THE DOCTRINAL ORIGINS OF SPETSNAZ: SOVIET SUBMARINE-INSERTED SPECIAL OPERATIONS IN NORTHERN SCANDINAVIA DURING WORLD WAR TWO

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14. ABSTRACT

During the 1930s the Soviet Union began developing tactical and operational instructions for naval forces, describing that the Soviet Navy should be prepared for active-offensive actions in the open sea, in the air, and near the coastlines and bases of the enemy. This was a task for the Soviet Navy in both peace and war, and preparations were a continius effort.
During World War Two the Soviet Union developed special operations forces, amongst them submarine-inserted naval scouts, later referred to as spetznas. These conducted operations against German convoys supporting the German-Finnish war in northern Scandinavia and Soviet Union. From the first failed attempts, it eventually evolved into a mature, seasoned unit. The German Wehrmacht tried different methods to combat the reconnaisance parties, the agent insertions, and the raids they encountered. The intent, means, and methods of these Soviet units is similar to actions in present day.

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

THE DOCTRINAL ORIGINS OF SPETSNAZ: SOVIET SUBMARINE-INSERTED SPECIAL OPERATIONS IN NORTHERN SCANDINAVIA DURING WORLD WAR TWO, by Lieutenant Colonel Per-Olof Nordin, 106 pages.

During the 1930s, the Soviet Union began developing tactical and operational instructions for naval forces, describing that the Soviet Navy should be prepared for active-offensive actions from shore to enemy shore and bases. This was a task for the Soviet Navy in both peace and war, and preparations were a continuous effort, in order to bring the war back to the enemy as soon as possible. Some of the means to achieve this are the submarines, and the operational support of reconnaissance assets. The method is to use the submarines for deep penetration, in order to deliver effect in the form of fires, raiding parties, and agents.

Before World War Two the Soviet Red Navy developed the first steps of amphibious assault, ranging from large assaults in support of ground forces operations, to insertions of agents. When the Red Navy was separated from the Red Army, this gained momentum, and soon the Naval Infantry was formed. During World War Two, the Soviet Union developed special operations forces, amongst them submarine-inserted naval scouts, later to be knows as *spetsnaz*. These conducted operations against German convoys supporting the German-Finnish war in northern Scandinavia and Soviet Union. The first try to insert a larger force failed and instead focus was changed to scouts for reconnaissance missions, with occasional sabotage raids, which was more successful. The operations was not war winning, but tied up German forces and resources which could have been better used somewhere else. They proved invaluable, however, for the gaining of experience for and establishment of the Soviet naval special forces.

The German Wehrmacht tried different methods to combat the reconnaissance parties. During 1942, they realized that the repeated attacks on their northern convoys must have been supported by enemy observation posts along the coast of Northern Norway. However, it was not until the capture of a Soviet soldier that they understood what to look for. A series of operations were conducted, ending with an operation to lure an enemy submarine into a trap.

Based on their experience of a sudden shift from peace to war, the Soviet doctrine writers concluded that this type of reconnaissance must be conducted in peace as well as wartime. Those doctrines goes far to explain numerous instances in which Soviet/Russian submarines and *spetsnaz* apparently violated Swedish sovereignty from the 1970s to present day.

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My first acknowledgment goes to James F. Gebhardt whose enthusiastic research and translations of the many sources have been essential for this essay. He has also provided me with many valuable tips and insights. Every organization needs a tireless "doer," and Gebhardt has filled that role for the benefit of not just me, but for the U.S. Army as well.

I also would like to thank my committee who never lost faith in me. My chair Professor John T. Kuehn has guided me through this endeavor with good humor and encouragement. Professor Emeritus Jonathan M. House has tirelessly and patiently proofread and corrected this essay, thereby increasing my command of the English language. Retired Colonel Charles R. Webster has not only supported me with this thesis, he and his family has also been a good host for me and my family during our stay in USA, providing that all-important relaxation in-between classes, studies and writing.

Although I have been assisted with translations and proofreading it does not absolve me from any possible errors in this thesis, and I alone are to be blamed for any such occurrences.

Finally, and most importantly, I want to thank my wife Gira and my son Charles who have very patiently endured my seclusion and absent mind during this year. You make it all worth it, and I love you very much.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I celebrated my 20th birthday as a conscripted infantry soldier, sitting alone in a foxhole in the middle of the night, clenching my automatic rifle loaded with live rounds. Through the greenish light of a First Generation Light Amplifier (nowadays known as night-vision goggles), I stared over an empty shore transitioning into a black sea. As a sentry, I was guarding the rear approach to my platoon's Observation Post, located on an isolated Swedish island, a part of the extensive coastal-defense. The Swedish coastline is about 2400 kilometer long, and as a protection against sea-borne invasion, the Swedish Armed Forces had since the late 19th century established fortifications along the coast, armed with fixed or mobile artillery, mines, and torpedoes. This island was normally deserted during peacetime, but now the Swedish Navy had detected an unidentified underwater activity in the area. As part of the quick-reaction force at the nearest mainland infantry regiment, my comrades and I were sent to the island, with the two-fold mission of securing it, and observing the surrounding sea.

The year was 1986, and the Cold War was still hot. Although Sweden was nominally non-aligned and neutral during the Cold War, the conceived threat was coming from the Soviet Union.[1] During the 1970s it was realized that systematic violations of Swedish sea-territory was taking place, and it escalated in the 1980s, with the run-

[1] This essay will use the name Soviet Union, unless the sources cited specifically refer to the name Russia, or the language or culture of Russia.

aground Soviet submarine *U-137*, outside the most important Swedish naval base at Karlskrona, in October 1981 as the most flagrant. A RAND report summarized:

> The Soviet have conducted submarine operations in Swedish waters continuously since World War II. Although the evidence of these violations of Sweden's territorial waters is incomplete, Swedish authorities indicate that "foreign" submarine operations were carried out at irregular intervals between the 1960s and the late 1970s.[2]

These incidents led to a substantial, and costly, expansion of the Swedish sub-hunting capability. The Swedish Navy collected indicators and evidence through different sources, and used live ordnance on several occasions. It was clear that both regular as well as mini submarines were used. However, most of the violations remained inconclusive—mainly due to the oceanographic characteristics of the Bothnian and Baltic Sea—with no verified identification of the intruder. With no proof, some people argued that this was just an elaborate conspiracy by the Navy to get more funding. Due to the secret nature of under-sea warfare in general, it was difficult for the Navy to present its facts and proofs.

This led of course to opposition, from some on pacifist grounds and from others on grounds of allotment of resources, for example between the sister services. The issue focused on why, and for what purpose, would the Soviet Union in peacetime risk underwater navigation in one of the world's most difficult, narrow and extensive archipelagos? The proponents stated the reason to be preparatory reconnaissance of the coastal defense, as well as mapping sea-lanes, for a possible invasion or control of the

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[2] Gordon McCormick, *Stranger than Fiction–Soviet Submarine Operations in Swedish Waters,* A Project AIR FORCE report prepared for the United States Air Force (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, January1990), v.

Baltic Sea. For the Swedish Armed Forces personnel responsible for planning the defense of Sweden these motives were understandable and explainable, but they were hard to prove. Sweden had a good knowledge about the capability of the Soviet Baltic Fleet, but its plans and intentions were harder to assess.

During the 1980s, more and more information became publically known about Soviet armed forces. One piece of information was the role and capabilities of their special forces, commonly known as *spetsnaz*.[3] Many of the contemporary Soviet doctrines and regulations were likely known by the Western intelligence services, including those concerning special forces operations. Yet, even an outright explanation of reasons why in an instruction does not in itself provide proof of clandestine operations in a non-aligned and neutral country like Sweden. However, if it is possible to tie conceptual thought with concrete actions, then the evidence becomes more solid. Subsequently, the longer the lineage that can be established, the more is it possible to argue confidently for an aggressive reconnaissance intent, executed even in peacetime. That would be an indication of a culture likely to remain, even more so if those actions had been successful.

Consequently, for me sitting alone in the dark, one of the potential threats was Soviet *spetsnaz* infiltration, delivered by (mini-) submarines. Understandably, guarding

[3] It is a collective term for many different special operations forces that existed or exist in Russia, but this essay focuses on those forces belonging to the Russian Navy. The word *spetsnaz* is a Russian abbreviation of the term (*vojska*) *spetsialnogo naznatjenija*, which translates to (troops with) special task. In this essay, the terms *spetsnaz*, scouts or agents will be used intermittently, but all referring to the same type of special operations forces. The word *spetsnaz* is referring to a type of unit and not to a unit, and is therefore written with lower-case letters.

against Soviet, and later Russian, threats has always been a part of my 30-year military career. In my spare time, I have read history books, especially about World War Two, both as a pastime and for professional development, but also books about Soviet and Russian armed forces. The underwater activities disappeared—or at least diminished—during the first decade of the millennia, but in October 2014 it reappeared in the Swedish archipelago. The result of that sub-hunting operation[4] was again inconclusive, but it revived my interest in the Russian Armed Forces' capabilities.

In the fall 2018, I read a Swedish translation of Viktor Leonov's autobiography *Blood on the shores*, describing his experience as a Soviet naval scout, operating along the coast of northern Norway during World War Two. Given my previous experience I found the book most interesting. Therefore, when I, during my studies at Command and General Staff College one year later, was introduced to some recently translated German and Soviet original documents from World War Two, I accepted the challenge of researching them.

The main source for this essay are documents found on microfiche in the Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, translated by Major (ret.) James F. Gebhardt, U.S. Army. The Russian documents include pre-war doctrines on naval special operations, and post-war reports of their experience. The German documents include orders, reports and court statements, regarding counter-sabotage and counter-intelligence operations against Norwegian resistance and Soviet Navy units.

[4] In Swedish official terminology the operation is referred to as being an intelligence operation, since many of the sub-hunting capabilities have been stood-down during the last two decades. Therefore, what was hoped to be achieved was to gather as much information as possible.

Some of the material has been researched by Gebhardt, and I have included his research in this essay. Therefore, with some expectation and excitement I set out to find the origins of Soviet Navy special operations and its evolution, showing a foundation that influenced the present Russian Armed Forces. The general intent, as described above, is to show actual willingness by the Russian armed forces to aggressively pursue information and intelligence, even in peacetime. Concurrently, I provide some additional knowledge on Nazi-German combat against the resistance movement in Northern Norway 1942-1943, but I invite further research into that topic.

To frame my research I formulated the following problem statement: “The Soviet/Russian use of submarines to support their special operations is well established. This practice was executed and developed during World War Two. One example is the Soviet special operations in northern Norway during World War Two. The forces were inserted by different means, and in many cases by submarines. This concept had been discussed in Soviet naval circles in the early 1930s. The study aims at finding out if the Soviet experiences during the war could have created a foundation for further development and use of this practice up to present day.” Further, I proposed a research question: ”What assumptions and expectations were made in the early doctrinal work by the Soviet Navy on submarine-inserted special operations, how were such operations executed in the Soviet Northern Fleet, and how did the German authorities perceive and counter these operations in northern Norway during 1942-1943? What possible tenets could be identified?”

A basic approach of determining if a country poses a military (or other) threat to others involves assessing its intention and capabilities. Assessing capabilities is often

quite straightforward; being just a matter of counting military units, tanks, ships et cetera, and estimating their specifications. Intention, on the other hand, is more elusive since it could be harbored only in the mind of the country's leader. Therefore, it is common practice to study speeches, interviews, publications and military doctrines and regulations to determine intention and conduct. History provides scholars and analysts a way of assessing a belligerent's intentions before a conflict, and then comparing it to their actions during the conflict, giving valuable insights into the linkage between strategic thought and the actual behavior of military organizations.

This is a tri-part research. In the next chapter this essay will investigate the intent, that is, to what extent were submarine-supported special operations discussed in the doctrines before, during and after World War Two. This is done to establish how well Soviet actions during the war corresponded to their pre-war doctrines. It will then present the available submarines, the means for accomplishment. Lastly it will discuss how they were used, the chosen methods. In chapter three, the essay will look closer on how the experience was looked upon, and how it was executed of and developed.

The fourth chapter will discuss how the German Wehrmacht perceived and countered the capabilities of the Soviet Red Navy during World War Two. What indicators did the Germans notice? What proofs did they secure? What actions did they take? Is there anything that can be learnt from their experience? These sources provide an opportunity to match the activities of both belligerents and get a better after-action-review. What one side perceived as a success can be negated by the information provided by the opponent. This is probably truer when it comes to submarine hunting, compared to any other military endeavor. Even if the hunter detects air bubbles, oil spills, debris et

cetera, it does not mean that the submarine is sunk, and the final result might not reveal itself until many years later, through records like this.

The primary sources consist of two sets. These documents stems from National Archives and Records Administration, Washington DC, bought from Russian archives for use by Soviet Army Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, in the early 1990s. The first set includes some ninety German documents, from the Wehrmacht 210th Infantry Division and the 2nd Mountain Division, which both operated in northern Norway. The documents are orders and reports on operations. There are also transcripts of minutes and conversations from German conferences, as well as from interrogations of prisoners. Additionally included are also two Field Verdicts or court statements from proceedings against resistance personnel, executed under the German Martial Law imposed during occupation of Norway in World War Two. The second set consist of the Russian documents, which includes two doctrinal manuals published in 1937 and 1940 regulating Soviet Navy operations, including special purpose ones. There are also five post-war reports and publications on wartime experience, published in Soviet Union and Russia between 1950 and 2004.

If compared to the Eastern front, the Pacific theater or North Africa, the war in northern Scandinavia during World War Two has not been extensively examined. However, some research and work have been conducted, even about the topic for this essay. Apart from translating the majority of the sources for this essay, Gebhardt is also the author of *The Evolution of Soviet Concepts of Amphibious Warfare in the 1930s*,[5]

[5] James F. Gebhardt, "The Evolution of Soviet Concepts of Amphibious Warfare in the 1930s" (Essay, Soviet Army Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, KS, undated).

which he wrote while working for the Soviet Army Studies Office. It is a short study providing context and a brief description on the background of Soviet Navy special operations, and it will be a part in the chapter about Soviet doctrine.

Earl F. Ziemke is the author of *The German northern theater of operations 1940-1945*.[6] It is an official Department of the Army's Office of the Chief of Military History study on German World War Two operations in Norway and Finland, against forces other than those of the United States. It provides understanding of the German tactical, operational and strategic actions and considerations in the Scandinavia and Finland and their interest in the region.

A book that is based on many of the sources for this essay is *Blodröd augusti—Historien om de norska partisanerna* (Bloodred August—The history about the Norwegian partisans), written by Alf Jacobsen.[7] He is a Norwegian journalist and author who has published several books about World War Two. This book describes the Norwegian nationals who fled to the Soviet Union in 1940, in the wake of the Nazi-German attack. There they received training provided by the Soviet intelligence service, after which they returned to Norway as agents. This book summarize many of the activities described in the German sources, and especially the Norwegian resistance activities in northern Norway. These activities were supported by Soviet armed forces, with what today is known as Unconventional Warfare in modern U.S. Army doctrine.

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[6] Earl F. Ziemke, *The German Northern Theater of Operations 1940-1945* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1980).

[7] Alf R. Jacobsen, *Blodröd augusti–Historien om de norska partisanerna,* trans. Emeli André (Stockholm, Bokförlaget Natur och Kultur, 2008).

A Swedish book about the war in the north is *Slaget om Nordkalotten* (Battle of North Cape), written by Lars Gyllenhaal and James Gebhardt.[8] Gyllenhaal is a Swedish author and historian who has published books and articles about World War Two, but also about Soviet and Russian armed forces, and especially their special forces. In this book, co-authored with the previously mentioned Gebhardt, he explains the German war in North Cape, and the Swedish involvement in that. It also includes one chapter about Soviet special operations in Finnmark. That chapter is largely based on a research paper by Gebhardt, *The Petsamo-Kirkenes Operation: Soviet Break-through and Pursuit in the Arctic, October 1944*.

Harald G. Sunde is a Norwegian doctor living in northern Norway, with an interest in local history. In his book *I partisanenes fotspor* (In the partisans' footprints),[9] he has compiled information about remnants, and memorial artefacts from World War Two, in and around Finnmark. It also presents information about Norwegian and Soviet nationals sent as intelligence agents to the region, some of whom were later arrested by Soviet Union on suspicion of counter espionage or placed under surveillance by the Norwegian counter-espionage service. It is a source for understanding the people involved, but most of all about the terrain they operated in.

[8] Lars Gyllenhaal and James F. Gebhardt, *Slaget om Nordkalotten* (Lund: Historiska Media, 1999).

[9] Harald G. Sunde, *I partisanenes fotspor* (Kirkenes: Beallječohkka Innovation. 2019).

Finally, there is, of course, also the book that led me into this project, *Blood on the Shores*, written by Viktor Leonov.[10] It is an autobiography from one of the *spetsnaz*'s predecessors, which was inserted into Finnmark to conduct special operations behind the German lines. It is a vivid description from one of the participants, who can really describe the harsh conditions, not just in the operations themselves, but also the barren, sometimes inhospitable, terrain in northern Europe.

Of the authors mentioned above, it is really only James Gebhardt, Lars Gyllenhaal, and Alf Jacobsen that mention submarine insertions. Viktor Leonov was, according to his own account, mostly inserted by boat. Therefore, the ambition of this work is to contribute and expand on the knowledge about the Soviet use of submarines in support of special operations during World War Two, and how they took care of this experience and developed it. By doing so, I hope to show that their experiences were advantageous and productive that they have continued the practice them to this day. It is commonly recognized that a victorious side seldom changes it thinking and behavior after a war, at least its basic principles, and that similar thoughts can predict similar actions for the future. I am content with providing the historical foundation that could explain the reasons for activities that occurred in the territorial waters of Sweden during the 1980s and 1990s.

