

ARMAGEDDON UNLEASHED:

**The First Day of War on the Eastern Front
(22 June 1941)**

Research Notebook



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Epigraphs

“It is not necessary that I should live; it is, however, that I should do my duty and fight for the fatherland.” (Frederick the Great)¹

“I am convinced that our attack will sweep over [Russia] like a hailstorm.” (Adolf Hitler, 1 Feb 41)²

“There will be 14 days of heavy fighting. Hopefully, by then we shall have made it.” (Colonel Günther Blumentritt, Chief of Staff, Fourth Army, 18 Apr 41)³

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¹ **Note:** *Deutscher Soldatenkalender 1961*, 30

² **Note:** Comment made to GFM v. Bock on **1 Feb 41**. (GFM v. Bock, *The War Diary*, 198.) The German text: “*Ich bin ueberzeugt, dass unser Angriff wie ein Hagelsturm ueber sie hinweggeht.*“ (Cited in: L. Besymenski, *Die Schlacht um Moskau*, 32.)

³ **Note:** J. Förster & E. Mawdsley, “*Hitler and Stalin in Perspective,*” in: *War in History*, 69.

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APOCALYPSE UNLEASHED:

THE FIRST DAY OF WAR ON THE EASTERN FRONT (22 JUNE 1941)

1.1: Preface & Acknowledgments

1.1.1: Preface

--Discuss my reasons (purpose & justification) for writing a book that simply examines the first day of the war in Russia. Note how I “crossed the Rubicon” in writing *Barbarossa Unleashed* when I composed entire chapter on 22 June 1941! Discuss the sources I have used to accomplish my task(s).

--**Note:** In doing my research for this book I soon discovered that the results of the first day of the war were surprisingly different along each of the three axes of the German assault; in fact, it was almost as if the Germans fought *three separate wars* on 22 June 1941—a situation that would characterize most of the summer of 1941, as the three German army groups largely fought out their battles independent of one another while confronting in many ways similar yet often very different challenges. (C. Luther, 15 July 2017)

--**Note:** Whereas 21st Century post-modern German “elites” – and much of German society as a whole – have largely condemned the 10 million of their countrymen who fought in Russia’s fields, forests and swamps from 1941/44 as criminals, the war still holds the Russian people collectively in its spell; war has almost totemic significance to the Russians, who view the more than 30 million of their countrymen and women who fought in the “Great Patriotic War” with great reverence. (C. Luther, 15 July 2017)

--**Note:** Due to a number of factors – not the least of which is the fact that, for first time in my modest career as an author, I’m laboring under the tyranny of “word count” – I’ve elected in my narrative to take a more thematic approach to the first day of the war and, thus, to largely avoid getting down in the “weeds” of the tactical details of the combat actions along the 1200 kilometer front addressed in this book. (C. Luther, 15 July 2017)

--About **22 Jun 41** writes Alan Clark:

What an appalling moment in time this is! The head-on crash of the two greatest armies, the two most absolute systems, in the world. *No battle in history compares w/ it*. Not even that first ponderous heave of **August 1914**, when all the railway engines in Europe sped the mobilization, or the final exhausted lunge against the Hindenburg Line four years later. In terms of numbers of men, weight of ammunition, length of front, the desperate crescendo of the fighting, *there will never be another day like 22nd June 1941*.

(A. Clark, *Barbarossa. The Russian-German Conflict 1941-45*, 44, 46)

--My original introduction to review of C. Hartmann book:

As noted historian Paul Johnson observed some years ago, **1941** was “The Watershed Year” – the critical year of the past century whose global impact still reverberates to this day. The year ended, of course, with the surprise Japanese attack on the U.S. Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor and American, British and European possessions in the Pacific region and Southeast Asia. Yet *the* pivotal event of this “watershed year” had occurred some months earlier, on the 22nd of June 1941. At dawn on that Sunday morning Hitler flung his still undefeated legions across the German-Soviet demarcation line, launching a “blitzkrieg”-style campaign which, his General Staff calculated, would destroy the Red Army and crush the Soviet Union in but a few weeks time.

This was indeed “Hitler’s war,” the war he had dreamt of since the mid-1920s and which embraced not only his aspirations for global power (“*Weltmacht*”) but those racial and ideological objectives which culminated in the most destructive war of annihilation (“*Vernichtungskrieg*”) the world has ever seen. Yet it was also the *Wehrmacht’s* war, for it was here, in the forests and swamps and endless steppe lands of the East that some 10 million of its 17 million soldiers saw active military service from 1941 to 1944. And it was here where the *Wehrmacht*, following its initial spectacular victories, slowly bled to death in a remorseless war of attrition it could never win.

--**Quote:** “A true war story is never moral. It does not instruct, nor encourage virtue, nor suggest models of proper human behavior, nor restrain men from doing the things men have always done. If a story seems moral, do not believe it. If at the end of a war story you feel uplifted, or if you feel that some small bit of rectitude has been salvaged from the larger waste, then you have been made the victim of a very old and terrible lie. There is no rectitude whatsoever. There is no virtue. As a first rule of thumb, therefore, you can tell a true war story by its absolute and uncompromising allegiance to obscenity and evil. . . You can tell a true war story if it embarrasses you. . .” (From novel by *Tim O’Brien, The Things They Carried*; quoted in: *Shay, Achilles*, 183)

-- “Augustine counsels us that the *only purpose of war is to achieve a better peace*.” (“*A failure of Generalship*,” Lt.Col. Paul Yingling,)⁶

-- “If ever there was a savage war, this was it.” (*Martin van Creveld, The Changing Face of War*, 156)

-- Both German and Russia soldier pushed repeatedly *beyond the limits of human endurance, suffering, etc.*

--Before a shot was fired in Russia, the German onslaught was planned – both at the front and the rear – „to be the cruellest military campaign ever fought.” (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 3, 12)

⁶ **Note:** In: Armed Force Journal (AFJ), May '07 (<http://www.armedforcesjournal.com>)

--German Army that exploded into Russia on **22 Jun 41** perhaps the finest military machine of the modern era. See insights of van Creveld, Marc Bloch, etc., in my **IMPB:36**; also Charles Burdick's insights in his Lanz biography.)

--The invasion was planned and carried out on the initiative of Adolf Hitler; it was a project over which he had a remarkable degree of control. The professional leadership of the German armed forces also enthusiastically supported it. It had, from its conception, a character that was both imperialistic and ruthlessly ideological. . . Before a shot was fired in Russia, the German onslaught was planned – both at the front and the rear – „to be the cruellest military campaign ever fought.“ (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 3, 12)

--For background on parameters of the Soviet-German War see, *D. Glantz, Soviet-German War: Myths & Realities*, 5-7) For example, he points out that the scale of the combat was “unprecedented” in modern warfare both in terms of width of the operational front and depth of military ops. Initial “Barbarossa” front (main front from Baltic to Black Sea) = **820 miles (1320 km)**. Depth of German advance (maximum extent / **1941**) = **760 miles (1223 km)**. Maximum extent of advance (**1942**) = **1075 miles (1730 km)**⁷

--Over **80%** of the Wehrmacht fought in the East during **1941/42**; over **60%** continued to do so in **1943/44**. (*Glantz, Soviet-German War: Myths & Realities*, 6)

-- Die *Lebenserwartung* eines Leutnants soll im Durchschnitt bei **18** Tagen, eines Kompaniechefs rechnerisch bei etwa **21** Tagen, die eines Bataillonskommandeurs bei ca. **32** Tagen gelegen haben. (*Naumann, Freispruch fuer die Wehrmacht*, 372)

--“Insgesamt sind also **5.3** Millionen Soldaten auf dt. Seite ums Leben gekommen [i.e., on all theaters of combat]. Der Vergleich mit den bisher vorhandenen Angaben zeigt, dass das Ergebnis der vorliegenden Untersuchungen – bezogen auf das insgesamt in der Literatur vorhandene Spektrum von ca. **3 - 9** Millionen Toten – durchaus im mittlern Bereich liegt u. insofern keine Ueberraschung darstellt. Die Angaben der am haeufigsten zitierten Autoren, *Mueller-Hillebrand* oder *Schramm*, dagegen bewegen sich mit ca. **3 – 4** Millionen doch in einer deutlich kleineren Dimension.“ (*Overmans, Deutsche militaerische Verluste*, 232)

-- Ca. **52%** der Todesfaelle [„Gefallen“ u. „Verschollen“] haben sich an der Ostfront ereignet – ganz zu schweigen von den Verlusten waehrend der Endkampefe [i.e., ab. **1.1.45**], von denen ca. **2/3** ebenfalls der Ostfront zugerechnet werden koennen. Hinzu kommen die Todesfaelle in der *Kriegsgefangenschaft*, so dass es nicht falsch ist, die Summe der in diesem, weiten Sinne an der Ostfront Gestorben bei fast **4,000,000** anzunehmen. Bezogen auf die *Gesamtverluste* sind damit fast **75%** der Ostfront im weitesten Sinne, weniger als **20%** dem Westen u. knapp **10%** den sonstigen Kriegsschauplaetzen zuzurechnen. (*Overmans, Deutsche militaerische Verluste*, 265)

--“Momument to the Battle of the Nations” (“*Voelkerschlachtdenkmal*”) in Leipzig as metaphor for my study? Momument completed in **1913** (the tallest momument in Europe); we visited in **Jun 09**. This is where I discovered the phrase from *Genesis*: “*Die Stimme des Blutes deines Bruders. . .*” Describe appearance of momument (imposing structure out of *concrete and granite*), its significance, etc.; the giant carved figures, the so-called “*Totenwaechter*” (“Guards of the Dead”). (*Wikipedia*)

⁷ **Note:** These figures indicate length “as the crow flies.” Actual length was about half again as long. (5)

--How utterly different is the Europe of today. Almost as if those who built this impressive edifice were creatures from another world. And, in a sense, they were. In front of the monument there is an artificial rectangular lake intended to symbolise the blood and tears shed during the wars. The so-called *Régates de Baquet* (a bathtub race) has taken place in this lake every year since **1991**, an attempt to "unmonopolize" the so-called ideologies inherent in such "overtly nationalistic structures." (*Wikipedia*)

--If previous generations had been willing to die for the dubious "cult" of nationalism embodied by this monument, one wonders if today's Europeans would be willing to give their lives for anything.⁸ Post-war Europe transformed Clausewitz' (iconic) dictum that war was simply politics continued by other means into something akin to: no conceivable policy justifies the application of military force to achieve its ends. Such potentially suicidal perspectives gained additional impetus in recent decades w/ the rise and ultimate triumph of the corrosive neo-Marxist philosophy of "multiculturalism." The catastrophe of World War II forged this new Europe. "Barbarossa" was a pivotal part of this catastrophe.⁹

--The seemingly invincible *Wehrmacht* advanced from the Soviet Union's western borders to the immediate outskirts of Leningrad, Moscow and Rostov in the shockingly brief period of less than six [6] months. . . The ensuing struggle encompassed a region totally roughly **600,000** square miles. . . The Soviet Union's self-proclaimed "Great Patriotic War" was one of "unprecedented brutality" – a "veritable "Kulturkampf," a war to the death between two cultures, which killed as many as **35** million Russian soldiers and civilians, almost **4** million German soldiers and countless German civilians, and inflicted imaginable destruction and damage to the population and institutional infrastructure of most of central and eastern Europe. . . The searing effect of this terrible war on the Russian soul¹⁰ endured for generations, shaping the development of the postwar Soviet Union and, ultimately, contributing to its demise in **1991**. (David Glantz, *Soviet-German War: Myths & Realities*, 2)

-- **Economic impact** of the war „dwarfs the imagination.“ Areas occupied by Germans contained 2/5th of the grain, 4/5th of the sugar beet produced in the USSR, plus about a ¼ of the nations farm animals, tractors and combine harvesters. In occupied areas of the Soviet Union the invaders and defenders, between them, destroyed **1710** towns, **70,000** villages, **32,000** industrial plants and **65,000** kilometers of railway track. In the Russian republic alone **23,000** schools were razed to the ground. Damage to basic industry was particularly severe. Between ½ and 2/3 of Soviet basic industrial capacity was put out of action. Mines which had produced **100** million tons of coal and **20** million tons of iron ore were wrecked and factories which had produced **19** million tons of steel were totally or partially destroyed. (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 14)

--In *Vom Kriege* Carl Graf v. Clausewitz avers that war in the *abstract* – as an *ideal* – tends toward *absolute violence*. He noted, however, that in the "real world," an infinite variety of factors intervene to make it something less – often much less – than absolute in its effects. Yet if any war in the modern era aggregated toward some *Platonic ideal* of absolute violence it was the Russo-German War 1941/45. . . (My idea)

⁸ **Note:** For example, their response to "Islamofascism" in their midst; German military behavior in Afghanistan, etc.

⁹ **Note:** I think this paragraph involves my "ruminations" some years ago.

¹⁰ **Note:** Glantz also writes: "Clearly the war had a searing effect on the Russian psyche, an effect that ultimately contributed to the demise of the Soviet State." (12)

--Writes T. Ropp: "Clausewitz' method was to attempt to define the *real nature of war* and then to compare it w/ warfare as soldiers practiced it.¹¹ The absolute – or abstract – concept of war is a concept of absolute violence. Bonaparte, Clausewitz felt, had *approached this absolute concept*." (See, Theodore Ropp, War in the Modern World, 159)

--The second major *dialectical relationship* that runs thru the **8** books of On War is encompassed in the assertion that real war is a *composite of three elements*. Its dominate tendencies, Clausewitz declared, "always make war a **remarkable trinity**" ["*wunderliche Dreifaltigkeit*"] composed of *violence and passion; uncertainty, chance, and probability; and political purpose* and effect. . . The tripartite definition: War is composed of, and exists in, the realms of *violence, change, and politics*. (See, Peter Paret, "Clausewitz," in: Makers of Modern Strategy, 201-02)

--Parallel to **1812: Jun 41** not the first time Germans had invaded Russia. In **1812**, tens of thousands served w/ Napoleon's *Grande Armee*. This army included not only French, but large numbers of Poles, Italians, Germans; even small contingents of Swiss, Spanish volunteers and Croats, etc. Among Germans were: Prussians (**20,000**), Bavarians (**24,000**), Saxons (**20,000**), Westphalians (**17,000**), Badenese (no numbers given). There was also an Austrian contingent (**35,000**). (Adam Zamoycki, Moscow 1812, 86-87)

-- Conservative historian **Paul Johnson** calls chapter 11 of his world history from the 1920s to 1990s, *Modern Times*, „*The Watershed Year*.“ It addresses the year **1941**, about which he writes: "Surveying this watershed year of 1941, *from which mankind has descended into its present predicament*, the historian cannot but be astounded by the *decisive role of individual will*. **Hitler and Stalin played chess w/ humanity**...[Yet] neither man represented irresistible or even potent historical forces...We have here the *very opposite of historical determinism* – the *apotheosis of the single autocrat*. (See, P. Johnson, *Modern Times*, 376)

--**Environmental impact of war**: "Flight of the rabid wolf." By late **1960s**, new wave of rabies virus had sped westward thru Europe's wild mammal population and reached the English Channel. . . Scientists agreed that the virus, transmitted in the wild mainly by wolves and foxes, had been spreading westwards thru Europe since end of Second World War in **1945**. . . It started when rabies-crazed wolves and foxes had fled the fighting on the Second World War's eastern front. (C. Bellamy, *Absolute War*, see p. 1.)

--C. Bellamy: „This book aims to provide, in one volume, a modern history of the greatest and most hideous land-air conflict in history. A war that was *total*, because it was fought by all elements of society. And a war that was *absolute*, because both sides aimed *to exterminate the opponent, to destroy his political existence*.' and in so doing perpetrated extremes of heinous violence and cruelty, shedding almost all of the customary restraints that had traditionally applied in wars between ‚civilized‘ nations.“ (*Absolute War*, xix)

--C. Bellamy: „Subject to those inevitable ‚modifications in practice,‘ the war on the eastern front was probably the most ‚absolute‘ war ever fought, on both sides. It was also the prime example of Clausewitz's famous **trinity**: *primordial violence, hatred and enmity; the play of chance and probability; and the political direction* to which it is, and must remain, subject.“ (*Absolute War*, 19; also, *Clausewitz*, trans. Howard & Paret, Bk 1, ch. 1, part 28, p 89)

¹¹ **Note**: That is, to compare it w/ all the factors of friction, uncertainty, etc., which made is something less than absolute.

--**27,000,000** Soviet people died during war – about **one** out of **seven**. *Demographers* calculate the „*global loss*“ of population, resulting not only from excess deaths during the war, including the direct war deaths, but also the overall impact on the population, resulting from couples who never met and babies not born, to have been in the order of **48,000,000**. Moreover, the Great Patriotic War unquestionably contributed to the *Russian population crisis* evident in 21st Century. (see, *Bellamy, Absolute War*, 11-12, 15)

--**Economic impact** of the war „dwarfs the imagination.“ Areas occupied by Germans contained 2/5th of the grain, 4/5th of the sugar beet produced in the USSR, plus about a ¼ of the nations farm animals, tractors and combine harvesters. In occupied areas of the Soviet Union the invaders and defenders, between them, destroyed **1710** towns, **70,000** villages, **32,000** industrial plants and **65,000** kilometers of railway track. In the Russian republic alone **23,000** schools were razed to the ground. Damage to basic industry was particularly severe. Between ½ and 2/3 of Soviet basic industrial capacity was put out of action. Mines which had produced **100** million tons of coal and **20** million tons of iron ore were wrecked and factories which had produced **19** million tons of steel were totally or partially destroyed. (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 14)

1.1.2: Acknowledgments¹²

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¹² **Note:** People or businesses, etc., to acknowledge listed in no particular order here.

1.2: Introduction¹³

(Revised Book Concept: Because I will be limited to a word count of **120,000+** words—slightly less than 1/3 the word count of *Barbarossa Unleashed* (**366,000+**)—and because I very much want to focus laser-like on B-1 and *Barbarossatag* (22.6.1941), I am beginning to think that the *background material* adumbrated in Section **1.3** of this notebook should be handled in summary fashion in a 20-25 page introduction. This book covers B-1 and the first day of war, it is not about the political or strategic background to Operation Barbarossa, nor about all the other issues I addressed in first five chapters of *Barbarossa Unleashed*. In fact, I can refer the reader to that book for more details on all that information.¹⁴ In other words, I am not going to regurgitate all that background material in any depth, for it is a zero-sum game—every word dedicated to those issues—which I covered so well in *Barbarossa Unleashed*, and which David Stahel, David Glantz, and so many others have covered in such exquisite detail—means one less word for the primary topic (and *raison d’etre*) for this book! I think this is a major insight into the approach I need to and will take! That said, it would still enrich the introduction—or preface?—to address in several paragraphs Hans and my 2016 Russia adventure!)¹⁵

In the footsteps of Dr. Haape’s Infantry Regiment 18:

From 10-29 June 2016, Dr Craig Luther and Dr. Haape’s son, Herr Johannes Haape, accompanied by our indispensable Belorussian guide, Sergej Stasikov, travelled from Berlin to Moscow on the trail of Dr. Haape’s Infantry Regiment 18. With Sergej at the helm of Johannes’ indomitable Peugeot SUV, we “zick-zacked” our way 4600 kilometers across Poland, Lithuania and Belarus to Rzhev, Russia and, finally, to the capital of the Russian Federation. Operating in the spirit of a tiny general staff, each morning we poured over our maps and scrutinized official battle records before striking out on our day’s journey, adhering as closely as possible to the route of Infantry Regiment 18 during that fateful summer and fall of 1941. We inspected the Red Army bunkers at Akmenynai, just beyond the old German-Soviet frontier, seized at the start of Operation “Barbarossa” at such a heavy cost in lives for Infantry Regiment 18; battered but still largely intact, the massive concrete structures loomed above the landscape like forgotten sentries of a bygone era. We observed the abandoned Jewish synagogue and gleaming Christian churches in the Belarus village of Oszmiana (site of the “Pan Pankowski” story told in Appendix 8); crossed the mighty Nemen, Dnepr and Volga Rivers; inspected the bunkers of the Stalin Line captured by Dr. Haape’s regiment on 15 July 1941; plunged headlong into the primeval forests of the Mezha River region (battling clouds of mosquitoes and other pesky insects each time we exited the vehicle!); reached the farthest point of the 6th Infantry Division’s advance into Russia, beyond the Volga and across the Tma River, northeast of Rzhev; and, finally, sought out (with some success we believe) the former site of the lonely Moscow tram stop, just outside the Soviet capital, visited by Dr. Haape and *Oberleutnant* Kageneck in the cold and ice and snow at the end of November 1941. In the process, we confirmed for ourselves the extraordinary accuracy of Dr. Haape’s remarkable memoir—a fact made even more striking when one considers the paucity of official records available to him when he dictated his account to Martha so many years ago.¹⁶

¹³ **Note:** Use my Russia travel diary as “raw material” for this section!

¹⁴ **Note:** In *Barbarossa Unleashed* I devoted more than **100,000** words (excluding hundreds of endnotes) to first five chapters of book leading up to **22.6.1941**.

¹⁵ **Note:** My revised book concept as of midnight, 22 June 2017.

¹⁶ **Note:** Rework and reorganize this paragraph as necessary.

--**Note:** At conclusion of introduction—Our amazing journey in the footsteps of Dr. Haape’s Inf.-Rgt. 18 enabled us to connect as intimately to the terrible realities of Hitler’s war of annihilation in Russia as one possibly could 75 years after the event; hopefully; this book—w/ its graphic eye-witness accounts, etc.—will transport the reader as close to the terrible realities of that war as he dare to venture. Or something along those lines!

--**Note:** Describe in detail how, 75 years after end of war, the horrific results of that war are still to be seen, and contemplated all over Russia—dilapidated and largely abandoned villages, pockets of poverty in cities and towns; large swaths of territory now virtually uninhabited, continuing “obsession” of Russian people with their victory in what they call their Great Fatherland War. Paid solemn visits to military cemeteries at Duchovschina and Rzhev. Witnessed 75th Commemoration of start of Operation Barbarossa in city of Rzhev on 22 June 2016 (describe solemn events, etc.). Discuss role of *Kuratorium Rzhev*;¹⁷ only German veteran who accompanied the *Kuratorium* to Rzhev last year was 97-year-old Dietrich Schöning. He served as artillery officer w/ **6 ID**; was captured by Russians in summer of 1944, during Operation *Bagration*, which swallowed up and annihilated the German Army Group Center; in Aug 44, he was one of tens of thousands of German POWs paraded thru the streets of Moscow by their captors. Sadly, he passed away only weeks later, on 3 August 2016; and, with him, vanished one of the few surviving participants in the apocalypse of the eastern front, as his generation recedes inexorably into history.

--**Dennis Showalter:** “*Never did men fight better in a worse cause than did the Wehrmacht on the plains of Soviet Russia in 1941.*” (D. Showalter, “*Barbarossa. Adolf Hitler hoped to destroy Russia w/ a single blow,*” 24)

--Henry C. Cassidy, American journalist and AP correspondent in Moscow, began his book, *Moscow Dateline* (1943) by noting that spring had come late to Moscow in **1941**, with the final snows not falling until **6 June**. As the Muscovites cursed the unusually cold weather, the icy sludge on their streets, what they didn’t know was that, at that very moment, German mechanized formations were rolling toward East Prussia and the Russo-German demarcation line in Poland in the final stages of Adolf Hitler’s buildup for Operation *Barbarossa*, his surprise attack on the Soviet Union. This final stage of the buildup, which had commenced in February, had begun only three days before (**3 Jun 41**), etc.¹⁸

--**Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:**

The German Army that plunged into the fields, forests and endless plains and steppe lands of European Russia on 22 June 1941 was perhaps the most splendid fighting force the world had yet scene. This is a bold statement. Surely, you remonstrate, the armies of Alexander the Great, the Roman Caesars, those of Napoleon, or even the ragtag, barefooted veterans of Robert E. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia – to mention but a few – must also occupy a special place in Valhalla, that mythological “hall of the slain.” And such a conviction would also be correct. Yet the roughly 3.1 million soldiers which comprised Germany’s *Ostheer*, the *Barbarossa* invasion force, signified something uniquely special. In terms of doctrine, training, initiative, experience, efficacy of their weaponry and success on the battlefield, modern Europe, at least, had never seen anything like them.

¹⁷ **Note:** Use material in appendix in *Moscow Tram Stop*.

¹⁸ **Note:** This is just an idea—might be an interesting way to begin the introduction.

In barely 21 months of war – September 1939 to June 1941 – Hitler’s *Wehrmacht* had registered an unparalleled string of victories. Poland fell in 37 days. France, which had fought Germany to a bloody standstill in World War I for nearly four years, was humiliated and defeated in 42 days (along with the Low Countries). In a daring display of initiative and flexibility, the Germans had conquered Norway, preempting a planned English invasion. If England had failed to submit to the *Luftwaffe*’s bombing campaign in the summer and fall of 1940, to most observers this appeared but a minor setback for Hitler’s victorious armies. By the spring of 1941, in a brilliant campaign planned on very short notice, the *Wehrmacht*’s motorized units had rolled over Greece and Yugoslavia, securing Hitler’s Balkan flank for Operation *Barbarossa*. And, in North Africa, Erwin Rommel had been set loose, while German paratroopers had conquered the strategic island of Crete. Total German killed in action (KIA) for this initial period of the war were, “by standards of [20th Century] bloodletting. . . inconsiderable,” amounting to about 110,000 men.ⁱ

By June 1941, Hitler’s Third Reich dominated the European continent from the North Cape above the Arctic Circle to the Balkans in the southeast and the Mediterranean in the south. There were many reasons for the spectacular successes of the German armed forces. In the first place, it should not be forgotten that Germany, which had begun to significantly rearm by 1935-36, had clearly “stolen a march” on France, England and other potential adversaries, who were much slower to rearm. In fact, clandestine rearmament in Germany had actually begun much earlier, during the 1920s under the Weimar Republic. In contrast, efforts of the Western powers to rebuild their armed forces were undermined by electorates which were often pacifist and in some cases even committed to complete disarmament. England and continental Europe were also slow to grasp the threat posed by Adolf Hitler.ⁱⁱ

(*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Introduction)

* * * *

1.3: Background to Operation *Barbarossa*

1.3.1: Hitler & Russia (Rationale for *Barbarossa*)

--Defeat of France (Germany achieves in 6 weeks what she failed to do in 4 years from 1914/18; achieves decisive breakthrough in just 4 days!).

--Successes of *Wehrmacht* thru spring '41 (losses minimal). (I:420, ff.) German casualties in French, Scandinavian and Polish campaigns of first 10 months [i.e., to ca. Jul 40] had amounted to 200,000, of whom some 60,000 were killed; this signified about half the German losses incurred in a single battle of the First World War – the Battle of the Somme in 1916). (Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 65)

--**Marcel Stein:** Hitler war in militaerischen Dingen sehr belesen, er hatte eingehend die Schriften von Clausewitz, Moltke u. Schlieffen studiert u. umfassende autodidaktische Kennt-nisse erworben. Darueber hinaus besass er die Gabe, gelesene Texte wortgetreu zitieren zu koennen. Von den nicht rein mil. Belangen, die einen Teil der Strategie ausmachen, wie Politik u. Wirtschaft, verstand er mehr als seine Heerfuehrer. Auch hatte Hitler, wie Manstein hervorhebt, ein erstaunliches Gedaechnis u. eine fundierte Kenntnis der Wirkung eigener u. fdl. Waffen, wie auch von wirtschaftlichen Zusammenhaengen, die bei einem Befehlshaber nicht vorhanden sein konnten u. die dieser daher in einer Diskussion mit Hitler nicht widerlegen konnte. Was Hitler voellig fehlte, war die Faehigkeit, die verschiedenen Elemente der Strategie zu koordinieren u. es gab auch bei ihm kein Gefuehl fuer die physischen Grenzen seiner strategischen Gedanken. Seine vage Idee, ueber den Kaukasus u. Nordafrika durch den Mittleren Osten nach Indien vorzustossen, war pure Phantasie. Seine Kriegserklaerung an die USA war ein Wahnsinn. . . Darueber hinaus griff Hitler zunehmend in rein taktische Fragen ein, die ein Strategie gewoehlich seinen Mitarbeitern ueberlaesst. Von seiner Hybris abgesehen, war er hier stark von der Gedankenwelt des Frontsoldaten des Ersten Weltkrieges beeinflusst. Der Vorrang, den seine taktischen Eingriffe erhielten, liessen strategische Ueberlegungen voellig in den Hintergrund treten. (*GFM Model*, 225-26)

--**Van Creveld:** „[Hitler] war kein ausgebildeter Fachmann, wusste aber mehr als seine Generale um die Probleme u. Zusammenhaenge der Kriegfuehrung auf hoechster Ebene.“ (Quoted in: Stein, *GFM Model*, 226, f.n. 743)

--**Ronald Lewin** [re: Hitler's War of Annihilation]: After discussing Hitler's meeting at the Reich's Chancellery w/ his generals on **17 Mar 41** – where he announced that “the war against Russia will be such that it cannot be conducted in a knightly fashion. This is a struggle of ideologies and racial differences and will have to be waged w/ unprecedented, unmerciful and unrelenting harshness” – his “notorious order” for liquidation of political commissars, the role of the *Einsatzgruppen*, etc., he writes: “How could it be expected, assuming a German victory, that the situation in the east would be other than that so mordantly described by Tacitus, ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant,” “where they make a wilderness, they call it peace?” (R. Lewin, *Hitler's Mistakes*, 129-30)

--**Kershaw** [*Hitler's decision to attack Russia*]: Did Hitler, in making his fateful choice in 1940 [to attack Russia], miss the opportunity to follow an alternative course of action which could have led to victory or, at the least, avoided the calamitous path to defeat that was about to follow? Hitler certainly did not think he had missed a chance. In his eyes, despite different possibilities in late summer and autumn of 1940, *none proved a practicable alternative to an attack on the Soviet*

Union – to attain rapid victory before the winter and lay the ground for the wider struggle against Britain and America. The USA, he thought, would be ready to enter the war on Britain's side in **1942**. He was *convinced, therefore, that time was not on Germany's side*. Continental dominance, the end of the European war and the *impregnability* this would bring, had to be attained in 1941, before any conflict w/ the United States ensued. There is no indication that he considered postponing, let alone cancelling, the invasion of Russia that he envisaged for spring 1941. The *preparations set in train at end of July 1940 were never halted*. In fact, *Hitler never deviated from his conviction that destruction of the Soviet Union in a lightning campaign was the **only route to overall victory***...It seems clear that *no chance was missed in 1940*. Given the leadership which Germany had, and the very reason she was facing a strategic dilemma in summer/autumn 1940 in the first place, *the attack on the Soviet Union was indeed the only practicable way open*. By 1940, unable to end the war, the only option for Hitler was *to gamble further*, to take, as always, the bold, forward move, one that would sweep over the Russians „like a hailstorm“ and make the world „hold its breath.“ „It was madness, but there was method in it.“ (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 85-90)

--**Paul Johnson**: Hitler's decision to invade Russia was the *most fateful of his career*. It destroyed his regime, and him w/ it. It was also *one of the most important in modern history*, for it brought Soviet totalitarianism right into the *heart of Europe*. But it was a gamble that might have succeeded. It is vital to grasp why it did not do so. Hitler claimed early in **1945** that the *five or six weeks' delay* in launching the invasion accounted for his failure to take Moscow and destroy Stalin's regime before winter came. But at the time he did not feel constrained by so tight a timetable. The truth is, *he grievously underestimated Russian military capacity*. There is an old and wise diplomatic saying: „*Russia is never as strong as she looks. Russia is never as weak as she looks.*“ Hitler ignored it. He was not alone in his contempt for the Red Army. The British and French general staffs *rated its performance below Poland's*. This view appeared to be confirmed by the *Finnish campaign*. Partly on the basis of Canaris's (*Abwehr's*) misleading estimates, Hitler thought the Russian campaign would be *easier than the conquest of France*. The Red Army, he told the Bulgarian Ambassador, *Dragonoff*, was „no more than a joke.“ It would be „cut to pieces“ and „throttled in sections.“ In **Dec 40**, he estimated that „in three weeks we shall be in St. Petersburg.“ Though the Japanese were his allies, he made no attempt to possess himself of *their far more sober estimates of Russian fighting capability*, especially in tank warfare, based on their bitter experience in **May-Jun 39**. (P. Johnson, *Modern Times*, 376-77; also, Fest, 955)

--Theses of Andreas Hillgruber:¹⁹

The theses presented by Andreas Hillgruber after the mid-**1960s** have *dominated the discussion about the origins of the war between Germany and the Soviet Union and the genesis of the operation plan "Barbarossa."* In two respects they have *withstood all attempts at refutation* and, w/ minor additions and modifications, have been *essentially confirmed* by more recent research. They can be summarized as follows:

(1) Hitler's decision to attack the Soviet Union was the result of a *mixture of ideological and strategic considerations*. The idea of a large-scale colonization of the East, w/ the two main aims of annihilating Bolshevism and conquering „living space“ for the German nation had been, in addition to his militant anti-

¹⁹ **Note:** These observations by Wegner are excellent and lay out in abbreviated form most all of what I will need to address on these key background issues!

semitism, the most important element in Hitler's world view since **1924/25** at the latest. . .

The importance of ideological aims in Hitler's strategic calculations was evident in his rejection of plans submitted by the Navy leaders and by Foreign Minister Ribbentrop in **1940** as alternatives to an offensive in the East. The plan developed by the C-in-C of the Navy, Raeder, to shift the main German war effort to the Mediterranean, the Near East and North-west Africa, and the concentration on the disruption of sea links between Great Britain and the U.S. favored by the commander of the submarines, Dönitz, did not, in the end, receive Hitler's approval because they *ignored his most important war aim, namely expansion by conquest in the East*. The situation was similar w/ regard to Ribbentrop's plan for a "continental bloc" [sic] directed against the sea powers Great Britain and the U.S. and extending from "Madrid to Yokohama" w/ the participation of the Soviet Union. Hitler did consider this option in the summer of **1940**, but only as a means of increasing the pressure on Great Britain and not w/ the intention of laying the foundation for a lasting new European order. In his eyes the *conditio sine qua non* for that was a war not against Britain, but against the Soviet Union.²⁰

(2) The war against the Soviet Union was of a *fundamentally different nature* from that of all other German campaigns in the Second World War. More than a mere military operation w/ a clearly defined, limited aim, it was rather a "*crusade against Bolshevism*" (as described quite accurately by contemporary German propaganda), a *colonial war of exploitation*, and a *racist war of annihilation*. The unprecedented brutality of the war in the East can be explained only in part as the result of the experiences of soldiers on the battlefield. The decisive factor was rather that the campaign in the East was *planned deliberately from the beginning w/ a complete disregard for internationally accepted laws of war*. As early as the beginning of **Mar 41** Hitler ordered that "all Bolshevik leaders and commissars" were to be "*rendered harmless immediately*" (that is, killed) w/o the use of military courts. A few weeks later, in his address to about **250 generals**, he again made clear that the coming campaign would *not be a normal military operation but rather a "war between two ideologies:"*

"We have to free ourselves from ideas of soldierly camaraderie. A communist is not and can never be considered a fellow-soldier. This war will be a *battle of annihilation*. . . It will be very different from the war in the West. In the East *harshness will guarantee us a mild future*. Military leaders must overcome their [humanitarian] reservations."²¹

Hitler's appeal did *not fall on deaf ears*. The *Wehrmacht Operations Staff* and the *Wehrmacht legal section*, as well as the *Army General Staff*, quickly prepared the necessary orders to take into account his wishes and at the same time the exaggerated security requirements of the officers involved. In fact, however, these orders *seriously compromised* the role of the *Wehrmacht* in Russia. [**Note:** Author goes on to discuss: a) the decree on military justice (13 May 41); b) the

²⁰ **Note:** Author also states "the fact that, contrary to his expectations, [Hitler] was not able to achieve this last aim [i.e., forcing Great Britain to remain neutral] by defeating France *reduced decisively the political value of his brilliant military victory in May and June of 1940.*" (107)

²¹ **Note:** See also, Halder's War Diary (**30.3.41**).

“Commissar Order” (6 Jun 41); and, c) the “*Guidelines for the Conduct of German Soldiers in Russia*, etc.]

(B. Wegner, “*The Road to Defeat: The German Campaigns in Russia 1941-1943*,” 106-08)

--**28.6.40:** Soviet invasion of Bessarabia & Bukovina began on this day; these moves threatened the Rumanian oilfields and Hitler’s response was to order the Army to *begin work on plan for a Soviet invasion*. (John Mosier, *Deathride. Hitler and Stalin: The Eastern Front, 1941-45*, p 81.

--**Jul 40:** When Hitler returned to his capital in early **Jul 40**, after the successful conclusion of the French campaign, he was *driven to the Reich Chancellery on a **carpet of flowers***. According to press reports, “the mile-long route from the Anhalter Station to the Chancellery was a perfumed avenue of *greens, reds, blues and yellows* flanked by cheering thousands who shouted and wept themselves into a frantic hysteria as the Fuehrer passed.” . . . (See, Roger Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 61)

--**31.7.40:** On the last day of July, at the *Berghof*, Hitler announced his decision to invade the Soviet Union to a small group of his generals; he described his *grand strategic design* as follows: “England’s hope is Russia and America. If Russia is lost, America will be also, because the loss of Russia will result in an enormous rise of Japan and East Asia. . . (Ziemke & Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 13).

With Russia smashed, Britain’s last hope would be shattered. Germany then will be master of Europe and the Balkans.

Decsion: Russia’s destruction must therefore be made a part of this struggle. Spring 1941.

The sooner Russia is crushed the better. Attack achieves its purpose only if Russian state can be shattered to its roots with one blow. . . If we start in May 1941, we would have five months to finish the job. Tackling it this year still would have been the best, but unified action would be impossible at this time.

[See text for more details.]²²

(Burdick & Jacobsen, *Halder War Diary*, 244-45)

--**31.7.40:** Hitler orders planning to begin:²³ Conference on the Obersalzberg on **31 Jul 40:** “Erstmals machte Hitler bei dieser Gelegen-heit deutlich, dass seine Ueberlegung *in ganz andere Richtungen* gingen [i.e., he was not contemplating an invasion of England, but of Russia]. . . um die strategische Pattsituation gewissermassen schlagartig zu ueberwinden. . . Folgt man dem Tagebuch [Halders], so aeusserte Hitler: ‘Englands Hoffnung ist Russland u. Amerika. Wenn Hoffnung auf Russland wegfaellt. . . Je schneller wir Russland zerschlagen, umso besser. *Operation hat nur Sinn, wenn wir [sowj.] Staat **in einem Zug** schwer zerschlagen.*’ (Volker Dahm (Hrg.), Die toeldliche Utopie, 573)

²² **Note:** In this conference, Hitler envisages an army w/ a total strength of **180** divisions, of which **120** would be earmarked for the east. (245)

²³ **Note:** GFM Brauchitsch and Stabschef Halder had actually anticipated Hitler’s thinking and begun their own initial planning.

--29.7.40: Hitler privately tells Artillery General Alfred **Jodl** that he had decided to attack the Soviet Union in **May 41** and that preparations should begin. (*Germany and Second World War*, Vol IV, 253)

--Nov 40: Molotov in Berlin: Hitler proposed partitioning the British Empire. To that end, he envisaged a pact of four – Germany, Italy, Japan, and the Soviet Union – all vowing “to respect each other’s national interests,” which in Stalin’s case involved the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea coast. It was then that Stalin became confused and overambitious, demanding from Hitler the whole of Finland, Romania, and Bulgaria and also pieces of Turkey, Hungary, and Iran. Czarist Russia had never controlled those vast, strategically important areas, and it was clear that Stalin wanted a *dominant position in continental Eurasia*. . . Stalin’s demands looked outrageous to Hitler, however. (C. Pleshakov, *Stalin’s Folly*, 45-46)

--11.11.40: GFM von Bock:

The *Fuehrer* visited me [Berlin, *Helfferrichtstrasse*], sat by my bed for a good half hour, and was very kind and concerned. We discussed the overall situation at length. . . . What is to happen in the east is ***still an open question***; conditions might force us to intervene in order to head off a more dangerous development. . .²⁴

(GFM v. Bock, *The War Diary*, 193)

--12.11.40: Molotov arrives in Berlin for talks. Over next few days, a series of *acrimonious talks* are held. Ribbentrop tries to entice the Soviets w/ an offer of membership to the *Tripartite Pact*, but Molotov is unimpressed. The talks break up w/o agreement as the gulf between the two powers widens. (*B. Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 8)

--12.11.40: ”A dark, drizzling day, and Molotov arrived [in Berlin], his reception being extremely stiff and formal. Driving up the Linden to the Soviet Embassy, he looked to me like a plugging, provincial schoolmaster. But to have survived in the cutthroat competition of the Kremlin he must have something . . . “ Thus began my diary entry in Berlin on 12 Nov 40. (See, *Shirer, Rise and Fall*, 800-12, for account of Molotov’s visit to Berlin and Hitler’s reaction to it. For ex., Shirer writes: “From this wearing experience w/ Moscow’s tough bargainer and from further evidence that came a fortnight later of Stalin’s increasingly rapacious appetite, Hitler drew his final conclusion.“ (809))

--3.12.40: GFM von Bock:

The *Fuehrer* visited me again in Berlin to wish me a happy 60th birthday. He sees the bright and dark sides of the big picture calmly and clearly. . . The *Luftwaffe and submarine arm*, whose activities are to be stepped up considerably in the new year, are to shoulder the main burden of the war against England. – The ***eastern question is becoming acute***. There are said to be contacts between Russia and America; a Russian-England link is therefore also likely. To wait for the outcome of such a development is dangerous. But if the Russians were eliminated, England would have no hope left of defeating us on the continent, espec-

²⁴ **Note:** Compare w/ Bock’s diary entry just three weeks later (**3 Dec 40**) below!

ially since an effective intervention by America would be complicated by Japan, which would keep our rear free.²⁵

(GFM v. Bock, *The War Diary*, 193-94)²⁶

--3.12.40: GFM von Bock:²⁷

Wieder besucht mich der Fuehrer, um mir zum **60.Geburtstag** zu gratulieren. . . Die Licht- u. Schattenseiten der grossen Lage sieht er ruhig u. klar. . . **Die Ostfrage wird akut**. . . Werden aber die Russen ausgeschaltet, so hat England keine Hoffnung mehr. . .

Nach einigen Bemerkungen ueber meine Gesundheit sagte er, dass die Sowjetunion **vom Antlitz der Erde getilgt werden muss**. Dann wird England schnell seine Weltgeltung u. Einfluss verlieren. [Bock war] etwas erstaunt ueber diese Worte [u. bemerkte vorsichtig, dass die] unermesslichen Raeume Russlands, seine uns unbekanntes militaerischen Kraefte die Erfuellung dieser Aufgabe selbst fuer unsere Streitkraefte schwierig machen.²⁸

[Das war zweifellos eine unangebrachte Bemerkung, u. von Bock musste sich sogleich eine entsprechende Lektion anhoeren.] Das Gesicht des Fuehrers wurde **kalt u. hart**. Er erwiderte scharf, dass der Feldzug gegen den Bolschwismus Deutschland vom Schicksal selbst vorherbestimmt sei. Bevor er abfuhr, wurde er wieder lebenswuerdig u. druecke die Hoffnung aus, dass ich gesunde u. im bevorstehenden Feldzug gegen Sowjetrussland eine *entscheidende Rolle* spiele.

(Lew Besymenski, *Die Schlacht um Moskau*, 29)

-- 21.12.40: Hitler aeussert im WFStab: 1941 muesse Deutschland *alle „kontinental europaeischen“ Probleme* geloest haben, da ab 1942 die USA in der Lage waere, einzugreifen. (H.A. Jacobsen, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg in Chronik*, 34; III:9)

--1.2.41: GFM von Bock (1 Feb 41):

I was ordered to report to the *Fuehrer*, who received me very warmly. He once again spoke at length on the overall situation. . . The *Fuehrer* justified the need to prepare for the struggle against Russia by stating that this great event would very

²⁵ **Note:** A good example of how Hitler attempted to prepare his generals for war w/ Russia—always addressing the problem in a vernacular that his generals could understand, while concealing from them his plans for a genocidal “*Vernichtungskrieg*” (until he finally “came clean” on those aims in a conference in **Mar 41**).

²⁶ **Note:** See also, GFM v. Bock’s diary entry for **2 Feb 41** below!

²⁷ **Note:** Besymenski’s account—also gleaned, he says, from Bock’s personal diary—includes this additional text, which is not in Klaus Gerbet’s edited edition of Bock’s diary. Odd—because it seems quite important—that it would be missing from Gerbet.

²⁸ **Note:** Observes Besymenski: “Das anfaengliche Schwanken Bocks darf uns nicht wundern. Schliesslich musste er sich die Schwierigkeiten der geplanten Aufgabe vor Augen fuehren. . . Um so bedeutsamer war fuer den ehrgeizigen Feldmarschall, dass Hitler gerade ihn zum Vertrauen gewaehlt hatte. Spaeter, als Bock sich mit den Aufmarschplaenen des Generalstabes bekannt gemacht u. gesehen hatte, dass *seine H.Gr. in der Schwerpunktichtung eingesetzt werden u. er Moskau nehmen sollte, verfliegen die Reste von Skepsis, u. er wurde zum eifrigen Befuerworter der Operation „Barbarossa.“ (29-30)*

quickly divert the world from events in Africa and present it w/ a new situation. “The gentlemen in England are not stupid; they just act that way” and “they will come to realize that a continuation of the war will be pointless for them *if Russia too is now beaten and eliminated.*”

The implications for Japan and America he assessed as on **3 December [1940]**. – I said that *we would defeat the Russians if they stood and fought; but I raised the question of whether it would also be possible to force them to make peace.* The Fuehrer replied that if the occupation of the Ukraine and the fall of Leningrad and Moscow did not bring about peace, than [sic] we would just have to carry on, at least w/ mobile forces, and advance to Yekaterinburg.

“In any case I am glad,” he said, “that we have *continued to arm to the point where we are ready for anything.*”²⁹ *Materially we are well off and already have to think about a conversion of some factories. In terms of personnel the armed forces are **better off than at the start of the war**; economically we are absolutely solid.”*

The Fuehrer **sharply rejected any idea of backing down** – without my having suggested it to him. “***I will fight***” and: “***I am convinced that our attack will sweep over them like a hailstorm.***”

(GFM v. Bock, *The War Diary*, 197-98)

-- Hitler's ideological precepts vis-à-vis Soviet Russia:

Continuity of his thinking since **1920s** (Mein Kampf; his second book of **1928**, which was not published until **1961**)³⁰

(Hitler in Mein Kampf: “Wollte man in Europa Grund u. Boden, dann konnte diese im Grossen u. Ganzen nur auf Kosten Russlands geschehen;” quoted in: Janusz Piekalkiewicz, *Die Schlacht um Moskau: Die erfrorene Offensive*, p 6)

(For anecdotal evidence of Hitler's visceral anti-Bolshevik position, see also, William L. Shirer, *Rise and Fall*, 128-29. Here we find excerpts from Goebbels diary re: two of Hitler's speeches in early **1926**.)

--Hitler was a realist. He expected the war in the Soviet Union to be *merciless* and to obey no conventional rules. Bolshevik methods were familiar to him. The horrors of the *Cheka* were part of history, but the brutality of the Bolsheviks in the *Spanish Civil War*, in Stalin's half of *Poland*, and most recently in the *Baltic States*, indicated that this was a permanent trait. In the *French campaign*, German troops had found **10** of their infantry comrades bound hand and foot w/ their eyes torn out, and an anti-aircraft gunner w/ his feet sawn off; the culprits turned out to be *Spanish Red Guards* (all were executed). In the Baltic countries, Stalin had appointed commissars who had supervised the deportation and liquidation of the entire intelligentsia w/in a matter of weeks (as had been done in Poland already). (Irving, *Hitler's War*, 210)

²⁹ **Note:** This assertion by Hitler certainly an exaggeration! At least as far as critical tank production was concerned!

³⁰ **Note:** For details on his second book see, Volker Dahm, *et al.*, Die toedliche Utopie, 61-62, 568. Second book illustrates that Hitler's “*Weltanschauung*” had hardly changed at all. In fact, his Darwinian and racialist world view was largely set by early **1920s** and would change little over the final **25** years of his life. Of interest: “In seiner **1928** entstandenen Schrift bezeichnete Hitler dagegen ‘die Wiederherstellung der Grenzen des Jahres **1914**’ als ‚wahnsinn,‘ auch alle Versuche zum Wiedererwerb von Kolonien ergaben fuer ihn keinen Sinn.“ (568)

--**First campaign actually planned to be a “Blitzkrieg,”** to be won in a matter of weeks as result of single, devastating blow. (Essentially, Hitler wanted to operate like the elder Moltke at the strategic level (i.e., isolate and defeat his opponents singly, as Moltke had done; he had had the advantage of *superiority of numbers* in all his battles, as a consequence of Bismarck’s superb states-manship), and like Schlieffen at the operational/tactical level (i.e., destroy the enemy in a short war via massive Battle of Annihilation. As Schlieffen realized, total destruction of the opponent is always the most advantageous, because it *sets the whole of the victor’s forces free* for other duties, and that really counted in a war on two fronts. He believed the best way to achieve the enemy’s annihilation is *encirclement and attack in the rear.*) (See, J. L. Wallach, *Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation*, 42)

-- *H. Hoth: “Ist Hitler sich klar gewesen, wie er den Krieg beenden wollte? . . . Statt so eine klare strategische Grundlage fuer den Krieg gegen Russland zu gewinnen, hat sich Hitler in der Vorbereitungszeit mit operativen Plaenen beschaeftigt, die nicht seines Amtes waren. Sie haben sprunghaft gewechselt. . . Bleibend bei allen diesen Erwaegungen war das eine: Das Ziel des Krieges sollte in einem Feldzug erreicht werden. . .“* (For more of *Hoth’s* analysis see his, *Panzer-Operationen*, 32-37)

--Hitler’s decision to invade Russia was the *most fateful of his career*. It destroyed his regime, and him w/ it. It was also *one of the most important in modern history*, for it brought Soviet totalitarianism right into the *heart of Europe*. But it was a gamble that might have succeeded. It is vital to grasp why it did not do so. Hitler claimed early in **1945** that the *five or six weeks’ delay* in launching the invasion accounted for his failure to take Moscow and destroy Stalin’s regime before winter came. But at the time he did not feel constrained by so tight a timetable. The truth is, *he grievously underestimated Russian military capacity*. There is an old and wise diplomatic saying: *„Russia is never as strong as she looks. Russia is never as weak as she looks.“* Hitler ignored it. He was not alone in his contempt for the Red Army. The British and French general staffs *rated its performance below Poland’s*. This view appeared to be confirmed by the *Finnish campaign*. Partly on the basis of Canaris’s (*Abwehr’s*) misleading estimates, Hitler thought the Russian campaign would be *easier than the conquest of France*. The Red Army, he told the Bulgarian Ambassador, *Dragonoff*, was „no more than a joke.“ It would be „cut to pieces“ and „throttled in sections.“ In **Dec 40**, he estimated that „in three weeks we shall be in St. Petersburg.“ Though the Japanese were his allies, he made no attempt to possess himself of *their far more sober estimates of Russian fighting capability*, especially in tank warfare, based on their bitter experience in **May-Jun 39**. (*P. Johnson, Modern Times*, 376-77; also, *Fest*, 955)

--*Hitler’s geo-political thinking*: For Hitler the destruction of Russia „was not, indeed, to be the end of the story. But w/o it the *story had no meaning*.“ And until it was brought about, Germany could not perform its preordained world role. On **31.7.40**, he told *Halder* that Britain’s hope of survival lay in America and Russia. To destroy Russia was *to eliminate both*, since it would give Japan freedom of action to engage America. He seems to have thought that *Roosevelt* would be *ready to intervene* in **1942**, and he wanted Russia removed from the equation before this happened. That, as he saw it, was the proper sequence of events. He told his generals on **9.1.41** that once Russia was beaten, Germany could *absorb its resources and so become ‚invulnerable.’* She would then have the power to wage wars against whole continents. With Japan tying down American in the Pacific, he would launch a *three-pronged pincer*, through the *Caucasus*, *North Africa* and the *Levant*, which would take Germany into *Afghanistan* and then into the *British Empire* at its heart, in *India*. Such a conception was too risky w/ Russia on the flank. (*P. Johnson*, 375; also, *J. Fest*, 952-55)

--Hitler's original idea was to launch attack on Russia in autumn of **1940**, and he was only w/ great difficulty persuaded to drop so risky a scheme. He took the *final decision to strike* in **Dec 40**, after the re-election of *Roosevelt* – to him an event of peculiar ill-omen – and after *Molotov* had presented Stalin's list of „interests“ which Hitler said made the Nazi-Soviet pact untenable „even as a marriage of convenience.“ Thereafter, *he did not waiver from his resolve to exterminate Bolshevism at the earliest opportunity.* (P. Johnson, 375)

--*Excerpt from Barbarossa Unleashed:*

1.5: Russia – Hitler's "eigentlicher Krieg?"

