

LITHUANIAN FREEDOM FIGHTERS' TACTICS RESISTING
THE SOVIET OCCUPATION 1944-1953

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General Studies

by

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ABSTRACT

LITHUANIAN FREEDOM FIGHTERS' TACTICS RESISTING THE SOVIET
OCCUPATION 1944-1953, by Darius Bernotas, 147 pages.

Although the end of World War II enabled devastated countries to rebuild and enjoy a time of peace, another bloody war had just started in Lithuania. Lithuanian Freedom Fighters (LFF) fought for almost a decade (1944-1953) against the Soviets who occupied their country after World War II. This research focuses on LFF tactics that enabled them to oppose greatly superior Soviet forces for an extended period of time and on the factors that resulted in eventual defeat of LFF armed resistance. The research utilized the elements of combat power as the measurement criteria to describe the LFF tactics.

The author concludes that the LFF tactics were to some extent effective. LFF managed to adapt tactics in accordance with a changing situation in terms of shifting Soviet tactics and wrong initial assumptions regarding international support. The other factor that contributed to the LFF success fighting the superior enemy for almost a decade was related to LFF ability to mitigate LFF combat power elements' weaknesses while exploiting their strengths.

Nevertheless, the absence of both political and material international support along with Soviet success in cutting off population support to the LFF were two main reasons that resulted in the gradual defeat of the armed resistance.

As asymmetric warfare is likely to continue playing an important role in future conflicts, members of the military profession should find it useful to familiarize themselves with this research. A thorough analysis of LFF tactics employing a combination of regular and irregular warfare to counter superior forces should assist military professionals in further deepening their understanding of asymmetric warfare phenomena thus contributing to their awareness of contemporary operational environment.

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This thesis is dedicated to the Lithuanian Freedom Fighters--selfless, courageous, and talented Warriors--who sacrificed their lives in the struggle against a ruthless Communism regime and greatly contributed to re-gaining Lithuanian independence in 1990, almost four decades after the last partisan lost his life in the fight for Freedom.

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ACRONYMS

HUMINT	Human Intelligence.
KGB	State Security Committee (Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti). The Soviet Secret Police.
LFF	Lithuanian Freedom Fighters.
MGB	Ministry of State Security (Ministerstvo Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti). The former Soviet Intelligence and counterintelligence agency, one of the forerunners of the KGB.
MVD	Ministry of Internal Affairs (Ministerstvo Vnutrennikh Del).
NKVD	People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (Narodny Kommissariat Vnutrennikh Del). The Soviet Secret Police Agency, a forerunner of KGB.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The one is not worth the Freedom, who does not defend it.¹

— Juozas Daumantas. *Partizanai* [The partisans].

The Research Question

Although the end of World War II enabled devastated countries to rebuild and enjoy a time of peace, another bloody war had just started in Lithuania. Lithuanian Freedom Fighters (LFF) fought for almost a decade (1944-1953) against the Soviets who occupied their country after World War II. The LFF's active resistance against Soviet forces is one of the great examples of 20th Century guerrilla warfare. However, there is still a lack of detailed analysis on the tactical factors that enabled LFF to resist superior Soviet forces for such a long period. Therefore, this research focuses on the following primary question: What tactics used by the LFF enabled them to oppose greatly superior Soviet forces for almost a decade? After examining LFF tactics, this research shifts focus to the secondary question: What factors resulted in the eventual defeat of LFF resistance?

Background

Before starting to research LFF armed resistance from a tactical point of view, the research author touches upon several areas that are important in understanding the setting and background of the resistance. The first focus area will cover Lithuanian warriors' role

¹From occupied Lithuanians letter to the Catholic Pope delivered by partisan Juozas Lukša in December 1947. He risking his life managed to breach the Iron Curtain delivering the message to the Western countries about the Lithuanians' bloody struggle for Independence.

in the long and challenging Lithuanian history. The author will then discuss the historical background and main reasons that inspired the LFF movement. The resistance's Ends, Ways, and Means will illustrate the concept that the LFF employed throughout the period of resistance. Phases of resistance will further assist in defining the background. And finally, the author will briefly cover the resistance results in terms of losses and benefits.

Warriors played a critical role in enabling the Lithuanian state to survive during the country's turbulent history. Lithuania faced numerous threats throughout a thousand years of its existence. In spite of relatively small numbers, Lithuanian warriors conquered neighboring lands, thus creating preconditions for the establishment of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The Battle of Grunwald (1410) is one of the most important battles in Lithuanian history. During that battle Lithuanian and Polish warriors decisively defeated the Teutonic Knights' aggression towards Lithuania and Poland, thus enabling the future prosperity of these two countries. In the 15th Century, Lithuania through alliances and conquest expanded its territory from the Baltic Sea as far south as the Black Sea, becoming one of the largest states in Europe. In 1569 Lithuania merged into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, but retained a separate Lithuanian army within the Commonwealth. In 1795 as a result of the partitions of the Commonwealth, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was erased from the political map and through the beginning of the 20th Century Lithuanians were forced to live mostly under the influence of the Russian Empire. However, in conjunction with Polish revolts a large number of Lithuanians conducted armed uprisings against the Russian regime twice, in 1831 and in 1863. Even though the Russians managed to defeat both armed risings and increased repression of the Lithuanian people, it is obvious that the Lithuanians never abandoned the will to resist

occupation and live in a free independent country. The restoration of Lithuanian independence in 1918 initiated further challenges for Lithuanian warriors. During a period of two years (December 1918–November 1920,) the newly formed Lithuanian Army defended Lithuanian independence against three aggressors: Bolsheviks, Bermontians, and Poles. However, in 1940 Lithuanian politicians accepted a Soviet ultimatum and directed the well-developed Lithuanian Armed Forces to surrender to the invading Soviets. The Lithuanian Armed Forces' equipment was transferred to the Soviets and the Lithuanian army structure was abolished. Nevertheless, the Lithuanian warrior spirit has guided soldiers to defend the country ever since the first written use of the term "Lithuania" back in 1009. This aspect played a critical role in 1944 when tens of thousands joined the LFF and initiated armed resistance to Soviet occupation.

Next, I will provide some insights on the historical background and further describe the main reasons that inspired LFF movement. Although during the interwar period Lithuania enjoyed a time of peace, World War II brought new turbulence. Even before the war broke out, Lithuania's future as an independent country was endangered. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact signed in 1939 secretly incorporated Lithuania into Germany's sphere of interest. A second secret protocol signed later the same year reassigned the majority of Lithuania to the USSR. The same protocol stated that Lithuania would be granted its historical capital city, Vilnius, which the Poles had occupied during the inter-war period. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, in 1940 Lithuanian politicians accepted the Soviets' ultimatum that prevented the Lithuanian Armed Forces from resisting Soviet invasion. Therefore, in the middle of 1940 Soviet troops occupied Lithuania without resistance. The Soviets identified Lithuania's

intellectual, political, military, and religious elite as a threat that could oppose the new regime, and massive arrests and deportations of Lithuanian leaders took place in 1941. Some 35,000 Lithuanian leaders were deported to Northern Russia and Siberia. Many of Lithuania's most educated citizens fled to the West in order to avoid Soviet repression. Harsh Soviet actions to destroy Lithuania's national existence in 1941 played a significant role in making Lithuanian citizens eager to resist in 1944 when the Soviets occupied Lithuania for the second time in the war.

After German troops pushed the Soviet Army out of Lithuania in June 1941, some Lithuanians greeted German soldiers as liberators. But Germany soon demonstrated it had no intentions of awarding independence to Lithuania. During the German occupation the Lithuanian Freedom Army along with a number of other underground organizations were formed. Even though these organizations employed various methods to oppose German occupation, such as boycotting Nazi efforts to recruit Lithuanian SS battalions, organizing an underground nationalistic press, etc., the overall goal of clandestine organizations was clear—to restore Lithuania's independence. However, the Germans as opposed to the Soviets granted Lithuania a right “to organize local units to fight Soviet partisans, but the primary rationale for their formation in the minds of Lithuanian[s] . . . was to have military units in place in the event the Soviets returned.”² Some Lithuanians fought for the Germans, but again they did so in order to prevent the Soviets from returning to Lithuania. In 1944, the Germans granted permission for General Povilas Plechavičius to form a Lithuanian Territorial Defense Force consisting of about 20,000

²Richard. R. Krickus, *Showdown. The Lithuanian Rebellion and the Breakup of the Soviet Empire* (Washington: Brassey's, 1997), 16.

soldiers. The Germans aimed to utilize this force countering Soviets, but when the Germans attempted to assign SS-related tasks to the newly formed unit, General Povilas Plechavičius refused to comply. Therefore, soon after creation of the Lithuanian Territorial Defense Force the Germans realized that the unit was pro-Lithuanian and posed a threat to the Nazi regime. As a result, the Germans arrested the newly created unit's staff members and disbanded the unit. However, a substantial part of unit's soldiers joined the underground and contributed towards Lithuanian armed resistance efforts against the Soviets after the World War II.

Nevertheless, the results of World War II created preconditions for the Soviets to take over Lithuania again in 1944. The Lithuanian people once again experienced Stalin's terror. "Many Lithuanian leaders were executed or forced into exile, and a six-year-long deportation of an estimated 350,000 people began."³ Moreover, Stalin pushed forward a rapid Sovietization policy by nationalizing farmers' land, forcing them into "Kolkhozy", and empowering Communist authorities who used harsh methods to enforce the Soviet rule. Lithuanians' reluctance to tolerate Soviet actions initiated the struggle to oppose the Communist regime. Moreover, the pro-Western and patriotic Lithuanian population, which was well-educated during the interwar period, assumed that Soviet occupation was temporary. Initially Lithuanians estimated that at the end of World War II a peace conference would grant independence to occupied Lithuania just as was the case after World War I. These beliefs were later fostered by the Atlantic Charter, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Geneva Convention, and other international agreements. Lithuanian leaders assumed that the country must resist to the Soviet regime just for a

³Ibid., 19.

short period of time before the Western countries would interfere and grant independence to Lithuania. To Lithuanian leaders “it seemed preposterous to suggest that the Western powers, which meant the United States and Britain, would abandon Eastern Europe to the masters of the Kremlin.”⁴ The other reason that contributed inspiring resistance to the Soviets was “Persistence of nationalist idealism and pro-Western orientation among the leaders of the intelligentsia, including former army officers.”⁵ Those reasons along with their overall historical background resulted in vast numbers of Lithuanians choosing armed resistance as a way to oppose Soviets.

At this point, I will identify the Lithuanian armed resistance’s Ends, Ways, and Means to illustrate the overall LFF resistance concept. The LFF identified regaining Lithuania’s independence as an overarching goal or end of armed resistance. The LFF employed the following ways to reach the identified end: (1) Conduct active unified LFF military actions to resist social and political changes that Soviets tried to impose; (2) Maintain Lithuanian public support; (3) Gain foreign support and assistance; (4) Prevent the Soviets from establishing governance; (5) Impede Soviet institutional organization; (6) Destroy farms’ collectivization process; (7) Protect Lithuanian population lives and property; (8) Prevent Lithuanian population from collaboration with the Soviets; (9) Conduct information operations. The LFF movement along with the Lithuanian population and international support aimed to provide means for active resistance.

⁴Stanley Vardys, “The Partisan Movement in Postwar Lithuania,” *Slavic Review* 22, no. 3 (September 1963): 504. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2492495> (accessed 23 February 2012).

⁵*Ibid.*, 501.

However, international support, as discussed in chapter 4, did not contribute to reaching the End of LFF armed resistance.

To further assist in defining LFF armed resistance background, the LFF movement can be divided into three phases: Phase 1: Active armed resistance (July 1944–May 1946). Main efforts in Phase 1 included: (1) Unifying separate LFF units into territorial units and military districts in order to orchestrate armed resistance efforts; (2) Actively defeating Soviet institutions' legitimacy; and (3) Fighting the Soviets by employing a combination of regular and irregular tactics. Phase 2: Unconventional armed resistance (May 1946–November 1948). Main efforts in Phase 2 included: (1) Fighting Soviets employing irregular-type tactics; (2) Employing a “bunker” system to preserve combat power; (3) Conducting active information operations; (4) Further unifying LFF efforts; (5) Reaching out for contacts in the West in order to gain support and attract Western countries' attention to Lithuania's struggle against the communist regime. Phase 3: Limited armed resistance and gradual decline of LFF resistance (November 1948–May 1953). Main efforts in Phase 3 included: (1) Information operations; (2) Restructuring a weakened organization due to massive casualties suffered during the first two phases; (3) Creating joint military-political resistance authority; (4) Further contacting the West for assistance.⁶

Finally, one must consider the resistance results in terms of losses and benefits. On one hand, Lithuania sustained massive casualties due to the resistance. “Some 20,200 partisans were killed, 140,000 people were sent to concentration camps, and 118,000

⁶The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, *War After War. The armed anti-Soviet Resistance in Lithuania in 1944-1953* (Vilnius: UAB “Baltijos Kopija”), 16.

deported.”⁷ Having in mind the small Lithuanian population and the fact that these people were the most educated and patriotic Lithuanians, the country sustained a massive impoverishment on the society. On the other hand, even though the LFF failed to reach the overall End of armed resistance—that is to regain Lithuanian independence—the outcome of the resistance had some positive aspects. First, almost a decade long LFF movement prevented the Russians from massively repopulating Lithuania. Therefore, Lithuania today does not face the critical ethnic Russian minority issues that other Baltic countries experience. Second, the LFF delivered the message to Western countries that Lithuania was occupied and was fighting for independence, which brought international awareness of Lithuania’s occupation.⁸ And finally, the LFF sacrifice strengthened pro-Lithuanian loyalties in Soviet-occupied Lithuania⁹ and served as a motivational tool to maintain within Lithuanians the will to resist by non-violent means and strive for freedom throughout long years of Soviet occupation.

Operational Definitions of Key Terms

The author extensively used the following terms throughout this research:

1. Lithuanian Freedom Fighters (LFF)—were combatants of Lithuanian origin who employed both regular and irregular warfare in order to resist the Soviet occupation during the period from 1944 to 1953. The author also referred to the LFF as partisans.

⁷Arvydas Anuškauskas, ed., *The Anti-Soviet Resistance in the Baltic States*, 5th ed. (Vilnius: Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, 2006), 44.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Vardys, “The Partisan Movement in Postwar Lithuania,” 522.

2. Territorial unit (Rinktinė)—was an LFF unit mainly consisting of subordinate companies. The number of subordinate companies varied from six to fourteen depending on the location of the territorial unit and the phase of armed resistance. During the first phase of armed resistance the numbers of LFF in territorial units varied from 200 to 700. As armed resistance progressed, the number of LFF in territorial units decreased accordingly.
3. Military district (Apygarda)—was an LFF unit consisting of two to five territorial units.
4. Military region (Sritis)—was an LFF unit consisting of two to five military districts. There were three military regions in Lithuanian territory.
5. War Fighting Function (WFF)—“is a group of tasks and systems (people, organizations, information, and processes) united by a common purpose that commanders use to accomplish missions and training objectives.”¹⁰
6. Combat power—“is the total means of destructive, constructive, and information capabilities that a military unit or formation can apply at a given time.”¹¹
7. There are eight elements of combat power:

Leadership is “the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation, while operating to accomplish the mission and improve the organization.”¹²

¹⁰Department of the Army, ADRP 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, May 2012), 3-2.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 3-1.

Information “enables commanders at all levels to make informed decisions on how best to apply combat power.”¹³

Mission command WFF “is the related tasks and systems that develop and integrate those activities enabling a commander to balance the art of command and the science of control in order to integrate the other warfighting functions.”¹⁴

Movement and maneuver WFF “is the related tasks and systems that move and employ forces to achieve a position of relative advantage over the enemy and other threats.”¹⁵

Intelligence WFF “is the related tasks and systems that facilitate understanding the enemy, terrain, and civil considerations.”¹⁶

Fires WFF “is the related tasks and systems that provide collective and coordinated use of Army indirect fires, air and missile defense, and joint fires through the targeting process.”¹⁷

Sustainment WFF “is the related tasks and systems that provide support and services to ensure freedom of action, extend operational reach, and prolong endurance.”¹⁸

¹²Ibid., 3-1.

¹³Ibid., 3-2.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., 3-3.

¹⁶Ibid., 3-4.

¹⁷Ibid.

Protection WFF “is the related tasks and systems that preserve the force so the commander can apply maximum combat power to accomplish the mission.”¹⁹

Note: Army doctrine describes the last six elements of combat as War Fighting Functions (WFF).

Limitations

The research is focused on analyzing LFF armed resistance from a tactical point of view in order to answer the primary research question. Even though the LFF did play a role in political situation development, the author did not analyze this aspect. However, diplomatic, economic, and political considerations are examined to an extent that is necessary to answer the secondary research question.

First-hand experience and feedback from LFF are unavailable to the author at the time of the research. Therefore, the author based research on available books about LFF movement, LFF diaries, and available Lithuanian armed resistance documented materiel. Furthermore, the author interviewed topic-related historian in order to get his insights on LFF tactics and factors that caused the ultimate defeat of the armed resistance.

The limited time period allocated for the research constrains studying all available data concerning the research area. Therefore, the author examined only selected books, diaries, and publications.

The research author did analyze Soviet tactics neutralizing the LFF armed resistance in order to visualize and conceptualize LFF tactics countering Soviet actions.

¹⁸Ibid., 3-4.

¹⁹Ibid., 3-5.

However, he thoughtfully avoided describing Soviet tactics in this research, because otherwise the research would have become exhaustively overextended. A separate follow-on research could be focused on describing the Soviet tactics against LFF throughout the resistance period.

Delimitations

Even though Lithuanians initiated armed resistance against the Soviet occupation in 1941 and the last armed partisan, Pranas Končius–Adomas, refused to surrender to the Soviets and shot himself in July 1965, this study focuses on the time period from 1944 till 1953 while analyzing organized LFF resistance. The research does not cover other countries' armed resistance to the Soviet occupation after World War II analysis and comparison.

The Significance of the Study

After the collapse of the Soviet Union historians increasingly researched Lithuanian armed resistance to occupation after 1944. Numerous books, reviews, articles, diaries, and other publications were published on this topic. Although LFF tactics are partly covered throughout the spectrum of these publications, a thorough and comprehensive analysis of LFF tactics is useful for at least three main reasons. First, the research of tactics employed in asymmetrical-type warfare contributes to understanding the contemporary operational environment, because NATO countries are increasingly facing asymmetric warfare in the 21st Century. Even though both tactics and weapon systems have evolved since the post-World War II period, an analysis of the asymmetric warfare tactical principles that the LFF employed against the Soviets half a century ago

does contribute to understanding the asymmetric warfare phenomena, which plays increasingly bigger role in contemporary operational environment. Second, the study could serve as an educational tool to be used in Military Academy of Lithuania and other military education institutions teaching soldiers the nature and essence of the asymmetric warfare and tactical principles that could be used to counter superior forces. And finally, such analysis serves as an inspirational tool for today's Lithuanian soldiers, because the current Lithuanian Armed Forces trace their background to the glorious Lithuanian military history.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

A broad scope of literature is available on the LFF armed movement. However, there is no consolidated thorough analysis on the LFF armed movement from a tactical point of view. Although LFF tactics are partly covered throughout the spectrum of publications, this research provides a comprehensive analysis of these tactics, thus filling the gap in existing literature on LFF armed resistance to the soviets. This chapter contains a concise review of primary literature that the author utilized conducting the research.

Researching the primary question required analysis of a broad number of publications in order to identify, analyze, and describe tactical patterns of armed resistance. The author gathered information related to the secondary question by researching mainly the same publications as answering the primary research question. The research is based on the following groups of literature sources:

Books

Books assisted in identifying the overall LFF armed resistance concept and patterns. Books related to the research topic set a background for the information gathering. The following books were used:

Arvydas Anuškauskas, ed., *The Anti-Soviet Resistance in the Baltic States*, 2006. Although this book did not focus on tactical level and resistance methods, it provided the author with insights on the overall armed resistance concept. Selected articles from this book contributed to the author's understanding and visualization of armed resistance in Lithuania. An article "The Contacts between the Lithuanian Resistance and the West"

helped the research author to analyze the secondary research question. This book enabled the author to stay objective while conducting the research, because the articles of the book are based on the primary sources.

Richard J. Krickus, *Showdown. The Lithuanian Rebellion and the Breakup of the Soviet Empire*, 1997. Although the author in this book focused on regaining Lithuanian independence starting in 1988, the beginning of this book covered the Lithuanian path towards freedom and democracy throughout long and turbulent Lithuanian history. As a part of his analysis of Lithuanian history, the author covered the period of armed resistance to the Soviets after World War II; therefore, the research author used this author's insights conceptualizing the information on resistance background mainly in chapter 1.

Rūta Gabrielė Vėliūtė, *Partizanai* [The partisans], 2009. This book, encompassing both memoirs of people who participated in the LFF armed resistance and various documents of the period, provided the author with insights on tactics that the LFF used throughout all the territory of Lithuania during the period from 1944 till 1953. Furthermore, the issues of international support towards LFF armed resistance were also addressed in this book. Therefore, the author used this book to gather data to answer both primary and secondary research questions.

Edita Jankauskienė, *Vakarų Lietuvos partizanų sritis. Atlasas* [The Western Lithuanian Partisan Military Region. Atlas], 2010. This publication along with next one on the list assisted the author in understanding and describing LFF structure throughout the resistance period.

Dalia Kuodytė, *Pietų Lietuvos partizanų sritis. Atlasas* [The Southern Lithuanian Partisan Military Region. Atlas], 2008.