[10] Viktor Leonov, *Blood on the Shores–Soviet Naval Commandos in World War II,* trans. James F. Gebhardt (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1993).

CHAPTER 2

RUSSIAN DOCTRINE

> On Tuesday 3 February 1942 . . . the 80 meter long submarine S-101 glided slowly into Kongsfjord. To reduce the noise she steamed with her electric engines. It was pitch dark, and from the shore came an icy wind. The submarine was just a couple of hundred meters away from the snow-covered Nålnes when Captain Victor Vekke ordered the engines stop. Quietly and without rush the sailors started passing crates of provisions and equipment from the sail down onto the deck, where two rubber dinghies were prepared. The first of Vizgins radio teams was about to be landed behind German lines on the coast of Finnmark.
>
> —Alf R. Jacobsen, *Blodröd augusti –Historien om de norska partisanerna*

This chapter examines the Soviet doctrines and instructions that were in effect before, during and after World War Two. First, it will examine the intent, more specific the reasoning and motives for various operations, which then became doctrine. Second, it will describe the means projected to achieve the objectives, the submarines. Finally, the methods that were employed will be presented. The main sources for this are two temporary pre/early-war instructions.

The Doctrine

One of the governing documents for Soviet tactics during World War Two—what they call the Great Patriotic War—on operations in Northern Scandinavia was the Temporary Combat Regulations for the Naval Forces of the *RKKA*[11] 1937 (*BUMS-37*).[12]

[11] RKKA is an abbreviation for *Rabochye-Krestyanstkaya Voyenno-Morskiy Flot* (Workers' and Peasants Military Naval Fleet).

[12] Directorate of Naval Forces (DNF), Workers'-Peasants Red Army, BU MS 37, *Temporary Combat Regulations for the Naval Forces of the RKKA*, trans. James F.

It was implemented and ratified by Marshal of the Soviet Union Kliment Voroshilov, the People's Commissar of the Defense of the Soviet Union (*USSR*). It is a nine-chapter mix of doctrine and regulation for the conduct of naval warfare.

BUMS-37 as a tactical regulation was followed in November 1940 by an operational instruction: Temporary Instructions for the Conduct of Naval Operations (*BN-40*). Admiral Kuznetzov, by now People's Commissar of the Military-Naval Fleet, in his order implementing *BN-40*, gives a clear instruction that the content of *BN-40* is to be taken literally. He considered this important "at the current state of structuring and training of the Military-Naval Fleet."[13] He directed the chief of the Main Naval Staff to "develop and implement procedures for confirming the mastering and implementation of the Instructions."[14] The first sentence in the order established the instruction as the basis for "operational preparation as well as for actual combat actions of the Military-Naval Fleet."[15]

By this time, World War Two had broken out and it was emphasized that this was a temporary instruction, requiring careful examination of the war experience by different

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Gebhardt (Moscow-Leningrad: People's Commissariat of Defense of the Union SSR, Government Military Publishing House, 1937).

[13] Main Naval Staff (MNS) of the Military-Naval Fleet of the Union of SSR, *Temporary Instructions for the Conduct of Naval Operations*, trans. James F. Gebhardt (Government Military-Naval Publishing House of the NKVMF of the Union of SSR, 1940), 3.

[14] Ibid., 4.

[15] Ibid., 3.

parties before refining it for completion.[16] Therefore, the instructions are indicators of a naval force in pursuit of professionalism, striving to find its form and building on best practice. Their version of readiness is found in the following sentence: "The Military-Naval Fleet, still before the eruption of military actions, should be prepared…to conduct decisive offensive operations."[17]

The Soviet Intent

Basically, intent can be divided into "When?" and "Why?" In the following discussion this essay will show that the difference between war and peace was very vague in the Soviet Union. Secondly, it will point to some of the reasons why certain actions had to be carried out. In an order on 14 May 1939 Admiral of the Fleet 2d Rank Nikolay Kuznetzov replaced chapter 1, named General Conditions. That chapter describes some general settings for the Workers'-Peasants Naval Forces.[18] Of great interest for this essay is the sentence in the first paragraph "Any attack on the socialist state of workers and peasants will be defeated by all the power of the armed forces of the Soviet Union, with the transition of military actions to the territory of the attacking enemy."[19]

Therefore, even in defense this definition dictates that any attack shall be met, repulsed and brought to the aggressors' territory. In the light of this, it is easy to understand why the Soviet Union did not stop at their own borders in 1944, but continued

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[16] MNS, *Temporary Instructions for the Conduct of Naval Operations*, 3.

[17] Ibid., 5.

[18] DNF, *Temporary Combat Regulations for the Naval Forces of the RKKA*, 6-7.

[19] Ibid., 7.

their offensive all the way to Berlin, for the final victory in 1945. It also provides an explanation of why Russia to this day is focused on generating offensive weapons and tactics, even when Russian leaders are talking publicly about defense. The history of wars in Russia, including their Civil War 1917-1921, when several foreign powers sent troops to participate, is often a story of ravaged land and brutal actions, which makes for an appealing idea of making defense of the home country to an affair of bringing the war to the enemy territory. This is important to remember.

This thinking also brings some clarity to modern Russia's talk about spheres of interests and buffers. The conquering of other territories is not necessarily a goal in itself, but it could imply that in preparing for defense of their motherland, they assess the geo-political and military geography of neighboring countries. Assessment of terrain is a vital step in most military decision processes, and if you plan to wage war on enemy territory, you need to gather information about that territory somehow. Thus, a bottom line up front is found in their intent of bringing the war back to the aggressor's territory as quickly as possible. That is a reason for clandestine intelligence gathering—even in peacetime.

A good explanation for this reason can be found here:

> A good knowledge of the theater and all its peculiarities provides great superiority over an enemy . . . The study of the theater and its peculiarities is a constant mission of the higher level commanders, flag-rank officers, their staffs, and vessel commanders. This study should be conducted from the perspective of the missions confronting the fleet, possible enemy operations, and the relationship of forces and conditions of employment of various forms of naval forces.[20]

The thing to note here is "constant mission," and in the second paragraph of *BUMS-37* the composition of the Workers'-Peasants Naval Forces is described, with surface and

[20] MNS, *Temporary Instructions for the Conduct of Naval Operations*, 9.

submarine fleets, naval aviation, coastal defenses and supporting land-based installations.[21] These forces should always be prepared for active-offensive operations, not just in the sea or air, but also near the coastlines and bases of the enemy, in order to achieve the operational goals, and be able to support air and ground forces operating in coastal regions.[22] The obvious reason for this is to defend one's own sea lines of communication while at the same time interrupting the enemy's.

However, the Russian way of war is more aggressive than that. To achieve victory, it must be decisive and the enemy fully destroyed, and the only means to do this is through conducting battle, with the intent of destroying the enemy forces and material, and suppressing his morale and capability of resistance.[23] This is not a tactic of halting the enemy, produce a cease-fire, and then engage in diplomatic-political solutions—this is a tactic of decisive victory and punishing the aggressor.

On several occasions *BUMS-37* mentions how important it is that the naval forces be active, persistent and engaging the enemy from friendly coast all the way to the enemy's coast.[24] This aggressiveness is intentional and expected: "A constant urge to engage in combat with the enemy, with the purpose of his destruction, should lay at the basis of military training and actions."[25] By creating and maintaining this urge, the Soviet

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[21] DNF, *Temporary Combat Regulations for the Naval Forces of the RKKA*, 7.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid., 8.

[25] DNF, *Temporary Combat Regulations for the Naval Forces of the RKKA*, 8.

Navy will always maintain a preparedness to meet and retaliate any aggression, to include "even in peacetime."[26] In a discussion on operational stress[27] of the naval forces, *BN-40* explains that norms enable judgment of different courses of actions. To accurately calculate these factors *BN-40* stresses that no opportunity to collect material shall not be neglected, in peacetime or wartime.[28] Therefore, to claim that Russia does not see a real distinction between war and peace when it comes to military operations, should not be seen as overly alarmist.

At the time of the publication of *BN-40*, the Soviet Union had successfully occupied half of Poland and all the Baltic States, but also fought a desultory and nearly unsuccessful winter war with Finland. The publication is described as have being created considering experiences from the recent wars, but that future events may provide more experience of this "continuing imperialistic war."[29] Most likely, this "imperialistic war" is attributed to the Germans, conveniently forgetting Soviet actions. Nevertheless, the important thing is that the doctrine writers regarded the instructions as temporary, and

[26] DNF, *Temporary Combat Regulations for the Naval Forces of the RKKA*, 8.

[27] Operational stress is somewhat analogous with culmination or operational reach, and is made up of quantifiable norms, for example movement time, readiness, expenditure of fuel or ordnance. They are quantifiable by using practical and operational, domestic or foreign, experience. Data collection was encouraged and reflects the "scientific" approach that Socialists maintained such an ideological fervor for.

[28] MNS, *Temporary Instructions for the Conduct of Naval Operations*, 11

[29] Ibid., 3.

that further examination of the developing World War would help refine a completion of the instructions.[30]

In the section about organizing operations *BN-40* explains: "A war plan is the development of a system of measures and calculations for the creation, preparation, and employment of armed forces and economic resources of the state in a struggle against believed (possible) specific enemies for the achievement of specific military goals."[31] Attracting attention are the words "believed" or "possible" enemies, which implies peacetime planning and preparation for any anticipated conflict. This is done so that the plan and its development can meet the requirement of being able to execute with short-notice, and without prior declaration of war.[32] In order to enable a quick execution, it is necessary that the update of the war plans is systematic, measured and continuous.[33] As discussed previously, it is important for the Soviet Union to be able to bring the war to the aggressor at the earliest possible opportunity. Therefore, plans for the initial operations must be at hand: "Development of operations plans in the course of the war is constrained by time."[34]

Geography mattered. *BN-40* Section 2 states that a good knowledge of the theater provides great superiority over the enemy. Military-geographic, military-economic, and

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[30] MNS, *Temporary Instructions for the Conduct of Naval Operations*, 3.

[31] Ibid., 24.

[32] Ibid., 26.

[33] Ibid., 26-27.

[34] Ibid., 31.

military-political aspects influence operations in selection of operational axes, time, place, means and methods. This shows a great understanding of how successful naval operations require more than superior firepower, adequate protection, knowing your enemy and yourself. One must also factor in the political and economic realities, and the ever-important geography. This is true not just in terms of depth or state of the sea, but sea-lanes, currents, natural or manmade obstacles, ports and defensive measures.[35]

Section nine of *BU-40*, which is the most extensive section, present different types of operations for the Naval Fleet. The first chapter of the sections is about Operational Reconnaissance and Reconnaissance Operations. Found here is, probably, the most profound evidence of the need for clandestine intelligence gathering: "Reconnaissance should be uninterrupted. This is achieved by organizing and conducting reconnaissance both in peacetime and in wartime."[36] This is then repeated in the chapter about Mine-Obstacle Operations and Mine Warfare, where it is stated that reconnaissance data should be prepared in peacetime, so that the first operations can be executed without delay.

Placement of mines and obstacles includes the enemy's bases as well, and is intended for the destruction of enemy vessels and obstruct his lines of communications. The calculations for types, number, locality is to be based on a careful study of the terrain, to include depths, current, incoming and outgoing tides, lucidity of water and

[35] MNS, *Temporary Instructions for the Conduct of Naval Operations*, 9.

[36] Ibid., 37.

more.[37] This is information that may be collected from open sources, but in many countries this is restricted, and was even more so in the time up to and including World War Two.

Another reason for collecting information is to find out more about the enemy. Previously mentioned norms are one. The calculations of norms is based on analysis of five factors, for example general war experience, the Soviet Navy's own war-experience, and the experience of combat preparation and combat activity of foreign navy's.[38] The experience of a foreign navy's preparations and combat activities can of course be collected through open source collection, but what is really required to know in terms of capabilities and effects are usually classified. Therefore, the systemized information regarding the composition of, and the equipment of the enemy is important.[39] This also includes the gathering of information about the shore-based infrastructure, such as bases, batteries, communications equipment, and navigation aids et cetera.[40]

The Soviet Means

Already in *BUMS-37*, the submarine was recognized for its ability of providing reliable, concealed and prolonged reconnaissance near the enemy's coastline and bases.[41] Starting slowly, and seriously hampered by the October Revolution in 1917 and its

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[37] MNS, *Temporary Instructions for the Conduct of Naval Operations*, 60.

[38] Ibid., 12.

[39] Ibid., 25.

[40] Ibid., 41.

[41] DNF, *Temporary Combat Regulations for the Naval Forces of the RKKA*, 11.

aftermath, including Josef Stalin's purge of the Soviet officers corps, the Soviet Union could still claim the largest peacetime submarine fleet in the late 1930s.[42] However, submarines are just one means of delivery, and this hardware has to be supported, by the different components of Combat support. Of these components, *BUMS-37* proclaims intelligence or reconnaissance to be the most important, and it is executed by forces and means specially designated for this purpose. It is unclear if submarine-inserted forces are foreseen at this time, but only four years later that was the case, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

None of the submarines were built or intended for clandestine insertions. The *Dekabrist* class (934 tons *surfaced displacement* hereafter) was a rather failed first attempt of Soviet submarine construction. It was followed by *Leninetz* class (1025-1108 tons), where the earlier boats fared no better, but the later series became capable ocean-going vessels. The *Pravda* class (931 tons) were intended as ocean-going cruiser-submarines, but suffered a lot of flaws and became reduced to transportation submarines during World War Two, which—considering their size—they probably did well. Being based on the same construction as the most successful German World War Two-submarine, Type VII, it is not surprising that the effective workhorse of the Soviet Fleet became the *Stalinetz* (*S*) class (828-837 tons).[43]

The Soviet Northern Fleet Submarine Brigade consisted of three divisions at the outbreak of The Great Patriotic War. The 1st Division were equipped with three *K* class

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[42] Jan Breemer, *Soviet Submarines–Design, Development and Tactics* (Surrey, UK: Jane's Information Group Limited, 1989), 7.

[43] Ibid., 44-53.

(1500 tons) submarines, which was the largest Soviet-built submarine of the war.[44] The 2nd Division used six *Shchuka* class (572-590 tons) submarines. This class was the most prolific in the Soviet Fleet during the war. The earlier series, due to their limited properties, were constrained to coastal in-and-out actions, while the later series were improved to ocean-going qualities. Finally, the 3rd Division sailed six *Malyutka* (or *Malodki*) class (157-161 tons) submarines. The name is an abbreviation translating into "small boats" and the submarines were actually so small that the torpedo-tubes had to be pre-loaded at port before departure. Later series increased in size and became dubbed the *M* class (206-281 tons).[45]

For a detailed description of the Soviet submarines, see Table, page 93.

Notably, the majority of submarines were limited in size, and this was due to the fact that the Soviet Union in the inter-war period had limited resources, including economic ones. The choice was therefore between few, large vessels, or small, numerous ones. The so called Young School (mainly non-Tsarist naval officers) argued for the latter, given the extensive, and geographically separated, coasts of the Soviet Union. Their opinion could be viewed as that of a "fortress fleet," but it was probably more because of the distinct Russian notion of the navy as a supporting arm to army

[44] This was also the only Soviet submarine that experimented with submarine-based aircraft, but the, understandably, small size of the aircraft (OSGA-101) was no match for the elements of the oceans, and the trials were eventually cancelled. This submarine was about the same size as the U.S. Navy *Gato* class.

[45] Breemer, *Soviet Submarines–Design, Development and Tactics*, 48-55.

operations.[46] The only perceived open ocean threat against Soviet sea-lines of communication was expected from Japan. Hence, the main effort was put into a defensive, coastal posture.[47] Yet, as discussed earlier, the doctrine expected this defensive posture to be active-offensive, or what some call "active defense" or a "fleet actively in being."[48] With the means at hand, the Soviet Fleet attempted to do what they could with what they had.

This meant for the Soviet Northern Fleet that the small *Malyutka*s operated no further than Tanafjord. The medium-sized *Shchuka*s were assigned the area from Tanafjord to North Cape, while the large *K*s were deployed beyond North Cape.[49] This was not a rigid division, and the missions were more subject to availability rather than capability. As the war progressed, the Northern Fleet were supplemented with additional submarines, such as *K*s and some *Stalinetz*s, which made tasking more ad hoc. The extractions and insertions of patrols were usually tied to which submarine happened to be inbound or outbound at the time, making it an additional task to their main task of regular combat patrolling.

Submarines share a capability with aircraft and that is to provide deep scale of operations, and support penetration in depth of limited theaters, according to *BN-40*. The

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[46] Jacob W. Kipp, "Undersea Warfare in Russian and Soviet Naval Art, 1853-1941" (Conference Paper, Soviet Army Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, KS, June 1989), 1-2.

[47] Ibid., 50-51.

[48] See Sir Julian Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* (1911, repr., Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1988), 212.

[49] Breemer, *Soviet Submarines–Design, Development and Tactics*, 72-73.

ground forces within the Fleet, besides defending their own coastline and bases, also conduct amphibious landing operations and other actions in coastal regions.[50] Combining the submarines with ground forces then make up the first part—reconnaissance service—of the system of operational observation. The second is the service of observation and communications: Observation and reporting service, and Air warning service. The third is the service of patrol forces, and finally, all data of observation obtained by vessels and aircraft located at sea. Operational obs*ervation was an important task of every staff and should be conducted with exceptional precision.[51]

No mention of special forces or *spetsnaz* is found in neither *BUMS-37* or *BN-40*, but in *BN-40*, Section 8 Organization of Operations, Chapter 2 Organization of Forces it states that certain operations might require temporary formations of special detachments to execute special tasks. Furthermore, it states that all necessary means, surface vessels, submarines, air forces, and shore defense, are represented in the large maneuver formations or Fleets.[52] It is obvious that the concept of Combined Arms was well understood in the Soviet Armed Forces, how different means reinforce and complement each other. Of interest, is that "organization of the fleet in peacetime should to the maximum degree approach the organization for wartime."[53] Although not uncommon in

[50] MNS, *Temporary Instructions for the Conduct of Naval Operations*, 11.

