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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

13 July 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence  
FROM : John H. Stein  
Acting Deputy Director for Operations  
SUBJECT : WARSAW PACT JOURNAL: Features of the  
Preparation and Conduct of Tactical Exercises  
on Mountain-Forest Terrain

1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on articles from a SECRET Soviet publication called Information Collection of the Headquarters and the Technical Committee of the Combined Armed Forces. This article makes comprehensive recommendations regarding the conditions, troop composition, and training required to prepare for and conduct tactical exercises on mountain-forest terrain. This journal is published by Warsaw Pact Headquarters in Moscow, and it consists of articles by Warsaw Pact officers. This article appeared in Issue No. 15, which was published in 1978.

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

John H. Stein

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## Intelligence Information Special Report

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COUNTRY USSR/WARSAW PACT



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SUBJECT

WARSAW PACT JOURNAL: Features of the Preparation and Conduct  
of Tactical Exercises on Mountain-Forest Terrain

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article from a SECRET Soviet publication called Information Collection of the Headquarters and the Technical Committee of the Combined Armed Forces. This journal is published by Warsaw Pact Headquarters in Moscow, and it consists of articles by Warsaw Pact officers. This article was written by Colonel C. Basalic, who makes comprehensive recommendations regarding the conditions, troop composition, and training required to prepare for and conduct tactical exercises on mountain-forest terrain. He stresses, among other things, the organization of supply on mountainous terrain, the advantages of training for exercises in mountain camps instead of in barracks, and the vital part played by maneuver in combat conducted in mountainous areas. This article appeared in Issue No. 15, which was published in 1978.

End of Summary



Comment:

There is no information in available reference materials which can be firmly identified with the author.



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Features of the Preparation and Conduct of Tactical Exercises on Mountain-Forest Terrain

by

Colonel C. BASALIC

Army of the Socialist Republic of Romania

The experience of the Romanian army in the war against Hitler and tactical exercises conducted in the course of combat training in peacetime illustrate that all branch arms can successfully operate in mountains. However, mountain-forest terrain with its characteristic features (difficult negotiability, lack of transportation lines, large wooded areas, and severe climate) hinders troop combat actions. All this necessitates a special approach to the preparation and conduct of tactical exercises.

On the basis of accumulated experience, we consider it advisable to dwell on the following matters.

1. The preparation of tactical exercises

Experience shows that on mountainous terrain, it is advisable to organize and conduct troop exercises using two sides, since this creates a realistic situation, the participants are forced to operate with initiative and boldness and continuously organize combat security, reconnaissance, and camouflage, and a real possibility exists to do engineer preparation of the terrain, construct barriers and obstacles, and make maximum use of the advantages of mountain conditions to conduct combat actions.

In our view, it is advisable that the themes of tactical exercise be integrated in content and permit several types of combat actions to be worked out systematically and without interruption, day and night, to a relatively great depth and under conditions of a rapidly changing situation. It is quite possible to conduct such exercises, since mountain regions, by reason of having no major industrial installations or extensive agricultural areas, are good training grounds.

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The duration and area of the exercises must be such that both sides can work out the designated themes and accomplish the assigned objectives.

In determining the composition of the participating subunits, it is necessary, in our view, to keep in mind that in mountains, troop requirements for reinforcement means and support increase, while their maneuver from one axis to another is often limited or even impossible, and that it is, therefore, advisable to designate the attached subunits for each axis in advance.

We should mention that many tasks which are performed by special subunits on normal terrain are assigned to the infantry on mountainous terrain, for example, setting up and positioning demolition obstacle belts and unmined obstacles, breaching minefields, carrying out various reconnaissance tasks, and restoring communications (especially wire).

In organizing an exercise in the mountains, the number of stages in the exercise should be made to correspond to the number of combat actions to be conducted, and the number of tactical episodes in one stage and their duration should be determined in accordance with the content of the training problems and the nature of the probable combat actions of the sides being trained.

It is very important to see that the trainees operate as if in a combat situation, keeping in mind the time factor, terrain, and weather conditions.