Janina Syvokiene, *Life Sacrificed for Motherland. Reminiscences by Antanas Kraujelis's sister, relatives, and friends*, 2011. The author of this book is a sister of partisan Antanas Kraujelis who shot himself after being surrounded to avoid being captured alive as late as in 1965. This book was useful for the research because the author described her first-hand experience being close to members of the armed resistance mainly during the last phase of the resistance. The book contains a number of both LFF and Soviet authorities' document copies that contributed to the objectivity of the research.

Diaries

A number of LFF diaries are summarized and published in books. The diaries provided the first hand information of the LFF armed resistance. The author used following the books of LFF diaries during the research:

Adolfas Ramanauskas Vanagas, *Daugel krito sūnų Partizanų gretose* [Many Sons Have Fallen], 2007. Adolfas Ramanauskas (code name Vanagas) joined LFF in 1945. Having both civilian and military education and being highly dedicated to the armed resistance, he soon gained trust among his peers and superior commanders which enabled him to assume critical command positions within the armed resistance. During a period of five years, Adolfas Ramanauskas progressed through command positions from platoon, company, territorial unit, military district, region commander, and in 1950 he was appointed representatives of military regions as the Commander-in Chief of LFF. Adolfas Ramanauskas Vanagas's extensive experience within the ranks of LFF make his diaries

especially valuable for the research by providing detailed information about LFF tactics and causes that resulted in the eventual defeat of LFF.

Juozas Daumantas, *Partizanai* [The partisans], 1990. Juozas Lukša (code names Daumantas, Skirmantas, Kazimieras, Skrajūnas, Juodis, etc.) joined the armed resistance in 1946 as a head of printed information section of Geležinio Vilko territorial unit, Tauras military district. He actively participated in creating the Supreme Headquarters of the Armed Partisans. Juozas Daumantas's later positions as territorial unit commander, Armed Forces headquarters intelligence section chief, and a LFF delegate to the Western countries exposed him to all levels of the partisan movement. He was closely familiar both with LFF tactics and with the challenges gaining foreign support for LFF armed resistance. Therefore, his diaries enabled the author to gain valuable information answering the primary research question on LFF tactics. Moreover, the book also provided the research author with valuable insights into foreign countries support to LFF resistance, thus contributing to answering the secondary research question on the factors that resulted in the eventual defeat of LFF resistance.

Publications

They served as additional and supplementary sources of information. The following publications were used:

The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, *War After War: The armed anti-Soviet Resistance in Lithuania in 1944-1953*. This publication, concisely covering the Lithuanian armed resistance against the Soviets, provided the author with background information about armed resistance phases and main aspects of the resistance. The publication, although very concise and

lacking a thorough analysis of armed resistance, helped the author to visualize and conceptualize the essence of the resistance thus contributing to the research.

Dalia Kuodytė and Rokas Tracevskis, “The Unknown War. Armed anti-Soviet resistance in Lithuania in 1944-1953,” Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, Vilnius, 2006. This concise publication, including a brief overview of the armed resistance, further assisted the author to understand and visualize various tactics-related aspects of the resistance.

Vardys, Stanley. “The Partisan Movement in Postwar Lithuania.” *Slavic review*, September 1963. Armed resistance causes, LFF organization and tactics, and the reasons for the decline of the resistance were the focus areas of this publication that directly related to the research topic and contributed to answering both primary and secondary research questions.

LFF and Soviets Archive Documents

Expert from the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania assisted by providing copies of original Soviet documents on specific battles analyzed in the study. Analysis of these documents contributed drawing accurate and legitimate conclusions of the research.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter contains a short description of the research methodology the researcher applied to navigate through the research process. The research used an evaluation study approach to describe what tactics LFF used throughout the periods of armed resistance. The researcher gathered and analyzed relevant data on LFF resistance tactics from books, publications, and LFF diaries focusing on the literature discussed in chapter 2. However, as Soviet political influence and Lithuanian sensitivity might have affected the objectivity of different articles and publications, whenever possible the researcher analyzed both LFF sources and Soviet documents to ensure credibility and validity of the research. Before drawing conclusions, the researcher conducted an oral history interview with a subject matter expert from Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania in order to compare estimated conclusions.

The research focused on the elements of combat power as the measurement criteria to describe the tactics employed by the LFF. The definition and elements of combat power are based on current US Army doctrine (specifically ADRP 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, May 2012). According to this publication, combat power consists of eight elements: Leadership, Information, Mission command war fighting function (WFF), Movement and Maneuver WFF, Intelligence WFF, Fires WFF, Sustainment WFF, and Protection WFF. Definitions of elements of combat power are provided in chapter 1. As the essence of the first two elements of combat power (e.g. Leadership and Information) is self-explanatory, at this point the researcher provides WFF-related tasks to assist the reader in visualizing the essence of each WFF. See table 1.

Table 1. War Fighting Functions and Related Tasks

War fighting function	Related tasks
Mission command	Commander's tasks: - Drive the operations process through their activities of understanding, visualizing, describing, directing, leading, and assessing operations. - Develop teams, both within their own organizations and with joint, interagency, and multinational partners. - Inform and influence audiences, inside and outside their organizations. Staff's tasks: - Conduct the operations process: plan, prepare, execute, and assess. - Conduct knowledge management and information management. - Conduct inform and influence activities. - Conduct cyber electromagnetic activities. Additional tasks: - Conduct military deception. - Conduct civil affairs operations. - Install, operate, and maintain the network. - Conduct airspace control. - Conduct information protection.
Movement and Maneuver	- Deploy. - Move. - Maneuver. - Employ direct fires. - Occupy an area. - Conduct mobility and counter mobility operations. - Conduct reconnaissance and surveillance. - Employ battlefield obscuration.
Intelligence	- Support force generation. - Support situational understanding.

	- Provide intelligence support to targeting and information capabilities. - Collect information.
Fires	- Deliver organic fires and integrate all forms of joint fires. - Conduct air and missile defense. - Manage the targeting and joint kill chain processes. - Detect and locate targets. - Decide on targets. - Assess.
Sustainment	- Conduct logistics. - Provide personnel services. - Provide health service support.
Protection	- Conduct area security operations. - Employ safety techniques (including fratricide avoidance). - Implement operations security. - Conduct physical security operations. - Provide intelligence support to protection. - Implement information protection. - Apply antiterrorism measures. - Conduct law and order operations. - Conduct survivability operations. - Provide force health protection. - Conduct chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear operations. - Provide explosive ordnance disposal and protection support. - Coordinate air and missile defense. - Conduct personnel recovery operations. - Conduct internment and resettlement operations.

Source: Department of the Army, ADRP 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, May 2012), 3-1 to 3-6.

As LFF did not possess indirect fire systems, the author did not analyze fires WFF while analyzing the application of elements of combat power. Some of the combat elements-related tasks are not applicable to analyze LFF tactics due to the fact that LFF armed resistance was conducted more than half a century ago and some of the current combat elements-related tasks were not applicable at that time. Nonetheless, combat elements were just as important then as they are today. Therefore, the researcher analyzed all combat power elements in exception of fires WFF in order to describe tactics used by LFF while resisting the Soviet occupation.

As tactics used to resist the Soviets changed significantly throughout the evolution of the resistance movement, the author divided LFF armed resistance period into three phases in order to actually portray the patterns and draw conclusions on LFF tactics in each phase. These three phases of the LFF armed resistance were described in chapter 1. Following LFF tactics analysis during each phase, the researcher drew conclusions on the analysis of LFF performance from tactical point of view. The research also identified the modification and evolution of tactics throughout the periods of armed resistance.

After answering the primary research question, the study focused on analysis of the factors that resulted in eventual defeat of LFF armed resistance. Dr. Gordon H. McCormick's diagram²⁰ serves as a tool to analyze the main components of any insurgency and counter-insurgency and both insurgents' and counter-insurgents' actions they need to perform in order to succeed in insurgency or counter-insurgency. Therefore,

²⁰Michael Freeman and Hy Rothstein, "Gangs and Guerrillas. Ideas From Counterinsurgency and Counterterrorism" (Technical Report, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, 2011), 16.

the application of Dr. McCormick's diagram to LFF armed resistance case enabled the researcher to identify the reasons for the ultimate defeat of LFF armed resistance.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

This chapter provides a detailed description and analysis of LFF armed resistance to the Soviets in terms tactics that are expressed through the elements of combat power. As there were three distinct periods of LFF armed resistance (see chapter 1), the author described each of the periods separately. Analysis of performance follows the description of each period. At the end of this chapter the author utilizes Dr. Gordon H. McCormick's diagram to analyze the reasons that caused ultimate defeat of LFF.

LFF Tactics in the Active Armed Resistance Phase (July 1944–May 1946)

Leadership

As mentioned in chapter 1 of this research, in 1940 Lithuanian politicians accepted the Soviets' ultimatum that prevented the Lithuanian Armed Forces from resisting the Soviet invasion. Therefore, in the middle of 1940 Soviet troops occupied Lithuania without resistance. The Soviets arrested and deported to Siberia a large number of Lithuanian officers. Some of them fled to the West in order to avoid Soviet repression. As a result, LFF leadership lacked experienced commissioned officers to lead the armed resistance. Former Lithuanian junior officers mainly commanded only higher echelon LFF units (i.e. territorial units, military districts, during later phases of armed resistance—military regions), while former noncommissioned officers and civilians with limited or even no military experience formed the bulk of lower echelons' LFF leadership.²¹ The

²¹The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, *War After War*, 3.

lack of military education and experience initially during the first phase of armed resistance prevented the LFF leadership from developing cohesive fighting organizations. In some instances after initial battles superior Soviet forces managed to disperse forming LFF units.²² Nonetheless, LFF leaders demonstrated both willingness and an ability to learn while fighting. Therefore, as the armed resistance progressed, the LFF leadership gained valuable knowledge and experience to lead the partisans.

As the beginning of armed resistance was spontaneous, LFF leadership from platoon to military district level realized the importance of providing a unified guidance for conducting the armed resistance, so it would not turn into chaotic, isolated, and uncoordinated movement. As there were no guiding documents and regulations on the overarching purpose and methods for armed resistance, the LFF leadership initiated development of these documents and regulations from the very beginning of the armed resistance. Preliminary LFF statutes, regulations and other documents that guided armed resistance were developed in accordance with interwar period Lithuanian armed forces regulations. During the first phase of armed resistance each territorial unit and military district-sized unit developed the main documents formalizing the armed resistance and providing guidance for subordinate units on how to conduct it.²³ Even though LFF statutes and regulations differed from military district to military district, these documents described overall armed resistance mission, purpose and tasks of the particular

²²Adolfas Ramanauskas Vanagas, *Daugel krito sūnų Partisanų gretose* [Many sons have fallen] (Lietuvos Gyventojų Genocido ir Rezistencijos Tyrimo Centras, Vilnius, 2007), 7.

²³The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, *War After War*, 13.

unit, their structures, job descriptions and duties of key personnel within the units, and the other areas regulating the armed resistance.²⁴ LFF leadership also developed documents describing the law of military conduct that served to prevent compromising conduct of LFF.²⁵ The LFF leadership demanded from the subordinates military discipline and absolute compliance towards regulations in order to avoid military crimes and self-will. Before being accepted into the armed resistance, each LFF had to take an LFF Oath. Although the actual Oath texts slightly differed between military districts, the basic principle remained the same—each LFF member swore to comply with the leadership's orders, honorably fight for the Homeland and be ready to sacrifice a life if needed defending that homeland.

Besides regulations describing LFF military conduct, the LFF passed regulations starting the award system. LFF awarded the most dedicated LFF both verbally and in written forms which served as a tool to further deepen LFF commitment and discipline.²⁶

In most cases subordinate officers elected commanding officers. Only staff officers were appointed. Therefore, there was a close relationship and trust between higher commanders, lower echelon leaders, and the rank and file.²⁷ As trust and close relationships were inherent characteristics of LFF leadership, during the first phase of

²⁴Juozas Daumantas, *Partizanai* [The partisans] (Vilnius: Vaga, 1990), 302-308.

²⁵The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, *War After War*, 21.

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷Vardys, *The Partisan Movement in Postwar Lithuania*, 511-512.

resistance LFF leadership managed to build a robust and reliable organization capable of resisting superior Soviet forces.

Despite the fact that moving within areas of operation was increasingly dangerous due to the threat being killed or captured by the Soviet units, the LFF leadership dedicated much effort visiting their subordinate units.²⁸ For example, the Tauras military district commander constantly visited each of the fighting groups within his district.²⁹ While meeting with subordinate partisans he explained the purpose of the armed resistance, current status, and way ahead. In addition to sharing information with subordinates, the higher purpose of these personal talks with partisans was to inspire and influence soldiers, instill the will to fight and boost their morale. The vast majority of other military districts' commanders also continuously visited their units to instill discipline, maintain morale, and guide their units' actions.

As the majority of LFF had no military experience and training before joining the armed resistance, the LFF leadership dedicated invaluable efforts educating and training their units. Once LFF units were organized, leadership taught the partisans not only the military tactics that they needed in order to survive on the battlefield, but also the essence and purpose of LFF armed resistance.³⁰ LFF leadership believed the latter would build LFF commitment to the armed resistance and contribute to the ultimate success.

²⁸Vanagas, *Daugel krito sūnų Partisanų gretose*, 435-436.

²⁹Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 109.

³⁰Rūta Gabrielė Vėliūtė, *Partizanai* [The Partisans] (Vilnius: Lietuvos Gyventojų Genocido ir Rezistencijos Tyrimo Centras, 2009), 11.

The LFF leadership during the first period of armed resistance influenced subordinates' commitment by demonstrating their own commitment to the resistance. Elected commanders possessed high discipline and courage. The LFF leadership did not seek any advantages in terms of improved living conditions, and shared the same harsh conditions along with subordinates. The LFF leaders also realized the importance of demonstrating their own courage to inspire the subordinates. One particular example worth mentioning occurred in 1946. After one of Tauras military district commanders' meetings, the leadership saw an opportunity to engage the Soviets. As the Soviets were organizing a meeting in a nearby location, two of Tauras's military district commanders dressed up in civilian clothes, approached a local Soviet government official, and employed non-lethal force letting him to escape and call for help. As a result, thirty men of a NKVD unit mounted on a truck approached the meeting area. The Tauras military district leadership ambushed the approaching enemy unit, killing twenty eight NKVD soldiers and capturing of their weapons. None of the military district commanders were killed. This example served as an inspirational tool to deepen the commitment of the LFF towards their leadership.³¹

Although at the beginning of armed resistance the LFF leadership lacked military knowledge and experience, LFF leaders compensated for this shortfall by demonstrating willingness and ability to learn while fighting. Therefore, as the armed resistance progressed, LFF leadership managed to lead the armed resistance by motivating the partisans, providing purpose, and directing their actions.

³¹Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 154.

Information

As LFF units started to form up in 1944, the exchange of information within and between these units became an urgent need. Uninterrupted information flow was a critical requirement of the armed resistance in order to avoid chaos and uncoordinated activities. Moreover, timely information dissemination was crucial enhancing the effectiveness of forming LFF units. Therefore, LFF leadership contributed substantial efforts establishing a robust information exchange system from the very beginning of the armed resistance. As LFF units did not possess radio equipment for rapid information exchange, the liaison-messenger system based on civilian support promised an alternative solution fulfilling the need for information dissemination within and among forming LFF units. The author describes liaison-messenger system in more details under the Mission Command warfighting function.

Mission Command War Fighting Function (WFF)

Develop LFF Units' Structure

As the World War II Eastern front moved westward in 1944, the Red Army units returned to Lithuania. The Soviet troops chasing Germans demonstrated harsh actions on Lithuanian civilians. In many instances, the Soviet soldiers robbed the local population. NKVD units initiated numerous arrests in order to identify and punish Lithuanians who were connected with nationalistic movements and organizations. Thousands of civilians were imprisoned and tortured. The Soviets conducted massive deportations of Lithuanian civilians who seemed to be unreliable to the Soviet regime. As the Red Army still fought heavily against the retreating Germans, a mobilization of Lithuanian youth was targeted to boost new troops into the front. For all these reasons including the historical

background-related reasons described in chapter 1, thousands of Lithuanians joined LFF units to resist the Soviet regime. In the beginning of 1945, LFF units operated throughout the Lithuania except in areas heavily occupied by Soviet troops.³²

In 1945 the LFF units consisted of about 30,000 members. Men rallied in forests and spontaneously formed LFF platoons, territorial units, and military districts. Units' size varied from dozens up to several hundreds of men.³³ Before conducting major operations, LFF units tended to temporarily task-organize into larger formations in order to concentrate more combat power. After completing major operations LFF units re-deployed back to their initial areas of operations and resumed their organic task organization.³⁴

However, because the LFF armed movement lacked overall unified mission command structure, the effectiveness of the armed resistance was questionable. Although in some instances independent LFF units' commanders demonstrated an unwillingness to subordinate themselves to higher units due to personal ambitions and other subjective reasons, the vast majority of LFF units realized the urgent need to unify LFF movement, to establish a unified chain of command, to create a common units' structure, to establish clear units' areas of operations, and to coordinate armed resistance efforts. Therefore, during the first phase of resistance the vast majority of LFF units operating independently throughout the Lithuanian territory started a unification process.

³²Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 59.

³³The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, *War After War*, 2-9.

³⁴Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 57.

Among other underground organizations aiming to unify LFF units, the Movement of Lithuanian Partisans was established in order to liaise and start coordination amongst LFF units that were forming throughout the country. The main mission of the Movement of Lithuanian Partisans was to task organize existing LFF units into bigger formations and to establish a unified command and control of LFF movement. However, as early as in the summer of 1945, the Soviets managed to interdict the Movement of Lithuanian Partisans actions and to prevent the organization from achieving its mission.³⁵ NKVD units also managed to neutralize the majority of active members of other underground organizations (Committee of Lithuanian Independence, etc.), thus hampering efforts to unify LFF units into a coherent structure.³⁶ Different underground movements' members realized that it would be difficult to operate within the cities and decided to join the existing partisan units throughout the country in order to start the unification process from within LFF formations³⁷ The fact that the armed resistance unification was conducted from small functioning units to bigger formations commanded by trustful trustworthy leaders contributed developing a robust organization capable fighting greatly superior enemy for almost a decade.³⁸

On 25 August 1945 military underground resistant groups from Suvalkija region (South-Western Lithuania) unified into a single military unit–called the Tauras military

³⁵Ibid., 56-57.

³⁶Ibid., 390.

³⁷Ibid., 387-388.

³⁸Vanagas, *Daugel krito sūnų Partisanų gretose*, 74.

district.³⁹ Even though it was not the first military district to be established in Lithuanian territory, the author briefly covers its structure to assist understanding of the major parts and a scope of military district size element.

The Tauras military district staff consisted of military and political departments. The first one was led by the chief of staff while the latter by the head of the political department. Both military district's chief of staff and head of political department were subordinate to the military district commander. Planning, mobilization, reconnaissance, sustainment, and communications sections formed the military department of military district staff. The political department consisted of individuals responsible for civil affairs, inform and influence activities, and military information support operations (propaganda operations at that time). Military district adjutant, chaplain, and surgeon were directly subordinate to military district commander.⁴⁰

The Tauras military district consisted of four subordinate territorial units. The territorial unit was the lowest unit having an organic staff that assisted the commander to direct and lead subordinate units. Territorial unit's staff consisted of chief of staff, adjutant, and chiefs of operations, reconnaissance, and sustainment sections. Territorial unit further consisted of companies, platoons and squads. Squad was the smallest military unit having eight to ten LFF.⁴¹

LFF within Tauras's military district were subdivided into active members, passive members and supporters. Active members directly carried out armed resistance-

³⁹Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 86.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 303.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 303-304.

related tasks by both lethal and non-lethal means. Passive members were not directly involved in armed resistance, but had weapons and were accounted for to join the armed resistance in order to support the active members. Supporters provided material means and conducted non-lethal tasks in order to enable the active members to perform their duties.⁴² Although this approach was not uniform throughout all the military districts, each of them subdivided its members into active LFF and passive members who indirectly supported the armed resistance.

The structure of each military district slightly differed in terms of staff organization and number and size of subordinate units. Nevertheless, each military district headquarters and subordinate units were structured to enable effective mission command and decentralized execution of operations.

During the first phase of armed resistance LFF formations throughout Lithuania conducted the unification process and in 1946 seven military districts were operational within the country: Vyčio (December 1944–January 1953); Didžiosios Kovos (February 1945–November 1950); Žemaičių (March 1945–August 1953); Vytauto (August 1945–December 1951); Tauro (August 1945–June 1952); Dainavos (November 1945–August 1952); Kęstučio (September 1946–June 1953).⁴³ The rapid development of military districts demonstrated LFF leadership's willingness and ability to unify their efforts to achieve the overall end state of LFF armed resistance.

On 23 April 1946, the Southern Lithuanian LFF military region (higher echelon of military district) along with staff was established on the basis of the Tauras military

⁴²Ibid., 304.

⁴³Anušaukas, *The Anti-Soviet Resistance in the Baltic States*, 28.

district.⁴⁴ However, during the first phase of resistance the LFF managed to unify their units mainly up to military district level. Further LFF military district unification into military regions and ultimately into a single chain of command occurred during the later resistance phases.

Develop Cohesive LFF Units

LFF movement authorities realized the importance of developing a cohesive fighting force that shared the same values, traditions, and beliefs. LFF commanders believed that each LFF member must be closely familiar with Lithuanian traditions, values, beliefs, and the psychology of local people in order to gain support of Lithuanian population. Therefore, nationality played a decisive role in selecting new members for the LFF movement. Although a number of Russians, Germans, and Latvians who found themselves in Lithuania as a result of war (i.e. prisoners of war, deserters from Red Army, etc.) volunteered to join LFF movement, they were rarely accepted. That was not only due to the lack of trust, but mainly because of the fact that foreign soldiers lacked knowledge about Lithuanian culture and values which was critical to gain population support. If accepted, they were granted only a position of private, no matter their previous experience or rank. Starting in 1945 LFF authorities encouraged subordinate commanders to accept only Lithuanian citizens into the LFF movement.