[51] Ibid., 22.

[52] Ibid., 28.

[53] Ibid., 27.

most armed forces, it is nevertheless again an indication of the Soviet blurred line between war and peace.

Even if *spetsnaz* is not mentioned, Section 9 Typical Operations of *BN-40*, in Chapter 9 about Operational Reconnaissance and Reconnaissance Operations, mentions that "continual" reconnaissance is organized using for example submarines and "secret agents in the form of special service."[54] They are also mentioned as examples of "episodic" reconnaissance, although with a tiny difference: "[a]secret agent network in the form of special service."[55] One of the tenets stated about reconnaissance is that it should be reliable, and one means for accomplishment of that is agent reconnaissance, mentioned in the same paragraph.[56] Together this shows the symbiosis foreseen between men and machines to achieve what this essay has set out to reveal, and what was later executed in Northern Scandinavia during World War Two.

The Soviet Methods

There are several methods described in both *BUMS-37* and *BN-40*, as it should be in any instruction. The base line for actions are set in the introduction of *BN-40*, where the Soviet Fleet should be prepared to conduct decisive offensive operations "still before the eruption of military actions."[57] That implies preparations for operations targeting a possible enemy still at base. In order not to arouse the enemy or unnecessarily heighten

[54] MNS, *Temporary Instructions for the Conduct of Naval Operations*, 34.

[55] Ibid., 35.

[56] Ibid., 37.

[57] Ibid., 5.

the tension, there is a need for covert methods in this initial stage. *BUMS-37* recognizes submarines as able to penetrate into the enemy's bases, and conduct covert observation. However, they are restricted by slowness to deploy, limited observation (periscope), and impossibility of submitting reports.[58]

Nevertheless, the preferred method is to strike as deep and as early as possible. The need for advantage is thusly stated as: "The most important and principal fundamental of operations is the creation at the crucial moment of decisive superiority over the enemy on the main axis."[59] When the order comes, the Fleet is then ready to execute one of its stated missions, operations against enemy bases and shore objectives, thereby weakening the enemy's fleet at sea, in his bases and their exits. Therefore, the Fleet should not be tracking just the movement at sea, but also the whereabouts and layouts of the enemy's bases, its defenses and naval properties, and the composition and readiness of his fleet assets.[60]

As seen earlier, the Soviet Fleet put a lot of effort in developing plans that could be put into effect almost immediately, and this should be done "without a declaration of war or general mobilization,"[61] so as not to alert the enemy which provides an enormous advantage. This would start with what in modern terms is called shaping operations. The Soviet intent was to sequentially broaden the operational zone until it included the

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[58] DNF, *Temporary Combat Regulations for the Naval Forces of the RKKA*, 19.

[59] MNS, *Temporary Instructions for the Conduct of Naval Operations*, 6.

[60] Ibid., 34.

[61] Ibid., 26.

enemy's base area.[62] As part of the shaping they foresaw using operational *maskirovka* (Russian for deception and operational security), by employing active methods, such as false deployment, demonstrations, and—highly contemporary—disinformation through the press and agent networks.

Another possible task for any agent landed on enemy shore could be to establish the cargo content on ships leaving the enemy's port.[63] This is described as one of the elements when planning operations against enemy sea lines of communication. However, there are no specific methods prescribed. Given the means of the period, this limits them to surveillance from air by air reconnaissance, or from sea by surface or underwater vessel, or from the ground. The two former are likely limited by the distance by which they have to position them in relation to the ship observed. The latter, if adequately trained, can come as close as to actually touching the ship, providing excellent data on what is being loaded.

A submarine may not strike one as being the first choice when engaging shore-based targets, but is mentioned as a method. Operations against shore-based targets are described as having two elements: Firstly, the target is immobile, facilitating specific calculations and actions. Secondly, it is associated with penetration in depth of the enemy's operational zone.[64] Due to the fact that the torpedoes of the time were quite unreliable, most submarines had, and used as a primary weapon the deck-mounted

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[62] MNS, *Temporary Instructions for the Conduct of Naval Operations*, 21.

[63] Ibid., 54.

[64] Ibid., 42.

artillery piece. Therefore, when *BN-40* states that "Submarines are used for strikes on the approaches to the bases, and also for penetration into the depths of enemy anchorage,"[65] then it is absolutely feasible.

Yet, the paragraph in *BN-40* sees this more in a combined arms view, with a mix of aviation, surface vessels, torpedo cutters, amphibious landing craft, and submarines complementing one another, according to their special capabilities. But:

> If a raid is the selected method of action, then the forces used for the raid should be selected such that they have the capability of penetrating secretly or by surprise into the depth of the enemy's operational zone . . . In a local case, if a powerful artillery strike is not required, submarines can be employed.[66]

This means that the Soviet Fleet foresaw the use of submarines as a method to insert raiding parties, which, as shown in the next chapter, they did with some success within a two year-period.

The next example of method relates to the previous one. In the section about Typical Operations, Chapter 8 is about Amphibious Assault Operations. It begins with a definition of amphibious assault, as a maneuver of ground forces across the sea for the purpose of flank attack, deep attack, or carrying the war to the enemy's territory. It differentiates between strategic and operational assaults. The latter can be a local assault directed against a hostile fleet base or seizure of hostile coastal territory for organization of a base for subsequent operations. In contemporary U.S. doctrinal terms, it is the equivalent of a joint forcible entry operation.[67] As a support operation, *BN-40* foresaw

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[65] MNS, *Temporary Instructions for the Conduct of Naval Operations*, 45.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid., 68.

diversionary assaults, delivered by aircraft or submarines, and explained as a method for landing of separate assault groups in a large-scale landing operation. The purpose is to land "demolition" or "partisan" units to develop diversionary actions. Depending on whether the landing is a direct action or reconnaissance action will determine the size and composition of the force, from a single person to several groups.[68]

BN-40 states that reconnaissance can be organized on basis of the methods secrecy, speed, and force. That determines the size, composition, and method of deployment. It stresses that of the different methods, secrecy should be paramount.[69] A focused purpose should guide the planning, so that reconnaissance is done at specified places, and not just in the general theater,[70] and in important cases even organize supplementary or confirming reconnaissance to validate data.[71] If necessary the operation can transition into a special reconnaissance operation, conducted by troop-level or agent assets.[72] Of interest is also the mentioning of the importance of personal study of the terrain, referring to commanders and staff,[73] but also a specific mentioning of the

[68] MNS, *Temporary Instructions for the Conduct of Naval Operations*, 69.

[69] Ibid., 35.

[70] Ibid., 38.

[71] Ibid., 37.

[72] DNF, *Temporary Combat Regulations for the Naval Forces of the RKKA*, 17.

[73] MNS, *Temporary Instructions for the Conduct of Naval Operations*, 9.

commander's own actual reconnaissance himself, which have a Russian expression: *rekognostsirovka*.[74]

Summary

The doctrines tells a story of a "new" fleet trying to establish a best practice. Their intent is to prepare in peacetime, so that they can conduct active-offensive defense and bring the war back to the enemy as soon as possible. The boundary between peace and war is not solid, and active preparations vis-à-vis possible enemies is a continuous work. Some of the means to achieve this are the submarines, and the operational support of reconnaissance assets. The method is to use the submarines for deep penetration, in order to deliver effect in the form of fires, raiding parties, and agents. In the next chapter, the Soviet World War Two experience of using these combined arms will be presented.

[74] MNS, *Temporary Instructions for the Conduct of Naval Operations*, 35.

CHAPTER 3

SOVIET EXPERIENCE

> Yes, we know how to operate in the enemy's rear area; we had mastered the enemy's strong and weak points; we were proficient with our own and the Germans' weapons; and we fearlessly met the jaegers in close combat. But every scout of polar infantry who fought beyond the sixty-eight parallel knew and could do these things. We were naval scouts! Naval horizons attracted us, deep fjords and enemy bases in those fjords, coastal lines of communications.
>
> —Viktor Leonov, *Blood on the Shores–Soviet Naval Commandos in World War II,*

This chapter will present the Soviet Naval Fleet's experience with submarine-inserted reconnaissance groups. The sources are Gebhardt's study mentioned in chapter 1, a couple of autobiographies from Leonov, Makar Babikov (which was another member of the same unit as Leonov), and Vinogradov, who was the commander of the Northern Fleet submarine brigade. As part of the group involved in the decision to execute submarine-insertions, he can be considered a primary source. Also included are a Soviet Naval academic report from 1950 and the *Combat Regulations for the Naval Forces of the Military Naval Fleet of the Union of the SSR* (*BU-45*), which superseded *BUMS-37*. This chapter will begin with a presentation of the evolution of amphibious warfare, followed by a presentation of operational experiences, and finally a discussion about lessons learned and their formalization.

Evolution of Soviet Amphibious Warfare

The continental nature of Russia's October Revolution, and subsequent Civil War, combined with a strained national economy led to a downgrade of importance for the

Soviet Fleet.[75] However, once the Soviet Union was consolidated in the middle of 1920s, the construction of submarines got high priority. Influenced by the so-called Young School, the focus for the Soviet Fleet was on coastal defense and submarines, with the Fleet acting as more or less as a flank protection of the Red Army's ground maneuver.[76] This focus on coastal warfare supporting the ground forces led to an evolution of amphibious warfare. By the end of the 1930s, Soviet Union had a well-developed doctrine for amphibious warfare, but lacked the means necessary, like amphibious landing craft or naval infantry.[77]

In 1934, an instructor at the naval academy, I. S. Isakov, wrote an essay about amphibious operations, where he divided them into three types: strategic, operational, and landing parties. The latter was seen as a single, isolated operation, quite small in scale, short in duration, and tasked to achieve limited objectives of a demonstration nature.[78] In *BN-40* they had evolved into four types: strategic, operational, tactical, and diversionary. The added type was tactical, which was described as a limited assault on the flank or rear of an enemy hindering the advance of their own ground forces. The diversionary attack was similar to that of landing parties, but the added purposes now included being a

[75] Kipp, *Undersea Warfare in Russian and Soviet Naval Art, 1853-1941*, 27.

[76] Ibid., 31-32.

[77] Gebhardt, *The Evolution of Soviet Concepts of Amphibious Warfare in the 1930s*, 1.

[78] Ibid., 4.

component in other types of amphibious operations, or as support on the flank of an army.[79]

An important step in the evolution of naval warfare was taken in December 1937, when the naval forces were separated from the ground forces. Still, war was perceived as being mainly a continental affair, and the naval forces were expected to support the ground forces' objectives, but the opportunities to formulate a naval strategy with supporting tasks in their own right now opened up. That also meant a need for organizing naval ground components, and in July 1939 the Baltic Fleet formed the Separate Special Rifle Brigade. That was followed in 1940 with a ski detachment and a special purpose battalion [*batalon spetsialnogo naznatjenija*], *spetsnaz*.[80] However, the specialized transports for amphibious landing units were still lacking, and that meant that the different Fleets had to improvise for most of World War Two.[81]

The First Experiences

The Northern Fleet Commander, Admiral A. G. Golovko, turned to the commander of the Submarine Brigade, Captain N. I. Vinogradov, and asked: "Speak to me as an experienced *malyutochnik*[82] . . . Is it possible to place 13 scouts on board an M-type submarine?" [Vinogradov replied] "We have never had to attempt such a tasking . . .

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[79] MNS, *Temporary Instructions for the Conduct of Naval Operations*, 68-69.

[80] Gebhardt, *The Evolution of Soviet Concepts of Amphibious Warfare in the 1930s*, 6.

[81] Ibid., 6.

[82] Russian nickname for submariners on the *Malyutka*-class submarines

I will have to study the matter."[83] It had come time to improvise. On 22 June 1941, Nazi-Germany attacked the Soviet Union. In northern Scandinavia, a combined German-Finnish force advanced with the objective of capturing Murmansk. However, the offensive was eventually halted at the Litsa River and the war—in this barren, harsh land—turned into a war of attrition.[84]

The German-Finnish forces were within reach of the Soviet submarine-base in Polyarnyy, and therefore the Soviet Fleet and the Red Army shared a common intelligence need on the enemy's positions and actions. What routes did convoys travel? How did they sail? Where did they stop? Where were their anti-submarine assets located? Where were their minefields? The first infiltrations were done by small torpedo patrol boats or slow-moving guard cutters, but that became increasingly difficult.[85] Hence, the idea of submarine-inserted scouts came in consideration. A. G. Golovko feared a German amphibious assault on Rybachiy Peninsula, some 50 kilometers northwest of Polyarnyy. Therefore, his priority request for information was if the Germans had any amphibious-landing-capable assets in northern Norway. He tasked Captain 3rd Rank Pavel Vizgin, chief of the intelligence staff section, to develop an intelligence collection plan.[86]

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[83] Nikolay I. Vinogradov, *Podvodnyy Front* [Underwater front], trans. James Gebhardt (Moscow: Voyennoye izdatelstvo, 1989), 1.

[84] Ziemke, *The German Northern Theater of Operations 1940-1945*, 154-156.

[85] Vinogradov, *Podvodnyy Front*, 1.

[86] Makar Babikov, *Letom Sorok Pervogo* [Summer of '41], trans. James Gebhardt (Moscow: Sovetskaya Rossiya, 1980), 1.

Vizgin assigned named areas of interest amongst his subordinates: The immediate combat zone, including the coast; German second-echelon forces; Finnish and Norwegian ports. Realizing that this included a large portion of Norwegian territory, Vizgin's deputy, Major Dobrotin, came up with the idea of recruiting some of the Norwegian nationals that had fled from Norway to the Soviet Union, after the German attack on Norway the previous year. This was approved, and the task of recruiting them fell upon Senior Lieutenant Kudryavtsev, one of the intelligence staff. Many of the Norwegians who fled were communists, and thought they would be received as comrades when they arrived. Awkwardly, the first refugee, Alf Mikkelsen, was arrested and sentenced for espionage and unlawful border crossing to labor camp, where he perished within a year and a half. That was a fate he would share with many of those following him.[87]

The information collection plan was approved. Next on the agenda was to form a detachment of scouts, directly subordinated to the intelligence staff section. Golokov approved and authorized a seventy-man strong unit in a first step, with the goal of having a company-sized unit of 140. It was decided that this first batch should be recruited from the fleet sportsmen, and therefore the fleet physical training officer, Captain Domozhirov, was invited into the selection. Being involved as he was, knowing many of the men, and being physically fit himself, it was natural to appoint him as the new unit's commander. Because it was already a secretive and isolated base, the submarine-base in Polyarnyy

[87] Jacobsen, *Blodröd augusti–Historien om de norska partisanerna*, 32-36.

was chosen as the scouts' base. The submarine brigade was also responsible for equipping and logistically supporting them.[88]

Once selected, the unit started its combat training. Being fleet officers, few had experience or training in ground combat, so the deputy of the intelligence-staff section, Dobrotin, and another staff officer became responsible for the combat training, as being the only individuals with some experience.[89] Thus, on 5 July 1941 the Northern Fleet Reconnaissance Detachment was officially activated. One of the first selectees was Viktor Leonov, a submariner wanting to do more, and he describes the training:

> After breakfast, Motovilin led us into the hills and showed us how to move and stay hidden in the rocks, how to throw a grenade, and how to thrust with a bayonet. We made a good effort, and after just two days Motovilin, satisfied with our initial success, said, 'Men, you're good, but don't tell anyone! Of course, you'll have to learn a lot more, but there is no time. We'll assemble tonight for more training.'[90]

If this seems inadequate, it seems even more so considering that the unit within one week was out on its first operation. It was to be a raid. They landed on a shore behind the German main line, and the mission was to attack a strongpoint on a hill. After an intense firefight with the German Mountain Troops, they withdrew to their boats and left, having lost two scouts.[91] At this and on the following operation there were no Norwegians participating. At the end of July 1941, Golokov was informed that 18 Norwegians had

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[88] Babikov, *Letom Sorok Pervogo*, 3.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Leonov, *Blood on the Shores–Soviet Naval Commandos in World War II*, 18.

[91] Ibid., 18-22.

been issued weapons and were receiving training, at which point he ordered that they should participate in the next mission.[92]

The Norwegian debut took place on the fourth operation, in the beginning of August 1941. It was to involve the entire reconnaissance detachment, and the mission was to execute a full raid on the northernmost flank of the German line. It turned out to be costly one. The unit suffered eight killed in action and thirty wounded, mainly through German fighters strafing their boats on their way back to base.[93] All attacks so far had been on objectives on the Soviet side of the border. Possibly realizing the value of the Norwegians, and not wanting to waste them on combat missions in the close battle-area, Golovko now wanted to shift focus to the enemy's deep area, Norway and Finland.[94]

Golokov wanted to insert groups, arranged around a core of Norwegians, but with Soviet radio operators, to observe the bringing up of reserves, munition storages, arriving ship and aircraft. For this, Vizgin was authorized to start recruiting radio operators from the commercial and fishing fleets. Another other issue concerned their means of insertion. So far, the operations had been within hours away of boat travel, but their next objectives laid at least a day's travel away. The existing surface vessels used were both too slow and too small to cope with the Arctic Sea, especially as harsh autumn and winter weather approached. To this end, the detachment were issued with sea-going cutters. The other option was to use aviation. This had dual purpose, both as means of insertion, using

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[92] Babikov, *Letom Sorok Pervogo*, 3-4.

[93] Ibid., 4.