In working out such training problems as organizing a battle or conducting combat actions, it is necessary to allot as much time as would be needed in working out these problems in an actual situation on the same type of terrain. From this it can be concluded that in preparing an exercise, one should study all possible versions of the commanders' decisions and troop actions in situational conditions which could arise in a given area and influence troop actions.

We believe that in preparing the umpire organization on the terrain, it is advisable to indicate only the overall situation of the sides. This will ensure that the exercise progresses in accordance with the commanders' decisions and the actual troop actions.

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In working out the concept of a tactical exercise, it is very important, in our view, to stipulate several versions of decisions that ensure that the troops will accomplish the assigned tasks.

An analysis of the possible actions of subordinates under conditions of an abruptly changing situation permits the director of the exercise to refine in a timely manner the plan for conducting the exercise in keeping with the decisions and to ensure the organized playing out of the combat episodes.

To support their combat actions in mountains, especially when they are separated from the main forces of the large unit (unit), it is very important to carry out the timely establishment in subunits of increased reserves of ammunition, rations, and other materiel, which will enable them to conduct independent combat actions. It is necessary to instruct all personnel in the efficient use of ammunition, rations, and materiel and in the methods of supplying materiel and evacuating; and to teach them to seek and utilize for combat and food those things which can be acquired from the surrounding area.

In tactical mountain exercises, we consider it useful to organize training so as to include:

- battalion rear services subunits in company two-sided tactical exercises;
- regimental (brigade) rear services subunits in battalion tactical exercises;
- rear services subunits of a large unit in regimental exercises.

The kind of tactical situation should be created in exercises that compels the rear services subunits to fulfil tasks and operate in a realistic manner: to supply ammunition and rations, repair combat equipment, weapons, and other types of equipment (engineer, communications, chemical, etc.); to evacuate the wounded with improvised means; to reload cargoes from motor vehicles to packhorses or porters; to use one's own means in defending rear services facilities against sabotage and reconnaissance elements, enveloping detachments, and airborne landing forces.



When preparing the exercise area, in order to prevent fires, considerable attention must be given to the means and to the areas where firing is designated, especially on terrain covered by woods or abundant vegetation, and to the reconnaissance of places which the troops cannot bypass. As a result of the reconnaissance, the directing body of the exercise can designate in advance roads and paths on specified sectors and post danger signs ("Attention! Danger -- Avalanche from 1000 to 1200 Hours"; "Halting is Forbidden"; "Attention! Danger -- Ledge", etc.).

In winter exercises in those areas where there are frequent severe snowstorms, warming places for personnel, temporary shelters, and luminous reference points for night actions are prepared in advance. This is done not to facilitate or simplify troop actions, but solely to prevent serious accidents.

As for the training of commanders and subunits, it should be mentioned that it was not those troops which were trained in barracks or on training grounds near their permanent disposition areas which showed the best results in exercises, but rather those which were brought directly to the mountain camps and which for a period of one to two weeks trained for the exercise.

The movement of units (subunits) out to the camps was done according to a plan which was worked out at the same time that the plan for combat and political training was drafted, that is, each movement was closely tied in with the main measures conducted in the given cycle: tactical exercises, practice sessions, firing training, etc.

The preparation for exercises (especially during the period in which a detachment or platoon is being prepared) that takes place in mountain camps ensures integrated training, the main purpose of which is to improve the teamwork of subunits in conducting a battle and to work out problems on the terrain that are directly related to the exercise. For example, in sessions devoted to tactical training, practice sessions were held with a detachment, platoon, company, and battalion on conducting bold, surprise actions on mountain terrain with the use of very diverse methods: ambush, raid, organization and conduct of defense in separate strongpoints, organization of the system of fire (short-range concentrated, multilayered, staggered, and

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interlocking fire), preparation of barriers and obstacles, attack against strongpoints, actions of subunits in enveloping detachments.

Each other type of training session had its own characteristic features. For example, in sessions devoted to firing training, soldiers and subunits were trained to conduct fire from organic weapons against targets located at angles greater than  $\pm 15$  degrees, over the heads and through the gaps of their own troops. In special training, methods were worked out for obtaining food and water and for preparing and heating temporary shelters under mountain conditions; problems of hygiene, first aid, and rescue work in mountains were worked out, as were supply and evacuation methods with the use of horses and improvised means; in military topography [training], the personnel were trained to get their bearings on the terrain in a dense fog, low clouds, and in a magnetic anomaly, and to move by azimuth; in integrated psychological and physical training, training sessions were conducted with great and continuous stresses, and the degree to which the body adapted to conditions of rarified air in summer and winter and under all weather conditions was tested.