Just before World War II ended, the Germans employed airborne operations to infiltrate Lithuanian-origin units along with weapons and ammunition deep into Lithuanian territory in order to disrupt the Soviet army actions and conduct sabotage.

⁴⁴Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 144.

However, the majority of these Lithuanian-origin soldiers was disloyal to Germans and agreed to conduct these missions in order to get the training and weapons needed for re-enforcing the Lithuanian resistance against the Soviets. Once infiltrated into Lithuania, these units joined LFF formations and cut off contacts with German authorities, refusing their initial missions. Although the number of infiltrated units was too small to make an impact on LFF armed resistance, the LFF leadership did incorporate the infiltrated units into LFF formations thus enhancing military knowledge level amongst LFF members. Those infiltrated units that refused to join LFF formations and remained loyal to German authorities were shortly neutralized by the Soviet forces.⁴⁵

It is difficult to clearly state the indicators that would help to assess how successful LFF authorities were in developing cohesive teams. However, the LFF commitment and dedication serve as a suitable indicator for assessing the LFF authorities' ability to develop cohesive fighting teams. Even though during the first phase of armed resistance the LFF lacked adequate military training and experience, suffered heavy casualties, and encountered sustainment shortfalls, they remained dedicated to fighting the superior enemy. The Soviet government starting in early 1945 addressed the LFF multiple times, suggesting that partisans quit fighting and disarm. Some suggestions were "soft" stating that LFF would not be punished, while some of the suggestions aimed to inspire fear in the LFF. In order to accelerate the LFF legitimization process, in the course of two years (1945-1946) the Soviet government conducted massive deportations of identified LFF family members. Moreover, a majority of LFF commanders did not

⁴⁵Ibid., 5.

force the LFF to avoid legitimization process.⁴⁶ Although a substantial number of individuals who joined LFF in the early stage of resistance did accept the Soviets offer to legitimize in 1944 and 1945, the majority of partisans refused to accept legitimization process and continued fighting. The fact that the LFF remained dedicated and committed fighting the enemy under difficult circumstances supports the argument that LFF authorities were successful in developing cohesive fighting teams.

Conduct Assessment

The LFF utilized the assessment process in order to identify both positive and negative aspects of their operations and overall LFF performance. LFF employed both informal and formal assessment methods. LFF leadership performed informal assessment continuously to improve their units' performance. Informal assessments also usually occurred after contacts with the enemy with a purpose to "identify mistakes made during the battle and to learn from brave and skillful comrades."⁴⁷ The Tauras military district's annual assessment of performance illustrates the formal type of assessment that was employed by other LFF military districts as well. After less than one year in existence, the Tauras military district commander ordered his staff and leaders down to company commanders to participate in the military district annual assessment briefing. Each of the staff sections and company commanders briefed the district commander about their performance in the past year. The commander's overall assessment of military district performance followed their briefings. At the end of the meeting the Tauras unit

⁴⁶Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 21-22.

⁴⁷Vanagas, *Daugel krito sūnų Partisanų gretose*, 67.

commander provided his remarks and way ahead.⁴⁸ This formal assessment meeting proved that LFF armed resistance was capable and more importantly willing to critically assess their performance in order to improve the organization.

Conduct Inform and Influence Activities

The LFF realized the importance of information and influence operations discrediting the Soviet rule and gaining support of Lithuanian population. Therefore, the LFF started to publish and distribute the underground press from the very beginning of armed resistance. Starting in 1945 the LFF underground press was published throughout the territory of Lithuania.⁴⁹ During the first phase of LFF armed resistance to the Soviets the LFF underground printing press was used to inform the Lithuanian public about the Soviet occupation and their unjust actions in Lithuania. The underground press also served as a tool to influence the Lithuanian population to resist the Soviet authorities' actions while supporting LFF in regaining Lithuania's independence. The underground press also enabled the LFF leadership to support the fighting spirit of LFF. And lastly, the press aimed to influence the population to boycott the illegal Soviet organized elections in Lithuania thus delegitimizing the Soviet rule.⁵⁰

The LFF used multiple methods to distribute the underground nationalistic press and leaflets. First, the partisans clandestinely distributed the press themselves. Second,

⁴⁸Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 145.

⁴⁹Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 110.

⁵⁰Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 111.

Lithuanian students and civilians acting as liaisons-messengers assisted with this task.⁵¹

And finally, the LFF employed a unique way of distribution which was based on threatening and forcing the Bolshevik apparatus in the provinces to distribute the press.⁵² However, the latter way was more an exception rather than the rule.

The effectiveness of LFF inform and influence activities could be measured by analyzing such activities targeted against the “Defenders of population.” The Soviet authorities as early as in autumn of 1944 initiated mobilization of Lithuanians into units called “Defenders of population.” The main purpose of these units was to contribute to defeating the LFF movement. As the real purpose of these units was not initially clearly defined and volunteers benefited from exclusion from mobilization into the Red army, some Lithuanians joined “Defenders of population” units. Realizing that the Soviet regime tried to make Lithuanians fight against Lithuanians, the LFF movement took counter-actions against the Soviet plan. Even though the LFF employed some direct actions targeting “Defenders of population” units, inform and influence activities were the main effort minimizing the effectiveness of these units. An active inform and influence campaign was successful and substantial numbers of Lithuanians mobilized into “Defenders of population” units eventually either joined LFF, or started to hide from the Soviet authorities. Inform and influence activities performed by LFF also enabled the Lithuanian people to uncover the real intentions of “Defenders of population” units thus minimizing the population support towards these units. As a result, an effective inform and influence campaign conducted by LFF in the first armed resistance phase degraded

⁵¹Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 110.

⁵²Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 111.

“Defenders of population” units’ effectiveness while enabling the LFF movement to preserve its combat power instead of being forced to decisively engage in direct actions against “Defenders of population” units.⁵³

During the first armed resistance phase the LFF realized the effectiveness of inform and influence activities resisting the Soviets. The practical experience that the LFF gained conducting inform and influence activities during the initial phase laid a foundation for increasingly extensive use of these operations during later armed resistance phases.

Install, Operate, and Maintain the Network

Communications play a key role conducting military operations, because means of communication enable commanders both to share information with subordinates and to receive information from subordinates. Communications enable commanders to guide the subordinate units while conducting operations.

Initially during the first phase of armed resistance some LFF leaders had initiatives to employ radio transmitters to command and control subordinate units. Radio transmitters enabled the Lithuanian Partisan Movement to communicate orders and instructions to forming LFF units. By the middle of 1945 Lithuanian Partisan Movement established radio communication between LFF units operating in Kaunas, Panevėžys, Kėdainiai, Kaišiadorys, Trakai, Marijampolė and some other districts within Lithuania.⁵⁴ However, as the NKVD disintegrated Lithuanian Partisan Movement in mid-summer

⁵³Ibid., 59.

⁵⁴Ibid., 57.

1945, the network stopped operating. Establishing units throughout Lithuanian territory could not rely on radio-based communication systems simply due to a lack or in most cases absence of radio equipment. Therefore, the LFF leadership had to find an alternative way to communicate with subordinate and neighboring units.

The liaisons-messengers system developed by the LFF at the initial resistance phase rapidly spread throughout the LFF areas of operation and promised the LFF leadership a feasible solution to the urgent need for communication means. This system consisted of two equally important elements: liaisons-messengers and a net of communication points. Civilian liaisons-messengers were volunteers who ensured LFF information flowed. Usually they lived legally among the population and clandestinely circulated LFF messages throughout LFF areas of operation in a timely manner. Women provided a vast number of liaisons-messengers. To make liaisons-messengers system more robust, each LFF unit had a net of communication points. Communication points were clandestine locations established throughout a particular LFF unit area of operations. LFF and liaisons-messengers used these communication points as a place to leave and receive messages. Communication points were established in various secret locations within wooded areas, farms, houses, even towns. In order to maximize security, LFF constantly changed communication nets and provided each communication point with a code name. The liaisons-messengers system developed by LFF during the first phase of armed resistance proved to be extremely efficient and became the primary means of communications throughout a decade-long conflict.

Employ Mission Command Philosophy

Having analyzed LFF performance from mission command-related tasks' point of view, the author grasped how LFF applied mission command as a philosophy conducting operations. In accordance to FM 6-0, "Mission command is the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of full spectrum operations."⁵⁵ LFF leadership did demand from their subordinate's compliance while performing tasks assigned by the leadership in order maximize the effectiveness of armed resistance. However, the nature of guerilla warfare demanded the commanders to trust and empower their subordinates to exercise initiative and creativeness while conducting missions. As the Soviets increasingly suppressed LFF command and control, subordinate LFF units had to act without direct guidance from their superiors for extended periods of time. Therefore, the LFF leadership giving the orders emphasized the purpose of operations. Understanding the higher commander's purpose for a certain operation enabled subordinate LFF to apply initiative and execute the orders without permanent supervision and guidance from the higher commanders. Certainly, LFF leadership did not formally identify that they employed mission command philosophy while leading the armed resistance simply because this term was not specified at that time. However, LFF leadership "de facto" did employ mission command philosophy which greatly contributed to survivability of LFF and to ability to conduct almost a decade long armed resistance against superior enemy.

⁵⁵Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, September 2011), 12.

Movement and Maneuver WFF

Move

Although the LFF initially enjoyed substantial freedom of movement within their areas of operation, later in the first phase of armed resistance their movement was hampered by increasing number of Soviet units deployed in Lithuania. Thus, in order to avoid detection while moving, the LFF tended to conduct movements in small groups. For the same reason whenever possible, they preferred to move during night time, poor weather conditions and through wooded terrain. When the situation permitted, LFF units moving through neighboring units areas of responsibility were escorted by members from the local unit. That enhanced survivability, because escorting local LFF was closely familiar with the elements of mission variables (i.e. enemy situation, terrain, friendly forces situation, and civilians) within particular area of operations.

Maneuver

As LFF performance from the maneuver perspective widely varied during the first phase of armed resistance, the author used the decisive action construct to analyze and describe the forms and types of maneuver. During the first phase of LFF resistance to the Soviets, although lacking both military knowledge and experience LFF managed to conduct decisive operations through the simultaneous combination of all three types of operations: defensive, offensive, and stability.

Defensive operations were aimed to defeat the Soviet attacks and economize forces. LFF used all three types of defensive operations: mobile defense, area defense, and retrograde.

One of the numerous examples of LFF mobile defense occurred in Degimai area, Prienai district on 11 June 1945. At 16.00 hours five LFF squad-size units were conducting tactics training in a meadow on the left bank of river Jiesia. LFF observation posts identified approaching Soviet units and provided early warning to the partisans. Two LFF squads occupied defensive positions on both sides of the nearby bridge. The terrain provided perfect observation and fields of fire for both squads. The next two squads occupied positions on the flanks in order to secure them. The fifth squad occupied a defensive position in the rear. As NKVD reconnaissance elements approached the bridge, the LFF did not open fire, waiting for main body units. The fifth squad positioned in the rear was tasked to destroy the NKVD reconnaissance elements. The fifth squad adjusted defensive positions and destroyed the approaching Soviet unit in an open field. Two wounded Soviet reconnaissance soldiers surrendered. After providing first aid treatment to wounded Soviet soldiers, LFF soldiers released the prisoners of war in order to enable military information support operation. LFF tasked the Soviet soldiers to inform their higher commanders that the LFF were committed to repulse the communist invasion and that every Soviet soldier trying to fight the LFF would face similar outcomes. On their way back to their unit, the released Soviet soldiers did not notice the well camouflaged and protected LFF main body positions for the second time. Shortly after wounded soldiers reported back to their unit, the Soviet main body approached the LFF positions. The NKVD unit expected to engage with partisans in the same area as the first time, so they did not use combat formation approaching well concealed LFF main body positions. Therefore, LFF units opened effective fire inflicting heavy casualties and preventing the Soviets crossing the bridge over the river Jiesia. Unable to penetrate LFF

defenses, Soviets retreated to reorganize. At that time LFF squads reinforced the flanks expecting Soviet envelopment movement. Their estimation was valid as after reorganizing the NKVD units initiated an envelopment movement from the left. Freedom fighters managed to repulse the Soviet second attack as well. The third NKVD attack occurred on the left flank again. The LFF did not expect the same direction of attack, therefore after sustaining casualties they withdrew back to the main body defensive positions. Then the LFF regrouped in order to minimize their defensive front and withdrew under pressure until they cut off the contact with the Soviets. The mobile defense operation lasted for about five hours, inflicting 67 KIAs on the Soviet side while on the LFF side only six fighters were killed. During the night, the Soviets sent reinforcements to the area expecting to continue the attack the next morning. That never happened, because during the night the LFF, estimating that the force ratio would favor the Soviets, redeployed about twenty kilometers back in their safe area.⁵⁶ The Soviet documentation on this battle is not available to the author. A brief hand-written Soviet report available to the author confirms the fact of the battle but covers neither details nor the Soviet casualties. This operation encompassed typical elements of mobile defense: the LFF maneuvered throughout multiple battle positions and traded space in order to inflict casualties to the enemy. After the enemy massed its forces and seized the initiative, the LFF withdrew back to the rear and broke contact with the enemy thus preserving combat power for follow-on operations.

The Kalniškės battle proves that LFF were capable of effectively conducting area defense operations during the phase of active armed resistance. NKVD intelligence

⁵⁶Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 64-66.

estimated one of the LFF camps to be located in the Kalniškės forest on the Southern part of Lithuania. Thus on 16 May 1945 the 220th Border Regiment from the 1st Baltic Front rear guard that was under NKVD control and consisted of about a thousand soldiers surrounded the Kalniškės forest in order to neutralize the LFF camp. The LFF company size unit, consisting of eighty partisans and not being strong enough to attack the Soviets, decided to occupy nearby high ground and prepare for area defense. The high ground provided the LFF with clear fields of fire and favored the defensive operation. The LFF company occupied perimeter defensive positions effectively incorporating machine guns into the fire plan. The Soviets employed World War II tactics conducting four successive frontal assaults. LFF fire was effective in repulsing all four attacks. As NKVD soldiers committed the fifth attack, LFF faced ammunition shortages and heavy losses. Therefore, the LFF decided to split into squad size elements and break through the enemy positions. The LFF lost 44 soldiers in the Kalniškės battle; however, the Soviets' losses were much bigger.⁵⁷ Different sources provide different estimations on how many Soviet soldiers were killed in this battle. Even though official Soviet documents claim that they lost only four soldiers killed and seven wounded, that is unlikely, because the battle lasted for three hours and the LFF managed to repulse four subsequent Soviet frontal attacks. During the first period of LFF armed resistance Soviets tended to minimize their losses in official reports in order to prove to authorities in Moscow that their efforts at destroying LFF armed resistance were effective. According to LFF diaries, as many as 400 Soviet

⁵⁷Aras Lukšas, "Žygdarbis prie Kalniškės," *Lietuvos Žinios* (25 May 2012), http://www.alfa.lt/straipsnis/14632694/Zygdarbis.prie.Kalniskes=2012-05-25_10-10/?pn=1#ixzz1vvObhTGP (accessed 14 July 2012).

soldiers were killed during the battle.⁵⁸ The Authors of publication *The Unknown War. Armed anti-Soviet resistance in Lithuania in 1944-1953* also confirm that number.⁵⁹ The battle near Kalniškės identified that the LFF were capable of conducting area defense operations employing the following principles: denying enemy access to designated key terrain for a specific time thus inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy; choosing the terrain that provides natural lines of resistance and degrading enemy freedom of movement; drawing the enemy into “kill boxes” that enable to inflict heavy casualties by employing an effective fire plan.

LFF formations employed retrograde operations when the Soviets massed towards a specific LFF unit and the force ratio was unfavorable to conduct offensive or defensive operations. Moreover, LFF formations employed retrograde operations usually following both offensive and defensive operations in order to break contact with the enemy and preserve the combat power for future missions. The battle near Paverkniai, Prienai district illustrates one of the retrograde operations conducted by LFF. In the spring of 1945 a company-size LFF unit consisting of 79 partisans received intelligence that division size NKVD formation was approaching into their direction. The LFF company occupied defensive positions at the edge of a nearby forest along the Soviets’ avenue of approach. Once dismounted, Soviet soldiers came as close as ten meters from well camouflaged LFF positions before partisans opened effective automatic and machine gun fire, defeating the enemy’s lead units. After one and a half hours of fighting, the Soviets

⁵⁸Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 72.

⁵⁹Dalia Kuodytė and Rokas Tracevskis, *The Unknown War. Armed anti-Soviet resistance in Lithuania in 1944-1953* (Vilnius: Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, 2006), 23.

initiated envelopment movement. To avoid isolation and envelopment, the LFF company conducted a retrograde operation thus avoiding combat that no longer promised success. While conducting this retrograde the LFF company encountered one more NKVD unit and a division reserve, but managed to defeat both of them, capturing a considerable amount of ammunition. During this battle 11 partisans were killed while the Soviets sustained 94 casualties.⁶⁰ Even though the above described situation did not favor a defense, LFF still resisted, exhausted, and inflicted damage to the enemy. But most importantly, LFF managed to preserve its forces, repositioning elsewhere to be used in other missions. However, some LFF retrograde operations during the first phase of armed resistance were disorganized causing heavy casualties to the LFF. The main reason causing unorganized retrograde was the lack of military knowledge and combat experience. This reason became irrelevant as LFF matured and gained invaluable combat experience. Although the life expectancy of partisans was as short as one year, the surviving LFF shared their experience with new colleagues thus ensuring continuity and improving LFF tactics.

Once the LFF had a suitable force ratio, they did not avoid conducting offensive operations in order to disrupt Soviet activities, seize their resources and protect the Lithuanian population against harsh Soviet actions. However, these operations were limited in terms of time and size of troops involved. Surprise, tempo, and audacity were the main characteristics of LFF offensive operations. As the size of LFF units employed in offensive operations was limited, infiltration was the most effective form of offensive maneuver. The LFF were especially proficient at conducting ambushes and raids. “Just in

⁶⁰Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 70-72.

one Alytus district [Southern Lithuania] as many as 800 ambushes were conducted in 1945.”⁶¹ They incorporated ambushes in both defensive and offensive operations. This type of attack by fire from concealed positions on moving or temporarily halted Soviet troops enabled LFF to minimize their disadvantageous force ratio inflicting heavy casualties on a superior enemy. Raids conducted by the LFF were usually small in scale. They involved swift LFF entries into Soviet controlled territories in order to disrupt Soviet activities and seize resources. During the first phase of armed resistance the LFF used to conduct raids even into big cities. “One of the central Lithuanian territory LFF leaders, Vaitelis, with his unit has conducted numerous successful raids into the second biggest Lithuanian city, Kaunas, even in daytime to disrupt NKVD activities.”⁶²

Offensive operations, even though limited in scale and time, produced good dividends as they hampered Soviet efforts to install the Soviet regime and populate Lithuania with pro-Soviet Russian population. Moreover, successful offensive operations both boosted LFF morale and increased local population’s confidence in LFF thus ensuring continuous support.

Having described LFF performance in defensive and offensive operations during the first phase of LFF armed resistance, the author will also briefly cover LFF actions pertaining to stability operations.

The LFF disrupted the Soviet efforts to conduct communistic stability operations in Lithuania. Soviet primary tasks related to stability operations in Lithuania included establishing a communist government and socialistic economy systems. The LFF

⁶¹Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 30.

⁶²Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 75.

opposed Soviet efforts to establish a communist government system by threatening and neutralizing pro-communist local government members. As a result, some districts lacked communist government authorities for extended periods of time which in turn prevented implementing “five year plans” and other elements of the socialistic economy system.⁶³ The LFF also aimed to disrupt the nationalization of private land in Lithuania, hindering Soviet efforts to establish the “Kolkhoz” system and collectivization.⁶⁴ Moreover, a vast number of LFF actions to disrupt communist stability operations efforts in Lithuania hampered the Sovietization process and forced the Soviets to dedicate more time and resources than they initially expected. LFF armed resistance also minimized immigration of Soviet population into Lithuania. Therefore, Lithuania did not face the critical ethnic Russian minority issue. That enabled Lithuanians to keep pro-Lithuanian feelings which in turn contributed in regaining independence almost half a century later.

The other method adapted by LFF to disrupt the Soviet governance in Lithuania was to disrupt the elections to the Supreme Council of the USSR in 1946. The LFF focused on election disruption efforts in the rural areas they controlled by utilizing the following methods: first, they intensified distribution of the underground press and proclamations encouraging Lithuanians to boycott the elections;⁶⁵ second, several days before the elections, the LFF collected Soviet passports and other documents from the civilian population; third, the night before the elections the LFF destroyed the telephone lines so that Soviet authorities would not be able to communicate; and lastly, the LFF

⁶³Ibid., 75.

⁶⁴Vardys, *The Partisan Movement in Postwar Lithuania*, 513.

⁶⁵Anušaukas, *The Anti-Soviet Resistance in the Baltic States*, 30.

initiated attacks on election facilities to frighten the Soviet authorities, preventing them from forcing the Lithuanian population to vote the next day.⁶⁶ As a result, the LFF greatly hampered the election process. According to LFF calculations, less than 40 percent of Lithuanian population voted on 10 February 1946. However, the Soviets fabricated the results stating that 96 percent of Lithuanian population voted for the Communist candidates.⁶⁷

The LFF disrupted Communistic stability operations in Lithuania not only by military means. It was the objective of LFF to utilize public support encouraging civil disobedience towards the Moscow efforts to establish a communist regime in Lithuania. Moreover, LFF actively conducted inform and influence operations aimed to encourage the population not to recognize the Soviet regime.