[94] Makar Babikov, *Otryad Osobogo Naznacheniya* [Special Purpose Detachment], trans. James Gebhardt (Moscow: Sovetskaya Rossiya, 1986), 4.

amphibious aircraft (i.e. flying boats) or by parachute drop, but also for aerial re-supply of provisions and ammunition.[95]

Enter the Submarine

With three means of insertion—by foot, by surface vessel, and by air—it was now time to investigate the fourth, submarines (sub-surface). After having received the question from the Fleet Commander Golovko, Vinogradov turned to one of his subordinates, Nikolay Morozov. He was the commander of the *M*-class submarine division. Morozov met with Kudryavtsev (who had recruited the Norwegians and was now designated as the leader of the first submarine-inserted patrol), to discuss the issue at hand: how to fit thirteen scouts, with weapons and equipment, into the smallest submarine in the Soviet fleet?[96]

A lot of creativity was required to accommodate the scouts. Morozov explained: "We attempted to explore the possibility of permitting the scouts to bring [on board] as much as possible: their mission was to be in the enemy rear for approximately two months!"[97] Still, the submarine had to be operated by the crew, and all the mechanisms had to be serviced. An indication of non-existent familiarization with the submarine beforehand is that the senior submariner had to brief the scouts how to move onboard, where to sit, and what to touch and what not to touch.[98] In the end, scouts and their

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[95] Babikov, *Otryad Osobogo Naznacheniya*, 4-5.

[96] Vinogradov, *Podvodnyy Front*, 1.

[97] Ibid., 2.

[98] Babikov, *Otryad Osobogo Naznacheniya*, 7.

equipment was dispersed in whatever space available, from the torpedo-compartment at the prow to the engine room in the aft. On the morning of 24 September 1941, the submarine *M-173* left its base and headed for northern Norway.[99] During the dark hours the submarine sailed surfaced, and during daylight submerged. This was so the submarine could make better time on the surface while at the same time using its diesel engines to charge the batteries that were used for sub-surface propulsion.

Forty-eight hours later, it arrived to its destination on the eastern coast of Varanger Peninsula, at Langbunes. Spending the day grounded on the bottom, they used the periscope to determine the most suitable landing site. After dark *M-173* made its way closer to the shoreline, to a distance of one hundred and eighty meters from the shore.[100] The strong tide made it difficult to maintain position, so the anchor had to be dropped, however, only so much as just touching the bottom. This was done to facilitate escape, in case the submarine was detected from the air, sea or ground. For that same reason, the submarines were under strict order to not surface with the bow towards the shore.[101] By

[99] Miroslav Morozov, *Podvodnyye Lodki VMF SSSR v Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyne 1941-1945 gg. Chast 3. Severny Flot; letopis boevykh pokhodov* [Submarines of the Naval Forces of the USSR in the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945; Part 3. Northern Fleet: summary of sorties], trans. James Gebhardt (Moscow: Izdatelstvo "Strategiya KM," 2004), 44.

[100] Vinogradov, *Podvodnyy Front*, 2.

[101] Naval General Staff, Naval Academic Directorate (NGS-NAD), *Collection of Materials on the Experience of Combat Activities of the Naval Forces of the USSR, No. 38, Intelligence Support to the Northern Fleet during the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945),* trans. James Gebhardt (Moscow: Naval Press of the Ministry of the Navy of the USSR, 1950), 4.

just touching the bottom soil, the submarine could depart immediately, hoisting anchor as she sailed.

As soon as the submarine was secured, the crew and scouts passed equipment from the sail[102] down on to the deck, while at the same time inflating two rubber boats, using a low air pressure hose from the bridge. Three scouts, together with some equipment, set off in the dark with the first rubber boat toward the shore. The second boat with equipment, rowed by one of the submarine's crew, followed some minutes later. Those on the submarine waited with tension. In case the landing party was confronted, they were supposed to detonate a grenade, but the silence remained. Suddenly, the crewmember returned with the two boats. The rest of the landing took 90 minutes, and Kudryavtsev was the last one to leave the submarine, likely to make sure every last piece of equipment was brought ashore.[103] The entire landing operation took 45 minutes.[104]

Of the thirteen scouts, six were Norwegians, and of the remaining seven Russian, two were Norwegian-Russians from the Kola Peninsula. Their mission was to set up a base for partisan warfare, gather intelligence, and to establish contact with the Norwegian resistance. Once on the ground they soon realized that the harsh climate, the barren terrain, and the general lack of a population to muster for a partisan force would make it hard to achieve the objectives. Within a few days, they would be reported by a

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[102] Sail is a naval term for the tower, conning tower or bridge of a submarine.

[103] Vindogradov, *Podvodnyy Front*, 2.

[104] NGS-NAD, *Collection of Materials on the Experience of Combat Activities of the Naval Forces of the USSR, No. 38, Intelligence Support to the Northern Fleet during the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945)*, 5.

Norwegian they had met, leading to engagements with the Wehrmacht, killing in total four scouts, while the rest had to withdraw before finally being extracted.[105] That raises the question whether the Norwegians, of which five out of six were from the east coast of Varanger Peninsula,[106] were consulted about the mission before landing? Given their local knowledge, they should have discouraged such a futile task.

However, the task did align with the description of a diversionary task in BN-40. Vizgin's plan for the operation was that after the first landing, there would be subsequent landings every two weeks to reinforce this projected partisan force. The aim was to make the Germans feel unsecure, forcing them to task more forces for rear and coastal guard duties instead of reinforcing the frontline troops. Modern doctrine calls this "economy of force."[107] As an advance force, the units' principal task was to reconnoiter suitable locales, and the locations and supply routes used by the Germans, and not let themselves get involved in any engagements. Thereby, they would literally adhere to *BN-40*, which stated that the purpose of a diversionary assault landings is "by means of concealed and surprise landing on enemy territory, to develop diversionary (demolition, partisan) actions."[108] The key word in this case would be "develop," meaning to create the conditions for further operations.

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[105] Jacobsen, *Blodröd augusti–Historien om de norska partisanerna*, 62-63.

[106] Sunde, *I partisanenes fotspor*, 76.

[107] Babikov, *Otryad Osobogo Naznacheniya*, 6.

[108] MNS, *Temporary Instructions for the Conduct of Naval Operations*, 69.

Returning to the operation, revealed to the Wehrmacht, the patrol fled out into the wilderness, from where the leader Kudryavtsev then radioed back to Northern Fleet command post and informed them about their current situation. They also recommended the ensuing landings to be canceled. This was agreed by the command post, who not just canceled the planned landing of the main body, but also ordered the group to cancel their mission and make their way back to Langbunes for extraction. Three weeks after their landing they were back at the same shore they had been inserted at. The promised submarine, *M-176*, did not appear. According to one source, the submarine failed to detect any signal from the shore on the first night. On the second night, again no signal was detected. Then the submarine commander decided to send two rubber boats with armed sailors to search for the scouts on shore, but without finding anyone. *M-176* was then informed that the scouts had moved on to Persfjord on the northern coast of Varanger Peninsula, and was redirected there. After several unsuccessful attempts, due to the weather and enemy actions, it finally returned empty-handed to base on 25 October.[109]

On land, the scouts decided to divide into two groups. One group made its way to Kiberg, a small fishing village about 11 kilometers northeast of Langbunes, where they eventually bought a small boat, which they then rowed and sailed across the bay to the Soviet controlled Rybachiy Peninsula.[110] The other group marched some 18 kilometers

[109] NGS-NAD, *Collection of Materials on the Experience of Combat Activities of the Naval Forces of the USSR, No. 38, Intelligence Support to the Northern Fleet during the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945)*, 19-20.

[110] Babikov, *Otryad Osobogo Naznacheniya*, 17.

across the barren mountains to Persfjord, where they were provided refuge by a local fisherman. From there they contacted the Northern Fleet command post via radio, and requested extraction.[111]

While they waited in a cabin for the submarine to arrive, a German patrol discovered them. The scouts fanned out in the house and the surrounding terrain to take firing positions. Lieutenant Kudryavtsev and one Norwegian posted themselves on the ground floor of the cabin. When the Germans attacked the cabin and breached into it through a window, the two men rushed out through the front door. Kudryavtsev turned, threw a hand grenade through one of the windows, before running for cover. Unfortunately, during the sprint, he and another Norwegian were hit by German fire, killing both men.[112] The rest of the group made a fighting withdrawal, breaking contact and were able to make it to a new hiding place. Finally, on the evening of 14 November, they could be extracted by the submarine *M-172*.[113]

The first submarine-insertion of a Northern Fleet Reconnaissance Detachment had lasted fifty-five days, in fall and winter weather, and cost the lives of four scouts, including the scout leader Kudryavtsev. On a negative note, they had failed to establish a partisan movement or sabotage anything, but as a positive they had gathered some intelligence, made contacts with local resistance, and shown that submarine-insertions

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[111] Babikov, *Otryad Osobogo Naznacheniya*, 18-19. See also Jacobsen, *Blodröd augusti–Historien om de norska partisanerna,* 64-65.

[112] Babikov, *Otryad Osobogo Naznacheniya*, 16.

[113] NGS-NAD, *Collection of Materials on the Experience of Combat Activities of the Naval Forces of the USSR, No. 38, Intelligence Support to the Northern Fleet during the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945)*, 20.

was feasible. However, on an operational level the raid had some success. The most important achievement was that the raid had shown the German command that the peace had ended in northern Norway. They now had to reinforce the garrisons, deploy guns along the coast, establish observation and guard posts, and tighten the control of the Norwegian population.[114] The German attack on Murmansk in June 1941 had culminated, because the force "had been determined by what could be spared in Norway and not by the requirements of the operation."[115] There would not be any more forces to spare after this raid.

Lessons Learned

The insertions would continue, and the experience would continue to grow. One problem that soon revealed itself was the choosing of observation posts. The problem facing Northern Fleet command was that the selection of suitable sites was made difficult in that enemy observation posts were already located in such places.[116] *BN-40* made only one mention about the location of an observation post, and that says that it should be in a place where reconnaissance data may genuinely be obtained.[117] The scout patrols that were inserted through the air or by the ground were limited in what location they could reach on the shore. The advantage that those inserted by surface vessels or submarines

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[114] Babikov, *Otryad Osobogo Naznacheniya*, 19-20.

[115] Ziemke, *The German Northern Theater of Operations 1940-1945*, 154-155.

[116] NGS-NAD, *Collection of Materials on the Experience of Combat Activities of the Naval Forces of the USSR, No. 38, Intelligence Support to the Northern Fleet during the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945)*, 3.

[117] MNS, *Temporary Instructions for the Conduct of Naval Operations*, 38.

had, was that they could land at sites only accessible from the sea. That meant that it was difficult for any enemy patrols to detect them. However, the next chapter will present what the Germans learned about the matter.

Probably an aspect of economy of force, but also likely due to the limited size of their submarines, normally a submarine conducted a single mission in a sortie. This meant that either it picked up or landed a reconnaissance group, before it went and took up station at sea or returned to base. Very seldom was the insertion or extraction the single mission of a submarine, and equally seldom did a boat exchange one patrol for another. Possibly, this was done to preserve the secrecy of the patrol and its mission, but also a way of mitigating detection by antisubmarine units. The less time spent surfaced for loading or off-loading, the better.[118]

The choice of landing sites was guided by the manner in which it permitted the submarine to get as close as possible to the beach, since the shorter the distance to shore, the less time required for rowing back and forth of the rubber boats.[119] Still, it had to be far away enough so that the depth allowed the submarine to submerge in case of a threat. This meant that the mission of insertion or extraction was given to the submarine commander who best knew the chosen area.[120] Those who know the area best were the

[118] NGS-NAD, *Collection of Materials on the Experience of Combat Activities of the Naval Forces of the USSR, No. 38, Intelligence Support to the Northern Fleet during the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945)*, 3.

[119] Ibid., 5.

[120] Ibid., 3.

Norwegians, and several were employed as pilots on the Soviet submarines when they were operating off the coast of Norway.[121]

To find the landing sites, the submarine usually arrived submerged during the day. If possible, it would ground and then the commander would determine his location and chose the most appropriate landing site on the shore. It is not mentioned, but it is highly probable that the choosing of the site was done in cooperation with the scout patrol leader. During the wait, the submarine would keep a constant hydro acoustic watch, surveilling for enemy antisubmarine boats. When it was time to surface, the periscope was raised and the horizon scanned, before the submarine moved into position for surfacing.[122]

Nevertheless, finding the right landing spot was still difficult. On 1 April 1942, submarine *K-1* had arrived during the day, ascertained its position, determined the landing site, and then waited until dark. Once the landing operation started and the rubber-boats approached the shore it was discovered that they were unable to land due to the steepness of the terrain. The landing was aborted, and the submarine spent another nine days reconnoitering the coastline, before it finally found a suitable location where it could land the reconnaissance party.[123]

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[121] Jacobsen, *Blodröd augusti–Historien om de norska partisanerna*, 89, 107, 117.

[122] NGS-NAD, *Collection of Materials on the Experience of Combat Activities of the Naval Forces of the USSR, No. 38, Intelligence Support to the Northern Fleet during the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945)*, 3-4.

[123] Ibid., 5-6.

Once surfaced the submarine commander dispatched observers topside to keep watch on the air, ground and surface of the sea. How important this was is exemplified by an insertion by the *Shchuka* submarine *Shch-403*, that began on 14 February 1942 at the deserted fisherman's village Opnan, some ten kilometers east of North Cape. Two rubber-boats set off, with three scouts and two sailors as oarsmen, in the heavy sea. When they did not return in time, the rubber-boats was retracted via the attached safety lines, and found to be empty of both personnel and equipment. A search party was dispatched but returned without any news. The submarine commander, Lieutenant Semyon Kovalenko, was forced by the deteriorating weather to abandon further search attempts.[124]

He did, however, in the following couple of days return to try to establish contact with the landed party, to no avail. On 19 February, the submarine had surfaced to charge its batteries, when the lookouts failed to detect two German warships approaching, who immediately opened fire on the submarine. Believing that Kovalenko was mortally wounded, he was left topside, when *Shch-403* tried to make an emergency dive. She was rammed amidships by one of the German ships, and as it ground across the hull of the submarine, the German sailors were able to reach down and snatch the wounded Kovalenko, before *Shch-403* disappeared beneath the surface. Kovalenko would die as a prisoner of war a few months later.[125] Russian sources on the other hand claims that

[124] Jacobsen, *Blodröd augusti–Historien om de norska partisanerna*, 84-85.

[125] Ibid., 85-86.

Kovalenko was wounded, washed overboard and drowned.[126] The scouts on shore were never heard of again.[127]

Once the surrounding area was considered safe the crew immediately started to prepare the rubber-boats, while the scouts and the rest of the crew started to pass the equipment to the deck. Personnel with only handguns and a limited quantity of supplies were first brought to the shore. If everything was calm, they signaled back to the submarine, and the rest of the personnel and equipment could be ferried in. If there was a large amount of cargo, the submarine could sometimes bring a larger boat, capable of bringing all equipment in one trip. To have a rapid and precise landing, everything should

[126] Morozov, *Podvodnyye Lodki VMF SSSR v Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyne 1941-1945 gg. Chast 3. Severny Flot; letopis boevykh pokhodov*, 71.

[127] This story contains some even more strange and disturbing events. According to some sources, the scouts fell in the water and drowned during the landing attempt. Others say that at least one of them survived. Most, if not all, equipment and provisions were lost at sea. Nonetheless, the only proven survivors were the two sailors sent along to row the boats, Nikolai Sjirokov and Mikail Klimov. They were captured by German authorities at the end of March, freezing and starving. During the subsequent investigation in the vicinity of the landing site, the Germans found human bones, body parts and even a human head. What remained of the bodies could not be identified, and exactly how they died could not be established. Sjirokov and Klimov would eventually be brought to Oslo, where they were presented as cannibals in a press conference The Nazi authorities saw this as proof of the Russian sub-human nature, and used it as propaganda to justify the war against the Soviet Union. In an interrogation, Sjirokov and Klimov said that everybody in the landing party had survived, but the scouts had been unwilling to assist in the collection of food, which made Sjirokov and Klimov decide to kill them and eat them instead. Sometime later they were discovered by a fishing crew of four Norwegians, who gave them some food in exchange for money. These four would later be arrested by the Germans, and then tried and convicted before being executed, for not having reported the Soviet sailors to the authorities. Jacobsen, *Blodröd augusti–Historien om de norska partisanerna*, 86-87. See also Sunde, *I partisanenes fotspor*, 140-142.

be scheduled: In what order should personnel and equipment come topside, who should provide guard et cetera, in order to minimize the time spent on the surface.[128]

During the extraction, the same procedures were taken to establish position and security when the submarine arrived. Before sending any rubber-boats to the shore the correct signals would be exchanged, which meant that it was absolutely forbidden to send a boat to look for any missing extraction party. This is exemplified in the following quotation:

> The submarine . . . arrived 6 April. Trygve flashed his flashlight five times. The submarine responded with three red or green flashes…After that, Trygve, Leif and I set out in Loe's rowing boat. When we got closer we exchanged the watchwords: Oskar and Alf.[129][Author's translation]

Everything was carried out in darkness, but to keep track of the rubber-boats they could use agreed signals with the submarine. As soon as the scouts were on board, they were immediately brought down into the submarine. Their equipment would be passed down the deck hatch into the command center, and later distributed throughout the compartments available. Then the submarine would depart as discretely as possible.[130]

However, the captain of a ship is responsible and makes the final decision to deviate from any practice. One example of skillful initiative was shown by the commanders of *M-176* and *M-172*. The first several attempts by *M-176* to extract a

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[128] NGS-NAD, *Collection of Materials on the Experience of Combat Activities of the Naval Forces of the USSR, No. 38, Intelligence Support to the Northern Fleet during the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945)*, 4.

