50X1-HUM

Next 3 Page(s) In Document Denied

Counterpreparation in an Army Defensive Operation

by
General-Mayor of Artillery N. Korf
Colonel A. Razuvayev

As is known, the primary task of defending forces is to disrupt an enemy offensive and destroy the enemy attack groupings. This task is accomplished with the combined efforts of all the branch arms. To disrupt an offensive being prepared by the enemy means to take measures which result in forcing him to temporarily or permanently abandon offensive actions. An enemy offensive can be disrupted by the massed employment of nuclear weapons or by conducting counterpreparation against the enemy troop groupings poised for the offensive.

Calculations show that to disrupt an enemy offensive it is necessary to destroy his nuclear attack means, his artillery, and at least 30 to 40 percent of his tank and motorized infantry battalions.

During a nuclear war, the delivery of a simultaneous massed nuclear strike or of several concentrated nuclear strikes upon the enemy means of nuclear attack or on his main grouping can sharply alter the balance of forces in favor of the defending forces and create the preconditions for their transition to an all-out offensive. Under these conditions there is no need to engage in a counterpreparation.

During a defense without the employment of nuclear weapons, the most important measure taken to disrupt or weaken the enemy offensive is counterpreparation, which is a powerful preemptive strike carried out by aviation, artillery, tanks and rocket troops, employing conventional ammunition.

Thus, during the last war, when a counterpreparation was carried out skilfully and in a timely manner, it helped increase the aggressiveness and stability of the defense, and not only weakened the enemy strike but also frequently disrupted the enemy offensive.

The most effective artillery counterpreparation during the Great Patriotic War was conducted in defensive operations in the vicinity of Moscow, Stalingrad, and Kursk and on the Dnepr River (in July 1944).

Data relating to several counterpreparations are set forth in the table below.

Army and Area of Conduct of Counter-preparation	Date of Conduct	Front of Counter-preparation Sector (in kilometers)	Average Density of Artillery (per km of front)	Duration (in minutes)	Number of Fire Strikes	Expenditure of ammunition (in units of fire)
16th and 20th Armies of the Western Front	20 October 1941	10	20.1	16	1	0.3
42nd Army in cooperation with the ships of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet in the vicinity of Leningrad	21 September 1941	--	20	15	1	--
62nd Army in the vicinity of Stalingrad	26 September 1942	2	100	60	3	0.25
13th Army in the vicinity of Kursk	5 July 1943	32	30 (without rocket artillery)	30	2	0.25
7th Guards Army in the vicinity of Kursk	5 July 1943	46	45-68	30	2	0.5

When organizing and planning a counterpreparation under modern conditions, it is essential to take into consideration a number of special features that stem from the nature of the enemy offensive operations. As is known, the basic method used at the present time is the offensive from the march, where the enemy does not form clearly defined, compact offensive groupings on selected axes, but disperses his forces along the front and in the depth, carefully camouflaging and sheltering them. The high mobility and relatively small size of the targets, which are dispersed over the area, and the absence of a stable front substantially impede the organization and conduct of a counterpreparation. The difficulty lies not only in determining the axis where the main forces of the enemy are concentrated (and, consequently, the sector of the counterpreparation) but also in deciding upon the time for initiating the counterpreparation and in selecting the targets of strikes. The defending forces will have a limited amount of time to carry out reconnaissance and regrouping of the artillery. Also, the continuing possibility that the enemy will deliver nuclear strikes makes it risky to concentrate the artillery in the sector of the counterpreparation by movement from the flanks and the second echelons.

Since the matter of the organization and conduct of a counterpreparation when an offensive is launched by the enemy from the march (as distinguished from an offensive launched under conditions of close contact) has not yet been adequately studied, we shall examine it in greater detail in this article.

In accordance with the views of our probable enemies, when they conduct an offensive from the march from concentration areas of a first-echelon division they occupy them 30 to 80 kilometers from the forward edge of the defense; only the covering units of the attacking forces will be in direct contact with the defending forces. When the troops begin their movement forward from the concentration areas, the artillery occupies prepared siting areas and will be in a state of readiness to fire.

When the first-echelon units reach a line that is 12 to 15 kilometers from the forward edge of the defense, the artillery preparation begins; under its cover the troops close, deploy, and attack the defending forces.

Thus, to disrupt enemy artillery preparation and to forestall the enemy in deploying, it is desirable to begin the counterpreparation the moment the enemy artillery occupies the siting area and his troops re50X1-HUM the line for deployment into battalion columns (i.e., when they are within 20 kilometers of the forward edge of the defense). At this point

conditions become favorable for the destruction of the enemy columns by our aviation and for the delivery of surprise fire strikes on his artillery and mortar batteries and command posts. It is desirable to conclude the counterpreparation when the enemy troops approach a line that is six to eight kilometers from the forward edge.

From this line all the artillery of the defending forces conducting fire on observed targets will be able to destroy the enemy as he deploys into company columns and into combat formation for the attack. This creates the conditions for continuity of transition from the counterpreparation to the destruction of the enemy troops on his lines of deployment for the attack and while the attack is in progress.