Biographers of Adolf Hitler and historians of the Third Reich have, for decades, sought to ascertain just why he took the fatal decision to attack Russia in 1941 – a decision which culminated in the destruction of his empire and his suicide in the bunker below the Reich Chancellery in Berlin on 30 April 1945. Some focus on the exigencies of the strategic-military situation as it developed between July 1940 and June 1941; others stress racial and ideological convictions held by Hitler since at least the 1920s; while still others champion some synthesis of the two. Be that as it may, most recent scholarship has concluded that Hitler made war upon Soviet Russia because *that* was the war he had most wanted to fight all along; it was – to invoke Manfred Messerschmidt's introduction to volume four of the quasi-official German history of World War II (*The Attack on the Soviet Union*) – "Hitler's real war" (*eigentlicher Krieg*).ⁱⁱⁱ This essential perspective is supported by Ian Kershaw, who observes in the second volume of his brilliant biography of Hitler: "The war in the east, which would decide the future of the Continent of Europe, was indeed Hitler's war."^{iv}

Yet as Messerschmidt also states, such a perspective strongly implies that the attack on Russia signified much more than "merely an attempt to escape from a strategic dilemma."^v A strategic dilemma there was, and we have touched on it in the narrative above. To summarize: After the fall of France and Britain's decision to fight on, Hitler needed to find a way to maintain the initiative and bring about a decision (on the continent) favorable to the Reich before America entered the conflict, most likely in 1942. To effectively challenge the Anglo-Americans – to "level the playing field" – he needed to bring the entire European continent under his control, which could only be done by subduing Russia. This would give Germany direct control of Russia's vital raw materials – her oil, ores, rubber, grain, etc. – and, in effect, a position of economic self-sufficiency (autarky) with its strong European base. Again Kershaw: "Autarky, in Hitler's thinking, was the basis of security. And the conquest of the east, as he had repeatedly stated in the mid-1920s, would now offer Germany that security."^{vi} Here we see the conflation of Hitler's long-standing programmatic goals (as laid out in his book *Mein Kampf*) with the strategic imperatives of the present. In more practical terms, however, given Germany's force structure and doctrine, it is evident that a land war with Soviet Russia "was the only war which Germany was equipped to fight, as was shown by its inability to launch an invasion of Britain."^{vii} Yet although Britain would remain a potential threat in the west (i.e., in Germany's rear), Hitler felt he had little to fear from her in 1941; hence, a "lightning" victory over Russia could be achieved without involving the Reich in a two-front war.

While such factors may seem sufficient to explain Hitler's "instinct that war with the Soviet Union was the logical next step,"^{viii} they do not go far enough. If one looks back to the mid-1920s, one sees strong elements of continuity in Hitler's thinking from that period up to the beginning of *Barbarossa*. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler had said it was Germany's "mission" to conquer Russia.^{ix} Germany needed "living space" (*Lebensraum*) for its expanding population, whose high density, he believed, was a threat to the country; and this could only be acquired in

the east.^x By the 1930s, Hitler's thinking had become even more radicalized. On several occasions following his seizure of power, between 1933 and 1939, Hitler was surprisingly open with his generals about the ultimate aims of his policies, letting slip that they embraced violent expansion in the east with pronounced racial and ideological overtones. On one occasion shortly before the outbreak of war, in February 1939, he intimated to a gathering of officers that Germany's present *Lebensraum* was insufficient; she would have to take more. He also left no doubt about the character of the coming war: "a purely ideological war, i.e., consciously a national and racial war."^{xi}

Just what that meant in human terms would become frighteningly apparent after 22 June 1941. When Hitler unleashed his war on Russia, it would look more like a European colonial war of the 19th Century than a modern military conflict. German occupational policies, as they took shape before the outbreak of hostilities with Russia – and then became increasingly radicalized after the war began – called for the captured eastern territories to be ruthlessly Germanized – i.e., repopulated with Germans, or European peoples of Germanic descent (*Volksdeutsch*) at the expense of indigenous Slavic populations, millions of whom were to be left to starve to death. Millions more were to be enslaved or eliminated, while the Jews – the ultimate purveyors of "Bolshevism" – were to be exterminated. In Hitler's mind, Bolshevism and Judaism were inseparable, indistinguishable; hence, the destruction of the Soviet Russia would also signify the eradication of a key center of World Jewry. In the final analysis, Hitler conceived the war between Germany and Russia as an ineluctable confrontation – an apocalyptic struggle between two mutually exclusive *Weltanschauungen* culminating in a racial war of extermination.^{xii} Some 30 years ago, Andreas Hillgruber outlined the four basic – and clearly overlapping – programmatic objectives of Hitler's *Ostkriegskonzeption*, insights which remain valid to this day:

- a. The extermination of the Soviet Union's "Jewish-Bolshevik" ruling elite, including its purported biological mainspring, the millions of Jews in eastern central Europe;
- b. The acquisition of colonizing space for German settlers in those areas of Russia reputed to be the best;
- c. The decimation of the Slavic masses and their subjugation to German authority in four "Reich Commissariats," Eastland (Belorussia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia), Ukraine, Muscovy, and Caucasus; however, when, in 1941, the course of the war ran counter to "schedule," only the first two were established – under the leadership of German "viceroys," as Hitler termed it, borrowing from his "ideal" model of colonial power, the role of Great Britain in India . . . And finally,
- d. The autarky of a "large territory" in continental Europe under German authority was to be achieved which would be secure against blockades and for which the conquered eastern territories were to provide an allegedly inexhaustible reservoir of raw materials and food stuffs. This appeared to be the decisive condition for Hitler's Reich to prevail against Anglo-American sea power in war and for it to be equal to any imaginable new "world war" in the future. It was already presupposed in the guidelines for the "*Wirtschaftsstab Ost*" [Economic Staff East] of 2 May 1941 that the aim alone of provisioning the German Army exclusively from Russia would mean that "x-million people" would starve.^{xiii}

In the months preceding the Russia campaign, Hitler was careful to keep his genocidal and colonial plans mostly to himself. Not even his generals – to whom he explained his aims in traditional military-strategic terms – were made privy to the true character of the impending struggle (i.e., Germany’s “Colonial tasks,” requiring a “clash of two ideologies,” for which the *Wehrmacht* would have to take part in a “war of extermination”) until the end of March 1941, with *Barbarossa* but weeks away.^{xiv} In any case, from this brief analysis, it is clear that Hitler’s decision to attack the Soviet Union hinged on much more than the desire to vanquish Great Britain’s “continental sword” and thereby knock the English from the war.

The proceeding discussion raises an important question, and it is this: From Adolf Hitler’s vantage point, were there not practical strategic alternatives to advancing on Soviet Russia? During the latter months of 1940, several different proposals were indeed “floated” – one by Germany’s foreign minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop; two by the *Kriegsmarine* – as possible alternatives to a policy of expansion in the east. Again we turn to Hillgruber:

- a. Ribbentrop’s political idea of creating a European-Asian “Continental Block,” “from Madrid to Yokohama” (including the Soviet Union) with its barb aimed at the British Empire and the USA;
- b. the basic strategic idea suggested by Raeder, the C-in-C of the German Navy, of a shift of focus in the war to the Mediterranean and the Middle East, as well as toward North West Africa, in order to gain a broad strategic and raw materials base for conducting a successful sea and air war against Great Britain and the USA in the Atlantic; and finally
- c. the stubborn demand from Doenitz, the U-Boot C-in-C, that the entire war effort immediately be concentrated on severing the sea links between Great Britain and the USA through a “total” U-Boot war so that American strength might be kept away from Europe by mastery of the Atlantic ocean routes by the U-Boats, whose numbers would have to be increased manifold in comparison to those then actually available.^{xv}

Hitler, however, rejected all three “options,” for they failed to address what he considered the most vital challenge facing Germany at the time – the elimination of Soviet Russia. The conceptions of Hitler’s naval commanders did not even consider the “Fuehrers” programmatic eastern objectives; in effect, Hillgruber observed, the German navy – banking on Russia staying neutral, or even being an ally – wanted to fight a different war than did Hitler! Ribbentrop’s concept of a “Continental Block” was also aimed at the Anglo-Americans, and embraced Russia as a potential partner. While Hitler toyed with Ribbentrop’s vision for a few short weeks in the fall of 1940 for purely tactical reasons, it never entered seriously into his plans.^{xvi} Indeed, despite such tactical maneuvering, Hitler’s overarching objective – at least on the European continent^{xvii} – always remained the destruction and enslavement of the Soviet Union; the exploitation of her people, land and resources. Hitler was acutely aware that, after the fall of France, a brief window of opportunity had opened up to settle the score with Russia. The *Wehrmacht* was at the peak of its powers, while Russia, though rapidly rearming, was not yet ready for war. To wait to strike until 1942, Hitler realized, was out of the question, for by then Russia would be ready and America most likely in the war^{xviii} – the window slammed shut. Yet the decision to attack in June 1941 did not, in the final analysis, emerge suddenly from a pragmatic – or opportunistic – assessment of the prevailing military-strategic calculus; rather, as we have seen, it was deeply and irrevocably imbedded in Hitler’s ideological world view. In this sense, the decision – the final reckoning with the hated “Jewish-Bolshevist” enemy – signified the

culmination of his life's work. The Russian war was the inevitable war. It was Hitler's war. (*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Section 1.8)

--*Excerpts from Barbarossa Unleashed:*

2.4.2: At the Reich Chancellery in Berlin (30 March 1941)

As he had consistently sought to do since the summer of 1940, when first raising the issue of war with Russia with his military advisors, Hitler had been careful throughout the conference on 3 February to speak in operational and strategic terms only. From the outset, he had argued for war with Russia as the most effective way to alter the strategic calculus in Germany's favor – most significantly by shattering Great Britain's putative continental sword (Russia) and, thus, forcing the recalcitrant island nation to sue for peace. He had, most of all, spoken a language and developed themes his generals understood well – even if some of them had not always accepted the premises. But this was all about to change. Hitler's *programmatische* objectives in a war with Russia – first conceived in the 1920s, on several occasions since 1933 at least hinted at to his top generals but, for the most part, kept in the background – were now to take center stage in his rationale for war. Now, his generals were to discover, the coming showdown in the east was no longer simply part of a strategic chess game; rather, it was to be a struggle for *Lebensraum* and a racial war of annihilation (*Vernichtungskrieg*) in which the feared and hated Bolshevist-Jewish enemy was to be – once and for all – eliminated root and branch. Every one of the 3.1 million German soldiers who made up the Russia invasion force – as well as the many millions of *Landser* who followed in their wake – would be ensnared in the whirlwind unleashed by Hitler's determination to fight what, in effect, was to be a **19th Century colonial style war of subjugation conducted outside the laws and usages of war** and, in the sheer scope of its almost surreal savagery, unprecedented in the history of warfare.

Whatever parallels may have existed between Napoleon's Russian campaign of 1812 and Hitler's of 1941, the very different objectives of both men was certainly not one of them. If Napoleon had been unwilling "to damage Russia any more than was necessary," and had not wanted to destroy her as a power,^{xix} Hitler pursued a very different agenda, as the watershed conference in Berlin on 30 March 1941 illustrates. For it was here that he first openly revealed to his generals just what his crusade in the east held in store for them. On this day, Hitler spoke for more than two hours to a select audience at the Reich Chancellery, which included the field marshals, generals and admirals who would lead the surprise attack on the Soviet Union. Among those in attendance were the commanders-in-chief of the army groups, armies, air fleets and the naval command, as well as the commanders of the panzer groups, air groups and their chiefs of staff. Surprisingly, the OKW war diary has nothing to say about this event, other than that, at 11.00 in the morning, Hitler addressed the assembled commanders of the eastern army groups and armies.^{xx} [See text for more details.]

5.4: Final Meeting at the Reich Chancellery (14 June 1941)

On 14 June 1941, a mere eight days prior to the launch of Operation *Barbarossa*, Hitler assembled the commanders of his eastern army groups, armies, *Panzergruppen* and air fleets at the new Reich Chancellery in Berlin for a final conference to discuss the impending campaign.^{xxi} On direct orders from Hitler, the new *Reichskanzlei* had been designed by Albert Speer and the extraordinary project completed in less than a year's time in January 1939 by some 8-9000 artisans, craftsmen and workers.^{xxii} The imposing structure – with its harsh granite facade, sumptuous marbled floors, lush mosaics and tapestries, elegant windows and doors – sprawled along the *Voss Strasse* from the *Wilhelmplatz* to the *Tiergarten* and was a fitting symbol of the

growing power and influence of the German Reich, as, of course, it was meant to be.^{xxiii} Soon after the war had ended in 1945, what remained of Hitler's Chancellery would be removed by the Russians; the stone and marble providing materials for their war monument in Berlin-Treptow.^{xxiv} [See text for more details!]

(Barbarossa Unleashed)

1.3.2: OKW/OKH Strategic Planning Process (Directive #21 & *Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa*)

--Fatal emphasis on *operational art* (too little attention paid to logistics, intelligence, etc., none to "grand strategy")

--GFM v. Moltke: "***Die Strategie ist die Anwendung des gesunden Menschenverstandes.***" (H. Hinterhuber, *Wettbewerbsstrategie*, 38)

--Clausewitz: "***The best strategy is always to be as strong as possible; first in general and then at the decisive point,***" („*War*," Martin van Creveld, at: <http://college.hmco.com/history>, n.d.)

--Messerschmidt: „Die *Wehrmacht* ging mit der Gewissheit eigener Ueberlegenheit in den Krieg, ihre Plaene sahen einen Sieg nach wenigen Wochen vor.“ (Militaerhistoriker Manfred Messerschmidt, quoted in: „*Wie Göring Verhungerte noch zu Helden machte—NS Propaganda über den Präventivschlag wirkte nach,*“ Matthias Arning, in: *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 22 Juni 2001)

--Moltke: „Die Strategie ist ein *System der Aushilfen*. . .“³¹ Die Strategie ist „die Fortbildung des urspruenglich leitenden Gedankens entsprechend den stets sich aendernden Verhaeltnissen.“ (H. Hinterhuber, *Wettbewerbsstrategie*, 28-29)

--GFM v. Moltkes „Lebensgrundsatz war, die Dinge erst zu waegen, bevor er sie wagte.“ (H. Hinterhuber, *Wettbewerbsstrategie*, 28)

--Although Clausewitz always stressed the subordination of strategy to policy even in war, he also emphasized the need of policy to be *realistic*: “The first duty and the right of the art of war is to keep policy from *demanding things that go against the nature of war.*” With this statement, too, Moltke agreed completely. (Gunther E. Rothenberg, “*Moltke, Schlieffen, and the Doctrine of Strategic Envelopement,*” in: *Makers of Modern Strategy*, 298)

--“***Unterschaetze niemals den Gegner, sondern versetze dich in seiner Lage; was wuerde ich tun, wenn ich der Gegner waere.***“ (Friedrich den Grossen, quoted in: H. Hinterhuber, *Wettbewerbsstrategie*, 12, f.n. 20)

³¹ **Note:** GFM v. Moltke: “Strategy is a system of *ad hoc* expedients; it is more than knowledge, it is the application of knowledge to practical life, the development of an original idea in accordance w/ continually changing circumstances. It is the art of action under the pressure of the most difficult conditions.” (H. Holborn, “*The Prusso-German School: Moltke and the Rise of the General Staff*, in: Makers of Modern Strategy, 290)

--“*Wir sprechen von einem vollstaendigen Siege . . . u. nicht von einer blossen gewonnenen Schlacht. Zu einem solchen Sieg aber gehoert ein umfassender Angriff oder eine Schlacht mit verwandter Front, denn beide geben dem Ausgang jedesmal einen entscheidenden Charakter.*“ (Clausewitz ueber *Umfassungen*, quoted in: Hoth, *Pz.-Operationen*, 110-11)

--**Note** (German allies): The German allies were [eventually] Italy, Rumania, Hungary and Slovakia. Bulgaria was an ally but did not declare war on the Soviet Union. Finland did declare war on the USSR on **26 Jun 41** but as a “*cobelligerent*,” not as an ally. Maintaining that it was useless to base operations on forces that could not be “counted on w/ certainty,” Hitler had *kept allied commands, except those of Rumania and Finland, out of the planning*. He had allowed the Rumanians and Finns to be brought in during the *final states* because German forces would have to deploy on those countries’ territory—and, in the case of the Finns, because their army’s performance against the USSR in the Winter War of **1939/40** had favorably impressed him. (Ziemke & Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 5)

--Huge though it was the invading force was not overwhelming. Overall the opposing forces were almost equal in numbers of men and equipment. . . The Russians had **170** divisions and **4** million men – many still on the march from the east. They had *more guns and mortars. They had more than twice as many tanks, including a number of modern KV-1s and T-34s, better than anything the Germans could put against them. They had 3½ times as many serviceable acft, though few were of the latest model.* . . The Germans were *well enough aware of the line up in front of them*. They knew much less about the Russian’s immense reserves of men and industry in the Urals and Siberia, far beyond the range of German reconnaissance. But they relied in Russia, as they had done in France, on the *shock of surprise, maneuverability, and superior skill to destroy the Russian will to fight, topple the Soviet regime, and impose a Cathaginian peace long before the Russians could bring their resources to bear. It was a fatal miscalculation.* (R. Braithwaite, *Moscow 1941*, 66)

--German confidence: A fourth contributor to the decision to launch *Barbarossa* was German confidence. The high-tech, low-cost victories of **1940** had *lifted the generals’ morale in ways incomprehensible to those who had not experienced the horrors of static trench warfare on the Western Front a quarter century earlier*. Places whose names had symbolized a generation’s sacrifice and a generation’s failure—Verdun – Ypres – Amiens—had fallen in spring **1940 like beads pulled from a string**, rating scarcely a line in official reports. The invasion of Britain had been a non-starter, but that was easily rationalized by claiming special circumstances. Germany’s military genius was *clearly as a land power*. A combined ground-air assault on the Soviet Union was what the *Wehrmacht* knew how to do. From the day Hitler, first summoned his senior officers to consider an invasion of the Soviet Union, the *operation’s feasibility was never seriously questioned*. (D. Showalter, “*Barbarossa. Adolf Hitler hoped to destroy Russia w/ a single blow*,” 20)

--As developed between the summer of **1940** and the spring of **1941**, the plan for *Barbarossa* was based on a *dispersion of the army’s striking power*. This was not a gesture of desperation. The Germans never proposed to *match the Russians man for man, gun for gun or tank for tank*. Instead, their experience suggested that *mechanized war depended less on strength than on timing—a dozen tanks on the spot were preferable to 50 an hour later*. The **10 panzer divisions** that had sufficed to overrun Western Europe were increased to 20, but the *number of tanks in each was cut in half*. . . Many of the **130** or so infantry divisions in *Barbarossa’s* order of battle were armed in part w/ an *assortment of weapons looted from a half dozen defeated armies*. . . Client states Romania and Slovakia and co-belligerent Finland provided between **20-30** additional divisions, but these proved to be of limited operational value. Occupied Europe was

stripped of everything w/ four wheels and an engine to provide logistics support for this menagerie. (D. Showalter, “*Barbarossa. Adolf Hitler hoped to destroy Russia w/ a single blow,*” 20)

--18.12.40 (Directive No. 21):

Only nine (9) copies of the 49-page document, in its top-secret cover, *scarlet w/ a diagonal yellow line*, were produced. They were to be carried „by hand of officer, only.“ And, on the cover, only now, the supremely evocative, crusading codename for the greatest operation in the history of war . . . „*Barbarossa.*“ **Frederick I „Barbarossa,**“ (c. 1123-90) had succeeded his uncle as *Holy Roman Emperor* in 1152. The nickname came from his red beard. He was a *bold and skillful cdr* and astute ruler. After taking part in the *Second Crusade* in 1188, he led the largest ever medieval crusading army back towards *Palestine* in 1189, but was drowned crossing the River *Calycadnus* (in modern Turkey) in **Jun 1190**. He became the German equivalent of the British (Celtic) King Arthur. Legend has it that his body now sleeps beneath a mountain at *Kyffhaeuser*, on the Rhine. One day, the story continues, Barbarossa’s red beard will grown out again, from beneath the mountain, and he will rise, responding once more to the call to arms. It was a „*brilliantly evocative and apposite codename*“ for the 1941 offensive, „arrogant in its recall of medieval splendours and menacing in its hints of medieval cruelties.“

(Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 126; also, *Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 21)

--18.12.40 (Directive No. 21):³²

Fuehrer and Supreme Commander
of the Armed Forces

Fuehrer Headquarters
18th December 1940.
9 copies

Directive No. 21
“*Case Barbarossa*”

The German Armed Forces must be prepared, even before the conclusion of the war against England, *to crush Soviet Russia in a rapid campaign* (“*Case Barbarossa*”).

The *Army* will have to employ all available formations to this end, w/ the reservation that occupied territories must be insured against surprise attack.

The *Air Force* will have to make available for this eastern campaign supporting forces of such strength that the Army will be able to bring land operations to a speedy conclusion and that Eastern Germany will be as little damaged as possible by enemy air attack. . .

The main efforts of the *Navy* will continue to be directed against *England* even during the eastern campaign. . .

In certain circumstances I shall issue orders for the *deployment* against Soviet Russia eight weeks before the operation is timed to begin.

³² **Note:** For original German text see, W. Hubatsch, *Hitlers Weisungen fuer die Kriegfuehrung 1939 – 1945*, 84-88.

Preparations which require more time than this will be put in hand now, in so far as this has not already been done, and will be concluded by **15th May 1941**. . .

The preparations of the High Commands will be made on the following basis:

1. *General Intention*

The bulk of the Russian Army stationed in Western Russia will be destroyed in daring operations led by deeply penetrating armored spearheads. Russian forces still capable of giving battle will be prevented from withdrawing into the depths of Russia.

The enemy will then be energetically pursued and a line will be reached from which the Russian Air Force can no longer attack German territory. The final objective of the operation is to erect a barrier against Asiatic Russia on the general line Volga – Archangel. The last surviving industrial area of Russia in the Urals can then, if necessary, be eliminated by the Air Force.

In the course of these operations the Russian *Baltic Fleet* will quickly lose its bases and will then no longer be capable of action.

The effective operation of the Russian *Air Force* is to be prevented from the beginning of the attack by powerful blows.

II. *Probable Allies and their Tasks*

[See text for details.]

III. *Conduct of Operations*

A. *Army* (in accordance w/ plans submitted to me):

In the theater of operations, which is divided by the Pripet Marshes into a Southern and a Northern sector, the main weight [*Schwerpunkt*] of attack will be delivered in the *Northern* area. Two Army Groups will be employed here.

The more southerly of these two Army Groups (in the center of the whole front) will have the task of advancing w/ powerful armored and motorized formations from the area about and north of Warsaw, and routing the enemy forces in White Russia. This will make it possible for strong mobile forces to advance northwards and, in conjunction w/ the Northern Army Group operating out of East Prussia in the general direction of Leningrad, to destroy the enemy forces operating in the Baltic area. Only after the fulfillment of this first essential task, which must include the occupation of Leningrad and Kronstadt, will the attack be continued w/ the intention of occupying Moscow, an important center of communications and of the armaments industry.

Only a surprisingly rapid collapse of Russian resistance could justify the simultaneous pursuit of both objectives. . .

The Army Group operating *south* of the Pripet Marshes will also seek, in a concentric operation w/ strong forces on either flank,³³ to destroy all Russian forces west of the Dnieper in the Ukraine. The *main attack* will be carried out from the Lublin area in the general direction of Kiew, while forces in Rumania will carry out a wide enclosing movement across the lower Pruth. It will be the

³³ **Note:** This objective was not met—in sector of Army Group South, as matters developed, the Germans were not able to place strong forces (mobile forces) on both wings, so the *Schwerpunkt* of this army group's attack was on its left wing (1 PzGr., Sixth & Seventeenth Armies).

task of the Rumanian Army to hold down Russian forces in the intervening area.

When the battles north and south of the Pripet Marshes are ended the pursuit of the enemy will have the following aims:

In the *South* to early capture of the Donets Basin, important for the war industry.

In the *North* a quick advance on Moscow. The capture of this city would represent a decisive political and economic success and would also bring about the capture of the most important railway junctions.

B. *Air Force*

It will be the duty of the Air Force to paralyze and eliminate the effectiveness of the Russian Air Force as far as possible. It will also support the main operations of the Army, i.e. those of the central Army Group and of the vital flank of the Southern Army Group. Russian railways will either be destroyed or, in accordance w/ operational requirements, captured at their most important points (river crossings) by the bold employment of parachute and airborne troops.³⁴

In order that we may concentrate all our strength against the enemy Air Force and for the immediate support of land operations, the Russian armaments industry will not be attacked during the main operations. Such attacks will be made only after the conclusion of mobile warfare, and they will be concentrated first on the Urals area.

C. *Navy*

It will be the duty of the Navy during the attack on Soviet Russia to protect our own coasts and to prevent the break-out of enemy naval units from the Baltic. As the Russian Baltic fleet will, with the capture of Leningrad, lose its last base and will then be in a hopeless position, major naval action will be avoided until this occurs.

After the elimination of the Russian fleet the duty of the Navy will be to protect the entire maritime traffic in the Baltic and the transport of supplies by sea to the Northern flank (clearing of minefields!).

IV. All steps taken by Commanders-in-Chief on the basis of this directive must be phrased on the unambiguous assumption that they are *precautionary measures* undertaken in case Russia should alter its present attitude toward us. The number of officers employed on preliminary preparations will be kept as small as possible and further staffs will be designated as late as possible and only to the extent required for the duties of each individual. Otherwise there is a danger that premature knowledge of our preparations, whose execution cannot yet be timed w/ any certainty, might entail the gravest political and military disadvantages.

V. I await submission of the plans of Commanders-in-Chief on the basis of this directive . . .

signed: ADOLF HITLER

(H.R. Trevor-Roper (ed.), *Hitler's War Directives*, 49-52)

³⁴ **Note:** Of course, this was also a “pie-in-the-sky” idea!

--22./31.1.41 (Deployment Directive Barbarossa):

The first draft of the Army's Deployment Directive *Barbarossa* (*Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa*) was issued on **22 Jan 41** w/ a subsequent final version submitted to Halder and dated **31 Jan 41**. It began by re-emphasizing the need to eliminate the bulk of enemy forces in the western districts and prevent any withdrawal. The second section, entitled "Enemy Situation," began w/ the important assumption Soviet forces would accept battle west of the Dnepr and Dvina Rivers w/ at least strong parts of their forces, thereby fulfilling the German requirement for the subsequent destruction of the Red Army's main force.

The substance of the document was based upon the guidelines set out in Directive No. 21 and accordingly followed Halder's well-known preference regarding operational objectives. Under the title "Intention," the Deployment Directive noted: [see text for details]

(D. Stahel, *Operation Barbarossa and Germany's Defeat in the East*, 77)

31.1.41 (*Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa*):

1. Auftrag:

Fuer den Fall, dass Russland seine bisherige Haltung gegen Deutschland aendern sollte, sind als Vorsichtsmassnahmen alle Vorbereitungen zu treffen, die es ermoeglichen, auch vor Beendigung des Krieges gegen England *Sowjetrussland in einem schnellen Feldzug niederzuwerfen*.

Die Operationen sollen so gefuehrt werden, dass die im westlichen Russland stehende Masse des russischen Heeres unter weitem Vortreiben von Panzerkeilen vernichtet, der Abzug kampfkraeftiger Teile in die Weite des russ. Raumes verhindert wird.

2. Feindlage:

[See text for details.]

3. Absicht:

Erste Absicht des OKH im Rahmen des erteilten Auftrages ist es, die Front der in Westrussland erwarteten Masse des russ. Heeres durch raschen u. tiefen Vorstoss starker schneller Verbaende noerdl. u. suedl. der Pripjet-Suempfe aufzureissen u. in Ausnutzung dieses Durchbruchs die voneinander getrennten Feindgruppen zu vernichten.

Suedlich der Pripjet-Suempfe – *H.Gr.Sued GFM v. Rundstedt* – ist der rasche Durchbruch starker Panzerkraefte aus dem Bereich um Lublin in Richtung Kiew auszunutzen, um die in Galizien u. in der Westukraine stehenden Feindkraefte von ihren Verbindungen ueber den Dnjepr abzuschneiden, die Dnjepr-Uebergaenge bei u. unterhalb Kiew in die Hand zu nehmen u. damit die Bewegungs-

freiheit fuer spaeteres Zusammenwirken der H.Gr.Sued mit den im noerdl. Russland operierenden deutschen Kraefte oder fuer neue Aufgaben im suedl. Russland sicherzustellen. Noerdl. der Pripjet-Suempfe wird der von *H.Gr.Mitte – GFM v. Bock* – unter Einsatz starker schneller Kraefte aus dem Bereich um Warschau u. Suwalki in Richtung Smolensk zu erzwingende Durchbruch auszunutzen sein fuer das Eindrehen starker schneller Truppen nach Norden, um im Zusammenwirken mit der aus Ostpreussen in allgemeiner Richtung Leningrad angreifenden *H.Gr.Nord – GFM v. Leeb* – die im Baltikum kaempfenden feindl. Kraefte zu vernichten, anschliessend in Verbindung mit dem finnischen Heere u. ggf. aus Norwegen herangefuehrten deutschen Kraefte die letzten Widerstandsmoeglichkeiten des Feindes im noerdl. Russland endgueltig zu beseitigen u. damit die Bewegungsfreiheit fuer weitere Aufgaben – ggf. im Zusammenwirken mit den im suedl. Russland operierenden deutschen Kraefte – sicherzustellen.

Das Antreten zum Angriff wird fuer die ganze Front einheitlich befohlen werden (B-Tag, Y-Zeit).

Fuer die Kampffuehrung im Rahmen dieser Operation werden die im polnischen Feldzug bewaehrten Grundsaeetze zu gelten haben. [See text for more details.] Auf die ***Verwendung chemischer Kampfmittel*** auch aus der Luft durch den Gegner muss die Truppe sich einstellen.

4. Auftraege an die Heeresgruppen u. Armeen:

[**Note:** Here the deployment order gets into more specific details for each army group and army; for these details, see the sections in this notebook for each army group and army.]

(Halder, Franz. *Kriegstagebuch: Tägliche Aufzeichnungen des Chef des Gen.St. des Heeres 1939-1942*, Bd. II: *Von der geplanten Landung in England bis zum Beginn des Ostfeldzuges (1.7.1940 – 21.6.1941)*, H.-A. Jacobsen & A. Philippi (Hg.), Appendix 2, 464-65)³⁵

--**8.6.41:** Die endgueltige Fassung der ***Aufmarschanweisung*** vom **8.6.41** [**Note:** Erster Entwurf der „*Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa*“ am **31.1.41.**] praezisierte die Aufgaben, ***indem der***

³⁵ **Note:** David Stahel cites the diary as: Franz Halder, KTB II, p. 464 (Appendix 2).

*geaenderten Lage infolge des Balkanfeldzuges Rechnung getragen wurde.*³⁶ (Magenheimer, *Moskau 1941*, 17)

--Notes on German Equipment:

The OKH planned to conquer the Soviet Union w/ **160** divisions³⁷-- **18** more than it had employed in the conquest of France. The area of Operation Barbarossa, however, was about **1,000,000** square miles – *about 20 times the size of France*. In addition, although the number of panzer and motorized divisions had *more than doubled*, from **15** in May 1940 to **32** in Jun 41, the number of tanks had only risen from **2574** to **3332**, an increase of **758** panzers.

The German armies were, in fact, a far cry from the highly mobile, incredibly well-equipped units that Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry made them out to be. For example, only **46** of the German divisions available for the invasion were *fully equipped w/ German arms*. The rest were either deficient in equipment (mainly in assault and AT guns), or were outfitted w/ *captured arms and equipment*, primarily from France and Czechoslovakia. **84** infantry divisions and even **3** of the motorized divisions were equipped w/ vehicles drawn from foreign countries. In fact, counting foreign equipment, the German Army had **2000 different types of vehicles**, **70** different types of guns, and **52** models of AA guns. As a result, *maintenance would be a nightmare* in the Russian campaign, and the breakdown rates of all units would be extremely high.

In addition, most of the infantry divisions were still heavily dependent upon horsepower. Some **119** divisions were still horsedrawn, and **77** of these had only horsedrawn supply units, including **15,000** Polish two-wheeled *Panjewagen* (peasant wagons). Most of the divisional artillery regiments depended *solely upon horses or mules*. Hitler and his generals were *clearly gambling on a war of short duration*, although few of them seemed to appreciate the risk they were running.

(S.W. Mitcham, Jr., *Men of Barbarossa*, 50-51)

³⁶ **Note:** Clearly some changes needed to be made to the deployment directive to take into account the Balkan campaign of April 1941. As laid out in *GSSW*, in the **31 Jan 41** version of the directive, Kleist's panzer group, after reaching Kiev, was to "push southward along the Dnieper in order to create a pincer movement w/ the army advancing from Romania for the encirclement of the enemy's forces." The army advancing out of Romania was to be German Twelfth Army; however, on 7 March 1941, Hitler, "having examined the Army High Command's materials and considered developments in the Balkans and Greece, decided that the offensive from Moldavia was to be scrapped; first of all the Marita attack . . . would swiftly eliminate all danger spots in the Balkans once and for all. This would require the entire Twelfth Army. As a consequence he ordered that only the units necessary for security were to be left at Romania's eastern frontier and that the attack by Army Group South was to concentrate wholly on an envelopment thrust w/ its northern wing. . . Hitler on 17 March ordered the abandonment of the Twelfth Army's attack as part of the envelopment move of Army Group South; instead, he ordered all mobile forces becoming available from the Greek operation to be switched to reinforce I Panzer Group. . . Accordingly, on **8 Apr 41** the operations department *amended the deployment directive for Barbarossa*. . ." In any case, in the final version of the directive, Twelfth Army was replaced in Romania by the much smaller Eleventh Army in the *Barbarossa* order of battle. See, *GSSW*, Vol. IV, 285-88.)

³⁷ **Note:** Confirm this number!

--Buildup of Army: Those in charge of Germany's army had to make some adjustments in their planning [after fall of France, due to Barbarossa decision]. The ***expected reduction in the size of the military forces was reversed***; instead of decreasing from about **140** to **120** divisions, the army was now to be increased first to **180** and, by **21 Aug 40**, to a more likely **200**. Many of the new units were, however, equipped with *captured weapons*; and though there was some modernization (particularly the replacement of old smaller tanks by newer medium tanks), the army which was to attack the Soviet Union in **1941** was ***not appreciably greater than the one which had attacked in the West in 1940***. Two factors contributed to this situation. First, German *underestimation of Soviet defensive power combined w/ a reluctance to impose total mobilization on the German economy* to hold down both production and recruitment levels. (G. Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 193)

--*Gerhard Weinberg's summary of planning*:

The military planning itself had begun in the summer of **1940**. By the end of **Jul 40**, the ***decision had been made*** to attack in the spring of **1941** rather than in the fall of **1940**. The new schedule made it possible for the Germans to develop the physical preparation of the logistic basis on the ground in the eastern reaches of German-occupied Europe as well as the theoretical preparations in the staffs of the army, the air force, and the overall high command, and eventually the navy over a period of several months. The physical effort ordered in **Aug 40** consisted of *improving the railway and communication system* in an area of limited rail and road networks and of building up supply stocks for the forthcoming operation. . .

The staff planning consisted of a number of *alternative proposals*, developed to some extent independently in the summer / fall of **1940** by different headquarters, eventually molded together primarily in the Army General staff w/ considerable influence from Hitler personally,³⁸ and issued in a general directive on **18 Dec 40**, w/ more detailed implementing military orders following in **Jan 41**. ***Not entirely resolved in these plans were the main directions of offensives between the initial attack and the assumed final positions.***

There was, however, no argument over two concepts. Heavy initial blows would be struck in such a fashion as to cut off and destroy large Soviet forces in the area closest to the border in order to preclude their retreating to new lines in any systematic of space for time, and that the goal was a line roughly from Archangel on the Arctic Ocean in the north to Astrakhan on the Caspian Sea in the south. The experience, mobility, aggressiveness, and excellence of staff and equipment of the Germans were assumed to be *sufficiently superior* to the Red Army and air force to make it possible to complete this operation in two or three months. It was assumed the ***Soviet system would collapse under the German hammer blows***; and . . . the Germans were ***so certain of victory*** in this, the easier of their campaigns as compared w/ the prior one in the West, that much attention in the staffs would be given in the weeks immediately before the attack to *those operations which were to ensue upon its successful conclusion*. . .

(G. Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 187-88)

³⁸ **Note:** But the ultimate operational plan was largely based on ideas of Halder.

--**German Intelligence:** The perception of a *weak Soviet Union* could not be remedied by accurate intelligence. The Germans *had very little*, and they would not be dissuaded by those whose estimates of Soviet strength were more perceptive, primarily because the *prejudices against Slavic peoples* were reinforced by the *euphoria of victory in the West*. Having practically *no agents inside the Soviet Union*, except for those actually working for Moscow and feeding them disinformation, the Germans could add to their knowledge only by two other methods: *signals intelligence and overflight*. Their signals intelligence *never penetrated higher-level Soviet codes* and therefore, although useful for tactical details, *never provided any major insights* (w/ neither of these conditions changing *after 1941*). The Germans began a substantial program of aerial reconnaissance over the Soviet Union in **Oct 40**, but this, too, was primarily of *tactical significance*. . . (G. Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 189)

-- To echo Hoth, the “*Barbarossa*” plan clearly posited a *radical solution* – i.e., annihilating Soviet forces and obtaining Hitler’s strategic ends via a *single blow* of but **8-10** weeks duration. (See my *Festvortrag*, Notebook #9, for some optimistic German assessments). Apparently, for the German General Staff, the proper *operational plan* virtually guaranteed victory. Hence, was there not a kind of unhealthy *determinism* in thinking of Brauchitsch, Halder, Heusinger, etc? (My ideas.)

--“*Vabanquespiel*.” This term used repeatedly by German historians to describe nature of Hitler’s assault on Russia. Hitler and his *Wehrmacht* “*waren bereit, alles auf eine Karte zu setzen*.” To describe the murderous intentions of Hitler and his paladins, historians often write of a „*rassische Flurbereinigung*,” die nicht nur Juden aber auch *Roma* u. *Sinti*, *Geisteskranke* u. anderes „*Lebensunwertes*“ Leben sowie die Durchsetzung einer *Rassenhierarchie* im Osten umfasste. Millionen germanischer „*Wehrbauern*“ sollten die Herrenschicht bilden. (Mueller, *Duell im Schnee*, in: *Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Burgdorff (Hg.), 118-20)

--To Hitler & his military advisers, the *strategic concerns* associated w/ a war in the Soviet Union appeared to be *mostly geographical*. One was the climate, which was *markedly continental*, with short, hot summers and long, extremely cold winters and an astonishing uniformity from north to south, considering the country’s great expanse. Hitler observed at the group’s first conference [i.e., first conference to a small group of his generals on **31.7.40**] that it would be “hazardous” to winter in the Soviet Union, and, therefore, it would be *better to delay the invasion until next spring*. Finishing off the Soviet union then in “one go” would mean a *single summer campaign of no more than five months*.³⁹ Its beginning and end would also have to be adjusted to the *rasputitsa* (“time w/o roads”) brought on by the spring thaw and the fall rains, which at both times turned the Soviet roads into impassable quagmires for periods of several weeks. (Ziemke & Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 13)

--The *big strategic question* was the one that also confronted earlier invaders: how to accomplish a military victory in the *vastness of the Russian space*?⁴⁰ Apart from the Pripiat’ Marshes and several large rivers, the terrain⁴¹ did *not offer notable impediments to the movement of modern military forces*. But maintaining troop concentrations and supplying armies in the depth of the country presented *staggering, potentially crippling, difficulties*.⁴² (Ziemke & Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 14)

³⁹ **Note:** Most projections for time of campaign were much more optimistic than five months—duration of 10 weeks or so; check, *Barbarossa Unleashed*.

⁴⁰ **Note:** Or, put another way, what was the Clausewitzian *center of gravity* within Soviet Russia?

⁴¹ **Note:** Terrain—which was monotonously flat!

⁴² **Note:** This, of course, due to paucity of modern road & rail infrastructure w/in the Soviet Union. See, *Barbarossa Unleashed* for figures on roads and railroads.

--**Economic Planning:** A second area of preparation was the economic one. The invasion was, after all, designed to *seize vast agricultural land for future settlement by German farmers*. That involved the eventual displacement of those currently living in the area to be occupied, but in the interim there was the prospect of *endless loot and ruthless exploitation*. At the Nazi Party rally on **12 Sep 36**, Hitler had asserted that the ores of the Urals, the forests of Siberia, and the wheat fields of the Ukraine could provide all Germans w/ a life of plenty. Here was the opportunity to translate these dreams into reality. The *seizure of food* would cause *famine in the rest of Russia*, but the *death of millions of Russians from starvation* was perceived as an advantage, not a disaster.⁴³ The mines of the Don and Donets basins and the forests of northern Russia would serve as fine substitutes for the riches of the Urals and Siberia of which Hitler had spoken earlier. The extensive preparation for *organized looting and exploitation* of the areas to be seized point to the *special character of the campaign in the East*.⁴⁴ . . . The *economic exploitation* of the territory to be seized in the East was from the *beginning a critical element in the whole German perception of the campaign against the USSR* [and] formed a major part of the preparations for that campaign. . . (G. Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 189-90)

--ab **15.11.40** (*Wolfsschanze*):

Am **15 Nov 40** befahl Hitler fuer die bevorstehende Auseinander-setzung mit der Sowjet-Union drei [3] sogenannte Kommandozentralen aufzubauen. Es waren die Anlagen „Sued“ bei Krosno (am Fuss der Waldkarpaten), die Anlage „Mitte“ bei Tomaszow (im Raum Litzmannstadt) u. die Anlage „Nord“ bei Rastenburg. Waehrend die Anlagen „Sued“ u. „Mitte“ mehr oder weniger als behelfsmaessig anzusehen waren (nur die Anlage „Sued“ wurde am **28.8.41** anlaesslich des Besuches von Mussolini genutzt), fiel die Wahl auf die Anlage „Nord“ als zukuenftiges Fuehrerhauptquartier.

Die hierfuer vorgesehene Gelaende, der Rastenburger Stadtwald – genannt „Die Goerlitz“ – erstreckte sich beiderseits der Bahnlinie u. befestigten Strasse Rastenburg – Angerburg mit dem Bahnhof Goerlitz. Der dichte Waldbestand aus Kiefern, Fichten, Buchen u. Eichen, bildete eine natuerliche Tarnung, die umliegenden Seen u. Suempfe ein natuerliches Hindernis gegen angreifende Bodentruppen.

Den Bauauftrag erhielt die „Organization Todt“, die unter dem Tarnnamen „Chemische Werke Askania“ die Baumassnahmen ab **Nov 40** begann. Das Vorhaben war bis **Apr/Mai 41** fertig-zustellen. Das gesamte Baugelaende war ab diesem Zeitpunkt hermetisch abgesperrt u. durch Soldaten abgesichert. . .

Etwa **5** km suedwestlich des Kurhauses Goerlitz, auf dem Gut Wilhelmsdorf, befand sich der Flugplatz des Fuehrerhauptquartiers. Dieser Fliegerhorst, seit **1935** von der Luftwaffe benutzt, wurde nun fuer Start u. Landung der viermotorigen „Focke-Wulf 200 Condor“ u. der „Ju 52“ erweitert. Da die Lande-

⁴³ **Note:** In a major conference w/ his generals prior to start of Barbarossa, at the Reich Chancellery in Berlin (**30 Mar 41**), Hitler revealed in some detail for the first time that the war in the east was to be a war of extermination (*Vernichtungskrieg*). His views were “met w/ understanding, agreement, and support.” (190) (See also, *Barbarossa Unleashed*, Section 2.4.2)

⁴⁴ **Note:** In *Barbarossa Unleashed*, I believe I compared the objectives of Operation Barbarossa to the colonial wars of the recent past (in Africa, etc.).

bahn erst im **Dez 41** fertiggestellt werden konnte, musste der etwa **35 km** entfernte Flugplatz Gerdauen benutzt werden.

(**Note:** Am **24 Jun 41** um **01.30** Uhr wurde die Anlage bezogen. Hitler taufte sie auf den Namen „Wolfsschanze.“ Diese in den Jahren bis Ende **1944** ausgebaute Bunkerstadt war bis **20 Nov 44** Hitlers Kommandozentrale. An diesem Tage verliess Hitler die „Wolfsschanze“ u. fuhr nach Berlin. Bis **22 Nov 44** verliessen auch alle anderen Dienststellen u. Einheiten das Fuehrerhauptquartier. . . Die Anlage „Wolfsschanze“ wurde am **24 Jan 45** gesprengt.)

(K.-J. Thies, *Der Ostfeldzug 1941, H.Gr.Mitte, Lageatlas der Op.Abt. des Generalstabes des Heeres*, vii-ix)

--By September 1939, the German Reich had built a military machine which, for all its well-concealed shortcomings – and they were many, including, *inter alia*, serious shortages of vital raw materials, as well as aircraft and other weapons systems already bordering on obsolescence, not to mention an economy still on a peacetime footing – was better trained, equipped, disciplined and led than the armed forces of its European neighbors. The Germans had also been more successful during the inter-war period in responding to the lessons of World War I and exploiting the new technologies first introduced on the battlefields of 1914/18. The resulting successes of the *Wehrmacht* created a nimbus of invincibility, which only grew as its string of victories became ever more impressive; furthermore, in the spring of 1941, the capabilities of Germany's remaining continental foe, the Soviet Union, appeared manifestly unimpressive. Indeed, the failures of Stalin's Red Army in Poland in 1939 and, more emphatically, in Finland in late 1939 and early 1940, had led Hitler and his High Command to the fatal conclusion that little more than 10-12 weeks would be required to smash the Soviet Union to pieces. In a typical pre-*Barbarossa* assessment by the German military of their Soviet adversary, the chief of staff of Fourth Army, Colonel Guenther Blumentritt, stated on **18 April 1941** that “*there will be [14] days of heavy fighting. Hopefully, by then we shall have made it.*” Such thinking was, of course, fueled by the German sense of racial and cultural superiority.^{xxv} (*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Introduction)

--General Erhard Raus re: Failures of German Planning:

The prerequisite for a successful war against the Soviet Union was a systematic preparation for the undertaking. *One could not provoke such a conflict and expect to carry it through in a spirit of adventure.* Unfortunately, due to the *lack of vision and the fundamental blunders of Germany's leadership*, it is no exaggeration to state that the *entire Russian campaign will go down in history as one gigantic improvisation.* Prior to the invasion of the Soviet Union, the [OKW and OKH] did not think far enough ahead. Senior commanders in the armed forces and military specialists in all important fields must acquire firsthand knowledge of the climate and terrain, as well as the social, economic, political, and military conditions in any potential theater of war, or at least in those neutral or friendly countries that possess similar characteristics. Both OKW and OKH were in a good position to learn the general, as we as the climactic [sp?], conditions of European Russia and the far north. If the officers involved actually acquired this knowledge, they certainly *failed to draw the proper conclusions w/ respect to strategy and military policy.*

The problem may have been that German planners were *too deeply entrenched in Central European military traditions* and not sufficiently familiar w/ foreign lands and particularly w/ countries whose *climatic conditions* differed from the German. As a result, they *lacked a personal understanding of what was to be expected and probably took matters too lightly at the outset*. Especially in the fields of tactics and logistics in European Russia and the arctic, *better preparations should have been made*.

Any observer who looks at the Russian campaign in retrospect will come to the conclusion that the *multitude of tactical and logistical improvisations*⁴⁵ that had to be employed to compensate for this *lack of planning* far exceeded what Field Marshal Helmuth v. Moltke once designated as a “*system of expedients*” in a tactical sense. In reality, our troops found themselves forced to *introduce their first improvisations as soon as they crossed the Russian border*. The farther they penetrated into the Soviet Union, the more expedients they had to devise, and the number rose by *leaps and bounds* when operations began to be hampered first by mud and swamps and later by snow and ice. German soldiers had been *neither trained nor equipped to withstand the raging elements of nature* because OKH had been under the impression that the Red Army could be destroyed west of the Dnepr and that there would be no need for conducting operations in cold, snow, and mud.

(E. Raus, *Panzer Operations*, 1-2)

--Hitler and the OKH agreed that the first objective of the campaign would have to be to **cripple Soviet resistance close to the frontier**. In **Dec 40**, however, when they were drafting the strategic directive, their *thinking diverged on how to accomplish the second objective, the final Soviet defeat*. Brauchitsch and the General Staff proposed to aim the main thrust toward the Moscow area. The roads were best in that direction and the General Staff believed the Soviet Command could be induced to *commit its last strength there*, to defend the capital, which was also the center of a *vital industrial complex and the hub of the country's road and railroad networks*. Hitler, however, did not believe the war could be decided on the Moscow axis. **Directive No. 21**, “for Operation *Barbarossa*,” which Hitler signed on **18 Dec 40**, **circumvented the issue** by providing for simultaneous thrusts toward Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev; a modified main effort toward Moscow; and a possible halt and diversion of forces from the Moscow thrust to aid the advance toward Leningrad. For the moment, the differences of opinion on strategy did not really interfere w/ the operational planning. The objectives were to trap the “mass” of the Soviet Army in *sweeping envelopments close to the frontier*, to annihilate it, and thereafter to occupy the Soviet territory east to the line Arkhangelsk and the Volga River. The **initial main effort** would be in the center toward Moscow, and staff studies showed that the Soviet Union **could be defeated in eight weeks, ten at most**. (Ziemke & Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 14)

--Hitler vs. His Generals:

A fundamental difference in the concept of the German General Staff and that of Hitler came to light early in the operational planning for the Russian campaign. The General Staff planned the disposition of two large operational groups, one of which was to advance in the direction of Kiev, the other toward Moscow. The Chief of the General Staff, Gen-eral Halder, considered the conquest of the Baltic

⁴⁵ **Note:** And, indeed, such improvisations were seen from the very first day of the campaign onward!

States, in the northerly direction, as only a secondary operation which must in no wise [sic] infringe on the assault on Moscow. On the other hand, Hitler explained to his C-in-C of the Army, GFM v. Brauchitsch, on **5 Dec 40**, that “*Moscow is not very important*,” and on **17 Mar 41**, that it was “*entirely immaterial*” to him. Corresponding to this concept which Hitler held from the beginning, the first directive issued by the *Wehrmacht* high command for *Barbarossa* on **18 Dec 40**, the secondary nature of the attack on Moscow came clearly to light. It provided for [see text for details].

The contrary concepts of Hitler and the Army High Command resulted from two different points of view. Hitler sought *political and economic objectives* in his plan of campaign: in the north he wished to join forces w/ the Finns as soon as possible, in the south he sought to gain the granary of the Ukraine and the Russian industrial area in the bend of the Dnepr. However, the primary concern of the Army High Command was to *destroy the military might of the enemy as quickly as possible*. This objective could be realized most surely on the way to Moscow. At all other places the defending forces could retire before the onslaught of the invaders, but they *had to make a stand before Moscow*. A glance at the map will suffice to indicate the *extraordinary importance of Moscow as a focal railroad point*. It is the *great center of power* in European Russia, and was the one city that Russians had to defend.⁴⁶

GFM v. Brauchitsch *postponed a clarification of the question* until the Russian deployment had been broken in the border battles. Then a decision for the further course of operations had to be made, and the Army High Command *began the effort to sway Hitler’s will*. . .

(Vice Admiral K. Assmann, “*The Battle for Moscow, Turning Point of the War*, 309-10)

--To compel the Soviet forces to *stand and fight* appeared to be the *chief requirement*, and if they did that, they would be defeated. The Soviet Army, Hitler maintained, alluding to the *military purges*, “*was leaderless*.” . . . Soviet armor, he believed, was no match even for the 24-ton German **Pz III**, mounting a 50mm gun, and the rest of Soviet weaponry, “except for a few modern field batteries,” was “copied old material.” [Note: Author’s discuss some strategic problems for Germany—e.g., relative manpower potential of both countries; economic considerations, etc.—then continues . . .] But Hitler had no time for doubts. He made just one comparison:

In the Spring [of **1941**], we will be at a discernable high in leadership, material, and troops, and the Russians will be at an unmistakable low.”

On **11 Jun 41**, Hitler issued *Directive No. 32*, “*Preparations for the Period After Barbarossa*,” in which he anticipated leaving **60 divisions** on security duty in the Soviet Union and having the rest of the forces redeployed for other missions by the late fall. (Ziemke & Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 14-15; see also, *Halder Diary*)

--**CRUX:** Im allgemeinen war geplant, *die Masse der sowj. Kraefte noch diesseits der Duena u. des Dnjepr zu vernichten*. Halder rechnete mit einer grenznahen, zaehen Verteidigung, ver-

⁴⁶ **Note:** Or so the Germans thought; yet Russian accounts make clear that loss of Moscow would hardly have brought war to an end.

bunden mit Teilangriffen zu Beginn des Krieges, wogegen ein weitraumiges Absetzen, das eine Aufgabe industriell wichtiger Gebiete bedeutet haette, *unwahrscheinlich* erschien. Man machte sich also wenig Gedanken ueber den Fall, dass es staerkeren Heeresteilen gelaenge, hinter die beiden Fluesse auszuweichen u. gemeinsam mit herangefuehrten Reserven die Verteidigung fortzusetzen. Der Generalstab spekulierte sogar darauf, dass die *Rote Armee fruehzeitig voellig zusammenbraeche*, worauf ein sofortiger Angriff auf Moskau in Frage kaeme. Der Generalstab stellte sich zwar auf *schwere Grenzschlachten* ein, hoffte aber, nach deren siegreichem Abschluss mit schnellen Truppen in die Tiefe des Raumes vorzustossen u. die noch kampfkraeftigen Teile des Gegners zu schlagen. . . Im grossen u. ganzen neigte der Generalstab dazu, *die operativen Risiken zu unterschuetzen u. die eigene Schlagkraft zu ueberschaetzen*. (Magenheimer, *Moskau 1941*, 17)

--**Blitzkrieg Campaign:**⁴⁷ By design, Operation *Barbarossa* was to be a *Blitzkrieg campaign* modeled after the *Wehrmacht's* previous lightning campaigns in Poland, France, and the Balkans. Specifically, the campaign's duration was to be *measured in a time span of weeks*, during which the **OKH** expected the German Army to achieve a, by now, familiar series of *double-envelopment encirclements* to annihilate the defending Red Army forces before they could withdraw further into the interior and reorganize their defenses. (Glantz, *Barbarossa Derailed*, 39)

--**Jul 40:**⁴⁸ Im Zuge der seit Juli 1940 laufenden gedanklichen Vorbereitungen formten sich bald Unterschiede in der mil.-strategischen Zielsetzung heraus: Waehrend der Generalstab unter Halder den Hauptstoss in Richtung Moskau fuehren wollte, um auf diesem Wege die Hauptkraft des Gegners aufzureiben, hatten fuer Hitler Ziele im Norden u. im Sueden des Landes Vorrang: Im Norden sollte Leningrad rasch genommen u. die Verbindung zur finnischen Armee herge-stellt werden, waehrend man im Sueden die *Bodenschaetze der Ukraine u. des Donezgebietes* gewinnen sowie in weiterer Folge die Erdoelzufuhr aus dem Kaukasus unterbrechen wollte. Vereinfacht ausgedrueckt, setzte der Generalstab auf die *militaerische Loesung*, naemlich die Niederringung der Roten Armee, wogegen Hitler, unterstuetzt durch General d.Artl. Alfred Jodl, Leiter des Wehrmachtfuehrungsstabes, auf die *Gewinnung politischer u. ruestungswirtschaftlicher Ziele* draengte.

