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INFORMATION ABOUT OPERATIONS IN
SOUTHERN FRANCE,
REAR AREA SECURITY IN RUSSIA 1941-1944,
NORTH AFRICA, AND KOREA

[Note: This manuscript was prepared in the mid-1960s by Charles B. MacDonald, Charles V. P. von Luttichau, Martin Blumenson, and Billy C. Mossman, historians assigned to the Office of the Chief of Military History (now US Army Center of Military History) for reference use by members of the Army Staff. It is typical of the kinds of "staff support" projects routinely carried out by the Center, and is a set of short background information papers prepared by subject-matter experts. The original is on file in the Historical Manuscripts Collection (HMC) under file number 2-3.7 AD.T, which should be cited in footnotes, along with the title. It is reproduced here with only those limited modifications required to adapt to the World Wide Web; spelling, punctuation, and slang usage have not been altered from the original. Where modern explanatory notes were required, they have been inserted as italicized text in square brackets.]

SOUTHERN FRANCE

LOCATION: France south of the Loire River.

TIME PERIODS: First six months of 1944; July-August 1944.

GENERAL TACTICAL SITUATION: Having occupied France since the armistice of 1940, the Germans had prepared fortified positions along the coasts to guard against Allied invasion. French insurgency had been increasing rapidly through 1943 and the first half of 1944 and was a serious problem over the entire country, despite the presence in all of France of some 160,000 German police. After Allied landings in Normandy in June, 1944, an army of insurgents estimated at about 70,000 men continued to operate in the

region south of the Loire until German withdrawal from southern France in the last half of August.

TYPE OF LINE OF COMMUNICATIONS: The main road and rail route ran south from Dijon down the valley of the Rhone River for about 350 airline miles through territory infested with insurgents amid a populace hostile to the Germans. Another critical line was the road and rail route across southwestern France from Bordeaux to Carcassonne, the Carcassonne Gap, route of contact between German forces in southwestern France and those along the southern coast.

NUMBER OF COMBAT TROOPS IN THEATER OR SECTOR: Until June, approximately 220,000; after the end of June, about 150,000.

NUMBER OF COMBAT TROOPS DEPLOYED TO PROTECT LoC: Until Allied landings in Normandy on 6 June, two divisions (one of which was only at about half strength) were always held out for general security tasks. There was in addition a group of separate battalions making up a so-called Ost Legion, which all together represented approximately division strength. And a "reserve" corps of about one division strength was assigned permanently to keeping open the Carcassonne Gap. Thus, about 31 divisions out of the line at all times on security tasks, about 30,000 men. After the Allied landings in Normandy, the Germans in southern France lost the equivalent of 5 divisions to the northern front, including one of the divisions that had been on security duty; but from time to time additional units were pulled out of the line for security assignments, so that the average employed on this task probably remained at about 30,000.

PERCENTAGE OF COMBAT TROOPS EMPLOYED TO PROTECT LoC: Until June, approximately 13 percent; after the end of June, about 20 percent.

DEGREE OF SUCCESS IN PROTECTING LoC: The Germans were never able to make their lines of communications secure. All convoys and rail movements had to be protected by armed escorts. By the time of Allied landings in southern France on 15 August, no rail routes to the south were open. As the Germans fell back from southern France, they were constantly harassed and attacked by insurgent groups. Retreating columns as large as 20,000 men were kept under almost constant harassment and attack.

—Charles B. MacDonald

REAR AREA SECURITY IN RUSSIA 1941-44

From June 1941 to July 1944 the German army fought on Russian soil. During the entire period the Germans were faced with the problem of fighting Russian partisans or guerrillas to hold open their lines of communications and vital base area.

German anti-partisan warfare went through three phases: (1) the German offensive of the summer and fall of 1941, (2) the Soviet counteroffensive of the winter 1941-42 and the following German summer offensive to the Caucasus and Volga, ending in August of 1942, and (3) the German defensive battles from Stalingrad in November 1942 to the Soviet border in June 1944.

Each phase had its counterpart in guerrilla and anti-guerrilla warfare. During the first phase the Soviet partisan movement was born and organized. It consisted of some 30,000 men, most of them hard-core communist functionaries supported by Red Army stragglers left behind the front of the advancing German armies. Although the Germans had hoped to be able to deal with guerrillas and secure their lines of communications by employing a total of 9 so-called security divisions (three divisions in each of three army groups), it soon was evident that regular front-line units had to be assigned for specific anti-partisan operations.

These operations were conducted in all sectors of the front and at varying times. They ranged from small-scale operations (up to company strength) to large-scale operations by special task forces of up to division strength, and mopping-up operations (today termed search and destroy operations) as well as pacification operations (today called clear and hold operations). The largest units the Germans withdrew from the front were regiments and battalions. Frequently, such regular forces were employed to clear certain parts of infested areas during redeployment moves. It took at least an 8 to 1 superiority to destroy a partisan unit by encirclement.