[129] Jacobsen, *Blodröd augusti–Historien om de norska partisanerna*, 116.

[130] NGS-NAD, *Collection of Materials on the Experience of Combat Activities of the Naval Forces of the USSR, No. 38, Intelligence Support to the Northern Fleet during the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945)*, 4.

reconnaissance group from Persfjord in northern Norway failed due to bad weather and enemy activity, even though the commander of *M-176* brook procedure on one night, sending one rubber-boat ashore with a search-party looking for the scouts. It eventually had to return to base and was replaced by *M-172* instead. Their first attempt also failed, when they were unable to detect any signal from shore. The next night, while surfacing, the submarine heard the propellers of an enemy patrol craft passing overhead. Again, in violation of procedure, the commander of *M-172* decided to take a chance and surface anyway. On the surface, they shortly afterwards detected the agreed signal from shore, and were able to extract the five-man team and return to base.[131]

It is notable that in the sources and readings, there does not appear to be much of sustainment planning involved. The doctrine is also vague on this subject, and in the staff studies and other literature it seems to be on an ad-hoc basis. This is peculiar, considering that some surveillance operations could last up to a year and a half, spent living in a cave, looking out over the Arctic Ocean.[132] A Soviet source mentions a landing on the night of 6 October of three scouts with two and a half tons of provisions, to support a six-month operation, as a success even though encumbered by severe weather.[133] However, what it failed to recognize was the fact that due to fatigue the three scouts left it on the beach for

[131] NGS-NAD, *Collection of Materials on the Experience of Combat Activities of the Naval Forces of the USSR, No. 38, Intelligence Support to the Northern Fleet during the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945)*, 7-8.

[132] Sunde, *I partisanenes fotspor*, 162-163.

[133] NGS-NAD, *Collection of Materials on the Experience of Combat Activities of the Naval Forces of the USSR, No. 38, Intelligence Support to the Northern Fleet during the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945)*, 18.

the night, instead of carrying it up the mountain, only to realize the day after that the severe weather had took most of it out to sea. The patrol almost perished due to famine, until they got assistance from a nearby Norwegian family and could continue their mission.[134]

Nonetheless, a majority of the landings and extractions were successful. The Soviet General Naval Staff in 1950 concluded that it depended on several factors. Training of the landing party and the small boat handlers, going to and from the submarine was one. The second was the importance of secrecy in preparation and execution. Third was precise identification of the reconnaissance patrol before extraction. A preliminary reconnaissance of the area to establish enemy patrol pattern was the fourth. Finally, a rapid and concealed execution of the landing was essential.[135]

Exactly how many landing and extractions that were attempted or executed in northern Norway during World War Two is disputed. The Naval General Staff 1950 study claimed thirty-nine landings and extractions, out of which twenty-five were successful and fourteen were not.[136] Miroslav Morozov says in his summary that it was twenty-seven.[137] However, Jacobsen and Sunde describes in their writings at least eleven

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[134] Sunde, *I partisanenes fotspor*, 148-149.

[135] NGS-NAD, *Collection of Materials on the Experience of Combat Activities of the Naval Forces of the USSR, No. 38, Intelligence Support to the Northern Fleet during the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945)*, 3.

[136] Ibid., 5.

[137] Morozov, *Podvodnyye Lodki VMF SSSR v Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyne 1941-1945 gg. Chast 3. Severny Flot; letopis boevykh pokhodov*.

landings and extractions not mentioned in the Soviet/Russian sources above.[138] All sources agree that the first insertion happened on 24 September 1941. Morozov claims the last insertion took place on 6 October 1943, and that the extraction of that group was a failed attempt on 9 March 1944. This is acknowledged by Jacobsen, who tells that the group took refuge with a Norwegian family until they could return to the Soviet Union. Jacobsen states the last insertion was executed on 5 April 1944. The two Soviet scouts that were inserted was eventually captured by the Germans and never extracted.[139]

Doctrinal Change

On 1 December 1945, Admiral of the Fleet Kuznetsov ordered the implementation of Combat Regulations for the Naval Forces of the Military Naval Fleet (*BU-45*). It rescinded *BUMS-37*. In connection with the fact that all experiences from the war had not yet been studied properly, these regulations were to be considered as temporary. It required that all fleet commanders together with their subordinates carefully

[138] Jacobsen, *Blodröd augusti–Historien om de norska partisanerna*: 3 February 1942, 81; 28 October 1942, 273; 20 February 1943, 274; 1 April 1943, 274; 6 April 1943, 274; 7 October 1943, 275; 5 April 1944, 275; Sunde, *I partisanenes fotspor*: 1 April 1942, 162-163; 4 April 1942, 110-111; 23 September 1943, 22-23; 19-20 October 1943, 103.

[139] There is an inconsistency between Jacobsen and Sunde. They both agree that two Soviet agents were landed on the night 5-6 April 1944. However, Jacobsen states that the submarine continued and at another location inserted the Norwegian national Trygve Eriksen, whose mission was to reconnoiter the battleship *Tirpitz* anchorage. He was later extracted at an undisclosed time and location. Sunde on the other hand claims that Eriksen had been inserted during the winter and that the submarine now picked him up on the shore after landing the Soviet agents. He goes on and tells how Eriksen met another Norwegian national, Ivar Moe, in the mountain who worked for Great Britain. The two talked for a couple of hours, sharing experiences (but no intelligence) and a vodka, before separating. It was eventually British bombers who would destroy Tirpitz 12 November 1944.

study the regulations and then submit suggestions of changes and supplements by 1 October 1946. This is to be understood as an effort to gather the experience and best practice from the World War Two. It was expected to publish a permanent regulation on 1 January 1947.[140]

That the Soviet Fleet had gained a lot of experience during the war is not surprising. BU-45 contained fourteen chapters compared to the nine chapters of *BUMS-37*. The striking thing in the reading of the two regulations is that *BU-45* presents a service, which not only matured during the eight years that had passed, but also gained a *confident* maturity. In 1937, the fleet was a part of the Workers'-Peasants Red Army. Apart for those sections specifically talking about support of ground forces, it is implied in many other places as well, as presented earlier in chapter 2. *BU-45* contains one chapter on how to defeat an enemy amphibious assault landing and another chapter about naval gunfire in support of ground forces operating on a coastline. The rest of the chapters are about how to maneuver a fleet with its vessels, and how to fight with them.

While *BUMS-37* talked about reconnaissance in general terms, and gave examples how it could be conducted, *BU-45* had a section about reconnaissance's role in combat support, as well as how it is supposed to be executed. It also makes a distinction between reconnaissance and patrolling. Another distinction is made between combat in enemy coastal regions, and amphibious assault. Both are given a chapter each. The former also

[140] People's Commissariat of the Military Naval Fleet of the Union of the SSR, Main Naval Headquarters of the VMF (MNF-MNH), BU-45, *Combat Regulations for the Naval Forces of the Military Naval Fleet of the Union of the SSR*, trans. James Gebhardt (Moscow-Leningrad: Directorate of the Naval Publishing House NKVMF of the Union of the SSR, 1946), 5.

distinguishes between offensive actions and raiding actions, with the difference being in duration.

Section 5 in Chapter 2 B is entitled Amphibious Landing of Reconnaissance-Diversionary Force. Examples of missions are reconnaissance, diversionary actions, capture of prisoners, and reception from shore of own scouts and parties. These tasks are executed by reconnaissance units of naval infantry, and special teams like sapper-demolition, or engineer assault. The mentioning of naval infantry is interesting, and shows that such infantry was now an independent branch of the Soviet Fleet. *BUMS-37* suggested the use Red Army units for similar tasks. Depending on the mission and target, the force might range from battalion down to small groups of two-three men. The delivery options include parachute insertion, surface vessel insertion, and insertion by submarine.[141] From a vague beginning in *BUMS-37*, from *BU-45* and after this method became an established practice.

Summary

In the early days of the Soviet Union there was an emphasis on submarine warfare as a cost-effective way of defending the motherland. At the same time thoughts of offensive defense were being discussed, and there was a will to bring the war to the enemy's territory as quickly as possible. That developed into the first steps of amphibious assault, ranging from large assaults in support of ground forces operations, to insertions of agents to reconnoitering or executing diversionary actions. When the Soviet Fleet was

[141] MNF-MNH, *Combat Regulations for the Naval Forces of the Military Naval Fleet of the Union of the SSR*, 6.

separated from the Red Army, this gained momentum, and soon the Naval Infantry was stood up.

The first trial during World War Two in the Soviet-Norwegian theater was intended to insert large numbers of troops or agents in order to establish a partisan movement. This failed miserably and the decision was made to focus instead on small groups of scouts for reconnaissance mission, with occasional sabotage raids, which was more successful. The operations cannot claim to have been war winning, but they did tie up German forces and resources that could have been better used somewhere else. They proved invaluable, however, for the gaining of experience for and establishment of the Soviet naval special forces. The next chapter will present the German counter-actions to these Soviet insertions of reconnaissance and diversionary groups.

CHAPTER 4

GERMAN COUNTERMEASURES

> 'The cool-blooded ramming hit the submarine's weakest point with full force. At straight angle and with a speed of 13 knots the double reinforced ice-bow cut through the pressure hull and capsized the submarine, confirmed by the escaping air. The force is illustrated by the submarine-hunter's anchor snapped in two when it cut through the sail', wrote the flotilla commander, Lieutenant Commander Erich Köplin in the report. The Soviet submarine M-106 *Leninsky Komsomolets* was built by money collected through the Young Communists in Leningrad. It never returned to Polarnoje after the collision. Submarine and crew disappeared.
>
> —Alf R. Jacobsen, *Blodröd augusti –Historien om de norska partisanerna*

This chapter examines the documents of the German forces operating in northern Norway during World War Two. These documents have been the base for much of the research about this theater, but the focus here will be on the counter-infiltration of reconnaissance teams. The chapter will follow a chronological order, from the first suspicions about insertions until the last entries on it.

Intelligence Collection

On 5 February 1943, the Headquarters of the 20th Mountain Army issued a summary of an Abwehr[142] (the German intelligence service) report dated 4 December 1942. The summary was titled "Examination of relationships of Soviet-Russian intelligence organizations."[143] It explains what was by then known by the Germans

[142] Abwehr is German for 'defense' or 'protect.'

[143] Oberkommando der 20, (Gebirgs) Armee, Ic/AO Tgb. Nr 114/43 (Nr 114/43), Summary, 5 February 1943, trans. James Gebhardt, Series T-312, Reel 1650, Folder AOK 20 36560/16, First Frame 000109, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

regarding Soviet intelligence services. The two main structures were the intelligence services in the armed forces, the Red Army and the Red Navy, and the intelligence services in the Soviet secret police.[144] As a subordinate service to the Red Army, there was also the Soviet-Russian Partisan forces that was controlled by the Central Committee of the Communist Party regarding intelligence activities, but supported by the Red Army in other functions.[145]

The statement in the summary that the boundaries between the different services are not distinct is not because of German intelligence failure, but rather Soviet inability or unwillingness to coordinate them. This is exemplified by the fact that, in the beginning of April 1942, both the Northern Fleet and the Soviet secret police had established three different observation posts within fifty kilometers, observing the same stretch of water.[146] The description of Soviet units and their methods are related to the same problem, and the summary says that "[t]he combination of units and their missions in extraordinarily diverse and is obvious only with distinct classification."[147] The terms used are: (1) spy units, (2) demolition units, (3) special units, and (4) partisan units.

The last term refer to the units of interest for this essay, the submarine-inserted reconnaissance units. This is interesting considering that the original intent for these units was to establish partisan groups, but as the first attempt failed they were assigned

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[144] NKVD is an abbreviation of *Narodnyy Komissariat Vnutrennykh Del* (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs).

[145] Nr 114/43 1943, 1.

[146] Jacobsen, *Blodröd augusti–Historien om de norska partisanerna*, 131-132.

[147] Nr 114/43 1943, 2.

reconnaissance tasks instead, as described in chapter 3. However, their organization, tasks, means of insertion, and methods are correctly described. This is most likely due to the fact that on 19 September 1942 the Wehrmacht captured a member of one of these units, Georgiy Vertyanskiy, who turned out to be cooperative.[148] Whatever their source, the German armed forces in Norway now understood that they were not searching for regular forces, but rather something predominately characterized by agent units.[149]

This is again reiterated in an order annex two weeks later, where the perceived local enemy is described quite accurately as being inserted by submarines and wearing civilian clothes. It also says that the Northern Fleet unit is divided in two groups, where one group is operating immediately beyond the frontline, while the other group operate deep inside Norway.[150] This is a good indication that the Germans understood that they had to tackle two different problem sets. The first being how to prevent ground insertion into the tactical rear area, and the second, how to counter insertions in the strategic deep area. Both would eventually be the responsibility of Wehrmacht.

The first organized attempt to stop such insertions was initiated by an order issued on 23 June 1943. The code name for the operation was 'Midnight Sun', and the plan was for units belonging to 210th Infantry Division to establish road checkpoints and conduct

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[148] 210 Infantry Division, Abt, Ic 343/43, Protocol, 9 May 1943, trans. James Gebhardt, Series T-315, Reel 1620, 210 Inf. Div. Ia, Anlage 3 to KTB, Folder 37889/5, First frame 000140, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

[149] Nr 114/43 1943, 2-3.

[150] Supreme commander of the 20th (Mountain) Army, Section Ic/AZ A 8 Nr, 810/43, Annex 3 to AOK 20 (MTN) Nr. 810/43, 22 February 1943, trans. James Gebhardt, Series T-312, Reel 1649, Folder 36560/11, Frames 001305-31, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

foot patrols as well as motorized patrols. This first operation had as its overall purpose to gain situational awareness. Para I. and II. of the order explained that there existed evidence that the enemy was inserting agent teams along the coast. The enemy was described as being composed of those Norwegians who fled to the Soviet Union after the German occupation of Norway. As such, they were likely to be accommodated with elements of the regular population in remote homesteads, fishing houses, and so on. The intent was to conduct "a large-scale reconnaissance operation in conjunction with a defensive check of the civilian population."[151]

The mission was for the scout units to explore and assess the road and terrain conditions, such as accessible observation locales, bivouac and lodging sites, sea approach and landing possibilities on the coast. In cooperation with the security police they were also to conduct passport control of civilians, as well as make annotations of the houses and huts they encountered, and list residents. In other words, the Germans set out to conduct a census of the population in northern Norway. Additionally, they were also ordered to execute house searches, arrest suspicious persons and detain those without an ID card, and intercept transient persons who through their actions appeared suspicious.[152] For a modern reference, the Germans intended to gather information for an Intelligence

[151] 210 Infantry Division, Section Ia 401/43, Ic (401/43), Order, 23 June 1943, trans. James Gebhardt, Series T-315, Reel 1620, 210 Infantry Division, Folder 37889/4, Annex 1b to KTB, First frame 000041, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC, 1.

[152] 401/43 1943, 1-2.

Preparation of the Battlefield, IPB.[153] They wanted to find out where insertions could possibly take place and which human and physical terrain could harbor this.

At the beginning of July 1943, the 210th Division disseminated an intelligence summary for the period 1 January to 30 June regarding the Finno-Scandinavian theater. Three things are noteworthy. First, it stated that Soviet military and civilian intelligence had been rendered ineffective. That was a premature statement, considering what was presented in the previous chapter, and their big break-through was yet to come.[154] Secondly, the credit for revealing the enemy's intelligence activities was given to the German intelligence officers working in corps and division level. Through their interrogation of prisoners of war and agents, they were able to present a workable intelligence picture. This would guide the Germans what to look for in the coming operation.[155] Lastly, it does not mention Vertyanskiy's name. This is odd, because he was the one who revealed the organization and modus operandi of the reconnaissance teams operating from submarines. The only plausible reason for this could be that he was still being interrogated, and considered as being used as a cross-reference for additional information.

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[153] Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), Field Manual (FM) 6-0, *Commander and Staff Organization and Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, May 2014), 106.

[154] Oberkommando der 20, (Gebirgs) Armee, Ic Tgb. Nr. 1055/43 (1055/43), Report, 1943. Series T-312, Reel 1650, Folder AOK 20 36560/16, First frame 000061, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC, frame 000076.

[155] 1055/43 1943, frame 000077.

Breakthrough

Operation Midnight Sun was a failure. Nothing had been found, except for four persons with unregistered hunting rifles. The whole operation was winding down, participating units was about to be returned to base, and the main source, Vertyanskiy, was deemed unreliable and sent to join the army of defected Russians fighting for Nazi-Germany. However, on the evening of 8 July, a Luftwaffe aircraft detected a Soviet submarine at the entrance of Kongsfjord and the aircraft immediately engaged with depth charges. The Germans thought that the submarine broke off and sought shelter under a cliff deep within the fjord. The Kriegsmarine had so far mostly provided transport for Wehrmacht units during the operation, but now the naval commander in Kirkenes realized that there might be some substance in the information about Soviet submarines maneuvering in the littoral waters of northern Norway and possibly supported by agents ashore. The actions gained new momentum, but now it was the Wehrmacht supporting the Kriegsmarine in its search along the coastline, in what was called Operation Wild Duck.[156]

The string of events that followed would reinforce each other. Operation Midnight Sun had forced some Soviet reconnaissance teams to displace, leaving behind their supply. To resupply them Northern Fleet Command dispatched airdrops. These airdrops were detected by some Norwegians who notified the Germans. They intensified their search and soon found radios and other equipment, including some diaries that named

[156] Jacobsen, *Blodröd augusti–Historien om de norska partisanerna*, 158-160.

agents and supporting civilians. The first arrests were made and those provided even more information.[157]

In what can be described as an after-action review, a report following Operation Wild Duck confidently stated that the presence of an enemy spy network was confirmed. It described that two radio stations or observation posts had been found, together with two supply depots as well. At one radio station they were able to capture one member of the reconnaissance group red-handed, and in total they captured fifteen suspected Norwegians, of whom five were identified as agents.[158] The findings were concrete evidence that what Vertyanskiy had told the Germans was true, and the report provided instructions on tactical-technical procedures to implement in further searches, as well as indicators of presence of an observation post.