During the first phase of armed resistance, LFF employed components of stability operations in order to secure the Lithuanian population from the Soviets robberies and establish civil control. As the eastern front moved westwards, the Soviet troops that lacked discipline often robbed the civilians. In conducting stability operations, the LFF focused “in locations where [Communist] authorities were either helpless or, as was mostly the case, unwilling to restrain civilian gangs or Soviet soldiers from looting farmsteads and attacking their inhabitants.”⁶⁸ Thus, whenever possible, the LFF employed components of stability operations protecting the local population and establishing civil control. “During the first years of the guerrilla war, the partisans would

⁶⁶Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 120.

⁶⁷Ibid., 130.

⁶⁸Vardys, *The Partisan Movement in Postwar Lithuania*, 507.

take provincial towns by storm and hold them for several days to demonstrate the existence of a Lithuanian power”⁶⁹ that could ensure the local population security and civil control thus delegitimizing newly formed local Soviet government.

Although the Soviets again initiated massive deportations of Lithuanian civilians to Siberia in February 1946, the LFF movement did not interdict the deportations process. This decision was mainly influenced by force ratio analysis. As the Soviets massed their forces to assist the deportations process, the LFF would be outnumbered and defeated trying to resist by military means. However, the LFF leadership tried to secure the houses and farms of the deported civilians in order to prevent robbery both by the Soviets and local criminals. The LFF did that by both active and passive means. The active means included installing booby-traps and posting the warning signs so neither civilians nor the Soviets attempted to take possession of departed people’s belongings. The passive means included announcing proclamations to civilians prohibiting them from taking possession of the departed civilians’ inventory without their relatives permissions.⁷⁰ These LFF actions demonstrate their willingness to conduct components of stability operations whenever the situation allowed.

Employ Direct Fires

The LFF took into account the comparison of available firepower before initiating the fight with the Soviet units. As investigation of battles won by LFF shows, the LFF

⁶⁹Kuodytė and Tracevskis, *The Unknown War*, 17.

⁷⁰Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 136-137.

had equal or even greater firepower when initiating the fight during the first phase of armed resistance.

As machine guns were the most effective means of concentrating firepower, the LFF put a major emphasis on thoroughly integrating these weapons into schemes of fire. Occupying camp locations, LFF units positioned machine guns in fortified locations that provided the best fields of fire.⁷¹ The LFF employed machine guns at the lowest level possible to increase small units' firepower.

Having intelligence on possible locations of LFF units, the Soviets often gathered superior forces to encircle and neutralize small LFF units. However, the LFF ability to rapidly shift direct fires and to concentrate on a single spot usually enabled them to breach the Soviet troops' encirclements and withdraw to the safe areas.⁷²

Occupy an Area

During the active armed resistance phase (1944–1946) the LFF controlled substantial parts of Lithuanian territory. Their presence was especially active in rural areas, villages and small towns.⁷³ Partisans controlled villages and small towns at night and in some instances even during day.⁷⁴ However, later during the armed resistance the Soviets increasingly suppressed the LFF and prevented them from controlling extended rural areas.

⁷¹Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 94.

⁷²Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 149.

⁷³Lukšas, *Žygdarbis prie Kalniškės*.

⁷⁴Anušaukas, *The Anti-Soviet Resistance in the Baltic States*, 30.

During the first phase of armed resistance developing military districts defined their areas of operation in order to achieve effective command and control and unity of efforts within assigned areas and avoid fratricide between the LFF units. Each military district assigned areas of operations to subordinate territorial units that further assigned areas of operations to companies and down to platoons.⁷⁵ LFF members usually operated within or close to the areas that they were originally from. In depth knowledge of obstacles, cover and concealment features, observation capabilities, key terrain, and possible Soviet forces' avenues of approach within LFF areas of operation provided the local LFF a great advantage over the Soviet forces. The fact that LFF operated close to civilians they had known for years also contributed gaining trust and support of local population.⁷⁶

LFF units preferred severely restricted terrain (mainly wooded areas, sometimes swamps, etc.) as a place for their command posts, camps, and rest areas, because it offered good cover and concealment. Moreover, severely restricted terrain within the LFF units' areas of operation hampered the Soviet units' freedom of movement. The Soviet forces had to dismount in order to conduct operations in severely restricted terrain; therefore, they lost the advantage of operating as motorized units. The LFF could easily identify the Soviet units' avenues of approach and adapt a scheme of maneuver accordingly to counter the Soviet threat. The Soviets while conducting search operations in severely restricted terrain often found themselves canalized into kill zones where the LFF employed direct fires to destroy the occupiers.

⁷⁵Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 304.

⁷⁶Vanagas, *Daugel krito sūnų Partisanų gretose*, 97.

The battle near Palios [Prienai district] that occurred in August 1945 illustrates the LFF capability to utilize severely restricted terrain within their areas of operation. One of the LFF units operated from a camp that was situated in the Palios swamps. As the NKVD identified the approximate location of the LFF camp, they initiated offensive operations in order to isolate and destroy the camp. After surrounding the Palios swamps, the Soviets conducted several hours-long indirect fire barrages to suppress the LFF within the location of the camp. As the Soviets in small boats approached the location of the camp to complete the destruction of the remaining LFF, the partisans opened effective small arms fire, destroying the boats and inflicting heavy enemy casualties. Severely restricted terrain hampered Soviet freedom of maneuver thus preventing possibility to maneuver from kill-boxes. As a result about 200 Soviet soldiers were killed while partisans lost only 17 fighters.⁷⁷ According to available Soviet documents, this was a small scale operation resulting in 33 LFF killed in action. The documents do not cover data on NKVD troops killed at the battle. However, the author does not further investigate the objectivity of contradicting Lithuanian and Soviet sources, because this does not fit into the scale and purpose of research.

During the initial phase of armed resistance the LFF headquarters and camps' layouts and defense schemes varied in different units. In some locations, the LFF concentrated in large camps in wooded areas. Usually the LFF chose higher elevations for camp locations in order to have better fields of fire.⁷⁸ Foxholes within camps served as fighting positions in case of enemy attack and increased survivability. Observation

⁷⁷Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 66.

⁷⁸Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 94.

posts around camps along with designated quick reaction sections provided protection. Masked foxholes were used as places for camp fires in order to avoid detection by the enemy.⁷⁹ Designated high-readiness guard squads increased camps' protection.⁸⁰

However, camps in severely restricted terrain were not the only locations that LFF operated from during the conflict. In some instances, LFF gathered and operated from trusted civilian supporters farmsteads. In that case the LFF changed farmsteads continuously and employed security of occupied locations in order to avoid being detected by the Soviets.⁸¹

The Didžiosios Kovos territorial unit's headquarters employed the other method occupying areas. The headquarters did not occupy a stationary area. Instead, it constantly changed locations within wooded areas and villages. A dedicated headquarters unit consisting of two platoons totaling 60 partisans followed the mobile headquarters providing protection.⁸²

Intelligence WFF

LFF units employed a surveillance and reconnaissance network based not only on LFF capabilities, but primarily on civilian support to increase the effectiveness of operations and to enhance units' survivability.

⁷⁹Ibid., 26.

⁸⁰Vanagas, *Daugel krito sūnų Partisanų gretose*, 48.

⁸¹Ibid., 245-246.

⁸²Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 37.

Whenever stationary, LFF units established observation posts to gain situational awareness and early warning on Soviet troop movements. The location of observation posts was carefully selected to provide cover and concealment and at the same time good observation capabilities. When stationed in wooded areas, dedicated reconnaissance soldiers preferred positions near the edge of forests at the most likely enemy avenues of approach. At night, observation posts were established close to stationary LFF units while during the daytime the distance from observation posts to LFF units was increased to maximize observation distance and time to react to early warning on enemy actions. Whenever situation allowed, the partisans in observation posts were often rotated to ensure their effectiveness. LFF units after establishing observation posts conducted withdrawal routes reconnaissance in case of Soviet attacks.

Although LFF leadership received intelligence data from subordinate units and disseminated it back to lower echelons,⁸³ the information collected from local population was the primary method collecting intelligence. LFF units were closely familiar with civilian population within their areas of operation. That enabled LFF to heavily rely on public support collecting intelligence. Human intelligence (HUMINT) was the primary tool gathering intelligence on enemy disposition, composition, strength, and activities within a particular area. Designated civilians served as LFF eyes and ears greatly enhancing LFF situational awareness and understanding. A widely developed HUMINT net preserved LFF combat power, because the LFF did not have to be exposed to the enemy while gathering intelligence. Selected civilians without supervision and detailed guidance by LFF actively collected information and fed it to partisans according to

⁸³Vanagas, *Daugel krito sūnų Partisanų gretose*, 416.

developed procedures. Detailed intelligence delivery procedures enabled information delivery in a timely manner. HUMINT proved to be an extremely useful intelligence gathering method due to these factors: (1) it did not require LFF to allocate substantial manpower for intelligence gathering efforts thus enabling to focus scarce manpower resources towards other tasks; (2) it greatly contributed to LFF situational awareness and situational understanding; (3) it enhanced rapid decision-making in critical situations thus enabling the LFF to preserve combat power; and (4) it maximized the effectiveness of LFF operations.

MVD lieutenant-colonel Grigori Stepanovič Burlitski, who participated in defeating the Lithuanian armed resistance and in 1953 escaped to the West stated “Having local population support they [LFF] knew what we were planning; once we mounted our men into trucks for operations against these bandits, they already had information and left their locations, withdrawing into woods.”⁸⁴ This former MVD officer’s statement supports the argument that LFF surveillance and reconnaissance network based on both LFF capabilities and primarily on civilian support was effective during the first phase of armed resistance. The surveillance and reconnaissance network contributed to planning and conduct of LFF operations and enhanced LFF units’ survivability.

⁸⁴Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 327-328.

Fires WFF

As discussed in chapter 3, the author did not analyze fires WFF while analyzing the application of elements of combat power due to the fact that LFF did not possess indirect fire systems. Fires WFF influenced neither LFF nor the Soviets tactics.

Sustainment WFF

Conduct Logistics

Logistics Structure

Even though LFF leadership highly decentralized the execution of logistics operations, each military district headquarters' included sustainment sections that were responsible for coordinating the sustainment of the subordinate units. Although the structure of sustainment organizations slightly differed throughout the military districts, the author will briefly describe Tauras military district sustainment section's structure in order to assist the reader visualizing its typical components and capabilities. Tauras military district sustainment section consisted of the following subsections: supply, equipping, and feeding; transportation and armament (weapons); finance; sanitation; LFF families, political prisoners, and departed people welfare.⁸⁵ These military district sustainment sections sub-sections provided overall guidance and supervision of sustainment within each military district areas of operation.

Transportation

Highly decentralized execution of LFF operations minimized the need for transportation operations. Nevertheless, even though each LFF unit was mainly self-

⁸⁵Ibid., 303.

sustainable, the need for transportation of supplies and other military assets did exist. As LFF did not possess the transportation means and the Soviets hampered LFF freedom of movement, the armed resistance authorities had to develop an innovative approach to conduct transportation operations. Civilian support solved that issue. Trusted civilians were tasked to clandestinely deliver supplies to assigned areas. In order to avoid detection, civilians hid LFF assets in their carts under some hay or other means available. Sometimes civilians took their children on the trip while delivering LFF cargo to minimize the Soviet suspiciousness. On other instances civilian youngsters assisted the partisans delivering packages into designated areas.⁸⁶ Utilizing public support to conduct secret transportation operations proved to be effective method that fulfilled basic LFF transportation requirements.

Supply

Class I (Subsistence). The LFF used two main sources to get subsistence supplies. The preferable source was conducting raids to confiscate food from the Soviet authorities in order to minimize the burden on the local population. However, during the first phase of resistance the main source of food supplies was based on Lithuanian population support. Local populace either provided nearby LFF units with prepared food or provided them with products that LFF used to make meals in the field conditions. Even though the local populace faced increasing poverty due to Soviet government attempts to develop a communist economy system, they still supported the LFF resistance.

⁸⁶Janina Syvokiene, *Life Sacrificed for Motherland. Reminiscences by Antanas Kraujelis's sister, relatives and friends* (Vilnius: UAB Petro ofsetas, 2011), 26.

Class II (Clothing, Individual Equipment). LFF leadership stressed the importance of each LFF wearing a military uniform. Besides the fact that military uniforms better suited combat environment, the LFF also emphasized that wearing uniform was necessary for armed resistance legitimization. The LFF were legal combatants and uniforms had to emphasize that fact. Moreover, “military uniforms and appropriate recognition badges also served as a disciplinary measure.”⁸⁷

The LFF aimed to acquire uniforms of the independent Lithuanian Armed Forces. However, providing uniforms for each LFF was a challenging task under armed resistance environment. Many people held their Lithuanian Armed Forces uniforms from their prior service. They provided uniforms for the LFF if they were not joining the armed resistance themselves. Some of the LFF made the uniforms themselves utilizing civilian help. But some of LFF, however, wore civilian clothes with an approved LFF insignia.⁸⁸

Some of the LFF managed to obtain white camouflage smocks that they wore during winter time to prevent enemy detection and increase survivability. But again, the lack of resources prevented LFF leadership to provide white camouflage for all units.

As the number of LFF increased daily starting in 1944, one of the LFF authorities’ major concerns was to provide them with weapons and ammunition. LFF utilized multiple sources to obtain weapons.

⁸⁷Kuodytė and Tracevskis, *The Unknown War*, 25.

⁸⁸The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, *War After War*, 20.

At the end of World War II Lithuanian self-defense units operating along with German armed forces identified that in the future weapons and ammunition would be of particular importance fighting the Soviets. Therefore, in 1944 when German forces were retreating from Lithuania, Lithuanian self-defense units' commanders coordinated efforts collecting and hiding weapons and ammunition.⁸⁹ There were some instances when retreating German army parachuted intelligence agents into Lithuania. Although these were rare instances, German intelligence agents "admission to the [LFF] ranks had gained for partisan groups valuable access to German supplies of munitions, weapons, and other needed materials."⁹⁰

The other source to obtain weapons for the LFF was to collect them from the Lithuanian population. The population that lived in World War II front areas possessed substantial amounts of various weapons and ammunition that they provided to LFF.⁹¹

The third main source of LFF weapons consisted of weaponry that the LFF captured from the Soviet troops after defeating them on the battlefield. Whenever the situation allowed, partisans would attempt to collect all weapons and ammunition before leaving the battlefield after successful attack.

The LFF were armed with a variety of weapons including; pistols, revolvers, semi-automatic and automatic rifles, pistol-machine guns, and machine guns. These weapons were both of different manufacturers and caliber. Therefore, the vast variety of weapons employed by the LFF caused logistic challenges providing suitable ammunition.

⁸⁹Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 9.

⁹⁰Vardys, *The Partisan Movement in Postwar Lithuania*, 509.

⁹¹Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 11.

However, the LFF continued using various weapons available, because there was simply no possibility to unify weapon systems.

Although obtaining weapons and ammunition challenged the LFF, there is no indications that the shortage of this class of supply had a substantial impact on LFF operations. It neither decisively hampered LFF operations nor impacted and shaped LFF tactics. Nevertheless, harsh LFF living conditions impacted the effectiveness of available weapons. Although LFF emphasized weapons maintenance, moisture and dirt that LFF weapons were constantly exposed to increased weapons malfunction instances which in turn had negative impact during LFF encounters with the enemy.

Class V (Ammunition). As the author has already discussed logistic challenges related with small arms ammunition due to variety of weapons systems within LFF inventory, the researcher provides a short description of LFF utilization of explosives. Explosives except of standard grenades were extremely difficult for LFF to obtain. The Soviets rarely used explosives other than grenades during encounters with LFF, therefore partisans could not capture them after defeating enemy on the battlefield. Moreover, supplies from foreign countries were non-existent. As a result, LFF lacked explosives to maximize effectiveness of assaults and other types of operations. However, as partisans matured and gained combat experience, some learned how to make explosive devices by themselves. In several instances LFF used aviation bombs and antitank mines gathered from the World War II to blow the Soviets vehicles.⁹² However, the use of explosives was infrequent and LFF never incorporated using them into common tactics-techniques and procedures against the Soviets.

⁹²Vanagas, *Daugel krito sūnų Partisanų gretose*, 498.

Provide Personnel Services

Religious Support

The chance of being killed that the LFF faced every day greatly increased the partisans' need for religious support. During the early stages of the resistance LFF attended religious services at the churches and priests' houses. To counter this service, the Soviets increasingly threatened the priests to quit supporting the partisans. The Soviets tried to force priests to collaborate by supporting Soviet efforts to defeat the armed resistance. The Soviets also interrogated the priests with a purpose to gain intelligence on partisans.⁹³ Although the highest Church hierarchy did not openly support armed resistance as a way to re-gain Lithuanian independence,⁹⁴ a number of priests decided to join the armed resistance becoming LFF chaplains. As majority of LFF were religious, chaplains played a major role in keeping up the morale of LFF thus contributing to endurance of armed resistance.

Provide Health Service Support

As during the first phase of armed resistance LFF encountered enemy both on irregular and regular-type warfare, LFF sustained significant casualties and faced their treatment issues. Depending on the injury level and situation, the LFF utilized the following health protection technique: after applying the first aid procedures and immediate lifesaving measures, wounded partisans were evacuated into safe locations for

⁹³Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 12.

⁹⁴Anušaukas, *The Anti-Soviet Resistance in the Baltic States*, 85.

further treatment and recovery. The safe locations included both areas prepared by LFF and clandestine accommodations among civilian population.

Most LFF units had dedicated paramedics. They usually lacked formal medical education, but possessed basic casualty treatment skills. Paramedics usually obtained medicine and tools for first aid procedures from civilian hospitals and pharmacies, even though the Soviets aggressively controlled the flow of this kind of medicine. If a situation allowed, civilian doctors and nurses treated seriously wounded LFF clandestinely.⁹⁵

Sometimes, if the injury was severe and the situation allowed, wounded LFF were accommodated in civilian hospitals by providing them with fake documents and declaring fake origination of injuries. However, the Soviets often interdicted the latter method by inspecting the civilian hospitals and investigating if the wounds of treated patients were not battle-related. Moreover, some of the civilian hospitals had dedicated NKVD members whose duty was to prevent LFF members from being treated in those hospitals.⁹⁶ Thus, the Soviets severely restricted the LFF from using this level of medical treatment.

Although providing health service support was especially challenging due to the lack of trained personnel within LFF formations, scarce medicine and supplies, and Soviets' efforts to prevent LFF using existing civilian medical facilities, the LFF did have a basic health service system that in most cases ensured basic treatment for wounded partisans.

⁹⁵Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 52-53.

⁹⁶Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 137.

Employ Safety Techniques

LFF employed a vast variety of safety techniques in order to survive against the Soviet security forces' actions targeted to suppress and neutralize the LFF armed resistance. However, as LFF lacked military knowledge and experience while initiating the armed resistance, gaining the experience to employ these safety techniques cost a lot of LFF casualties. As the armed resistance progressed, LFF developed and commonly used numerous safety techniques. Limited scope of the research prevents describing majority of these techniques; however, the following are some basic safety techniques:

1. The LFF preferred to operate in small groups in order to avoid detection by the enemy. They task-organized into bigger formations (up to 200 partisans) only for the period to conduct specific missions.⁹⁷ Once an outnumbering enemy attack was imminent and situation permitted, they dispersed into small groups and gathered again in a new designated area.
2. Whenever possible LFF chose wooded areas to increase cover and concealment while moving. They also avoided major and side roads that posed the threat of being detected by the Soviet soldiers. Moreover, LFF tended to move during cover of darkness to increase concealment effectiveness.
3. LFF units masked their footprints by all means possible to avoid detection by enemy. In the winter time the last men in a unit's column used tree branches to destroy their footprints. The LFF took advantage of periods when it snowed, maximizing necessary movement, because the snowflakes masked their

⁹⁷Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 34.

footprints. Special device attached to LFF feet imitated the footprints of hare thus masking LFF footprints on snow. Whenever retreating partisans identified that the Soviets would use dogs to chase them, the LFF poured some oil or tobacco on their shoes so dogs would not smell their footprints. Crossing rivers and creeks while retreating was another way of hiding their footprints.

4. When crossing unpaved roads, an LFF unit used the same footprints. This technique prevented Soviet units from identifying LFF march routes and the number of LFF using them. An LFF unit walked backwards while crossing some of the unpaved roads along the march route. That confused the enemy while trying to pursue partisans.⁹⁸ LFF also put their foot straight from above in order to avoid large footprints on the grass and to prevent the enemy from identifying the direction of their movement.⁹⁹

5. While visiting subordinate units, the LFF leadership used a variety of techniques to minimize the risk of being detected and neutralized by the enemy. Dedicated partisans escorted the leadership in order to protect them. Usually subordinate units' representatives escorted the leadership throughout their areas of responsibility to increase protection and take advantage of their good knowledge of the terrain, thus enabling them to avoid detection by the enemy. The Didžiosios Kovos military district headquarters' employed an especially unique technique while visiting the subordinate units. The military district headquarters, accompanied by a protection unit, moved around two

⁹⁸Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 81.