During the second phase, the Soviet partisan movement ran to a strength of about 150,000, organized into brigades and regiments. The partisans now had the capability of threatening rear area security to the extent that the operations of field armies and army groups were affected. The Germans were forced to counter the threat by resorting to large-scale operations, especially in the center and north sectors of the front.

The Germans launched a typical operation of this kind in the Yelnya-Derogobruzh area in January-June 1942. The Russian guerrilla and regular forces in the area numbered about 20,000 men. The German Fourth Army committed two army corps plus elements of a third, totalling *[sic]* seven divisions, plus security forces. Because of attrition and relatively low effective combat strengths, the German force was about equal in strength to the Soviet partisan forces, but superior in terms of mobility, firepower, and training. The Germans also had the advantage of

-2-

initiative. They killed or captured all but about ten percent of this group. The leadership and hard-core elite escaped.

During the third phase, the partisans had about a quarter of a million men. They were organized into brigades, groups, regiments, and battalions and were supported by the local population of large areas under partisan control. The partisan units were equipped

with heavy weapons, artillery and even tanks. The Germans streamlined their anti-partisan organization, strengthened their security forces, and adopted aggressive counter-measures. Most effective were large-scale encirclement operations. The Germans employed, depending on the area, forces from one division to a reinforced army corps with up to half a dozen combat divisions. In terms of battalions, the total strength of some operations (e.g., Operation Zigeunerbaron near Bryansk) reached 40 battalions, reinforced by tanks, artillery and aircraft. None of these operations was fully successful because the Germans lacked the strength to throw tight encir[c]lement rings around the partisan areas.

To guard their lines of communications in the spring of 1943, the Germans employed about 250,000 men on security missions (150 German security battalions, 90 collaborator battalions, 30 satellite battalions, and more than 50,000 auxiliary police). In addition 10 training and reserve divisions had to be moved from the zone of the interior to Russia, and combat troops (divisions and corps) had to be withdrawn from the front for periods of weeks and even months. Conservative estimates would place German and Axis manpower employed in anti-partisan and security actions at 400,000 men. German commanders estimated that they would have needed twice the number to eliminate the guerrillas. These figures compare to an average strength of German land forces in the East of about 3.3 million in the summer of 1941 and 2 million in mid-1944.

—Charles V. P. von Luttichau

NORTH AFRICA

LOCATION: North Africa.

TIME PERIODS: November 1942-May 1943.

GENERAL TACTICAL SITUATION: Anglo-American forces totalling 107,000 men came ashore on 8 November 1942 at three landing sites: Casablanca, Oran, and Algiers. From the latter, the Eastern Task Force, with an initial contingent of about 10,000 American troops, headed eastward toward Bizerte and Tunis, 550 miles away. From this situation developed the Tunisian Campaign, in which increasing numbers of British, U.S., and French troops were employed. At the same time, Allied troops were engaged in occupying Algeria and French Morocco, training for the invasion of Sicily and Italy, re-equipping and training French units, and operating the ports and supply lines.

TYPE OF LINE OF COMMUNICATIONS: Supplies to the troops engaged in Tunisia came from the United States and the United Kingdom by ship, then were transported by rail, truck, and to a limited extent by air to the front. The nearest port was Bone, about 100 miles away, but supplies were distributed from almost all North African ports, including Philippeville, Bougie, Algiers, Oran, and Casablanca, the latter being about 1,500 miles from Tunis and Bizerte, the ultimate objectives of the campaign. Along this

extended line of communications, highly vulnerable to Axis parachutists, saboteurs, and air attack, the entire French Territorial Division of Constantine performed guard duty for about a month, then was replaced by other French troops and at least the entire 39th U.S. Infantry Regiment for a period of four months. (Numbers of British troops performing similar duty is unknown). The problem of determining how many additional combat troops were used to protect line of communications requires consideration of other factors, discussed below.

NUMBER OF COMBAT TROOPS IN THEATER OR SECTOR: U.S. Army troops in North Africa totalled 128,000 on 30 November 1942 and 395,000 on 30 April 1943. Divisional forces numbered 52,000 and 106,000 for the respective dates. Divisional combat forces employed in Tunisia totalled 40,000 in January 1943 and about 75,000 in March, the highest figure for the campaign. Nondivisional combat arms totalled 4,000 in November, 24,000 in April. All together, the combat forces engaged in Tunisia totalled 90,000 men. The 150,000 left unaccounted for consist of Air Force and Service troops, plus three combat divisions engaged in training and occupation duties, probably one-third of which consisted of duties directly related to guarding line of communications installations.

NUMBER OF COMBAT TROOPS DEPLOYED TO PROTECT LoC: Approximately 15,000.