Erst in der Weisung Nr. 21, dem „*Fall Barbarossa*“, vom 18. Dez. 40 *konnte man einen Kompromiss der voneinander abweichenden Absichten finden*: Die am staerksten ausgestattete Hr.Gr.Mitte hatte mit zwei Pz.Gr. in doppelseitiger Umfassung des Gegners ueber die obere Duena u. den Dnjepr auf Smolensk vorstossen; nach Erreichen dieses Zwischenzieles sollte sie starke Kraefte nach Norden ansetzen, um gemeinsam mit der H.Gr.Nord den Gegner im Baltikum vernichtend zu schlagen, Leningrad einzunehmen u. sich mit der finnischen Armee zu vereinigen. Erst nach Erledigung dieser vordringlichen Aufgabe war vorgesehen, die Vorbereitungen zur Einnahme des Ruestungs- u. Verkehrszentrums Moskau aufzunehmen, wo immerhin elf Bahnstrecken aus allen Himmelsrichtungen zusammenliefen. Waehrenddessen sollte die H.Gr.Sued mit einem starken Stossfluegel gegen den Dnjepr bei Kiew vorgehen, die Stadt nehmen, dort u. weiter suedlich Brueckenkoepfe ueber den Strom gewinnen u. hierauf im Angriff nach SO ge-meinsam mit den aus Rumaenien angreifenden Kraefte den Gegner *westlich des Stromes ver-nichten*. Erst nach siegreicher Beendigung der Operationen noerd. u. suedl. des Pribjetgebietes hatte das Heer im Norden Moskau einzunehmen u. im Sueden das Donezgebiet zu besetzen. (Magenheimer, *Moskau 1941*, 15)

⁴⁷ **Note:** In fact, while not generally known, *Barbarossa* was the first German campaign to be planned from the very start as a *blitzkrieg campaign*.

⁴⁸ **Note:** Good, short explanation of differences in perspectives of German High Command and Hitler in how to conduct the campaign.

--**3.9.40:** Lt Gen *Friedrich Paulus* (not *von Paulus*, as often described) took over responsibility for planning the war on Russia. As *Oberquartiermeister I*, he was responsible for all planning work on the Army General Staff. In planning the attack on Russia, he drew heavily on the work of *Marcks* and *Lt Col Feyerabend*, who did much of the work on the organization of German forces for the eastern campaign. (*Germany and Second World War*, Vol IV, 262-66)

--**Oct 40:** By mid-Oct 40, Army Group East had been set up in Poland and **OKH** had moved from France to its *location for the rest of the war* at the great former Imperial German complex at *Zossen-Wuensdorf*, south of *Berlin*. **OKW** – the joint armed forces command – would *look after operations in the rest of the world*. **OKH**, the army command, would have *exclusive control of Barbarossa*. Another „quirky“ piece of Hitler organization. (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 127)

-- **Oct-Dec 40:** For great details on planning process within **OKH** (led by Paulus) see, *Torsten Diedrich, Paulus. Das Trauma von Stalingrad*, 163-66; **VIII:248**. This account makes clear that the basic planning („Vorarbeiten“) was complete by end of **Dec 40**. Also makes clear that, despite some divergence of opinion between **OKH**, **OKW** and Hitler, there appeared to be no fundamental disagreements “um die strategische u. operative Kriegfuehrung.” According to Paulus’ operational concept, offensive on Moscow was to be launched on the **40th** day of the campaign.

-- **Nov-Dec 40:** War gaming:

Major war game conducted by LtGen Paulus, who was, at that time, **Qu I** at **OKH**. Based on conclusions of the war game, Halder reported the proposed ops plan to Hitler. The former pointed to the fact that the Pripet Marshes divided the theater of war into two separate sectors. The *center of gravity* of the whole operation would be north of the marshes. The strongest concentration of German forces would advance from Warsaw to Moscow by way of Minsk – Smolensk. . .

Hitler agreed in principle but stressed some points that were to bear grave consequences for the future. The first point was his emphasis on encircling the enemy forces in the Baltic area. . . . Hitler also considered a possibility of encircling strong enemy forces in the Ukraine. . . **Cruz:** It is obvious that, at this stage, Hitler’s strategic objectives bore a predominately *political and economic character*. . .

On the other hand, **OKH** held the *classic strategic opinion* that although the conquest and maintenance of these areas were important, the prior annihilation of the Red Army was a necessary supposition. The mass of the Russian forces would be met and encountered on the way to Moscow. Moscow was the *hub of Soviet power*. . .

From a strategic point of view, this cleavage of opinion meant that Hitler strove for a military decision on both wings, whereas **OKH** wanted it in the center of the over-all front.

(For more details see, J.L. Wallach, 269-70)

--For *Johannes Huerter's* sharp condemnation of German military planning for Russian campaign see, *Hitlers Heerfuhrer*, 293-300; **IX:104**) He writes, *inter alia*, "Ein Feldzugplan ohne klaren Schwerpunkt ueber die erste Phase der Grenzschlachten hinaus konnte von den militaerischen Fachleuten nur als Fehlkonstruktion beurteilt werden."

--**Note:** See, **I:546**, ff., for useful background on *logistics challenges* in Russia, German logistics planning, shortfalls, etc.

-- Logistics planning for "Barbarossa" (GQu. Wagner): Optimistic assumptions for campaign (so typical!) Fuel / ammunition consumption, etc. (With reserve of about **1.4** million tonnes at end of **1940**, fuel requirements for three branches of *Wehrmacht* could be met for about **3** months (**IX:** R.-D. Mueller, *Hitler's War in the East*))

-- **Shortage of armored forces** would result in a *fundamental flaw* in German planning concepts – **OKH** planners were compelled to settle for having to conduct *single-envelopments* in the northern and southern sectors of the Eastern Front (See, D. Glantz, *Barbarossa Derailed*, Vol. I, 40)

--**German intelligence:** German intelligence on the Soviet ability to wage war was "profoundly wrong." The Germans had a good picture of the Soviet forces deployed well forward, but virtually no picture of the *second operational echelon*, and none of the *second strategic echelon*. (Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 173-75)

--**Note:** Wie wenig konkret insgesamt die Unterlagen waren, auf die sich die dt. militaerische Planung stuetzen konnte, zeigte in besonders krasser Weise das „Handbuch“ ueber die „Kriegswehrmacht der UdSSR,“ das die Abteilung FHO am **1 Jan 41** herausgab; hier wurde zugegeben, dass man ueber die sowj. Kriegsgliederung faktisch nichts wusste. (Andreas Hillgruber, „Das Russland-Bild der fuehrenden deutschen Militaers vor Beginn des Angriffs auf die Sowjetunion,“ in: *Die Zerstoerung Europas. Beitrage zur Weltkriegsepoche 1941 bis 1945.*“ 264-65.)

-- For German intelligence picture –*Fremde Heere Ost* – see, **I:108**, ff.). German intelligence overestimated number of Red Army divisions concentrated in the forward area and was *totally ignorant of Soviet mobilization capabilities*, specifically, the quantity of reserve armies the Soviet Union could raise and deploy forward into new defensive positions east of the Western Dvina – Dnepr Rivers. D. Glantz, *Barbarossa Derailed*, Vol. I, 20)

-- In **1940** Guderian's corps frontages rarely exceeded **15** miles; in Russia the norm for his group would be **80** and more. (Dennis Showalter, *Hitler's Panzers*, 160). (In general, many (most?) divisions/corps, etc. would often hold frontages much wider than the theoretical frontages laid out in doctrine.)

--Concerning the *collective attitude of the top German cdrs* earmarked for "Barbarossa" (Army Group, Army and Corps Cdrs) to the impending campaign, **J. Huerter** concludes w/ the following observations: "So ueberwog trotz der beschriebenen Bedenken auch bei den hoechsten Truppenbefehlshabern ein mehr oder weniger *verhaltener*, insgesamt **erschreckend leichtfertiger Optimismus**, der auf einem Grad an Selbstueberschaetzung u. Verblendung beruhte, wie er in der Geschichte der dt. Militaerelite wohl *einmalig* ist. . ." (For rest of quote see his, *Hitlers Heerfuhrer*, 235)

-- **Hubris after 1940:** „In the warm, heady afterglow of victory [i.e., over France], the Germans tended to forget all the doubts that had plagued them before and during the invasion of France. More and more generals joined Hitler in concluding that their *war machine was invincible and unstoppable*. Not even their failure to knock Britain out of the war could disabuse them of this illusion. . .” (Max Boot, *War Made New*, 236)

--**18.4.41:** The statements of the Chief of Staff of **Fourth Army**, Maj.-Gen. Günther Blumentritt, on **18 Apr 41** are a good example of pre-war assessments by the German military of their Soviet opponent and of their own capability:

Maybe the Russians really intend to stand and fight the Germans between the western border and the Dnepr, a move that would be very desirable . . . Even the Imperial Army was no match for the German command, and the Russian commanders today are at an even greater disadvantage. The shortcomings of the middle ranks are even greater . . . The effects of German weapons, whose prestige has increased with the campaign against Yugoslavia, will soon be felt! There will be *14 days of heavy fighting. Hopefully, by then we shall have made it.*

(Cited in: J. Förster & E. Mawdsley, “*Hitler and Stalin in Perspective . . .*,” 69)

-- Only real opposition had come from **Admiral Raeder**: His “Mediterranean” alternative rejected by Hitler (See, **IX:67, 79, 125**, etc.). Hitler also rejects Ribbentrop’s “continental bloc.” (See, **IX:67**, etc.)

--“*Hyperoptimismus*“ vom GFM v. Brauchitsch . . . meinte er am **30.4.41**, dass der Feldzug gegen die Sowjetunion nach “voraussichtlich heftigen Grenzschlachten” mit einer Dauer “bis zu vier [4] Wochen“ im wesentlich beendet sein u. es sich danach nur noch um Saeuberungsaktionen . . . handeln werde; die Hauptursache fuer solchen leichtfertigen Optimismus ist . . . in dem *Primat des operativen Denkens* im preussisch-deutschen Generalstab (seit Moltke u. Schlieffen) zu suchen. (See, Hillgruber, “*Das Russland-Bild der fuehrenden dt. Militaers*,” 258)

--U.S. Assessments of Russo-German War:⁴⁹

Prior to launching Operation *Barbarossa*, the Germans put great stock in three main factors that indicated Soviet weakness: 1) a general dissat-isdiction on the part of many Russians and especially, most subject nationalities, over the Communist system; b) the debilitating effects of the purges on Soviet leadership, in particular, the military hierarchy; and, c) the poor performance of the Red Army and Air Force during the occu-pation of eastern Poland and against Finland. *Most American (and British) military experts sub-scribed to the same view*. The personalities of the U.S. Ambassador, Laurence Steinhardt, and Military Attaché, Captain (later Major) Ivan Yeaton, helped to skew this point of view. . .

In early March [**41**], Yeaton wrote his assessment that “*The Soviet Union is scared to death . . .*” of the Germans. . .

⁴⁹ **Note:** These assessments are significant because they reveal that the Anglo-Americans had, fundamentally, the same impression of Russian weakness as the Germans did.

Despite ample evidence of Nazi invasion preparations, the Americans believed, as did the Soviets, that war rumors were “*German in origin and being promulgated purposefully*” to force better economic concessions from Stalin. . . [In **May 41**] Yeaton reported⁵⁰ . . . “*Germany would undoubtedly beat the Soviet Union in from three weeks to three months this summer.*” Most American decision makers accepted this rose-colored appraisal.

AS war approached, assessments remained pessimistic. . . On **17 Jun 41**, Stimson wrote in his diary his belief that the Germans and Soviets were negotiating: “...from all the dispatches, it seems to be Nip and Tuck whether Russia *will fight or surrender*. Of course I think chances are that *she will surrender.*” Three days later, Marshall’s Assistant for Military Intelligence opined that “It is also possible that she [Germany] could *totally defeat the Russian Army before the end of 1941*, thereby securing to herself European Russia.” Thus, in the minds of the U.S. military, *the USSR had no chance*.

(R. Kirchubel, “*Operation Barbarossa and the American Controversy over Aid to the Soviet Union*, 5-6)

-- Auffassungen auf der Ebene der H.Gr.- u. Armeefuehrungen (here, brief discussions of the views of GFM v. Leeb, GFM v. Bock, GFM v. Rundstedt, Guderian, v. Kluge, Blumentritt, usw. . . . Die Erwartung, dass die dt. Kriegsmaschine die SU in kurzer Zeit ueberrollen werde, war indessen nicht nur in der dt. militaerischen Fuehrung weitestgehend *Opinio communis*, sondern sie wurde auch von britischen u. amerikanischen Militaers u. Politikern geteilt (here brief discussion of Anglo-American assessments of outcome of possible Russo-German war. (Hillgruber, “*Das Russland-Bild*. . .,” 265-68)

-- **Fazit:** Der schnelle Triumph ueber Frankreich, die erfolgreichen „Blitzfeldzuege“ insgesamt, zuletzt noch in dem schwierigen Gelaende in Suedosteuropa, hatten jenes *hybride Ueberlegenheitsbewusstsein* hervorgerufen, das insbesondere fuer den Generalstab des Heeres das russ. Problem nur noch zu einer Frage des richtigen Operationsansatzes werden liess. Die Klischees von der schwerfaelligen, schematisch denkenden u. handelnden, verantwortungs-scheuen Roten Armee, die in Polen u. Finnland alles andere als militaerisch ueberzeugende Leistungen vollbracht hatte trugen . . . wesentlich zu der Erwartung bei, dass die dt. *technische u. fuehrungsmaessige Ueberlegenheit* den raschen durchschlagenden Erfolg herbeifuehren werde. . . (Hillgruber, „*Das Russland-Bild*,” 268)

-- Lack of *mechanization*: Pulling the guns and the carts of the supply columns or working as pack animals were nearly three quarters of a million horses [actually, ca. **650,000**] – more than had entered the Kaiser’s war in **1914**. [My note: Only the proverbial “tip of the spear” was mechanized; this amounted to ca. **15%** of the overall force. Ratio of PDs and IDs (mot.) to regular IDs? Check Order of Battle.]

--*Erstschlagkapazitaet?*

Total German deployments (ground & air forces + reserves (**23 Div.**) + replacements in *Ersatzheer* (ca. **300k** = thru **Sep 41**) (Note: For status of *Wehrmacht* on **22.6.41** see also, Matthew Cooper, *The German Army 1933-45*, in: “*German forces* file; also, Keilig, Bd. III, for total size of Army on “Stichtag” **22.6.41**)

⁵⁰ **Note:** In his footnote, Kirchubel gives date of **7 Mar 41**. Did he mean **7 May**?

(**Note:** Issue of *paucity of strategic reserves*; no doubt felt they would suffice for a short war of **8-10** weeks. In this context, interesting to note that Count v. Schlieffen had also “rejected the holding back of any general reserves because they would *never reach the decisive place in time.*” (J. L. Wallach, *Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation*, 51))⁵¹

(**Note:** Im **Jun 41** standen als Ersatz zur Deckung der Verluste des Feldheeres neben rund **80.000** Mann in den Feldersatzbatln. des Feldheeres **300** bis **350.000** Mann ausgebildetes Personal im Ersatzheer zur Verfügung, vorwiegend der Geburtsjahrgang **1921**. Das waren insgesamt **400.000** Mann zur Deckung der Ausfälle. (B. Mueller-Hillebrand, *Das Heer 1933-45*, Bd. II, 101)

--Challenges and difficulties posed by *Russian space* – for historical overview of German thinking (from GFM v. Moltke, who was “completely daunted by the difficulties presented by the Russian space,” through Schlieffen,⁵² F. v. Bernhardi, etc., see, J.L. Wallach, *Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation*, 265-66)

(**Note:** In **1913** the German Great General Staff promulgated a secret memorandum about Russian tactics. Section IV of this document, entitled “Hints for the conduct of German troops in a Russian theater of war,” stressed the *special difficulties of the territory*: for example, bad road conditions, lack of building materials for modern roads and bridges, great distances between dwelling places, vast swamps, difficult climate conditions, *lack of correct maps*. (J.L. Wallach, 266)

(**Note:** When comparison made between France **1940** and plan for assault on Russia, the astonishing fact emerges that for the new war it was proposed to commit only a *handful of divisions more* than were used during the second stage of the war in the west. In terms of area the German Army was to be deployed in about **1,000,000** square miles of Russia, whereas the area of western Europe in which victory had been gained in **1940** w/ slightly fewer divisions had been ca. **50,000** square miles. [!] James Lucas, *War on the Eastern Front*, 3)

--**Blitzkrieg concept:** Was as much an *economic as a military concept*, based on Hitler’s view that Germany could not sustain a prolonged war until she possessed herself of Russia’s riches. „Operation *Barbarossa*,“ was to be the last *blitzkrieg*. It was *cut to the bone*. Even in **1941** Hitler was not prepared to put the German economy on a full war-footing. Since the *occupation of Prague*, he had become suspicious of the will of the German people to wage total war, and he was reluctant therefore to drive women into the war factories or to cut civilian production and consumption more than was absolutely necessary to attain his military objectives. As a result, **Barbarossa was seriously underpowered in terms of the magnitude of its objectives**. There were elements of **153** division involved, but only **3580** tanks [and assault guns], **7,184** guns and **2,740** acft. By comparison, the Soviet offensive in **Jan 45** on the *Berlin front* alone employed: **6,250** tanks, **7,560** acft, and no less than **41,600** guns. Much of the German transport was horse-powered and lack of mobility proved an increasing handicap as the campaign proceeded. The Germans found themselves *fighting a Forties war with late-Thirties weaponry*, and not enough even of that. The defects were *most pronounced in the air*. Goering proved an increasingly idle and *incompetent leader*; both his chief technical ofcr and his staff chief were eventually driven to *suicide* by the exposure of their bunglings. But the responsibility was also Hitler’s, for failing to provide acft in sufficient quantity. Equally to blame was Nazi procurement policy, which was *statist and bureaucratic* and totally unable to produce a *satisfactory heavy bomber*. Hitler allowed

⁵¹ **Note:** In fact, both Clausewitz and Schlieffen “deny any need for strategic reserves; both agree as to the usefulness and necessity for tactical ones.” J. L. Wallach, 76)

⁵² **Note:** For background on Count Schlieffen – his life, tenure as chief of staff, strategic thinking, etc. – see, G.E. Rothenberg, “Moltke, Schlieffen, and the Doctrine of Strategic Envelopment,” in: Makers of Modern Strategy, P. Paret (ed.), 311-25

the *Luftwaffe* to become the most *party-dominated* and *totalitarian* of his armed services, and dearly did he pay for it. (P. Johnson, *Modern Times*, 377-78; also, *Fest*, 962, 1091)

--18.12.40 [*Weisung Nr. 18*]: The directive emphasized the destruction of the Red Army *along the frontier* but emphasized that these preliminary battles were to set the stage „for a pivoting movement performed by strong mot. elements that will drive northward in order to annihilate the enemy forces in the Baltic area in conjunction w/ the northern army group which will be driving from East Prussia in the general direction of Leningrad.“ Similarly, after destruction of Soviet forces in the center, the Germans would pursue the beaten enemy into the Donets basin. Directive No. 21 did suggest „that Moscow be reached as soon as possible. The political and economic significance of capturing this city is tremendous.“ What the directive represented was an agreement among the German high command, including Hitler himself, *not to agree*. The basic premise of German planning now was that operations should strive to destroy the Red Army on the frontier; after that *nothing was clear*. (W. Murray, *War to be Won*, 118)

--Apr 41 (Impact of Balkan Campaign on Barbarossa):

--Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

--The decisive German Balkan victory had driven the British from Greece, dramatically reducing the vulnerability of the Romanian oil fields to attack from the air; in strategic terms, by bringing both Greece and Yugoslavia within Germany's orbit, it had solidified the Reich's southern flank – a vital prerequisite to the attack on Russia. Conversely, historians have argued for decades that the Balkan campaign delayed implementation of Operation *Barbarossa* by some four to six weeks - a delay, they insist, which proved fatal to its outcome. In his magisterial study of the Third Reich published in 1960, William L. Shirer wrote:

And though June [1941] had arrived the vast army which had been turned southeast into Yugoslavia and Greece had to be brought back great distances to the Soviet frontier over unpaved roads and run-down single-track railway lines that were woefully inadequate to handle so swarming a traffic.

The delay, as things turned out, was fatal. Defenders of Hitler's military genius have contended that the Balkan campaign did not set back the timetable for *Barbarossa* appreciably and that in any case the postponement was largely due to the late thaw that year which left the roads in Eastern Europe deep in mud until mid-June. But the testimony of the key German generals is otherwise. Field Marshal Friedrich Paulus, whose name will always be associated with Stalingrad, and who at this time was the chief planner of the Russian campaign on the Army General Staff, testified on the stand at Nuremberg that Hitler's decision to destroy Yugoslavia postponed the beginning of *Barbarossa* by “about five weeks.” The Naval War Diary gives the same length of time. Rundstedt, who led Army Group South into Russia, told Allied interrogators after the war that because of the Balkan campaign, “we began at least four weeks late. That,” he added, “was a very costly delay.”^{xxvi}

Almost half a century later (2007), Professor Chris Bellamy, in his impressive study of Russia in the Second World War, echoed Shirer's observations: “*Barbarossa* was delayed – almost certainly with disastrous consequences for the Germans – because of the 27 March 1941 coup in Yugoslavia, and Hitler's subsequent invasion to deal with it.”^{xxvii} This analysis, however, is simply

false. To get it right, we turn to the venerable British military historian, Sir John Keegan:

The Balkan campaign, often depicted by historians as an unwelcome diversion from Hitler's long-laid plan to attack the Soviet Union and as a disabling interruption of the timetable he had marked out for its inception, had been in fact no such thing. It had been successfully concluded even more rapidly than his professional military advisers could have anticipated; while the choice for D-Day for *Barbarossa* had always depended not on the sequence of contingent events but on the weather and objective military factors. The German Army found it more difficult than expected to position the units allocated for *Barbarossa* in Poland; while the lateness of the spring thaw, which left the eastern European rivers in spate beyond the predicted date, meant that *Barbarossa* could not have been begun very much earlier than the third week in June, whatever Hitler's intentions.^{xxviii}

It is true that, several days prior to commencement of the Balkan campaign, OKW had concluded that the expansion of the operation to include Yugoslavia – requiring the commitment of nine additional divisions, drawn from the German order of battle already in place for *Barbarossa* – would delay the start of war against Russia by at least four weeks – from the originally intended start date in mid-May to about mid-June 1941.^{xxix} As matters turned out, Hitler did not settle on 22 June as the new start date for war with Russia until **30 April 1941**.^{xxx} Moreover, faced with continued uncertainty on the part of OKH as to whether even *that* deadline could be met, he did not *finalize the 22 June start date until the end of May*.^{xxxi}

Yet despite the added complications created by the assault on Yugoslavia – and whatever delays they imposed on the *Barbarossa* buildup – the attack on Russia, as Keegan so rightly observed, could not, in any event, have been launched much before the second half of June because of the weather. The spring of 1941 had brought unusually heavy rains to Central and Eastern Europe, while flooding rivers and dikes throughout western Russia. Until the end of May, the ground was boggy, roads and unpaved airfields virtually unusable. These adverse conditions, recalled former *Luftwaffe* general Hermann Plocher, “seriously retarded the rapid extension of German highway and road networks, the expansion of German airfields, and the construction of immense communication lines.”^{xxxii} They also made operations by mobile forces – panzer and motorized divisions – largely impossible until the rivers had ceased flooding their banks and the sodden, marshy ground had dried out. Thus, the delay in launching *Barbarossa* until well into June was “almost certainly inevitable.”^{xxxiii} . . .

While the precious time lost was largely unavoidable because of the late spring thaw, the Balkan campaign still exacted a heavy toll on German preparations for *Barbarossa*. As historian David Stahel recently observed:

From the divisions committed to action in Yugoslavia, two-thirds were simply replaced in the line by OKH reserves and all combat divisions were on route back to the eastern border by the end of May. The forces committed to Greece, however, were a different matter. Combat losses were slight yet, as would soon be the case in *Barbarossa*, the long distances and inhospitable terrain took a much greater toll on the German panzers and motorized transports. As a result, these divisions had to make the long journey back to Germany to receive thorough overhauls and partial re-equipping. It proved a time-consuming process and meant that the **2 PD** and **5 PD**, as well as the **60 ID (mot.)**, only arrived on

the eastern front well after the initial attack. The two panzer divisions were then held in the OKH reserve and did not see action until October 1941. The delay in returning motorized units to service proved an important setback given the brief window of opportunity for the success of *Barbarossa*. Compounding this was the loss of the entire **Twelfth Army**, which was needed to provide occupation forces and coastal defense in southeastern Europe. This complicated the already difficult task of Army Group South, which made the slowest progress of the three army groups in the opening weeks of *Barbarossa*. . . The Balkan campaign placed yet another drain on Germany's eroding military resources and contributed in no small measure to the mounting over-extension of the *Wehrmacht*.^{xxxiv}

(*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Section 2.7.2)

--**10.6.41:** Bei der Festlegung des Angriffstermins stimmte der Generalstab des Heeres mit Hitler ueberein. Halder selbst sah sich *nicht unter Zeitdruck* u. war daher mit dem 22.Juni als Termin, den **Hitler bestimmt hatte**, einverstanden. Obwohl es in der Hand des Generalstabes gelegen haette, auf einen fruerehen Angriffstermin zu draengen, geschah nichts dergleichen. Als Hitler am **6 Jun 41** in einer Besprechung mit General Halder den **Angriffstermin bestaetigte**, erhob dieser keine Einwaende. Die Rueckfuehrung der auf dem Balkan eingesetzten Verbaenden war bis zum **10 Jun 41** im wesentlichen beendet, u. das OKH haette somit in den naechsten Tagen den Angriff eroeffnen u. die noch ausstehenden Truppen als Reserven nachfuehren koennen. Wenn auch viele Fluesse in Weissrussland, im Baltikum u. in der Westukraine, die im Zuge der Offensive ueberquert werden mussten, bis in den Juni hinein Hochwasser fuehrten, so waere ein Angriff etwa ab dem **10 Jun 41** durchaus moeglich gewesen. . . Ein Zeitgewinn von ungefaehr 10 bis 12 Tagen haette *entscheidende Bedeutung* bekommen koennen: Es fehlte naemlich nach der siegreichen Doppelschlacht bei Wjasma – Brjansk im **Okt 41** eine solche Zeitspanne, um in Verfolgung der gegnerischen Reste Moskau bis zum Einsetzen der Schlammperiode zu gewinnen. (Magenheimer, *Moskau 1941*, 18)

--*Excerpt from Barbarossa Unleashed:*

1.8: Crossing the Rubicon: The Barbarossa Directive (18 December 1940)

When OKH briefed the Russian campaign plan to Hitler in Berlin on 5 December, the plan – as in earlier references to it – still bore the original code-name of “Otto.”^{xxxv} Two weeks later, when Hitler finally signed the directive for the impending operation, “Otto” had become the more imperious sounding “*Barbarossa*.” Hitler alone appears to be responsible for the change in name.^{xxxvi}

Frederick I, “Barbarossa” (ca. 1123-90), had become Holy Roman Emperor in 1152, the nickname a reference to his red beard. He was a “bold and skillful” commander and an “astute ruler.” After participating in the Second Crusade in 1188, he had, the following year, led the greatest ever medieval crusading army back toward Palestine, only to drown crossing the Calycadnus River (in modern Turkey) in June 1190. In Germanic folklore he was to become the equivalent of the British (Celtic) King Arthur. According to legend, his body now sleeps beneath a mountain at Kyffhaeuser, on the Rhine; one day – so the story goes – Barbarossa will rise up from his resting place and, once more, take up the call to arms. It was a “brilliantly evocative and apposite code-name for the 1941 offensive, ‘arrogant in its recall of medieval splendors and menacing in its hints of medieval cruelties.’”^{xxxvii}

At the *Berghof* on 17 December, General Jodl, OKW Operations Chief, presented a first draft of the *Barbarossa* directive to Hitler, who rejected it outright. The document, apparently, had incorporated the primary intent of the Army High Command (OKH) – i.e., an advance by the main force via Minsk – Smolensk to Moscow – and ignored Hitler’s proposal (made at the 5 December conference in Berlin) that the main thrust be directed through the Baltic toward Leningrad.^{xxxviii} The directive, redrafted in accordance with the dictator’s desires and retyped on the large “Fuehrer typewriter,” was resubmitted to Hitler the next day, 18 December,^{xxxix} and signed by him as “Fuehrer Directive” No. 21, “Case *Barbarossa*.” Only nine copies of the document – “in its top-secret cover, scarlet with a diagonal yellow line” – were made; they were to be carried “by hand of officer, only.”^{xl}

The directive began by stating that the “*Wehrmacht* must be prepared, even before the conclusion of the war against England, to *crush Soviet Russia in a rapid campaign*” (*Sowjetrußland in einem schnellen Feldzug niederzuwerfen*). All preparations for the attack were to be completed by 15 May 1941. The bulk of the Red Army in western Russia was to be annihilated (*vernichtet*) by means of “daring operations led by deeply penetrating armored spearheads” and the enemy’s withdrawal into the interior prevented. The final objective of the campaign was to “erect a barrier against Asiatic Russia on the general line Volga – Archangel.” If necessary, surviving industrial areas in the Urals could be taken out by the *Luftwaffe*.^{xli}

As Part III of the directive (“Conduct of Operations”) made clear, the document drew heavily on the plan of OKW – that is, on the study of Lt.-Col. Lossberg – and provided “bindingly for the turn of strong mobile formations from the center to the north, once the enemy had been beaten in front of the Dnepr-Dvina line.”^{xliii}

A. *Army* (in accordance with plans submitted to me):

In the theater of operations, which is divided by the [Pripiat’] Marshes into a Southern and a Northern sector, the main weight of attack will be delivered in the *Northern* area. Two Army Groups will be employed there.

The more southerly of these two Army Groups (in the center of the whole front) will have the task of advancing with powerful armored and motorized formations from the area about and north of Warsaw, and routing the enemy forces in White Russia. This will make it possible for strong mobile forces to advance northward and, in conjunction with the Northern Army Group operating out of East Prussia in the general direction of Leningrad, to destroy the enemy forces operating in the Baltic area. Only after the fulfillment of this first essential task, which must include the occupation of Leningrad and Kronstadt, will the attack be continued with the intention of occupying Moscow, an important center of communications and of the armaments industry.

Only a surprisingly rapid collapse of Russian resistance could justify the simultaneous pursuit of both objectives.^{xliiii}

There it was in plain German: Leningrad, the Baltic region in general, and the eradication of Red Army forces operating there were codified as higher priorities than the capture of Moscow – the political, psychological and communications hub of the Soviet Union. It had also become “manifest” in Hitler’s discussions with his military advisors that he considered the capture of Russia’s war-essential economic centers as the “main objective of the campaign, whereas Halder considered this a dissipation of forces which would then be lacking for the decisive thrust against

Moscow.^{xliiv} Yet the Chief of the Army General Staff's reaction to the directive was – once again – not to argue or remonstrate; rather he continued patiently to craft an operational plan which matched his own thinking. When his plan differed from Hitler's he simply ignored the differences and went about his business as if he and his "Fuehrer" were in complete agreement.^{xliv} After Operation *Barbarossa* began, Halder would quietly continue to attempt to fight the war according to his own operational concepts, sometimes even engaging in subtle subterfuge vis-à-vis his "Fuehrer."

(*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Section 1.8)

Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

1.9: German Planning Through 1940 – An Assessment

The *Barbarossa* O-Plan was, at least on paper, elegant in its clarity and simplicity of purpose: The main Red Army forces were to be enveloped, encircled and annihilated by the German armored spearheads west of two great river lines, the Dnepr and Western Dvina, in a spectacular *Vernichtungsschlacht* – a super "Cannae," whose doctrinal antecedents were to be found in the theories of Clausewitz, the elder Moltke and Schlieffen. As noted, unlike Poland (1939) and France (1940), the Russian campaign was from the start envisaged as a true "blitzkrieg," to be decided in a matter of weeks as the result of a single, devastating blow. Simply put, Hitler and his General Staff wanted to operate like Moltke on the strategic level – by isolating and defeating each opponent singly – and like Schlieffen at the operational and tactical level – by destroying the enemy in a short war through a massive battle of annihilation. By doing so, they could overcome the traditional dilemmas posed by Germany's central European position and its modest human and material resources. In Schlieffen's view, argued former Israeli officer Jehuda L. Wallach, the "total destruction of the opponent is always the most advantageous because it sets the whole of the victor's forces free for other duties;" the best way to achieve this was through "encirclement and attack from the rear."^{xlvi} Hitler, Halder, *et al.*, had absorbed the lessons of Schlieffen.

Indeed, after Red Army forces west of the Dnepr-Dvina had been encircled and destroyed, the war, it was believed, would essentially be over; all that would remain would be mopping up operations and pursuit into the interior to destroy those enemy elements which had escaped destruction and to reach final geographical objectives. German planners, then, anticipated little enemy resistance after the initial battles had been fought. Their intelligence – mostly derived from top-secret high level reconnaissance flights over Soviet territory – had given them a good picture of Red Army dispositions up to a depth of several hundred kilometers from the German-Soviet frontiers; beyond that, however, little was known about potential Soviet strength and dispositions. The Germans, however, simply assumed that the mass of the Red Army was deployed near the border regions and, once these forces were eliminated, there would be little left to deal with. It was a fatal assumption.

Of course, the men responsible for working out the details of the campaign plan were not stupid men. They knew full well that, in terms of time, geography, available resources, and so forth, the Russian theater of operations would pose unprecedented challenges and they sought, as best they could, to address them. Time was limited, the campaigning season in Russia lasted from about late May – at the earliest – into September; thereafter operations, particularly those of modern mechanized forces would be seriously disrupted by rain, mud and snow. Compared to Poland or France, the theater of operations was immense. The two primary German thrusts into Poland in September 1939 had covered about 105 and 240 kilometers from East Prussia and Silesia, respectively. The depth of the longest advance in France in 1940 was about 400 kilometers (the

panzer drive across the Meuse River to the Channel coast), while the length of the active front against France and the Low Countries was less than 250 kilometers. In contrast, the *Wehrmacht* would have to begin its attack on Russia along a front stretching more than 1200 kilometers.^{xlvii} Moreover, as Lossberg had pointed out, the front would expand inexorably, in the shape of a funnel, as it migrated eastward from the Russo-German frontier, resulting in the dilution of German forces over an ever-broader area^{xlviii} and complicating the operational challenge of creating a clear center of gravity.^{xlix} This problem, of course, was inherent in *Barbarossa*, given the prodigious size of the Soviet Union; yet it would grow increasingly unmanageable should the German blitzkrieg fail to quickly knock Russia out of the war.

Despite several large rivers, broad tracks of marshland and primeval forests, the terrain itself – with the notable exception of its sheer vastness^l – did not pose major impediments to the movements of modern armies. However, the poor road and rail infrastructure in European Russia was a truly staggering problem which would seriously complicate the movement and supply of Germany's eastern armies fighting in the depth of the country. The entire Soviet Union possessed only 82,000 kilometers of railroad – all of a different gauge than those in Germany, Western Europe and German-occupied Poland^{li} – and it would have to be converted to standard gauge, a time-consuming and labor intensive process. Of just under 1.4 million kilometers of road, 1.13 million were little more than cart tracks. There were also 240,000 km of allegedly all-weather roads, yet only 64,000 km of these possessed hard surfaces.^{lii} The logistical and operational headaches inherent in such statistics provide a textbook example of what Clausewitz identified as “friction,” a phenomenon which would complicate and slow the German advance eastward. The often insoluble problems created by such friction will be a primary theme of the soldiers' accounts in this narrative.

The Germans grappled with all of these – and many more – of the myriad challenges posed by a military campaign in Russia. In the end, however, they simply ignored them or let themselves be seduced by the optimistic assumptions which formed the basis of all their planning. One can only marvel at the astonishing fact that, for Operation *Barbarossa*, the Germans planned to commit total forces only marginally larger than those employed in the west in 1940, during the second stage of the German offensive. In terms of space, the *Wehrmacht* was going to have to operate over some 2.6 million square kilometers (one million square miles) of terrain in the east, while victory in 1940 had been achieved in a battle space of ca. 130,000 square kilometers.^{liii} The underlying theme in this discussion is that Hitler and his generals dramatically overestimated the capabilities of their own forces and, conversely, dismissed the military prowess of the Soviet Union. They assumed that, once the blitzkrieg was unleashed, it would unfold according to plan and bring about a rapid decision. The Soviet Union, with all its inherent social, political and military weaknesses, would simply come crashing down when struck by the *Wehrmacht*'s overpowering and ineluctable blow.

While such general observations – as far as they go – are meaningful, an analysis of German planning for war with Russia requires deeper insight into several topics. They are: a) the failure to plan definitively beyond the initial operations; b) over-reliance on operational planning; c) lack of resources committed to the campaign; d) failures of German intelligence; and, e) failures of logistical planning. Each topic is explored briefly below.

(*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Section 1.9)

--**14.6.41:** The C-in-Cs of the Army Groups, Armies and Air Fleets destined for the eastern front are summoned to the Chancellery on 14 June. To avoid the influx of General Staff officers becoming too obvious, a strict agenda of arrival routes, times and car parking was enforced.

After a few words of welcome, Hitler invited each cdr to report on his intentions for his personal sphere of ops during the opening days of the campaign. This provided an overview of the strengths of the groups, the numbers of panzers and so on. Hitler interrupted rarely and listened attentively. The reports gave an optimistic opinion about the quality and equipment of the Red Army. After lunch Hitler spoke to the gathering for about an hour. He said that this was a war against Communism. He reckoned that the Russian soldier would fight hard and offer tough resistance: “We must expect heavy air raids and take steps to protect ourselves through skillful air defenses. The Luftwaffe will win quick successes and thus lighten the load for the Army Groups. We will have the worst of the fighting behind us after about six [6] weeks. But every soldier must know what it is we are fighting for. It is not the territory that we want [somewhat disingenuous point!], but rather that Bolshevism is destroyed!” He spoke in bitter tones against Britain, which preferred an understanding w/ the Soviet Union to one w/ Germany. . . He continued: “If we lose this war w/ Russia, then all Europe will become Communist.”

In the afternoon, Hitler had further talks w/ the cdrs of Army Group South. . . He said that the mass of Russian troops was expected on the Central Front; once these were defeated, Army Group South would be reinforced from Army Group Centre. Brauchitsch and Halder made no comment. (Nicolaus v. Below, *At Hitler's Side*, 101-02)

--**22.6.41**: And so 22 June came. At the *operational level* the Germans expected to destroy the Red Army in the frontier zones. But beyond that the German high command had *not decided the campaign's next objectives*—largely because Halder and Brauchitsch feared that a decision by Hitler would force them to focus on Leningrad and the Ukraine, which they did not want to do. The *support structure* was anything but secure. Should the Soviets survive the first blow, the *logistical system* would be hard pressed to support the *Wehrmacht* in the depths of Russia. To worsen their prospects, the Germans were *not coming as liberators but as destroyers* of European Jewry and enslavers of the Slaves. As Hitler commented, “Naturally this great area would have to be pacified. The best solution was to shoot anyone who looked askance.” Such attitudes condoned terrible crimes and *underestimated Germany's opponent*. (W. Murray, *A War to be Won*, 120)

Why „Barbarossa“ failed:⁵³

- Objective of „Operation Barbarossa“ was to shatter the Soviet military forces west of the Dniepr-Dvina Rivers – and in process shatter the Soviet state – and in campaign of 7-10 weeks; in other words, the Soviet Union was to be defeated by **30.9.41**. Failure to accomplish this objective signified the failure of “Barbarossa” and, ultimately, of the Russian campaign in general. Operation “Taifun” was an improvisation – the result of the failure of “Barbarossa” to meet its very precise objectives. With failure of “Barbarossa,” the war became a *war of attrition* (“Abnutzungskrieg”) for which Germany was patently unprepared and which she could perforce never win:

- “Barbarossa” was launched on a logistical “shoe string,” with utterly inadequate reserves in men, wpns (stockpiles), vehicles, equipment, etc. Only ca. **24** divisions in the **OKH** reserve earmarked for the campaign; totally inadequate number of replacement battalions available in Fromm's Replacement Army. In essence, the *Ostheer* directed to defeat the Soviet enemy w/ the resources made available on **22.6.41**, w/ limited prospects for replacements in men/matieral.

- *Industrial preparation* totally inadequate for war of attrition. For example, Germany only producing **200+** tanks per month in **Jun 41**. Fatal missed opportunity to ramp up for the War in the East from **Jul 40** – **Jun 41**. Production of wpns/equipment for the Army throttled in **Jul 41**, in anticipation of impending decision in the East.

⁵³ **Note:** Perhaps much of this material more appropriate for conclusion!

- German fatally *underestimated* the resiliency, fighting qualities and wps of the Red Army, to say nothing of its inexhaustible reserves via *rapid mobilization*. Equally significant was failure to understand the strength and resiliency of the *Soviet Communist System* forged in blood and iron by Stalin and his subalterns. Despite its flaws, the Soviet system did some things very well – i.e., training/mobilizing millions of reserves and dispatching them to front by rail. Dozens of new armies created from **Jun-Dec 41** (something over 50, if I recall correctly).
- Failure at Moscow in fall '41 simply underscored the failure of the campaign in the East which, in hindsight, had occurred by **30.9.41**. War of attrition had, by **2.10.41**, worn down the *Ostheer* dramatically – losses in experienced, *einsatzfreudige* Offz. especially alarming.
- Entry of the USA into the war ensured Germany's ultimate defeat. Germany and Axis powers now in a global struggle with some 75% of the world's resources aligned against them. And despite its aspirations, Germany was a middle-range power, not a global power.

(C. Luther, 29.3.09)

1.3.2.1: German Military Leadership (Profiles):

BLUMENTRITT, Gen Guenther:

--*Blumentritt*: "In **1914-18**, as a lieutenant, I fought for the first two (2) years against the Russians, after a brief contact w/ the French and Belgians at *Namur* in **Aug 14**. In our very first attack on the Russian front, we quickly realized that here we were meeting *essentially different soldiers* from the French and Belgian – hardly visible, entrenched w/ consummate skill, and resolute! We suffered considerable losses." (Quoted in: *B.H.L. Hart, German Generals Talk*, 187-88)

--Kurz nach Kriegsbeginn wurde er dann durch die Umbenennung des Oberkommandos zum Ia im Generalstab der **Heeresgruppe Süd** ernannt und nahm mit dieser am Polenfeldzug teil. Dabei wurden ihm bereits beide Spangen zu seinen Eisernen Kreuzen verliehen. Danach wurde er durch die Umbenennung seines Kommandos zum Ia im Generalstab der **Heeresgruppe A** ernannt. Mit dieser nahm er am Westfeldzug teil. Am **20 Okt 40** wurde er dann zum Chef des Generalstabes bei der **4. Armee** ernannt. Ab Juni 1941 wurde er dann mit dem **AOK 4** im Ostfeldzug beim Angriff auf Mittelrussland eingesetzt. Bei diesem wurde er am 16. Januar 1942 zum **Generalmajor befördert**. Das Rangdienstalter wurde dabei auf den 1. November 1941 festgelegt. Am 17. Januar 1942 kam er als **Oberquartiermeister I** in den Generalstab des Heeres. Am 26. Januar 1942 wurde er mit dem Deutschen Kreuz in Gold ausgezeichnet. . . Ritterkreuz (13. September 1944) Eichenlaub (18. Februar 1945)
(<http://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de>)

BOCK, GFM Fedor von:

Kirchubel: The **64-yr-old** v. Bock has been described as a "difficult man." In **Apr 1918** Major v. Bock had garnered the *Pour le Merite* for "reckless bravery." He spoke French fluently, and English and Russian well. Usually the "stoic guardsman," he was the *only senior leader to question Barbarossa* when briefed on its plan in **Jan 41**. (*Barbarossa* 1941, 16)

A. Seaton: "Apart from those who had doubts as to the need to go to war, only the **60-year-old**, elegant, tall and spidery GFM v. Bock seems to have *openly questioned Hitler's political and*

strategic aims. Formerly an officer of the Kaiser's foot guards and a man whose main military ability appeared to be in the field of strategy, v. Bock was arrogant, aloof, cynical, vain and unbending. Yet he was on good terms w/ Hitler, of whom he stood a little in awe. When, on **3 Dec 40**, the Fuehrer visited the sick v. Bock to congratulate him on his birthday, the field-marshal learned for the first time of the dictator's intention to attack the Soviet Union. He immediately voiced his fears. Russia, v. Bock said, was an enormous country and its military strength was unknown; he believed that such a war might be difficult even for the Wehrmacht." (*The Battle for Moscow*, 31)⁵⁴

A. Seaton: "Von Bock, overbearing w/ both superiors and subordinates, was not, however, inhibited from severely restricting the freedom of his own army cdrs, even to the extent of meddling w/ matters which were scarcely his concern. His relationship w/ the level-headed Hoth was satisfactory but tension was to arise between von Bock and Strauss. He did *not get on at all well w/ the energetic GFM v. Kluge*, so well esteemed by Hitler, and he had very little time for the arrogant, impetuous and undisciplined Guderian." (*The Battle for Moscow*, 41)

Gerbet: *At no time was Bock a National-Socialist*. On the contrary, "There are indications that he had scant regard for nazi pomp. He was of the opinion that he stood above the raw political and propaganda intrigues of the Nazis. The story is told that during an official reception at the *Reich Chancellery* in 1938, *Hermann Goering*, like Bock a wearer of the *Pour le Merite*, approached him and said that as wearers of Germany's highest military honor they could actually be good friends. Bock answered w/ an *icy stare* and told Goering in no uncertain terms that the medal at their throats did not place them on the same social level. On the other hand Bock regarded *Hitler* as head of state and supreme commander of the armed forces and *in his diary refers to him almost reverentially*. As a high-ranking cdr during the Third Reich's early victories in the Second World War, Bock usually concluded his orders of the day w/ '*long live the Fuehrer*,' not '*hail to the Fuehrer*' as the cdrs who were adherents of national-socialism did." (Gerbet, 19-20; also, Turney)

Kommissarbefehl: Took the courageous stand of *refusing to transmit the now infamous Kommissarbefehl*, which authorized *summary extrajudicial execution* of Soviet political ofcers. (Hart, *Guderian*, 71)

Bock plays major role in Polish campaign as C-in-C of Army Group North; was awarded the *Knight's Cross* for his role in campaign. In **Oct 39**, he was transferred to Western Front as C-in-C of Army Group B. On **19.7.40**, Bock was promoted to *Generalfeldmarschall*. (Gerbet, 19)

BRAUCHITSCH, GFM Walther von:

„Like Keitel, von Brauchitsch was an upright, imposing looking man, square-jawed and of confident bearing, in outward appearance what might have been thought a typical Prussian officer, reserved in manner and exacting towards his subordinates. Yet in truth von Brauchitsch was irresolute. (A. Seaton, „*The Battle for Moscow*, 18)

⁵⁴ **Note:** GFM v. Bock would see Hitler again, for about an hour, on **2 Feb 41**; the conversation covered the same ground as that two months earlier. Hitler was "breezily optimistic" and regarded the early collapse of the Soviet Union as a foregone conclusion. But v. Bock again brought up the question of strategic aims, and remained unconvinced by Hitler's answers. . . According to Seaton, v. Bock was the only senior general who questioned the political/strategic aims of "Barbarossa." (31-32, 35)

Ueber GFM von Brauchitsch ist *“nur wenig bekannt u. noch viel weniger ist ueber ihn geschrieben worden.* Ein Mann, der als [ObdH] von 1938 bis 1941 an der Spitze der groessten Teilstreitkraft des Deutschen Reiches stand u. damit eine der Schluesselpositionen in der *Wehrmacht* besetzte, ist nur *schemenhaft u. bruckstueckweise in der vielfaeltigen Literatur* zum Zweiten Weltkrieg sowie zum Nationalsozialismus u. zum Widerstand im ‚Dritten Reich‘ zu finden. Dies ist auf den ersten Blick um so ueberraschender, als sich die historische Forschung bereits eingehend mit den beiden Chefs des Generalstabes in der Amtszeit von Brauchitsch, Beck u. Halder, auseinandergesetzt hat...Eine intensive Auseinandersetzung mit Brauchitsch oder seinen Motiven findet kaum statt...Sudetenkrise, Polen- u. Frankreichfeldzug, schliesslich der Angriff auf die Sowjetunion sind die bekanntesten mil. Stationen, die v. Brauchitsch an der Spitze des Heeres fuehrte u. in deren Verlauf er zuletzt am mil. Wendepunkt im Winter 1941 entlassen wurde. In diesem Zusammenhang ist in der *Nachkriegsliteratur das Bild eines physisch u. psychisch gebrochenen Mannes gezeichnet worden.* Gleichzeitig wurde ihm vorgeworfen, dass er es nicht vermocht habe, den Diktator von der Politik des Krieges abzubringen u. er sich keiner der Gruppen des mil. Widerstandes u. dem Staatsstreich eindeutig angeschlossen hat. Ueber die Jahre nach seiner Entlassung 1941 hinaus, ist nur wenig bekannt. In den Darstellungen u. der Forschungsliterature taucht Brauchitsch nach 1941 nur noch selten auf. (Loeffler, *Brauchitsch*, 8-9)

World War One: Experienced war exclusively on *western front* as general staff officer, but also saw combat service; experienced *“den Schrecken des Trommelfeuers u. des Stellungskrieges.”* Served as Ia for **34. ID** (1915-16), and later **11. ID** (1917-18). Garnered several combat decorations: **EK I, EK II, Ritterkreuz des Kgl. Hausordens der Hohenzollern mit Schwertern**, etc. Promoted to **Major** in **July 1918**. (Loeffler, *Brauchitsch*, 47-48, 266; see also *Anlagen 1-4*, 304-15)

4.2.38: Appointed **Oberbefehlshaber des Heeres**. Am **29.1.38**, wurde B. erstmals von Hitler empfangen. Hier bestaetigte der General seine Aussagen, seine Bereitschaft zu Aenderungen in den Stellenbesetzungen u. zur *vertiefenden Verbindung von Herr u. Nationalsozialismus*, die er bereits gegenueber Keitel geaeussert hatte. Das erste Gespraech mit Hitler nutzte B. aber auch, um sich offen zur *Kirche* u. zu einem *homogenen Aufbau u. Ersatz des Offizierkorps* zu bekennen, dem er besondere Bedeutung zugemessen hat. Somit stand *General der Artillerie* von Brauchitsch, **bei Hitler keineswegs an erster Stelle fuer den Posten des ObdH**, ja es erscheint vielmehr, als waere seine Berufung immer staerker durch Ausschluss der anderen Kandidaten u. mit der *Unterstuetzung Keitels* in den Vordergrund gerueckt. Er war ein **Kompromisskandidat**. (Loeffler, *Brauchitsch*, 87-88)⁵⁵

B. as **Suendenbock**: Das hinderte jedoch Hitler nicht daran, den ehem. ObdH gegenueber verschiedenen Personenkreisen als *Suendenbock fuer den gescheiterten Feldzug* u. alle inzwischen aufgetretenen Schwierigkeiten verantwortlich zu machen. (Loeffler, *Brauchitsch*, 256-57)

⁵⁵ **Note:** „Den angeblichen **Verkauf des Heeres an Hitler** durch die *Rentenzahlung an Brauchitschs erste Frau* – fuer eine wie auch immer geartete grosse Barsumme oder Dotation findet sich *kein Beweis* – belegen zu wollen, ist nicht so eindeutig nachzuvollziehen, wie es in der Literature oftmals den Eindruck hinterlaesst. Dieser Vorwurf ist durch **Foertsch** erhoben worden u. dient seither als grundsaeztlicher Beleg fuer die Behauptung, der ObdH *habe sich durch diese Geldzuwendung in seinen Entschlussen beeinflussen lassen, da er sich an Hitler gebunden fuehlte*. Ein Vorwurf der selbst in der neuesten Forschungsliterature, mal staerker, mal schwaecher ausgepraegt, **ohne adaequaten Beweis**, weiterhin aufrecht erhalten wird.“ (89-95, 270-71)

Ian Kershaw: „As Commander in Chief of the Army, Brauchitsch was *hopelessly weak and ineffectual*. Torn between pressures from his field cdrs and bullying from Hitler, he offered a *black hole* where clear-sighted and determined military leadership was essential. Long before the crisis which would ultimately bring his removal from office, Brauchitsch was a *broken reed*. The contempt w/ which Hitler treated him was *not w/o justification*.” (Hitler, 418-19)

GREIFFENBERG, General Hans von:

Born: **12 Oct 1893**.
General der Infanterie.

Educated at the Central Cadet School, Lichterfelde, Berlin; commissioned as Leutnant on **20 Jan 1914**. Served w/ field forces throughout World War I.

At end of the war he remained in the **100,000-man Reichswehr**. In **1925**, he was detached for General Staff training in Stettin and Berlin. After a General Staff assignment in Berlin from **1926-30**, and a term as a coy cdr in **1931**, von Greiffenberg, now a major, was *detached for a year to the Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, KS*.