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, 230.

circles. Seven rest areas and four control lines were established within the small circle. Reconnaissance units along with observation posts contributed to situational awareness. Whenever the enemy increased activities within the “small circle,” the headquarters started to move around the “big circle” thus avoiding detection by the Soviet units. The headquarters did not stay in one particular place for more than three days to avoid detection.¹⁰⁰

6. As the Soviets identified that LFF were dependent on population support and every so often visit civilians to gain information and support, the Soviets employed provocative actions to gather intelligence on LFF activities within a particular region. One of the techniques was to pretend to be partisans while visiting civilians with a purpose to gather intelligence on LFF members. In order to counter these Soviet provocations LFF authorities ordered subordinates to be escorted by at least one partisan who was known to the civilians while visiting them. That increased LFF survivability in the regions where the LFF used this safety technique.¹⁰¹

7. Soviets identified that the majority of partisans tend to visit their families during the most important religious holy days of the year. The Soviets used these opportunities to kill or capture partisans. Therefore, LFF authorities passed a regulation forbidding LFF members from visiting their families during these holidays. This safety technique saved numerous LFF lives.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 43.

¹⁰¹Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 111.

¹⁰²*Ibid.*, 99.

Implement Operations Security

Besides of learning the employment of safety techniques, increasing LFF casualties during the first armed resistance phase necessitated the development and implementation of operations security measures. The development of operations security measures had to enable LFF to avoid detection, disintegration, and destruction by the Soviets. The most commonly used operation security measures included the following:

1. Using code names. Every partisan had a code name to increase the organization's survivability and protect their families and supporters from Soviet reprisals. Using code names complicated Soviets' efforts identifying and nesting LFF which made it difficult to locate and target the partisans. LFF code names also safeguarded LFF family members because the Soviets could not identify LFF relationships with their families. Once receiving information that the Soviets might have identified their personalities, partisans changed their code names thus further hampering enemy targeting process.¹⁰³ As armed resistance matured, some partisans used different code names among civilian population, among fellow partisans, signing documents, etc. Using different and frequently changing code names enabled partisans to further increase operations security.
2. Using code words. LFF units used a variety of code words to increase operations security and avoid fratricide. Code words were used sending messages, communicating among LFF, setting camps' passwords, etc. LFF

¹⁰³Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 94.

avoided using the same code words for extended periods of time. As a rule they changed passwords daily.

3. The LFF leadership forbade single LFF to seek or provide unit contacts and other information with non-organic neighboring units unless specifically ordered. Coordination with neighboring units was retained at leadership level in order to avoid LFF unintentionally giving information to the secret Soviet agents or civilians supportive to the Soviets thus endangering operations security.¹⁰⁴
4. Although during the first phase of armed resistance LFF family members and relatives usually knew LFF units' camp locations, the LFF leadership later forbade partisans from disclosing this information in order to increase operations security. Only selected civilians who served as liaison-messengers, intelligence collectors, and sustenance providers were granted information on exact LFF camp locations.
5. The Soviets as early as in the beginning of 1945 initiated provocation actions targeted to discredit the LFF movement among the local population and to disrupt LFF operations by infiltrating their agents into the movement. NKVD units dressed up as partisans killed Soviet authorities who were helping the local population. By doing that, the NKVD aimed to cut off local population support to LFF. Moreover, NKVD units while conducting provocation operations identified partisans' supporters from local population. After conducting provocation operations NKVD units used torture, repression, and

¹⁰⁴Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 307.

murder of partisan supporters thus degrading local population support to LFF.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, the LFF tried to apply operations security measures to minimize the impact of the Soviet provocation actions. These measures included avoiding contact with unknown partisan units, educating civilians to avoid negotiations with unknown partisans, warning local supporters and neighboring LFF units about Soviets' provocative actions within a particular area, etc.

6. The ultimate operations security measure was to avoid detention by the Soviets by any means. The Soviets employed extremely harsh interrogation techniques towards detained partisans. Beating partisans until they lost consciousness, starving prisoners, threatening to kill family members, denying rest or sleep for extended periods of time so detainees would lose his concentration were common interrogation techniques. The LFF knew that well; therefore, if the situation did not allow the LFF to escape and detention was inevitable, partisans tended to kill themselves instead of surrendering to the Soviets. While killing themselves, LFF tended to destroy their faces so the Soviets would not identify them.¹⁰⁶ Before killing themselves partisans tried to destroy documents in order to prevent enemy access to them thus increasing operations security.¹⁰⁷ Partisan willingness to die rather than be captured contributed to

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 75.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 168.

¹⁰⁷Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 97.

the LFF operations security, preventing the Soviets from gaining valuable information on LFF movement employing harsh interrogations.

Conduct Law and Order Operations

After occupying Lithuania in 1944, a number of undisciplined Soviet commanders and soldiers robbed Lithuanian civilians across the country. They aimed for food, alcohol, clothes, and any small valuable items they could carry.¹⁰⁸ The LFF invested extensive efforts trying to prevent Soviets from robbing the Lithuanian citizens. Whenever the LFF had intelligence and a force ratio that favored them, the LFF disrupted Soviet attempts to rob the population. That was important for two main reasons. First, it increased public support towards LFF. Second, as the LFF were dependent on public support for class I supplies (subsistence) it prevented further impoverishment of the society by the Soviets.

Some military districts established court martial systems to regulate punishment of Soviets and Lithuanian citizens who collaborated with the enemy. There were instances when LFF themselves were court-martialed and sentenced to death due to robbing local population, killing innocent people, or misusing the court martial system.¹⁰⁹

Whenever possible, LFF tried to capture the Soviets and suspected collaborators alive in order to conduct courts martial. Before sentencing and punishing the suspected people, LFF tried to gather as much evidence as possible. The wartime situation, however, prevented LFF from employing the procedures which would be preferred

¹⁰⁸Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 90.

¹⁰⁹Vanagas, *Daugel krito sūnų Partisanų gretose*, 320.

during normal circumstances. Nevertheless, the LFF court martial system served as a tool to maximize transparency of armed resistance and minimize potential casualties of innocent people. The system also helped maintaining LFF as a legitimate power in the eyes of civilian population.

Conduct Survivability Operations

When occupying camps, LFF dug foxholes, bunkers and established a flexible fires plan to increase units' survivability.¹¹⁰ Although during the first phase of armed resistance bunkers played only a minor role in ensuring LFF survivability, during later phases employment of bunkers became critical factor of LFF survivability. The author will describe the bunker system in detail when analyzing the second armed resistance period. Early in the first phase of resistance, LFF used bunkers to hide documents and other important materiel and to increase partisans' protection from enemy direct fire.¹¹¹ However, the structure of bunkers was simple and yet to be developed during the later phases of armed resistance to provide higher degree of survivability.

Analysis of Performance

The first period of LFF armed resistance to the Soviets was unique in terms of tactics employed by the LFF. As units reached their peaks in terms of numbers of soldiers, they employed a combination of both irregular and regular warfare fighting the soviets. Although vast majority of LFF lacked formal military training and experience, numerous battles conducted in that period illustrate LFF capability to conduct decisive

¹¹⁰Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 94.

¹¹¹*Ibid.*, 100.

operations through the simultaneous combination of all three types of operations: defensive, offensive, and stability.

However, the combination of irregular and regular warfare adapted by the LFF during the first phase of the armed resistance proved unsuitable to achieve the end state of armed resistance—that is to regain Lithuania’s independence. The cost of this type of warfare was high “about 10,000 partisans were killed.”¹¹² Even though the LFF managed to inflict significant casualties on the Soviet military as well as civilian communist activists that proved to be irrelevant. According to USSR estimations in 1946 alone LFF carried out as many as 1,840 attacks inflicting 2,262 casualties.¹¹³ However, the Soviet population, as oppose to current Western countries’ populations, was not sensitive to heavy casualties in order to achieve political aims. The Soviet public will was not a factor limiting communists’ political aims. The Soviet dictatorship authorized increasing efforts to suppress and neutralize LFF armed resistance. Growing numbers of Soviet security troops were dedicated to solving this issue, and in May 1946 the Soviets surged security units to destroy LFF armed resistance in Lithuania. Therefore, even though the LFF employed a combination of regular and irregular warfare during the first phase of armed resistance, the Soviets’ increasing efforts in terms of manpower dedicated to suppress Lithuanian armed resistance prevented LFF from achieving its end state.

Nevertheless, one should take into account that LFF decision to employ regular-type tactics as a part of warfare to achieve the end state was based on the assumption that

¹¹²The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, *War After War*, 2.

¹¹³Anušaukas, *The Anti-Soviet Resistance in the Baltic States*, 65.

the Western countries would interfere and assist in defeating the expanding Soviet regime.¹¹⁴ However, after the first several years of resistance to the Soviets, it became apparent that the Western countries, devastated after World War II, were not interested in another conflict, especially against the Soviet Union. Therefore, in 1946 after two years of actively resisting the Soviets by a combination of irregular and regular warfare while sustaining heavy casualties, the LFF changed their approach and continued the armed resistance employing a less open form of resistance.

LFF Tactics in the Unconventional Armed Resistance Phase
(May 1946–November 1948)

Leadership

Despite the fact that during the second phase of resistance the Soviets increasingly suppressed the LFF, its leadership continued to influence members of the resistance by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to carry on resistance to reach the end state—that is, to re-gain Lithuanian independence.

Although armed resistance and moving throughout the areas of operation posed increasing danger, the LFF leadership continued to emphasize the importance of visiting the subordinate units “in order to consult, stress the discipline issues, and inspire partisans to fight.”¹¹⁵ The LFF leadership’s continuous presence among troops instilled the sense of purpose and motivated the partisans while providing direction to adapt resistance tactics and methods in order to continue fighting against superior enemy.

¹¹⁴Vardys, *The Partisan Movement in Postwar Lithuania*, 515.

¹¹⁵Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 77.

While directing the resistance, the LFF leadership emphasized the importance of military discipline and a just conduct of armed conflict. Even though the Soviets escalated violence by torturing captured LFF members, suppressing LFF family members and other non-combatants, committing war crimes on behalf of LFF thus trying to cut off local populace support towards the armed resistance, etc., the LFF leadership managed to prevent escalation of LFF violence. The LFF leadership demanded that each partisan obey existing regulations. A Partisan Criminal Statute served as a tool regulating punishment procedures of the Soviet authorities and local collaborators when they committed a crime. It clearly stated under what conditions and how the Soviet authorities and civilians collaborating with them had to be prosecuted and what type of punishment could be adapted.¹¹⁶ Thus the LFF leadership demanded absolute adherence to discipline and regulations on military conduct, preventing unnecessary casualties and minimized the amount of LFF violence. In turn, the LFF ability to direct and control the movement also enabled armed resistance to remain legitimate in the eyes of population which ensured continues support.

However, during the second phase of armed resistance increasing Soviet efforts to destroy the LFF provided substantial results. The Soviets managed to discover and neutralize more and more LFF leaders. Nevertheless, the LFF leadership demonstrated a unique motivation and ability to restore command and control. For example, in early 1947 after obtaining information on the Kęstutis military district commander's bunker location, the Soviets besieged the bunker, killing and capturing the commander along with his subordinates. However, shortly after this event the Kęstutis military district staff

¹¹⁶Anušaukas, *The Anti-Soviet Resistance in the Baltic States*, 33.

organized a meeting of subordinate territorial units commanders and designated one of these commanders to assume military district commander's position. Subsequently, a new chain of command was established ensuring uninterrupted command and control of Kęstutis military district.¹¹⁷ As newly assigned LFF commanders had gained substantial experience fighting the Soviets, they progressed through leadership positions, replacing killed commanders they continued effectively leading partisans and prevented the Soviets from gradually disintegrating LFF by targeting key leaders. Even though the Soviets increasingly targeted the LFF leadership in order to disrupt LFF units' command and control during the second phase of armed resistance, the LFF leadership demonstrated flexibility, re-assigning key commanders and thus restoring uninterrupted command and control and preventing the Soviets from disintegrating the armed resistance.

Information

During the second phase of armed resistance the LFF senior leadership continued to emphasize the importance of sharing information among subordinate, higher, and neighboring units in order to coordinate actions and achieve unity of effort. Even though the Soviets severely restricted LFF freedom of movement, LFF top leadership from different military districts conducted a number of meetings to share the information and discuss the unification possibilities. These meetings enabled the de facto unification of LFF units into three military regions.

At the end of second resistance phase increasingly active and effective Soviet units hampered LFF possibilities to organize routine meetings among military regions'

¹¹⁷Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 97.

commanders to share information and approve the developing documents and regulations. Therefore, the Supreme Partisan commander, Jonas Žemaitis, employed liaison-messengers to send official documents and related information to subordinate commanders for approval, remarks, and situational awareness.¹¹⁸ This method of information circulation served as a tool to continue sharing timely information when organizing routine meetings became increasingly challenging.

The LFF emphasized that gaining international support was essential to continue the resistance and gradually achieve the end state. But in order to attract the Western countries attention to the Lithuanian struggle for independence, the LFF had first to inform them on the situation behind the Iron Curtain. The author described in detail the LFF infiltration operations later in this chapter; however, the fact that the LFF leadership ordered extremely risky operations to breach the Iron Curtain into the Western countries demonstrates their appreciation of the information domain conducting the armed resistance.

Mission Command WFF

Develop LFF Units' Structure

Although surge operations that the Soviets employed in 1946 suppressed the LFF movement, the LFF military districts' leadership still continued unifying the movement under one superior headquarters in order to orchestrate the armed resistance more effectively. Thus, during the second phase of armed resistance, two additional military districts were established: Algimanto (May 1947-November 1950) and Prisikėlimo (April

¹¹⁸Ibid., 100.

1948-June 1952).¹¹⁹ Moreover, in 1946 the Supreme Headquarters of the Armed Partisans was established in Vilnius, the capital city of Lithuania, with the aim of leading the armed resistance. Members from all the military districts formed the headquarters. At the end of 1946 the headquarters passed an order that divided Lithuanian territory into three LFF military regions' areas of operations and appointed commanders for each of the military regions.¹²⁰ But the actual LFF military districts' unification into military regions was still ahead. The Soviets' counterintelligence infiltrated an agent who managed to assume critical positions within the Supreme Headquarters of the Armed Partisans and shaped its decisions into the Soviets' favor. The agent was close to disorganizing and destroying the overall armed resistance before the LFF found out about his intentions. The superior headquarters members' organizational skills enabled them to avoid the destruction of LFF leadership and re-orient armed resistance activities.

On 12 January 1947, the majority of military districts' commanders managed to attend a meeting to discuss the situation and way ahead indicating LFF's continues unification efforts.¹²¹ Throughout 1947, LFF military districts' commanders further tried to unify their efforts to resist the Soviets. According to the Joint Kęstutis military district commander, "The unification of LFF military regions is necessary for coordination of actions and closer cooperation. . . . In case of neutralization of the Supreme Headquarters of the Armed Partisans, the headquarters of military regions would serve as a backbone

¹¹⁹Anušaukas, *The Anti-Soviet Resistance in the Baltic States*, 29.

¹²⁰Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 66.

¹²¹*Ibid.*, 70.

of follow-on resistance providing command and control.”¹²² But the same Soviet agent who disrupted the Supreme Headquarters of the Armed Partisans activities further hampered the LFF unification efforts.

Nevertheless, in May 1948 the military districts’ commanders from West Lithuania established the Western Lithuanian military region, called Jūra (Sea). Jonas Žemaitis was elected to command the military region. He further was actively involved in establishing the overall command and control structure of LFF armed resistance and in November 1948, during the meeting of Western and Eastern LFF military regions’ delegates, he was elected as Supreme Partisan commander. He was also commissioned to act as the provisional chairman of the Movement of Common Democratic Resistance (the political body of armed resistance). During the same meeting the Western and Eastern LFF military regions’ representatives elected the Supreme Partisan headquarters’ chief of staff and chief of Civil-Military department who formed the heart of Supreme Partisan command.¹²³

The Southern military region was established in October 1948. Therefore, despite of heavy losses, LFF leaders further unified the movement and before the end of 1948 three military regions, encompassing all Lithuanian territory, were “de facto” functioning. Moreover, the LFF achieved substantial progress in unifying military regions into an overall Supreme Partisan chain of command that would orchestrate the LFF armed resistance. LFF senior commanders’ activities throughout the second phase of

¹²²Ibid., 98.

¹²³Ibid., 99.

armed resistance indicate the LFF leadership's dedication and ability to unify LFF movement and to coordinate LFF activities throughout the country.

Conduct Training and Education

Although an increasing number of Soviet troops continued to suppress the LFF armed resistance, the LFF leadership, realizing the importance of developing LFF ability to fight, continued LFF training and education whenever the situation allowed. This argument can be supported by the fact that despite being suppressed by the Soviets, the Tauras military district leadership managed to organize the warrant officers' course in the summer of 1947. Participants were delegated from units throughout the military district and formed a company sized training element. The Tauras military district commander himself was an officer scheduling and conducting the course. The course included both tactics exercises and theoretical instructions.¹²⁴ The rest of LFF units throughout the country also conducted various albeit smaller in size training exercises and education of LFF to increase fighting proficiency and efficiency.

Conduct Assessment

During the second phase of armed resistance the LFF continued to apply both informal and formal assessment processes in order to evaluate performance, resistance methods, and tactics. Just as in the first phase, the overarching purpose of the assessment was to ensure that the resistance movement remained effective and adaptive to effectively confront the superior enemy.

¹²⁴Ibid., 76.

A formal assessment meeting, organized in the summer of 1947 by the Tauras military district commander, identified how important the assessment process was to the LFF leadership. During the first part of the meeting each subordinate commander had to critically evaluate his colleagues and provide feedback on their performance in the absence of the commander being evaluated. After collective evaluation, the military district commander summarized the evaluation results and presented them to each of the commanders and staff members. As a result of the evaluation, one of the territorial units' commanders received a negative assessment report and was released from position due to his leadership deficiencies and poor performance. After the evaluation process, the military district's commander initiated discussion on ways to improve the district's organization and specific procedures. Then the commander provided his guidance for follow-on resistance methods and tactics.¹²⁵ This particular example of critical assessment of LFF leadership's and military district's overall performance demonstrates that LFF was a learning organization eager to identify existing deficiencies and implement change in order to make resistance constantly adaptive and increasingly more effective fighting the superior enemy.

Conduct Inform and Influence Activities

As the LFF leaders established a solid foundation to inform and influence operations in the first phase of armed resistance, during the second armed resistance phase they continued to emphasize the importance of these operations by allocating increasing resources.

¹²⁵Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 246-247.

Each military district headquarters throughout Lithuania had organic information, press and information, or military information support operations sections. Each military district constantly published at least one title of periodic publication. There were over seventy titles of periodic underground LFF press in that period.¹²⁶

During the second phase of armed resistance the LFF underground press continued to counter Soviet newspapers' misinformation and propaganda. It also informed the populace on international events, instilled national pride and identity, and encouraged public disobedience to Soviet rule. Besides periodicals, the LFF also published collections of poetry, songs, prayer books, and proclamations to the population,¹²⁷ all of which still served the same purpose--to conduct inform and influence activities thus contributing to overall LFF resistance lines of effort.

LFF also conducted inform and influence activities to counter the Soviets' stability operations efforts. On 9 February 1947, the Soviets organized elections for the Lithuanian Supreme Council. The LFF opposed these elections, but in a different way than in 1946. This time the LFF employed a passive election disruption method, mainly focusing on conducting inform and influence activities to encourage the population to boycott the elections. However, the Soviets having learned from the previous elections when the LFF disrupted the elections process, employed armed units to force people to vote and protect the pro-Soviet authorities in the election stations. Even though the

¹²⁶Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 110.

¹²⁷The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, *War After War*, 26.

majority of population avoided participating in the elections, the Soviets fabricated the results and declared that 96 percent of the population had voted for the communists.¹²⁸

During the second phase of armed resistance increasing numbers of Russian colonists settled down in Lithuania to assume the Soviet governmental duties. The LFF therefore intensified inform and influence operations targeted towards the newcomers. Besides oral warnings to leave the country, the LFF also provided written announcements. In some instances the LFF published newspapers in the Russian language to facilitate reaching the target audience.¹²⁹ Sometimes inform and influence activities did not provide the desired results and as discussed latter in this chapter limited offensive operations had to be initiated. Nevertheless, active employment of inform and influence operations proved that the LFF managed to balance both kinetic and non-kinetic means to achieve a synergetic effect on the enemy.

Install, Operate, and Maintain the Network

During the second phase of armed resistance, the LFF continued to rely on the liaison-messengers system as primary means of communication. Experience gained in this field enabled LFF to further develop this communication system and make it more robust. Each time the Soviets discovered a communication point or a liaison-messenger, “LFF enhanced the liaison-messengers system. They changed communications-

¹²⁸Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 185.

¹²⁹Anušaukas, *The Anti-Soviet Resistance in the Baltic States*, 33.

messengers and communication points' code names, passwords and introduced a message coding system.”¹³⁰

Movement and Maneuver WFF

Deploy-Infiltrate

The LFF leadership saw the infiltration of its members into the Western countries of strategic importance, because these operations could set the conditions to gain materiel support and attract Western countries' attention to Lithuania's struggle against the communist regime.¹³¹ Therefore, the author analyzed the LFF infiltration operations into the Western countries in more details.

Even though LFF initiated Lithuanian-Polish border crossing operations during the first phase of armed resistance, the most important infiltration operations were conducted during the second phase of armed resistance. Thus, for clarity reasons the author will describe both initial border crossing operations and infiltration operations conducted during the second armed resistance phase in this part of research.

After the second Lithuanian occupation the Soviets put increasing efforts on securing Lithuanian-Polish border. Nonetheless, during the first phase of resistance the LFF managed to conduct border crossing operations with comparative ease. The Western part of the Tauras military district area of operations ended at the Lithuanian-Polish border. The military district leadership infiltrated platoon sized elements into area of nearby towns in Polish territory. The platoon mission was to contact Lithuanians living in

¹³⁰Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 94.