PERCENTAGE OF COMBAT TROOPS EMPLOYED TO PROTECT LoC: about 16 percent.

DEGREE OF SUCCESS IN PROTECTING LoC: No impairment of the flow of supply. The large numbers of French troops in the process of re-equipping and retraining, plus the unknown numbers of British troops engaged in LoC protection,

-2-

eased the problem of guarding the long LoC. Exact figures of U.S. Army troop strengths in North Africa, November 1942-April 1943, may be found on pages 680 and 681 of George F. Howe, *Northwest Africa: Seizing the Initiative in the West* (U.S. ARMY IN WORLD WAR II).

—Martin Blumenson

KOREA

LOCATION: Korea.

TIME PERIODS: Month of October 1950.

GENERAL TACTICAL SITUATION: By 1 October 1950, United Nations Command forces had completed an offensive that had cleared the Republic of Korea of all organized North Korean resistance, but thousands of North Korean troops had been bypassed in the south. Some of these still endeavored to reach North Korea, using the rough axial Taebaek mountains as the main escape route, while others moved into mountainous areas, principally the Chiri Mountains in the southwest, where they intended to operate as guerrillas along with other irregular forces that long had infested these areas.

UNC plans for October called for advances through North Korea to destroy the remainder of the North Korean Army. The Eighth Army, employing 1 U.S. and 2 ROK corps headquarters and 2 U.S. and 6 ROK divisions, was to cross the 38th Parallel on western, central, and eastern corps axes near the beginning of the month. Later, the separate X Corps, with 1 U.S. division and 1 reinforced U.S. Marine division, was to land at Wonsan on the east coast of North Korea, take control of 1 ROK corps, initially under Eighth Army control and moving over the eastern axis, and proceed to clear northeastern Korea.

The remaining major force of the Eighth Army, initially with 1 U.S. corps headquarters and 2 U.S. divisions and 1 ROK division, and after 8 October an additional ROK division activated on that date, was to protect the main Eighth Army lines of communications in South Korea, running from Pusan at the southeastern tip of the peninsula northwestward through Taegu, Taejon, and Suwon, to Seoul. In conjunction with this assignment, these forces assisted by ROK national police units were to seek out and destroy the remaining enemy forces in South Korea.

As the lines of communications lengthened with the advance beyond the parallel, forward reserve units varying in make-up from time to time, were to protect the routes against any interdiction efforts by North Korean remnants that had taken refuge in the Taebeck range of North Korea.

TYPE OF LINE OF COMMUNICATIONS: At the beginning of October, the Eighth Army's main road line of communications stretched almost 3400 airline miles from Pusan to Seoul, all in friendly territory. The main rail line, on approximately the same path as the main road, was about the same length, although full use of it from Pusan to Seoul was not possible because of war damage until 10 October. (Generally speaking, the army railhead lagged 200 miles behind the Eighth Army front). By the end of October, the main road line of communications had lengthened to approximately 500 miles, the additional distance resting in enemy territory (North Korea). The main rail line of communications in use was shorter by about 150 miles.

NUMBER OF COMBAT TROOPS IN THEATER OR SECTOR: During October, the combat forces of the Eighth Army and the ROK Army with which this example is concerned ranged from approximately 150,000 men to 162,000.

NUMBER OF COMBAT TROOPS DEPLOYED TO PROTECT LoC: The number of Eighth Army and ROK Army combat troops involved in protecting the LoC during October ranged from 48,000 to 60,000. Two qualifications attend this substantial total: Part of this force probably would have been used in the advance north of the 38th Parallel had the Eighth Army been able at the time to support additional forces logistically. Also, an additional mission assigned to the forces deployed in the rear was to seek out the guerrillas and by-passed North Korean soldiers in areas other than those bordering the main lines of communications.

PERCENTAGE OF COMBAT TROOPS EMPLOYED TO PROTECT LoC: 32 to 37 percent (as qualified below).

DEGREE OF SUCCESS IN PROTECTING LoC: While the irregular enemy forces established some ambushes and fireblocks along the road and rail lines serving as the Eighth Army's main lines of communications, at no time was the use of the LoC's blocked or even noticeably delayed. The full use of the LoC's with the exception of some harassment from the irregulars was due to a measureable extent to the containing effect of operations by the Eighth Army and ROK Army forces deployed in the rear areas. But it must also be recognized that the failure of the irregulars to interdict the LoC's effectively was also partially due to the fact that during October, these irregulars lacked communications with their northern allies, thus receiving no logistical support from the north; they lacked the necessary explosives and other equipment necessary for effective operations and seldom captured any of this material; and despite large numbers (estimated as high as 40,000[)], they were largely disorganized and engaged largely in a struggle for survival. In sum, it is not likely that more Eighth Army or ROK Army troops would have been used had they been available.

—Billy C. Mossman