Immediately after the outbreak of war in **Sep 39**, he was appointed Chief of Operations Division, OKH; and, on **1 Aug 40**, was promoted to Generalmajor. He was relieved of his position in **OKH** in **Jun 41** [**Jan 41?**] and assigned to **12. Army** as Chief of Staff during the Balkan Campaign. In **May 41** [?] he was transferred to the Russian front, where he served as Chief of Staff of Army Gp Ctr until **Apr 42** and from then as Chief of Staff of **Army Gp “A”** on the southern sector. On **1 Apr 42**, he was promoted to Generalleutnant. In **Oct 43**, he was appointed Military Attache to Hungary. (Note: This brief biography gleaned from: *FMS, P-052, “Combat in Forests and Swamps”*)

GUDERIAN, General Heinz:

Note: From GFM v. Bock’s memoirs (edited by *Gerbet*),⁵⁶ it is clear that Guderian was a real *meteoric personality*—a “hot head.” Impatient. Volatile. Bursting w/ energy and sometimes even insubordinate.

Note: The personal diary of Georg Heino Freiherr von Muenchhausen – 1940 bis 1944 *Ordonnanzoffizier* beim Chef der Operationsabteilung im OKH, Generalleutnant Adolf Heusinger – contains numerous dismissive references to Guderian. For details see, Section **1.3.6 (Tagebuch Muenschhausen)** in Notebook No. 1.

Note: Guderian’s account of Operation „*Barbarossa*“ in his memoirs offers regular (sometimes daily) updates of the locations of each division of his Panzer Group. His memoirs also contain some useful maps.

⁵⁶ See, for example, Bock diary entries for **4.-6.9.41**. At this time, Bock even considers relieving Guderian of his command.

A. Seaton: Seaton avers, in the context of Guderian's removal from command in **Dec 41**: „Guderian, brave, headstrong, violent, disloyal, capricious and petulant, was not a sympathetic character, and, in his own eyes, was never in the wrong.“ (*A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 215)

A. Seaton: This author calls Guderian “arrogant, impetuous and undisciplined.” He also notes that “between Guderian and v. Kluge there was bitter animosity.” (*The Battle for Moscow*, 41)

Liddell Hart: “It is clear, too, that [Guderian] possessed most of the qualities that distinguished the 'Great Captains' of history – *coup d'oeil*, a blend of acute observation w/ swift-sure intuition; the ability to create surprise and throw the opponent off balance; the speed of thought and action that allows the opponent no chance of recovery; the combination of strategic and tactical sense; the power to win the devotion of the troops, and get the utmost out of them.“ (*Intro to Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 15)

Note: During the Great War and Weimar period, his experience of *Jaeger*, *signal* and *transport* duties, service w/ the *Freikorps* and training in *Kazan*, USSR, had all prepared him to become one of the world's foremost theorists and practitioners of armored warfare. (Kirchubel, *Barbarossa* 1941, 17)

Russell Hart: „Guderian has been lionized by many as the *legendary father of the German armored force* and *brilliant practitioner of Blitzkrieg* maneuver warfare. **Guderian created this legend** w/ his own highly influential, yet self-serving and distorted memoir...The result has been an *undeserving hagiography of Guderian*. While undoubtedly a *great military figure*, G. was a man of **appreciable ego and ambition** – a *volatile, impetuous, and difficult personality* determined to achieve his vision of a war-winning armored force, irrespective of the consequences.” (R. Hart, *Guderian*, 3)

Guido Knopp: „Guderian war sicherlich kein Politiker u. kein Ideologe“, erklart Soenke Neitzel. „Er war ein – diplomatisch formuliert – rechtskonservativer Geist, der schon **1919** in einem Freikorps im Baltikum gekaempft hatte, der mit *ganzer Seele antibolschewistisch eingestellt* war. Er war ein Militaer, ein ‚Professional. . .‘ In Frankreich waren es dann erneut seine Panzer, die schon innerhalb der ersten **48** Stunden des Feldzugs rund **100** km weit in gegnerisches Gebiet vordrangen u. danach *entgegen dem ausdruecklichen Befehl Hitlers ohne Flankenschutz tief ins franzoesische Hinderland stiessen*. . . Schon relativ frueh wurde Guderian in die Vorbereitungen des Russlandfeldzuges einbezogen. Moralische Bedenken scheint er keine gehabt zu haben – eher waren seine Einwaende gegen den Angriff fachlicher Natur, wie Wilhelm Ritter von Thoma, einer der Generaale in Trent Park, seinen Mitgefangenen berichtete: „Ich weiss noch, wie Guderian zum ersten Mal von der Russland-Geschichte hoerte – ich war zufaellig da. Er sagte, ‘Was, jetzt noch so ein grosser Irrsinn? Wenn man das nur nicht macht, denn das ist ein derartiger Koloss, da kann man gar nicht durchkommen.‘“ . . . Obwohl er die gewaltige Groesseordnung der sowj. Ruestung kannte, scheint Guderian schliesslich geglaubt zu haben, dass der Blitzkriegplan tatsaechlich funktionieren koennte. „Drei Tage bevor es losging, war Guderian bei uns,“ berichtete der in Trent Park gefangene General Friedrich Freiherr v. Broich, **1941** Kommandeur eines Reiterregiments. „Aber da hat es Guderian inzwischen selbst geglaubt. Er sagte, am Anfang habe er kolossal dagegengeredet, nun war es aber befohlen worden. Und da hat er sich in eine Begeisterung hineingeredet, dass er es nachher selber geglaubt hat – obwohl er vorher

genau der gegenteiligen Ansicht gewesen war.“ (Quoted in: *Die Wehrmacht. Eine Bilanz*, 91-94)⁵⁷

R. Hart's assessment: Undoubtedly a *maverick*; an *outsider* who repeatedly flaunted rules or reinvented them [*iconoclast?*]. Man of *progressive ideas* and an *able administrator* capable of turning dreams into reality. He was also an *arrogant, ambitious egotist*. He suffered from *strategic myopia*. Stubbornly believed he was *always right*; was a *political neophyte*. His memoirs allowed him to *carve out for himself an exaggerated role as the father of the German armored force*. Subsequent biographers have all too often *uncritically embraced G.'s self-image*, so that **Kennth Macksey** could conclude about him that „no other general in WWII managed to impress so wide and intrinsic a change upon the military art in so short a time.“ This biography contends that such *eulogistic assertions inflate G.'s true accomplishments*. Macksey claims that Guderian had *strategic insight*, but in reality he was as woefully blinded to strategic realities as Hitler and rest of senior German cdrs. G. certainly had *several great operational accomplishments*—his strike deep into the Polish rear in **Sep 39**; his *dash to the channel* in **May 40**; his advance to *Smolensk* and to *Kiev* in **summer 41**, etc. But most of his great successes were accomplished in positions of substantial strategic, operational, and tactical advantage.⁵⁸ He was a *good tactician and technician*; he helped to *devise the communications and logistics infrastructures that made blitzkrieg warfare possible*. He was a **charismatic, dynamic leader of men**. He was a **bold, daring cdr** who saw the strategic future for armored forces but who remained *obsessed both w/ armor* (at the expense of truly combined-arms mech. forces) and w/ the *inherent superiority of maneuver*. Yet he **led too much from the front**, which hampered the smooth functioning of his HQ. He was **impetuous**, liable to *react and act instinctively*, sometimes w/o thinking. He was **overly optimistic** and *too determined to have his way*. He was w/o doubt a *strong personality who drove himself very hard*. He was a *great organizer, an intellect, a theorist and a technician*. But, in the final accounting, **his deficiencies outweighed his strengths** and he contributed directly to Germany's defeat. He **bore considerable responsibility for the final abortive push on Moscow in Dec 41**; he proved *unable to master that winter's defensive crisis*. But his **greatest weakness was his limited strategic understanding**, which was probably worse than Hitler's: he remained *fixated on the eastern front and gave scant due to the strategic requirements of other theaters*. He was an army man (and exclusively an *armor man* at that) who *disdained interarms and interservice cooperation*, w/ disastrous consequences. His ego and unswerving advancement of his beloved panzer force **engendered enormous personal animus and accentuated institutional rivalries and conflicts**. He was *politically naive*, and actually little more successful than other German generals in influencing Hitler. A *genuine empathy existed between G. and Hitler* and for far too long G. had believed that **Hitler was Germany's savior**. Only after **1942**, did G. begin to *recognize Hitler's failings*; and he lacked the courage to commit himself fully to the removal of the *Fuehrer*. G.'s **biggest failing was his arrogance, which hampered the German war machine at every stage**. (Hart, *Guderian*, 114-18)⁵⁹

⁵⁷ **Note:** “1941, als ich zu Hause auf Urlaub war, war mein Vater sehr wenig zugaenglich. Als ich meine Mutter fragte, was denn los sei, antwortete sie mir, dass er erfahren habe, dass es gegen Russland gehen solle, was ihn gaenzlich verstoert hat. Er hatte vorher Napoleons Feldzug in Nordafrika studiert u. war voellig darauf eingestellt, dass es im Mittelmeer weiterginge.“ (Heinz Guenther Guderian, *Sohn von General Guderian*, quoted in: G. Knopp, *Die Wehrmacht. Eine Bilanz*, 94)

⁵⁸ Could not the same best said of *Montgomery, Bradley, Patton*, etc?

⁵⁹ **Note:** R. Hart provides a brief *bibliographical essay* at end of his book. Asserts that *Macksey's* biography is too flattering of G.; that *Dermot Bradley's* work is “most solid German study.” Also notes that *Gerhard Weinberg (1995)* and *Norman Goda (1997)*, among others, have proven that G. took *massive bribes from Hitler* that he “forgot” to mention in his autobiography.

Weakness in strategic outlook: 1940/41: G. hoped to see Hitler commit up to *six panzer divisions* to overrun the British position in Egypt. Here again, he showed his **ignorance of the larger strategic picture**, as he gave no thought to the immense logistical difficulties of supplying a mechanized army operating deep in North Africa. Guderian asked **von Epp** to intercede on his behalf and *present his plan for invading Africa to Hitler*, which he duly did. Hitler demurred. Nowhere did G. more clearly reveal his **strategic myopia** than in his *stubborn belief that the capture of Moscow would collapse communist rule* and end the war in the east. It was not until **1945** that he began to recognize that only through psychological warfare and *collaboration w/ anticommunist and anti-Russian forces within the USSR* might Germany have stood even a remote chance of defeating a country of the size and resources of the USSR. (Hart, *Guderian*, 66, 69, 76-77)

HALDER, Gen.Obst. Franz:

Halder's adjutant, *Capt Conrad Kuehlein*: "He [Halder] was a *tireless worker* who put his health at stake, in that he was active until the early hours of the morning for months at a time. I repeatedly saw him leave his desk at 7:00 in the morning when I arrived in the barracks for the early situation briefing. Then at 9:00 he would reappear for duty." More typically, Halder arrived at work at about 8:00 a.m., worked until well past midnight, and then read for some time before retiring. In this sense he tried to personify *Moltke the Elder's dictum "Genius is diligence,"* and he expected no less from those who worked under him. (*Inside Hitler's High Command*, G.P. Megargee, 152-3)

„There is no evidence that the generals in the Army's High Command objected to Hitler's decision to turn on the Soviet Union, whose loyal fulfillment of the pact w/ Germany made possible their victories in Poland and the West. Later, *Halder* would write derisively of 'Hitler's Russian adventure' and claim the Army leaders were against it from the beginning. But there is *not a word in his voluminous diary entries for Dec 40 which supports him on this*. Indeed, he gives the impression of being full of *genuine enthusiasm* for the 'adventure,' which he himself, as Chief of the General Staff, had the *main responsibility* for planning.“ (Shirer, *Rise and Fall*, 812; also, Halder, *Hitler as Feldheer*, 22)

31.7.41: [*Heusinger* an seine Frau]: Dabei gehe es mit *Brauchitsch* noch besser als mit *Halder*, „der sehr kaput ist,⁶⁰ mir einerseits alles ueberlaesst, andererseits aber doch immer wieder mit eigenen Gedanken dazwischen kommt.“ (Meyer, *Heusinger*, 154)

HEUSINGER, General Adolf:

(4.8.1897 – 30.11.1982)

Born on **4 Aug 1896**. After receiving his commission, he was wounded at the Battle of Verdun. In **1917** the English Army captured him in Flanders. Heusinger was a cool, analytical thinker, fluent in Russian, a man of few words, and so diligent that his fellow officers called him „Little Ludendorff.“ He began his General Staff training in **1927**, doing so well that he passed on to the Operations Branch. After short stints w/ field units, he returned to the Ops Br in **1937**, becoming

⁶⁰ **Note:** Heusinger's letters to his wife corroborate fact that Halder was an *absolutely tireless worker*, who in fact worked himself to the bone, endangering his health.

its chief in **Oct 40**. On **20 Jul 44**, he was wounded while standing near Hitler during the assassination attempt, but three [3] days later was arrested by the Gestapo and saw no further service in the war. (S.J. Lewis, *Forgotten Legions*, 156, f.n. 32; Keilig, *Das Deutsche Heer*, 133)

Highlights:

- a. Chef des Operationsabteilung im Generalstab des Heeres (**1940-44**)
- b. Erste Generalinspekteur der Bundeswehr (**1957-61**)
- c. *Gefangenschaft*: **1917-19** in englischer Kriegsgefangenschaft; nach dem **20.7.44** Wochen der *Gestapo-Haft* in der *Prinz Albrecht-Strasse* u. in der *Polizeischule Fuerstenberg*; **1945-48** Kriegsgefangenschaft u. Internierung in amerikanischem Gewahrsam; dabei insgesamt 11 Monate im *Zeugensfluegel* des Nuernberg Gerichtstsefaengnis. (Meyer, *Heusinger*, 2)

Barbarossa:

According to his biographer, H. had not supported Operation *Barbarossa* ("vor dem Ostfeldzug immer den Feldzug verworfen hatte") (Meyer, *Heusinger*, 149)

Work schedule: Endlich spricht er auch einmal von seinem Tageslauf, „ein Tag wie der andere.“ Er stehe um **7 Uhr** auf, nehme ab **8 Uhr** die Lagevortraege der Abteilung entgegen u. trage dann von **9-11 Uhr** Halder u. Brauchitsch vor, anschliessend bis **13.30 Uhr** „Arbeit u. viel telefonieren.“ Nach dem Essen ruhe er bis etwa **16 Uhr**, von da an Arbeit bis **21 Uhr**, Telefonate, Vortraege der Abteilung, Besprechungen, danach bis etwa **23.15 Uhr** abermals Lagevortrag bei Brauchitsch u. Halder, dann kurzes Abendessen u. noch einmal *Arbeit bis eine Stunde nach Mitternacht*. Jede dritte Nacht *Schlaf auf dem Buero*, was dann von **5 Uhr** bis **6 Uhr** morgens die Entgegennahme der Tagesmeldungen bedeute unter Verzicht auf eine Stunde Schlaf. Er bemuehe sich, „*eisern sieben bis acht Stunden Schlaf*“ einzuhalten, „**Halder** macht es mit *vier Stunden* u. sich dabei **kaput**,“ beschreibt er dessen Ueberbeanspruchung. (Meyer, *Heusinger*, **2.8.41**, 155)

General a.D. de Maiziere: “Sein scharfer analytischer Verstand, die nuechterne Praezision seines Denkens, das frei von jedem Pathos u. Wunschdenken war, seine Integritaet, seine persoenliche Bescheidenheit u. natuerliche Wuerde gaben seinem Auftreten Glaubwuerdigkeit u. Ueberzeugungskraft. Er konnte aufmerksam u. geduldig zuhoeren, Ratschlaege anhoeren u. pruefen. Immer war er beherrscht, niemals habe ich ihn laut order erregt erlebt; ja, er verabscheute es, mit der Faust auf den Tisch zu schlagen, was dynamische u. robustere Truppenfuehrer gelegentlich bei ihm vermisst haben moegen.“ (Meyer, *Heusinger*, xiv)

HOEPNER, General Erich:

It was his forces which eventually got *closest to Moscow*. He too had a great reputation as an „energetic leader.“ (Blumentritt, *Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 44)

Born **14 Sep 1886**. He commanded the **1. Light Div.** from **1935** to **Nov 38**; the **16. AK** from **Nov 38** through the French campaign; after which he assumed command of **4. PzGr**. A tough, imaginative leader, Hoepner was one of the best German tank cdrs. Throughout his career, he

was known for his independence, a trait which ultimately led to his fall. (S.J. Lewis, *Forgotten Legions*, 153, f.n. 24; Keilig, *Das Deutsche Heer*, 139)

Before *Barbarossa* Gen Hoepner issued directive concerning *method of warfare* in the coming battle in the east: „This war must have the smashing of modern Russia as its goal and must therefore be *executed w/ a brutality hitherto unknown*. Each battle must be planned and executed w/ the *iron will to annihilate the enemy* completely and mercilessly.“ (H.J. Schroeder, *German Soldiers' Experiences*, 322)

Jan 42: Hoepner, who prematurely withdrew his *panzergruppe* to the winter line on **8.1.42**, was dismissed from the army in disgrace. (He along w/ *General v. Sponeck*, who had abandoned *Kerch*, were executed **3** years later in another context.) Outraged at the loss of his “well-earned pension rights,” Hoepner instigated a *lawsuit* against the Reich in the *Leipzig* courts and won. Hitler, engraed by the blindness of the legal profession to the disciplines of war, declared himself *above the law* and summoned the Reichstag on **26.4.42** to endorse a decree to that effect. (Irving, *Hitler's War*, 366)

Jan 42: After relieving Hoepner from his command, Hitler also ordered that he be expelled from the army w/ loss of pay, pension, and rights to wear the uniform and decorations. The military courts, however, upheld Hoepner's contention that he could not be deprived of those rights and benefits w/o a court-martial; and he continued on inactive status w/ rank and full pay until he was arrested and then tried and executed as a member of the **20 Jul 44** pot against Hitler. (Ziemke & Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 128, f.n. 19)

HOTH, Col.-Gen. Hermann:

One of the *Wehrmacht's* “most underrated generals.“ (Kirchubel, *Barbarossa* 1941, 16)

He was a „calm, precise man.“ (Blumentritt, *Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 44)

During Russian campaign in **1941**, his tanks and other vehicles have white temporary markings for his **3 Pz Gr**: a stylized “Hh” for Hoth. (Kirchubel, *Barbarossa* 1941, 52)

JODL, GenObst. Alfred:

As head of the *Wehrmacht Operations staff* (*Wehrmacht Fuehrungsstab*), he was Hitler's *closest military advisor*.

A. Seaton: “Behind Hitler, in the shadows, stood Jodl, probably closer to the Fuehrer than any other military officer except Schmundt, Hitler's military aide. A lean and saturnine general of the artillery, Jodl briefed the Fuehrer daily on all theaters of war and discussed at length plans and orders, so that he may unconsciously have served as Hitler's military tutor. Jodl was intelligent and able, ambitious and reserved and, although entirely under the spell of the Fuehrer, whom he regarded as a military genius, he was not afraid in these early days to speak his mind, his Bavarian speech on occasions being blunt almost to the point of rudeness.” (*The Battle for Moscow*, 33)

13.5.45: ...erklarte etwa GenO. **Jodl:** „Seit Fruehjahr 42 wusste ich, dass wir den Krieg nicht gewinnen konnten.“ (Jagdfliegerverbaende 6/1, Prien, 20)

KESSELRING, GFM Albert v.:

At the end of **1941** Hitler had transferred the bulk of Kesselring's **Air Fleet 2** to Sicily and North Africa for a proposed attack on Malta. Kesselring was the right cdr for the Mediterranean. He was a likeable man, a warm-hearted and cheerful optimist w/ an open manner, and for this reason found all doors open to him – an inestimable benefit in the onerous liaison he had to maintain w/ the Italians. . . Hitler had great confidence in Kesselring, which was not misplaced. (v. Below, *At Hitler's Side*, 124)

Re: „Barbarossa:“ „Leicht wuerde der Kampf nicht werden, eine Krise konnte die andere abloesen...Aber war das Ziel, das Fernhalten des Kommunismus von West-Europa, nicht so gross, dass **das Letzte u. Aeusserte** gewagt werden musste?“ (Kesselring, *Soldat*, 114-15)⁶¹

KEITEL, GFM Wilhelm:

“Keitel was not gifted w/ either a quick brain or clarity of vision. Burly and corpulent, monocled and handsome, the **58**-year-old field-marshal had a very imposing presence, and he struck such arrogant attitudes that Hitler found it convenient to take him round Europe w/ his retinue as a show piece, so that Keitel might impress foreign dignitaries and statesmen w/ his haughty bearing; when Keitel was admitted to a conference he could be counted upon to echo his master, for he idolized the dictator. Behind this majestic exterior there was nothing except physical bravery. For Keitel had neither character, intelligence, moral courage, nor professional ability, and he owed his rapid advancement to the fact that he was useful to Hitler. . .” (A. Seaton, *The Battle for Moscow*, 15)

KLUGE, GFM Hans v.:

Halder's opinion of: The Chief of General Staff did not rate v. Kluge's operational talents very highly. . . The Cdr of Army Group Ctr, Halder thought, was too much influenced by the day-to-day events and the hourly crises, voicing opinions based merely on his most recent impressions. (Quoted in, A. Seaton, *The Battle for Moscow*, 268; see also, Halder, *Diary*, early Feb 42)

„[He] was an impulsive, energetic leader of a traditional type. His talents were those of a tactician rather than a strategist. He *did not smoke* and *only rarely touched alcohol*. No matter how grave the situation, he *always went to bed early and rose early*. Like Rommel, he was happiest when he was w/ the troops in the very front line. Occasionally he would himself take control of ops at the front, which did not facilitate the work of his staff, though it must be said that he always saw to it that his chief of staff [i.e., *Blumentritt*] was kept informed about any orders he might have given on the spot. The Field-Marshal was passionately fond of aeroplanes and was very proud of his ‚wings‘ which he had won during the First World War. In a joking sort of a way he frequently compared himself w/ Napoleon's *Marshal Ney*. Like Ney, he was *quite fearless*, indeed oblivious

⁶¹ From his memoirs, *Kesselring* appears to have fully supported Hitler's attack on Russia—to have accepted the *Fuehrer's* logic for doing so.

to danger, and he never hesitated to fly or drive through the enemy's fire. When visiting the front he always took a tent, stove, food and water as well as an armored command vehicle, wireless transmitter truck and one or more motor-cycle despatch riders. He was thus *independent* of his HQ and could doss down wherever he might happen to find himself at nightfall. He was *frequently wounded* and was involved in *numerous car and plane crashes*. As a man he was *inexhaustible*, and his mood was always one of extreme determination. (Blumentritt, *Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 43)

Examining our dispositions [just prior to start of campaign], Kluge remarked: „We look *very thin on the ground* and, as you see, there are no powerful reserves such as we had in the Western campaign. The farther east we go, the wider the front must become and the thinner our line will be. Therefore it is essential that our troops remain *well concentrated*, even at the risk of gaps appearing between ourselves and the flanking armies.“ (Blumentritt, *Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 46)

Note: From reading of GFM v. Bock's war diary (edited by *Gerbet*), clear that there was lots of *tension* between Kluge and his army group cdr. For example, see v. Bock diary entries for: **30.3.41** and **22.7.41**.

According to *Blumentritt (Stabschef 4. AOK)*, “von Bock was a very difficult man to serve, and von Kluge would have been glad to get out of his sphere.” Blumentritt told Liddell Hart that Kluge was strongly in favor of Hitler's decision in **Aug 41** to turn south to encircle Soviet forces in the Ukraine: “It was his [Kluge's] idea, and desire, that his own **4 Army** should swing south to carry out this pincer-movement along w/ Guderian's panzer forces. When setting forth the arguments for this plan, he said to me, w/ emphasis: ‘It would also mean that *we* should be under GFM v. Rundstedt instead of GFM v. Bock.’” (Quoted in: B.H.L. Hart, *German Generals Talk*, 151)

Note: For *Marcel Stein's* assessment of GFM v. Kluge, see his *GFM Model*, 62-64. For example, he writes: „Die Beurteilungen des Heerfuehrers Kluge in der kriegsgeschichtlichen Literatur sind unterschiedlich, der Mensch Kluge wird ueberwiegend negativ beurteilt. . . Ueber den Menschen Kluge faellt es schwer, ein positives Bild zu zeichnen. Kluge war anscheinend der Prototyp des Kadetten, ueberheblich u. arrogant. He also notes, „Guderian bezeichnet den Heerfuehrer Kluge als fleissigen Soldaten, guten Kleintaktiker, der aber von der Verwendung von Panzerverbaenden in beweglicher Fuehrung nichts verstand. „Er war ein Meister im Zerreißen der Verbaende.““ (See also, Guderian, *Erinnerungen*, 330)

Boeselager observations:⁶²

Positive:

--mit “Leib u. Seele” Soldat

⁶² Sources: Private Paper prepared by Philipp Freiherr v. Boeselager; P. Freiherr v. Boeselager, *Der Widerstand in der Heeresgruppe Mitte*, Beitrage zum Widerstand 1933-1945, Heft 40, 1990; E-Mail, Christoph Nehring, *Kommentar zu “Boeselager Notizen”*; 1 Apr 07. (**Note:** Boeselager was Kluge's O.O. from 1 Apr 42 – 1 Apr 43. During this time he was constantly with the *Feldmarschall*. Always ate meals together. Boeselager and mates in *Ordonnanzoffizierszimmer* possessed a *Lautsprecher* that enabled them to listen in on v. Kluge's telephone calls, including many with Hitler.)

War ein in den preussischen Wertvorstellungen verwurzelter General (der dem diabolischen Hitler nicht gewachsen war) (B)⁶³
 --war wahrscheinlich nicht ein solcher Strategie wie Manstein, aber er hatte einen klaren strategischen Blick (B)
 --hervorragender Heerfuehrer ueberall geachtet
 clearly cared for well-being of his soldiers
 Kluge's son served as 2. *Generalstabsoffizier* in XXXIX Pz.Kp.
 --teilweise wegen seines Wissens u. seines ploetzlichen Erscheinens an der Front, gefuerchtet
 --hochintelligent u. tapfer
 --well educated (enorme Allgemeinbildung)
 Passionierter Land- u. Forstwirt
 Kannte sich am Sternenhimmel u. in der Geschichte aus
 An tech. Neuerungen aller Art aeussert interessiert
 --bei Meldungen verlangte er "eine voellige objektive Darstellung der Lage
 --Kluge war Christ u. ein Konservativer alter Schule
 Er fuehlte sich dem christlichen Sittengesetz verpflichtet

Negative:

--im Grunde seines Herzen sicherlich ein *kleinbuengerlicher Spiesser* (Nehring)⁶⁴
 --als Vorgesetzter war er mehr als schwierig; *extreme egoistisch*
 --ein sehr grosser Bewunderer Hitlers (aber stimmt kein Nazi!); er bewunderte H. u. lehnte ihn gleichzeitig ab (B).
 --his nickname "der Kluge Hans," mit negativen Aspekten verbunden (see Nehring)
 --war ueber sich selbst *sehr unsicher* und daher *extreme anfaellig gegen Kritik*
 --auch anfaellig fuer Erfolge Dritter Untergebener oder auch Gleichgestellter, die er stets versuchte zu torpedieren oder "kleinzureden;" er misgoennte den Anderen den Erfolg.
 --in general, als Mensch "kleinkariert" u. mit charakterlich schweren Fehlern; schwieriger Vorgesetzter.

KUEBLER, General der Gebirgstruppe Ludwig:

Kdr **49 Gebirgs-AK** at start of Russian campaign.

Dec 41: General *Kuebler* wurde von Hitler zum OB der **4. Armee** vor Moskau ernannt. Es war eindeutig eine Belohnung fuer die Leistungen des **XXXXIX Korps**. Es hatte vorbildlich u. mit vollem Erfolg gekaempft. . . Sein Korps war mehr als **1.700** km unter den schwierigsten Bedingungen marschiert u. hatte beträchtliche Verluste zu beklagen. (Burdick, *Hubert Lanz*, 138-39)

LEMELSEN, General der Pz. Tr. Joachim:

Am **1.4.37** zum *Generalmajor* befoerdert, wurde er am **1.3.38** Kdr der **29. ID**. Am **1.4.39** zum *Generalleutnant* befoedert, fuehrte er seine Division 1939 in Polen u. 1940 in Frankreich. Ende Mai 1940 wurde er Kdr der **5. PD**, die er waehrend der zweiten Phase des Westfeldzuges in Frankreich fuehte. Am **1.8.40** wurde er zum *General der Artillerie* befoerdert (ab Juni 1941

⁶³ B = *Boeselager*.

⁶⁴ Note: Nehring's views are his own and, in part, those of his father, "der v. Kluge ablehnte."

General der Pz.Tr.) u. am **25.10.40** Komm.Gen. des **47. AK.**, welches er ab Juni 1941 in Russland fuhrte. (www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de)

Veteran **Otto Will (5 PD)**: “Von General Lemelsen wurde zu dieser Zeit [beginning of *Russlandfeldzug*] noch oft gesprochen. Ich kann mich erinnern, dass *er bei den Soldaten sehr angesehen u. sehr beliebt war.*“ (Brief, 1 Sep 07)

NEHRING, Walter K.:

G. Schulze: “Hinzu setzten darf ich, General Nehring nicht ein einziges Mal nervoes oder unbeherrscht gesehen zu haben. Die eigene Disziplin, ueber der Sache zu stehen, besonders in kritischen Momenten, war bewunderungswert.“ (*Gen. W.K. Nehring, „Der pers. OO. berichtet,“* 3)

He was *one of the great progenitors of anti-tank doctrine*, proposing a very sophisticated approach to the problem involving a wide array of wpns—among them, AT guns, tanks, artillery, aircraft and heavy wpns. (Dinardo, *Panzer Arm*, 93)

“Als er **1936** eine Studie ueber die Rote Armee niederschrieb, hatte ihn deren Staerke beeindruckt, aber auch die Kapazitaet einer Panzerproduktion im Kriegsfall. Wenn er jetzt daran dachte, dass er seine *neue, unfertige Pz.Div.* in dieses weite Land fuehren sollte, dann ueberkam ihn *eine grenzlose Ohnmacht* gegenueber der Fuehrung seines eigenen Landes, das in diesen *Alexanderzug* verwickelt werden koennte.“ (W. Paul, *Pz.Gen. Nehring*, 113)

Spring 41: Bis *Minsk*, der Hauptstadt Weissrusslands, waren es **350 km**, bis *Smolensk* **700** u. bis *Moskau* **1100** km, wenn man von den Umwegen absah. Das waren die naechsten Aussichten fuer Nehring [Cdr, **18. PD**] u. seine Division. Aber Nehring wusste auch, dass *die Angriffsziele der drei Heeresgruppen auseinander fuehrten*, was operativen Grundsuetzen widersprach, mit denen Nehring bisher gelebt hatte als Generalstabsoffizier. War sich Hitler seiner Sache so sicher, fragte er sich, dass er glaubte, diesen operativen Nachteil im Sinn einer schnellen Durchfuehrung des Feldzuges in Kauf nehmen zu duerfen? (W.Paul, *Pz.-Gen. Nehring*, 116)

Anfang Mai [1941] erfuhr Nehring, dass es in der Sowjetunion *einen neuen schweren Panzer, den T-34 gaebe*. Er fuhr sofort nach Berlin, sprach in der *Organisationsabteilung des Kriegsministeriums* mit dem *Oberst i.G. Buhle* u. hielt ihm vor, seine Division habe gegen den neuen Panzer nur 3,7 cm PAK. Der Oberst versprach Nehring, zur Abwehr des T 34 eine groesere Zahl der *neuen 5 cm PAK* zuzufuehren. (W. Paul, *Pz.Gen. Nehring*, 114)

Nehring's *Fuehrungstil*: From very start of „*Barbarossa*,“ he led from the *tip of the spear*—up front w/ his lead tanks from first day of campaign. For several days, until his *Generalstaffel* could catch up, he was up front alone w/ his tanks (i.e., w/o his *Generalstaffel*). In opening weeks of campaign, often in close contact w/ enemy. One one occasion, his *Befehlspanzer* rammmed by a Soviet tank! He led his **18 PD** by issuing “*kurze, praegnante Funkbefehle.*” His *O.A.*, **Guenther Schulze**, remembers that Nehring was “*sparsam mit Worten*” during the opening *Panzerraid* across the Bug. For his actions at *Borissow*—which he captured in a *coup de main* (ca. **30.6.41**)—he is awarded *Ritterkreuz*; which he receives personally from Guderian on **27.7.41**. (See, W. Paul, *Pz.-Gen. Nehring*, 118-20)

REINHARDT, Hans Georg (Gen. d. Pz.Trp.):

Er fuehrte das **41 PzK** immer von vorn, meist aus seinem Funk-SPW. (*R. Stoves, I. Pz.-Div.*, 138)

M. Stein: „*Reinhardt muss mit Sicherheit den herausragenden Herrfuehrern der Wehrmacht zugerechnet werden.* Er wurde nicht Feldmarschall, aber seine Leistungen uebertrafen die einer groesseren Anzahl der Feldmarschaelle.“ (*GFM Model*, 58, f.n. 218)

In Deutschland ist der Generaloberst Reinhardt, der zu den herausragenden Befehlshabern der Wehrmacht gehoerte, fast in Vergessenheit geraten. (Stein, *GFM Model*, 307)

RICHTHOFEN, Wolfram Freiherr v.:

He was the cousin of WWI fighter ace *Manfred v. Richthofen*, the Red Baron. He was as the *Luftwaffe's most outstanding proponent of army support aviation*. Came to the fore during the conflict in Spain (1936-39). His early career gave little indication of his future role as a *tactical innovator*. On subject of direct battlefield air support, Richthofen was heard to remark that the concept of acft „*diving below 6600 feet is complete nonsense.*“ During his tenure w/ the *Luftwaffe's* technical office in mid-1930s, he even attempted to discontinue development of the *Fieseler Fi 156 Storch* spotting and liaison plane, a type he would later use extensively during his service in Russia. Yet he did not allow his preconceptions to override operational reality. In a short time, he *developed the tiny Condor Legion into a formidable weapon* able to execute a wide variety of tasks, including close air support. (Muller, *German Air War*, 19; also, Deichmann, *German Air Force Operations in Support of the Army*, 35)

Since **Jun 39**, he commanded a special detachment called the *Fliegerkorps zur besonderen Verwendung* (special duties air corps), later designated *Fliegerkorps VIII*, the *Luftwaffe's premier close support force*. His experiences in Spain had convinced him of the value of close air support. Richthofen, among other achievements, *pioneered use of radio-equipped armored car detachments* which, while accompanying army units, could send back to air corps HQ the most recent information regarding progress of the ground battle. (Muller, *German Air War*, 21-2)

The *heavy losses habitually suffered by units under his command* was a source of some concern at *Luftwaffe* HQ. General *Karl Koller* regarded Richthofen as „*heartless*“ and felt he paid no heed to high casualties since, „*owing to his privileged position*“ w/ Goering and Jeschonnek, he could always count on an adequate flow of replacements. (Muller, *German Air War*, 57)

David Irving: “The *Luftwaffe*, and particularly *Richthofen*, kept Hitler zealously briefed on the army generals' shortcomings.” (Ref. here is to “winter crisis” 1941/42; see, *Hitler's War*, 366)

A World War One *cavalry officer*, he was a civilian engineer during the Weimar years and transferred to the new *Luftwaffe* in **1933**, w/in two years serving as the *Condor Legion's* chief of staff. Judging that strategic bombing would not win the war for Franco, he perfected [?] *close air support* instead. He would become a field marshal in **Feb 43**. He was diagnosed w/ a *brain tumor* in **Oct 44**, and died in captivity nine (**9**) months later. (Kirchubel, *Barbarossa* 1941, 18)

SCHWEPPENBURG, Leo Freiherr Geyr v.:

He was a conservative who had already nearly come to blows over tactics w/ Guderian in Poland. According to Newton, v. Schweppenburg (like Hitler and v. Kluge, for ex.) was much more conservative (cautious) in his approach toward use of German armor compared to tank generals like Guderian, Hoth, Model, etc. (*Newton, Hitler's Commander*, 114)

Sep 41: General der. Pz.Truppe, *Leo Freiherr Geyr v. Schweppenburg*, schrieb Ende September 1941 in einer *Denkschrift*, dass „die Einnahme von Moskau auf Grund immer wiederholter Lehren russ. Geschichte **nichts Entscheidendes bedeutete**.“ Es hiess darin woertlich: „Moskau duerfe nicht zu einem **zweiten Verdun** werden.“ (Nehring, *Panzerwaffe*, 245)

1933-39: Geyr war Militaerattache in Grossbritannien, Belgien u. Holland waehrend der Jahre **1933-37**. Also er besass betraechtliche Auslandserfahrung. In Polen [**Sep 39**] war Geyr Kdr der **3 PD** gewesen. (Stein, *GFM Model*, 55)

STRAUSS, Col.-Gen. Adolf:

Commanded **9 Army**. He was a „quiet, prudent and experienced cdr.“ (Blumentritt, *Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 44)

According to *S.H. Newton*, Strauss was „one of the more conservative senior generals in the army.“ (*Hitler's Commander*, 155)

He had commanded **9 Army** under v. Bock since the western campaign in **1940**. He trained his army to be the *first wave* of the stillborn Operation *Sealion* against Britain, until transferred east for *Barbarossa*. He led **9 Army** “with ability“ until **12.1.42**, when he asked to be relieved “for health reasons.“ Thereafter he sat out the rest of the war. (Kirchubel, *Barbarossa* 1941, 16)

Goerlitz beschreibt Strauss als einen sehr vorsichtigen Befehlshaber, der das Risiko scheute u. es gewohnt war, von seinem Schreibtisch aus zu fuehren. Er sei ein alter, sehr gemuetlicher u. schlicht in altmodischen Kategorien denkender Herr gewesen.“ (*Goerlitz*, 109). *Reichhelm*⁶⁵ widerspricht diesen Beurteilungen: „Strauss war nicht risikofreudig, aber er war ein sehr mobiler u. tapferer Mann, der fast nur bei der Truppe war.“ Im **Okt 41** wurde ihm von v.Bock vorgeworfen, dass sein Vormarschtempo bei Wjasma ungenuegend war. Die Meinungsverschiedenheiten zwischen Bock u. Strauss sind deutlich in den laufenden Eintragungen im KTB der H.Gr.Mitte, **Okt 41**, erkennbar. . . [Aber] auch Reichhelm betont. . .dass Strauss der Ueberblick fehlte. (Stein, *GFM Model*, 67)

1.3.2.2: German Intelligence Failures:

-- Intelligence failures!: If Hitler nervous, he had good reason to be. Address German intelligence failures:

⁶⁵ **Note:** Guenther Reichhelm was staff officer w/ **9 Army** (See, *Stein*, 128)

Note: German *intelligence failures* before and during the Russian campaign were *catastrophic*. For insights into this issue see, *Robert W. Stephan, Stalin's Secret War. Soviet Counter-intelligence against the Nazis, 1941-1945.*

Note: Wie *wenig konkret* insgesamt die Unterlagen waren, auf die sich die dt. militaerische Planung stuetzen konnte, zeigte in besonders krasser Weise das „*Handbuch*“ ueber die „Kriegswehrmacht der UdSSR,“ das die Abteilung FHO am **1 Jan 41** herausgab; hier wurde zugegeben, dass man ueber die sowj. Kriegsgliederung faktisch *nichts* wusste. (Andreas Hillgruber, „*Das Russland-Bild der fuehrenden deutschen Militaers vor Beginn des Angriffs auf die Sowjetunion,*“ in: *Die Zerstoerung Europas. Beitrage zur Weltkriegsepoche 1941 bis 1945.*“ 264-65.)

-- For German intelligence picture –*Fremde Heere Ost* – see, **I:108**, ff.) German intelligence overestimated number of Red Army divisions concentrated in the forward area and was *totally ignorant of Soviet mobilization capabilities*, specifically, the quantity of *reserve armies* the Soviet Union could raise and deploy forward into new defensive positions east of the *Western Dvina – Dnepr Rivers*. *D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed*, Vol. I, 20)

Fremde Heere Ost (FHO) was department of OKH responsible for evaluation of all military intelligence about the Soviet Union, including the analysis of Soviet intentions and strategy. As of **1.5.41**, it was responsible for Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, China, Japan and for some Scandinavian countries. This agency headed by *Col Eberhard Kinzel*. Amazingly enough, he had *no special training in intelligence, did not speak Russian, and could boast no special familiarity w/ the country*. The fact that Germans would entrust such a man w/ a task of such importance speaks volumes. (*Megargee*, 107, 111) In Spring 1942, Kinzel was replaced by Richard *Gehlen*.

CRUX: The overall assessment of the Red Army by FHO between **Jul 40–Jun 41** must be described as *incomplete and inaccurate*. After Jun 41, FHO continued its poor performance via *repeated judgement in its intelligence estimates that the Red Army was near collapse* and incapable of taking the offensive. Thus, between **Jul-Dec 41**, FHO issued a number of inaccurate estimates, which *nourished the overconfidence of OKH and Hitler*, and resulted in errors of German strategy and operational conduct at decisive moments in the campaign. To conclude, the *poor performance of FHO in evaluating the capabilities and the strength of the Red Army in connection w/ the planning of Barbarossa is “beyond dispute.”* Nor can there be any doubt about the *unsatisfactory record of FHO between June 1941 and April 1942* in assessing Soviet operational intentions and fighting power. FHO became more efficient under *Gehlen*, but still failed on a number of decisive occasions either to apprehend Soviet intentions or to predict major Red Army offensives at army and front level. (*D. Thomas*, 275, 279, 288-9)

Owing to unsatisfactory performance of German military intelligence in general, and FHO in particular, during the first year of war against Russia, Halder replaced Kinzel w/ *Gehlen* and *elevated FHO from an essentially statistical organization to the de facto status of an operational department directly subordinated to the Chief of the General Staff and the Operationsabteilung of*

OKH. FHO under Gehlen was granted authority to formulate its own judgements regarding large-scale operational issues, including planned German offensives, anticipated Soviet attacks, and probably Soviet military capabilities and intentions. In spring of 1942, OKW agreed to place *Stab WALLI*, sections I (agent espionage) and III (counter-intel) under the operational direction of FHO. Thus, FHO *assumed responsibility for collecting and evaluating data, and for providing an independent estimate of enemy situation (Feindlagebeurteilung)*. Gehlen reorganized FHO in **May 42**, and the new organizational structure was retained w/ minor modifications until end of war. (D. Thomas, "Foreign Armies East and German Military Intelligence in Russia 1941-45," in: *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 22, 1987, 263)

Foreign Armies East produced a variety of reports on the Soviets. These included a *daily report entitled "Important Features of the Enemy Situation (Eastern Front)"*⁶⁶ that went to most of the staff sections in the OKH as well as to the subordinate commands. In addition, the branch produced a *daily report on the strength and disposition of Soviet forces*...One point of interest about these reports is that Foreign Armies East usually *did not try to forecast enemy intentions*; instead, it provided *raw information* on enemy movements, reinforcements, etc. (G.P. Megargee, *Inside Hitler's High Command*, 158-9)

Heusinger [bei einer Befragung im MGFA, Feb 66]: Weiterhin haette "die Arbeit der Abteilung Fremde Heere Ost [...] zu grossen Ent-taeuschungen gefuehrt." Der Abteilungschef, Oberst i.G. Kinzel, haette mit „einer gewissen Leichtfertigkeit“ „wenn er mal eine Nachricht hatte, ja, da schein ein hoeherer Stab zu sein,“ auf die Lagekarte „eine Division hereingesetzt.“ Dieses *Feindlagebild* sei dann auch mitbenutzt worden, „um zu dokumentieren, dass Russland im Begriff gewesen waere, nach Westen anzugreifen.“ Ueber die Dislozierung der russ. Streitkraefte, „dass sie ziemlich doch weiter in der Tiefe schon standen, sei man sich nicht klar gewesen. (Meyer, *Heusinger*, 850, f.n. 22)

These assessments were *seriously flawed*; vastly underestimated Soviet military potential, the skill and flexibility of its officer corps. For example, the army that Foreign Armies East estimated contained 2,000,000 men at start of Jan 41, actually contained **4,205,000** already, and that figure would grow to **5,005,000** by 22 Jun 41. The 10,000 tanks the Germans expected turned out to be **20-24,000**, and would include the **T-34**, about which the Germans knew nothing, even though information was available! (See, Megargee, *Inside Hitler's High Command*, 111-16.)

Jun 41: Prior to the invasion, German intelligence had a fairly accurate assessment of the total strength of the *active* Red Army, but they had almost no knowledge of the *new Soviet mechanized corps* and *antitank bdes*. German intelligence analysts apparently believed the Red Army was still at the **1939** stage, when large mech units had been abandoned in favor of an infantry support role. Prior to **22 Jun 41**, the Germans had identified only **3** of the **16** mech corps in the forward military districts. The massed appearance of these mech units in the field against **1 PzGr** at end of June was almost as great a surprise as the first encounters w/ **KV-1** and **T-34** tanks. (Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 66)

⁶⁶ *Wesentliche Merkmale der Feindlage (Ostfront)*.

1.3.3: German Force Buildup in East

--In summer 1940, while planning for *Barbarossa* was already underway, the *first movements of German forces to the east* began. Eighteenth Army redeployed to the east, followed in September by Army Group B and Fourth and Twelfth Armies, accompanied by 10 infantry and one panzer division. In addition, three panzer and two motorized infantry divisions returned to eastern Germany to retrain for combat in the east and prepare deployment areas and communications networks required for the coming flood of German forces. Masking the buildup was essential to German plans. The initial movements could be explained as a covering force. Thereafter the problem became more complex as the tempo of deployment picked up. But it was not until late May and June 1941 that the Germans *flooded the border areas in occupied Poland and East Prussia w/ nearly two divisions per day*. By then it was too late for Soviet intelligence to digest the extent of German deployments, at least before the invasion. (W. Murray, *A War to be Won*, 118)

--Seit **Feb 41** vollzog sich der Aufmarsch des Ostheeres in steigendem Masse. Eine Verlegung von Grossverbaenden aus dem Westen u. aus dem Reich war in vier Wellen gedacht u. geplant. Die 1. Welle [see text for details.] . . . u. die 4. Welle (**19** Infanterie- u. **28** motorisierte u. Panzerdivisionen vom **25 Mai 41** nach Ostpreussen, in das Generalgouvernement u. nach Rumaenien. (W. Haupt, *Die 8. Panzer-Division im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 134-35)

--Eisenbahnaufmarsch:

Der Eisenbahnaufmarsch begann im **Jan 41** u. lief in allmaehlicher Steigerung in fuenf Staffeln mit insgesamt 17.000 Zuegen ab. Um die Offensivabsicht so lange wie moeglich zu verschleiern, wurde er erst in den Monaten **Mai – Jun 41** im Hoehsttempo gefahren, die Schnellen Verbaende am Schluss. Ende **Feb 41** befanden sich im Aufmarschgebiet 25 Divisionen, im **Mar 41** kamen 7; im **Apr 41 13**, im **Mai 41 30** u. bis **22 Jun 41** weitere 51 hinzu. Das Ostheer verfuegte demnach bei Angriffsbeginn ueber 126 Divisionen, dazu die Heerestruppen, Luftwaffenverbaende u. Nachschubdienste. Der Rest von 19 Divisionen der OKH-Reserve rollte bis Mitte **Jul 41** heran.⁶⁷

Die Ausladung u. Versammlung der Kraefte vollzog sich westlich der Linie Radom – Warschau – Neidenburg unter dem Schutz der an die Demarkationslinie vorgeschobenen Besatzungstruppen. Erst im letzten Drittel des **Mai 41** durften geschlossene Verbaende in Nachtmaerschen nach der Grenze hin aufschliessen, die Schnellen Verbaende in den letzten vier Naechten vor Angriffsbeginn. Die vom Balkan nach Rumaenien zurueckkehrenden Inf.-Diven. hatten Fussmaersche von rund 800 km zu bewaeltigen.

Ab **10 Jun 41** setzte die Versammlung der fliegenden Verbaende der Luftwaffe ein. Die Kriegs-marine stellte die beteiligten Seestreitkraefte in den Ostseehaefen bereit u. legte ab Mitte **Jun 41** Minensperren gegen die russ. Flotte.

Der Strom so starker Kraefte nach Osten war freilich *nicht wirksam zu tarnen*. . .
[See text for more details.]

⁶⁷ **Note:** This account is reasonably—albeit not completely—accurate.

(Philippi & Heim, *Feldzug gegen Sowjetrussland*, 52-53)

--**Aufmarsch H.Gr.Sued**: Seit **Nov 40** rollte der Aufmarsch der Armeen, Korps u. Diven., die im Rahmen der H.Gr.Sued zum Einsatz kommen sollten. Das **OKH** liess noerdl. der Strasse Krakau – Przemysl ein *grosses Versorgungszentrum* errichten. Dieses Zentrum war in vier Unterabschnitte aufgeteilt, die je zwei Lagergruppen mit Munitions – Betriebsstoff – u. Verpflegungslager besaßen. (W. Haupt, *Die Schlachten der H.Gr.Sued*, 11)

--**Feb-Jun 41** [Assembly of troops]:

The original **OKH** plan for the rail assembly in the East, exclusive of Rumania, envisaged **5** phases, beginning in early **Feb 41** and continuing to **23 Jun 41**. The second part of Phase IV (**3.-23.6.41**) involved **12** armored and **12** motorized divisions. The final phase, constituting some **30** reserve divisions, was to begin after the start of the invasion. . .

The manner in which the plans were executed may be illustrated by the *example of Army Group Center*. The build-up for Bock's forces involved **42** divisions up to **23 Jun 41** (through Phase IV). Between **10 Jun – 24 Jul 41**, the fifth phase was to add **15** divisions. A division movement by rail during the first three [**3**] phases took about a week from Germany and **10** days from France. During Phase IV, executed at twice the speed, divisions from Germany reached detraining points in **2-4** days, in **5** days from the West, and up to **3** weeks from Greece or Rumania.

After detraining, a division marched to temporary assembly areas and then to its final jump-off positions in a sequence of phased moves that were to begin on **1 Jun 41** and end precisely on **22 Jun 41**. The infantry divisions were the first to start the round of movements to the east by night marches averaging about **20** miles. As the armored and motorized divisions arrived, the roads would thus be clearer for them after **11 Jun 41**.

The transportation and assembly schedules were subjected to some unforeseen stresses and strains. [**Note**: See text for example of **8 Fliegerkorps**.] Local improvements of roads, especially the reinforcement of bridges and culverts, continued until the last minute. The Organisation Todt (**OT**), the Reichsarbeitsdienst (**RAD**), and Army engineers all co-operated in these efforts. Some of the biggest headaches occurred in the Suwalki Triangle because of a complete absence of paved roads. Yet this was the salient where **3 PzGr** must concentrate. Some of the new highways [?] built in that backward area came so close to the Soviet border that they paralleled it within a few yards. [!] For lack of heavy construction equipment, the Germans could not build the roads strong enough to handle some of the heavy wpons and equipment, such as the **300-mm** mortars [i.e., howitzers] which **9 Army** wanted to employ to crack the big bunkers of the Soviet border defense line.

The Germans were bothered in their concentration by the short nights in June and by a mosquito plague “of biblical proportions,” the result of an unusually wet spring. German HQs were also concerned about the danger of forest fires that the Russians could easily start by dropping incendiary bombs. Large forest fires

could destroy fuel and ammunition dumps scattered all through the forests. The fact that the Russian air force *did not interfere w/ the concentration* was probably the biggest break the Germans got.

(For more details see, *Luttichau Manuscript*, “Road to Moscow,” IV: 33-37)

--**May-Jun 41** (Aufmarsch im Osten): Not until late **May** and **Jun 41** that the Germans flood the border areas in occupied Poland and East Prussia w/ nearly two divisions per day. By then, it was too late for Soviet intelligence to digest the extent of German deployments. The final deployment included the *backbone* of German offensive strength – **28 panzer** and mot. inf. divs. (W. Murray, *War to be Won*, 118; **III:12**)

--**Jun 41** (Aufmarsch im Osten): Die Verlegung von Truppen erfolgte in fuenf [5] seitlich festgelegten Staffeln⁶⁸ auf sechs [6] Transportlinien. Taeglich fuehren **144** Zuege mit einem Durchschnittstempo von **24** km/h. Dabei muss man davon ausgehen, dass fuer den Transport einer Inf.-Div. etwa **70** u. fuer eine Pz.-Div. etwa **90** bis **100** Zuege erforderlich waren. Hier wurde von der Reichsbahn in Zusammenarbeit mit den Transportstaeben der Wehrmacht, trotz vieler Schwierigkeiten durch den Mangel an Lokomotiven u. wegen unvorhergesehenen Witterungseinflussen ein enormes Arbeitspensum bewaeltigt. (Woche, *Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 97; **III:13**)

--**2.6.41** (Aufmarsch im Osten): By this date, there are **129** German divisions deployed in the East. (H.A. Jacobsen, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg in Chronik*, 35; **III:13**)

--**6.-19.6.41 (3 ID (mot.))**.⁶⁹

Unbefriedigend ist die Kfz-Lage, abgesehen von der Tatsache, dass die letzten Fahrzeuge erst kurz vor dem Abmarsch nach Ostpreussen aus Paris ueberfuehrt werden. Im Zeichen des Materialmangels wird unsere Div. zusammen mit einer Pz.-Div. vorwiegend mit franz. Kfz. ausgestattet. Diese haben sich mit ihren hochgezuechteten Motoren u. ihrer tiefen Strassenlage auf den russ. Wegen *schlechter bewaehrt* als die deutschen (Opel, Mercedes, Krupp). Bei der Pkw muss weitgehend das Verdeck herausgeschnitten werden, um sie fuer den Einsatz brauchbar zu machen. Besonders unangenehm ist der Mangel an gelaendegaengigen Kfz., von denen z.B. die Artillerie nur wenige Nachr.Kfz. erhaelt.