One of the best methods of preparing for mountain exercises is to train personnel in a mobile mountain camp. This consists of preparing and conducting a march over a great distance (at company and battalion strength in three to four stages) while at the same time working out training problems in line with the main types of training, negotiating several mountain areas with heavy weapons, combat equipment, and materiel reserves carried on horses (in winter, on general-purpose sleds), and stopping for rest at high altitudes.

March routes are selected so that, to the extent possible, they cross different types of terrain relief (great heights, gorges, places which cannot be bypassed, like ravines, valleys, plains, defiles, etc.) and assist in the maximum study of the planned themes. For example, if an area provides the opportunity to conduct combat firing after prolonged physical stress, then a target field is prepared there and troop actions with field firing are worked out; if another area favors the conduct of a

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meeting battle, then a tactical exercise is conducted there, and so forth.

To coordinate all measures conducted in a mobile camp, a graphic plan of the march is drawn up on a map, with an explanatory note attached indicating the following: the theme, objectives, and subunits involved in the march and the time allotted for training in the mobile camp; the movement route (for each stage of the march); the areas in which the training problems are to be worked out and the time of arrival at the lines (areas); the location of the mobile camp and the officer responsible for setting it up and closing it down; the daily routine, program, and duty personnel; places which the columns must not bypass; which subunits will be the first to negotiate difficult sectors, the time of passage through them, and support measures in the event of rockslides or snow avalanches; the concept of the main tactical exercises (if field firings are to be conducted -- a layout of the target situation and ammunition allotment); how communications are to be provided (radio, radio-relay, courier, wire) throughout the exercise.

On the reverse side of the map, a plan for materiel support is worked out, showing the organization of deliveries by various types of transport and by porters, sectors of the march route where each method for delivering cargoes is used, the place for reloading from one type of transport to another, the method of feeding and equipping personnel, and the distribution and use of munitions and all other types of equipment in different situations.

In addition, a march schedule must be worked out separately for each stage. It may be done on the exercise map (plan) or separately. In case larger tactical units are moved -- regiment, division -- the march schedule will be supplemented with a diagram of the march formation, on which there is noted the time each element of the march formation passes the departure line.

In exercises with troops, the march schedule is the main document. Organized and implemented on the basis of the march schedule are the command of the movement forward of units and subunits and the monitoring of practice sessions called for during the movement forward.



During the conduct of the march, special attention is devoted to matters of organizing rests, preparing food, and caring for equipment, weapons, and horses. This largely depends on the experience of the commanders in selecting rest areas which must have natural or man-made shelters, be capable of protecting the personnel from adverse weather and rockslides, and also have water, firewood, approach routes, and sites for the takeoff and landing of helicopters.

The diversified nature of the preparation of subunits and units for tactical exercises in mountain-forest terrain has as its purpose the physical and psychological hardening of the personnel so that they can bear great and prolonged stress.

2. Some features of conducting tactical exercises

During the movement forward of the troops from their permanent disposition areas to the exercise area, the following tasks can be carried out: security and traffic control, especially in crossing ravines, defiles, tunnels, viaducts, bridges, etc.; reconnaissance of loading and unloading areas; measures to provide camouflage of the movement and concentration of troops; maintenance of the survivability of transportation routes; destruction of sabotage and reconnaissance detachments, especially in areas which cannot be bypassed, in railroad centers, etc. Commanders and staffs direct their efforts at ensuring the timely movement of troops into concentration areas while maintaining their combat effectiveness for an organized commitment to battle.

When troops are moved by rail across one or several mountain areas, a situation has to be created which would make it necessary for the trainees to organize the movement both by rail and by organic means (on motor transport or on foot).

An analysis of the organization and implementation of the movement of troops indicated the necessity of devoting attention to matters of organizing the march and movement of troops by rail and to the reliable preparation of combat equipment, personnel, and horses.