¹³¹The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, *War After War*, 24.

Poland and the Polish national underground. One of the military district's companies operated in the Lithuanian-Polish border area providing escort through the border. Two platoons of this company operated on the Lithuanian side of the border while the third platoon was positioned in the Polish territory.¹³² However, because the LFF leadership did not have consolidated tasks for infiltrated personnel during the first phase of resistance, these operations did not provide decisive results informing the Western countries about the situation in Lithuania.

In 1947 the LFF leadership decided to infiltrate LFF representatives into Western European countries with the purpose of restoring contacts with the West.¹³³ At that period the Soviets had greatly improved border security in order to prevent Lithuanians fleeing to the Western countries. Nevertheless, in May 1947 LFF representatives managed to clandestinely breach the border. The infiltration unit consisted of the breaching group (five partisans) and support group (ten local partisans). The support group's task was to escort the breaching group up to the border and support by fire in case a Soviet border patrol noticed the breaching group. However, superior intelligence gathering skills and small unit tactics enabled the LFF to breach the border without direct contact with border security. Neither Soviet border patrols nor observation posts noticed well camouflaged and prepared partisans.¹³⁴ The LFF contacted Lithuanian representatives in Poland who further contacted the Western countries promoting the question of Lithuanian independence. As Lithuanian representatives abroad promised the infiltration group that

¹³²Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 70.

¹³³*Ibid.*

¹³⁴Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 210.

they would seek material assistance from the Western countries and provide it to the LFF, the infiltration group established transportation of material support through Polish–Lithuanian border procedures. A well trained platoon size LFF element had to be deployed into border area in Poland in order to clandestinely transport the goods into Lithuania.¹³⁵ The Soviet border control detected the LFF representatives while they were infiltrating back to Lithuania. Only well-developed soldiering skills enabled the LFF representatives to fight their way back to Lithuania and retrograde from the Soviets, who chased the partisans about 20 kilometers deep into Lithuanian territory. This border crossing operation demonstrated the LFF ability to conduct complicated infiltration operations. Small unit tactics employing thorough reconnaissance and fire and maneuver were the key to success.

LFF representatives, including partisan Juozas Lukša who also participated in the above mentioned infiltration, conducted the other infiltration operation to the West in December of 1947. The operation was aimed at the following tasks: to contact the leadership of the Supreme Lithuanian Freedom Committee (i.e. the resistance political body abroad); to provide Lithuanian communities abroad with written materiel concerning the occupation of Lithuania and LFF armed resistance; to forward the Lithuanian Catholics' letter to the Pope; and to contact the Western countries' intelligence services.¹³⁶ Achieving these tasks had to serve the broader purpose of infiltration operations, which was to gain international assistance fighting the Soviets and

¹³⁵Ibid., 382.

¹³⁶Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 80.

provide situational awareness to the West about the active armed resistance against the Communist regime in Lithuania.

Again, the infiltration group employed small unit tactics, heavily relying on detailed planning and reconnaissance. Although the LFF team demonstrated superior skills conducting movement and maneuver, three of its members were killed crossing the border. Both Russian and Polish border guards chased the remaining three partisans into Polish territory for the next several days. Nevertheless, sophisticated soldiering and survival in extreme situations skills enabled partisans to breach the Iron curtain and accomplish the above mentioned infiltration operation tasks. The purpose of the infiltration operations, however, was not achieved due to non-military related circumstances that are not a subject of this research and therefore are not covered in detail. Later the LFF representatives separated. In Sweden, a partisan called “Mažytis” [The Little] gained knowledge working with coded radio equipment and breached the Iron Curtain back to Lithuania in 1949. In order to further deepen valuable military knowledge to fight the Soviets, the other partisan Juozas Lukša attended reconnaissance school in France and then American reconnaissance courses in Western Germany.¹³⁷ He along with two other LFF were parachuted back into Lithuania in 1950 to continue the fight for freedom.

The infiltration operations mentioned above were not the only ones during the resistance period. So the LFF did succeed in breaching the Iron Curtain and informing the world about the Lithuanian struggle for independence. However, as discussed later in chapter 4, although this objective was reached, it did not provide the LFF movement with

¹³⁷Ibid., 84.

direct dividends--the Western countries neither intervened in the armed resistance, setting preconditions to regain Lithuanian independence, nor provided materiel support to the LFF. "Western countries took interest in Lithuania's affairs only to the extent that their special services were eager to find out the number of soldiers in the Soviet army, the distribution of its military garrisons and so on."¹³⁸

Move

As the LFF matured, they learned to employ various combat formations whenever they expected to encounter the enemy. Each tactical formation was used depending on LFF unit size, the terrain, and enemy size. In order to stay undetected and still maintain 360 degree observation and crossing fields of fire, LFF often chose single or double column formation. When encountering the enemy was likely, but their exact disposition was unknown, the LFF employed a triangle formation in order to maximize fields of fire in all possible directions.¹³⁹ When moving under enemy fire, LFF tended to split into smaller groups. While one group was maneuvering, the other was supporting by fire. This method increased LFF survivability while moving under direct enemy fire.¹⁴⁰

Maneuver

Whereas during the first phase of armed resistance the LFF employed a combination of both irregular and regular warfare, during the second phase of armed

¹³⁸The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, *War After War*, 24.

¹³⁹Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 222.

¹⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 219.

resistance LFF avoided directly engaging with the Soviet military and concentrated on irregular-type tactics. LFF employed mainly covert small scale actions targeting Soviet authorities. A typical small scale action occurred in Marijampolė town (South-Western Lithuania) in the beginning of 1947 when during a fake engagement party one of the partisans acting as a Soviet supporter killed five Bolshevik activists.¹⁴¹ The operation was deliberately planned and perfectly executed. These operations did not occur often, but they represented the LFF shift towards irregular-type tactics.

During the second phase of resistance the LFF avoided direct contact with the enemy under unfavorable conditions. If attacked by the enemy while not in bunkers and not being able to disengage, LFF tactics were to find the weakest point in the enemy offensive formation and penetrate it, inflict as many casualties as possible and withdraw into safe locations before the enemy committed reinforcements.¹⁴² These tactics enabled LFF to avoid massive casualties thus preserving combat power for prolonged resistance against the Soviets. Whenever penetrating the Soviet encirclements and withdrawing to safe locations was impossible, LFF never surrendered and fought in the defense until the last man in order to inflict as many casualties to the Soviets as possible. Six Tauras military district partisans, after being surrounded by several hundred Soviet soldiers in a farmstead, demonstrated superior capability fighting a defensive battle and managed to kill 67 Soviets before lack of ammunition caused their defeat.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹Ibid., 167.

¹⁴²Ibid., 262.

¹⁴³Ibid., 265-266.

Although an increasing number of Soviet security forces suppressed LFF actions in the second phase of armed resistance, the LFF still conducted limited offensive operations which they adapted to irregular-type tactics. Whereas during the first phase of armed resistance the LFF offensive operations were larger in scale, LFF increasingly reduced the scale of offensive operations as the second phase of armed resistance progressed.

In 1946 the Tauras military district commander ordered territorial units' commanders to conduct raids on Bolshevik strong points within their areas of operation in order to demoralize "Destroyers - Itribitely" - Lithuanian origin supporters of the NKGB units. After the successful raids, military information support operations proceeded, coercing the "Destroyers" to quit supporting the Soviet units. The raids in the Tauras military district were successful in destroying three Soviet units' strongpoints. As a result, "Destroyers" support to the Soviet efforts was marginally reduced.¹⁴⁴

Offensive operations were also aimed to prevent the Russian colonists from settling down in Lithuania. Even though Communist authorities welcomed Russian citizens to settle in Lithuania by providing various economic privileges, LFF throughout the country threatened newcomers by both non-kinetic and kinetic means. Most often before attacking the Russian colonialists the LFF employed military information support operations (MISO) to influence newcomers to leave the country. When military information support operations did not achieve the desired results, the LFF directed offensive operations against newcomers. An LFF operation conducted on 16 November 1947 illustrates this type of offensive operations. A group of 35 Russian colonists settled

¹⁴⁴Ibid., 167.

in Obštūrai village (South-Eastern Lithuania–Tauras military district area of operations), where NKVD authorities provided them with small arms and machine guns for protection. After receiving multiple warnings from the LFF to abandon the village, the newcomers ignored them. Thus Tauras military district partisans decided to use lethal means and to task a 70 men element to attack the village.¹⁴⁵ Several days before an attack on the village, LFF attacked Communists in a nearby village in order to attract the enemy's attention to that area as a part of deception plan. When local MGB and MVD units focused their attention towards the recently assaulted object, the LFF established a cordon around the Obštūrai village in order to isolate it and attacked the village by eight assault groups. The purpose of the attack was to disarm the newcomers and force them to leave the country within a month. As communists defended the village employing small arms and machine guns, LFF had to neutralized twenty four colonists before the rest of them surrendered. After seizing the village, assault groups disseminated proclamations to leave the country and withdrew back. The surviving colonists did not wait until the deadline and left Lithuania the next morning.¹⁴⁶ Although such large scale offensive operations during the second resistance phase were rare, the LFF continuously conducted smaller-scale offensives throughout the country impeding newcomers from occupying Lithuania. Such offensive operations contributed to LFF efforts to fight the Sovietization process.

¹⁴⁵Anušaukas, *The Anti-Soviet Resistance in the Baltic States*, 33.

¹⁴⁶Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 274-275.

As the LFF matured and shifted towards irregular-type tactics, ambushes became increasingly preferred form of LFF offensive operations. The next two examples describe LFF ability to employ ambushes as offensive actions.

During the second phase of resistance Communists further intensified efforts to force population to join the collective farms. People who still possessed private land were assigned double duties and increased taxes. The LFF, realizing that these communists' efforts were directly linked with cutting of wealthier population support to LFF, targeted Soviet finance inspectors and supply officials. Once they travelled with armed escorts to register the crops and livestock of private farmers, LFF units ambushed them thus hampering the confiscation of farmers' property.¹⁴⁷ Therefore, by conducting effective ambushes LFF hindered the communist collectivization process in Lithuanian.

The Vytautas territorial unit's ambush conducted in the beginning of 1947 proves LFF ability to conduct extremely effective ambushes. According to the territorial unit commander's plan the LFF conducted the ambush in two phases. Phase One consisted of seizing communist controlled Buktos alcohol distiller confiscating crops, money, and other goods and making MGB units from nearby town to react and send quick reaction force to help the distillery workers. Phase Two consisted of conducting the ambush on an MGB unit deploying to the area as a quick reaction force. LFF carefully reconnoitered the location for the ambush. The main ambush force was divided into four squads in order to increase effectiveness of command and control. A reconnaissance team ensured early warning and covered the main body withdrawal. The LFF opened fire once the mounted MGB unit entered the effective fire zone. Concentrated and overlapping

¹⁴⁷Anušaukas, *The Anti-Soviet Resistance in the Baltic States*, 33.

machine gun and automatic rifles fire killed the majority of MGB soldiers. LFF assault clearing force surrounded and destroyed the ones that survived the fire within the ambush effective fire zone. While the ambush clearing force collected killed MGB soldiers' weapons and ammunition, the reconnaissance team warned the ambush force of other MGB unit approaching the ambush site. Early warning enabled ambush force to cover withdrawal of the reconnaissance. Lastly, the ambush force withdrew under pressure into a safe location.¹⁴⁸ Throughout the second phase of the resistance the LFF favored ambushes as a form of attack, because they enabled the LFF to avoid decisive engagements with the Soviet soldiers thus minimizing own casualties while inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy.

Occupy an Area

Although initially LFF operations excluded large population areas, during the second phase of armed resistance LFF intended to establish territorial units in towns also. On 20 January 1947, the Birutės territorial unit was established in Kaunas (the second largest city in Lithuania) with the purpose of increasing partisan movement in the city and its suburbs.¹⁴⁹ However, the attempt to expand LFF presence and influence in large population areas did not materialize throughout the country. Heavy Soviet presence in population's centers prevented the LFF from choosing this option. Other LFF military districts did not follow this path and remained operating in rural areas. As contemporary insurgency examples show, shifting LFF focus towards population centers might have

¹⁴⁸Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 202-204.

¹⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 180.

increased the effectiveness of Lithuanian armed resistance against the Soviets. However, as the author recommends in chapter 5, alternative tactics that LFF could have used fighting the Soviets could be a topic for follow-on research.

Intelligence WFF

As the LFF acquired more combat experience and the Soviets posed an increasing threat to their freedom of movement and security, the LFF dedicated increasingly greater efforts towards effective reconnaissance and surveillance. During the second phase of armed resistance, LFF units continued to employ a surveillance and reconnaissance network developed during the first armed resistance phase. Just as in the first armed resistance phase, the network was based not only on LFF capabilities, but primarily on civilian support to increase the effectiveness of operations and to enhance units' survivability.

Sustainment WFF

Conduct Logistics

Supply

Class I (Subsistence). In contrast to the first phase when the LFF were mostly dependent on the local population to provide class I supplies, during the second phase of resistance LFF tried to shift focus to confiscating class I supplies from the Soviet authorities. That decision was based on the fact that the communist regime increasingly devastated Lithuania and the local population could hardly support themselves with the food. In order to avoid pressing the population to provide food for partisans and thus decreasing support towards LFF movement, in the autumn of 1946 the LFF authorities

ordered subordinate units to conduct raids into the Soviet “Kolkhoz” warehouses to collect class I supplies for up to one year.¹⁵⁰ As the LFF conducted these raids mainly at night, the Soviets increased warehouse night security. At that point, demonstrating the ability to adapt to a changing situation, the LFF started to conduct raids during the daytime. As a result, before the Soviets managed to task enough troops for security of warehouses, LFF formations fulfilled their orders to collect substantial class I supplies for an extended periods of time.¹⁵¹

The LFF leadership implemented requisition of confiscated food supplies in a strictly official manner to avoid uncontrolled robbery. The LFF leadership ordered subordinate units to fill and keep accountability records of confiscated food supplies in order to prevent plunder.¹⁵²

However, shifting focus to obtain subsistence supplies from the Soviet institutions was not an easy task. As the Soviets continued to hamper LFF freedom of movement, some LFF units continued to rely on the primary source of subsistence supplies--that is to utilize the local population support. During the second phase of armed resistance that was still possible, because a substantial part local population avoided the Soviets’ attempts to force people to join collective farms and continued to maintain their own farms. Therefore, the local population was still willing and most importantly able to provide subsistence to LFF.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., 164.

¹⁵¹Ibid., 166.

¹⁵²The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, *War After War*, 30.

Provide Personnel Services

As the armed resistance progressed, an increasing number of LFF demonstrated their bravery and valor in combat. The LFF leadership grasped the importance to recognize the most dedicated LFF for their contribution defending the country. Although the LFF initiated development of regulations describing an LFF award system at the beginning of armed resistance, during the second phase the LFF award system materialized in practice throughout the LFF areas of operation. “The military district commander had a right to grant the award after the territorial unit’s commander initiated it.”¹⁵³ LFF award ceremonies were conducted in secret and included remembering the fallen comrades. These ceremonies and award system as a whole served as a tool to boost LFF morale and deepen their commitment fighting under extremely dangerous and demanding conditions.

Protection WFF

Conduct Survivability Operations

During the first phase of armed resistance bunkers played only a minor role ensuring LFF survivability and were used primarily by leadership command posts. However, as the Soviets increasingly hampered LFF freedom of movement and suppressed the armed resistance during the second phase, employment of bunkers became a critical LFF survivability factor. Underground bunkers served not only as a temporary protection place, but they were used to live and work for extended periods of time. The living conditions were poor and negatively impacted LFF health; however bunkers did

¹⁵³Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 164.

provide protection that was of extreme importance when the Soviets increasingly suppressed LFF freedom of movement.

As the LFF matured and gained practical experience building the underground bunkers, both locations and structures of bunkers matured. The vast majority of bunkers were established underground. For deception purposes the LFF built bunkers under numerous unlikely areas, such as under houses, barns, woodsheds, poultry-houses, stoves, in wooded areas under the roots of trees, etc.¹⁵⁴ See figure 1.

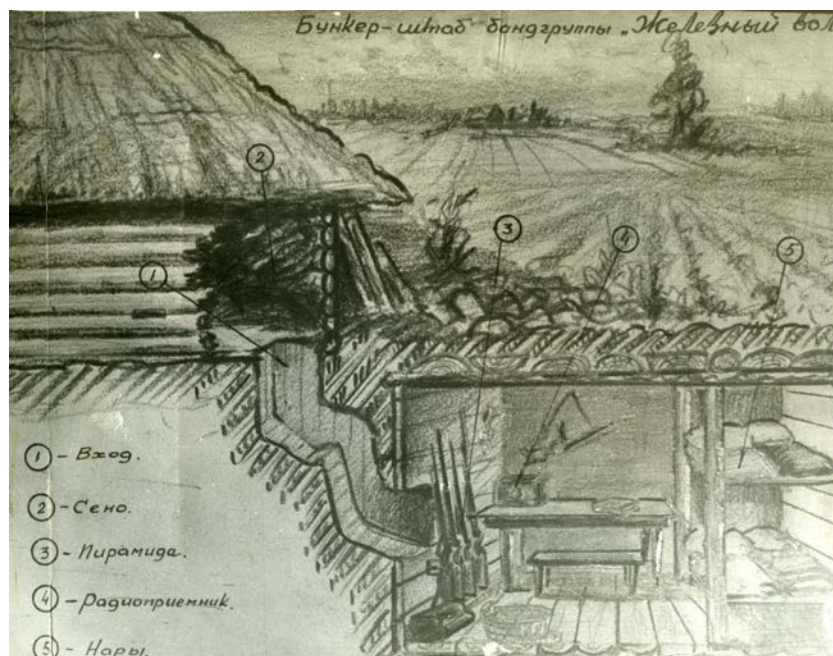


Figure 1. Typical LFF Underground Bunker

Source: From KGB album, developed for partisan search; picture obtained from The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Center of Lithuania archives.

¹⁵⁴The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, *War After War*, 27.

The LFF also chose such areas as creeks, bushes, crop fields, and small unpaved roads to build bunkers. There were instances when the LFF demonstrated the ability to improvise bunkers in barrels within marshes and wells, cemeteries, near churches, between double walls and double roofs of houses, etc. The bunkers' structures developed as well. There were separate working, sleeping, and cooking areas in some of LFF bunkers. Ventilation devices were concealed in trees and other unlikely places to increase concealment.¹⁵⁵ See figure 2.

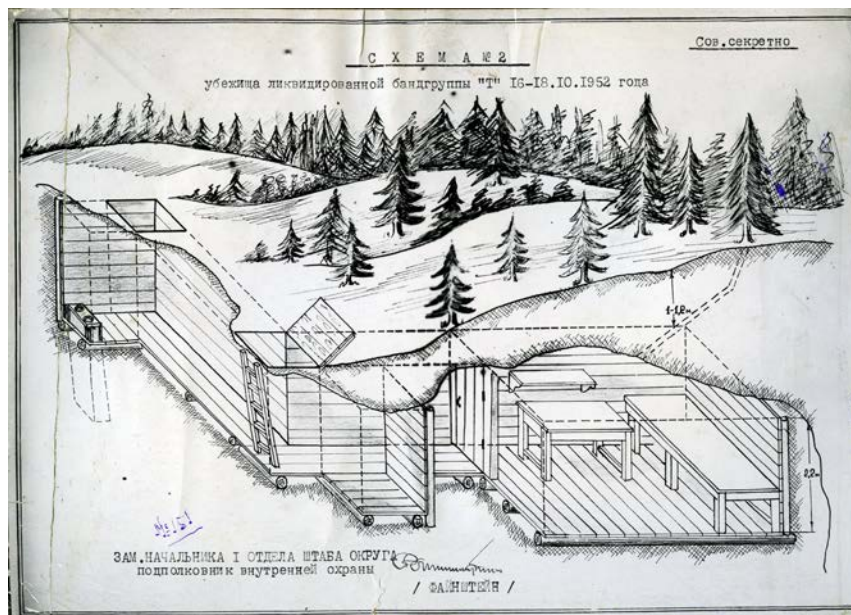


Figure 2. Well-developed LFF Bunker's Structure

Source: From KGB album; picture obtained from The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Center of Lithuania archives. Note: ventilation device is established in a tree.

¹⁵⁵Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 102.

However, as LFF constantly changed bunkers to increase survivability, they rarely used well-developed bunkers because building these bunkers required vast resources in terms of manpower and time.

Although the bunker system increased LFF survivability, it also had a negative aspect. The underground bunkers were not suited for defense; therefore, when surrounded by Soviets the LFF found themselves trapped and either were killed by the Soviets or killed themselves in order to avoid being captured.¹⁵⁶ Before killing themselves, LFF destroyed available documents in order to increase operation security thus preventing the Soviets from gaining valuable information on LFF activities.

Employ Safety Techniques

As during the second phase of armed resistance bunkers played a critical role ensuring LFF survivability, the author separately analyzed the safety techniques related to establishing and using bunkers. The following are some of the most widely used and unique ones:

1. Bunkers' locations were kept in extreme secret and known only to necessary LFF chain of command and liaisons-messengers to increase survivability.
2. In order to ensure survivability, the LFF left the bunkers as seldom as possible to conduct operations and to get food supplies.¹⁵⁷
3. As the Soviets used probes to place into the ground searching for bunkers, the LFF put up to one meter of dirt on the covers of underground bunkers in order

¹⁵⁶The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, *War After War*, 28.