Obwohl die Einheiten moeglichst mit Fahrzeugen eines Typs ausgestattet werden (**29** mit Opel Blitz, **8** mit Citroen, Peugot u. Matford), wird im Laufe des Feldzuges das Bild auch der Kpen. bunter. Das erfordert, dass bereits die Kpen. *immer mehr Ersatzteile bereithalten muessen*, wollen sie einsatzbereit sein, ja dass sie Soldaten nach dem Zentralerzatzteillager Borissow u. zu den HKP entsenden.

Unsere Div. wird erst Anfang **Jun 41** nach Ostpreussen verlegt, nachdem die Masse der Diven. hier bereit versammelt ist. Mit den Pz.- u. mot. Diven. gehoert sie zur **4 b-Aufmarschstaffel**, die erst spaet in den Aufmarschraum verlegt wird, um die Schwerpunktbildung geheim zu halten.

⁶⁸ **Note:** These deployments, of course, started well before June 1941.

⁶⁹ **Note:** **3 ID (mot.)** good example of just how “creatively” so many of the German *Ostheer* divisions were outfitted w/ weapons and vehicles!

Waehrend die Kettenfahrzeuge am **6 Jun 41** mit der Bahn nach Ostpreussen verlegt werden, marchiert to Masse der Div. vom **12-19 Jun 41** bei z.T. regnerischem Wetter mit ihren Raederfahrzeugen nach dem Osten: Schwerin (W.) – Landsberg (W.) – Deutsche Krone – Schlochau – Bütow – Dirschau – Mohrungen – Heilsberg – Preussisch Friedland – Insterburg in den Trappener Forst. Dieser erste geschlossene mot. Marsch fuehrt die Div. bei einer Marschgeschwindigkeit von **30 km** ueber **700 km**. Dier vier letzten Etappen werden in Nachtmarschen erreicht, bei denen bei Tageslicht jede Bewegung zu unterbleiben hat; Kommandoflaggen duerfen nicht gezeigt werden. Die Marschdisziplin findet die Anerkennung des Div.-Kdrs.

Die Tage bis zur Kriegserklaerung verbingt die Div. in dem riesigen Trappener Forst, **35 km** ostw. Tilsit suedl. der Memel. In ihm hat der Arbeitsdienst Schneisen geschlagen u. Wege befestigt, so dass die Kfz. gut getarnt unterziehen koennen. Ueber die Memel ist zwischen Trappen – Wischwill eine Pontonbruecke gebaut worden. In den Forsten noerdl. des Flusses liegen beiderseits der Strasse Wischwill – Schmallenigken die **8 PD** u. noerdl. davon die **290 ID**, die mit uns dem **56 PzK** gehoeren. . .

(G. Dieckhoff, *3. Infanterie-Division*, 90-91)

--**10.6.41**: Die Rueckfuehrung der auf dem Balkan eingesetzten Verbaenden war bis zum **10 Jun 41** im wesentlichen beendet. (Magenheimer, *Moskau 1941*, 18)

--**3.-23.6.41**: Zufuehrung v. **12** Panzer u. **12** mot. Divisionen = **75%** d. Feldheeres im Osten. (H.A. Jacobsen, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg in Chronik*, 35; **III:13**)⁷⁰

--**16.-18.6.41 (8 PD)**: Das KTB der Div. brachte am **16 Jun 41** folgende Entragung:

Die befohlene Verlegung der Division aus Gegend Prag in einen Unterkunftsraum noerdl. Insterburg laeuft am **16.6.**, **13.57** Uhr, planmaessig an. Der Abtransport der Div. erfolgt in **101 Zuegen**. Das Eintreffen der Div., das in kuerzen Abstaenden innerhalb **51** Stunden erfolgte, ist eine ausserordentliche Leistung der Transportkommandantur.

Wetter: warm u. sonnig.

(W. Haupt, *Die 8. Panzerdivision im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 135)

--*Excerpt from Barbarossa Unleashed:*

2.3: The Deployment Order and Initial Concentrations in the East (January – May 1941)

After the basic concepts and guidelines for the conduct of the war in the east had been laid down in the *Barbarossa* directive (No. 21), the Army General Staff sought to bring its operational plans and timetables into sharper focus. In a flurry of purposeful activity, General Staff planners crafted the Army's Deployment Directive (*Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa*), a first draft of which was issued on 22 January, with a final version submitted to Halder and dated 31 January.^{liv} At noon

⁷⁰ Demgegenueber an den anderen Fronten: Norwegen (**8**), Westfront (**38**), Suedosten (**7**), Afrika (**2**), Heimat (**1**). Insgesamt = **209** Divisionen des dt. Heeres. (p 35)

that day, Field Marshal von Brauchitsch received the three army group commanders who were to direct operations in Russia – field marshals Wilhelm Ritter von Leeb (North), Fedor von Bock (Center) and Gerd von Rundstedt (South) – together with General Halder for a discussion of the new directive. It was the first time the Army C-in-C and the Chief of the Army General Staff had met with the three Prussian field marshals for an exchange of ideas.^{lv . . .}

Echoing the *Barbarossa* directive, the OKH deployment plan stated that the Soviet Union was to be “crushed in a rapid campaign,” if necessary before ending the war with Great Britain.^{lvi} Operations were to be conducted in such a manner that the main body of the Red Army in western Russia could be defeated by driving powerful armored wedges (*Panzerkeile*) deep through the Soviet front, enveloping and encircling the bulk of the enemy’s fighting forces, and preventing their intact withdrawal into the Russian interior. Despite Halder’s admission to Bock, Army planners remained confident the Red Army would accept battle west of the Dvina-Dnepr line. Soviet strategy, it was assumed, would also embrace the new system of field fortifications being built along the Russo-German demarcation line, as well as the original “Stalin Line,” which ran along the old Russo-Polish and Romanian borders.^{lvii}

The primary mission of each of the three army groups was also laid out in the OKH directive. South of the Pripiat’ Marshes, Field Marshal von Rundstedt’s Army Group South was to break through the enemy front with strong armored units from the area of Lublin, destroying enemy forces in Galicia and the western Ukraine in cooperation with a secondary thrust from Romania. Advancing on Kiev, bridgeheads were to be seized over the Dnepr River at and below the city, enabling exploitation beyond that river barrier and deeper into southern Russia. North of the marshes, Field Marshal von Bock’s Army Group Center, the strongest of the three groups, was first to annihilate the Red Army in Belorussia by means of a double envelopment closing around Belostok and Minsk; Bock’s armor was then to drive eastward to capture Smolensk, less than 400 kilometers from Moscow. Once these initial (first phase) objectives were achieved, the army group was to wheel north with strong, mobile elements to support Field Marshal von Leeb’s Army Group North which, in turn, was to advance out of East Prussia and through the Baltic, annihilating Soviet forces along the way and striking out in the general direction of Leningrad. German troops were to be cautioned not to anticipate the level of air support they had enjoyed during the earlier campaigns, while preparations were also to be made to combat the possibility of chemical warfare. Operational direction of the three army groups along the main front was the responsibility of OKH, while the OKW role in the eastern campaign was to be limited to the far north, where modest German forces were to secure Petsamo and advance on Murmansk.^{lviii}

The operational intent of OKH thus adhered closely to the guidelines set down in Directive No. 21, in that it followed Hitler’s often stated preference for a main drive into the Baltic region toward Leningrad after the frontier battles had been fought. Conversely, the Army was careful to point out that, in case of a rapid and general collapse of Soviet forces, the central army group might be able to forgo a drive to the north (with von Leeb) and continue with an immediate thrust toward Moscow. The deployment directive was signed by Brauchitsch “although the Army High Command’s own operational objectives remained, as ever, separate from those of Hitler.”^{lix}

The OKH deployment directive encompassed an intricate timetable for assembly and concentration of German forces in the east. If the initial German advance into Russia was to rely on truck transport for logistical support, the buildup of forces for the offensive was to be handled mainly by rail – a challenge so enormous in scope it required thousands of trains to move about three quarters of the German armed forces to their new theater of operations. In October 1940,

the *Wehrmacht* had issued new instructions to German rail authorities^{lx} for the expansion of stations, rail lines and other infrastructure of the *Ostbahn*, with the objective of more than doubling rail capacity (movement and unloading) by 10 May 1941. The entire effort came under the auspices of the “Otto” Program^{lxi} which, in subsequent months, was to make dramatic improvements to rail lines and facilities, among them new west-east lines, new stations, platforms, signal installations, an expanded telephone net and other improvements. As a result of “Otto,” the flow of trains crossing the borders of the Reich to the east increased from about 80 per day to a maximum of more than 200 per day, enabling the transport of troops, tanks, vehicles, equipment and supplies to go according to plan (*planmaessig*). Indeed, from February through mid-July 1941, well over 10,000 trainloads were unloaded in the east; yet, remarkably, the German and Polish rail lines were still not stretched to their utmost limit during the buildup period.^{lxii}

The OKH deployment plan called for this vast migration of men and materiel to take place in five phases (the fifth, and final, phase beginning after the start of hostilities and consisting of the majority of the OKH reserves).^{lxiii} Simply put, most of the marching infantry divisions were to be transported in the initial phases, while the rail movement of the panzer and motorized formations was not – for reasons of security – to begin until the final few weeks before the invasion.^{lxiv} Road movements, primarily from detraining points into more forward assembly areas, were meticulously integrated into the progression of rail movements to ensure a smooth flow of men, equipment and supplies. Until three weeks before the operation was to begin, new formations arriving in the east were not to go beyond a line marked by Tarnow – Warsaw – Koenigsberg. Beyond that “invisible barrier,” authority for dispositions became the responsibility of the army groups and armies. The execution of those final movements was to be carefully concealed, meaning that most of them, particularly those of armored units, were to occur only at night.^{lxv}

The strictest security covered all phases of activity and the number of persons authorized to know about the planning was kept to an absolute minimum. To deceive the Russians, ostensible planning and preparations for the invasion of Britain were to be continued. All preparations for Russia were to be completed in time for operations to begin in mid-May 1941. So complex was the machinery of this colossal movement of men and materiel that major changes could not be made after 10 March 1941, some nine weeks prior to the anticipated “jump-off.”^{lxvi}

Of course, even before the *Barbarossa* buildup began in earnest, the Germans had stationed significant forces in the east, which, by late summer 1940, were under the command of Field Marshal von Bock and Army Group B (see below, Section 2.5). These forces amounted to 23 divisions on 20 July 1940, and were slowly increased to 34 by the end of the year. Four of these divisions, however, were stationed in Austria due to the uncertain situation in the Balkans; and, in early February 1941, the Army High Command dispatched another four divisions from German-occupied Poland to the southeast, leaving Bock with just 26 divisions (there were also two divisions earmarked for *Barbarossa* in Romania). When the strategic concentration (145 divisions) for the Russian campaign commenced on 7 February, 117 divisions still had to be moved by a combination of rail and road, 22 of them twice due to the intervening requirements of the Balkan campaign.^{lxvii} The first three phases (1.-3. *Aufmarschstaffeln*) of the rail assembly in the east – Phase I: 7 February – 17 March; Phase II: 16 March – 10 April; Phase III: 13 April – 20 May – resulted in the deployment of the majority of the marching infantry divisions.^{lxviii} (*Barbarossa Unleashed*)

--Excerpts from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

2.6: Army Group Center Prepares for War (February – May 1941)

. . . When the strategic concentration for *Barbarossa* began in early February 1941, of the 117 divisions which still had to be moved by rail and road, 42 were earmarked for Army Group Center by the start of the campaign. Concerned army group staff officers coordinated their efforts with the German *Reichsbahn* and military rail authorities to shepherd the units to their various destinations. The movement of a complete division by rail during the first three phases (i.e., through 20 May 1941) took about a week from Germany and 10 days from France. (During the final phase in June the pace would be dramatically accelerated.) After detraining, the divisions typically occupied temporary assembly areas far from the eastern frontier; in most cases, only in the final weeks before the start of the campaign, were they to begin to move – in a series of phases – to their final jump-off positions. Thus, while the railroads carried the troops as far as East Prussia or Poland, upon arrival the infantry still faced long and arduous foot marches – mostly at night for security reasons – into their final assembly areas. To ease their burden, if only slightly, the Organization Todt (OT), German Labor Service (*Reichsarbeitsdienst*, or RAD) and Army engineers labored diligently to improve roadways and reinforce bridges and culverts.^{lxxix} Yet the months of hard physical conditioning and combat training had built confidence and prepared the men well, as the following accounts – building on those earlier in this chapter – illustrate: [see text] . . .

One of Field Marshal von Bock's primary concerns, of course, was the ongoing training of his army group. As he well knew, Soviet Russia, with its limitless expanses, primitive roadways, vast tracks of primeval forest and swamps, and general want of "creature comforts," would impose special demands on his men. Basic training in the German Army, even in peacetime, had always been tough – "long, arduous, realistic," as one author has characterized it.^{lxxx} German training programs sought to replicate combat conditions as closely as possible. Troops were trained in all types of weather and around the clock, day and night. Exercises with live ammunition – a practice employed by the pre-1914 Imperial Army during its annual summer maneuvers – were routine,^{lxxxi} exposing recruits to serious injury or death. Yet German military authorities accepted the one percent fatality rate sustained during such training as the necessary price for saving soldiers' lives in combat.^{lxxxii} Training was also forward-looking and thorough, with each soldier learning to perform his immediate superior's mission as well as his own, in case he had to take command. Of critical importance was the fact that all recruits – regardless of their chosen field of specialization – first received a basic infantry, or combat, training^{lxxxiii} – a policy which would prove of incalculable benefit during the winter of 1941/42, when rear area "comb outs" were necessary to furnish desperately needed infantry for the front. Finally, pre-war training programs emphasized familiarity with combined arms operations.

After the war began, training was made even a good deal more rigorous. The Army High Command was disappointed by their soldiers' performance in the Polish campaign of 1939. Chief of the Army General Staff Halder echoed complaints commonly made by field commanders that the infantry had not been aggressive enough in the attack, while the poor march discipline of mobile units – a problem again encountered at the start of *Barbarossa* – had caused traffic jams and unnecessary delays. Guderian had observed several occasions when his motorized and tank units exhibited signs of nervousness before going into action. The OKH was well aware of such concerns, having been alerted by a series of brutally honest after-action reports from unit commanders outlining deficiencies of their troops. As a result, between the Polish and French campaigns, a major effort was made to improve training and enhance efficiency.^{lxxxiv} Beginning in the fall of 1939, the German Army spent 17 hours a day, six or seven days a week, implementing "with precision and enthusiasm" the OKH training syllabus – a "ruthless and relentless" training program which stood in stark contrast to the generally "lackadaisical practice" of most French formations during the "Phony War" of late 1939 and early 1940.^{lxxxv}

Following the French campaign, in the autumn of 1940, the OKH ordered another round of intense training, this time in preparation for a very different kind of war – that against the Soviet Union. Panzer divisions were to undergo extensive training in combined arms tactics, while motorized infantry units were to train to fight unsupported and to clear forests and villages rapidly.^{lxxvi} Foot infantry were to execute long, strenuous marches to prepare for the rigors of traversing vast, inhospitable distances.^{lxxvii} Yet training in the German Army for combat under Russian terrain conditions was by no means “uniform or systematic.” Indeed, a truly specialized program was impossible for several reasons. Plans for war against Russia were long kept a closely guarded secret; some division commanders would – almost to the final moment – regard their transfer to, and assembly in, the east as nothing more than a precautionary measure or a bluff to extract diplomatic concessions. Other units were pulled out of the Balkan campaign in the spring of 1941, dispatched directly to the east, and given no time for special training. More importantly, there were no suitable training groups – no places in France, the Netherlands, or central Europe where the Army could train for combat in deep forests, extensive swampland, or sandy areas. Obstacles to realistic training – particularly for tank units and motorized infantry – also resulted from shortages of fuel and vehicles. Wherever training, however much possible, was actually attuned to Russian conditions, it was done so on the initiative of individual army, corps, or division commanders.^{lxxviii}

Despite such challenges, Bock and his field commanders did what they could to ready their charges for war. The training manuals issued by the commander of Fourth Army, Field Marshal Guenther von Kluge, embraced typical concerns of the army group’s senior commanders, while also reflecting the still healthy respect the German Army officer corps – many of whom had fought in the east in World War I – had for the Russian Army. As Kluge understood, albeit not from personal experience,^{lxxix} any fight with the Red Army was going to be a serious affair. On 20 March 1941, Kluge ordered his subordinate commanders to step up their training efforts. The training, he demanded, should emphasize a toughening of the troops, since in Russia the soldiers would often be without even the simplest comforts. The men were to train to march great distances, while efforts were to be made to protect the troops from the possible use of chemical or biological weapons. The field marshal warned that the Red Army was likely to attack in several thick waves, with strong support from tanks and artillery; as combatants, they would be tough and disdainful of their losses. Kluge stressed that his infantry would have to effectively coordinate all of its firepower to defeat such attacks. Moreover, the infantry was to be trained for greater toughness in close combat (a specialty of the Russian fighting man) and to overcome its aversion to fighting at night. Because they could also expect to be assaulted by tanks, the infantry should be instructed to emulate Finnish and Spanish infantry by aggressively attacking enemy tanks with explosive charges. Kluge also foresaw special problems arising from the vast scope of the Russian theater of operations, where his units would frequently be left with unguarded flanks. To address this concern, he recommended that units become accustomed to providing for adequate reconnaissance and security, paying particular attention to large forests, where Russian cavalry might lurk. Security, he admonished, must also be made more robust for German staffs; hence, all headquarters personnel were to be familiar with, and expect to use, their side arms.^{lxxx}

The Fourth Army, like all the armies deploying along the German *Ostfront*, had to prepare its own detailed deployment plans; guided, of course, by the general plan promulgated by the OKH at the end of January 1941. At their headquarters in the center of Warsaw – in the great castle from the time of August the Strong, and former home of the Polish general staff – concerned staff had hammered out their deployment order by 15 March 1941.^{lxxxii} Three days later, Hans Meier-Welcker, a General Staff officer on the staff of Fourth Army, attended a conference in Zossen (OKH headquarters), just outside Berlin, conducted by the Army’s Deputy Chief of Staff for

Supply and Administration (*Oberquartiermeister*); his diary entry for that day illuminates some of the trenchant problems faced by Army Group Center – and the German Army as a whole – as war crept inexorably closer: [see text] . . .

After the war, Guenther Blumentritt, in 1941 chief of staff of Fourth Army, described the atmosphere which prevailed in his headquarters that spring:

More and more divisions were moved to the east, but in order to conceal their presence from the Russians they were stationed well back from the frontier. Preparations began to be intensified and skeleton staffs of other senior commands were set up in the east. Numerous map exercises and tactical discussions took place. As it became increasingly obvious that for Hitler war with the Soviets was inevitable, preparations were intensified by staffs at all levels.

A strange atmosphere prevailed during those months. In the first place we realized what this new war would entail. Many of us had fought in Russia as junior officers between 1914 and 1918, and we knew what to expect. There was uneasiness both among the staff officers and in the divisions. On the other hand duty demanded precise and detailed work. All books and maps concerning Russia soon disappeared from the bookshops. I remember that Kluge's desk at his Warsaw headquarters was usually laden with such publications. In particular, Napoleon's 1812 campaign was the subject of much study. Kluge read General de Caulaincourt's account of that campaign with the greatest attention: it revealed the difficulties of fighting, and even living, in Russia. The places where the Grand Army had fought its battles and skirmishes were on the maps before us. We knew that we would soon be following in Napoleon's footsteps. We also studied the Russo-Polish War of 1920. As Chief of Staff, Fourth Army, I delivered a series of lectures to our staff officers on this subject, illustrated by large maps.^{lxxxii}

While Blumentritt's post-war recollections appear measured and sober, in the spring of 1941 he, like so many of his colleagues, had evinced a sublime optimism. Indeed, on 8 May 1941, he had said with regard to *Barbarossa*: "We should not forget the reputation and the aura of invincibility which precedes our *Wehrmacht* everywhere."^{lxxxiii} Nothing was impossible for the German soldier!

One area of acute concern was the ***potential use of gas and the possible contamination of land and water wells by Red Army forces***. It is clear from contemporary accounts that the Germans genuinely feared the prospect of the enemy unleashing gas – as well as other chemical and/or biological contaminants – on their troops.^{lxxxiv} In general, they expected the Russians to react to the German assault with brutality and excess far exceeding earlier campaigns^{lxxxv} – a foreboding which, as events soon revealed, was not without basis in fact. Only days before *Barbarossa* began, Field Marshal von Brauchitsch visited his army field commanders in the east. What he had to tell them was sobering: ***The Russians could be expected to use flamethrowers and gas; they would contaminate wells and stocks of supplies***, while seriously threatening rear lines of communication. As he told the staff of Fourth Army on 12 June 1941, ***one had to be prepared for their adversary to wage "war by all possible means" (Krieg mit allen Mitteln)***.^{lxxxvi} As Brauchitsch predicted, the Red Army did indeed fight with virtually every means at its disposal, and often in violation of the laws and usages of war; however, despite numerous scares among German troops in the opening days of the campaign, the Russians appear to have never made use of poison gas.^{lxxxvii} (*Barbarossa Unleashed*)

--Excerpts from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

5.1.1: The Ground Forces:

By the spring of 1941, the flow of troop trains crossing the borders of the Reich to the east, and carrying the soldiers, tanks, guns, vehicles and equipment of the *Ostheer*, had increased to as many as 220 a day. As briefly described in Chapter 2 (Section 2.3), the rail movements (*Eisenbahnaufmarsch*) were conducted in five phases, beginning in early February 1941; by 20 May 1941 (end of the third phase) the majority of the marching infantry divisions in the *Barbarossa* order of battle had been deployed in the east. Initially, most formations were kept well back from the German-Soviet demarcation line; however, during the final 10 days of May, entire divisions began to close up to the frontier in a series of night marches – all movements carried out under painstaking security and with disinformation measures to conceal their actual intent from the Soviets. At the end of May and beginning of June, with the offensive barely weeks away, the Germans began to flood the border zones of occupied Poland and East Prussia with as many as two or more divisions per day. Meanwhile, the fourth (and final) phase of the pre-war rail deployments was split into two segments: 23 May – 2 June (9 infantry divisions from the west) and 3 – 23 June (12 panzer and 12 motorized divisions from the Reich, the west and the Balkans). For reasons of security, the deployment of these 24 mobile divisions – which embraced the backbone of the German invasion force – was thus conducted at the last possible moment before the start of the campaign.^{lxxxviii} Also from 3-23 June the “super heavy” rail-borne artillery was brought up from the Channel coast and assigned to the eastern army groups: Four “K5” pieces, each with 90 rounds of ammunition to Army Group South; eight “K5” guns and two of type “Karl” to Army Group Center; and four guns, type “Bruno” (short), with 300 rounds to Army Group North. Understandably, the transport of these guns and the construction of gun positions was a “major effort.”^{lxxxix}

The short nights in June complicated efforts to complete the final concentration of forces, while the troops were discomfited by a plague of mosquitoes “of biblical proportions,” the result of unusually wet spring weather. Transportation and assembly schedules were encumbered by a number of unanticipated challenges, including the last-minute decision to move 8 Air Corps across the east-west lines of communication to East Prussia – its 8000 motor vehicles threatening to tie up every main artery from the Reich to the eastern front. Facing the prospect of a nasty traffic jam, Army Group Center solved the problem by appointing a special road communications staff commanded by a general, who enforced strictest control and march discipline. German headquarters also fretted over the possibility of forest fires, which the Russians could have easily started by dropping incendiary bombs, potentially causing havoc among the many fuel and ammunitions dumps scattered throughout the forests. The Russian air force, however, did not interfere with the German preparations.^{xc}

Improvements to roads and the reinforcement of bridges and culverts went forward to the last minute, the Organization Todt (OT), Reich Labor Service (*Reichsarbeitsdienst*) and Army engineers all cooperating in these efforts. Some of the biggest “headaches” occurred in the primitive Suwalki triangle – the salient where 3 Panzer Group was to concentrate – due to the complete absence of paved roads. Lacking heavy construction equipment, the Germans were unable to sufficiently reinforce the roads in this backwater region, with the result that the roads were not strong enough to handle some of the heavy weapons – such as the 300mm mortars – which Ninth Army wanted to commit to “crack the big bunkers of the Soviet border defense line.”^{xc} Despite such challenges, by 22 June 1941, via the combination of rail and road movements outlined here and in Chapter 2, 126 divisions (along with *Heerestruppen* and supply

services) had been deployed to the eastern front (the initial assault wave of 117 divisions and 9 OKH reserve divisions). The final 19 reserve divisions would be dispatched to the east by mid-July 1941, during the final phase of the German rail *Aufmarsch*.^{xcii} . . .

Only the final four nights before the attack was to begin – from 18-21 June 1941 – were the mobile divisions permitted to advance – as stealthily as possible – into their final assembly areas adjacent to the border with the Soviet Union.^{xciii} Among the mechanized mass of panzer and motorized units moving up to the frontier was General Hermann Hoth's 3 Panzer Group. A report in the panzer group's official records describes the movements of its four armored and three motorized divisions into the Suwalki triangle, an area dotted with forests and lakes and the group's final concentration area for the attack:

The deployment of 3 Panzer Group in the Suwalki triangle proceeded according to plan from 19.-22.6.[41]. The three short nights which were available, as well as the availability of only two roads for moving up the troops, made it necessary to move elements into the assembly areas during the day. This disadvantage was consciously taken into account, so that the bulk of the divisions might make their appearance at the frontier at the latest possible time. Despite this, secrecy was maintained, as the later attack demonstrated.

All deployment movements proceeded smoothly amid good traffic discipline. Disruption through SS units could be eliminated through the intervention of Ninth Army headquarters. The strict separation of combat vehicles and vehicles which were to follow had proved its worth. All vehicles required for combat, as well as those extensively equipped with bridging columns, reached the designated areas on time along poor roads. The strict separation of the sectors assigned to the panzer corps and infantry corps for their movement, repeatedly requested by the *Panzergruppe*, had already borne fruit for the deployment.

The divisions, well camouflaged, prepared for the attack under the protection of the artillery, heavy weapons and Flak. At 0200 hours on 22.6.[41], the assembly was completed without disruption, which in itself was an achievement, since a Russian attack into our troop movements and assembly areas could have caused a difficult situation.^{xciv}

5.1.2: The Logistical Buildup:

The jerry cans and drums of fuel, of course, signified but a tiny fraction of the fuel which had been stockpiled for months – along with rations, ammunition, spare parts, etc. – as part of the logistical buildup for the Russian campaign. Each of the three army groups – North, Center, South – was supported by a supply district (*Versorgungsbezirk*) which accumulated tens of thousands of tons of supplies in multiple depots in the weeks and months leading up to 22 June 1941. By way of example, Supply District Center (supporting Army Group Center) distributed its massive tonnage of supplies over 13 ammunition, 11 fuel and 14 ration depots. As of mid-February 1941, Supply Districts North, Center and South had built up stocks of ammunition amounting to 42,560 tons, 87,460 tons and 42,300 tons, respectively. By 20 June, these stockpiles had climbed to 68,000 tons, 127,000 tons and 84,000 tons, respectively. Before the start of the campaign, each division was allotted a full initial load (*Erstausrüstung*) of ammunition,^{xcv} while those divisions taking part in the opening attack were allocated an additional half load of ammunition to support the initial breakthrough of the Soviet border defenses. Army Group Center, the largest of the three groups, required roughly 30,000 tons of ammunition to furnish its

50 divisions with a full initial load (excluding all elements organic to the army group, its armies or corps, or assigned temporarily to them, including combat engineer and artillery units).^{xcvi}

The quantities of fuel and rations assembled for the armies of Hitler's *Ostheer* were just as impressive. Supply District Center alone possessed 52,000 tons of fuel and 45,800 tons of rations in its depots on 22 June 1941. This amounted to 13 *Verbrauchsätze*, or units of consumption (a measurement of fuel),^{xcvii} and enough rations to support the army group for some 20 days.^{xcviii} One unit of consumption for the divisions of Army Group Center (again, excluding elements assigned directly to the army group, its armies or corps) amounted to about 3500 tons of fuel, while the daily ration requirement (*Tagessatz*) was roughly 2400 tons. Each division of the army group began *Barbarossa* with a full load of fuel as well as enough food to last – if stretched – for about two weeks. To ensure adequate mobility for the first two weeks of operations, panzer and motorized divisions carried an additional allotment of fuel in their organic transport. Finally, the two panzer groups assigned to Army Group Center were each supported by a supply dump filled with some 400 tons of tank replacement parts.^{xcix}

Despite such in-depth preparations – which were, of course, accomplished by all three of the army groups in the *Barbarossa* order of battle – shortages of all kinds would affect German operations virtually from the start of the invasion, the result of the speed and depth of the advance (particularly of the mobile formations, which had soon pushed well beyond their initial supply points), the Soviet Union's poor road and rail infrastructure, Red Army destruction of bridges, railroads and rolling stock (and the overly deliberate pace of German conversion of the railroads to the European standard gauge), an inadequate German motor transport pool, and other factors. In some cases, supplies even had to be flown to armored units stranded hundreds of kilometers beyond the Russo-German frontier without ammunition or fuel.

5.1.3: The Luftwaffe:

The *Luftwaffe* had completed its plans for the eastern campaign in late February 1941, issuing sealed orders to aircrews which were not to be opened until eight hours before “H-hour.”^c The construction of airfields, the provision of accommodations and other preparatory activities had begun in the fall of 1940, continued through the winter of 1940/41, and accelerated in March 1941 as the weather improved. However, it was only in April/May 1941 that actual preparations for the arrival of the flying units began to go forward in occupied Poland, including the establishment of administrative and supply units, aircraft maintenance shops and equipment issuing stations. Once again, all these initiatives proceeded as unobtrusively as was possible, with every conceivable security precaution.^{ci}

To preclude possible detection, the transfer of *Luftwaffe* units to the east was delayed to the last possible moment. Motorized elements of the *Luftwaffe* ground organization, including anti-aircraft and signal units, were deployed by rail and road – movements they had largely completed by 15 June 1941. The assignment of flying units to the eastern front was accomplished in its entirety in a period of just three weeks by 20/21 June 1941. Gradually, under conditions of strictest secrecy, supported by radio deception measures, *Luftwaffe* units were pulled out of operations against Great Britain. The first to be withdrawn were the fighter formations, which were not required for the night air offensive; the last were the bombers, which had conducted that offensive. As much as possible, the flying formations were first shifted to their home bases for a brief period of rest and rehabilitation; from there, the aircraft were brought up to their prepared air fields in the east in individual flights or in small formations of several planes (*Ketten*), avoiding larger urban areas as a security precaution. The deployment of the *Luftwaffe* to the east,

however, did not remain hidden from British radio intelligence, which, through ULTRA, was able to read the German Air Force's code.^{cii}

One of the last air elements to deploy was Lt.-Gen. Wolfram *Freiherr* von Richthofen's 8 Air Corps, one of two air corps assigned to Field Marshal Albert Kesselring's 2 Air Fleet, responsible for air support to Army Group Center. The 8 Air Corps had been heavily committed during the Balkan Campaign that spring, and now it was about to begin an even greater challenge with little time to rest and refit, as Richthofen complained in his diary. Only on 19 June did it finally deploy to East Prussia from deep inside Germany, where it had replenished its supplies and taken on new aircraft and aircrews. Still, 8 Air Corps would begin *Barbarossa* short some 600 motor vehicles, 40 percent of its aircraft, and vital spare parts and communications equipment.^{ciii} Despite such challenges, the air corps – the only dedicated close air support unit in the *Luftwaffe* – would be ready to accomplish its mission, and would do so to great effect.

Field Marshal Kesselring did not leave the Channel Coast – from where he had led the German air campaign against Great Britain – until 12 or 13 June, heading first to Berlin for the final pre-*Barbarossa* conference; according to official German pronouncements, however, he was still with his bombers in the west, where bogus German wireless transmissions throughout the first days of June sought to convey the impression that certain *Luftwaffe* formations were still operating against England, instead of redeploying to the east. Several days later Kesselring flew on from Berlin, landing at an airfield outside Warsaw, joining his headquarters staff, and throwing himself into his final preparations for the impending air campaign.^{civ}

5.1.4: Total Forces in the East:

By 20/21 June 1941, the largest invasion force the world had ever seen – and, most likely, ever will see – had lurched finally into place. In its entirety the German *Ostheer* embraced the following:

- 3,050,000 men
- 3600 tanks and assault guns
- 600,000 vehicles
- 625,000 horses

Artillery:

- 4760 light guns
- 2252 medium & heavy guns
- 104 Army Flak guns (88mm)
- 30 super-heavy high-/low angle guns^{cv}

This extraordinary mass of men and materiel was organized into 145 divisions, including 28 of the OKH reserve:

- 103 infantry
- 19 panzer
- 13 motorized (+3 brigades/regiments (mot.))
- 6 security
- 2 mountain
- 1 cavalry^{cvi}

Deducting the OKH reserve, 117 divisions were (as noted) earmarked for the first assault wave. Of the panzer divisions, two belonged to the OKH reserve, leaving 17 for the initial attack. The motorized formations included four *Waffen-SS* divisions and several motorized brigades/regiments, among the latter the elite Infantry Regiment *Grossdeutschland*. The final mobile unit, 1 Cavalry Division, was the only cavalry division remaining in the German Army inventory.^{cvii}

In addition to the primary force structure outlined above, the German Army of Norway deployed several divisions (67,000 men) in northern Finland. Among the allied contingents were about 500,000 Finnish troops, distributed over 14 divisions and several brigades; 150,000 Romanian troops in 14 under strength divisions and several brigades; and smaller levies from Hungary and Slovakia. In addition, Italy would dispatch a small expeditionary force of several divisions to the east in August 1941. However damning history's verdict may be of Hitler's decision to wage a war of annihilation against Soviet Russia, the German dictator cannot be accused of "going it alone!" His *Ostheer* was truly a "multicultural" army.^{cviii}

Providing the "vertical envelopment"^{cxix} was a *Luftwaffe* force structure in the east comprising nearly 3000 aircraft, of which 2255 were combat ready. On 22 June, this force included 757 bombers (mostly He 111s), 360 Ju 87 *Stuka* dive bombers, and 657 single-engine Bf 109 fighters fully operational. The eastern air forces also encompassed short- and long-range reconnaissance aircraft under tactical control of the Army; these included 111 long-range and 358 short-range aircraft which were fully operational. All of these aircraft (*Luftwaffe* and Army-controlled) were apportioned over four air fleets (1, 2, 4, 5).^{cx}

(Source: *Barbarossa Unleashed*)

1.3.4: Rumors of War in Far-Away Places

--**20.5.41:** „Ueber Russland sind hier die tollsten *Geruechte* im Umlauf. Die einen sagen, wir haetten die *Ukraine* fuer 90 Jahre gepachtet u. die Durchmarschgenehmigung zur Tuerkei u. dem Irak erhalten. Die anderen behaupten, dass die Kriegsgefahr durch die Haltung Stalins gebannt sei usw. Jede *Latrine* jagt die andere . . . (Lt. H.H., 258. ID, in: Buchbender, *Das Andere Gesicht des Krieges*, 67)

--**May-Jun 41:** Im Mai u. Juni 1941 schiessen unter den Soldaten die Spekulationen ins Kraut [i.e., they *ran wild*], was es mit der Verlegung in den Osten wohl auf sich haben koennte. Auch [*Hans Olte*] macht sich so seine Gedanken u. tippt auf den *Irak*. (*Latzel, Deutsche Soldaten*, 47)

--**Early Jun 41:** Knappe's division (87. ID) shifted to *Prostken*, an East Prussian village only a few kilometers from the demarcation line w/ Russia. One day, his Btn. Cdr. summons him and other battery cdrs to his office. There is a greatly enlarged map of area posted on his office wall. Major says, "gentlemen, study this map carefully. We must determine the best position for our guns in the event of an attack on Russia." Knappe and other battery cdrs are "speechless." After all, Germany had friendship treaty w/ Russia and was at war w/ England. "Why would be attack Russia," Knappe asks? (S. Knappe, *Reflections*, 199)

--**1 Geb.Div.:** Bereits gegen Ende **Mai 41** war die *Luft voll von Geruechten*, als die ersten Vorbefehle fuer das Unternehmen „*Barbarossa*“ ergingen. Es war eine Zeit, in der das Wort „*Latrinenparole*“ ganz gross geschrieben wurde. Einige sahen in dem Aufmarsch im Osten ein Ablenkungsmanoever, um die Englaender zu bluffen; andere glaubten an einen von Stalin genehmigten Durchmarsch, um die Briten dann im Iran zu schlagen. . . (R. Kaltenegger, *Die Stammdivision der deutschen Gebirgstruppe*, 200)

--**3 ID (mot.):** Aus Berlin stammende Geruechte schafften bis zuletzt Unklarheit; es gehe um einen Marsch durch das verbuendete Russland, um von Persien aus den Englaendern in den Ruecken zu fallen. Das seit dem **3.2.41** den Krieg mit Russland beschlossen u. seit dem **6 Jun 41** der Termin fuer den Angriff festliegt, [?] ⁷¹ bleibt unbekannt. Manche teilen auch die von Berlin propagierte Meinung, der Krieg werde *im September beendet sein, da Stalin ein Viertel der hoeheren Offizere der Roten Armee liquidiert hat u. das bolschewistische System nach einigen Niederlagen zusammenbrechen werde.* (G. Dieckhoff, *3. Infanterie-Division*, 91)

--**Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:**

--It has been remarked, perhaps with glibness in mind, that the lot of the soldier in wartime is one of interminable boredom punctuated by moments of visceral fear. Yet it was also the fate of the vast majority of soldiers – at least before the advent of modern satellite- and computer-based communications – to have little awareness of what took place on the battlefield beyond what they could touch, smell or observe with their own eyes. They may have known the enemy on the patch of ground before them intimately, but beyond that they knew little to nothing. Such enforced isolation in a time of heightened senses and emotions – and fear – led, ineluctably, to half-baked speculation about what the days ahead might hold.

Such was surely the case that winter and spring of 1941, when several millions of German soldiers – from France, Germany, the Balkans and other regions of occupied Europe – took part in the gigantic secret troop movements toward the eastern frontier. After the fall of France in June 1940, many had hoped for a swift end to the war and a return to their families and civilian life. Yet Great Britain held out and the war dragged on. Now, suddenly, the great bulk of the German Army was rolling eastward, across the Elbe and Oder; and as their troop trains crossed the borders of the Reich, they wondered where they were going and why they were going there. They knew nothing, of course, about *Barbarossa*; in fact, most of these soldiers did not learn about the Reich’s impending attack Russia until the final hours before the attack began, when officers and NCOs read out to them their “Fuehrer’s” proclamation “To the Soldiers of the Eastern Front!” Yet in the weeks and months before that watershed moment, they were undoubtedly aware that they were participating in an extraordinary undertaking; that something big, very big, was in the air.

Just what that might be, however, was unclear, as surviving diaries and field post of German soldiers illustrate. With the luxury of hindsight, it may seem odd that the answer wasn’t patently obvious at the time – that is, that Germany was about to attack Russia! Yet in the spring of 1941, Germany was at war with England and at peace with Russia. Indeed, the Reich and the Soviet Union had – on the surface of things at least – enjoyed good relations since late August 1939, when Hitler’s Foreign Minister Ribbentrop had flown to Moscow and put his signature to the non-aggression pact between the two countries which stunned the world. Moreover, since that time, the peaceful relations between Germany and Russia had been expanded through growing economic cooperation.^{cx1} Besides, England had yet to be vanquished, and the “Fuehrer’s” own

⁷¹ **Note:** How did the author come up w/ these dates?!?

experience in World War I had taught him well the folly of allowing the Fatherland to be ensnared in a war on two fronts. To be sure, many *Landser* still managed to see the *Aufmarsch* in the east for what it was. Yet many did not, and often took refuge in flights of fancy to explain the mighty war machine metastasizing along the frontier with Soviet Russia. Simply put, the “rumor mill” ran amuck, as the following first hand accounts demonstrate:

Leutnant H.H. (258 ID)

20 May 1941

The craziest rumors about Russia are making the rounds here. Some are saying that we've leased the Ukraine for 90 years and received permission to march through Turkey and Iraq. Others claim that the threat of war has been averted by Stalin's stance, etc. Every latrine rumor is closely followed by another. I'd be quite happy if it didn't come to war. That bogland and its vermin would hold no attraction for me. And all that time I've invested in learning Russian might just as well be wasted, too, for all I care.^{cxii}

Officer (SS *Das Reich* Division)

June 1941

At the beginning of May 1941, the peace-time atmosphere in which we had been living suddenly changed. All unit commanders in the Division were called to a conference at Gmunden am Traunsee, to be briefed on the coming war against Soviet Russia. There were no enthusiastic cries of “Sieg Heil!” at this announcement for there was none of us who did not have some concern at the size of the landmass in which we were soon to operate. The rank and file were not put in the picture at that time so that when the eastward movement began in June the wildest rumors spread – including one about a march through Russia and into India.^{cxiii}

R. Hertenstein (13 PD)

June 1941

They transferred us to the southern part of Silesia which was a German province until the end of World War II. We got there around the late spring of 1941, and around June we slowly moved further east toward the Soviet/German demarcation line in Poland. We were in the area where we had fought in 1939, northwest of Lemberg.

At that time there were all kinds of rumors going around as to what would happen next. One rumor was that we would go through the Ukraine and the Caucasus mountains down into Persia to cut off the British oil sources there. The Russians would permit us to do it. There was a second rumor that we would go through the Caucasus, Turkey, and Palestine, and go west from there to cut off the Suez Canal. Rommel with his *Afrika Korps* would then advance toward the canal from Libya.^{cxiv}

Gefreiter (Unit unknown)

2 June 1941

Yesterday somebody was saying we had got three roads and two railway lines from Russia for the march through. Why do you lose hope for an early end to

this? Now that the business with Russia is hunky-dory [*so in Butter ist*], I am increasingly hopeful. Because of course Russia is much more important than, perhaps, America. Because, if America were really to step in – which I don't believe any more – and in the meantime we've got all the English bases up to the Indian Ocean, the Americans would be over a barrel. Of course they know that, too, in America.^{cxv}

Unteroffizier W. P. (167 ID)

8 June 1941

We've been packing all day today, because we're moving onwards. Where, we don't know of course! Either east (Russia) or to the southeast, Syria, Iraq, etc. In any case, it will mean the deployment we were promised back home. Of course, I can't and mustn't tell you about anything else. We are all very curious about all the days to come ourselves, because everything in the future is so vague.^{cxvi}

Otto Skorzeny (SS *Das Reich* Division)

mid-June 1941

In mid-June 1941 our division was transferred by rail to Litzmannstadt (Łódź) in Poland. After all vehicles and supplies had been loaded onto the flat cars, we boarded our passenger cars and enjoyed the journey without worry.

For hours we speculated about our next military objective, but none of us envisioned that we would soon embark on a war against Russia. To the contrary, the most persistent rumor was that our objective would be the oil fields of the Persian Gulf. Russia would grant the German Army free passage and we would march across the Caucasus into Iran. We discussed the possibility of winning over the Islamic world, and, by doing so, securing access to trade and raw materials that could prove decisive to the outcome of the war.

Another rumor was that we would march via Turkey into Egypt and surround the English Near-East Army in a pincer action. As a result of this conjecture I took along the book *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, by T.E. Lawrence. The tempting Orient provided us with many hours of conversation while we were transported in a wide arc around Bohemia and Moravia to reach Poland via Upper Silesia. . .

We soon discovered that our speculation about our next move had been completely off base, as our orders pointed to an imminent offensive against the Soviet Union. This option had not occurred to us, although we had assumed the non-aggression pact between Germany and Russia could not last forever.^{cxvii}

H.-G. Alvermann (110 ID)

20-22 June 1941

Early in June we were made aware of an imminent departure. I was fortunate enough to find myself in my home area and so had a few advantages over my other comrades. But even then, saying farewell is not exactly easy: on 20 June 1941, I said goodbye to my parents.

Sometime that evening, our block warden came by – in the Party that was something like a lance-corporal in the *Wehrmacht*. He was employed with the camp command staff and, in his position, naturally “knew” something about the secret affairs of the Army: our unit was to be transferred to India to stir up trouble for the English in their imperial colonies. So I returned to our quarters, a cantonment, with this secret knowledge, but didn’t tell anyone about it.

Our transport began the following morning with a train via Hamburg – Mecklenburg – Pommerania. On 22 June, we had a roll call on the station platform in Neustettin, where the news of the war with Russia was revealed to us. We were astonished, because of course our government had sealed a non-aggression pact with that country in [August] 1939. So nothing was going to come of that trip to India. We couldn’t do anything about it; our tickets could not be exchanged.^{cxviii}

F. Belke (6 ID)

21 June 1941

We get an injection in our chest against dysentery, a vaccination that you can really feel for some time. Otherwise it’s an off-duty day. Our bare upper torsos bask in the warm sun – consequence: sunburn that will cause us additional agonies in the coming days. During the course of the day it becomes crystal clear: we’re going up against the Soviet Union! The rumors of a march through Russia and being deployed against the Brits in the Middle East or in India have exploded. Calm, but earnest and tense, we look the issues squarely in the eye. I am now located in the same sector in which my father fought in June 1915, exactly 26 years ago, against the Russians.^{cxix}

G. W. Schrodek (11 PD)

22 June 1941

Right up to late in the evening of the previous day we cherished the delusional hope of staying in eastern Poland and just waiting for Stalin’s permission to march across Russia to Syria (!). Until then, really nobody had considered a war against Russia.^{cxx}

These accounts signify a representative sample of the kinds of rumors which circulated among the *Landser* on the eve of war with Russia. What fascinates about them is how focused they are on possible strategies for defeating Great Britain; and they make more understandable the failure of so many to comprehend the real purpose behind the buildup in the east, for their “Fuehrer” – in whom the average German soldier had implicit faith and trust – would never begin a war with the Soviet Union before he had finished with England. Ironically, their thinking ran roughly along the same lines as that of Joseph Stalin! For like Stalin, it appears that they were also purposely misled by Germany’s disinformation campaign, which had begun in February 1941. (See Chapter 4, Section 4.6)

It should be pointed out that it was not only rank-and-file soldiers who failed to grasp the Nazi leadership’s true intentions. General Erich Hoepner, commander of 4 Panzer Group, also found the prospects of war against Russia virtually inconceivable, as his biographer explained:

Among his family, on the evening of 30 March 1941, Hoepner expressed the hope that this new campaign could be averted. This hope is also echoed once again, although diminishing, in a short letter to his mother from 26 May 1941: “Nothing will happen here before 20.6. The question of whether it is even going to occur is also being asked here constantly. A 99-year lease of the Ukraine is even being spoken of. On the one hand, I can hardly believe that the USSR would risk this loss of prestige. On the other hand, our demands would not be satisfied by that. . .” Moreover, his *Ordonnanzoffizier* 03, responsible for military intelligence, who for three years was among his closest confidants, later stated: “Hoepner believed a war against the Soviet Union to be out of the question and the whole deployment to be a bluff. . . It is utterly impossible that Hoepner could ever have considered war against the USSR to be unavoidable, or to be a fight for survival which had been imposed on us. Three or four days before the attack on the Soviet Union he said to me: ‘This cannot be true, this is our harakiri!’”^{xxxii}

In the late autumn of 1941, the surviving remnants of Hoepner’s 4 Panzer Group were to come closest to Moscow of all German forces. Less than three years later, on 8 August 1944, Hoepner was hanged in Ploetzensee prison in Berlin for his role in the anti-Hitler resistance.

(*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Section 5.3)

1.3.5: Stalin & the Red Army

(**Note:** For more details on German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact of **Sep 39**, division of Poland, etc., see section on Soviet War Crimes below.)

--Description of Stalin: “The first thing people noticed was his bright light-brown eyes, which were nearly yellow: *weirdly intense*, discomfoting, almost *animalistic* in their quiet alertness. All his other features – his low brow, thick hair, mustache, pockmarks – seemed to fade away in the enigmatic glow of his eyes. (C. Pleshakov, *Stalin’s Folly*, 26)

--Description of Stalin’s Kremlin office:⁷² “By Soviet standards, Stalin’s office was large, its walls *richly paneled w/ oak*, the table covered by an *ostentatious green cloth*. Portraits of Marx, Engels, and Lenin were the sole decorations on the bare walls. The furniture was uncomfortable, and Stalin’s desk littered w/ piles of papers and maps. The only organized objects were the telephones and a bunch of freshly sharpened colored pencils. Those close to Stalin knew that he preferred blue ones. (C. Pleshakov, *Stalin’s Folly*, 26-27)

--General Zhukov: Detailed biography of the general. (C. Pleshakov, *Stalin’s Folly*, 27-31, 35)

--**1937/38:** All told, close to **700,000** people shot in **1937-38** and more than **1,000,000** arrested. In all, **34,301** Red Army officers were arrested or expelled from the armed forces in 1937-38. Some **30%** were reinstated by the beginning of **1940**; but **22,705** were either shot or their fate remains unknown. Recovery from such a bloodletting of the leadership of the armed forces could not be speedily. Stalin was overheard asking *Voroshilov* in autumn **1938** whether there were any officers left *capable of commanding a division*. By the summer of 1941, as *Barbarossa* was launched,

⁷² **Note:** In context of his conference w/ his generals on evening of **2 Jan 41**.

75% of field officers and 70% of political commissars had held their posts for less than a year. Yet far from undermining Stalin's support, the purges *enhanced it*, though mainly out of *awe and fear* of their Leader rather than from warm adulation. The mass purges of 1937 ensured that Stalin would not be threatened, that his *despotism* would not be challenged. (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 246-50; also, Volkogonov, *Stalin. Triumph and Tragedy*, 369)

--**1937/39:** Another inevitable conclusion of any study of the newly available sources is that the Great Terror of **1937-39** was *completely rational from Stalin's perspective*. It has traditionally been argued that the **prewar purge** that killed about **35,000** Red Army officers was one of the reasons for the terrible defeats of the summer of **1941**. This is surely true, as the troops were consequently led by inexperienced and often ill-prepared commanders. But the purge was also the *source of the Soviet regime's strength*. Without that seemingly irrational terror, which had killed people virtually at random, *a military coup d'etat or a popular revolt against Stalin would almost certainly have occurred in the first days or weeks after the German invasion*. . . The Great Terror saved the dictator and his system; instead of collapsing in the summer of **1941**, as it should have, it survived for another **50** years. (C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 15-16)

--**1939:** Stalin who trusted nobody else, appears to have been the last human being on earth to trust Hitler's word. It was a case of *wishful thinking*. The Nazi-Soviet pact was of *enormous benefit to Stalin*. Though he later defended it solely as a temporary, tactical arrangement („We secured our country peace for a year and a half and the opportunity of preparing our forces“) he *clearly hoped at the time that it would last indefinitely*, or alternatively until the Germans and the West had mutually exhausted themselves in a prolonged war when, in according w/ his **1925 declaration**, Russia could move in for the pickings. In the meantime the pact was of immense benefit to him. By mid-1940 he had recovered much of the territory Russia had lost in **1918-19**. He had destroyed the structure of eastern Poland. In spring **1940**, he had **15,000** Polish officers murdered, a third at *Katyn* near Smolensk, the rest in or near the Soviet *concentration camps* of **Starobelsk** and **Ostachkov**. It is possible that these mass killings were carried out at the suggestion of the *Gestapo*. (P. Johnson, *Modern Times*, 372-73)

--**1939:** Space does not allow for a full description of the Nazi-Soviet pact, which is popular shorthand for both the German-Soviet Treaty of Non-Aggression signed on **23 Aug 39** and the political settlement between the two countries that followed it, including the accompanying secret protocols. In essence, the pact gave Hitler a **free hand in the West and Stalin freedom to operate in the East**, Poland having been carved up between the two. „Non-aggression“ in this context was a *wholly cynical expression*, allowing both parties aggression in the sphere of their choice. (J. Colvin, *Zhukov*, 59)

--Stalin's Urteile der Lage:⁷³

- Eine andere gaengige Interpretation . . . basiert auf der inzwischen einwandfrei nachgewiesenen Tatsache, dass Stalin aus verschiedenen Quellen *tatsaechlich im Besitz genauer Informationen ueber deutsche Absichten u. Truppenaufstellungen war*. (347)
- Stalin's Vorstellung . . . dass Grossbritannien durch *Verbeitung von Geruechten ueber einen Truppenaufmarsch* versuche, eine Krise in den deutsch-sowj. Beziehungen zu provozieren. (348)

⁷³ **Note:** These are simply some random observations from Gorodetsky's article.