The duration of the counterpreparation is determined by the amount of time the enemy troops require to advance from the line for deployment into battalion columns (from the moment the counterpreparation begins) to the line for deployment into company columns, and may be an average of 30 to 40 minutes.

The structure of the counterpreparation will depend on the volume and nature of the tasks to be carried out, the extent to which enemy targets are to be damaged, the amount of artillery allocated for the counterpreparation, and the duration of the counterpreparation. Accordingly, there may be two to three fire strikes against enemy artillery batteries and command posts and one to two against enemy personnel and fire means. One variant of the structure of a counterpreparation is shown in the diagram.

The amount of ammunition expended in counterpreparation depends primarily on the volume of tasks carried out by the artillery and the specified degree of destruction of the targets. Thus, approximately 0.5 unit of fire of ammunition is needed to neutralize one enemy artillery battery at a range of up to ten kilometers (converted in terms of a 122-mm battery) and approximately 0.9 unit of fire is needed for one self-propelled battery. During the counterpreparation one six-gun battery can neutralize one to two enemy batteries. Thus, the total expenditure of ammunition by one battery amounts to 0.9 to 1.0 unit of fire. These figures were confirmed during a scientific-research game that was conducted in February 1968 in the Military Artillery Academy, when the artillery allocated for a counterpreparation lasting 35 minutes was allotted from 0.8 to 1.0 unit of fire of ammunition (amounting to about 0.5 of an army un50X1-HUM of fire).

In contrast to the variant examined, when there is direct contact with the enemy, the volume of artillery tasks during the counterpreparation will be somewhat smaller since aviation will assume responsibility for a portion of them, and the duration of the counterpreparation will be determined by the amount of time needed by the artillery to damage the enemy targets, within the limits of the amount of ammunition issued for the counterpreparation. Given an expenditure of 0.5 to 1.0 unit of fire, the counterpreparation will last approximately 20 to 30 minutes.

The following may be allocated to participate in the counterpreparation: the organic and attached artillery of first-echelon divisions, an army artillery group, and also the divisional artillery of the second-echelon divisions of the army.

The most favorable conditions (from the point of view of the capabilities for allocating artillery) will exist when counterpreparation is conducted simultaneously in two separated sectors (before the defensive front of two non-adjacent divisions). Under these conditions 80 to 90 percent of the entire army artillery can be allocated, firing from indirect fire positions.

To more fully employ the artillery of the second-echelon divisions in the counterpreparation, it is desirable, in our opinion, to move this artillery forward ahead of time to the probable axes of enemy operations and into concentration areas (15 to 20 kilometers away from the forward edge of the defense) or into areas of fire positions of the army artillery group.

How fully the artillery is employed will depend on the conditions of the situation and on the capability for carrying out maneuvering of fire and battle formations to the sector of the front where the counterpreparation is being conducted. An army consisting of four divisions can allocate up to 20 artillery battalions or 55 to 60 artillery batteries (330 to 360 guns) of its organic artillery for the counterpreparation.

If the army is reinforced by one to two regiments of an artillery division this number will increase to 370 to 420 guns. What are the capabilities of this artillery? 50X1-HUM

As calculations show, the minimum density of artillery in a counterpreparation (in which 50 to 60 percent of enemy artillery and mortar batteries and 25 to 30 percent of enemy personnel are reliably neutralized

in a given zone) is 25 to 30 guns (four to five batteries of 122-mm and higher caliber) per kilomeuter of front. Based on this, with the aforementioned quantity of artillery, a counterpreparation can be conducted in a sector up to 15 kilometers wide. If a counterpreparation is planned on not one but two axes, the overall front of the counterpreparation sectors should not exceed the artillery capabilities cited above, since it is difficult to achieve effective results with lower artillery densities. At the same time, we believe that the front of the counterpreparation sector should be no less than eight to ten kilometers wide, since otherwise the capabilities for effective support of the attacking troops by artillery fire from adjacent axes would be hampered.

Since counterpreparation is a measure that is carried out on an army scale, the army commander should determine the axes (sectors) where it is to be conducted and the allocation of the targets to be destroyed among aviation and the artillery (and in a number of cases also establish its duration and the expenditure of ammunition). In addition, he determines the time for readiness and for initiation of the counterpreparation.

The volume of work and the work procedures of the chief and staff of the rocket troops and artillery of the army when planning a counterpreparation depend, above all, on the amount of time available for organizing it and the comprehensiveness of the reconnaissance data. However, under all conditions, he determines: the tasks of the artillery (area of the counterpreparation) of the first-echelon divisions in whose zone the counterpreparation is being conducted (taking into account artillery moving into their zones); the specific fire tasks for the army artillery group; the nature of and procedure for artillery movement; the schedule of fire of the counterpreparation; and the expenditure of ammunition by types and calibers. As for the conduct of reconnaissance and specific planning of fire, the responsibility, obviously, falls entirely on the first-echelon divisions in whose zone the counterpreparation is being conducted and on the army artillery group.