The German forces were instructed to consider which terrain features overlooked the ocean. These observation posts could be in elevated terrain, among rocky cliffs, and under overhangs. They also realized that the inaccessibility by land did not exclude the presence of an observation post, since they would be inserted, supported and extracted from the sea. One important conclusion that would come of this was that subsequent search operations should be done jointly, involving both the Wehrmacht and the Kriegsmarine. The observations posts faced the ocean and could therefore, hopefully, be detected from that direction, while the ground forces were necessary for stopping evasive

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[157] Jacobsen, *Blodröd augusti–Historien om de norska partisanerna*, 164-169.

[158] 210 Infantry Division, Ia Nr. 489/43 (489/43), Report, 22 July 1943, trans. James Gebhardt, Series T-315, Reel 1621, Annex 1b, KTB No. 3, 210 Infantry Division, Folder 45787/2, First frame 000098, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

movement by the agents.[159] This joint approach was considered so important that a planned follow-up operation in mid-August was canceled because the Kriegsmarine was unable to participate.[160]

The searches were focused on rocks and hollows that could hide supply dumps, and to look for stone cairns marking them.[161] Further, it was by then known that narrow plywood boxes indicated that goods had been transported by submarines. Several of these crates were found at multiple locations.[162] They were likely tailor-made to fit in different compartments of the submarines, and was probably useful for an easy and quick off-loading of equipment, since the time surfaced for insertion had to be kept minimal.

The single most important event during Operation Wild Duck was the capture on 15 July of the Russian radio operator Vasiliy Jessipov. He proved to be very cooperative and confirmed what was already known. He confessed to have been inserted by submarine on 1 April 1943 at Seglodden, together with five Norwegians. He had been sentenced to five years in prison for anti-government activities 1939, pardoned in November 1941, assigned to a Border Guard Regiment as a radio operator. As such, he

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[159] 210 Infantry Division, Section Ic Nr. 92/43 (92/43), Report, 26 July 1943, trans. James Gebhardt, Series T-315, Reel 1621, Annex 1b, KTB No. 3, 210 Infantry Division, Folder 45787/2, First Frame 000102, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC, 6.

[160] 210 Infantry Division, Ia Nr, 1673/43, Order, 6 August 1943, trans. James Gebhardt, Series T-315, Reel 1621, Annex 1b, KTB No. 3, 210 Infantry Division, Folder 45787/2, First Frame 000127, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

[161] 489/43 1943, 2.

[162] 92/43 1943, 1-2, 7.

participated in a raid on a German airfield in northern Finland in December 1941, and in March 1943 he was transferred to the Northern Fleet Reconnaissance Unit. Immediately on arrival there, he was brought to a submarine and told that he was being sent to Norway as radio operator replacement. After a two-day passage, he was inserted and exchanged for another Russian radio operator.[163]

Having a Russian national as a radio operator makes sense, as regards to both the language skills and familiarity with the equipment. However, in this case the messages were coded and only the Norwegian agents could cipher and decipher them. This could indicate that the Russians were taking the security and secrecy of their Norwegian agents seriously. On the other hand, it could also be as is stated in the conclusion of the minutes that, given Jessipov's criminal past, he was not to be trusted. Therefore, he had no knowledge about the content of the messages, but suspected they pertained to convoys, fortifications, troop unit relocations and troop unit shifts. Most importantly in the outcome of the interrogation was that Jessipov agreed to participate in a radio deception against the Soviets.[164] This was to be facilitated by two cipher codes, found at one of the sites.[165]

In an acknowledgement dated 19 August 1943 the Commander of XIX Mountain Army Corps, Lieutenant General Ferdinand Schörner, summarized the outcome of these

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[163] 210 Infantry Division, Abt, Ic 566/43 (566/43), Copy of Minutes, 16 July 1943, trans. James Gebhardt, Series T-315, Reel 1621, Annex 2, KTB No. 3, 210 Infantry Divison, Folder 45787/3, First Frame 000420, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC, 1-2.

[164] Ibid., 2-4.

[165] 92/43 1943, 2.

two last operations. Fourteen Norwegian nationals had been tried and found guilty of agent activities, or support thereof. Eleven were sentenced to the death penalty by shooting and the remaining three to prison.[166] He also acknowledged that these had been Wehrmacht-led activities, with the support of the German Security Service. This is remarkable since it would usually be the other way round. His concluding remark was the most important. A successful counter-intelligence operation had degraded the enemy's capabilities, but he cautioned that this was only temporary and that it would occur again. There would be no time to relax.[167]

210th Infantry Division issued a final report on 21 August with a summary of recent events and recommendations for further actions. Syltefjord, on the northern coast of Varanger Peninsula, was identified as the most likely fjord for further insertions. It was therefore recommended that an observation post should be established at one of the high points overlooking the fjord, in order to detect submarine insertions. The Luftwaffe was, in addition to its regular sea surveillance, also instructed to look for possible hiding

[166] The statement that the convicted had been shot turned out to be false. When the convicted were brought to the place of execution, they were first ordered to dig a mass-grave. During the digging (probably not carried out in a haste) they were taunted and abused by the soldiers of the German execution squad. Finally, the officer in charge spat one of the Norwegians in the face, which made him kill the officer with a blow to the head from his shovel. This enraged the German soldiers and instead of shooting the prisoners they started clubbing them to death one by one, using firewood and shovels. After the war, no one was tried for this war crime. Sunde, *I partisanenes fotspor*, 16-17.

[167] Headquarters, XIX (Mtn.) Army Corps, Acknowledgement, 19 August 1942, trans. James Gebhardt, Series T-315, Reel 1621, Annex 1b, KTB No. 3, 210 Infantry Division, Folder 45787/2, First Frame 000165, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

places for submarines along the coast.[168] It was by now clear to the Germans that Soviet submarines did not just approach the shores to insert reconnaissance teams, they could also use the rugged coastline for concealment, striking at convoys from the landward side.[169]

In a division order at the beginning of September regulating a coastal-overwatch operation the lessons learned had been implemented. The most suitable locations for submarine insertions and landings were designated in an annex, and were to be monitored or patrolled on a regular basis. Apparently, the Germans had realized that if agents could be inserted or landed, so could larger raiding parties. As presented in chapter 2 this was not an ungrounded suspicion. In order to prevent this the German units were instructed to be vigilant, especially during dark or foggy nights, and conduct combat patrols at nearby landing sites.[170]

Operation Tundra and After

The successful operation at the beginning of August had been a hasty arrangement between two like-minded officers from the Wehrmacht and Kriegsmarine respectively. In mid-September it was time for a more deliberate action, using the acquired experience.

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[168] 210 Infantry Division Abt. 1c 146/43 (146/43), Report, 21 August 1943, trans. James Gebhardt, Series T-315, Reel 1621, 210 Inf. Div. Anlage 2 to KTB 3, Folder 45787/3, First Frame 000443, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC, 5-7.

[169] Ibid., 2.

[170] 210 Infantry Division, Ia Nr. 608/43, Order, 3 September 1943, trans. James Gebhardt, Series T-315, Reel 1621, Annex 1b, KTB No. 3, 210 Infantry Division, Folder 45787/2, First Frame 000192, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

The area of interest was the coastline from Jakobselv—on the current border between Russia and Norway—westward to Bøkfjord, a distance of twenty-five kilometers as the crow flies. Considering all the fjords and islands, this was an impressive undertaking. The order was to search the coastal area as well as the coastline for agent observation posts.[171] In the annex to the order, the now well-known characteristics of an observation post—a rocky slope facing the sea—were outlined, and also the indicators: Russian clothing, food containers and especially the narrow plywood submarine supply containers mentioned earlier. It was emphasized that supplies could be either submarine delivered or airdropped, implying that ground-access was not a prerequisite for a suitable observation post.[172]

Secrecy was paramount and the order instructed commanders, under the pretext of a multi-day exercise, not to inform the soldiers of the objective until leaving the start-point. The forces consisted of two Wehrmacht battalions and nine boats as well as two marine landing platoons from the Kriegsmarine. It was to be a five-phased operation. First, ground forces would move in on the coastline and establish a defensive line facing the sea, with a second screening line behind in surveillance posts. These positions should

[171] 210 Infantry Division, Abt. 1a Nr. 625/43 (625/43:1), Order, 14 September 1943, trans. James Gebhardt, Series T-315, Reel 1621, Annex 2, KTB No. 3, 210 Infantry Division, Folder 45787/2, First Frame 000227, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC, 3.

[172] 210 Infantry Division, Abt. 1a Nr. 625/43 (625/43:2), Annex, 14 September 1943, trans. James Gebhardt, Series T-315, Reel 1621, Annex 2, KTB No. 3, 210 Infantry Division, Folder 45787/2, First Frame 000233, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

be occupied as covertly as possible, and in synchronization with the sea-borne elements.[173]

Once the ground-force had gone firm, the boats would land search parties at suspicious sites along the shore to conduct a careful search. Meanwhile, parts of the ground elements would move forward for supporting searches. After the searches were finished the units were to ostensibly withdraw. In the fourth step, the troops in the defensive line would wait for the dark before setting out to comb the terrain all the way to the coast. The screening line would stay and watch for any fugitives emerging. When this search was completed, the forces would return to their starting point and the operation would be terminated.[174]

The operation, named Sea Eagle, did not achieve anything other than finding some Soviet made equipment and arresting six suspicious civilians.[175] As it turned out the Germans were on the brink of destroying the Soviet reconnaissance efforts completely. They knew what to look for on the ground, they knew the Soviets tactical and technical procedures, and could therefore begin to be more pro-active against the method of insertions as well. The lesson the Germans had learnt was that in order to be successful against submarine-supported activities, they must exploit the moment of the actual insertion. For that to succeed they needed to know beforehand were the submarine would appear.

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[173] 625/43:1 1943, 2-3.

[174] Ibid., 3-4.

[175] Jacobsen, *Blodröd augusti–Historien om de norska partisanerna*, 292.

The next step for the Germans would include using the resources and assets captured in August and September: two radio-operators, two Russian codebooks, and several radio-sets. One of the radio-operators were Leif Utne, captured by a patrol on 27 August 1943. He was a Norwegian national and volunteered to participate in a radio game aimed at the Soviet Northern Fleet Headquarters in Murmansk. It was initiated on 3 September and the purpose was to attract and apprehend other scouts, as well as luring a Soviet submarine to appear so that it could be attacked.[176] The first message sent told that the "scouts' team" had issues with the transmitter. This was probably done in order to avoid being forced into too lengthy and detailed conversations with Murmansk, risking a revelation of the true sender.[177]

However, in the subsequent messages requesting provisions, the Soviet conveyance were through airdrops, until on 20 September Murmansk informed the supposed observation post that a pick-up by submarine was planned. Some confusion about the best location for this arose, and the radio game was almost thwarted when the Soviets parachute-dropped two scouts on 5 October to help guide the "agents" to the pick-up point. The Germans duped the Soviets by claiming that they were already on the

[176] 210 Infantry Division, Abt. Ic 260/43 (260/43), Report, 17 November 1943, trans. James Gebhardt, Series T-315, Reel 1621, 210 Inf. Div. Ic, Annex 2, KTB 3 Folder 45787/3, First Frame 000565, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC, 1.

[177] 210 Infantry Division, Abt. Ic 239/43 (239/43), Transcript, 6 November 1943, trans. James Gebhardt, Series T-315 Reel 1621, 210 Inf. Div., Folder 45787/3, First Frame 000573, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC, 1.

march towards the coast, and too starved and exhausted to go back. The game could go on.[178]

On 7 October, an order draft was submitted to the Commanding General of XIX Mountain Army Corps for approval. The codename for the operation was 'Tundra'. The concept was to use the expected extraction of the two latest scouts to engage the submarine in a joint operation between the Wehrmacht and the Kriegsmarine. Firing on the submarine from land would not be sufficient to destroy it, and therefore it must be attacked from the sea as well.[179] The Kriegsmarine provided eight boats: Four sub-hunters, two cutters and two fast R-boats. The Wehrmacht also provided an assault boat armed with depth charges from an Engineer Landing Company, in addition to five anti-tank guns and two heavy machine guns for direct fire.[180]

The execution was to be in three phases. On arrival, the Germans assumed the submarine and shore would exchange the agreed-upon signals. When the rubber-boat arrived at shore, the occupant would be arrested noiselessly. Secondly, on the first shot all weapons would engage the submarine. Lastly, when the submarine submerged the assault boat would engage it with its depth charges.[181] Most submarines had a hatch

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[178] 260/43 1943, 1-2.

[179] 210 Infantry Division, Abt. 1a/Ic 203/43 (203/43:1), Hand letter, 7 October 1943, trans. James Gebhardt, Series T-315, Reel 1621, 210 Inf. Div., Folder 45787/2, First Frame 000283, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

[180] 210 Infantry Division, Abt. 1a 203/43 (203/43:2), Order, 7 October 1943, trans. James Gebhardt, Series T-315, Reel 1621, 210 Inf. Div., Folder 45787/2, First Frame 000283, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

[181] Ibid., 1.

between the pressure hull and the sail, so therefore the gunners were instructed to aim at the base of the sail in order to compromise the hull. The machine-gunners were to engage the visible personnel.[182] Once the assault boat had released its depth charges, the remaining hunt would be left to the Kriegsmarine.[183]

Now it was just a matter of getting the submarine within range. After some messaging back and forth a location and time was decided, three kilometers west of Seglodden on the evening of 19 October. The Germans discovered that the banks were too steep on the chosen location to allow deployment of the anti-tank guns. At 2230 hours, the Soviet submarine surfaced and launched the rubber-boat, and Leif Utne called out to the boat handler that he could not make it down to the shoreline. When after a while no more sound or movement could be detected the boat handler decided to return to the submarine, which then disappeared.[184]

The supposed "agents" now contacted Murmansk and explained that Leif Utne had hurt his foot, and therefore had not been able to link up. They then asked if a new extraction could be made at a location just two kilometers from Seglodden, which was accepted with the response: "Expect pickup on your spot every night."[185] This was quite remarkable and an indication of either bravery or confidence, that a submarine promised to surface at the same spot for consecutive nights. By this time, the Soviet Northern Fleet

[182] 203/43:1 1943.

[183] 203/43:2 1943, 2.

[184] 20/43 1943, 2.

[185] 260/43 1943, 2.

had done more than twenty insertions or extractions, and it could be that they felt that they by now possessed the required experience and confidence in their operating procedure.

The following night the Wehrmacht had deployed their guns at the agreed location, and the Kriegsmarine had stationed its boats around the coastline. At 2000 hours, the submarine *M-105* surfaced and launched the rubber-boat. The moment it beached, the German guns opened fire. Twenty artillery rounds were fired and five was recorded as hits, together with multiple machine-gun bullets, from a distance of three-hundred-and-fifty meters. The submarine made a crash dive, cueing the engagement of the naval elements. The nearest boat was the assault landing craft, but the heavy surf swamped it, rendering it powerless.[186]

Therefore, the outpost boat *6113* became the first boat to engage. Approximately one hour before midnight *6113* detected underwater movement and released its first depth charges. After its third attack run large oil quantities became visible on the surface. On its thirteenth run it released the last of its ninety-five depth charges, which resulted in a large air bubble emerging and additional oil spills. Another four attack runs were executed, until it was determined around noon the following day that *M-105* had been destroyed. The battle report commended the commander of *6113* for his energetic and unerring action, manifested by his decision-making, rapid assessment, and accuracy in execution.[187]

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[186] 260/43 1943, 2.

[187] Dr. Zunker, *Battle Report of Outpost Boat 6113 in regard to the destruction of an enemy submarine on 21 October 1943 in front of Piersfjord,* Statement, 29 October 1943, trans. James Gebhardt, Series T-315, Reel 1621, 210 Inf. Div., Annex 2, KTB 3,

As a result, the battle report assessed that the engagement had led to the destruction of the *M-105,* referring to the hits in the sail by the land-forces that would make a dive precarious, and also because a dull bang had been heard from the submarine when it dived. After the fourteenth depth charge attack, no in-motion operation of the submarine could be detected. Therefore, it concluded, the damage had been devastating.[188] However, 210th Infantry Division's report on Operation Tundra to the commander of XIX Mountain Army stated "an absolutely safe statement of the destruction of the submarine on the basis of the previous documents will not necessarily be met."[189] This caution later proved to be correct.

A Soviet account of the incident stated that *M-105* had been at the extraction point the previous night, but was unable to establish contact with the "scouts" ashore. It therefore submerged and settled on the bottom of the fjord. In the evening it surfaced and deployed the rubber-boat, with—coherent with the German report—the firing starting when it landed. After that, the accounts differ. The Soviet writing claims that only machinegun and submachine gun fire was received, but that none of it struck the submarine since the tide had carried it out of range. This seems unlikely, given what has been discussed previously, that the submarine commanders made great efforts to maintain their vessels in place during insertion or extraction. Nonetheless, after crash-diving the

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Folder 45787/3, First Frame 000592, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

[188] Zunker, *Battle Report of Outpost Boat 6113 in regard to the destruction of an enemy submarine on 21 October 1943 in front of Piersfjord*, 3.