- Meist wird angenommen, dass Stalin sich nicht dazu durchringen konnte zu glauben, dass *Hitler an zwei Fronten Krieg fuehren werde*. Die Warnungen seien deshalb von ihm als ein „Nervenkrieg“ interpretiert worden, der seinen Hoehepunkt in einem Ultimatum finden muesse. Er habe somit zu der Annahme geneigt, dass die Briten angesichts ihrer sich verschlechternden strategischen Position ihr Heil darin suchten, *einen Krieg zwischen Deutschland u. der Sowjetunion zu provozieren*. Stalins Streben sei dahin gegangen, **einen Konflikt um jeden Preis zu vermeiden**. (348)

- In Wirklichkeit war die sowj. Strategie, reichlich ehrgeizig, darauf aufgerichtet, **den Krieg im Falle einer Invasion unverzueglich in das Territorium des Gegners zu tragen**. Diese geradezu *revolutionaere Konzept* war von dem ungewoehnlichen Trio Tuchacevskij – Triandafillov – Isserson entwickelt worden. Die Defensive zielte darauf ab, dem Gegner die Initiative abzunehmen u. Vorbedingungen fuer eine Gegenoffensive zu schaffen. Defensiven Operationen wurde eine Uebergangsrolle zugewiesen; sie wurden als zeitlich begrenztes Phae-nomen betrachtet, das nicht fuer die gesamte Laenge einer strategischen Front durchgehalten werden konnte. Das Erste Strategische Staffel – haeufig auch als „Sicherungskraefte“ bezeichnet – sollte die Aufstellung des Gegners brechen, waehrend die Zweite Strategische Staffel mobil gemacht wurde u. auf-marschierte. . . [see text for more details] **1940** waren die Begruender der strate-gischen Schule entweder tot oder sonstwie einer Saeuberung zum Opfer gefallen, doch war ihr strategisches Konzept bis **1941** *durch keine Alternative ersetzt worden*. Mit der Wahrscheinlichkeit eines Krieges konfrontiert, warf Stalin, statt der gaengigen Doktrin zu folgen . . . seine Streitkraefte an die Front, ohne ihre angemessene *logistische Unterstuetzung bzw. ihre ausreichende Ausstattung mit Verteidigungsmitteln sicherzustellen*. (348-49)

- Ende **Apr 41** wurde Zhukov damit beauftragt den „*Verteidigungsplan fuer die Staatsgrenzen 1941*“ umzusetzen . . . [see text] (349)

- Eine Untersuchung der *diplomatischen Szene* in der Zeit zwischen der Unterzeichnung des Ribbentrop-Molotov-Pakts u. des deutschen Angriffs auf die Sow-jetunion offenbart, dass die **Furcht vor einem britischen-deutschen Separat-frieden Stalins Urteil in hohem Masse beeintraechtigte u. zu der Erstarrung beitrug, die sich mit dem Naeherruecken des deutschen Angriffs deutlicher auspraegte**. Die Urspruenge seines *pathologischen Argwohns* lagen in der *Angst vor einer erneuten Intervention*. Alle wichtigen internationalen Ereignisse der Zwischenkriegszeit wurden in Moskau innerhalb dieses Bezugsrahmens anal-ysiert. (349)

- In seinen Memoiren zeichnet Chruscev ein lebendiges Bild der Panik, die Stalin ueberkam, als die Nachricht vom **deutschen Einmarsch in Paris** den Krem erreichte: Stalin „liess einige ausgesuchte russische Flueche los u. sagte, dass **uns Hitler nun mit Sicherheit den Hald umdrehen werde**.“ (350)

- Stalin, ueber deutsche Absichten u. Truppenaufstellungen *ausreichend informiert*, war sich gleichermassen **der Schwaeche seiner Streitkraefte bewusst** . . . Gegen Ende **Apr 41**, nach dem Fall Jugoslawiens u. Griechenlands,

musste Stalin erkannt haben, dass ihn die *ueberwaeltigende Notwendigkeit einer „Atempause“ zu weiterer Nachgiebigkeit gegenueber Deutschland* zwang. (350)

- Die Situation wurde jedoch durch Stalins Ueberzeugung kompliziert, dass *Hitler keinen Zweifrontenkrieg riskieren werde*. [See text for details of Stalin's judgement on this issue]; (350-51)

- Im Licht der bisher dargestellten Ereignisse wird der Englandflug den Hitlers Stellvertreter Rudolf Hess am **12 Mai 41** als Friedensmission unternahm, zu einem *Schluessel fuer das Verstaendnis der sowj. Haltung gegenueber dem nahenden Konflikt*. [See text for details.] Ivan Majskij, der sowj. Botschafter in London schloss . . . dass das [englische] Kabinett das Friedensangebot tatsaechlich *ernsthaft in Erwaegung ziehe*. (352-53)

- Richard Sorge, der bedeutende sowj. Agent in Japan, uebermittelte Berichte, nach denen der Flug von Hess ein in letzter Minute u. mit Hitlers Einverstaendnis unternommener Versuch war, *einen Frieden auszuhandeln*. [See text for more details]. (353)

- Majskijs Gefuehl, dass Grossbritannien *verzweifelt versuchte, Russland in den Krieg zu verwickeln*, schien durch seine Unterredung mit Eden nach Cripps' Rueckkehr am **13 Jun 41** . . . bestaetigt zu werden. (357)

- Die Entscheidung, bedeutungsschweres, durch „Ultra“ gewonnenes Material freizugeben, wurde erst am spaeten Sonntag des **15 Jun 41** von Churchill gebilligt worden. Majskij war deshalb *erstaunt*, als er Montag morgen zum Foreign Office gerufen wurde, um Cadogans unbeteiligte u. monotone Wiedergabe „*praeziser u. konkreter*“ Meldungen zu hoeren. [See text for details.] (357)

- Am Samstag, den **21 Jun 41**, teilte Cripps Majskij das Wesentliche der *akuellsten u. genauesten „Ultra“-Information* darueber mit, was fuer den naechsten Tag erwartet wurde. (358)

- Stalins unerschuetterter Glaube an eine Provokation einerseits u. seine Ueberzeugung andererseits, dass einem deutschen Angriff ein Ultimatum vorausgehen werde, entmutigte in der Atmosphaere von Furcht, die im Krem herrscht, seine Entourage, Informaten u. auch Majskij, eine eindeutige Lagebeurteilung zu geben. (358)

- Wie von russischer Seite vor kurzem senstaionellerweise enthuellt wurde, teilte Graf v. der Schulenburg, der deutscher Botschafter in der Sowjetunion – ein Anhaenger von Bismarcks Lehre, dass *Krieg mit Russland um jeden Preis zu vermeiden sei* – den Russen *das genau Datum des von Hitler geplanten Angriffs eine Woche im voraus mit*. Hoehnis wies Stalin diese Warnung in einer Sitzung des Politburos zurueck: „Wir werden nun in Rechnung stellen, dass die Desinformation die Botschafterebene erreicht hat.“ (358)

- Noch aufschlussreicher war die *plotzliche hektische Geschaeftigkeit im Kremel*. Waehrend die neue Information⁷⁴ nicht die Moeglichkeit einer britischen Provokation ausschloss, erhoehrte sie die *Wahrscheinlichkeit eines Krieges unabhaengig davon, was in London geschah*. Bislang hatte man dem Bestreben, Provokationen zu verhindern, Prioritaet eingeraeumt. Das wuerde die extreme Heimlichkeit erklaren, mit der die Truppen an die Front verlegt wurden. Erst am **18 u. 19 Jun 41** wurden sowohl die Luft- wie die Bodenstreitkraefte instruiert, *Vorsichtsmassnahmen zu ergreifen*. Die frueheren Instruktionen wurden widerrufen u. die Kommandanten der Ost- u. Nordmeerflotten angewiesen, ihre Mannschaften in Bereitschaft zu halten. Am **19 Jun 41** wurde General Eremenko angewiesen, sein Fernostkommando abzugeben u. unverzueglich nach Moskau zu kommen. Am **21 Jun 41** gestand Stalin die *Unsicherheit der Situation offen ein*. . . . Zhukov hat Stalin als *hin- u. hergerissen zwischen der Angst vor einem deutschen Ueberfall u. der Furcht, einen ungewollten Krieg auszuloesen*, in Erinnerung. Auf Draengen des Generalstabs gab er nun die *Direktive 1* aus, die auf die Moeglichkeit eines Krieges hinwies u. *grundlegende Defensivmassnahmen in Gang setzte*; sie warnte die Kommandanten im Felde noch immer vor *„jeglichen provokativen Schritten*, die ernsthaften Komplikationen verursachen koennten.“ (359-60)

- Bis in den spaeten Morgen des **22 Jun 41** schloss der Kremel nicht die Moeglichkeit aus, dass *Russland zu politischer Nachgiebigkeit gepresst werden sollte*. Wie Molotov Cripps gegenueber bereits am **27 Jun 41** eingestand, hatte man *nicht erwarte*, dass Krieg *„ohne irgendeine Diskussion oder ein Ultimatum kommen koennte*.“ Man ging noch davon aus, dass Hitler sich auf einen Grossangriff *nicht ohne Billigung der britischen Regierung* eingelassen haette. [!] Die anfaenglichen Instruktionen an die Front – noch bevor man die pol. Situation begriff – hatten deshalb dahingehend gelautet, *kein Feuer zu eroeffnen u. Provokationen zu vermeiden*. (360)

- So scheint es, dass der Aufmarsch der Roten Armee einen in letzter Minute unternommenen Versuch darstellte, *einen deutschen Angriff zu vereiteln*, u. dass dieser Versuch dadurch ausgeloeset wurde, dass Churchill sehr praezise „Ultrameldungen“ ueber Hitlers Absichten an Stalin weiterleiten liess u. Stalin von seinem Meisterspion Sorge aus Tokio bestaetigende Informationen erhielt. Die ungeschickte Ausfuehrung des Aufmarsches spiegelt Stalins unloesbare Aufgabe wider, Defensivmassnahmen umzusetzen, fuer die die Rote Armee *gar nicht vorbereitet war*, u. gleichzeitig *jegliche Provokation*, die einen Krieg ausloesen konnte, fuer den Fall zu vermeiden, dass sich die Meldungen als falsch herausstellten. (361-62)

(G. Gorodetsky, „*Stalin and Hitler’s Angriff auf die Sowjetunion*,“ 347-62)

--**Jan 41**: Stalin appointed Zhukov chief of the general staff. According to author, “Zhukov’s top priority was the preemptive strike plan. He must have been shocked when he learned of its existence. . .” But the plan itself remained in draft form, because Stalin *refused to finalize it*. Meanwhile, there was no backup defensive scenario, no Plan B,⁷⁵ in the event that Germany

⁷⁴ **Note:** Not sure what “new information” he’s addressing here. Appears to be the “Ultra” information given to Stalin by Churchill.

⁷⁵ **Note:** So, author is insisting that the Soviet Union really had no war plan at this time? (See p. 67!)

struck first. As a result, both the country and the army were *caught between offense and defense* – in effect, nowhere. (C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 59-60)

--Zhukov had hoped to find a wise mentor in Stalin, thinking that together they would make a difference and prepare the troops for war. But after only a few weeks on the job he found himself frustrated. Very soon it became obvious to Zhukov that Stalin trusted nobody, that he chose to ignore other people's opinions and placed blind hope in his own instincts. . . Instead of becoming the leader's right hand, Zhukov found himself a mere gearshift between the enigmatic *vozhd* and the halting Red Army, the gearshift that would be accountable for every slip. What was particularly unsettling was that he was getting *no guidance at all*, and as a result the army was paralyzed. Zhukov hadn't shared w/ Stalin the *most shocking discovery of all*. After he moved to Moscow [upon becoming Chief of Staff] and gained access to comprehensive information previously unavailable to him, he came to the conclusion that the *nation was wholly unprepared for war*, offensive or otherwise. (C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 61-67)

--**Mar 40:** Following the Soviet-Finnish war, which ended on **12 Mar 40**, efforts had been made to *improve combat training and education in the requirements for war in the Soviet Army*, w/ emphasis on the *cooperation between arms, physical training, surprise and junior leadership*. Exercises, some under the supervision of the Commissar for Defense, now S.K. Timoshenko, were frequent. . . Timoshenko had become Defense Commissar in **May 40**. . . After its poor showing in Finland, Timoshenko was *determined to modernize the army*, especially its training, supply and intelligence. (J. Colvin, *Zhukov*, 60)

--**1941:** Tukhachevsky's theories of active defense and massive counteroffensives into enemy territory were translated by Stalin into the construction ordered by Zhukov of over **2000 strong points on the frontier itself** in full view of the enemy. When the *Wehrmacht* entered the old Kiev fortified area [i.e., original Stalin Line], they found it *overgrown w/ high grass and weeds, the gun emplacements abandoned, together w/ any idea of defense in depth*. But the new fortifications had not been completed by **Jun 41**; nearly all were *w/o radio, artillery, even the most basic infrastructure, power and light*. Worse, Stalin still thought, or wished to think, that the German Army could be *held by the NDVD guards at the frontier and simultaneously thrown back whence it came . . .* (J. Colvin, *Zhukov*, 63)

--**1941:** In reply to criticism after the war of inadequate preparation against *Barbarossa*, Zhukov said that had he ordered full deployment, Stalin would have ordered Beria "**to take him to the basement.**" Stalin had ordained that "**war would not come in 1941, and the system was not able to contradict him.**" (J. Colvin, *Zhukov*, 63)

--**1941:** The Soviet Union, too, was *manically preparing for war*, expanding the Red Army and producing *innovative weapons* like the T-34 tank and the Katyusha rocket-launcher. But Stalin did not want it to come for years. To keep the 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact in place, he was **fully pre-pared to make huge concessions in 1941**. Stalin assumed all the rumors of war were German sabberattling in hopes of gaining the Baltic littoral as a defensive barrier against Russia and some of the fertile land of the Ukraine. *Hitler could have had a great deal for the asking: Stalin had calculated Hitler's objective correctly, but not the genocidal ambitions, and so failed to grasp that Hitler's principal instrument of state was an army*. He negotiated only if he thought the army was too weak to win. (R. Messinger, "*The German Way of War*," 31)

--**1941 (State of Red Army / Zhukov's Memoirs):** Now let's see what our armed forces were like on the eve of war:

- Infantry. In **Apr 41** the infantry was *brought up to wartime strength*. . . At wartime strength an infantry (rifle) division was supposed to have about **14,500** officers and men, **78** field guns, **54** 45-mm AT guns, **12** AA guns, **66** 82-120-mm mortars, **16** light tanks, **13** armored cars and over **3000** horses. So manned and equipped the infantry divisions were sufficiently mobile and formidable fighting units. . . At the end of **Mar 41** . . . we were allowed to call up **500,000** men and non-coms, and send them to the border military districts to augment infantry divisions there, bringing up the strength of each to at least **8000**. [See text for more details].

- Armor. . . By **1938** the output of tanks more than trebled as compared w/ that of the early 1930s. . . From **Jan 39 – 22 Jun 41**, the Red Army received over **7000** tanks; in **1941** industry turned out about **5500** tanks of all types. As to the KV and T-34 tanks, the plants managed to put out only **1861** of them before the war, which was clearly insufficient. The new tanks began appearing in the tank schools and in the border military districts only in latter half of **1940**. [See text for more details].

- Artillery. Confirmed archival records show that between **1 Jan 39 – 22 Jun 41** the Red Army received **29,637** field guns and **52,407** mortars; the total number of artillery guns and mortars, including tank guns, amounted to **92,578**. This equipment was mostly organic to units in the field. . . Immediately before the war we had **60** howitzer and **14** artillery regiments in the High Command Reserve, which . . . was totally insufficient. [See text for more details, re: **BM-13** (Katyushas) rocket launchers, etc.]

- Signals service, engineer troops, Railways and Motor Roads. [See text for details.]

- The Air Force. . . According to the confirmed archive data, the Red Army received **17,745** combat planes, including **3719** of the latest models, between **1 Jan 39 – 22 Jun 41**. A new stage opened in acft construction. The Central Aero- and Hydro-Dynamics Institute was almost entirely reconstructed; new combat acft design offices sprang up. Able designers such as [see text] . . . came up with the **Yak-1**, **MiG-3** and **LAGG-3** fighters, the **Il-2** attack plane, the **PE-2** dive bomber and others, some **20** types in all. In late **1940** and early **1941**, batch production was stepped up of the best types of acft. . . But industry could not keep pace w/ the needs of the time. Old types of acft were still plentiful on the eve of war. Some **75-80%** of the planes were *technically inferior to their German counterparts*. New acft were still in the testing stage; only **21%** of the air units had been re-armed. [See text.] . . . By and large, the Air Force was *in the midst of far-reaching reorganization when the war broke out*. . .

- Fortified Districts. The construction of new FAs on the western frontier had been started in early **1940** under a project approved by Stalin on the basis of Voroshilov's and Shaposhnikov's report. The building of the fortified areas was not completed by **Jun 41**. By the time the war began some **2500** reinforced-concrete structures had been set up, **1000** being equipped w/ appropriate fortified-area artillery and the other **1500** having only MGs. As for the Ukraine, the *Rava-Russkaya and Peremyshl areas were the best prepared for combat in*

Jun 41. At this point I think it relevant to elucidate the *removal of artillery from the old fortified areas*. [See text for details.]⁷⁶

(Roberts, G., (ed.). *Marshal of Victory*. Vol. 1, 233-42, 251)⁷⁷

--**Spring 41:** "The [Soviet Union] was preparing itself for war, but it was not yet ready for it. (D. Volkogonov, "The German Attack," 80)

--**Mar 41 (Call up of Reservists):** Because of Stalin's extreme reluctance to do anything that could be seen by the Germans as a provocation, it was not until the end of **Mar 41** that Timoshenko and Zhukov were authorized to *call up 800,000 reservists*, raising the strength of some Soviet divisions to **8000** men. (J. Colvin, *Zhukov*, 62)

--**Spring 1941:** War correspondent Henry C. Cassidy:

Spring came late in Moscow in **1941**. Well into April, the heavy winter clouds that fell lower and lower, until every breath of a damp, compressed air rasped like a file in the lungs, hung over the Byzantine turrets of the Kremlin. Not until **Jun 6** did the last snow fall. Those who had to stay with it cursed the dirty coat of ice, the soggy piles of snow that clung to the cobblestoned streets, and longed for the warmth of spring, not knowing that w/ it would come war.

Everyone, except those who should know, realized that the two greatest powers of continental Europe, Russia and Germany, were about to come to grips. For two cents, you could read in all the newspapers of America reports from Ankara, Berne, and London that Germany was to attack the Soviet Union. For nothing, you could hear in the chancelleries of Europe reports from Rumanian military attachés, Hungarian secretaries of embassy, and Finnish counselors of legation that conflict was coming to the eastern front.

But, in the ensor-tight cylinder of Moscow, no one knew, not the foreigners, not the Russian people, not the Soviet leaders. The reason we did not know there would be war was that we did know the Soviet Union *wanted peace at almost any price, would make almost any concession, even unasked, to escape war*.⁷⁸ What we could not know was that Germany was determined, in any case, to attack.

So we went on, cursing the tardiness of spring, and leading the strange life of that last winter of peace in Moscow.

(H.C. Cassidy, *Moscow Dateline*, 1-2)

⁷⁶ **Note:** Recalls Zhukov: "The FAs along the old frontier had not been dismantled and wholly disarmed, as claimed in some war memoirs and historical works. They had been essentially kept intact in the most important sectors and, what is more, were to have been reinforced." (253)

⁷⁷ **Note:** Recalls Zhukov: "History gave us too small a period of peace to get everything organized as it should be. We began many things correctly, and many other things we had had no time to complete. Our miscalculation regarding the possible time of Nazi Germany's attack had a telling effect. It lay at the root of the flaws in the preparations to repulse the first enemy onslaught." (271)

⁷⁸ **Note:** So true! Stalin's policy vis-à-vis Germany in 1941 was one of appeasement at any price!

--**Spring 41**: One more serious error lay in Stalin's conviction that the *main thrust of the German assault* – in order to deprive the Soviet Union of coal, grain and oil – would fall, not on Belo-russia (where the Barbarossa attack in fact came), but against the Ukraine's wheat fields, the Donets coal basin and the Caucasus. Stalin's concept formed the basis of the Soviet operations plan for war in the autumn of **1940** and was not corrected on revision in the spring of **1941**. The *gravest mistake*, in Zhukov's opinion, was Stalin's refusal to believe that Hitler would betray the non-aggression pact, in spite of the continual intelligence on Nazi military intentions, which had become plain to Zhukov by **Apr 41**. . . Instead, Stalin actually *increased supplies to Germany under the pact*, and rejected any proposal by his own military, such as moving troops to defensive positions along the border or increasing their own combat readiness. Most such suggestions were turned down as "providing Hitler w/ an excuse to attack the Soviet Union." (J. Colvin, *Zhukov*, 62-63)

--**Apr 41 (Ultra Intelligence)**: ULTRA was the code-name for British signal intelligence derived from the decryption of intercepted German radio traffic enciphered in the high-grade cipher machine known as ENIGMA. The Germans, of course, were aware that their enemies were monitoring their signals; yet they placed absolute faith in ENIGMA, and were convinced that messages sent by the machines were undecipherable. By 1941, however, the British Government Code and Cipher School at Bletchley Park, 80 kilometers northwest of London, had made major strides in cracking certain ENIGMA keys, in particular, those associated with the *Luft-waffe*. (I. C. B. Dear (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to World War II*, 108, 910)

In April 1941, the British, while careful not to reveal the source of the information, *had begun to share ULTRA intelligence with the Russians in an attempt to warn them of a potential German attack*; several additional warnings followed.^{cxvii} Despite the risks involved, they continued to furnish the Soviets with such intelligence after *Barbarossa* began. Churchill was a "prime mover" in the process, continually asking if certain decrypts had been passed on to the Russians and, if not, why not. As a rule, the information was first sent to the British Military Mission in Moscow and, from there, conveyed to the Soviets. (*Barbarossa Unleashed*, 556)⁷⁹

--**Apr-Jun 41 (Mobilization & Strategic Deployment of Red Army forces prior to 22 June 1941)**:

Between **Apr – 22 Jun 41**, during what they called a "*specialty threatening military period*," the Soviet government and KNO accelerated "*creeping up to war*" by conducting a *concealed strategic deployment of forces*. This was, in effect, the first stage in a prolonged mobilization and deployment process that would continue into wartime and, ultimately, through early **1942**. From **26 Apr 41** on, on the instructions of the General Staff, the Trans-Baikal Military District's and Far Eastern Front's Military Councils dispatched to the West one mech. corps, two rifle corps, and two airborne bdes. On **10 May 41** the Ural Military District received instructions to send two rifle divisions to the Baltic Special Military District, and five days later the Siberian Military District received similar orders to transport single divisions to the Western and Kiev Special Military Districts.

On **13 May 41**, the People's Commissariat of Defense and Zhukov, chief of the General Staff, directed the military districts to move 28 divisions, 9 corps hq.,

⁷⁹ **Note**: For more details on British attempts – using intelligence gained from ULTRA – to alert the Russians about Operation *Barbarossa*, see comments by John Somerville (Wells, England) in: J. Rohwer &

E. Jaeckel (Hg.), *Kriegswende Dezember 1941*, 220-21.

and **4** army hq. (**16, 19, 21, 22**) from internal districts to the border districts. These forces were to assemble in positions along the Western Dvina and Dnepr Rivers, w/ the **16** and **19 Armies** reinforcing the Kiev Special Military District and the **21** and **22 Armies** the Western Special Military District. Movement of these armies began in **May 41** w/ orders to adhere to a *strict camouflage regime and to deploy carefully and slowly so as not to portray abnormally high traffic on the rail net*. These armies were to complete their concentration in designated assembly areas between **1-10 Jun 41** and were to constitute a *second strategic echelon*.

The **13 May 41** directive also ordered the redeployment of formations from the Moscow – Volga – Siberian – Arkhangel’sk – Orel and Far Eastern Military Districts for the formation of three additional armies (**20, 24** and **28**). . . [See text for more details.]

Most of the formations in these reserve armies were not at full strength. Up to **80%** of the divisions were at *reduced peacetime manning* (**6000** rather than **14,800**), and only when war actually began did they begin receiving reservists **Note**and additional weapons, equipment, and transport from wherever they could obtain it. [See text for more details.] . . .

To supplement these *secret troop movements*, by **1-10 Jun 41** the KNO and General Staff had called up **793,500** conscripts⁸⁰ under the guise of “large training exercises” (BUS). In fact, this amounted to a *partial secret mobilization*. This permitted filling out to a considerable extent about half of the existing rifle divisions as well as fortified regions, RGK artillery regiments, Air Force, engineer, signal, air defense, and rear service forces. . . Although these orders provided valuable manpower resources, full force readiness depended greatly on *weaponry and combat equipment, which were in short supply*. . .

On **15 Jun 41** district cdrs received permission from the NKO and General Staff to *shift forces from deep in the district to positions further forward IAW existing defense plans*. Some deployed by rail, but most did so on foot and at night in order to maintain secrecy. During this movement the NKO categorically *prohibited military district cdrs from redeploying first echelon forces or improving their forward defenses*.

At least one brave military district cdr *violated these instructions*. On **15 Jun 41**, General F.I. Kuznetsov, Baltic Special Military District cdr, alarmed by intelligence reports that described a threatening enemy buildup along the border, issued a lengthy order *increasing force readiness along the border*. Without specifically mentioning the German offensive preparations, Kuznetsov criticized specific division cdrs for laxness and sloppiness in maintaining combat readiness: “Today, as never before, we must be fully combat ready. Many commanders do not understand this. But all must firmly and clearly understand that at any moment we must be ready to fulfill any combat mission.” Kuznetsov then ordered cdrs to implement specific passive measures [?] to improve combat readiness and defenses. . . [See text]

⁸⁰ **Note:** Glantz uses term “conscripts,” but believe he means “reservists.”

Finally, on **18 Jun 41**, after receipt on [the day before] of a lengthy, detailed, and threatening intelligence summary, Kuznetsov ordered his forces to **full military readiness**. The order . . . specifically mandated full combat readiness on the part of district air defense, signal, and ground transport systems, instructed **8** and **11** Army cdrs to prepare engineer bridging and minelaying, and provided instructions to all other force cdrs to make appropriate defensive preparations. Despite these courageous actions on Kuznetsov's part, there is no evidence that the additional preparations made any difference in district combat performance when war began.

These measures designed to beef up the defense capability of the border military districts failed. In the period immediately preceding the German attack, although **33 divisions** began moving from internal military districts into the border districts, only **4 to 5** divisions succeeded in reaching their new concentration areas. This, combined w/ the **dispersion of the district forces to a depth of up to 400 km**, set up these forces for **sequential and piecemeal defeat**. Meanwhile, in the strategic depths, the Soviet command failed to back up forward forces in timely fashion w/ ready reserves. The planned formation and deployment of the strategic reserve of 7 armies w/ 67 divisions was also chaotic and late. This, combined w/ the General Staff's misassessment of where the German main attack would occur, condemned forward forces and strategic reserves alike to subsequent rapid defeat. . .

(D. Glantz, *Stumbling Colossus*, 102-08)

--**Apr 41** (Opposing Soviet strategies):

As late as mid-**Apr 41**, even top military leaders, like Zhukov and Timoshenko, were *unsure what kind of warfare they were supposed to be preparing for, offensive or defensive*. With the exception of a few top commanders, the Soviet army still thought it was expected to defend the country, not strike first. More remarkably, while plans for a preemptive strike were sketchy, **plans for defense were nonexistent**. There were no reserve CPs, no backup communication lines, no alternative defensive positions marked out, no meeting points for retreating units. Usually in anticipation of an attack, army engineers prepare all major communications arteries on the frontier for *speedy and effective destruction*. Bridges are layered w/ explosives, railroads and highways are secured w/ mines. Nothing of this sort was done in the spring of **1941**, although nobody, including Stalin, could rule out a German attack.

To Zhukov's consternation, elements of the *two opposing strategies*, each of which required pain-staking logistics, now intermingled, creating irreconcilable conflicts in military planning. Zhukov was most concerned about the fortifications. The old defense line, built from **1929-35** along the initial Soviet-Polish border, had been *all but abandoned*. . . while the new one – on the current border **150-200** miles farther west – was still under construction. . .

In the *absence of an over-arching political decision*, any serious and decisive military buildup was *impossible*. Indeed, the *vozdh* could *not make up his mind*,⁸¹ and the Red Army's leaders remained suspended in tired animation.

(C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 67-69)

--**Apr-Jun 41**: In all, between late July 1940 and 22 June 1941, no less than **90** separate warnings of an impending German attack were conveyed to Stalin by his intelligence apparatus, each report first having been professionally collated, carefully evaluated and interpreted before being briefed to him. Information received in the spring of 1941 (yet by no means a complete accounting) offers insight into just what Stalin knew, when he knew it, and how he responded to it:

- April 1941: Churchill, with data derived from ULTRA indicating that elite German units are in Poland, and not in the Balkans, decides to alert Stalin with a personal message from a "trusted agent." In the margins of the report, the Soviet dictator is alleged to have scrawled, "another English provocation." He takes no action.
- 19 May 1941: Richard Sorge warns that nine German armies with 150 divisions are massing on the German-Soviet border. Stalin's response to this highly accurate report is to denounce Sorge as "a little shit who has just set himself up with some good business in Japan."
- June 1941: The German ambassador in Moscow, von Schulenburg, warns the head of the Soviet International Affairs Department: "I am going to tell you something that has never been done in diplomacy before," he says. "Germany's state secret number one is that Hitler has taken the decision to begin war against you on 22 June." Stalin's response is indignant. He tells the Politburo that "Disinformation has now reached ambassadorial level!"
- 12 June 1941: Stalin receives information from "Starshina," that the decision has been taken to attack Russia. The same day, a report reaches the Foreign Ministry and Central Committee, indicating that, between 1 January and 10 June 1941, German planes had violated Soviet airspace more than 2000 times; including 91 violations in the first 10 days of June.
- Mid-June 1941: A report arrives from "Lucy," stipulating the date of the attack (22 June) and furnishing details of the German operational plan. Stalin remains in complete denial.

(*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Section 4.6)

--**13.5.41**: On this day, the General Staff issued a directive for interior military districts to *shift troops westwards*. The **22 Army** was moved from the Urals to Velikiye Luki; the **21 Army** from the Volga to Gomel; the **19 Army** from the North Caucasus to Belaya Tserkov; the **25 RC** from the Kharkov district to the Western Dvina and the **16 Army** from Trans-Baikal to Shepetovka in the Ukraine. Altogether, **28** rifle divisions and four army commands were moved in **May 41** from interior military districts closer to the western frontier. Regrettably, their strength ranged from **8000-9000**, and they *did not have all their assigned weapons*. In late **May 41**, the General Staff

⁸¹ **Note:** Yet his huge forces in the border regions of the west were in an *offensive posture*.

instructed the commanders of frontier districts immediately to start preparing command posts, and stationing Front commands there not later than **20 Jun 41** under the following scheme: [see text for details.] (Roberts, G., (ed.). *Marshal of Victory*. Vol. 1, 259-60)

--Stalin on Eve of War:

He spent the first weeks of spring in mental agony. He *fully intended to **strike at Germany first***. . . . Was it a good time for a preemptive strike or not? He needed to predict Hitler's next moves, and he felt he could not do so. In **Feb 41**, German troops landed in North Africa. In **Apr 41**, they invaded Greece and Yugoslavia. That seemed to indicate that Fuehrer had decided to deal w/ British colonies and allies in the eastern Mediterranean first, which was *very good news* for Stalin. With any luck, German troops would get mired in the Middle East. Even if they were victorious, it would take them several months to establish firm control over the rough and vast terrain. From Egypt, Hitler would probably proceed farther east, to the British colonies of Palestine, Transjordan and Iraq, or to French Syria. In principle, from there his troops could march on to Iran, Afghanistan and India. . .

However, Stalin's intelligence . . . reported that Germany was plotting an imminent invasion of the Soviet Union. Stalin didn't trust spies. Having himself betrayed many people . . . he saw no reason to believe others wouldn't do the same. . . His distrust also made sense from another, more objective perspective: spies had been promising a German attack for several months now, and *each warning had proved false*. . . (for examples see, 70)

The *tension was becoming too much for the **vozhd***. Just like his father, he tried to calm himself by *drinking heavily*. . . The feasts at his dacha had been reasonably joyful, if never relaxed. Now the host remained gloomy, *drinking one glass of wine after another* and making everybody else keep up w/ him. . .

(C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 69-73)

--**May 41: Impact of Hess Flight:**

Immediately after the [pre-emptive war] plan was completed in mid-**May 41**, though, Stalin launched an *aggressive military buildup*. In all likelihood he had been unnerved by Rudolf Hess's surprising defection to Britain. . . Stalin believed more strongly in conspiracy theory than he believed in Marxist-Leninism. . . Now he smelled a rat. He simply couldn't believe the second in command in the Nazi Party had just flown a plane to Britain to negotiate an alliance w/ London because he was insane. . . Hess's defection was the second pivotal moment that spring [first was the non-aggression pact w/ Japan in **Apr 41**?]. After it happened, Stalin decided to *accelerate war preparations*. Whatever precipitated Hess's flight, he was now *no longer sure he had until the summer of 1942*. The Red Army had to be ready to move sooner than that. [See text for more details. 80-81)

Accelerated preparations for war included:

- Five [5] armies started secretly moving west. . . The armies were to be in position by **10 Jul 41**. Two more armies were to deploy soon after. . . [See text for deployment details.];

- In **May-Jun 41**, **800,000** reservists were quickly drafted;
- All military schools were ordered to finish early that year so the young lieutenants could be sent west.
- The frontier military districts started to move troops closer to the border; the commanders of those districts were ordered to begin preparing combat headquarters,⁸²
- About late **May 41**, the Soviets started “cleansing” the newly conquered territories in the west,⁸³ ordering the police to accelerate purges in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia; all in all, at least **170,000** men and women in the Baltics fell victim to this eleventh-hour purge;
- Finally, Soviet propaganda measures ratcheted up to prepare people psychologically for war. (See, 81-84)

In all likelihood, *fewer than 10 people knew about these measures in their entirety*. . . The accelerated buildup suggested that the army would be *ready to strike by midsummer 1941*. The seven [7] armies were expected to be in place by **10 Jul 41**. (C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 80-84)

--**17.5.41**: Stalin believed, as he stated in his toast on **5 May 41**, that in the event of a German attack – which he *considered unlikely*, as it would have meant war on two fronts – the Red Army would be in a position quickly to shift from “defensive to offensive action.” But did he really *not* know about the “top-secret” directive of the People’s Commissar for Defense, No. **34678** of **17 May 41**, in which the Marshal of the Soviet Union, S.K. *Timoshenko*, had evaluated the results of combat readiness? It stated that the requirement and the provisions for “the winter period of **1941** had not been met in a significant number of formations and units.” The Main Military Soviet, for example, assessed the readiness of the Red Army air force as “unsatisfactory.” The documents w/ these appraisals, which were well known to Stalin, are signed by *Timoshenko*, A.A. *Zhdanov* and *Zhukov*. (*Volkogonov*, “*The German Attack*,” 79-80)

--**23.5.-5.6.41**: The *special inspection* of the Kiev, the Western and Baltic Special Military Districts, and the Odessa Military District, which is carried out over this period, ascertains the readiness of the forces as *unsatisfactory*. The coded telegram, addressed to the military soviets of the districts and the armies, and signed by *Timoshenko* and *Zhukov*, presents an *alarming evaluation of the condition of the units*. A little earlier, A. *Zaporozhets* had reported the same findings in a special account to Stalin and other members of the Politburo, “concerning the conditions of the *fortified districts* on our western frontiers,” namely that “the majority of the troops deployed in the fortified districts on our western frontiers are *not battle ready*.” Yet only a month and a half before the beginning of the war [i.e., on **5.5.41**] Stalin is insisting that in the event of a German attack, the USSR would quickly go over to the offensive. (*Volkogonov*, “*The German Attack*,” 80)

--**May-Jun 41**: The military manages to persuade Stalin to undertake a big step: at end of May and beginning of June **1941**, **793,000** reservists are called up for training, which makes it possible to replenish some formations in the front line **2-3** weeks before the start of the conflict. In general

⁸² **Note:** The new locations were just under **100** miles from the proposed front line. (82)

⁸³ **Note:** This is an intriguing bit of information, in context of Soviet planning for preemptive strike.

terms, at the beginning of **1941**, the strength of Red Army units – measured against a requirement for a full complement (**100%**) – was as follows: medium tanks – **74%**, artillery wpns – **76%**, aircraft – full complement, but in the main these machines consisted of old models. (*Volkogonov, “The German Attack,”* 82-83)

--**May-Jun 41:** In spite of the misgivings of his professional advisors, Stalin had moved forces into newly occupied territories – *Bessarabia, Poland, Finland, Baltic States* – and out of the so-called *Stalin Line* (whose powerful guns and tangles of barbed wire in difficult forest country later impressed the Germans who overran it), until by **May 41 170** Russian divisions were stationed outside of the pre-**1939** frontiers of the USSR. . . [Thus] the fact is that well over half the Russian army was occupying new positions whose fortifications and rearward communications were incomplete. . . Preparations of the Red Army for war, esp. in frontier districts, were impeded up to the last moment by Stalin’s continuing obsession w/ avoiding provoking the Germans and so prolonging the respite. (*Calvocoressi & Wint, Total War*, 166, 170)

--**Jun 41:** Tension kept mounting. And the greater loomed the threat of war, the tenser worked the leading personnel of the People’s Commissariat for Defense and the General Staff. Indeed, the leading members of the Commissariat and General Staff, and especially Marshal Timoshenko, **worked 18 or 19 hours a day** at that time, and often remained in their offices at night. (Roberts, G., (ed.). *Marshal of Victory*. Vol. 1, 275)

--**Jun 41: German overflights:** Between **10-19 Jun 41**, the frontier was violated no fewer than **86** times by German planes; on **20-21 Jun 41**, **55** times. Each time the aircraft flew at least 20-30 miles deep. (87)

Even the servile and opportunistic Beria, who normally told Stalin only what he wanted to hear, reported that the Germans had dispatched numerous saboteurs to Ukraine – Byelorussia – Lithuania. The saboteurs crossed the border individually or in small groups and carried radio transmitters, weapons, currency, and Soviet passports. Some of them were former White Army officers who had fought against the Reds in the same region **20** years earlier. . . On **11 Jun 41**, Beria’s men discovered a telephone cable on the bottom of the San River; the Germans had been monitoring Red Army phone conversations. (87)

Each time Stalin was confronted w/ such information, he said . . . “Hitler and his generals are not so foolish as to *start a two-front war*. The Germans broke their neck on this in World War I. Hitler would never risk such a thing.”⁸⁴ (C. Pleshakov, *Stalin’s Folly*, 87-88)

--**13.6.41:** As late as **13 Jun 41**, Timoshenko asked Stalin to authorize the alerting of troops in the border districts and pre-deployment of the first echelons. “You propose mobilization, alerting troops and moving them to the western borders?” said Stalin. “***That means war. Do you understand or not?***” (J. Colvin, *Zhukov*, 64)

--**15.6.41:** If Stalin and the military leadership were convinced war was impending, they also had a very good idea of *exactly when to expect it*. Richard Sorge, a Soviet master spy in Tokyo, who was a German newspaperman w/ extremely well-informed contacts, gave them that information. On **15 Jun 41** he sent a radiogram that read, “***War will begin on 22 June . . .***” and another that stated, “***Attack will proceed on a broad front commencing 22 June.***” In any event, Stalin knew by mid-**Jun 41** that “*to escape war, even in the very near future, was impossible*” and permitted the *final preparations* to begin. The rule, however, was “to do what was necessary to strengthen

⁸⁴ **Note:** This was clearly an *idée fixe* for Stalin on eve of war!

the defenses . . . but not do anything in the frontier zone that could *provoke* the fascists or hasten their attack on us.” The Defense Commissariat ordered the frontier military districts to *shift their divisions closer to the border* and into positions designated for them in the special plan for defending the state frontier. The movements began on **15 Jun 41** but, on the 22nd, “only certain” of the divisions were in position. On **21 Jun 41**, the *Politburo* acted to create a single command for the armies being brought from the interior military districts to the line of the Dnepr and Dvina. On the night of **21 Jun 41**, a war alert directive went out from Moscow. It ordered all units to *combat readiness* and those close to the border to *man the fortifications and firing points in secret* during the night. Troops on the border were not to respond to any *German provocations* or to take any other action w/o special orders. The directive did not reach all the field commands in the hours left before the German attack, and the *state of readiness otherwise was far from complete*. (Ziemke & Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 23)

--**17./18.6.41** (Stalin vs. his generals): In the very last days of peace Stalin’s dogged confidence *began to crack*. On **17 Jun 41** he ordered his advisors to summarize their intelligence . . . Alas, by the time it was ready, the document was already only of historical interest. It reached its readers after the Germans had already attacked. On **18 Jun 41** Timoshenko and Zhukov tried once again to per-suade Stalin and the Politburo to *put the army on full alert*. The meeting lasted for 3 hours. The more Zhukov spoke, the more irritable Stalin became. He accused Zhukov of warmongering and became *so abusive that Zhukov fell silent*. But Timoshenko persisted. There would be favor, he said, if the *Wehrmacht* struck the troops in their present positions. Stalin was furious. “It’s all Timoshenko’s work,” he told the others. “He’s preparing everyone for war. He ought to have been shot, but I’ve known him as a good soldier since the Civil War.” Timoshenko reminded Stalin that he told the cadets on **5 May 41** that war was inevitable. Stalin replied furiously, “I said that so that people would raise their alertness. But you have to understand that Germany on her own *will never fight Russia*. You must understand this.” He stormed out, then suddenly put his head round the door and shouted, “If you’re going to provoke the Germans on the frontier by moving troops there w/o our permission, then heads will roll, mark my words.” In Stalin’s mouth that was not a figure of speech. Stalin’s wishful thinking had become a catastrophic obsession. (R. Braithwaite, *Moscow 1941*, 59-60)

--**17.-19.6.41** [from diary of Major Thilo]:

I fly as aide-de-Camp to Chief of the General Staff (Halder) via Hungary to Rumania, and to the front on the Prut River. Enemy situation in the south of Bessarabia (briefing by Chief of Army Mission, General Hauffe) – Russians are obviously *withdrawing mobile forces* from there to behind the Dniester River, *destroying bridges and stocks in Bessarabia*. Accordingly, only *defensive action* on southern Prut front and Danube to be expected [facing attack by German Eleventh Army].

(K.W. Thilo, et al., “*German Operations on the Lutsk-Rovno Axis*,” in: D.M. Glantz, *Initial Period of the War*, 294)

--**19.6.41**: In Moscow, an alarming mood was intensifying—even more unambiguous information was arriving from Belorussia. A special report dated **19 Jun 41** from the Belorussian NKGB (People’s Commissariat of State Security) to the USSR NKGB about *Germany’s preparations for war against the USSR* stated:

1. The Germans are building bunkers in the woods a distance of **400** meters from the Koroshchin – Nepli road, and observation posts have been established in

front of them at a range of **100** to **200** meters from the road. They are taking readied materials, which had been prepared by peasants for residences, for the construction of fortifications. Vehicles are standing in Terespol and its environs, loaded w/ fascines (of sticks bound together by wire), which are intended for passage through the swamps and sandy areas.

2. . . . (On both sides of the border railroad line, bunkers have been built and trenches dug for firing from upright positions).

. . . The entire population of Warsaw is *talking about the pending German entry into a war w/ the USSR in the next several days. . .*

(Agent X) on the road towards the border on the Brest axis personally observed a *large aggregation of German troops*; two infantry divisions that have arrived from Austria are in Terespol. . .

The discussion is plainly about the **45 ID**! Of those divisions positioned opposite Brest, only the **45 ID** was formed in Austria. The special report goes on to mention practically *all the measures that the 45 ID had implemented*.

[Note: Author goes on to note that virtually nothing had been done on this axis to conceal most important military targets. Orderly rows of guns and vehicles on the artillery parks and encampments of the motorized-mechanized units, as well as the acft lined up on the airfields, made them not only easy to spot, but also enticing targets for air strikes. . . At the fortress of Brest-Litovsk, the artillery parks of the **333** and **84 Rifle Rgts.**, as well as of other units, continued to *stand in the open w/in a km of the border*.]

(R. Aliev, *The Siege of Brest, 1941*, 44-45)

--**20.6.41**: On this day, in Belostok, the hq. of the NKVD's Border Forces of the Belorussian District issued an order for heightened security; *leaves were cancelled* until **30 Jun 41**. Everyone was to be at their assigned posts on the border between the hours of **2300** – **0500**, except for those returning from duty details at **2300** and the sentries at the frontier posts. Border detachments were ordered to take position no closer than **300** meters from the border. (R. Aliev, *The Siege of Brest, 1941*, 46)

--G. Blumentritt:

In **1914-18**, as a lieutenant, I fought for the first two (**2**) years against the Russians, after a brief contact w/ the French and Belgians at *Namur* in **Aug 14**. In our very first attack on the Russian front, we quickly realized that here we were meeting *essentially different soldiers* from the French and Belgian – hardly visible, entrenched w/ consummate skill, and resolute! We suffered considerable losses . . . Even in **1914-18** the greater hardness of war conditions in the East had its effect on our own troops. Men preferred to be sent to the Western rather than the Eastern front. In the West it was a war of material and mass-artillery – *Verdun*, the *Somme*, and so on. These factors were paramount, and very grueling to endure, but at least we were dealing w/ Western adversaries. In the East there was *not so much shellfire*, but the fighting was more dogged, as the human type was much harder. Night fighting, hand-to-hand fighting, fighting in the forests, were particularly fostered by the Russians. In that war there was a saying current

among German soldiers: ‘In the East the gallant Army is fighting; in the West the Fire Brigade is standing by.’ It was in this war, however, that we first learnt to realize what ‘Russia’ really means. The opening battle in **Jun 41**, revealed to us for the first time the *new Soviet Army*. Our casualties were up **50%**. The *Ogpu* [?] and a *women’s battalion* defended the old citadel at *Brest-Litovsk* for a week, fighting to the last . . . The Red Army of **1941-45** was *far harder than the Czar’s Army*, for they were fighting fanatically for an idea. That increased their doggedness, and in turn made our own troops hard, for in the East the maxim held good – ‘*You or I.*’ Discipline in the Red Army was *far more rigorous* than in the Czar’s Army.

(Quoted in: *B.H.L. Hart, German Generals Talk*, 187-88)

--Most historians writing about the Russian’s “*Barbarossa*” disaster have made too little use of one crucial factor – Red Army *war plans*. In an extraordinary example of strategic blindness, the Soviet political and military leadership prepared for war on a false assumption: that there would be time to mobilize & concentrate the Red Army before the main fighting began. . . The USSR would choose when war would break out – as had been the case w/ Finland in **1939**. The Soviet generals could not grasp that it was the *Red Army* that could be caught by surprise. The Soviet military leaders also expected – at least until late spring of **1941** – that it would take several weeks for the Germans to concentrate their forces for an attack against Russia. They believed that this German concentration could not be carried out secretly. They also supposed that their covering forces on the border could hold any German attack for 3-4 weeks while the Red Army was mobilized and concentrated. These assumptions were not consistent w/ intelligence that was coming in, nor w/ the knowledge of the sudden attacks the Germans had mounted against Poland, Scandinavia and France. By **May 41**, the Red Army had finally concluded that the German armed forces were *already mobilized* and that a large German force had been concentrated in East Prussia and Poland, but Stalin still did not order a change to existing plans.

Behind the planning of **1940-41** was the Red Army’s offensive doctrine. Under Marshal Timoshenko, the High Command developed a series of war plans from **Sep 40**. The initial plan was for a massive counterattack into German-held southern Poland (to be mounted after a **30-day** mobilization period). By **May 41**, the planners were proposing a pre-emptive surprise attack, a “sudden blow on the enemy, both from the air and on land,” following a “hidden mobilization.” Offensive action was tested in the war games of Jan 41, and the offensively-minded Zhukov was appointed Chief of the General Staff after his success in those games. . . Far from ignoring the general German threat in the late spring of **1941**, Stalin and the Red Army High Command were preoccupied w/ it. The Russians were scrambling to reorganize their forces on the ground and in the air. They believed they had the means of dealing w/ the German threat, through a counter-offensive or even a pre-emptive attack. What existed by **Jun 41**, however, was a half-baked Red Army strategy for offensive actions by Soviet mechanized formations and aviation regiments concentrated near the border. The USSR could not simultaneously prepare a defense in depth and an offensive spearhead; in the end, it had neither. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 37-41)⁸⁵

⁸⁵ **Note:** Concerning the Red Army’s deployment in western Russian on **22.6.41** Mawdsley writes: “However, the fear for the Ukraine was not the main reason for the concentration of the Red Army there, in the Kiev Military District. From the Russian point of view, the question was not where to defend but *where to attack*.” In other words, “Red Army planners looked at the options and recommended an attack [against Germany] along the southern axis [out of the Ukraine]. This variant was approved by Stalin in **Oct 40**. A large force, heavy in tanks and acft, was built up in the Kiev Military District, which would form the

--Non-Aggression Pact: Ironically, the infamous Ribbentrop-Molotov Non-Aggression Pact, which Stalin negotiated w/ Hitler in **Aug 39**, actually *contributed to the catastrophic defeat the Red Army suffered during initial stages of Operation Barbarossa*. By signing the infamous pact, Stalin hoped to *forestall possible German aggression* against the Soviet Union and, while doing so, create a “buffer” or security zone by seizing eastern Poland and the Baltic States. However, the subsequent Soviet invasion and occupation of eastern Poland in **Sep 39** and the Baltic States in the fall of **1940**⁸⁶ brought the Soviet Union into *direct contact w/ German-occupied territory*. This, in turn, compelled Stalin’s government to reevaluate potential strategic military threats to the Soviet Union and *adjust its war, defense, and mobilization plans* accordingly. In short, by **Jul 40**, the Soviet Union *assessed Germany as its most likely future strategic opponent*, and the Red Army General Staff identified Hitler’s *Wehrmacht* as the *most dangerous military threat to Stalin’s communist state*. (Glantz, *Barbarossa Derailed*, 21)

--**Sep 39-Jun 41**: Soviet military planning, both for offense and defense, was greatly confused by the movement of the frontier **200** miles to the west, following annexation of the Baltic States, eastern Poland, and Bessarabia in **1939/40**. Before **1939**, the Red Army had prepared defensive positions on the Soviet Union’s existing border, in what the Germans would call the “Stalin Line.” With a border stretching **800** miles and relatively level terrain, it was impossible to create a defensive position even as solid as the French Maginot Line or the German *Westwall*. Instead there was a string of “fortified zones” (*ukreplennye raiony*), each w/ bunkers, artillery and MG positions, and tank traps. Following the annexations made by the USSR in the west, Stalin and Red Army decided on a high-priority programme to build **20 fortified zones** along the new border (what the Germans called the “**Molotov Line**”), using materiel from the old border defenses. . . The fortified zones provided part of the “screen” behind which the main offensive force of the Red Army could mobilize – so the further west this screen was sited the better. The fortified zones also freed mobile troops for a general offensive, by covering that part of the frontier where the Soviet troops would not be attacking.

There was, to be sure, a more pessimistic side to Soviet strategic planning, which would explain why in **May 41** work began on renovating the Stalin Line and building a new “rear” defensive line (Ostashkov – Pochep Line) just west of Moscow. The Russians would not in the end be given much time to prepare the new fortified zones. From the point of view of fixed defenses the Red Army was in the worst possible position in **Jun 41**: the “Molotov Line” was far from finished, and the “Stalin Line” had been partly dismantled. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 23)

--**1941 [DP 41]**: Mandated by Stalin and prepared in early **1941** by Army General Georgii K. Zhukov, who was appointed chief of the General Staff in **Jan 41**,⁸⁷ the provisions of **DP 41** were based on the cardinal assumption that “the Red Army would begin military operations in response to an aggressive attack.” Although clearly defensive in a strategic sense, because of the *largely offensive focus of Soviet military thought in the 1930s*, which were a period dominated by the development of the tactical and operational offensive concepts of “*deep battle*” and “*deep operations*,” **DP-41** contained many offensive features, couched in terms of necessary and inevitable offensive reactions, that is, “counteractions” to potential enemy aggression. For example, a contingency plan prepared by chief of staff Zhukov on **15 May 41**, which recommended the Soviet

offensive fist of a wartime Southwestern Army Group. The plan was tested in the **Jan 41** war games. It was developed by Zhukov in the form of the **Mar 41** and **May 41** war plans when he became Chief of the General Staff.” (40)

⁸⁶ **Note**: Weren’t the Baltic States seized in **Jun 40**?

⁸⁷ **Note**: Was he not appointed in **Feb 41**?

Union launch a **preemptive attack** against Germany in reaction to a perceived German military build up on the Soviet Union's western border, was ultimately incorporated as an "answering strike" in the Kiev Special Military District's (wartime Southwestern Front's) portion of **DP-41**. (Glantz, *Barbarossa Derailed*, 21-22)

--**1941**: Ordered by Stalin and prepared in early **1941** by G.K. Zhukov, the new Chief of the General Staff, **State Defense Plan 1941 (DP 41)** reflected the assumption „that the Red Army would begin military ops in response to an aggressive attack.“ Thus, while defensive in a strategic sense, the plan and the military thought that it echoed was *inherently offensive* in nature. **DP 41** and its associated mobilization plan required Red Army to deploy **237** of its **303** divisions in the Baltic Special, Western Special and Kiev Special Military Districts and the 9th Separate Army, which, when war began, would form the Northwestern, Western, Southwestern and, ultimately, Southern Fronts. . . **Mobilization difficulties in early 1941**, however, **precluded full implementation of DP 41**. Thus, on **22.6.41**, the first strategic echelon's three (**3**) operational belts consisted of **57**, **52** and **62** divisions, respectively, along w/ most of the Red Army's **20** mech. corps deployed in European Russia. The five (**5**) armies deployed in the *second* strategic echelon under *Stavka* control, which ultimately comprised **57** divisions assembling along the Dnepr and Dvina rivers, was *virtually invisible to German intelligence*. Its mission was to orchestrate a counteroffensive in conjunction w/ counterattacks conducted by the forward *fronts*. However, by **22.6.41** neither the forward military districts nor the **5** reserve armies had completed deploying IAW the official mobilization and deployment plans. As in so many other respects, the German attack caught the Soviet Union *in transition*. Worse, Soviet war planners had fundamentally misjudged the situation, not only by concentrating their forces so far forward, but also by expecting the main enemy thrust south of the Pripiat' Marshes. Thus, the Red Army was *off balance* and concentrated in the SW when the main German mech. force advanced further north. (Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 16; also, Glantz, *Barbarossa Derailed*, 21)⁸⁸

--Although Stalin, like Golikov, considered a German attack upon the Soviet Union to be *most unlikely until Germany had conquered or made peace w/ Great Britain*, he had given as his opinion that, when war did come, the Germans would make their main thrust into the Ukraine in order to seize Ukrainian grain, Donetsk coal, and Caucasian oil. This assumption was certainly reflected in the Soviet defensive deployment in June 1941, in that the *greater part of the Red Army* was to be found in the Ukraine, the forces there being greater than the combined strength of Pavlov's Western and Kuznetsov's Northwestern Fronts. The Soviet troops in Galicia and Bessarabia covering the Ukraine were organized into the Southwestern and Southern Fronts. [See text for details.] (Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 134)

--**Stalin Line**: German "Frontschau" training video for the *Ersatzheer*, offers interesting impressions of the Stalin Line. On display are, for ex.: tank traps (of various types), water obstacles, wire entanglements, criss-crossed steel beams (tank obstacles), bunkers (concrete, wooden, earthen), earthworks of timber/soil, wide and deep AT ditches; houses/barns used to hide wpn positions, even flamethrowers w/ remote ignition. (*Frontschau Nr. 2, "Russischer Stellungsbau"*)

--**Stalin Line**: An integral part of the shield behind which the Soviets would prepare their strategic counteroffensives were their *Fortified Regions*. Called the "Stalin Line" by the Germans, they were in *no way comparable to the Maginot Line*; the main works consisted of bunkers w/ light artillery and MGs. One of the two oldest Fortified Regions was that at *Polotsk* astride the

⁸⁸ **Note**: See Glantz, p 215, f.n. 9, for details of deployment of Soviet first strategic echelon. The third operational echelon (**62** divisions) was deployed to a depth of **400** km (along the Dnepr and Dvina rivers).