The rate of speed of a march on wheels is determined by the march route sectors, with the factors being the throughput

capacity of the roads, road structures, steepness of the climb, and the nature of expected weather conditions. Experience shows that when commanders and staffs draw up the march schedule without considering these factors, units arrive in the prescribed areas late. The technical condition of motor transport affects the timeliness of the movement by the units to the designated areas; therefore, it is very important to prepare the drivers and equipment more carefully for the march and to provide the vehicles with means for increasing cross-country capability.

It is necessary to designate march routes separately for tanks and to coordinate their movement forward with that of motor vehicle columns, since in mountains, movement in mixed columns is made difficult by the different rates of movement and different capabilities for ascending slopes and maneuvering on tight turns.

The average rate of movement of horse columns is often about equal to the rate of movement of columns moving on foot. In some instances, along march routes with sectors difficult to traverse and with a large number of places which cannot be bypassed, it is advisable to stipulate a separate negotiable march route for horse columns.

Combat in mountain terrain is of a maneuvering nature. Through maneuver, subunits assure for themselves more favorable conditions and can destroy an enemy having the advantage in forces and means.

Maneuvering increases the effectiveness of a mountain battle and ensures the delivery of a surprise strike against the enemy. It must be conducted on the basis of careful study of the enemy, terrain, and weather conditions.

In organizing maneuver in mountains, one should not forget that the enemy is capable of a countermovement. Therefore, it is extremely important for subunits carrying out a maneuver to take measures to ensure the security of open flanks. To do this, it is necessary to conduct reconnaissance of the threatened flanks and carefully organize effective fire, direct security, and all-round surveillance of the enemy.

The results of maneuver increase considerably when it is carried out rapidly and with surprise, since in this case the

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enemy does not have sufficient time to take countermeasures.

Frequent and bold surprise actions by small subunits (detachments, platoons) -- in the summer, negotiating terrain sectors which seem difficult to traverse, and in the winter, exploiting the success of subunits which have penetrated on skis -- determine successful actions by companies and even battalions. The success of such combat actions is emphasized by the experience of the Romanian troops in the war against Hitler and by a number of exercises in which heavily fortified areas in the mountains were taken with the help of several surprise maneuvers and the use of a small number of well-trained forces.

The director of the exercises should encourage decisions by subordinates to conduct bold and decisive actions, especially under conditions of poor visibility (fog, rain, snowfall, night, etc.). This will assist in training personnel to get their bearings under conditions of poor visibility, move by azimuth, fire against plotted targets from temporary firing positions, negotiate obstacles, barriers, traps, and carry out penetration and other methods and ways of conducting combat actions under conditions of poor visibility or at night.

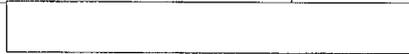
Consequently, in determining the success of one or the other side, the director of the exercise must take into consideration all the situation data, and especially those which result from actual combat actions by subunits or which are connected with sudden changes in the weather conditions.

The source of the data needed in order to make decisions, plan artillery fire, etc., must be primarily the reconnaissance of all the branch arms.

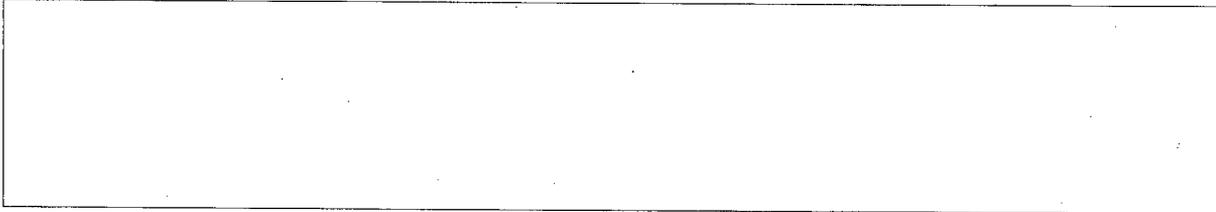
The success of one or the other side should be determined in accordance with the actual actions on the terrain, since this increases the interest of the participants in the exercises, increases their initiative in taking specific measures in reconnaissance, security, etc., selecting different methods of actions, and ensuring favorable conditions with respect to the enemy.

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