No less complex a problem is the organization of the movement of the artillery for participation in the counterpreparation. Its solution is made difficult on the one hand, by the ever-present threat of nuclear strikes on the artillery grouping being formed, and on the other hand, by the extremely limited amount of time available for regrouping and preparing to conduct fire from new siting areas. Consequently, when adopting a

50X1-HUM

decision for a counterpreparation, it should be based, above all, on the amount of time available to the troops for organizing the counterpreparation and on what forces and means can be allocated to conduct it.

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

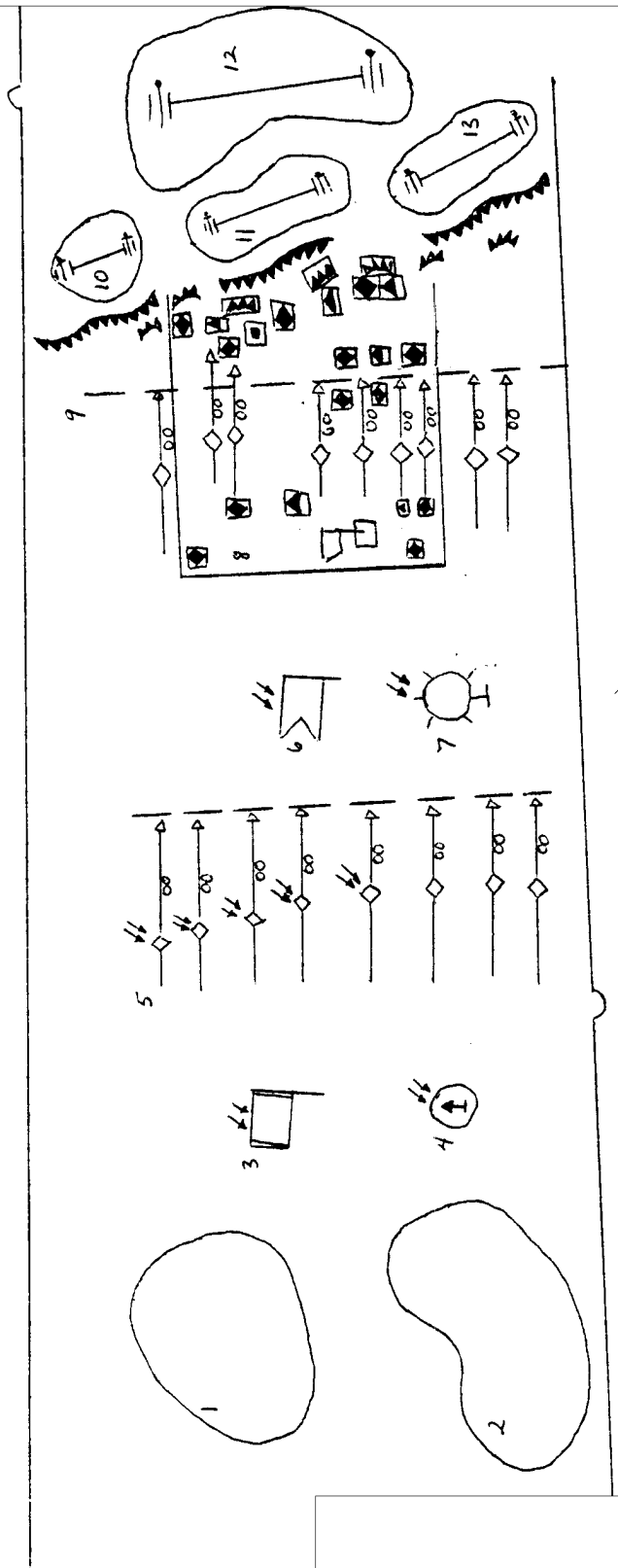

Diagram of a counterpreparation during an enemy offensive from the march

50X1-HUM

50X1-HUM

LEGEND

1. 15th tank division
2. 14th motorized infantry division
3. Army corps headquarters
4. Hawk surface-to-air missiles
5. Beginning of counterpreparation with reaching the line
6. Division headquarters
7. Honest John free rockets
8. Area (2 words missing) of artillery
9. End of counterpreparation with reaching the line
10. Artillery of 14th motorized rifle division
11. Artillery of 27th motorized rifle division
12. Army artillery group of 16th Army and artillery of 11th tank division
13. Artillery of 16th motorized rifle division

50X1-HUM

Schedule of Artillery Fire in a Counterpreparation of the 16th Army

Structure of Counterpreparation		Army artillery group of the 16th Army and artillery of 11th tank division	Artillery of 14th, 27th and 16th motorized rifle divisions
Required Time 38 minutes	1st fire strike 8 minutes	against artillery, mortar, and antiaircraft batteries, command posts and radar stations	
	2nd fire strike 18 minutes	against enemy troops	
	3rd fire strike 12 minutes	against artillery, mortar, and antiaircraft batteries, command posts, and radar stations	
Destruction of the enemy at a line for deployment		neutralization of the portion of the artillery of the army within range of the batteries	neutralization of manpower and tanks at the lines for deployment