Dvina River, where the Soviet, Polish and Lithuanian borders come together. Others, at *Minsk*, *Mozyr* and *Slutsk*, dated from the **1930s**. Stalin insisted that the defensive lines move west into Poland in **1939**. In **Jun 40**, a month after replacing Voroshilov, Timoshenko ordered new construction in these areas, including updating Fortress Brest's defenses. On *Barbarossatag*, most divisions manning the Soviet-German frontier lacked their engineer bns which were busy building new bunkers and obstacles, markedly degrading the divisions' combat power. Construction went slowly, partially owing to the same miserable transportation infrastructure that would soon hamstring v. Bock's advance. Prior to *Barbarossa*, Red Army inspectors found the Minsk defenses "deplorable." The German after-action report claimed that only **193** of the **1175** forts throughout the West Front were equipped and occupied. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa* 1941, 27-28)

--**22.6.41** (Soviet Unpreparedness): Not only did the Red Army leadership simply brush aside all those well-founded warnings [of impending German assault], but it **actually halted such defensive measures as were being initiated by responsible military leaders** . . . Thus immediately before the war, the commanders of the Baltic and Kiev Special Military Districts had on their own initiative taken a number of measures to *enhance the combat readiness of their troops*. These measures, however, had to be *suspended and rescinded on orders from the Red Army General Staff*. Requests by other commanding officers to be allowed to move their units forward into defensive positions and to man gun emplacements had likewise been rejected. *Blackout and airraid precautions were also prohibited*; uncamouflaged acft were lined up in close order on the airfields; and it was forbidden for AA artillery to open fire. Once the Central Directorate of Political Propaganda had labeled warnings of a conflict as "**provacative rumors**," the *initiative of field cdrs was paralyzed*; no one wished to be accused of having fallen for enemy provocations. Particularly damaging to the combat readiness of the Soviet forces was the well-known statement issued by the Tass agency on **14 Jun 41**, which officially and categorically denied the possibility of a German attack on the Soviet Union, describing all rumors to the contrary as "**lies and provocations**." (J. Hoffmann, *GSSW*, Vol. IV: 833-34)

--**22.6.41** (Soviet artillery): Much of the artillery *had not yet undergone range firing, was not prepared for combat, and was accordingly practicing at ranges when the Wehrmacht struck*. (J. Colvin, *Zhukov*, 65)

--**22.6.41**: ***Wpns are in short supply for the Red Army***. Even before the Germans attack, Russian arms production, though substantial, has not been adequate to equip all of the new units formed in 1940/41. In Jun 41, the Red Army has less than **30%** of the automatic wpns called for in the tables of organization. West Front troops have only **60%** of the authorized number of rifles. (*Dunn, Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 90-91)

--**22.6.41** (Soviet Forces on Frontier): Along the state frontier we had **47** land and **6** naval frontier guard detachments, **9** separate frontier commandant's offices; **11** regiments of the Internal Affairs Commissariat's operational troops and an number of rifle divisions—the first echelons of the covering force of military districts—which were stationed near the frontier but not deployed for combat. All in all, the western frontier districts and fleets numbered **2.9** million men, over **1500** modern acft and a large number of obsolete planes, about **38,000** guns and mortars, **1475** new KV and T-34 tanks and a considerable number of obsolete light tanks . . . some of which needed repairs. (Roberts, G., (ed.). *Marshal of Victory*. Vol. 1, 261)

--**22.6.41**: Deficiencies of Soviet Military:

- Zu Kriegsbeginn befanden sich auf den Fliegerhorsten nur **16-17% neuer Flugzeugen** [die ueberwiegende Mehrheit waren veraltete Typen];
- Unzulaenglichkeiten zeigten sich auch bei der Artillerie. Viele Art.-Einheiten waren noch nicht auf mechanischen Zug umgestellt;
- Der ueberwiegende Teil der Schuetzen-Einheiten der Sowjettruppen befand sich bei Kriegsbeginn nicht in mobilem Zustand;
- Die Vorbereitung der neuen Verteidigungslinien war nicht abgeschlossen worden;
- Im Baltikum, in Weissrussland und in der Westukraine war das Flugplatznetz noch unentwickelt;
- Die fuer Truppenverschiebungen benoetigten Eisenbahnstrecken u. festen Strassen befanden sich in schlechtem Zustand;
- Der Mangel an [modernen] Panzer—der Massenaustoss der neuen Panzer „T 34“ u. der schweren Panzer „KV“ war noch nicht angelaufen; infolgedessen hatten nur die in Grenznaehe liegenden mechanisierten Korps eine Panzerausstattung, doch auch diese nur eine unvollkommene (**50 bis 80%**);
- Eine *sehr weitreichende Bedeutung* hatte auch das *Fehlen der **Kriegserfahrung** bei unseren Kdr.-Kadern*.

(B.S. Telpuchowski, *Die sowj. Geschichte des Grossen Vaterlaendischen Krieges*, 43-44)

--**22.6.41** [Overview]: Soviet armies were ill prepared to meet the onslaught that struck them. Having annexed large areas of territory between **1939-41**, the Red Army had abandoned its border fortifications to redeploy its armies in the Baltic States, Poland and Rumania. Furthermore, the Red Army was undergoing a *comprehensive restructuring* at time of the attack. Some Soviet units were fully reequipped by the summer of '41 and had a complete complement of men, while others were only partially equipped, some not at all. Moreover, much of the equipment of the army and air force, despite being available in massive numbers, was obsolete and mechanically unsound. Many of the armored units had moved to new barracks in the occupied regions, but their equipment remained to the east, awaiting transportation. Rifle units were in similar straits. Furthermore, the leadership of the Red Army had been *decimated* in the purges...

In all, the Red Army deployed **4.7** million men in **300** divisions, of whom **2.5** million men – a force of **170** divisions – were in the western border regions. These forces also deployed **24 000** tanks, **8000** acft, and **40 000** artillery pieces.⁸⁹ However, of the **24 000** tanks, barely ¼ were operational at time of German attack, the remainder being in workshops near their units or far to the rear. The few remaining operational tanks consisted in the main of old models, only **867 T-34s** and **508 KVs** were available for action. (For additional details see, *B. Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 30-32)⁹⁰

⁸⁹ **Note:** The Red Army had **67 335** artillery pieces and mortars (larger than **50mm**) in Jun 41. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 11)

⁹⁰ **Note:** For more background on Soviet **T-34** and **KV** tanks see, *Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 11. For ex., latter source notes that “despite their greater weights, wide treads on the T-34 and KV gave them as much as **25%** lower ground pressures per square inch than the German tanks and yielded much

--Excerpt from Barbarossa Unleashed:

4.2: Impact of the Purges

As one account put it bluntly: “Where Hitler had tamed his officer caste, Stalin had killed his.”^{cxxiii} The purges of the armed forces were part of the Great Purge of the civilian and military establishment which the preternaturally paranoid Soviet dictator had implemented in 1936. Although the Russian army had no discernable tradition of revolt or revolution – its sole attempt to usurp power, the Decembrist coup of 1825, had petered out after a day – Stalin still feared it. Obsessed that his rivals – real or imaginary – might move against him, he responded with homicidal brutality. During the height of the purges in 1937-38, more than 1.5 million people were arrested by the Soviet secret police, the NKVD;^{cxxiv} of these, more than 1.3 million received some sort of sentence, while more than 680,000 were executed. The effects of the purges were felt at every level of Soviet society, from the Politburo down to ordinary citizens arrested in the streets. Among those killed were so-called “ex-kulaks,” “criminal elements,” “socially dangerous elements,” “members of anti-Soviet parties,” “former tsarist civil servants,” and “White Guards.” Of course, these designations were applied rather flexibly to any suspect, whether he was a Party member, member of the intelligentsia, member of the armed forces, or a simple worker.^{cxxv}

Although new scholarship has revealed that the NKVD’s “*Ezhovshchina*” – “The Reign of Ezhov,” a reference to Nikolai Ezhov, leader of the NKVD from September 1936 to November 1938 – had less of an impact on the armed forces than hitherto believed, its impact was nonetheless horrific. All told, some 35,000 officers were arrested or expelled from the Red Army between May 1937 and September 1938;^{cxxvi} of these, about 30 percent were eventually reinstated by 1940, but more than 22,000 were either executed or their fate remains unknown. If that were not enough, a new wave of terror commenced in the fall of 1938, with the result that high-level arrests and executions of key military leaders went on – albeit at a slower pace – right up to the eve of war with Germany.^{cxxvii} In the final analysis, the purges decapitated the leadership of the Soviet armed forces; among those eliminated were:

- 3 of 5 marshals
- 13 of 15 army generals
- 8 of 9 admirals
- 50 of 57 army corps commanders
- 154 of 186 division commanders
- 16 of 16 army commissars
- 25 of 28 army corps commissars^{cxxviii}

According to Evan Mawdsley, the purges of the Soviet military had three primary outcomes, each of which was devastating: a) indispensable trained leaders were lost during a period of rapid Red Army expansion; b) the initiative of the officer corps was “paralyzed,” and a “mental state imposed which was the very opposite of the German ‘mission-oriented command system;’” and, c) the purges convinced foreign nations – among them Hitler’s Germany – that the Soviet military was nothing more than a “broken shell.”^{cxxix}

Certainly, the evisceration of the Red Army’s officer corps constituted one of the gravest handicaps to Soviet military effectiveness in both the Russo-Finnish conflict of 1939/40 and the

better traction on mud or snow.”

initial phase of the war with Germany. As a direct result of the purges – and the rapid ongoing expansion – the Red Army’s shortage of skilled specialists reached crisis proportions by 1940. Moreover, the Army faced a shortfall of 36,000 officers on the eve of the German invasion; a figure which climbed to 55,000 following wartime mobilization.^{cxxx} Only 7.1 percent of commanding officers had a higher military education (55.9 percent had a secondary education, 24.6 percent had taken accelerated courses and 12 percent of officers had received no military education at all).^{cxxxi} By June 1941, 75 percent of field officers and 70 percent of political commissars had occupied their posts for less than a year.^{cxxxii} Field commanders at *all* levels held “positions for which they were unqualified, lacked the practical experience and confidence necessary to adjust to changing tactical situations and tended to apply stereotypical solutions, distributing their subordinate units according to textbook diagrams without regard for actual terrain. The results were predictable.”^{cxxxiii}

Yet if the purges had broken the back of the Soviet officer corps, they had strikingly solidified Stalin’s own hold on power. From this point forward, no one dared challenge his authority on any matter pertaining to war or peace. The implications of Stalin’s iron grip on the Soviet state were profound:

The mass purges of 1937 ensured that Stalin would not be threatened, that his despotism would not be challenged, whatever his own paranoia told him. The purges also greatly weakened the position of the army’s General Staff in its dealings with the political leadership, most especially with Stalin himself. . . . Stalin – cautious, distrustful and cold-bloodedly ruthless – was increasingly told what his sycophantic and anxious subordinates thought he wanted to hear. This would play its part in the disaster of June 1941.

In the vital months prior to the launch of “*Barbarossa*,” therefore, decisions on all matters of importance within the Soviet Union were taken by Stalin personally. There were discussions, sometimes lengthy and usually informal, with fluctuating groups from within the “inner circle.” But those who met Stalin on a regular basis saw each other as rivals, and were, consequently, divided among themselves. They were also acutely aware that their tenure was insecure. Their dependence on Stalin was total. So, therefore, was their loyalty to him. This did not make for an open exchange of views. . . . The reinforcement of Stalin’s own views was, therefore, almost guaranteed. This would prove a major weakness, rather than a strength, as invasion loomed.^{cxxxiv}

Recently, some scholars^{cxxxv} have concluded that even more so than the Great Purge, it was the breakneck expansion of the Red Army which was largely to blame for the decline in the Army’s quality and its poor showing in the initial phases of the Russo-German war. Be that as it may, operations on the eastern front reveal that it took the Russians a good two years, perhaps longer, to begin to reach parity with the Germans on the *operational* level of war – a status they would never attain on the *tactical* level. In fact, poor small unit tactics were endemic to the Red Army in the early years of the war, as exemplified by the following example from the central front in early 1942, near the village of Olenino:

A Russian regiment [attacked] eastward in an attempt to cut off some German units and link up with friendly forces moving in from the opposite direction. The attack methods employed by the Russian infantry showed that the troops were inadequately trained. The infantry units emerged from their jumpoff position in a disorderly manner, having the appearance of a disorganized herd that suddenly

emerged from a forest. As soon as the Germans opened fire, panic developed in the ranks of the attack force. The infantrymen had to be driven forward by three or four officers with drawn pistols. In many instances any attempt to retreat or even to glance backward was punished with immediate execution. There was virtually no mutual fire support or coordinated fire.

Typical of Russian infantry tactics was the tenacity with which the attack was repeated over and over again. . . From 27 February to 2 March, detachments, consisting of about 80 Russians each, attacked daily in the same sector and at the same time. . . Every one of them was unsuccessful, the attacking Russians being wiped out before they could reach the German position. . .

During the main assault [several days later] the teamwork between Russian tanks and infantry was inadequate. In this particular engagement the Russian infantry showed little aggressiveness, and the tanks had to advance alone to break up the German defense system before the infantry jumped off. . .

As in many other instances, the lower echelon Russian commanders revealed a certain lack of initiative in the execution of orders. Individual units were simply given a mission or a time schedule to which they adhered rigidly. This operating procedure had its obvious weaknesses. While the Russian soldier had the innate faculty of adapting himself easily to technological innovations and overcoming mechanical difficulties, the lower echelon commanders seemed incapable of coping with sudden changes in the situation and acting on their own initiative. Fear of punishment in the event of failure may have motivated their reluctance to make independent decisions.^{cxxxvi}

(Barbarossa Unleashed, Chapter 4)

--Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

4.4: Final Strategic Planning: Failures & False Assumptions

Since the late 1930s, the Red Army General Staff had extensively refined and drilled their mobilization plans. By spring 1941, spurred by intelligence estimates of the growing German threat, the Soviet leadership had partially implemented a “special threatening military period” and accelerated “creeping up to war” by conducting a concealed strategic deployment of forces. This signified, in essence, the initial stage of a precautionary mobilization process which was to accelerate after the war began and continue into early 1942. Beginning in late April 1941, and in strictest secrecy, major forces were transferred from the interior of the country – from Trans-Baikal and the Far East, and later from the Ural and Siberian Military Districts – into the threatened western military districts. All told, four army headquarters, 19 corps headquarters and 28 divisional headquarters received orders to advance from the interior of the USSR to the western districts. In early June 1941, ostensibly for the purpose of “large scale war games,” the People’s Commissariat of Defense (NKO) conscripted 793,000 men to flesh out some 100 existing divisions and fortified regions. Under the General Staff’s final mobilization plan (MP-41) all troops in the western districts were to be brought up to full mobilization readiness during the spring of 1941.^{cxxxvii} As we have seen, by 22 June 1941, the Red Army in the frontier zone (first strategic echelon) comprised 171 divisions echeloned in depth, with a further 57 divisions assembling in the second strategic echelon along the Western Dvina and Dnepr Rivers. Due to snags in the mobilization process, however, full implementation of MP-41 – which, for example,

had called for assembly of 186 divisions in the first strategic echelon – had not been achieved in either strategic echelon by the time war finally came.^{cxxxviii}

The final dispositions of Soviet forces in the west make for interesting speculation about the motives behind Soviet strategic planning on the eve of the German invasion. What is most striking about these dispositions is that they reveal a marked concentration of Soviet forces in the Kiev Special Military District, covering the Ukraine. A total of some 60 divisions (among them 16 tank and eight motorized) were stationed in this district, far more than in any of the other military districts, with the Western Special Military District possessing the second largest number of divisions with a total of 44 (12 tanks and six motorized). Soviet air regiments were also heavily concentrated in the Kiev Military District.^{cxxxix}

A cursory examination of Soviet strategic planning from the summer of 1940 into the spring of 1941 reveals potential rationales behind the powerful assembly of forces on what was to become (on 22 June) the Southwestern Front – opposite German Army Group South. Beginning about July 1940, the General Staff, under the direction of Marshal Timoshenko, crafted new war plans positing that a German attack – should it come – would most likely be made north of the Pripiat’ Marshes and out of East Prussia into Lithuania, Latvia and Western Belorussia (all now occupied by the Soviet Union); hence, the bulk of Red Army forces were to be stationed in the north. In October 1940, however, Soviet planning underwent a crucial revision: The main Red Army forces were not to be disposed in the north, but in the south, shielding the grain of the Ukraine and the coal and minerals of the Donbas region. The “most likely explanation” for this change, submits Geoffrey Roberts, was the “expectation” that, if war broke out, the main German forces would attack in the south, into the Ukraine. While Roberts does not say what prompted this fundamental – and wholly inaccurate – reassessment of German intentions, he goes on to indicate that, by early 1941, the Germans were carefully promoting it by means of a disinformation campaign which effectively masked their true intentions – i.e., a concentration of forces (*Schwerpunkt*) in the north, for an offensive along the Minsk – Smolensk – Moscow axis.^{cxl}

There is, however, another interpretation of why the primary Russian concentration was in the south. Evan Mawdsley explains:

Fear for the Ukraine was not the main reason for the concentration of the Red Army there, in the Kiev Military District. From the Russian point of view, the question was not where to defend, but *where to attack*. The alternatives lay between attacking the Germans in East Prussia and northern Poland (*out of* Belorussia), or attacking them in southern Poland (*out of* the Ukraine). The problem with the northern axis was that it meant attacking through the lakes and forests of East Prussia, which had prepared German fortifications. The Russian Army had stalled there in 1914-15; meanwhile the strength of modern field fortifications had become clear in the Red Army’s 1940 attacks on the Finnish “Mannerheim Line.” The southern axis, in contrast, allowed an advance into relatively open country, without long-built German fortifications, and with the attacking Red Army’s left flank covered by the Carpathian Mountains. A drive into Poland, through Lublin and Kraków and Upper Silesia, would outflank the German concentration in Poland and threaten German links to the Balkans. Red Army planners looked at the options and recommended an attack along the southern axis.^{cxli}

This plan, states Mawdsley, was approved by Stalin in October 1940, and a large force, heavy in tanks and aircraft, was subsequently deployed to the Kiev Military District. Revisionist historians

have interpreted the decision by Stalin and his generals to concentrate in the south as proof that they were planning a pre-emptive strike against Germany. While Zhukov would propose just such a strike in mid-May 1941, the more logical conclusion is that the Soviets were simply acting on long-standing military doctrine, which foresaw immediate offensive action – even when under attack – to take the war to the enemy’s territory. Indeed, State Defense Plan 1941 (DP-41), although clearly defensive in a strategic context, embraced many offensive features, “couched in terms of necessary and inevitable offensive reactions, that is, ‘counteractions,’ to potential enemy aggression.”^{cxlii}

In any case, the Soviet decision to put their largest force grouping in the south, away from the main axis of the German advance, was a serious miscalculation. The decision was reinforced by the outcome of two war games conducted by the Red Army in January 1941, with the result that, by March 1941, a revised operational plan was ready which mandated that the main weight of the Soviet defenses be directed against a German attack into the Ukraine.^{cxliii} More serendipitously, as it turned out, the January war games – in which Soviet General G. K. Zhukov had participated with relative success – resulted in Stalin appointing Zhukov Chief of the Army General Staff. The games, however – both of which simulated a German offensive on different fronts and explored Red Army responses – revealed the unpreparedness of the armed forces and help to explain “Stalin’s desperate attempts to postpone the war, and his cautious handling of the deployment in the months preceding the war.”^{cxliv}

It should also be noted that Soviet war planning in general was based on several unfounded assumptions which, in the end, nearly proved fatal. In an “extraordinary example of strategic blindness,”^{cxlv} Soviet political and military leaders prepared for war in the mistaken belief that they would have time to mobilize and concentrate their forces prior to the start of the main fighting. They would, so they thought, be able to choose when war would begin – as had been the case with Finland in the autumn of 1939. Soviet generals failed to grasp that the Red Army, too, could be caught by surprise. Moreover, they fully expected – at least until late spring 1941 – that the Germans would require several weeks to concentrate their forces for an attack on Russia, and that such a concentration could not be carried out secretly. They also overestimated the combat capability of their border cover forces, thinking they could hold any German attack for several weeks, giving the Red Army time to mobilize and concentrate. These assumptions had begun to fall apart by May 1941, as the Soviet military leadership finally realized that the *Wehrmacht* was *already mobilized* and had assembled large forces in East Prussia and German-occupied Poland opposite the Russian border. And, yet, Stalin still directed no changes to existing plans.^{cxlvi}

Soviet military planning in the months prior to the German attack was also cast into confusion by the movement of the frontier 320 kilometers to the west, after annexation of the Baltic republics, eastern Poland and Bessarabia in 1939/40. Before 1939, the Red Army had built strong defensive positions along and behind the Soviet Union’s old border, fortifications the Germans christened the “Stalin Line.” The Stalin Line was, for the most part, not a line at all, but a system of fortified regions (*ukreplennyi raion* – UR), each with bunkers, light artillery, machine gun positions and tank traps.^{cxlvii} A German training video for the Replacement Army (*Ersatzheer*) offered a fascinating glimpse of the Soviet border defenses following their capture in July 1941: On display are tank traps (several types of them), water obstacles, wire entanglements, crisscrossed steel beams (tank obstacles), bunkers (concrete, wooden, earthen), earthworks of timber and soil, houses and barns used to conceal weapon positions, even flamethrowers with remote ignition.^{cxlviii} One of the oldest fortified regions along the Stalin Line was Polotsk, which sat astride the Dvina River where the Soviet, Polish and Lithuanian frontiers came together; others at Minsk, Mozyr and Slutsk dated from the 1930s.^{cxlix}

In an effort to turn the newly occupied territories in the west into a kind of strategic *glacis*, defenses along the old 1939 frontier were stripped to provide weapons and materiel for new fortified zones along the border with Germany. The outcome was all too predictable: When the Germans struck the Stalin Line had been seriously compromised, while not nearly enough had been done to create new fortified zones along the new border. Moreover, on *Barbarossatag*, most of the divisions along the German-Soviet frontier were missing their combat engineers (they were off constructing new bunkers and obstacles), seriously degrading their combat prowess.^{ci} Once again, poor Soviet decision-making resulted in a Red Army which was unable to do its best in either attack or defense.

--Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

4.5: The Red Army – Ready for War?

In light of the preceding discussion, highlighting myriad Red Army deficiencies as war loomed with Germany, the reader may well find the question rhetorical in nature. The weaknesses of the Soviet armed forces were, undoubtedly, legion; and it seems apparent that, in June 1941, they were, at best, months away from being ready for war. The following list strikingly illustrates – in no particular order – the many challenges faced by the Red Army at this time:

- Conflicting doctrinal concepts; purges still underway, resulting in severe shortage of trained and experienced commanders and staff officers;
- Authoritarian concepts of combat leadership, stifling initiative on the part of junior officers and NCOs; lack of cooperation between combat arms; poor staff work;
- Massive reorganization of force structure and change-out of weapons and equipment still far from complete; in many vital spheres – tank and aircraft production, border fortifications, manpower – targets for completion set for no earlier than early 1942;
- Serious deficiencies in troop training; outmoded weapons, out of date combat aircraft; shortages of maps and equipment;
- Armed forces possessing some modern weapons, but “no indication that anyone understood how to use them;”^{cli} some Soviet pilots with less than four hours experience in new aircraft; cases of tanks whose main armament had not been bore-sighted before war began;^{clii}
- Political necessity of Red Army soldiers to defend every inch of existing frontier; many units positioned well forward in border regions and too vulnerable to German ground and air forces;
- Serious shortfalls in motorization; less than 275,000 motor vehicles in all theaters (compared to German *Ostheer's* 600,000), supplemented by ca. 200,000 mobilized from civilian economy;
- Mechanized corps near frontier with only 50-80 percent of authorized strength in combat vehicles; 208 Motorized Division (positioned near Belostok in central sector) with only 70 to 80 percent of its authorized armaments; its tank regiment with no tanks (authorized 250); situation of this division hardly out of the ordinary;

- Deficiencies in logistics bordering on the catastrophic – cases of military clothing, equipment, etc., improperly housed in military depots (clothing and materiel rotting in the open, etc.); units suffering from serious shortages of uniforms, shoes, underclothing, food, equipment; artillery shells improperly stored and rusting in the open; lack of fuel and ammunition;
- Prime movers in short supply; Russians forced to employ civilian tractors to tow artillery;
- Poor signal communications: Moscow in contact with military districts over telephone, telegraph and radio, but primarily by telephone and including use of the civilian system; communications in the field tenuous; radio networks thin,^{cliii}
- Railroad development plan for 1941 – including 11 new lines in the western military districts – only 8 percent complete as of 1 June 1941 due to shortages of key building materials.^{cliv}

A sobering compilation – albeit one far from complete! And, yet, the picture is more complicated than it seems. According to Albert Seaton:

The fighting efficiency of aircraft, tanks and guns and of air and ground formations, depends largely . . . on the associated fire-control, communication and auxiliary equipment, and this was woefully lacking in the Soviet Union in 1941. All in all, however, Russia went to war immeasurably better prepared and equipped than it had ever done in czarist times and, in quantitative terms, took the field with the greatest army in the world. . . Stalin's failure in the opening days of the war was political rather than military, for it was the direct consequence of his own political misjudgement.^{clv}

There is more than a grain of truth in Seaton's words. Indeed, if Stalin had done much to cripple his country's armed forces in the years before they joined in combat with Hitler's *Wehrmacht*, and if his policy of appeasement vis-à-vis the Third Reich was inevitably doomed to failure, Stalin was, in the final analysis, largely responsible for the victory ultimately achieved. It was his policies from at least the late 1920s, however oppressive and murderous, which set the Soviet Union on its path to becoming a modern industrial state. Without the Five-Year Plans; without the creation of a second industrial infrastructure well outside European Russia; without the colossal buildup of manpower, weapons and equipment he relentlessly pursued in the years before war; and without the Communist re-education of the young he so sedulously promoted – without all these things, the Soviet Union would have collapsed in 1941. If Stalin's pre-war policies helped to bring his country to the brink of extinction in the summer of 1941, they also built the foundation which enabled it to emerge victoriously in 1945 and survive another 46 years. One might question whether that was a good thing, but one cannot doubt Stalin's decisive role in bringing it about. For unlike the Czar's armies in 1914, Stalin's armies had rifles; they also had tens of millions of committed soldiers and an unbroken flood of tanks, guns and planes. Together, these men and machines would ultimately smash the *Wehrmacht*, and Red Army soldiers would plant the flag of the Soviet Union above the Reichstag in Berlin on 2 May 1945.

(*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Chapter 4)

--Excerpts from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

4.6: Joseph Stalin: What did he Know and When did he Know it?

Since the topic of discussion is the Soviet dictator, another question – and perhaps a more intriguing one – must be posed: Just how well informed was Stalin in the weeks and months before 22 June about Operation *Barbarossa*, and how did he respond to what he learned? The first part of the question can be answered with relative certitude: Stalin was very well informed about the impending German invasion through several different channels. The second part, however – his reaction to what he was told – is rather more complex. . .

Joseph Stalin, of course, was not so fortunate as to have a terrifying comet to alert him to the impending arrival of the Apocalypse, yet what he did have was “perhaps the most effective intelligence apparatus of any;” and parts of it operated “right at the heart” of German decision-making.^{clvi} Soviet spies crawled all over Europe and included, among others, Harro Schulze-Boysen (code-name “*Starshina*,” or “the Elder), a German Communist sympathizer and officer in the *Luftwaffe* with access to top-secret material; and Arvid Harnack (known as “*Korsicanets*,” or the “Corsican”), a lawyer who had worked in the Economics Ministry in Berlin since 1935. Both men, who furnished a flow of excellent information to the Soviets, had been recruited in the summer of 1940 to work secretly for Soviet intelligence. They were eventually discovered and executed in 1942.^{clvii}

There were also Soviet espionage groups operating across German-occupied Europe and neutral Switzerland, such as the so-called “Lucy” spy ring – run out of Switzerland by German refugee Rudolf Roessler. Because of the high value information provided by “Lucy,” historians have speculated that the ring may have been used by the British as a covert way to pass ULTRA-based intelligence on to the Soviets. (ULTRA was the code-name for British signal intelligence derived from radio traffic which the Germans encrypted on their high-grade cipher machines, called ENIGMA.)^{clviii} Such speculation, however, is now known to be false.^{clix}

Another vital source of information on German intentions was Richard Sorge (known as “*Ramzai*”), a Soviet spy embedded in the German embassy in Tokyo. In addition, British, American and other foreign governments directly provided Stalin and his cohorts with an abundance of intelligence, much of it highly accurate. Finally, by the spring of 1941, a plethora of tactical intelligence was flowing in from the border military districts.^{clx}

In all, between late July 1940 and 22 June 1941, no less than **90 separate warnings of an impending German attack were conveyed to Stalin** by his intelligence apparatus, each report first having been professionally collated, carefully evaluated and interpreted before being briefed to him. Information received in the spring of 1941 (yet by no means a complete accounting) offers insight into just what Stalin knew, when he knew it, and how he responded to it: [See text for details.] . . .

Clearly bent on avoiding war with Germany – acutely cognizant as he was of his country’s lack of preparedness for such a conflict – Stalin was to cling tightly to his denials until, finally, he could cling to them no more. Early on the morning of 22 June 1941, he got a telephone call from Zhukov: A massive German assault was underway all along the western frontier, he reported; the war had begun. Deeply shaken, Stalin at first said nothing. All Zhukov could hear was his boss’s heavy breathing at the other end of the line. Yet even then, the full gravity of what had happened would not become apparent to Stalin for many hours.^{clxi}

Today, nearly three generations removed from the towering events of that summer in 1941, it seems inconceivable that Stalin could have responded so dismissively to so much good intelligence. Once again, however, the situation is more complex than it appears, and a brief analysis of Stalin’s behavior illustrates that it was not without a certain justification.

In the first place, much of the information which made its way to Stalin pertaining to German intentions or their buildup in the east, was much less clear cut than the examples cited above, even contradictory in nature. Key lieutenants such as Lavrenti Beria, the sinister head of the NKVD, or F. I. Golikov, chief of military intelligence, insecure in their own positions, often simply told Stalin what he wanted to hear, confirming his own prejudices and misconceptions. In addition, the Soviet intelligence community – both civilian and military – had been badly gutted by the purges, losing many agents and analysts in the process. In his 1940 report on the state of the Red Army, Defense Commissar Timoshenko observed: “The organization of intelligence [*razvedka*] is one of the weakest sectors of the work of the Commissariat of Defense. There is no organized intelligence and systematic gathering of information on foreign armies.” Golikov, moreover, who took over the GRU in July 1940, had no previous experience in the field.^{clxii}

In assessing the Soviet dictator’s failure to discern Germany’s true intentions, one must not overlook the role played by the *sly and effective German disinformation campaign*. In June 1941, Vladimir Dekanozov, Soviet ambassador to Berlin since November 1940, passed on a report that only served to reinforce Stalin’s prejudices. The report, which dealt with rumors of a possible *rapprochement* between Germany and the Soviet Union – based either on far-reaching “concessions” on the part of the latter, or on a division of territory into “spheres of influence” – was simply part of a vigorously promoted attempt by the Germans to mislead and confuse the Russians. In fact, the *Wehrmacht’s* deception campaign prior to *Barbarossa* – begun in February 1941 under the code-names “shark” (*Haifisch*) and “harpoon” (*Harpune*)^{clxiii} – was the most far-reaching it ever employed. A key element of this deception was to convince the Russians that Operation “Sealion,” the planned invasion of England, was still operative, and that the massed German forces in the east were simply a ruse to convince the British that “Sealion” had been cancelled. Even Stalin’s firm belief that any German attack would be preceded by an ultimatum – giving him time to concede, mobilize his forces, or even act pre-emptively – was based on German deception.^{clxiv}

Yet the crux to Stalin’s calculations can perhaps best be understood as a kind of “mirror imaging.” The Soviet leader “took it for granted that Hitler employed the same calculus of power that he did, and would never attack in the east until he had settled with Britain.”^{clxv} This bedrock conviction that Hitler – like Stalin himself – was much too rational to risk a two-front war – goes furthest to explain Stalin’s inability to grasp the reality of *Barbarossa*. As he reportedly told Zhukov only days before war began, “Germany is involved up to its ears in the war in the west, and I believe Hitler will not risk creating a second front for himself by attacking the Soviet Union.”^{clxvi} Yet Stalin was far from alone in assuming this. Even the British Joint Intelligence Committee had been “ambivalent in its conclusions until the end of May 1941 and only confirmed the Germans’ final intention to invade in early June.”^{clxvii}

(*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Chapter 4)

--Notes from Chris Bellamy’s *Absolute War*:

Chapter 6: The War’s Worst-Kept Secret:

This chapter examines – in today’s parlance – what Stalin knew and when he knew it (and how he interpreted the intelligence pointing to a German attack). Chapter does a good job of explaining why Stalin might have logically believed that a German attack was not imminent in the summer of **1941**.

Some key points:

a) As the German deployment unfolded thru **1941**, Soviet agents observing all the *railway junctions* close to their own border enabled the **NKVD** and **NKGB** to build up *extraordinarily detailed intelligence on German movements*. (137)

b) Broadly, Soviet intelligence reports suggested that *German leadership was split* [re: attacking the Soviet Union]], w/ one faction, led by Goering, favoring war w/ the USSR and the other, including Hitler and Ribbentrop, ready to do business. (139)

c) Stalin pursues a double-sided strategy of *deterrence and appeasement*. For example, in mid-**Apr 41**, Stalin ordered his security services to escort the German Military Attache on a tour of the massive new industrial plants in Siberia, which greatly impressed him. (It was against this back-ground that Stalin's **5 May 41** speech to the Frunze Academy must be seen.) . . . The German delegation visiting the Soviet acft industry had been taken aback by its efficiency and scale of production. The visit from **7-16 Apr 41** involved the German Air Attache, two Luftwaffe engineers and reps from Daimler-Benz, Hensschel, Mauser and other firms. They had been shown plants in Moscow, Rybinsk, Perm, in the Urals and elsewhere. . . One of the acft engine factories, the German engineers reported, was bigger than six [6] of Germany's principal engine plants put together. Goering was furious, accusing them of defeatism. Hitler, however, was impressed. Stalin's *policy of deterrence* fed Hitler's penchant for pre-emption. "Now you see how far these people have already got. We must *start at once*." (140-41)

d) Massive distrust between England and Russia – While the British feared a real military alliance between Germany and the USSR, they failed to see that the Russians *feared a separate peace* between Britain and Germany. [**My Note:** This dynamic poisoned relations between the two countries and explains why Stalin viewed British warnings of an impending German assault as a "provocation."] (145)

e) **17.6.41:** Example of how report from "*Starshina*" – "Sergeant-Major," Harro Schulze Boysen, an Ob.Lt. on the Luftwaffe staff – noting that all military measures by Germany in preparation for an armed attack on USSR were fully complete, infuriated Stalin. His response: "To Comrade Merkulov. *You can tell your 'source' from the German Air Headquarters that he can go and fuck his mother*. . ." (146-47)

f) Crux: Stalin was *convinced by the "split" theory* – i.e., he believed the *Wehrmacht* was provoking war w/o Hitler's wish or consent. . . Stalin also convinced that war would be preceded by ultimatum from Hitler. (149)

g) British view – until very late in the day – was that German war preparations were intended to impose diplomatic and political pressure [to garner various concessions] [but did not portend an actual attack on the Soviet Union]. (149)

h) Germans had a reasonable knowledge of which Russian formations were where in the forward areas, but they *completely underestimated the strength of Russian reserves*, and esp. the strength of Russian air forces. (151)

i) Stalin on eve of “Barbarossa.” He was probably at his *lowest ebb* by now. In the week before “Barbarossa,” he appears to have retreated into *heavy drinking bouts* and dinners at his dacha in Kuntsevo. (153)

j) **Note:** Author believes that, on evening of **21.6.41**, Stalin may have reluctantly ordered the still unfinished **15 May 41** “scheme” for a *pre-emptive strike* against German forces as they assembled to be put into operation. (154)

(C. Bellamy, *Absolute War*)

--Stalin’s purges tend to overshadow the *massive expansion of the Soviet armed forces* in the **1930s**. Whatever his long-term intention, Stalin was amassing the capability to *overrun central Europe*. The Red Army had **1,600,000** men under arms in **1938**, and **5,000,000** by **1941**. (C. Winchester, *Hitler’s War on Russia*, 31)

--**Jan 39-May 41:** The Red Army undergoes a *massive military expansion*, which actually has a greater impact on the *decline in the army’s quality than the purges*. During this period, Red Army adds **111** rifle divisions, **12** rifle bdes plus **50** tank and motorized divisions. Its personnel strength grows from **1.5** to more than **5** million. During this period, the proportion of officers attending [officer training?] who required schooling plummeted, course length shrank from **36** to **24** months and later to **18** months, and the rank of instructors fell from major or captain to senior lieutenant. (Kirchubel, *Barbarossa* 1941, 25)

-- Frantic efforts undertaken to build up the VVS prior to German attack (formation of **106** new air rgmts began in **1941**, only **19** formed by beginning of war, including **13** long-range bomber rgmts; **164** new airfields built between **8 Apr–15 Jul 41**); technical specifications and production figures for VVS given in several tables; theory & doctrine behind employment of VVS (“aviation is linked strategically and tactically to the ground forces;” key role played by air supremacy, etc.) (25 ff.) (M. N. Kozhevnikov, *The Command and Staff of the Soviet Army Air Force in the Great Patriotic War 1941-45*)

-- Soviet strategy in summer of **1941** of *counterattacking at every opportunity* would be misunderstood by the Germans: “These attacks, all appearances to the contrary, were part of a deliberate Soviet strategy . . . [but they] were so ineffective [and so terribly costly!] that the Germans failed to notice the pattern.” (John Mosier, *The Rise and Fall of the German War Machine, 1918-1945*, 176, 184.)

--**19.-21.6.41:** The Soviet General Staff did not remain totally oblivious to these warnings [of impending German attack]. Faced w/ Stalin’s firm resistance to any measure that might seem provocative to the Germans, it undertook *some actions on its own to improve readiness*, but these paled in comparison to the threat. For example, on **19 Jun 41**, Zhukov and his staff associates prevailed on Timoshenko to issue an order requiring that *airfields be camouflaged more thoroughly*. These measures, however, were to be completed by **1-15 Jul 41**. By late evening, **21 Jun 41**, even the calm Zhukov was agitated over the intelligence information, and he pressed the issue w/ Stalin: [See text for details.] (D. Glantz, *Stumbling Colossus*, 251)

--**22.6.41**: Soviet armed forces, at best guess, numbered **4.7 – 4.9** million in all, in **20** armies, broken up into **303** divisions. Of this total force, about **2.5** million men in **171** divisions were on the western frontiers (i.e., in the *first strategic echelon*) and **202** on the Soviet-German front as a whole . . . The Soviet State Defense Plan-41, prepared in early 1941, envisaged four fronts (army groups). These four fronts would comprise **186** divisions in the *first strategic echelon*. The *second strategic echelon* would comprise a further **51** divisions in five (**5**) armies under the centralized control of STAVKA – the Supreme High Command. The first strategic echelon would comprise three *operational* echelons, or belts – a light covering force on the frontier, and then two further echelons to provide „defense in depth.“

Yet mobilization problems prevented **DP-41** from being fully implemented. By **22.6.41**, **171** divisions and **20** out of the **28** giant Soviet *mechanized* corps were available to make up the first strategic echelon. They were deployed in the western military districts: Leningrad, Baltic, Western Special, Kiev Special, Odessa and the Crimea. In addition, five (**5**) armies of **57** divisions were assembling on the *Dnepr – Dvina* rivers to form the second strategic echelon. This was the result of the movement of forces westward during the preceding two months. (Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 166, 175)

--**Infantry (Rifle Divisions)**: In **Jun 41**, Soviet rifle divisions were short on men, wpns and vehicles. Each was supposed to have **14,483** men, but in fact their strength varied from **8400 – 12,000** men, w/ most between **8000 – 10,000**. The biggest shortfall, however, was in „soft-skinned“ motor vehicles – trucks. Each rifle division had only **10-25%** of the motor vehicles it should have had, because any new vehicles available were directed towards the massive, newly formed mech. corps. (Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 176)

--**Artillery**: Of all the Soviet ground forces, the best-equipped and most professional arm (as of **Jun 41**) was the artillery. With an unbroken *tradition of excellence* throughout Russian history, the Russian artillery deployed superb guns – some updated **1930s** versions of excellent Tsarist wpns, others new models, under very professional officers. Whereas the Germans parcelled out their artillery for close support, the Russians *had so much of it* that they could, and did, do that at regimental and divisional level, but were also able to retain large concentrations of medium and heavy artillery for concentrated firepower strikes under control of corps, armies and fronts. (Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 176-77)

--**Mechanized Units**: The large mechanized corps – strength on paper of **36,080** men and **1031** tanks – were *not ready for war*. As Popel's graphic account of **8 Mech. Corp's** experience makes clear, the Germans caught the Red Army in the *middle of a major restructuring*. After the triumph of German armored forces in the West in **1940**, the Red Army began to assemble these giant formations. (Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 176)

--**Red Air force**: Like tanks, most Soviet acft did not have radios fitted in 1941. Compared w/ the experienced pilots of the *Luftwaffe*, the Red air force's newest „rookie“ pilots in the forward areas may have had as few as *four hours'* experience flying their machines. (Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 177)

--**Ilyushin (Il)-2** „*Shturmovik*“ ground attack plane, the Red air force's unique, armored „flying tank,“ had just entered service in spring of **1941** and were still in short supply when the war began. The acft's engine, cockpit and fuel tanks were all protected by steel armor and the pilot's windshield was of **66mm** thick bullet-resistant glass. It could attack ground targets w/ MGs,

32mm cannon, bombs and rockets, and could survive ground fire that would be lethal to any other aeroplane. (Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 178)

--Excerpt from Barbarossa Unleashed:

4.3: Soviet Force Structure & Dispositions on Eve of *Barbarossa*

If the expansion of Soviet armed forces accelerated in 1939/40, it became truly frantic in 1941. From January 1939 to May 1941, the Red Army added 111 rifle divisions, 12 rifle brigades and 50 tank and motorized divisions to its ballooning force structure.^{clxviii} The instability caused by such expansion (and the purges) is evident in the fact that, on two days in early March 1941, four new army, 42 corps and 117 division commanders were appointed. They had little more than three months time to become acquainted with their new commands.^{clxix} Observes David Glantz:

It is clear from Soviet contemporary writings and archival materials that, by this time, fear, rather than hostile intent, was the driving force [behind the massive growth in force structure]. Soviet military assessments appearing in open and closed military journals . . . were particularly candid. They show a clear understanding of superb German military performance and an unmistakable realization that the Soviet military in no way met German military standards. It is no coincidence that many of the articles which appeared in these journals during 1940 and 1941 dealt with clearly defensive themes. In short, Soviet military theorists understood what could happen to the Soviet military and the Soviet state. Politicians, including Stalin, must have known as well. This understanding provided necessary context to all that occurred diplomatically and militarily in 1940 and 1941. At the least, it explains the magnitude of the ongoing Soviet military reform program and the haste with which it was implemented. Unfortunately, for the Soviet Union, this understanding of current threats and the wholesale rearmament program which followed did not adequately prepare the Soviet military for war.^{clxx}

Adequately prepared or not, the Soviet military had – in terms of numbers at least – transformed itself into a veritable leviathan by mid-1941. On the cusp of the greatest armed struggle she was ever to face, Russia boasted a defense establishment composed of over five million men arranged in 27 armies and 303 divisions, with 17,000 to 24,000 tanks^{clxxi} and nearly 20,000 aircraft.^{clxxii} This massive military machine – which embraced the largest number of tanks and aircraft of any nation in the world – was made up of the following ground units:

- 29 mechanized corps
- 62 rifle corps
- 4 cavalry corps
- 5 airborne corps
- 303 divisions
 - 198 rifle
 - 61 tank
 - 31 mechanized
 - 13 cavalry
- 57 fortified regions^{clxxiii}
- 5 separate rifled brigades
- 10 anti-tank brigades

- 94 corps artillery regiments
- 75 RVGK (High Command Reserve) artillery regiments
- 34 engineering regiments^{clxxiv}

Of this total force structure,^{clxxv} field forces (*Deistvuiushshaia armia*) stationed in the western frontier zone were arranged in five fronts^{clxxvi} – Northern, Northwestern, Western, Southwestern, and Southern – which were established immediately after the German invasion from the Leningrad Military District; the Baltic, Western, and Kiev Special Military Districts; and the Odessa Military District, respectively. The forces assigned to these fronts possessed a total strength of about 2.9 million men and were composed of the following formations:

- 16 armies
- 20 mechanized corps
- 32 rifle corps
- 3 cavalry corps
- 3 airborne corps
- 171 divisions^{clxxvii}
 - 103 rifle
 - 40 tank
 - 21 mechanized
 - 6 cavalry
- 41 fortified regions
- 2 separate rifle brigades
- 10 anti-tank brigades
- 87 artillery regiments (52 corps / 35 RVGK)
- 18 engineer regiments^{clxxviii}

Rounding out these forces, the *Stavka* (Soviet High Command) reserve comprised five armies (14 rifle corps, 5 mechanized corps, 57 divisions) and 17 artillery regiments; while the remaining military districts and the Far Eastern Front were made up of six armies (16 rifle corps, 4 mechanized corps, 83 divisions), 16 fortified regions, three separate rifle brigades, 65 artillery regiments (29 corps and 36 RVGK), and 16 engineer regiments.^{clxxix}

In accordance with Soviet pre-war planning, Red Army forces were echeloned in great depth – extending from the “trip-wire” forces along the demarcation line with Germany back as far as the Western Dvina and Dnepr river lines. The first strategic echelon – consisting of the field forces in the five western military districts – comprised three operational belts made up of 57, 52, and 62 divisions, respectively, including 20 of the 25 mechanized corps stationed in European Russia. The first operational belt (57 divisions) provided the covering forces along and near the frontier; the second belt (52) was positioned 50-100 kilometers to the rear; while the third belt (62) made up the first strategic echelon reserve, in place 100-400 kilometers from the border with Germany. Fortified regions had been established along the 1941 border, in depth along the pre-1939 Soviet-Polish border, and along approaches to major cities, such as Kiev in the Ukraine. Adding further depth to these armies was the second strategic echelon, consisting of the five armies (57 divisions) of the *Stavka* reserve and, by 22 June 1941, in the process of deploying along the line of the Dvina-Dnepr. The mission of this second strategic echelon – which was virtually unknown to German intelligence – was to carry out a counteroffensive along with the counterattacks conducted by the armies of the forward fronts. Yet when war began, neither the forward military districts nor the *Stavka* reserve armies “had completed deploying in accordance with the official mobilization and deployment plans. As in so many other respects, the German attack on 22 June caught the Soviets in transition.”^{clxxx}

A striking feature of the Red Army forces assembled in the Western Special Military District (to become Western Front on the day of the German invasion) was their strong concentration far forward in Soviet occupied eastern Poland. The bulk of the Soviet troops in the Western District – even armored, mechanized, and cavalry units – was deployed in a large salient around the town of Belostok, which projected far into German held territory. As a result, these forces were already deeply enveloped by German Army Group Center in position in East Prussia and Poland. Indeed, three of the four armies of the Western Special Military District (along with three of its six mechanized corps) stood in a semi-circle around Belostok, their positions dangerously exposed.^{clxxxii} Also assembling close to the frontier were Soviet Air Force units:

Since the spring of 1941 efforts had . . . been in progress to set up a dense network of operational airfields in the proximity of the western frontier of the Soviet Union. This project had not been completed by the beginning of hostilities, with the result that aircraft were crowding together on those airfields which had not been completed, offering an easy target to the German Air Force. Not only had the ground and air forces been moved up close to the new state frontier, but also – in a manner now described as mistaken – supply depots, fuel stores, and mobilization supplies; these were nearly all lost at the beginning of the war. Roads, tracks, bridges, troop accommodations, and so on were massively extended, yet no attempt was made to establish rearward communication links or to set up the command centers indispensable for a defensive war. In a similar vein was the suspension of all work on the strengthening of fortifications along the old state frontier and the partial disarming of the installations; yet the large-scale fortification work planned along the new state frontier in Lithuania and in the annexed Polish and Romanian areas was making only slow progress.^{clxxxiii}

In other words, the Red Army found itself in a situation resembling a state of limbo, prepared neither to attack nor defend. Implicit in the paragraph above is also the fact that neither Stalin nor his lieutenants were planning on fighting a war on Soviet soil. Whenever and however the war began, the Red Army was – in accordance with Soviet military doctrine – to advance at once and aggressively into German held territory. In recent years, revisionist historians have cited these clearly offensive oriented Soviet dispositions as proof that Stalin was preparing to launch a war of aggression of his own; and, as outlined above, Bogdan Musial’s ground-breaking scholarship makes the compelling case that Soviet Russia had been preparing to attack the West since the early 1930s. However, it appears more likely that, by 1940/41 – to echo David Glantz’ earlier observations – whatever the Soviets may have been planning in the 1930s, they were now simply struggling desperately to ready their armies for the hammer blow about to crash down on them. The contentious issue of preventive or pre-emptive war – of who was preparing to attack whom – will be explored in Chapter 5. Before going there, however, it is necessary to take a closer look at the Soviet armed forces on the eve of *Barbarossa*, followed by a more in-depth examination of the Red Army’s final plans and preparations before the German invasion.

(Barbarossa Unleashed, 144-47)

1.3.6: Preventive & Preemptive War Debates

--From the outset, Germany’s “Fuehrer” attempted to portray the war as pre-emptive – that is, as an action to forestall or parry a threat perceived to be “imminent and overwhelming.” Yet this was

not so, for surviving records reveal that Hitler and his High Command hardly broke a sweat in the months preceding *Barbarossa* over the possibility of an imminent Russian attack on Germany. Nevertheless, new research into Soviet archives arguably supports the position that Hitler's attack may well have been justified as a *preventive* measure – as an action to “prevent a threat from materializing which does not yet exist,” but may well exist at some time in the not too distant future. (*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Introduction)

--“More or less, ***we were convinced that the Soviet High Command planned a surprise attack.*** Only the time and date of such an attack was uncertain to most of us. The interrogation of POWs revealed later that the *bulk of Russian troops deployed along the frontier opposing 4 PzGr and Eighteenth Army had been withdrawn a few days before.*” (Lt.-Gen. A.D. v. Plato, “Reflections on 41st Panzer Corps Operations,” in: D.M. Glantz, *Initial Period of the War*, 152)

--Preemptive Strike: “It is now *clear* that Stalin was preparing a *preemptive strike* against Germany, a subject long debated by historians. Though no smoking gun has been found in the archives yet – no document signed by Stalin naming the date of the attack – the new evidence demonstrates that the leader of the Soviet people started planning as early as the summer of 1940⁹¹ and hoped to launch the invasion by the summer of 1942.⁹² We now have access to a succession of war plans drafted between **Aug 40** and **May 41** and also a number of top-secret Party and army directives. In light of this, the tantalizing hints of a preemptive strike that have been torturing historians for decades finally make perfect sense. (C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 13)

--Contrary to popular belief, Stalin did not sink into criminal passivity in the spring of 1941, refusing to act on reports of the concentration of German troops on the border. He was aware of the danger, but he continued to believe that Hitler *would not be able to strike before the summer of 1942*. Thinking that he still had time, he kept postponing the final war preparations. It was not until Japan's foreign minister, Yosuke Matsuoka, visited Moscow and signed a neutrality pact in **Apr 41**, thus *securing the Soviet Union's eastern flank*, that Stalin ordered *preparations for a preemptive strike*. This happened between **15 Apr** and **5 May 41**. But it was already too late; his indecisiveness cost the nation dearly, as the Red Army got *caught in a strategic limbo between offense and defense* and consequently was ready for neither. (C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 13-14)

--Preemptive Strike:⁹³ In the summer of 1940, under Shaposhnikov's guidance, Vasilevski started work on the preemptive strike plan. The first memo was ready in mid-**Aug 40** and was signed by Shaposhnikov and Timoshenko. . . Unexpectedly, the *vozhd* rejected the draft. . . Vasilevski was told to rewrite the draft. Barely a month later, on **18 Sep 40**, Timoshenko and the new chief of general staff, Meretskov, sent it to Stalin. . . However, after **Oct 40** the top-secret deliberations came to a halt. ***The preemptive war remained a researched option, not a definitive plan.*** Having received the blueprints of the operation [see text for the details of the plans], Stalin still could *not make up his mind* whether he wanted to attack Germany soon or in a few years. . . Nonetheless, Stalin hoped that sooner or later he would command an all-out war against Germany. He *couldn't decide on a date or even the year* of the preemptive strike, but the basic elements had been ordered. Fortifications were to be built right on the border and would be used

⁹¹ **Note:** Of course, at that time – after fall of France in **Jun 40** – Russia faced no imminent threat of German attack. Yet both Stalin and Hitler felt war between them was inevitable. After fall of France, Stalin became much more seriously alarmed about potential German threat and, so Pleshakov, began to take measures to counter it.