¹⁵⁷*Ibid.*

to prevent the Soviets from reaching the bunker and to conceal the entrance location.¹⁵⁸

4. The LFF thoroughly masked bunkers' locations using local vegetation and natural features (i.e. cut trees, hay, etc.).¹⁵⁹ During summer time after rain the LFF used to replace mock-camouflage from locations further from bunkers in order to increase concealment and prevent enemy from locating the entrance into bunkers.¹⁶⁰
5. During the winter time the LFF established some of the bunkers near ice free creeks. When leaving bunkers the LFF used a wooden bench to go straight to the water. By going in the water they did not leave footprints on the snow that would enable enemy to discover the location of the bunker. The LFF walked through the water until they reached a road. After conducting a mission they used to come back on the same road just from the opposite direction until reaching the same creek which took them back to their bunker. This created the impression that someone had gone all the way on the road.
6. When the LFF constructed bunkers near civilian population living areas, they established various signals indicating enemy activity in the area (i.e. hewing logs in certain intervals indicated that the Soviets are operating within areas, a bucket hanging in a certain location seen from a distance within a homestead

¹⁵⁸Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 103.

¹⁵⁹The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, *War After War*, 27.

¹⁶⁰Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 101.

indicated that the Soviet soldiers have set an ambush in that particular homestead, etc.).¹⁶¹ In many instances trusted civilians within the bunker areas warned hiding partisans and enabled them to hide before being detected.¹⁶² The civilian population served as information gathering assets and greatly increased bunker-system security thus contributing to LFF survivability.

7. Later, during the second phase of armed resistance Soviets developed a technique to intoxicate LFF in the surrounded bunkers by chemical preparations in order capture the LFF alive for further investigations. To avoid being captured and giving out the information on LFF movement as a result of torture, LFF tended to kill themselves while surrounded in bunkers while trying to inflict as many Soviet casualties as possible.¹⁶³

Analysis of Performance

During the second phase of armed resistance the LFF demonstrated an ability to adapt to Soviet actions and continue the armed resistance. After sustaining heavy casualties during the first phase of armed resistance when the LFF employed a combination of irregular and regular tactics, the LFF adapted tactics in the second phase of armed resistance. After two years fighting the Soviets it became more and more obvious that the earlier LFF assumption regarding quick Western countries' involvement

¹⁶¹Ibid.

¹⁶²Syvokiene, *Life Sacrificed for Motherland*, 28.

¹⁶³The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, *War After War*, 28.

into the conflict was wrong. Therefore, the LFF shifted focus towards irregular warfare tactics in order to preserve combat power for a prolonged conflict.

Instead of openly confronting the Soviet forces as in phase one, LFF preserved combat power for prolonged conflict by utilizing sophisticated bunker system. Moreover, LFF dedicated main effort on the following areas: further unifying LFF mission command, conducting active inform and influence operations, and contacting the Western countries for assistance.¹⁶⁴ Nevertheless, LFF did retain the ability and will to perform small scale attacks against Soviet establishments and their collaborators.¹⁶⁵ Ambushes were the dominate forms of attack.¹⁶⁶ Deliberately planned ambushes enabled the LFF to keep a pressure on Soviets while avoiding major combat thus preserving combat power for prolonged resistance.

Despite continuous heavy losses, the military districts grew stronger by gaining valuable experience of partisan warfare. Main documents and regulations describing armed resistance methods unified LFF efforts resisting the Soviets.¹⁶⁷

LFF infiltration operations into the western countries conducted in the second period of armed resistance demonstrated two main facts. First, they identified the LFF leadership's understanding that gaining foreign support was a critical factor to continue resisting the Soviets and eventually reach the end state--that is to re-gain Lithuanian independence. Second, successful infiltration operations proved that LFF small unit

¹⁶⁴Ibid., 16.

¹⁶⁵Syvokiene, *Life Sacrificed for Motherland*, 12.

¹⁶⁶Anušaukas, *The Anti-Soviet Resistance in the Baltic States*, 30.

¹⁶⁷Ibid., 32-33.

tactics employed in the second phase of armed resistance were well developed enabling LFF to conduct even the most complicated operations.

LFF Tactics in the limited armed Resistance and Gradual Decline of LFF
Resistance Phase (November 1948–May 1953)

Leadership

Throughout the period of armed resistance the LFF leadership drew up standard military documents and regulations that guided the armed resistance thus enhancing LFF effectiveness and maintaining discipline.¹⁶⁸ However, the third resistance phase was especially important in this area, because the LFF leadership drew up the majority of documents that provided overall unified guidance and regulations for LFF armed resistance. These documents were accepted in the meeting of the highest LFF authorities in the beginning of 1949 and included a draft of Movement of Lithuania's Struggle for Freedom statute, projects of the regulations guiding the LFF activities, statute of military justice and criminal actions, various guidance and regulations on activities related to LFF armed resistance.¹⁶⁹ Development of these documents and regulations indicates that despite the Soviets' efforts to disintegrate the armed resistance, the LFF leadership remained committed to making the resistance more coordinated, robust, and effective.

During this phase, the Soviets further increasingly neutralized LFF. In less than two years from 12 November 1948 till 2 May 1950, LFF numbers in Dainavos military

¹⁶⁸The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, *War After War*, 2.

¹⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 13.

district dropped by fifty percent from 346 down to 174 partisans.¹⁷⁰ The losses were similar throughout the country. Nevertheless, the LFF leadership continuously adapted the armed resistance structure accordingly by changing some units' areas of operation and unifying smaller units thus avoiding disintegration. Therefore, despite heavy casualties and overwhelming Soviet pressure, the LFF leadership managed to maintain the unified LFF structure up until 1952.¹⁷¹ Nevertheless, regardless of the LFF senior leaders' tremendous efforts to maintain the unified LFF structure and further lead the resistance, after the gradual creation of a unified LFF structure in 1949 only four years were left before the Soviets finally defeated the resistance. The reasons for the gradual defeat of LFF are provided later in this chapter answering the secondary research question.

In his last words before being sentenced to death, the Supreme Partisan commander Jonas Žemaitis stated “I consider all underground movement actions . . . against the Soviet government to be just and not criminal. I just want to stress that as long as I commanded the Lithuanians fighters' struggle for freedom I followed the principles of humanity. I did not allow any cruelties. I know the upcoming decision of this court. But I still think that the fight that took nine years will produce results.”¹⁷²

Jonas Žemaitis' last words prove that throughout the armed resistance the LFF leadership visualized the armed resistance end state and continuously led the armed

¹⁷⁰Vanagas, *Daugel krito sūnų Partisanų gretose*, 23.

¹⁷¹The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, *War After War*, 11.

¹⁷²Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 122.

resistance towards it. Despite unjust actions applied by the Soviets defeating the armed resistance, the LFF leadership tried to apply just ways and means of leading the armed resistance.

Despite being increasingly suppressed by the Soviet actions, the LFF leadership managed to influence the LFF throughout the armed resistance phases by providing purpose, direction, and motivation. Nevertheless, as the author analyzes answering the secondary research question, non-leadership related factors prevented dedicated LFF leadership from ensuring the success of the armed resistance.

Information

Information exchange between LFF units became increasingly challenging during the third resistance phase mainly due to three reasons. First, the Soviets continued actions impeding LFF freedom of movement which had a direct negative impact on information exchange between LFF units. Second, the Soviets managed to infiltrate agents into LFF units who further interrupted the information exchange by feeding misleading information. As a result of infiltrated Soviet agents' actions, LFF leadership had to be increasingly cautious communicating with subordinate, neighboring, and higher units which in many cases hampered LFF leaders' ability to make informed and timely decisions. And finally, as LFF information exchange was highly dependent on civilian liaison-messengers, the Soviets' ability to minimize civilian population support towards LFF also negatively impacted LFF information exchange. The author describes Soviet actions in this area in more details answering the secondary research question.

The LFF did try to overcome information exchange difficulties by employing procedures described in the mission command WFF later in this chapter; however, during

the third armed resistance phase the information exchange between LFF units became increasingly complicated, and suppressed LFF possessed neither materiel nor personnel resources to develop and implement an alternative information exchange system that would ensure smooth information flow. Nevertheless, although the Soviets managed to hamper LFF information exchange process between LFF, the author did not find evidence that this was one of the main factors contributing to the gradual defeat of the resistance. The LFF leadership still managed to share critical information with subordinate, neighboring, and higher units until the gradual destruction of the armed resistance.

Mission Command WFF

Develop LFF Units' Structure

Although during the last phase of armed resistance the Soviets managed to suppress and disrupt LFF resistance, representatives from all three LFF military regions gathered for a meeting that lasted from 10 to 20 February 1949. This was the most important LFF meeting throughout the armed resistance period because of the strategically important political and military decisions negotiated during the meeting. As a result of this meeting, partisan groups from all military regions were organized into the Movement of Lithuania's Struggle for Freedom (*Lietuvos Laisvės Kovų Sąjūdis*).¹⁷³ As described in chapter 1, the author did not analyze the political aspects of the armed resistance; therefore, political decisions of the meeting are not covered here. From a

¹⁷³Vardys, *The Partisan Movement in Postwar Lithuania*, 500.

military point of view, participants made the following important agreements during the meeting:

1. Unified resistance ideology.
2. Developed overall strategy for regaining of Lithuanian independence.
3. Agreed on common tactics to be used for further resistance to the Soviets.
4. Discussed and agreed upon documents, regulations and statutes that regulated and guided the resistance.
5. “De jure” formalized existing structure of armed resistance (i.e. Lithuanian territory was formally divided into three military regions; military regions were subdivided into military districts; the latter were further subdivided into territorial units).¹⁷⁴ See figure 3.

¹⁷⁴Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 104-106.



Figure 3. Military Regions, Districts, and Territorial Units as of February 1949

Source: Obtained from The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Center of Lithuania archives.

As during the third phase LFF hopes that the Western countries would gradually interfere into the conflict vanished, LFF leadership changed the resistance approach. They decided to focus on maintaining command and control of the existing armed resistance structure throughout the country instead of trying to increase the number of armed fighters.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, *War After War*, 40.

However, increasing Soviet efforts to destroy the armed resistance produced results and neutralized increasing numbers of LFF. Nonetheless, “Despite the decreasing number of fighters, the partisan leaders stubbornly tried to maintain the established [overall LFF resistance] structure, and they succeeded in doing so until 1952-1953.”¹⁷⁶

Conduct Inform and Influence Activities

Although inform and influence activities played an important role in LFF lines of effort throughout the armed resistance, during the last phase these activities gained top priority among LFF lines of effort. LFF faced increasing difficulties to acquire printing equipment, paper, printing ink, and other printing-related supplies. Moreover, the LFF organization lacked qualified writers. Nevertheless, LFF continued to conduct inform and influence activities throughout the most difficult phase of resistance.¹⁷⁷

LFF publications were separate for each target audience: partisans, civilian population, and LFF leadership. The following were the main themes of inform and influence operations:

1. Explaining the end state of armed resistance which was to re-store independent and democratic republic of Lithuania;
2. Examining the international situation that could impact restoration of Lithuanian independence;

¹⁷⁶Kuodytė and Tracevskis, *The Unknown War*, 28.

¹⁷⁷The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, *War After War*, 26.

3. Stressing duties and responsibilities of Lithuanian intelligentsia in efforts for regaining Lithuanian independence.¹⁷⁸

At the end of the third phase, when the LFF leadership recognized that the armed resistance will most probably be defeated by the Soviets in the near future, inform and influence activities were seen as means to deepen Lithuanian national identity and national consciousness. These activities had to educate the population on the need to continue striving for Lithuanian independence by other non-lethal means after the defeat of armed resistance.

Throughout the resistance period as many as 54 different periodicals and 18 other publications were published.¹⁷⁹ “The Soviets judged [LFF inform and influence operations] to be as destructive as the use of violence, because they sustained the hope of freedom [among the Lithuanian population] and thus reduced the degree of cooperation the regime needed to restore local government and to fulfill economic plans”¹⁸⁰

Install, Operate, and Maintain the Network

The liaison-messengers system established as the primary means of communications between and within LFF units during the first phase of armed resistance was further developed throughout the resistance period. The Soviets well understood the importance of breaking down the LFF communication system and allocated increasing resources to do that. After capturing liaison-messengers, Soviets tortured them while

¹⁷⁸Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 110.

¹⁷⁹Anušaukas, *The Anti-Soviet Resistance in the Baltic States*, 34.

¹⁸⁰Vardys, *The Partisan Movement in Postwar Lithuania*, 514.

conducting thorough investigations to find and disrupt the LFF communications network. Therefore, after the arrest of a liaison-messenger, the LFF had to change the whole communication system—communication points, passwords, etc.¹⁸¹

The LFF also developed innovative techniques and procedures to avoid detection of liaisons-messengers and communication points. During the latest phase of resistance LFF senior leadership messages were limited in weight (up to ten grams) and carried in using least obvious means (i.e. in sandwiches, candies, etc.).¹⁸²

Nevertheless, during the latest phase of armed resistance Soviets managed to disrupt the LFF communication system. Sometimes after arresting a liaisons-messenger, LFF leadership faced disruption of communication for as long as several months.¹⁸³

At this stage of armed resistance when communications were broken for extended periods of time the mission command concept employed by partisans throughout all the periods of armed resistance paid big dividends. Utilizing mission command philosophy, the lower echelon LFF leadership was able to act in accordance with a broad LFF leadership's intent stating "what to do" instead of specifying "how to do it". Therefore, LFF units continued functioning in case of interruption of communications with higher echelons, because they based their actions in accordance with the overall LFF leadership's intent not expecting for continuous guidance from higher echelons. The mission command concept prevented the LFF from being disorganized by temporary loss

¹⁸¹The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, *War After War*, 40.

¹⁸²Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 94.

¹⁸³The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, *War After War*, 40.

of communication and contributed to the LFF's ability to fight for almost a decade against a superior enemy.

Movement and Maneuver WFF

During the third phase of armed resistance LFF could no longer continue with country-wide organized irregular warfare. Tactics were changed from open resistance to sabotage.¹⁸⁴ At the beginning of the third resistance phase LFF did manage to continue organizing small-scale ambushes to liquidate Bolshevik activists,¹⁸⁵ but decreased LFF freedom of movement and decreasing numbers of partisans forced LFF leadership to shift focus towards non-lethal means while conducting the resistance. Although the LFF still employed limited-scale offensive operations in order to restrain and liquidate Communist government officials, these operations could not ensure reaching the resistance end state before the Soviets finally defeated organized armed resistance in 1953.

Intelligence WFF

As during the third phase of resistance the Soviets managed to suppress LFF, intelligence became the critical factor ensuring LFF survivability. However, the LFF could no longer rely on a surveillance and reconnaissance network that was used during first two resistance phases due to two main reasons. First, the Soviets managed to infiltrate their secret agents among civilian population and even among the LFF. Second, the Soviets were increasingly capable of controlling the rural population because of increased presence in these areas and because of forcing people into collective farms

¹⁸⁴Vardys, *The Partisan Movement in Postwar Lithuania*, 521.

¹⁸⁵Syvokiene, *Life Sacrificed for Motherland*, 40.

were they could no longer assist the LFF with intelligence gathering efforts. As local population support played a critical role to ensure functioning of the surveillance and reconnaissance network during first two phases of armed resistance, the Soviet actions cutting off population support in LFF intelligence gathering efforts had a direct and negative impact on the LFF intelligence cycle. The LFF could no longer trust the intelligence provided either by civilians or in some cases even by other LFF units. Therefore, during the third resistance phase both the effectiveness of LFF operations and their survivability decreased dramatically.

Sustainment WFF

Conduct Logistics

Supply

Class I (Subsistence). During the last resistance phase the vast majority of LFF units continued to rely on the primary source of subsistence supplies--that is, to utilize the local population support. However, during this resistance phase that was increasingly difficult due to Soviet actions in these two areas: continuous massive deportations of population that was suspected providing support to LFF and the “collectivization” process. The author describes these Soviet actions and their impact on LFF sustainment and on the overall armed resistance later in this chapter when analyzing major factors that resulted in the gradual defeat of the armed resistance.

Class II (Clothing, Individual Equipment). In 1949, after finally unifying the LFF under a single chain of command, the LFF leadership attempted to create a common military uniform. However, although several proposed designs survived, they were never

put into use due to the weakened movement.¹⁸⁶ Therefore, the LFF continued to wear until the end of armed resistance either prior Lithuanian Armed Forces uniforms or civilian clothes with approved LFF insignia.

Protection WFF

Implement Operations Security

During the last phase of resistance the Soviets widely infiltrated their secret agents into LFF formations with a purpose to disintegrate the armed resistance. This method of fighting the partisans proved to be efficient, because in contrast to the earlier phases of the resistance, during the third phase the majority of partisans were killed or captured as a result of infiltrated agents actions and not as a result of direct engagement.”¹⁸⁷ Therefore, the LFF tried to apply operations security procedures to minimize the effectiveness of the Soviet secret agents. Avoiding contact with unknown partisans and trusting only well-known and reliable civilian supporters were the most common operations security procedures targeted against the secret agents. As oppose to the earlier resistance phases when LFF used to share their plans with a number of civilian supporters, during the third resistance phase LFF avoided making arrangements with civilian supporters in advance. The LFF tended to talk with trusted helpers without witnesses and avoid those who have been summoned by the KGB because of the danger that they might be recruited by this organization.¹⁸⁸ Nevertheless, despite LFF efforts in

¹⁸⁶The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, *War After War*, 20.

¹⁸⁷Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 108.

¹⁸⁸Syvokiene, *Life Sacrificed for Motherland*, 47.

the operations security area, the Soviet secret agents were not restrained by the legal norms and applied unrestricted and unjust actions that enabled to continue infiltrating into LFF units and neutralize them.

Analysis of Performance

In contrast to the first two phases when LFF based armed resistance on a combination of lethal and non-lethal means, during the last resistance phase LFF shifted focus towards non-lethal means. During the third resistance phase the main LFF lines of effort included conducting inform and influence activities, restructuring a weakened organization due to massive casualties suffered during the first two phases, creating joint military-political resistance authority, and “de jure” establishing the unified resistance structure.

Besides the LFF as a target audience, inform and influence activities were targeted to develop national and social awareness of the people and to foster their dedication towards the struggle for independence.¹⁸⁹

Even though only about 2,000 LFF continued to actively resist during the third phase of resistance, the LFF leadership finally managed to unify the LFF structure, creating the joint authority of armed resistance.¹⁹⁰ However, the Soviets succeeded in finally defeating the armed resistance in less than four years after LFF “De Jure” unified the armed resistance in 1949. The next part of chapter 4 contains analysis of the factors that resulted in the eventual defeat of LFF resistance.

¹⁸⁹The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, *War After War*, 16.

¹⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 13.

Factors that Resulted in the Eventual Defeat of LFF Resistance

Having described the tactics that enabled the LFF to oppose greatly superior Soviet forces for almost a decade, the author will focus on answering the secondary research question--that is, what factors resulted in the eventual defeat of LFF resistance.

Besides military actions employed by insurgents and counterinsurgents, there is a myriad of other aspects that have influenced the outcome of any insurgency throughout the world during long years of insurgency phenomena. Such aspects include the whole spectrum of operational environment systems, including political, economic, social, infrastructure, information, etc. Therefore, one faces a challenging task trying to pinpoint the exact factor or factors that cause the defeat or victory of a particular insurgency. Nevertheless, the author will investigate the root causes that prevented the LFF turning bloody and prolonged armed resistance into eventual victory.

In order to state the factors that resulted in the eventual defeat of LFF, the author will examine the factors that are crucial for any insurgency to succeed. Dr. Gordon McCormick's diagram in figure 4 serves as a mean to conceptualize the requirements of a successful insurgency.

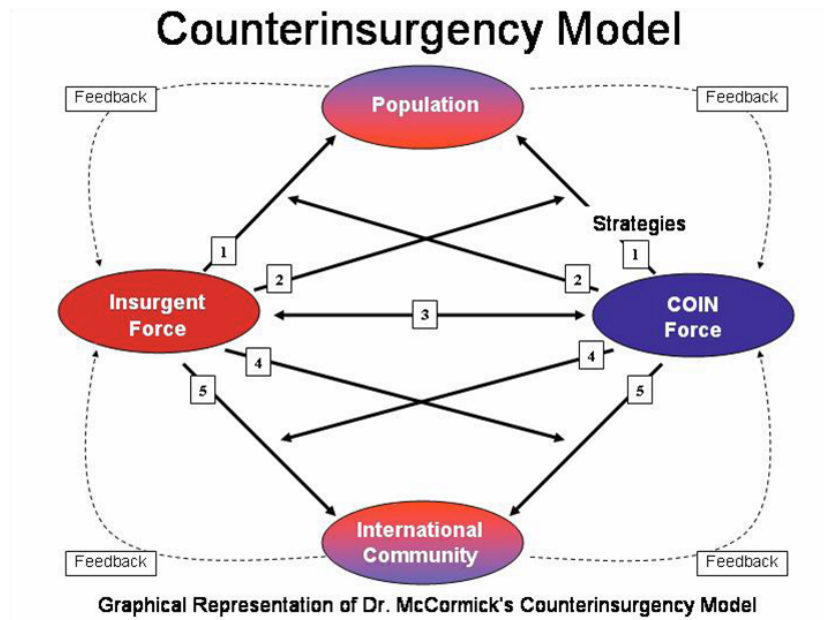


Figure 4. Dr. G. McCormick's "Diamond" diagram

Source: Webster's Dictionary Online, <http://www.websters-dictionary-online.org/definitions/insurgency> (accessed 27 September 2012).