[189] 260/43 1943, 3.

approaching submarine-hunters were soon heard followed shortly by the depth charge attacks. A total of fifty-three explosions were reported, including those heard after *M-105* reached the open sea.[190]

Considering the fact that *6113* reportedly dropped its allocation of ninety-five depth charges, this could be an indication that the better part of the German submarine-hunt was a wild goose chase. The Germans fifteenth run, which was executed sometime between 0820 and 1118 hours in the morning, claims to have been done against a particularly good and clear echo of a submarine.[191] This shows exactly how difficult a submarine-hunt is in littoral waters, as was later experienced by the Swedish Navy in the 1970-80s.

Subsequently, the Soviet report claimed that *M-105* returned to base with only some damage. The report ends the story of this mission with the statement that the reconnaissance group had probably been captured, and then used to lure a submarine into a trap. It is difficult in retrospect to determine if this conclusion was evident for the Northern Fleet Command 1943, or if it is a later statement based on captured German documents after the war. Nonetheless, the radio game continued for almost a month. The German "scouts" transmitted a deceptive accusation that they had been betrayed, and

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[190] NGS-NAD, *Collection of Materials on the Experience of Combat Activities of the Naval Forces of the USSR, No. 38, Intelligence Support to the Northern Fleet during the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945)*, 6-7.

[191] Zunker, *Battle Report of Outpost Boat 6113 in regard to the destruction of an enemy submarine on 21 October 1943 in front of Piersfjord*, 2.

then tried to get the Soviets to agree on a new extraction point, claiming that the "scouts" were running seriously short of supplies.[192]

However, it is clear from the transcript that the Soviets were evasive in their response about further submarine operations and instead offers airdropped supplies. After repeated prompting by the "scouts," on 11 November the Northern Fleet replied that an extraction was very dangerous and advised them to try to acquire a boat and make it back on their own. Finally, on 15 November an evidently last message from the Soviets declared: "Cannot pick you up in future."[193] This was also mentioned by the Germans in the Operation Tundra report. Still, they were not ready to call it quits yet. The report suggested two possible traps, of which one would utilize the Soviet proposal of using a boat, claiming mechanical failure mid-sea to lure a submarine within range. Once it surfaced, a German submarine surfaced next to the boat would destroy the enemy submarine with torpedoes. There is no evidence that such operation was ever attempted.[194]

From then on, the submarine-insertions almost ceased, but not the activities they had been supporting. According to Morozov, on 9 March 1944 there was a failed

[192] 239/43 1943, 4-5.

[193] Ibid., 6-7

[194] 260/43 1943, 4. The other suggestion was to attempt a crossing of the frontline, luring the Soviets to reveal names of agents or guides who would assist in such a crossing, or if everything else failed, at least ambush the prospected Soviet receiving combat patrol.

submarine-extraction attempt due to inability to observe the scout team on shore.[195] Jacobsen claims that the last insertion was made on 5 April 1944 when two Soviet scouts were landed and who were eventually arrested. The continuing insertions of reconnaissance squads were made by parachute.[196] Commando raids also continued. Leonov describes a fast-boat raid that was conducted on the evening of 15 December 1943 by a Soviet raiding detachment, with the aim of capturing the Norwegian lighthouse operator on the island of Lille Ekkerøy. He was interrogated on the road-movement near the lighthouse. Six days later another raiding party landed from fast-boats and set up an ambush on a column of German trucks, killing one soldier and capturing two others. This type of operation continued for some time.[197]

Summary

It is clear that the Germans had a good knowledge about the different Soviet espionage and intelligence services. By 1942, they also realized that the repeated attacks on their northern convoys must have been supported by observations along the coast of Northern Norway. However, it was not until the capture of the Soviet soldier Vertyanskiy that they understood what and where to look for these observation posts. This led to a

[195] Morozov, *Podvodnyye Lodki VMF SSSR v Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyne 1941-1945 gg. Chast 3. Severny Flot; letopis boevykh pokhodov*, 30.

[196] Jacobsen, *Blodröd augusti–Historien om de norska partisanerna*, 275-276.

[197] Oberkommando der 20, (Gebirgs) Armee, Ic/AO Tgb. Nr. 736/44. Report, 22 August 1944, trans. James Gebhardt, Series T-312, Reel 1651, Folder AOK 20 52630, First Frame 000527, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC, 7. See also Leonov 1993, 83-85.

series of operations, beginning with an operation to establish a situational awareness, and ending with an operation to lure an enemy submarine into a trap.

The first operation to counter the Soviet observation posts was a failure. Yet, by a stroke of luck and the determination of a Wehrmacht intelligence officer and a coastal commander from the Kriegsmarine they were able to conduct a truly joint operation, which led to the capture of enemy men and equipment. With the help of that and with the cooperation by a traitor they were able to lure a Soviet submarine into a trap, almost leading to its destruction. Even if the outcome was not according to what had been planned, it did achieve the effect of drastically reducing the use of submarines as a mean of insertion or extraction.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

> He who wants victory, let him train soldiers diligently.
> —Flavius Vegetius Renatus, *Epitoma Rei Militaris*

What assumptions and expectations were made in the early doctrinal work by the Soviet Navy on submarine-inserted special operations, how were such operations executed in the Soviet Northern Fleet, and how did the German authorities perceive and counter these operations in northern Norway during 1942-1943? What possible tenets could be identified? The intention was to see if there existed Soviet conceptual thoughts and if those were translated into actual operations, thereby establishing a practice or even a culture that might exist even in today's Russian armed forces. This essay had no intention of trying to rigorously prove something, merely provide a plausible explanation for possible motives and patterns.

As discussed earlier, there are two basic ways of assessing the possibility or likelihood of an actor's actions: intent and capability. Moreover, if it is also possible to examine the experience from specified intentions and capabilities, then there is a potential to establish the presence of a practice. The fundamental motive behind this study was to understand what plausible reasons could explain the alleged presence of Soviet/Russian submarines in the Swedish archipelago during the 1970-80s and to this day, in no small part related to the author's own personal experience. It is a common understanding today that the Russian way of war—especially from the October Revolution 1917 and onward—does not really distinguish between peace and war.

Hence, if there is no difference between peace and war, then there cannot be any difference between military exercises, preparations for war, or acts of war.

The Soviet Intent

The first factor and most telling reason for why the Soviet Union would see the need for clandestine intelligence gathering was found in *BU-40*: "Reconnaissance should be uninterrupted. This is achieved by organizing and conducting reconnaissance both in peacetime and in wartime."[198] In order to evaluate possible and planned operations it was necessary to be aware of the time and place of forces and means of the enemy. Only by being aware of changes is it possible to make adjustments, and therefore not one opportunity—in peace or war—should be neglected to collect information.[199] The reason for this had been declared already in *BUMS-37*. Reconnaissance was one of the enablers for the capability of delivering powerful strikes at the enemy, which was to be maintained "constantly even in peacetime."[200]

The doctrine specifically mentions at three different locations that activities are to be carried out in peacetime. There can be no doubt that the notion of a diffuse boundary between war and peace existed in the Soviet Union, and plans should be executed without a declaration of war or a mobilization. No doubt, this was a result of the Soviet experience from both World War One as well as the Civil War of 1917-1921, leaving them with a feeling of constant struggle to defend the revolution. Add to that the Soviet

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[198] MNS, *Temporary Instructions for the Conduct of Naval Operations*, 37.

[199] Ibid., 11.

[200] DNF, *Temporary Combat Regulations for the Naval Forces of the RKKA*, 8.

leadership's internal discussions as to whether they should champion a worldwide revolution or leave it to the workers of the different nations to decide for themselves.[201]

The second factor to consider is what I call the Soviet Naval Deep-operations doctrine. In 1937, the Soviet Navy was formally an organization within the Red Army (the Naval Forces of the *RKKA*), and as such it was likely influenced by the ongoing discussions in the Red Army about deep operations, and devised by such military thinkers as Marshal of the Soviet Union Mikhail Nikolaevich Tukhachevsky. The deep operations concept suggested that the enemy should be attacked throughout the depths of his defenses and eventually outflank him. The Soviets emphasized modern, technical solutions to problems and this deep battle would be conducted using airplanes, parachutists, and mechanized units for example.[202]

Both *BUMS-37* and *BN-40* proclaimed that one of the tasks for the naval forces was to support the ground forces in coastal regions, by conducting amphibious landings and operations to support the ground forces flank.[203] Not only could the naval force provide a deep strike capability in the rear of an enemy, but as has been presented earlier, it could bring the war to the enemy's territory. Therefore, for the discussion of this thesis

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[201] Jonathan M. House, *Red Army Developments, 1921-41* (US Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC), Department of Military History (DMH), Fort Leavenworth, KS, March 2007), 358, excerpt reprinted in CGSC, DMH, *H100: Rise of the Western Way of War* (CGSC, Fort Leavenworth, KS, July 2019), accessed 28 October 2019, https://cgsc.blackboard.com/ bbcswebdav/institution/CGSC/AY19-20/RES_Core/H100_Student/H100SRB.pdf.

[202] Ibid., 358-359.

[203] DNF, *Temporary Combat Regulations for the Naval Forces of the RKKA*, 7; MNS 1940, 10.

it can be claimed that the submarine was seen as the Soviet naval equivalent to the transport aircraft delivering parachutists in the enemy rear area, or the attack aircraft delivering a deep strike.

Conclusion 1: In accordance with the prevailing doctrine and the thoughts of military thinkers during the 1930s-40s, the units of the Soviet Naval Fleet were striving to achieve operational readiness to be able to conduct operations throughout the strategic and operational depth at any given time.

The Soviet Capabilities

Submarines were seen as a cheap substitute for bigger surface vessels, which fitted into the initially defensive and close coastal doctrine. The first five-year plans saw a steady increase of submarines until at the time for World War Two the Soviet Union had one of the world's largest submarine forces. Although primarily intended for naval warfare against the enemy's battle fleets, the submarine was quickly recognized as having the capability to deliver fires as well as reconnaissance deep into the enemy's territory, as discussed above. The submarine itself has both acoustic and visual sensors, but experience from World War Two showed that it was difficult for Soviet submarine captains to take useful photos through the periscope, even though some good pictures of ships or coastlines were taken.[204]

However, even if intelligence collection was a 'constant mission', the submarine technology of the day usually forced the submarine to abandon its station during night,

[204] NGS-NAD, *Collection of Materials on the Experience of Combat Activities of the Naval Forces of the USSR, No. 38, Intelligence Support to the Northern Fleet during the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945)*, 24-25.

sail out to sea and surface in order to charge the batteries. On the other hand, an observation post on land could provide reconnaissance twenty-four hours a day for several months. That is probably why operational reconnaissance by troops or agents was foreseen as early as 1937. As the wartime experience showed, the submarines also had the capability to clandestinely insert the scouts at locations only accessible from the sea.

In December 1937, the Red Navy was separated from the Red Army. That meant that, in order to independently conduct ground operations, the Soviet Naval fleet had to be augmented with a ground component. This was to be in accordance with the theories of amphibious warfare that had been developed during the 1930s.[205] July 1939 saw the first formation of the Soviet Naval infantry and soon after that date, a battalion for special purposes—or *spetsnaz*—was organized as well. The *spetsnaz* unit of interest for this essay was formed on 5 July 1941, which must be considered impressive by any standard since it had only gone two weeks after the Nazi-German attack on the Soviet Union.

Consequently, five years after it had been presented as an option in *BUMS-37* the Soviet Naval Fleet had an amphibious warfare unit with reconnaissance scouts ready for use. Its leaders knew very well what it wanted to use this capability for, but it would take some time and effort before they had figured out the method for its application. The submarines with their crews were neither equipped nor trained for this type of task, especially not the *Malyutka*-class, but with a mix of courage and adaptability they made it work. Therefore, in 1946 the Soviet Naval Fleet could issue a new regulation building on newly acquired war experience describing how *spetsnaz*-units could be used for various

[205] Gebhardt, *The Evolution of Soviet Concepts of Amphibious Warfare in the 1930s*, 1.

tasks, such as reconnaissance, diversionary actions, capture of prisoners, and insertion and extraction of scouts and agents.[206]

Conclusion 2: By the end of World War Two, the Soviet Union possessed a tried and tested amphibious warfare capability that included the use of submarine-inserted *spetsnaz*-units.

The Soviet and German Experience

Although one of the intents for the submarine-inserted reconnaissance teams was to collect intelligence about the German convoys trafficking the Barents Sea, in order to guide the Northern Fleet submarine warfare against it, it is questionable if the Soviets achieved that. The submarines accounted only for a limited and disappointing number of sinking. Instead, it was the Soviet Air Force and Naval Air Arm that attributed most to these.[207] According to Jacobsen, the German Admiral Polarküste claimed that 0.6% in 1942, and 0.8% in 1943 (measured in tonnage) of German shipping were sunk. For example, of 2 238 German ships convoyed in 1942 thirty-six ships were sunk, out of which twenty-four were merchant ships. Of those merchant ships, only twelve were sunk by direct fires, and the remainder lost to mines or otherwise shipwrecked.[208]

This poor outcome is probably indicative of the cumbersome communication set-up that required the scout teams to radio their observations to the Northern Fleet

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[206] MNF-MNH, *Combat Regulations for the Naval Forces of the Military Naval Fleet of the Union of the SSR*, 6.

[207] Breemer, *Soviet Submarines–Design, Development and Tactics*, 75.

[208] Jacobsen, *Blodröd augusti–Historien om de norska partisanerna*, 281.

Headquarters in Murmansk, which in turn then assessed, decided and directed the submarines. The communications with the submarines were of course decided by the pre-determined timings for signaling, furthering delaying the actions against the convoys. In this case, it was the technology, not ambition, that produced the biggest friction.

However, the method of inserting scout teams to their operations area were in the majority of cases successful. In some cases weather prohibited insertion, but usually the submarine would just return the next night and execute it. On only two occasions did the insertions fail, when equipment were lost in the high surf, leaving the scouts without supplies or radio-sets. When extractions failed, it was usually due to inability to establish contact between the team on shore and the submarine, forcing the scout team to find another way back. For anyone who has not experienced the terrain and climate of the northern coast of Norway, it is probably difficult to really appreciate the feats of those submarine crews and scout teams.

In addition, for the purpose of this study, it is noticeable that the perception of the Soviet Navy after the war is that the submarine insertions and extractions "on the whole …were carried out successfully."[209] This is the strongest evidence that the means and methods were perceived as useful, and that this concept was in place to stay.

The success of the method can also be measured by how difficult it was for the Germans to detect and apply countermeasures. They suspected the presence of scout teams along the coast, but initially they thought either they were local Norwegian agents

[209] NGS-NAD, *Collection of Materials on the Experience of Combat Activities of the Naval Forces of the USSR, No. 38, Intelligence Support to the Northern Fleet during the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945)*, 3.

or that they had been inserted by boats or parachutes. It was not until the capture of a Soviet scout team that they became aware of the submarine insertions. Furthermore, the Germans could not effectively counter those activities until they had captured a Soviet radio operator and radio codes. As a result, they were able to lure a submarine to a known location and engage it. This trap made the Soviet Northern Fleet more careful and it abandoned the submarine method for the remainder of the war.

As a side note, it is noticeable that these remaining insertions were done using parachute, thereby proving that Soviet naval *spetsnaz* units—like their American counterpart SEALs—can use infiltration tactics and means on sea, air and land.

Conclusion 3: The method of submarine insertions was seen as successful and (almost) undetectable. The overall failure can be attributed to immature technology rather than inappropriate methods.

Lessons for Sweden

Swedish Official Investigation

On 5 October 2000 the Swedish Government appointed a special investigator to look into the Swedish political and military conduct of the so called 'submarine question', and the report *Perspektiv på ubåtsfrågan (SOU)* (Perspective on the submarine question) was released on 15 November 2001.[210] The report was expected to be a summary of all political and military investigations that had been done so far.

[210] Statens offentliga utredningar (SOU), *Perspektiv på ubåtsfrågan, SOU 2001:85* (Stockholm, Sweden: Regeringskansliet, 15 November 2001), last updated 2 April 2015, accessed 17 April 2020, https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2001/11/sou-200185.

SOU concluded that Sweden was subjected to multiple submarine intrusions during the 1980s-90s. The Soviet Union was stated as being the dominant power in the Baltic Sea from the early 1980s until its dissolution in 1992. Because of the U.S Navy's increased forward presence in the North Atlantic[211] and an anticipated continental conflict in Central Europe, the Soviet Union identified the eastern and southern Baltic Sea coast as being of greater importance. The Soviets saw it as necessary to protect their sea-lines of communication, both for sustainment reasons, and for protecting the northern flank of a ground offensive. This protection of the flank of a ground operation can be recognized from their 1930s doctrines, as discussed earlier.[212]

Apart from one violation, the infamous *U-137* that ran aground outside Karlskrona in 1981, it was never possible to establish the identity of the violators. Therefore, a number of rumors and speculations rose: "that some or all the intrusions were made by NATO submarines with the tacit consent of the Swedish Navy, that the chiefs of staff deliberately allowed submarines to violate Swedish territory, that submarines were released with the tacit consent of the Government, etc."[213] This contributed to a growing credibility gap between the politicians, the Armed Forces, and the public, which continues to this day. Nonetheless, the overall conclusions by SOU

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[211] See Norman Friedman, *The US Maritime Strategy* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1988), for a complete discussion of the change in US operations and strategy.

[212] SOU, *Perspektiv på ubåtsfrågan,* 353-354.

[213] Ibid., 357.

were that Swedish territorial waters had been violated, and that neither the Soviet Union nor any Western state could be excluded as perpetrators.[214]

So then, what motives could an intruder have had? One of the purposes of this essay is to examine whether history can provide an answer to this question. This is of course dependent on the time, place, situation, and what actors are involved. However, for possible motives SOU saw either political or military ones. The political—the specific being to provoke Sweden to increase its sub-hunting capability in order to deny the enemy the use of Swedish territory; or the more general, to influence the defense and/or security policy—were considered too far-fetched. The military ones could be either preparations for war, or facilitating planning by training exercises and testing of equipment.[215]

Subsequently, the described possible military actions from an "enemy" could be divided into three categories:

1. Mapping and surveillance to facilitate hostile actions against shipping.
2. Preparations in order to contain Swedish naval bases.
3. Sabotage against the coastal defense and the chain of surveillance and detection installations along the coastline.