According to the diagram, there are four interacting elements in each insurgency:

1. Insurgent force.
2. Counterinsurgent force (i.e. the government).
3. Population.
4. International community.¹⁹¹

In accordance with McCormick's diagram, both insurgent and counterinsurgent forces have to complete the following critical tasks in order to succeed:

1. Gain and maintain support of the population.
2. Disrupt the opponent's control over the population.

¹⁹¹Webster's Dictionary Online, <http://www.websters-dictionary-online.org/definitions/insurgency> (accessed 27 September 2012).

3. Confront the opponent by military means.
4. Prevent/disrupt opponent's relations with the international community.
5. Establish Relationships with the International Community.¹⁹²

Having described the elements of an insurgency and key tasks they need to accomplish in order to succeed, the author will describe how the above mentioned elements relate to the LFF armed resistance case.

Because the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania again after World War II, the LFF should not be technically considered as insurgents while the Soviet government should not be considered as a legitimate government either. Still, in order to productively continue the research for clarity reasons the author relates above mentioned elements of the insurgency to the LFF armed resistance as following:

1. LFF represent the insurgent force.
2. The Soviet security forces (incl. regular army, NKVD, MVD, MGB, etc.) form the counterinsurgent force.
3. The occupied Lithuanian civilians depict the population.
4. The United States, Great Britain and other Western countries characterize the international community.

At this point the author will explore which of the key tasks typical for a successful insurgency the LFF accomplished and which failed to accomplish and how these tasks impacted the eventual defeat of the armed resistance.

As described earlier in chapter 4, the LFF did succeed in gaining the support of the local population. The support of the local population played a key role in enabling

¹⁹²Ibid.

armed resistance in Lithuania. The LFF could not have survived almost a decade long armed resistance had the inhabitants, mainly the rural population, not provided them necessary support. Besides materiel support (i.e. food supplies, clothes, etc.) the population also assisted LFF in the following areas: they acted as liaison-messengers thus ensuring communication among LFF units; civilians gathered reconnaissance data thus contributing to LFF situational understanding which in turn increased LFF units' survivability and enhanced LFF operations; the local population also assisted distributing the LFF underground press thus enabling the LFF inform and influence activities, etc.¹⁹³

When it comes to the task of maintaining support of local population, the LFF faced major issues. The Soviets clearly understood that the local population was one of the cornerstones of LFF armed resistance. In order to cut off Lithuanian population support during second and third phases of armed resistance the Soviets arrested tens of thousands of people suspected of supporting the LFF and deported them to the arctic regions of the Soviet Union.¹⁹⁴ Moreover, in 1948 the Council of Ministers of the LSSR passed a regulation to force local population into collective farms. Although people were reluctant to join the farms they had no choice due to the Soviet reprisals. As a result, people were impoverished and could hardly provide support to LFF armed resistance.¹⁹⁵ Massive deportations of civilian population and forcing them to join collective farms were targeted to cut off population support to LFF. As population support was a critical

¹⁹³The Museum of Genocide Victims of the Genocide and Resistance Research Center of Lithuania, *War After War*, 35.

¹⁹⁴*Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁹⁵Anušaukas, *The Anti-Soviet Resistance in the Baltic States*, 36.

requirement for LFF armed resistance to continue, these Soviet actions severely hampered LFF armed resistance efforts. Although the Soviet actions cutting off the local population support to the LFF were not the main reason for the eventual defeat of the LFF, it certainly did play a major role in it.

According to McCormick's diagram, the next key task ensuring the success in an insurgency is to disrupt the opponent's control over the population. First of all, it is worth mentioning that the Lithuanian population was never supportive towards the Soviet rule even without the LFF intervention. As briefly discussed in chapter 1, Russia occupied Lithuania numerous times throughout the turbulent history of the country. Moreover, negative Lithuanians' attitudes towards the Soviet rule were vivid in their memories, because Lithuanians faced the Soviet repressions after the first Soviet occupation in 1941. Therefore, the Soviets faced numerous challenges implementing control of Lithuanian population after the second occupation in 1944. Additionally, the LFF further impeded the Soviets' efforts to establish control of Lithuanian population. They did this in two ways. First, the LFF conducted active inform and influence activities aiming to discredit the Soviet actions. Second, the LFF countered the communistic stability operations in Lithuania, particularly in rural areas. As the author described in detail answering the primary research question, the LFF dedicated substantial efforts to both ways disrupting the Soviet control over the local population throughout the period of armed resistance. Therefore, the Soviets had to employ extremely harsh methods (i.e. continuous deportations of non-supportive Lithuanians to Siberia, imprisonment of numerous Lithuanian nationalists, forcing farmers to join collective farms, instilling fear into people, etc.) to maintain an acceptable level of population control. LFF efforts disrupting

the Soviet control over the population were effective, because the Soviets were forced to employ extreme methods to control the population. These unacceptable methods caused further Lithuanian hatred and dissatisfaction of the Soviet regime and inspired long-lasting Lithuanian nationalism among the substantial part of the population which contributed to the eventual defeat of the Soviet regime almost five decades later. So the LFF did succeed disrupting the Soviets' control over the population at least in first and second resistance phases.

The third key task to succeed in insurgency is to confront the opponent by military means. Although the LFF tactics continuously changed throughout the resistance period as analyzed answering the primary research question, the LFF managed to confront the Soviets for a substantial period. The LFF and Soviet units' force ratio comparison in 1946 and 1952 identifies that the Soviets were not able to neutralize LFF armed resistance by military means. In 1946 twelve NKVD soldiers and operative agents targeted one LFF; while in 1952 the ratio increased to thirty Soviets to one LFF.¹⁹⁶ Even though the LFF did not succeed defeating the Soviet regime, the armed resistance leadership never intended to do so without the foreign assistance. The LFF did confront the Soviets for almost a decade; therefore this key task is not the one that caused the eventual defeat of the armed resistance.

The next key task for a successful insurgency is to disrupt the opponent's relations with the international community. However, the superior Soviet forces defeating the LFF possessed all the necessary resources in terms of manpower, equipment, etc. and did not require any assistance from the international community. Moreover, it is unlikely

¹⁹⁶Ibid.

that the international community would have decisively impacted only by political means the Communist Central Committee's decisions even if occupied Lithuania would have succeeded raising the question of Lithuania's occupation on the international arena. Moscow was too determined and committed executing its ruthless expansionist communist policy; thus it is unlikely that the international community's solely political means would have shaped the situation in Lithuania. In Lithuanian armed resistance case, disrupting the Soviets' relations with the international community was not a critical requirement directly related to the defeat of the armed resistance. Therefore, the author does not further analyze LFF capability to perform this task. On the other hand, the Soviets committed substantial efforts disrupting LFF relations with the international community in order to prevent LFF from gaining international assistance. The Soviets' actions performing this key counterinsurgency task and impact on the eventual defeat of the LFF armed resistance will be described in the next paragraph in more details.

The last key task for an insurgency to succeed is to establish relationships with the International Community. From the very beginning of armed resistance the LFF realized that gaining the Western countries' assistance would play a crucial role in resisting the Soviets. The LFF expected to gain both materiel and political support from abroad.¹⁹⁷ In fact, LFF leadership based planning and conducting of armed resistance on the assumption that they need to fight the Soviets just for a short period until the Western countries would join their efforts and liberate Lithuania. "The resistance did not believe that they could defeat the occupation forces; they only sought to delay and harass the

¹⁹⁷Ibid., 82.

Soviets until help [from the Western countries] arrived.”¹⁹⁸ As described in chapter 1, the assumption that the Western countries would interfere stopping the Communist aggression appeared valid at the beginning of the armed resistance. The Atlantic Charter, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Geneva Convention, and other international agreements that followed the World War II supported that assumption. Therefore, the LFF put a lot of efforts reaching out for contacts in the West in order to gain support and attract Western countries’ attention to Lithuania’s struggle against the Communist regime.

Despite the Soviet actions to prevent LFF contacting the Western countries by increasing Lithuanian–Polish border security and infiltrating secret agents into partisans’ liaison nets, LFF representatives managed to conduct successful infiltration operations into Poland and reach the Western countries, explaining that Lithuania was occupied and sought help. Nevertheless, as it became more and more clear in 1946, the LFF assumption that they had to fight the Soviets only for a limited period of time until the Western countries would join the fight and liberate Lithuania appeared to be false.¹⁹⁹ The reasons why the Western countries did not interfere in the conflict are strictly political. As mentioned in the limitations of this research, the political aspects of the resistance are not a part of this study and therefore are not covered here. Although in 1947 “the Bolsheviks estimated that only Western countries’ materiel assistance provided to LFF enabled armed resistance to continue fighting,”²⁰⁰ in reality the LFF never received

¹⁹⁸Kuodytė and Tracevskis, *The Unknown War*, 17.

¹⁹⁹Daumantas, *Partizanai*, 150.

²⁰⁰Vėliūtė, *Partizanai*, 75.

substantial assistance that would have helped fighting the Soviets.²⁰¹ “Without support from abroad, a long guerrilla war against the total-war strategy of the Soviets became militarily impossible.”²⁰² Therefore, even though the LFF did commit substantial efforts accomplishing the key insurgency task to establish relationships with international community seeking assistance, the assistance never came. This was the main factor that resulted in the eventual defeat of the LFF armed resistance against the Soviet occupation.

²⁰¹Vardys, *The Partisan Movement in Postwar Lithuania*, 516.

²⁰²*Ibid.*, 522.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This chapter summarizes the results of analysis answering the primary and secondary research questions. As the research focused on the elements of combat power as the measurement criteria to describe the LFF tactics countering the Soviet aggression, a concise analysis of LFF combat power elements' strengths and weaknesses will serve as a toll to depict the conclusions on LFF tactics. After providing the conclusions on tactics employed by the LFF throughout the resistance period, the author will briefly emphasize the findings of the secondary research question summarizing the main factors that resulted in the gradual defeat of LFF armed resistance.

In order to provide the conclusions on tactics employed by the LFF throughout the period of armed resistance, table 2 depicts each LFF combat power element's strengths and weaknesses. The tables also include brief explanations on how the LFF managed to exploit elements of combat power strengths while protecting their weaknesses.

Table 2. Analysis of LFF Combat Power Elements' Strengths and Weaknesses
Depicting the Conclusions of LFF Tactics

Element of combat power	Strengths/Weaknesses	Exploitation of strengths/ Protection and mitigation of weakness
Leadership	Strengths	Exploitation of strengths
	LFF leadership's total commitment to the armed resistance.	Despite the Soviets' efforts to eliminate the armed resistance, the LFF leadership continued to influence members of the resistance by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to carry on resistance. That increased the effectiveness of the armed resistance and enabled the LFF to fight a prolonged conflict against superior forces.
	Close relationship and trust between higher commanders, lower echelon leaders, and ranks were inherent characteristics of LFF leadership.	Exploiting close relationship and trust enabled LFF leadership to build a robust and reliable organization capable of resisting superior Soviet forces.
	LFF leadership's ability to ensure uninterrupted command and control.	Even though the Soviets continuously targeted the LFF leadership to disrupt LFF units' command and control, the LFF leadership's ability to re-assign neutralized key leaders contributed towards LFF effectiveness and survivability.
	Weaknesses	Protection/mitigation of weaknesses:
	LFF leadership lacked experienced commissioned officers to lead the armed resistance.	LFF developed the armed resistance as a learning organization, where both leaders and private LFF were encouraged to learn while fighting thus making the organization more effective.
	As the beginning of armed resistance was spontaneous, there was no unified guidance on the conduct of armed resistance.	LFF leadership developed documents and regulations that governed the armed resistance thus enhancing LFF effectiveness and maintaining discipline. That prevented the armed resistance from turning into chaotic, ruthless, and uncoordinated movement.
Information	Strengths	Exploitation of strengths:
	N/A	
	Weaknesses	Protection/mitigation of weaknesses:
	Outnumbering Soviet forces restricted LFF freedom of movement thus hampering information dissemination among subordinate, neighboring, and higher LFF units.	- LFF developed liaisons-messengers system based on civilian support to ensure continuous information flow among the units. - Despite risk of being neutralized, LFF leadership conducted meetings at various levels throughout the armed resistance period to ensure effective LFF command and control and information exchange.
	The "Iron Curtain" established by Soviets prevented LFF from freely disseminating information to the Western countries thus attracting their attention to the Lithuanian struggle for independence.	LFF conducted infiltration operations to the Western countries to inform about LFF armed resistance and gain assistance fighting the Communists.

Mission Command WFF	Strengths	Exploitation of strengths:
	LFF capability to conduct effective inform and influence activities.	LFF continuously conducted inform and influence activities as a part of decisive operations, which contributed discrediting the Soviet rule and gaining support of local population.
	LFF ability and will to objectively assess operations and overall armed resistance.	LFF units continuously conducted both informal and formal assessments of the armed resistance's ways and means in order to make the armed resistance more effective.
	Weaknesses	Protection/mitigation of weaknesses:
	Absence of unified armed resistance efforts and structure.	LFF leadership contributed enormous efforts unifying separate LFF units into a single structure in order to coordinate LFF activities throughout the country thus increasing effectiveness of the armed resistance.
Movement and Maneuver WFF	Absence of military communication assets to ensure command and control.	LFF developed liaison-messengers system utilizing civilian support in order to ensure effective command and control of the armed resistance.
	Strengths	Exploitation of strengths:
	LFF superior small unit tactics.	- Enabled the LFF to conduct effective small scale operations and to keep constant pressure on Soviets while avoiding major combat thus preserving combat power for prolonged resistance - Enabled infiltration operations to the Western countries seeking assistance.
	LFF in depth knowledge of terrain and civil considerations within areas of operation.	- LFF utilized information on obstacles, cover and concealment features, observation capabilities, key terrain, and possible Soviet forces' avenues of approach within their areas of operation while planning and conducting operations. - Intimate knowledge of civil considerations enabled LFF to gain local population support.
	Weaknesses	Protection/mitigation of weaknesses:
	Maneuver force ratio greatly favored the enemy forces.	- LFF balanced between regular and irregular warfare to mitigate force ratio disadvantage. - Depending on mission variables, LFF conducted decisive operations through the simultaneous combination of all three types of operations: defensive, offensive, and stability.

Intelligence WFF	Strengths	Exploitation of the strengths:
	Local population support.	LFF extensively utilized local population support to assist collecting intelligence on enemy disposition, composition, strength, and activities.
	Weaknesses	Protection/mitigation of weaknesses:
	Lack of resources (i.e. manpower, equipment, etc.) to conduct conventional-type intelligence.	LFF developed a wide HUMINT net which: - greatly contributed to LFF situational awareness; - maximized the effectiveness of LFF operations; - did not require LFF to allocate substantial manpower for intelligence gathering efforts.
Fires WFF	N/A	
Sustainment WFF	Strengths	Exploitation of strengths:
	Local population support.	LFF extensively relied on population support conducting sustainment operations.
	Weaknesses	Protection/mitigation of weaknesses:
	Lack of centralized LFF sustainment capability.	LFF leadership decentralized execution of sustainment operations while retaining the right to supervise and guide the sustainment process.
Protection WFF	Strengths	Exploitation of the strengths:
	Superior LFF survivability methods and techniques.	LFF employed a vast variety of operation security measures and safety techniques to avoid detection, disintegration, and destruction by the enemy.
	Weaknesses	Protection/mitigation of weaknesses:
	LFF lacked firepower and resources to counter the superior enemy on the conventional battles.	LFF utilized severely restricted terrain (mainly wooded areas) as sanctuaries to increase survivability and protection thus preserving combat power to engage the enemy under favorable conditions.
	The Soviets increasingly suppressed the LFF and hampered their freedom of movement.	LFF developed bunker system that increased survivability and protection.

Source: Created by author.

Although it is hard to objectively measure the effectiveness of such things as tactics, the study of the primary research question and analysis of LFF combat power elements' strengths and weaknesses led to a gradual conclusion that the LFF tactics employed from 1944 up to 1953 were to some extent effective. LFF managed to adapt tactics in accordance with a changing situation in terms of shifting enemy tactics and wrong initial assumptions regarding international support. The other factor that

contributed to the LFF success fighting the superior enemy for almost a decade was related to LFF ability to protect and mitigate LFF combat power elements' weaknesses while exploiting their strengths.

Even though it was not a purpose of the research, the author investigated what insights regarding LFF tactics effectiveness other researchers of similar topics had come up with. Arvydas Anušauskas, a historian and current chairman of Lithuanian Parliament National Security and Defense Committee, in his article "A Comparison of the Armed Struggles for Independence in the Baltic States and Western Ukraine" states that in accordance with KGB documents in 1946 LFF carried out 1,840 attacks and sustained 1,584 casualties. Mr. Arvydas Anušauskas argues that in comparison Western Ukrainian freedom fighters in the same year carried out 1,619 attacks while sustaining four times more casualties, i.e. 6,526.²⁰³ Even though Arvydas Anušauskas described other factors related to these numbers and statistics in this case do not promise absolutely objective answer, this comparison does support this author's conclusion that tactics employed by LFF were to some extent effective.

Nevertheless, effective tactics do not necessarily ensure success in a conflict. History offers numerous examples when a belligerent sustained a defeat even though employing superior tactics. Unfortunately, this was the case in the heroic LFF armed resistance against the Soviets. The absence of both political and material international support along with Soviet success gradually cutting of population support to LFF were two main reasons that resulted in the gradual defeat of the armed resistance. The LFF along with the vast majority of the Lithuanian population, inspired by the Atlantic

²⁰³Anušauskas, *The Anti-Soviet Resistance in the Baltic States*, 66.

Charter, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Geneva Convention, and other international post World War II agreements, believed that democratic countries would not close their eyes to the expanding Communist tyranny but would instead assist in defeating it. However, 20,500 LFF and numerous civilians had to pay an ultimate price before the Soviet Union overwhelmed the armed resistance. Although Lithuanians were militarily defeated by ruthless Communist apparatus, they never succumbed morally and never gave up their hope to live in a free country. It took almost half a century until this hope finally came true and Lithuania re-gained its freedom.

Recommendations

The author will concentrate on two areas while providing recommendations. First, he will highlight the recommendations on potential usage and audience of this research. Second, the author will recommend potential topics for further research on Lithuanian armed resistance to the Soviet occupation after the World War II.

As asymmetric warfare is likely to continue playing an important role in future conflicts, members of the military profession should find it useful to familiarize themselves with this research. A detailed analysis of LFF tactics employing a combination of regular and irregular warfare to counter superior forces should assist military professionals in further deepening their understanding of asymmetric warfare phenomena thus contributing to their awareness of contemporary operational environment.

Although this research might be attractive to everyone interested in military history and particularly in asymmetric warfare, the research is mostly useful and understandable to a reader who has basic knowledge of military art and science. This is

due to the military nature of the research. Therefore, the study could serve as an educational tool to be used in the Military Academy of Lithuania and other military education institutions teaching soldiers the nature and essence of the asymmetric warfare.

The author did not aim to provide an in-depth analysis of all the aspects of the LFF armed resistance against the Soviets during the period from 1944 to 1953. Instead, in order to avoid being exhaustively overextended, he focused on two specific areas analyzing LFF tactics which enabled them to oppose greatly superior Soviet forces for almost a decade and factors that resulted in the eventual defeat of the armed resistance. Therefore, the follow-on studies on this topic could include analysis of strategic and political factors of the armed resistance. In depth analysis of specific battles between LFF and the Soviet troops would also contribute to further understand the armed resistance. Furthermore, even though the author did analyze Soviet tactics neutralizing the LFF armed resistance in order to visualize and conceptualize LFF tactics countering Soviet actions, the author did not intend to describe the Soviet strategy and tactics in this study. Therefore, a detailed analysis of Soviet strategy and tactics defeating LFF could also be a topic for further research. A study comparing LFF and other countries (i.e. West Ukraine, Poland, Latvia, Estonia, etc.) tactics countering the Soviet aggression after the World War II would identify different ways and best practices of asymmetric warfare in that particular period and region. And finally, a research focusing on alternative tactics that LFF could have used fighting the Soviets would be of a big value, because it would incorporate lessons learned from asymmetric conflicts that followed the LFF armed resistance against the Soviet occupation after World War II.

The topic of Lithuanian armed resistance against the Soviets is not fully covered yet. As after the collapse of Soviet Union substantial material and documents (both LFF and Soviet) on that period became available for public, the follow-on researches in this area should enable us to fully understand all aspects that enabled a small country to conduct armed resistance against a powerful Soviet regime for almost a decade.

APPENDIX A

USE AGREEMENT FOR INTERVIEW

USE AGREEMENT FOR INTERVIEW MATERIALS

To: Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Room 3517, Lewis & Clark Center, CGSC

1. I, DARIUS JUODIS, participated in an oral interview conducted by DARIUS BERNOTAS, a graduate student in the Master of Military Art and Science Degree Program, on the following date(s): 24 SEPT 2012; 01 OCT 2012.

2. I understand that the recording(s) and any transcript resulting from this interview will belong to the U.S. Government to be used in any manner deemed in the best interests of the Command and General Staff College or the U.S. Army, in accordance with the guidelines posted by the Director Graduate Degree Programs. I also understand that subject to security classifications restrictions I will be provided with a copy of the recording(s) for my professional records. In addition, prior to the publication of any complete edited transcript of this interview, I will be afforded an opportunity to verify its accuracy.

3. I hereby expressly and voluntarily relinquish all rights and interests in the recording(s) with the following caveat:

 None Other:

N/A

4. I understand that the tapes and transcripts resulting from this interview may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act, and therefore, may be releasable to the public contrary to my wishes. I further understand that, within the limits of the law, the U.S. Army will attempt to honor restrictions I have requested placed on these materials.

<u>DARIUS JUODIS</u>	<u>02 OCT 2012</u>
Name of Interviewee	Date
<u>DARILIS BERNOTAS</u>	<u>02 OCT 2012</u>
Accepted on Behalf of the Army by	Date

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