Interestingly enough, SOU did not see the use of *spetsnaz*-type units as likely because, according to the investigator, such use is only done in preparations for an amphibious landing, which were deemed as excluded in the Swedish case.

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[214]SOU, *Perspektiv på ubåtsfrågan,* 368-369.

[215] Ibid., 321-322.

Comparing the World War Two and the Swedish Experience

Chapter 2 described the supposed tasks for reconnaissance and diversionary units in the Soviet naval doctrines during the time for World War Two. The foundations of these tasks were to maintain an updated knowledge about the possible theaters, in order to facilitate war planning and ensure a rapid execution of 'active-offensive' strikes even in peacetime. Therefore, military geography had to be reconnoitered, for example depths, currents, and tides. That also included knowledge about mines and other obstacles. In conjunction with intelligence on the enemy's composition of forces, and their equipment, it also included information about the bases, coastal batteries, communication equipment, and navigational aids. Finally, submarines were also expected to insert raiding parties or agents as necessary.

All of these tasks fall well within the three categories described by SOU. Keeping with the confidentiality that still applies to much of the information around the Swedish underwater violations, only two open-source examples will be provided as indicators of activities listed above:

1. In the mid-1980s, it was discovered that a mine-line belonging to the Swedish coastal defense had been sabotaged.
2. An anti-submarine net protecting a Swedish naval base was found to have been cut through in 1986.[216]

Both of these examples can be directly linked back to what was described as tasks for diversionary-reconnaissance units, or *spetsnaz*, in *BUMS-37*.

[216] SOU, *Perspektiv på ubåtsfrågan,* 378.

On an anecdotal, but still interesting, level are the numerous sightings and even close encounters with unidentified frogmen. One of the more well known in Sweden happened in the end of February and beginning of March 1984 in the vicinity of the Swedish naval base in Karlskrona. Swedish Army units on two occasions observed frogmen along the shoreline. On the first occasion, a Swedish police K-9 unit engaged in a pursuit but it ended at the waterline. A few days later, an Army unit opened fire on a frogman who disappeared into the water.[217]

The Nazi-German experience from Northern Norway shows how difficult it is to conduct sub-hunting, especially in littoral waters, something that is shared with the experience of the Swedish Armed Forces during the 1980s-90s. Even when the Germans managed to lure a Soviet submarine to a specified place at a specified time, they failed to sink it or force it to strike flag, although it was subjected to direct gunfire and more than a hundred depth charges.

Finally, this research also found the Soviet and German actions and observations that can serve as indicators of submarine activity even to this day. First, there is the described practice of lying in wait during daytime, only to surface and insert teams during the night, which should leave markings in the seabed, as well as indicating when an effort should be concentrated. Second, is the maneuvering just before surfacing to ensure the bow are facing open water, which can help explain movement patterns. Lastly,

[217] Patrik Micu, Mikael berättar: ”Fienden är här, tänkte jag,” *Kvällsposten*, 10 January 2016, accessed 26 April 2020, https://www.expressen.se/kvallsposten/31-ar-senare-fienden-ar-har-tankte-jag/.

the deliberate search by the Wehrmacht for plywood boxes as indicators of submarine insertions. Any identified telltale sign like that can be used as indication of a presence.

Conclusion 4: What was described in *BUMS-37* through *BU-45* can be observed as modern day practice.

Overall Conclusion

Committed to avoid fighting a war on its own territory the Soviet Union from the outset was determined to maintain a readiness, in order to be able to deliver a pre-emptive strike or at least bring the war back to an aggressor's territory as quickly as possible. At the same time they were developing the deep-battle theory, engaging the enemy throughout the whole depth, and striking at the rear echelons. The Soviet Naval Forces contribution to this was an intent to engage the enemy even at their bases. To achieve this there had to be ready plans, which during their production had to be fed by an intelligence-preparation of the battlefield. This preparation had to be carried out in peacetime in order to be ready when the war came.

These ideas were tested in practice during World War Two and within a couple of weeks after the Soviet Union had been attacked by Nazi-Germany, the Soviets were preparing to conduct deep strikes behind enemy lines. With the use of submarines they successfully inserted scout teams along the coast of Northern Norway to monitor the German convoys. The scout teams did not achieve the expected effect, but that was more due to a cumbersome command and control arrangement than anything else. Nonetheless, the experience gained was encouraging enough to promote a continued practice after the war.

The principal lesson learned was how difficult it was for an enemy to detect the insertions and extractions, and in case they did, how difficult it was (and still is) to conduct sub-hunting in littoral waters. It is possible that the Germans would never have been able to counter the submarine insertions, had it not been for a lucky capture of a prisoner willing to cooperate. Although the operation to sink a Soviet submarine failed, it did manage to severely limit further Soviet submarine insertions into Northern Norway for the remainder of the war.

Experience from modern day Swedish anti-submarine warfare shows several similarities with the writings in Soviet naval instructions from the 1930s, as well as the practical experience by the Wehrmacht and Kriegsmarine during World War Two. Modern Swedish assessment of the motives replicates early Soviet writing on the matter, and a current Swedish Navy captain would likely nod his head in an acknowledging manner could he speak with a Kriegsmarine captain, on how to sink a Soviet submarine.

Further Research

As stated in the beginning of the essay, there is more to be learnt from the northern Scandinavian theater of World War Two. The sources are abundant with information, and although the German documents have been used by several researchers previously there are still more to be found. This author's humble suggestions are: firstly, more can be learned from the German experience of counter-insurgency or anti-guerilla operations, or conversely, the conduct of unconventional warfare. Secondly, an in-depth research of the development of the Soviet doctrines from 1930 through the World War. A big leap was taken in 1937, when the Red Navy was separated from the Red Army, and

an additional leap was taken when the experiences of World War Two was incorporated into *BU-45*.

Although not technically research, English speakers would benefit from a translation of the books by Jacobsen and Sunde. The story of the Norwegian nationals working for the Soviet Union in an effort to liberate their country is awe-inspiring. The author has had a hard time to stay on track, and not let himself divert into the enticement of their stories. Nevertheless, with an angle in line with the first research suggestion there might be room for them to be heard.

Epilogue

When I started this project I did not know what story I would write. I had read some about the subject beforehand, and knew what I was interested in. However, when confronted with thousands of pages on different matters, I just started writing as I saw it. Fortunately, my hard-drive crashed, and while spending time attempting to recover what was lost, I started to read the sources more thoroughly and suddenly I found the story I wanted to write. This story can definitely be expanded, both in width and in depth, and I encourage anyone to use this essay as a starting point.

My research has increased my understanding of a possible foe that has followed me throughout my military career. I truly believe that the Russians say what they mean, and mean what they say. Unlike the Western tradition—to which I count myself as being part of—the Russian tradition is not "running after one ball after another." In other words, their path is anchored in tried and tested theory, based on a distrust of their surroundings (being true disciples of the realist security theory) and a disgust for fighting on their own soil.

My findings in this research is that of a very practical nation, who is always in preparation for war, and not willing to recognize a distinction between war and peace. The 2014 seizure of Crimea by unidentified but clearly Russian special operators illustrates that attitude. The Russians use the means at their disposal, and are not afraid of taking big risks in order to gain the intelligence they need or do the preparations they see fit. However, I sign off with a humble respect for what they did during a trying and daunting period of their history. The bravery of the people should not be overshadowed by a corrupt and dysfunctional political system.

APPENDIX A

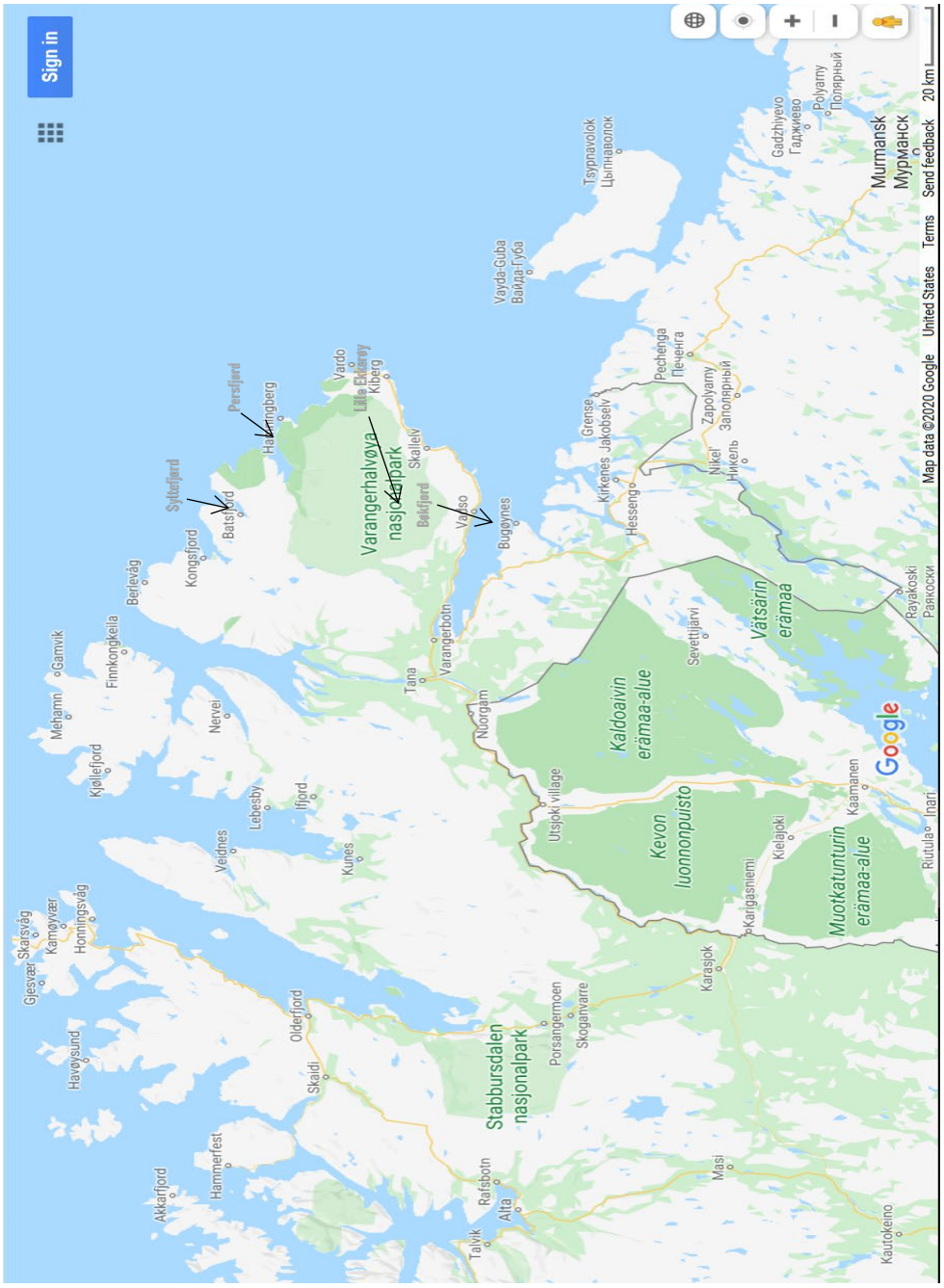
SOVIET SUBMARINE AND CONSTRUCTION

Boat type	Series	Basic dimensions length x beam x draught (m)	Displacement (tons) surfaced / submerged	Propulsion No x hp diesel / electric	Speed (knots) surfaced / submerged	Range at full and economical speed kt.–naut. mi.	Armaments[1]			Crew (officers, petty officers, sailors)
							Torpedoes; torpedo supply	Deck guns, machine guns, # of rounds	Mines	
Dekabrist	I	76.6x 6.4x3.76	934 1361	2x1100 2x525	14.6 9.5	2570 16.4 8.9–8950 2.9–158	8 – 533 B – 6 S – 2 14	1 – 100 (120) 1 – 45 (500)		53 (10, 15, 28)
Leninets	II	78.0x 7.2x3.96	1025 1312	2x1100 2x600	14.5 8.28	3600 10.8 9–7400 2.5–154	6 – 533 B – 6 12	1 – 100 (122) 1 – 45 (250) 1 – 7.62	2 tubes PLT 20	55 (10, 16, 29)
	XI	79.9x 7.0x3.96	1040 1340	2x1100 2x650	14.6 8.5	3400 12.5 10–7500 2.5–135	6 – 533 B – 6 12	1 – 100 (122) 1 – 45 (250) 1 – 7.62	2 tubes PLT 20	55 (10, 16, 29)
	XIII	85.3x 7.0x4.05	1120 1425	2x1100 2x650	15.0 9.0	2750 13.5 10–10,000 2.5–150	8 – 533 B – 6 Deck - 2 18	1 – 100 (150) 1 – 45 (500) 2 – 7.62	2 tubes PLT 18	55 (10, 16, 29)
	XIII-bis	83.3x 7.0x4.05	1108 1400	2x2000 2x650	18.0 9.0	3100 13.5 10–10,000 2.5–150	8 – 533 B – 6 Deck - 2 18	1 – 100 (150) 1 – 45 (500) 2 – 7.62	2 tubes PLT 20	56 (10, 19, 27)
Shchuka	III	57.0x 6.2x3.76	572 672	2x600 2x400	11.5 8.5	1350 9.0 8.5–3130 2.8–112	6 – 533 B – 4 S – 2 10	1 – 45 (500) 2 – 7.62		40 (7 15, 18)
	V	58.5x 6.2x3.79	592 715	2x685 2x400	11.86 8.5	1100 8.5 8.5–3130 2.8–112	6 – 533 B – 4 S – 2 10	2 – 45 (1000) 2 – 7.62		40 (7 15, 18)
	V-bis	58.7x 6.2x3.94	592 716	2x685 2x400	13.52 8.52	1460 9.2 8.5–3130 2.8–112	6 – 533 B – 4 S – 2 10	2 – 45 (1000) 2 – 7.62		40 (7 15, 18)
	V-bis-2	58.7x 6.2x4.0	593 705.7	2x685 2x400	12.3 7.83	1280 8.5 8.5–3130 2.8–112	6 – 533 B – 4 S – 2 10	2 – 45 (1000) 2 – 7.62		40 (7 15, 18)
	X	58.7x 6.2x3.96	584 707.8	2x800 2x400	14.12 8.62	1200 8.62	6 – 533 B – 4 S – 2 10	2 – 45 (1000) 2 – 7.62		40 (7 15, 18)
	X-bis	58.7x 6.4x4.0	590 705	2x800 2x400	14.0 8.0	1100 8.5	6 – 533 B – 4 S – 2 10	2 – 45 (1000) 2 – 7.62		40 (7 15, 18)
Pravda	IV	90.0x 8.0x2.83	931 1685	2x2700 2x550	20.2 10.9	1880 8.6 11.9–5535 4.1–96	6 – 533 B – 4 S – 2 10	2 – 100 (227) 1 – 45 (460) 1 – 7.62		56
Malyutka	VI	36.9x 3.13x2.58	157 197	1x685 1x235	13.0 7.0	400 5.84 10–1065 2.5–55	2 – 533 B – 2 2	1 – 45 (195) 1 – 7.62		17–19 (4, 9, 6)
	VI-bis	37.8x 3.11x2.58	161 201	1x685 1x240	13.2 7.16	545 6.0 10–1065 2.5–55	2 – 533 B – 2 2	1 – 45 (195) 1 – 7.62		17–19 (4, 9, 6)
S	IX	77.7x 6.4x4.0	828.2 1068.7	2x2000 2x550	20.0 9.0	2500 9.0 10–9860 3–148	6 – 533 B – 4 S – 2 12	1 – 100 (200) 1 – 45 (500 2 – 7.62		45 (8, 16, 21)
	IX-bis	77.7x 6.4x4.0	837 1090	2x2000 2x550	19.45 9.0	2700 9.0 10–9860 3–148	6 – 533 B – 4 S – 2 12	1 – 100 (200) 1 – 45 (500 2 – 7.62		45 (8, 16, 21)
M	XII	44.5x 3.3x2.85	206 258	1x800 1x400	14.0 7.8	650 8.0 8.6–3380 2.9–108	2 – 533 B – 2 2	1 – 45 (200) 1 – 7.62		20 (4, 10, 6)
	XV	50.5x 4.4x2.81	281 351	2x600 2x230	15.8 7.8	965 9.7 8–4500 2.9–85	2 – 533 B – 2 2	1 – 45 (200) 2 – 7.62		32
K	XIV	97.6x 7.4x4.07	1500 2117	2x4200 2x1200	22.5 10.0	2400 10.0 9–16,500 2–175	10 – 533 B – 6 S – 2 Deck – 2 24	2 – 100 (400) 2 – 45 (1100) 2 – 7.62	2 mine Cisterns EP-36 20	62–65

Source: V. I. Dmitriev, "Appendix 5: Basic Tactical/Technical Elements of Diesel Submarines of Soviet Navy of Pre-war and Wartime Production," in *Sovetskoye podvodnoye korablestroeniye* [Soviet submarine construction], trans. James F. Gebhardt (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1990).

APPENDIX B

NORTHERN SCANDINAVIA AND FINLAND



Source: Google Maps, "Northern Scandinavia and Finland," Google, accessed 2 June 2020, https://www.google.com/maps/place/Finnmark,+Norway/@70.0879562,28.7810091,7z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x45c8bbc7fe13caf5:0x6db095899c2b58a3!8m2!3d70.4830388!4d26.0135108.

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