⁹² **Note:** Compare w/ complementary thesis of Brogdan Musial in his Kampfplatz Deutschland!

⁹³ **Note:** From footnotes, appears author using original (new?) Soviet archive documents (Memo from People's Commissar for Defense and Chief of General Staff to Stalin), etc.

as the base of aggression, and the troops would assemble in a number of salients like the one in Belostok.⁹⁴ (C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 56-57)

--Stalin plans preemptive strike:

Joseph Stalin was an *insomniac*, often staying up until dawn. . . He had not doubted that Hitler would one day turn his rapacious leer on the Soviet Union, but in Stalin's mind that would not happen before spring 1942, after Britain was on its knees. . . By then Stalin's own plan, which he had *kept secret thus far even from the majority of his generals*, would be in place. It called for a *full-scale attack on the Germans*, one that would allow the Soviet Union to acquire even more of Eastern Europe and joint it to the Red empire. (1)

While the timing of a German attack was settled in Stalin's mind, the generals were far less sanguine. By his order they had developed the *top-secret plan to launch the Red Army's offensive down the road*, but they also knew that if Germany attacked now, the plan would be *irrelevant*, and there was *no defensive strategy* to fall back on, because the dictator deemed such a precaution unnecessary. (2)

One of the things Stalin admired about Hitler was his audacious nature. If Hitler was indeed planning to strike now, he had *picked his moment well*, attacking when the Soviet Union was *extremely vulnerable*. (3)

After much hesitation, on the evening of **21 Jun 41**, Stalin called a *secret meeting* to put the finishing touches on the *preemptive strike plan*. The revised plan called for launching an attack *within a couple of weeks*.⁹⁵ (4)

(C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 1-4)

--**The Preemptive Strike:** (pp 75-84)

It had taken Stalin about **9** months to make this decision. The *days of equivocation had come to an end*. Matsuoka's visit had been a *pivotal moment* in the *vozhd's* journey. . . He believed that Japan would not attack the Soviet Union in the next year and a half. This provided him a *critical window of opportunity*.

5.5.41: Discussion of Stalin's speech at the Red Army academies' commencement in the Kremlin. . .

[By now] the *principal decision had been made* – the Soviet Union would strike first – but when [his generals, i.e., Timoshenko, Zhukov, etc.] talked to the *vozhd*

⁹⁴ **Note:** Still, this all seems rather odd to me. If Stalin could not make up his mind on a date – even on a year! – for the attack, why did he place his forces in such exposed positions? For if he was wrong about Hitler's intentions, and Germany attacked first, the Red Army's dispositions would prove disastrous (as indeed happened on **22.6.41**). Would it not have made more sense to place his armies along the western frontier in a strong *defensive* posture, yet one from which they could rapidly pivot to an offensive war once the decision to “go” was finally taken?

⁹⁵ **Note:** Pleshakov thus supports Suvorow's thesis that Stalin was preparing to attack as early as early **Jul 41**.

about specifics, he was vague. He honestly *believed that he had until the summer of 1942*, so detailed planning could wait. All he wanted now was a broad blueprint.

Stalin as military leader: He didn't seem to realize that he *lacked the most basic military skills*. He was *unable to read maps correctly*. He noticed things like distances and the locations of cities, but he never paid attention to the terrain. . . "His armies were to march from point A to point B in a straight line, following a precise schedule."

15 May 41 Preemptive Strike Plan:

That schedule was ready by **15 May 41**. It was a **15**-page memo in black ink in Vasilevsky's handwriting, addressed to Stalin and carrying a warning in its upper right-hand corner: "Top Secret. Very Urgent. Exclusively Personal. The Only Copy." [!] [See text for details of this "first-strike document," 77, ff.]⁹⁶

The [**15 May 41**] plan was a direct successor to the three [**3**] previous drafts, but it differed from them in two important respects: it *openly advocated a preemptive strike* ("it is necessary to deprive the German command of all initiative, to preempt the adversary and to attack"), and it unambiguously favored Ukraine as the main springboard of aggression. The assault required an enormous amount of preparation [and, as narrative illustrates, Red Army was far from ready to attack! More armies needed to be mobilized, reserves created, etc.] *No date was given for the attack*, but the document suggested finalizing preparations in **1942**.

(C. Pleshakov, 75-84)

--*Excerpt from Barbarossa Unleashed:*

5.5: Operation Barbarossa – Pre-emptive or Preventive War?

--From the outset Adolf Hitler sought – disingenuously to be sure – to justify his decision to attack the Soviet Union as the only option left to him to thwart the imminent and existential threat of a Soviet attack on Germany. As we have seen, he emphasized the prophylactic aspect of Operation *Barbarossa* in his address to his generals at the Reich Chancellery on 14 June 1941. He did so again in his proclamation to the soldiers in the east, which was read out to them on the night of 21/22 June, and in which he referred to the increasingly threatening concentrations of Soviet offensive forces (armored and paratroop units) close to the frontier, stating ominously that some 160 Russian divisions were now poised along the border with Germany, and that only days before, for the first time, Russian patrols had even crossed into territory of the Reich and were only turned back after a prolonged firefight.^{clxxxiii}

On the morning of 22 June, in the diplomatic note handed to Soviet Foreign Commissar Molotov by the German ambassador, the attack was also justified as a response to the "steadily growing concentration of all available Russian forces on the long front from the Baltic to the Black Sea;"

⁹⁶ **Note:** Crux = Stalin favored the south as the major strategic theater – he coveted the Balkans, and he also expected Hitler's main force there. For that reason, the document suggested striking from Ukraine and defeating the Germans' main force in southern Poland. (77)

moreover, the note charged that reports “received in the last few days eliminated the last remaining doubts as to the aggressive character of this Russian concentration. . .” Later that day, in his radio address to the German people, Hitler again alluded to the sinister buildup of Red Army forces along the border with Germany, and described the task of the Reich and her Axis allies as the “defense of the European continent.”^{clxxxiv} Five days into the campaign, on 27 June, the German High Command got into the act, announcing that the large concentrations of enemy forces in the border areas, particularly in the salients around Belostok and Lemberg, had prefigured an impending Red Army assault on central Europe.^{clxxxv} By early July 1941, Hitler, no doubt influenced by front-line reports revealing the stunning numbers of Red Army forces in the frontier districts, had even convinced himself that the cynically promoted fiction of *Barbarossa* as a preventive action was in fact real, as this diary entry of Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels illustrates: . . . [See text for details.]

Hitler, in fact, with what degree of verisimilitude one can only venture to guess, would maintain the pretext of preventive, or pre-emptive, war until the very end of his life. In February 1945, with the Reich in ruins and Russian troops and tanks poised along the Oder River, on the threshold of Berlin, Hitler dictated his political testament to his deputy, Martin Bormann; in it, he explained that he had attacked Russia in an effort to eliminate Great Britain’s sole remaining ally on the continent and, in this manner, induce the English to make peace. Yet there was, he said, a “second compelling reason [for invading Russia], which would have been enough on its own: that from the very existence of Bolshevism there was a threatening danger. From this side one day must inevitably come an attack.”^{clxxxvi}

Is there so much as a scintilla of truth to the notion that *Barbarossa* was pre-emptive or, at least, preventive, in nature? The first part of the question – was the war pre-emptive – can be dismissed out of hand. Although the war in the east was, from the start, presented to the German people as an effort to ward off an imminent and existential threat,^{clxxxvii} this was merely Goebbels’ propaganda at work. As Ian Kershaw has argued, Hitler’s decision to attack Russia was “a momentous decision, perhaps the most momentous of the entire war.” Yet the decision was “freely taken. That is, it was not taken under other than self-imposed constraints. It was not taken in order to head off an immediate threat of attack by the Soviet Union. There was no suggestion at this time [second half of 1940] – the justificatory claim would come later – of the need for a pre-emptive strike.”^{clxxxviii} From the beginning, German planning for Operation *Barbarossa* had “completely overlooked the magnitude of the undertaking and arrogantly underestimated the capabilities of the opponent,”^{clxxxix} indeed, as Hitler had assured OKW Chief Keitel in the immediate aftermath of the French campaign, war with Russia, by way of comparison, would be “little more than child’s play!” In other words, Hitler and his General Staff “*a priori* ruled out the possibility of a Russian pre-emptive strike.” General Erich Marcks, who had drawn up the initial outline of an operational plan in the summer of 1940 for the Army High Command, had even lamented the fact that the Red Army would not do the Germans “the courtesy of attacking.”^{cxc}

If Hitler and his generals in the weeks before 22 June were occasionally discomfited by the accelerating pace of Soviet war preparations,^{cxc} there are absolutely no indications – neither in contemporary documents nor memoirs – that anyone was unduly concerned about the prospect of *Barbarossa* being pre-empted. German military intelligence (Foreign Armies East) offered no indications of an impending Soviet attack,^{cxcii} while Halder at OKH, in June 1941, characterized the Red Army’s dispositions along the border as “purely defensive” (*rein defensiv*) in nature and rejected the notion of a Soviet attack as “nonsense” (*Unsinn*).^{cxciii} German thought processes at the time are neatly summed up by German historian Juergen Foerster:

Since Stalin was not presumed to harbor aggressive, but rather defensive, intentions, Hitler and his military command were not alarmed by the capacity of the Red Army for war. Its concentration in the advance areas around Lemberg and Belostok was actually quite convenient for them. The greater concern for Hitler was rather that Stalin might spoil his bellicose idea with a political gesture of good will.^{cxci}

Turning to the question of a possible justification for a preventive war, the answer becomes rather more complex – in large part due to new, and decidedly different, interpretations of Soviet behavior in the years prior to and at the beginning of the Second World War. While the significance of *Barbarossa* as an ideologically and racially motivated war of annihilation has remained relatively constant in post-war historiography, the national security policy of the Soviet Union under Stalin has been subject to a broader range of interpretations. For many years, for example, the historical consensus was that Stalin's Russia, in the period between the summer of 1939 and June 1941, was a largely passive force; and while it may have made gains at the expense of its weaker and smaller neighbors (Poland, the Balkans, Romania), and was engaged in an extensive military buildup, these actions were generally rationalized as defensive responses to the growing German threat.^{cxcv}

In the 1980s and 1990s, however, new lines of interpretation began to emerge, suggesting that Stalin's intentions throughout this period were much more sinister than previously thought and, indeed, “on par with those of Hitler.”^{cxvii} Most notable among the revisionist historians is the Russian émigré and former officer in the Soviet Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU), who goes by the pseudonym Viktor Suvorov (née Rezun). Simply put, Suvorov, and other revisionists, argued that the Soviet dictator was an ambitious revolutionary with the long-term strategic goal of advancing the cause of Communism, in part by means of military conquest. To this end, Stalin had signed the notorious pact with Hitler in August 1939, hoping to use his unwitting National Socialist counterpart as an “ice breaker” to weaken the western democracies – and Germany as well – before Stalin himself overran Europe. According to Suvorov, by 1941, Stalin was ready to proceed to the final stage of his plan, which was to begin with the conquest of Germany. Suvorov even professed to know the date the Soviet attack was to set to begin – 6 July 1941.^{cxviii}

It is, of course, beyond the scope of this narrative to “fight” the academic battles which followed in the wake of Suvorov's “revelations.” Suffice it to say that the more traditional historians – among them, the late John Erickson, Gabriel Gorodetsky and David Glantz – pushed back hard against Suvorov and other revisionists with related perspectives. They pointed out that, in 1941, the Soviet Union was much too weak to undertake offensive action against Hitler's Germany and that Stalin was well aware of this, which explains his appeasement policies vis-à-vis the Reich as well as his obsession with not provoking Hitler or his generals. While the rebuttals of the traditionalists are firmly grounded, the general line of Suvorov's thesis is supported by Bogdan Musial's extraordinary new book, *Kampfplatz Deutschland*, to which the reader was introduced in Chapter 4 (Section 4.1). If Musial rejects outright Suvorov's dramatic claim that Stalin was set to attack Germany on 6 July 1941, he also holds that insights gained from recently opened Soviet archives largely uphold Suvorov's interpretation of Stalin's basic designs:^{cxviii}

What is undeniable is that in spring 1941, Stalin was in the process of building up the largest invasion force of all time along the German-Soviet border in order to attack his German ally at the right moment. This intention was not the result of the fear that Germany would soon attack the Soviet Union, but rather of the Communist ideology of world revolution. The aim was to implement the next and decisive stage of the world revolution, to sovietize Central and West Europe,

indeed the whole of Europe. For a victory over Germany would then have meant mastery of all Europe. The German attack on 22 June 1941 caught this invasion force off guard in the midst of its preparations.^{cxix}

In other words, not only was Hitler preparing a war of aggression, but Stalin was as well. Once this fundamental – yet paradigm altering – fact is accepted, convoluted arguments over who planned to attack whom tend to forfeit their meaning, trumped as they are by the overarching reality that each dictator was preparing to strike the other! To employ the vernacular of revisionist historian Heinz Magenheimer, it thus makes more sense to consider the war between Germany and Russia as a “war between two attackers” (*Krieg zweier Angreifer*).^{cc} To underscore this point, more needs to be said about Soviet preparations for war in the spring of 1941. In Chapter 4 the author examined in some detail the Soviet buildup along the western frontier prior to the German attack. It was noted that this buildup, while still incomplete on 22 June, could be interpreted as offensive in nature. However, it was also pointed out that, *by 1940/41 – and certainly for the period following the Wehrmacht’s convincing victory over France in June 1940 – Soviet military preparations were more likely driven by fear of an impending German invasion, rather than by aggressive intent.*^{cci} Yet while this may be so, it does not explain Stalin’s longer-range and, ultimately, expansionist intentions. To gain more insight into those intentions we turn to another of the revisionist historians, the late Joachim Hoffmann. [See text for details.] . . .

What then, can be reasonably concluded about the original query at the beginning of this section – that is, can Hitler’s June 1941 attack in any way be considered pre-emptive or preventive in nature? The first part of the question was dealt with summarily and answered in the negative: Germany did not wage pre-emptive war because Russia was far from ready to attack in the summer of 1941; moreover, Hitler and his High Command had no fear of an imminent Soviet attack. In this context, one can also dismiss the weaker arguments of the revisionists – those pertaining to Stalin’s speech of 5 May and the pre-emptive war plan which followed in its wake.

Was *Barbarossa* a preventive war? As we have seen, the Soviet Union had been arming itself for a war of aggression against Germany and the West since the early 1930s. Her spectacular military buildup, as well as foreign and defense policy from the summer of 1939 onward, can thus be reasonably understood as an effort to bring about a positive “correlation of forces,” one which would enable the Communist state, at a time of its choosing, to vanquish Germany through an offensive war, culminating in domination of the entire European continent. In this author’s view, the fact that Stalin’s plans for the domination of Europe were thrown off kilter by Germany’s defeat of France in 1940 – and, hence, by the sudden and foreboding prospect of having to face the full might of the *Wehrmacht* at the height of its powers – in no way alters the fact that Soviet Russia under Stalin was a revolutionary state pursuing expansionist goals; and, by the early 1930s, Stalin was pinning his hopes on the Red Army as the sole means of spreading revolution to Germany and the West.

Such was the very essence of Communism under the “*vozhd*,” as the Soviet leader was called. Stalin, like Hitler, viewed war as inevitable; and if the German Reich had not struck in 1941, Stalin would have most likely done so himself in 1942, when his army and air force were finally equipped with the thousands of new tanks (the superior T-34s and KVs) and aircraft on which he was waiting. Indeed, the conviction that Stalin may well have attacked in 1942^{ccii} is a perspective which has gained increasing acceptance (or at least legitimacy) among historians in recent years. If the Russian archives have yet to reveal a “smoking gun,” the basic objectives of Stalin’s Russia, its foreign and defense policies in the years prior to June 1941 – as well as the intrinsic nature of the Communist state and its incompatibility with National Socialist Germany – lead to the reasonable conclusion that Hitler’s attack on the Soviet Union, while hardly planned as such,

served a preventive function. As we will see, the German *Landser* who poured into Russia in the opening days of the war were often stunned by the massive concentrations of Red Army troops, tanks and equipment they encountered, leading many of them to conclude – however erroneously – that they had indeed just barely averted the disaster of a Russian attack.

1.3.7: Weapons of War (*Wehrmacht*)

--Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

3.1: Force Structure of the Army

On mobilization for war in September 1939, the German field army had encompassed 106 divisions, of which six were armored and eight motorized.^{cciii} The Army underwent further expansion in the winter and spring of 1939/40, increasing in size to 169 divisions, about 140 of which were committed to the campaign in the west.^{cciv} After toying with the idea of reducing his ground forces to a “peacetime” army of 120 divisions, Hitler, now contemplating war with Russia, decided in the summer of 1940 to expand the Army to 180 divisions. This figure again underwent revision and, by June 1941, the German Army had burgeoned to approximately 208 divisions.^{ccv} Its force structure on the eve of *Barbarossa* embraced 152 infantry,^{ccvi} 21 panzer, 15 motorized,^{ccvii} nine security, six mountain, four “light” divisions and one cavalry division, as well as several motorized brigades/regiments. Of these divisions about 150 were part of the buildup in the east (including four divisions deployed to Finland), 38 were stationed in the western theater, eight in Norway, seven in the Balkans, two in North Africa, and one in Denmark.^{ccviii} The personnel strength of the Army had risen since September 1939 from 3,750,000 men to about 5,000,000, while the *Luftwaffe* numbered 1,700,000, the *Kriegsmarine* 400,000 and the *Waffen-SS* 150,000 men.^{ccix}

The ca. 150 divisions earmarked for the Russian campaign signified almost 75 percent of the German Army’s total force structure in June 1941; yet in terms of combat capability, the percentage was actually much higher: 19 of the 21 panzer and all 15 motorized divisions were part of the *Barbarossa* order of battle,^{ccx} while nearly all *Heerestruppen* (formations controlled by the armies themselves and not organic to divisions or corps), including large amounts of heavy artillery, were earmarked for the east. Of those divisions *not* taking part in the eastern campaign, more than 30 had only recently been established and, in terms of training and equipment, were not ready for combat, while many of the divisions left behind in the west and the Balkans – among them some of 30 just noted – had been reduced to mere skeletons and were far from combat capable (*kampffaeig*).^{ccxi}

Despite its clearly formidable nature, the German Army of 1941 – and throughout the Second World War for that matter – possessed a force structure which was fundamentally unbalanced. As the above figures illustrate, the great majority of this Army was made up of a large unmechanized mass of “legacy” infantry divisions, marching on foot and dependent largely upon draft horses to move artillery, equipment, ammunition and supplies. Of the 208 total divisions, only 36 – a little more than 15 percent – were mobile formations (armored and motorized). The stark imbalance improves – albeit just a little – when one considers only the forces assembled for the Russian campaign: 34 mobile divisions out of 150, or less than 25 percent. The result of this “quirk” in the composition of the German Army was that it, in essence, was two separate armies – one relatively small, mobile and armored, capable of covering large areas quickly; the other large, slow, and

cumbersome, and “proving not greatly more maneuverable than the Kaiser’s army of 1914, or even that of Napoleon in 1812.”^{ccxii} In the relatively compact theaters of war from September 1939 through the spring of 1941, this serious structural flaw had not significantly affected German ground operations; in the immense spaces of the east it would be a different matter entirely. In retrospect, one doubts whether “blitzkrieg” in Russia was even possible, given the paucity of mobile forces which made up the tip of the eastern army’s spear.

Of course, neither Hitler nor anyone in his inner circle of military advisors would have entertained such doubts; they were much too preoccupied preparing for war to engage in introspection. Preparations in all areas through the spring of 1941 encompassed a large number of special initiatives to further sharpen the qualitative edge of the armies assembling in the east. These included: a) establishment of panzer group headquarters to direct the mobile units in battle; b) a major reorganization and expansion of the panzer divisions; c) introduction of new – or upgrade of existing – weapons systems to boost the firepower of both infantry and mobile units; d) improvements to combat engineers, signal and railroad troops; e) creation of additional Flak units to protect the troops from air attack; f) improvements in logistics support (including a significant increases in truck transport for moving food, fuel, ammunition and other supplies); and, g) development of a new ensemble of winter clothing based on the experiences of the Finns in their winter war with Russia in 1939/40.^{ccxiii}

Yet it would be false to imply that Germany’s political and military leadership actually did “due diligence” in their preparations for the eastern campaign, for it is now apparent they did not – despite the unprecedented scope of the challenge presented by Operation *Barbarossa*. It is astounding to realize that Germany’s overall armaments production (weapons and ammunition) in the second year of the war hardly increased at all, whereas the Soviet Union and Great Britain almost doubled their armaments production and the United States tripled theirs. Moreover, increases in production which were achieved were largely due to draconian cutbacks in the output of ammunition – cutbacks which would affect German operations in the east as early as August 1941 and seriously so in the fall and winter of 1941/42.^{ccxiv} Yet even in areas where production increases were sought, such as in tanks, the gains were mostly unimpressive. As noted in Chapter I, average tank production for 1940 was less than 200 per month (all types), while in the first quarter of 1941 only 700 more left the factories.^{ccxv}

There were many reasons for these anemic production figures, among them the habitual shortages of manpower,^{ccxvi} raw materials and specialized machine tools, as well as the hopelessly Byzantine nature of the Nazi regime, with its systemic inefficiencies, lack of coherent planning, corruption and stifling rivalries. Yet the underlying reason may well have been simply the conviction among the military leadership that the Russian campaign could be waged successfully with the forces and stockpiles of weapons and ammunition already on hand; thus, “additional production efforts were regarded as superfluous and, in view of the short time available, also pointless.”^{ccxvii} In fact, “at no time was a maximum effort even considered – an effort commensurate with the enemy’s potential – because the German leadership assumed that available forces were sufficient to smash the Soviet military potential within a few weeks.” As General Jodl argued, the operations in the east could be “easily conducted” with existing forces and weapons, thus no special exertions were required.^{ccxviii}

If armaments production was adversely affected by such insouciance at the top levels of command, it was also undermined by the incoherent armament policies pursued since the defeat of France, a major feature of which was a shift away from production for the Army in favor of the *Luftwaffe* and the Navy. On 11 June 1941, barely a fortnight before the start of *Barbarossa*, Hitler signed Directive No. 32, submitted to him by OKW, and which began with the conceit: “*After the*

destruction of the Soviet Armed Forces, Germany and Italy will be military masters of the European continent. . .” It then went on to “formally direct the main industrial effort toward the [*Luftwaffe*] and the Navy,” a decision which went unchallenged by Hitler and OKH.^{ccxix}

Even from this cursory analysis it is apparent that, in the critical period between July 1940 and June 1941, neither Hitler nor his military staffs were prepared to assign to their impending eastern campaign – the burden of which was to be carried by the Army – the priority it deserved. As Heinz Magenheimer has observed:

The leadership was clearly not prepared to assign top priority to the Army, despite its enormous requirements in arms and equipment for “Operation *Barbarossa*.” The acceptance of such a high risk – in the short time-span until May 1941 it was already impossible to equip the Army to the desired extent – may be explained both by the confidence inspired by the results achieved so far, and by an underestimation of the enemy. This again underlines the fact that the war against the Western powers was the real issue and the campaign against the Soviet Union was only intended to bring about a preliminary decision. It shows, too, that from the beginning of hostilities in 1939, the Supreme Command did not have an all-encompassing war plan which could have served as the basis for a well-conceived and well-founded armaments program. . .

Despite various improvisations, arms and munitions supply of the Army did not reach the originally planned figures. On 1 April 1941, the day set as the deadline, there were supply gaps of up to 35 per cent in the most important categories of weapons. In artillery alone, the paradoxical situation arose that in June 1941 the eastern army could only deploy 7184 guns of all calibers, whereas during the campaign in the west in 1940 there had been 7378 guns available on a considerably narrower front.

Even if in certain sectors the Army was expanded and improved in quality, mainly by utilizing weapons captured so far, it is still true to say that the eastern army in June 1941 was only slightly stronger and larger than the western army had been in the spring of 1940. The equipment of the eastern army verged on a condition that has been described as a “patchwork quilt.” This unsatisfactory situation can be explained by the fact that the *Luftwaffe* was not required to accept any reduction in its arms program in favor of the Army, and only trailed the Army by 10 percent in its assignment of labor. . .

It is clear that during the summer and autumn of 1940 armaments control did not follow any overall long-term plan, but was more a short-term improvisation designed to serve several strategic objectives. Furthermore, the confrontation with the Soviet Union did not lead to any clear concentration of arms on the Army in order to provide it with the power that might have brought about a rapid victory. This leads to the conclusion that the campaign against the Soviet Union did not occupy the central position – neither in overall planning, nor in armaments production – that it merited, given the requirements it demanded of the *Wehrmacht*. The campaign in the east was seen merely as an intermediate, albeit important, step designed to create the conditions for the “final battle” in the west. . .^{ccxx}

The outcome of such myopia (and hubris) was that the German *Ostheer* thrust across the German-Soviet frontier on 22 June 1941 with “alarming shortfalls” in armor-piercing weapons, field artillery, and infantry field pieces – seriously impairing the firepower of the infantry. Some 84 infantry divisions – and several motorized infantry divisions as well – were equipped with all types foreign vehicles (mainly of French origin), while captured weapons were used to partially outfit the anti-tank units. The armored forces went into combat with hundreds of obsolete tanks, as well as large numbers of armored fighting vehicles of Czech origin. While these and other types of foreign equipment were by no means necessarily inferior to German standards, they added to the bewildering multiplicity of types^{ccxxi} in the German Army, complicating already existing challenges in the areas of ammunition, spare parts and maintenance. Were it not for the use of captured material, however, it would scarcely have been possible to equip the expanded German Army of 1941 for Hitler’s war in the east. Indeed, in the summer of 1940, the OKH had recognized that captured stocks of weapons, vehicles and other equipment were a “vital prerequisite” for the deployment of the eastern army.^{ccxxii}

As outlined below, Germany’s military leadership made significant qualitative improvements to their armed forces in the year separating the victory in the west from the beginning of *Barbarossa*. Nevertheless, the inescapable conclusion is that the order of battle assembled for war against Russia was not much more imposing than that committed to the campaign in the west in 1940, while the “patchwork quilt” of weapons, vehicles and equipment collected for the Russian campaign suggests that “Hitler’s eastern army resembled a pieced-together, mismatched construction – not the imposing, purpose-built, uniformly-equipped war machine often portrayed in the immediate post-war literature.”^{ccxxiii} Again, the proximate cause for what, in hindsight, seems scarcely comprehensible is a German military culture which – after almost two years of unbroken victories – had abandoned its professional bearings and, inexplicably, exhibited too little curiosity and concern about its future opponent in the east. To sharpen the point: The German generals’ approach to *Barbarossa* reminds us “why war must be carefully planned and thoroughly researched prior to opening the latches that secure Hell’s gates.”^{ccxxiv}

--Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

3.2: The Marching Infantry

To again underscore the point: The foot infantry, depending largely on horse-drawn transport, still dominated the German force structure of 1941, making up almost 75 percent of its 200+ divisions. Despite the “headlines” grabbed by the panzer divisions, it was the infantry which, just as in 1914/18, shouldered the primary burden on the battlefield in all theaters. The average infantryman on the eastern front lasted only a matter of weeks before being wounded or killed. Many were wounded repeatedly, only to return time and again to their units, until finally killed or taken prisoner. Yet the German infantry:

fought with impressive tenacity and effectiveness throughout World War II, even after their units had sustained extreme losses. Statistical analyses have concluded that German troops typically inflicted 50 percent greater casualties on their opponents than they suffered in return, regardless of whether they were attacking or defending, even in the face of overwhelming Allied numerical advantages and air superiority later in the war. One of the most basic elements of this phenomenal military fighting power was unit cohesion: the ability of German soldiers to stick together and to continue operating as an integrated team despite devastating losses, long after the point where other forces would have dissolved into a mass of individuals driven by panic and the mere instinct of self-

preservation. German soldiers also showed a remarkable capacity to regroup and form *ad hoc* battlegroups composed of stragglers and survivors of various units.^{ccxxv}

During World War II, the German armed forces organized, trained, equipped and sent into battle 389 infantry divisions.^{ccxxvi} According to the German practice, these divisions were established in “waves” (*Welle*), with no fewer than 35 waves created throughout the war. As a rule, each wave evinced minor differences in armaments and equipment, while organization tended to be more standard. At full strength in 1939, a “first wave” division with highest priority for materiel possessed more than 5000 horses but fewer than 600 trucks. The “haphazard process” of rearmament from 1933-39 had precluded any attempt to expand the German automobile industry sufficiently to motorize a mass army. The High Command had responded by creating for its marching infantry a family of state-of-the-art horse-drawn wagons, outfitted with such refinements as ball-bearing wheels and rubber tires. The only fully motorized elements in German infantry divisions were the anti-tank companies and battalions, for which it was imperative to move fast enough to counter enemy armor.^{ccxxvii}

The total strength of an infantry division in 1941 was about 17,000 men. The core of the division was its three infantry regiments, each comprising approximately 3000 men.^{ccxxviii} Each regiment, in turn, broke down into three battalions, each of four companies – three rifle companies and one machine gun company. The infantry regiments were also equipped with a company of light and medium infantry guns and an anti-tank (*Panzerjaeger*) company, providing regimental commanders with substantial organic firepower. Complementing the three infantry regiments in each infantry division’s order of battle were an artillery regiment, an anti-tank battalion (with the same weapons as the regimental anti-tank companies, only more of them), a reconnaissance battalion, and a combat engineer battalion, as well as signal, medical, veterinary, administrative and supply services.

Standard weapons of the rifle company included the Mauser 98K bolt-action rifle, the standard German infantry weapon throughout the war; machine pistols (normally carried by NCOs and officers); machine guns (primarily the MG 34); light and medium mortars (50mm le.Gr.W. 36 and 81mm s.Gr.W. 34); and, of course, hand grenades. The building block of the rifle company was the squad, or *Gruppe*, a 10-man unit built around its light machine gun (le.MG 34). The squad leader (NCO), originally armed with a rifle had, by 1941, been equipped with a machine pistol (MP 40) which, with a practical rate of fire of 180 rounds per minute, signified a major boost in firepower.^{ccxxix} The machine gun company (actually a heavy weapons unit and always the last numbered company in a battalion; hence the 4th, 8th and 12th companies, respectively, in the three infantry battalions) was outfitted with heavy machine guns (s.MG 34) and medium mortars, giving it a good mix of flat and high-angle weapons.^{ccxxx}

The infantry gun company (always the 13th company in a regiment) consisted of six 75mm light (le.IG 18) and two 150mm medium guns (s.IG 33). The anti-tank company (the 14th company in each regiment) was outfitted primarily with 37mm anti-tank guns; yet because these guns had proven ineffective against heavier Allied armor in 1940 – and, thus, were now basically obsolete – a heavier 50mm anti-tank gun had been introduced; however, by June 1941, it was only beginning to reach the forces in the field in small quantities. As a result, some divisions were also given French 47mm anti-tank weapons as a stop-gap measure. Yet none of the AT weapons available to the German infantry in 1941 proved effective against the heavier Soviet KV-1 and T-34 tanks. Infantry units were thus often forced to deploy their artillery well forward in a direct-fire role to halt enemy attacks, even though this sometimes led to a heavy loss of guns due to close range line-of-sight engagements.^{ccxxxi}

The artillery regiment – its soldiers with their red piping arm insignia – would play an indispensable role in the fighting of 1941. A German military publication in 1943 called the artillery the “backbone of the front” (*das Rueckgrat der Front*),^{ccxxxii} and indeed it was. During 1941/42 alone – despite habitual shortages of shells – the German artillery in Russia would expend more than 60,000,000 rounds^{ccxxxiii} – preparing the way for the infantry in attack and shouldering much of the burden in defense. The standard artillery regiment comprised four battalions, each of three batteries, with each battery having four guns. The first three battalions were equipped with a total of 36 105mm light field howitzers (le.FH 18), while the fourth battery normally boasted 12 150mm medium field howitzers (s.FH 18), making for 48 pieces in all.^{ccxxxiv} The artillery was horse drawn, the regiment possessing more than 2000 horses.^{ccxxxv}

Whatever the shortcomings of a 1941 German infantry division, its aggregate firepower was immense. [Note: Here insert the Appendix in new version of *Moscow Tram Stop*: “6 ID Weapons & Personnel, 20 June 1941.”]

The German infantry divisions earmarked for the east would also receive fire support from several new weapon systems now entering service with the Army in significant numbers (yet not organic to the infantry divisions themselves). These included the 20mm *Vierling* Flak; the 150mm *Nebelwerfer* 41 rocket projector; 280mm and 320mm ground-to-ground rockets; and the assault gun, or *Sturmgeschuetz*. The *Vierling* Flak was an anti-aircraft gun consisting of four 20mm cannon on a single mount; with a practical rate of fire of 800 rounds per minute, it was also a devastating weapon against ground targets. The *Nebelwerfer*, a six-barreled rocket launcher, hurled a high explosive shell more than 7000 yards, also with devastating effect. The 280mm and 320mm rocket launchers fired high explosive or incendiary rockets from wooden crates which could be mounted to the sides or rear of a half-track vehicle; the shock effect of a large quantity of these rockets arriving simultaneously on their target was truly horrific. The range of the weapon – which the troops had soon christened “*Stuka zu Fuss*” (“Stuka on foot”) – was about 2000 meters.^{ccxxxvi}

For the attack on Russia the Germans were to make the first large-scale use of a highly effective new weapon – the StuG III (*Sturmgeschuetz*) assault gun.^{ccxxxvii} By June 1941, some 375 assault guns had been produced, 250 of which were committed to the eastern campaign in 11 battalions and five separate batteries.^{ccxxxviii} The main armament of the StuG III was a short-barreled 75mm L24 gun mounted on the chassis of a Panzer III tank. Because the weapon system had no turret (the 75mm gun was built directly into the hull) it had a low silhouette, enhancing its survivability. The assault gun had been commissioned to provide close armor support to the infantry, while also performing an anti-tank role.^{ccxxxix} Those infantry divisions fortunate enough to be assigned a battery or company of assault guns would come to deeply appreciate the weapon, while the Russians would come to fear it. “The *Sturmartillerie* [assault gun] is our ultimate weapon [*letzte Waffe*],” wrote an artillery officer fighting in the El’nia salient (east of Smolensk) in a letter to his wife on 30 August 1941:

They are tanks with a gun, only they are open on top and so they shoot with the aid of a scissors telescope! The armor plating is very good! I learned to appreciate this weapon during the infantry attacks – every battalion was allocated two assault guns, they would lead the way and the infantry would advance under their protection. They use shells that are good for combating and shelling tanks. . . .^{ccxl}

--Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

3.3: Panzer & Motorized Divisions

If the infantry dominated in numbers, the panzer and motorized divisions were to dominate on the battlefield. Although the mobile units made up but a fraction of the eastern armies, it was upon the successful outcome of their deep envelopment and encirclement operations that the Germans pinned their hopes. From 1 April 1940 to 1 June 1941 the inventory of German armored fighting vehicles (AFVs) had climbed modestly – from 3387 (all models) to 5694 (all models).^{ccxli} The latter figure, broken down by AFV type, reveals the following:

877 Pz I
1157 Pz II
187 Pz 35(t)
754 Pz 38(t)
1440 Pz III
572 Pz IV
330 Armored staff cars
377 StuG III^{ccxliii}

Of these AFVs, 3648 were deployed in the east on 22 June 1941:

281 Pz I
743 Pz II
157 Pz 35(t)
651 Pz 38(t)
979 Pz III
444 Pz IV
143 Armored staff cars
250 StuG III^{ccxliiii}

As David Stahel correctly observes, to accurately assess the nature of the war in the east, “one must first gain a rudimentary grounding in the technical means by which it would be fought.”^{ccxliiv} Since the primary component of the operational concept of “blitzkrieg” was clearly the tank, the technical specifications of each model in the German inventory are briefly outlined below:

Panzer I: This vehicle was the lightest, and most lightly armed, of all German tank models in use in 1941. First introduced in 1934,^{ccxlv} it was intended as an interim vehicle for rapid building and training of Germany’s nascent tank arm. The Pz Kpfw I^{ccxlvii} weighed between five and six tons, was equipped with two 7.92mm machine guns and had an armor thickness of just 13 millimeters. It had first seen action in the Spanish Civil War and, thereafter, in the early campaigns in World War II. Yet even in Spain its deficiencies – armament and protection – had become apparent and, by 1941, the tank was clearly obsolete. Nevertheless, 281 of these tanks were assigned to the *Barbarossa* strike force.^{ccxlvii} Only 13 days into the campaign, Brig.-Gen. Ritter von Thoma, returning from an inspection tour of 3 Panzer Group, informed Chief of the Army General Staff Halder that the Pz I had become a “burden” to the troops; that it should be removed from active service in the east and used for protection of the home front, coastal regions, and as a training vehicle.^{ccxlviii}

Panzer II: Because the new medium tanks the German Army required in the mid-1930s were slow to develop and produce, the Pz II was introduced as another interim AFV. First issued in 1936, it had a three-man crew, a main armament of one 20mm L/55 gun and a 7.92 MG. Several variants of the tank – which had somewhat better armored protection and was slightly heavier than its predecessor – had been introduced by 1941. More than 700 of these tanks would see duty with the four panzer groups operating in Russia in 1941 – most of them assigned to the light tank companies. Like the Pz I, the Pz II was already out of date; yet together, these two models made up more than 1000 of the tanks (28 percent) in the eastern strike force.^{ccclix}

Panzer 35(t): Following the occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1939, the Army benefited from that country's arsenal of high-grade weapons and its impressive armaments industry. The Czech tank arm was particularly valuable, for it had produced vehicles clearly superior to the early German tanks. The heavier of the two Czech tank models was redesignated the Pz 35(t) by the Germans; it boasted 25mm armor plating, a 37mm gun as main armament, and two 7.92 MGs. Unfortunately, the tank's armor was riveted, not welded like German tanks, and the rivets had the disturbing tendency to pop out under the impact of a heavy shell, sending rivet shanks swirling through the inside of the tank as secondary projectiles.^{cccl} By June 1941, the tank was in decline, and the only unit so equipped was 6 Panzer Division, which had all 157 of them.^{cccli} In his eastern front memoir, a former commander of 6 PD, General Erhard Raus, described the difficulties which soon arose from deployment of the Pz 35(t):

The most noteworthy characteristic of the 6 Panzer Division at the outset of the Russian campaign was the fact that the entire division contained the equivalent of only a single heavy panzer company. [The division's] 11 Panzer Regiment consisted of three battalions of four companies each. The predominant panzer model was the light PzKw 35t, an older vehicle of Czech manufacture that was no longer in production and whose frontal armor had a maximum thickness of only 25mm. Only the 4th Company of each battalion was provided with some PzKw IVs and a few PzKw IIIs. By contrast, the 1 Panzer Division boasted an entire battalion of heavy panzers. The higher numerical strength of 11 Panzer Regiment could not compensate for its technical deficiencies. From the outset, his awareness of this weakness all but forced Major General Franz Landgraf, the division commander,^{ccclii} to forbid the commitment of all panzers en masse and instead to employ them in conjunction with our infantry battalions. Alone our PzKw 35ts would have been grossly inferior even to the Russian tanks and anti-tank weapons about which we were already aware.

These facts require special mention because they entailed different combat methods on our part from those utilized by other panzer divisions. . . Moreover, because production of the PzKw 35t had been discontinued for some time, providing spare parts became increasingly difficult. Thus the number of serviceable tanks in the division sank steadily despite only small losses due to enemy activity. . .^{cccliii}

By mid-December 1941, 6 Panzer Division had lost every one of its tanks and had only 350 combat soldiers remaining.^{cccliv}

Panzer 38(t): This tank was the Czech follow-on design to its Pz 35(t). While lighter than its predecessor, it was eventually outfitted with thicker armor plate. The tank's main armament was

also a 37mm gun, supported by two 7.92 MGs. After seizing the Czech stocks, the Germans adapted the tank to fit a four-man crew, adding a gun loader to the driver, radio operator and commander/gunner. The tank was extremely reliable mechanically, with its durable chassis also providing a base for later variants in design, among them the tank hunters (*Panzerjaeger*) Marder III and Hetzer. Indeed, the Pz 38(t) represented “the best of all the German light tanks at this time,”^{ccclv} and 651 of them were assigned to the *Barbarossa* order of battle, the lion’s share going to General Hermann Hoth’s 3 Panzer Group.^{ccclvi} Yet for all its attributes, the tank was still a light tank, and on the eastern front it also failed when pitted against Soviet T-34s and KV-1s and the heavier caliber artillery of the Red Army. The tank’s attrition rate was correspondingly high. Such losses, avers David Stahel,

also underline the basic weakness of the German tank force invading the Soviet Union, upon which so much of the operational plan rested. To break this down more clearly, if one adds the totals of all light tanks deployed for *Barbarossa* and takes that as a percentage of the overall total it equals 50 percent, meaning that half of the German tanks gathered for the invasion of the Soviet Union were largely obsolete for that theater.^{ccclvii}

Panzer III: The first experimental models of this medium tank – disguised as a “medium tractor” – were ordered by the German Army as early as 1934, with the first few being produced by 1937.^{ccclviii} The Pz III was one of the two tanks (the other the Pz IV) specifically developed for the new armored units of the *Wehrmacht*. It was envisaged as *the* main battle tank – that is, the “anti-tank” tank – of the German mobile forces, and was to be outfitted with a high-velocity armor piercing shell. However, when it first appeared, its version of the 37mm gun proved less than adequate. The weapon system experienced other “teething” problems as well in its initial iterations and, following a complete redesign of the suspension system, the “E” model (*Ausfuhrung E*) of the Pz III went into series production in December 1938. Several more series were designed and manufactured over the next few years, with a new main armament – a more powerful 50mm L/42 gun – finally becoming standard in the “G” series, 600 of which were built between April 1940 and February 1941. This model of the Pz III also had two 7.92 MGs, an armor thickness of up to 37mm, and weighed about 20 tons. It was operated by a five-man crew.^{ccclix}

The final Pz III upgrade to be undertaken before the launch of *Barbarossa* was the “J” series, which began production in March 1941 and thickened the basic hull armor to 50mm. All told, nearly 1000 Pz IIIs were allocated to the eastern strike force; of these, the majority was equipped with the “upgunned” 50mm L/42 main armament, providing the tank forces with a major boost in firepower and, in fact, “bringing the first real backbone to the panzer divisions.”^{ccclx}

It should be pointed out that Hitler, apparently, had wanted the Pz III upgraded with an even longer-barreled 50mm gun, which would have had a greater muzzle velocity. As Panzer General Guderian recalled:

On the basis of the experience gained during the western campaign, Hitler ordered a tank production of 800 to 1000 units per month. However, the Army Ordnance Office reckoned that the cost of this program would be about two milliards [billions] of marks, and that it would involve the employment of 100,000 skilled workers and specialists. In view of these heavy expenses Hitler unfortunately agreed to the abandonment of this plan for the time being.

Hitler also ordered that the 37mm gun in the Panzer III be replaced by a 50mm L60. In fact it was the 50mm L42 which was used, a gun, therefore, with a considerably shorter barrel. Hitler was apparently not immediately informed of this modification to his directive on the part of the Ordnance Office; when, in February of 1941, he learned that his instructions were not being carried out even though all the technical requirements were at hand, he became extremely angry and he never forgave the responsible officers of the Ordnance Office for this high-handed act. Years later he was to refer to it.^{cclxi}

Panzer IV: This model, the final one to take part in the invasion of Russia, had first entered production in 1936. All series manufactured prior to June 1941 (“A” through “F”), were outfitted with a short-barreled 75mm L24 main gun. Originally, the Pz IV had been conceived as a close support weapon and, perforce, as a complement to the Pz III main battle tank. However, its success in the Polish and French campaigns – and later against Allied and Soviet vehicles – soon led to its active use as an “anti-tank” tank as well. The final version to enter production before the start of *Barbarossa* was the “F” series (April 1941), with generally increased armored thickness for added protection. The tank weighed about 26 tons, was operated by a crew of five, and was equipped with two 7.92 MGs as secondary armament. Various models of the Pz IV would see combat through the end of the war; with a total production run of about 9000, the Pz IV would make up the backbone of the German armored force in World War II.^{cclxii} Nearly 450 Pz IVs were assigned to the *Barbarossa* order of battle.

--Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

3.4: Reorganization & Expansion of the Mobile Forces

Even before the end of the campaign in the west in 1940, the Army High Command had contemplated a major reorganization and expansion of the panzer and motorized divisions in the Army’s force structure. The initial target figure of 24 panzer and 12 motorized divisions drafted in May 1940 had, by the middle of June, been reduced to the final figure of 20 panzer and 10 motorized divisions.^{cclxiii} The new divisions – 10 tank and eight motorized divisions – were established in the fall of 1940 and spring of 1941; at the same time, the existing 10 panzer divisions were reorganized and partially re-equipped. In the course of this major undertaking, the OKH was guided by the experiences of the French campaign, while also seeking to make the organization of the panzer divisions more uniform – an intent only partially realized. Before the beginning of Operation *Barbarossa*, the plan was altered only by the creation of the 5 Light Division (motorized) in early 1941, which was intended as the blocking force (*Speerverband*) for North Africa; after its arrival in Libya, it was redesignated as 21 Panzer Division on 21 August 1941.^{cclxiv}

Because of the low production figures for tanks in 1940/41, the only way to double the size of the panzer force was by greatly reducing the number of tanks in each division. As a result, each panzer division now had only a single panzer regiment (of two or three tank battalions), whereas in 1940 six of the 10 existing panzer divisions had possessed two tank regiments.^{cclxv} While this measure was partially offset by phasing out hundreds of obsolete Pz Is and Pz IIs, and re-equipping the panzer regiments with more medium Pz IIIs and Pz IVs, it still reduced the regiments to the outer limit of the minimum number of tanks needed to operate effectively.^{cclxvi} In fact, the *average* number of tanks in each division plunged from 258 in 1940 to just 196 after the

reorganization and expansion, while the *specific* number of tanks in each division ranged from a mere 147 to 299.^{cclxvii}

The contraction in the number of tanks was also ameliorated by allotting each panzer division a second motorized infantry regiment, while a motorcycle battalion (*Kradshuetzen-Bataillon*) was added to each division's table of organization. In addition to the partial change out in tank models, the panzer divisions were beneficiaries of several new weapons systems and capabilities; these included the introduction of 50mm AT guns into their *Panzerjaeger* units, small numbers of 20mm *Vierling* Flak, 280/320mm rocket launchers (*Stuka zu Fuss*), as well as upgrades to artillery, signal, combat engineer and supply units.^{cclxviii}

The reorganization and expansion effort had not always proceeded smoothly, with shortages in motor vehicles creating serious bottlenecks which delayed equipping the divisions and adversely affected their training. To provide even tolerable levels of motorization, the Army was forced to turn to foreign materiel (mostly French) to fully outfit both the panzer and motorized units. Some units received their vehicles so late they barely had time to become acquainted with them before being sent into action in Russia, while the bewildering diversity in types of vehicles posed problems with spare parts and maintenance. The 17 Panzer Division alone – much to its dismay – was outfitted with some 240 different types of vehicles;^{cclxix} moreover, it did not receive its full complement of vehicles until late May 1941, only weeks before *Barbarossa* began. No matter – by mid-July 1941, 17 PD – “this brave division,” as Guderian called it – had destroyed 502 Red Army tanks.^{cclxx}

While it is difficult to generalize about the 1941 panzer division's order of battle – given the lack of uniformity in numbers of tanks, for example – some basic observations can be made: The personnel strength ranged from roughly 13,000 to 16,000 officers, NCOs and men; they all wore the pink (*rosa*) piping first worn by their predecessors in the motor trucking battalions (*Kraftfahrtruppen*) of the former *Reichsheer*.^{cclxxi} The “typical” panzer division possessed less than 300 tracked vehicles (of which just under 200 were tanks) as well as some 3000 wheeled vehicles; if arrayed in single file on a road, this massive armada would have stretched for 130 kilometers!^{cclxxii} The total firepower of a panzer division encompassed some 620 automatic weapons and 260 guns of all calibers (excluding 50mm and 81mm mortars).^{cclxxiii} The fighting core of the 1941 panzer division's tank forces was represented by the Pz 38(t) and Pz III, which together made up 1630 of the 3250 tanks^{cclxxiv} assigned to Operation *Barbarossa*. Yet while the order of battle included some 600 more Pz IIIs in comparison to 1940, the number of Pz IV medium tanks allocated for the attack on Russia (444) was barely 150 more than had been available for the campaign in the west. Moreover, more than 50 percent of the German tank force (Pz I, Pz II, Pz 35(t), Pz 38(t)) was outdated and thus ill-suited for the rigors of combat in the east. Even the medium tank models were, for the most part, no match for the Soviet T-34s and KV-1s, which enjoyed a vast qualitative advantage over all types of German tanks.^{cclxxv} One can readily conclude that, while much was accomplished to augment the firepower of the German tank fleet, in terms of both quantity and quality the results fell far short of what was required to successfully confront an adversary like the Soviet Union.

Order of Battle of a German Panzer Division **(June 1941)**^{cclxxvi}

Division HQ with Map Section (2 le.MG)

Panzer Brigade Staff with,

-- Signal Platoon, Light Tank Platoon (3 Pz III command tanks, 5 Pz II)

2 Panzer Battalions^{cclxxvii} each with,

-- 1 HQ Company (2 Pz III command tanks, 5 Pz II)

-- 2 Light Tank Companies (each with 17 Pz III, 5 Pz II)

-- 1 Medium Tank Company (14 Pz IV, 5 Pz II)

2 Rifle Regiments (mot.), each with,

-- HQ Company (Signal Platoon, Combat Engineer Platoon, Motorcycle Platoon, 3 l.MG)

-- Two Rifle Battalions each with,

3 Rifle Companies (each with 18 l.MG, 2 s.MG, 3 le.Gr.W.)

1 MG Company (8 s.MG, 6 s.Gr.W.)

1 Heavy Company (3 37mm Pak, 2 le.IG, 4 le. MG)

-- 1 Infantry Gun Company (2 s.IG, 4. le.IG)

1 Motorcycle Battalion with,

-- 3 Motorcycle Companies (weapons same as rifle battalions)

-- 1 Motorcycle-MG Company (same as above)

-- 1 Heavy Company (same as above)

1 Medium Infantry Gun Company (Self-propelled)

-- Only for 1, 2, 5, 9 and 10 PDs (6 s.IG (SP))

1 Armored Reconnaissance Battalion (mot.) with,

-- Staff and Signal Platoon (2 le.MG)

-- 1 Armored Scout Company (10 KwK 20mm,^{cclxxviii} 25 le.MG)

-- 1 Motorcycle Company (18 le.MG, 2 s.MG, 3 s.Gr.W.)

-- 1 Heavy Company (same as in rifle battalions)

-- 1 Reconnaissance Column (3 le.MG)

1 Artillery Regiment (mot.) with,

-- Staff and Signal Platoon

-- 2 Light Artillery Battalions each with,

3 Light Field Howitzer Batteries (each with 4 105mm le.FH, 2 le.MG)

-- 1 Medium (*schwere*) Mixed Artillery Battalion with,

2 Medium Field Howitzer Batteries (each with 4 150mm s.FH, 2 le.MG)

1 100mm Gun Battery (4 100mm Cannon, 2 le.MG)

1 Anti-Tank Battalion^{cclxxix} (mot.) with,

-- Staff and Signal Platoon

-- 3 Anti-Tank Companies (each with 8 37mm Pak, 3 50mm Pak, 6 le.MG)

-- 1 Flak Company^{cclxxx} (SP) (8 20mm Flak, 2 20mm *Vierling* Flak)

1 Armored Combat Engineer Battalion (mot.) with,

-- 2 Light Combat Engineer Companies (each with 9 le.MG)

- 1 Armored Combat Engineer Company (Pz I,^{cclxxxix} 6 SPW^{cclxxxii} with 280/320 rocket launchers)
- 1 Bridging Column "B" (mot.)
- 1 Bridging Column "K" (mot.)
- 1 Light Combat Engineer Column (mot.)

- 1 Armored Signal Battalion (mot.) with,
- 1 Armored Telephone Company (2 le.MG)
- 1 Armored Radio Company (13 le.MG)
- 1 Light Armored Signal Column

1 Field Replacement Battalion

- Supply & Rear Area Services including,
- Motor Vehicle Supply Columns
 - 1 Supply Company (mot.)
 - 3 Maintenance & Repair Companies (mot.)
 - 2 Medical Companies with,
 - 3 Ambulance Platoons
 - 1 Bakery Company
 - 1 Butchery Company
 - Military Police
 - Field Post Service^{cclxxxiii}

At the end of this section a few observations about the expansion of the motorized divisions: The motorized infantry were all, originally, foot infantry, numbered in the normal sequence and trained and equipped as regular infantry of the line; as such, they wore the traditional white piping of the infantry service. The only difference to the line infantry – albeit a major one – was that the motorized troops were transported to and from the battlefield in trucks or, to a much lesser degree, in armored personnel carriers (APCs). In 1939 there were four motorized divisions (2, 13, 20 and 29),^{cclxxxiv} all belonging to the 14 Motorized Corps. Early in 1940, each of these divisions was reduced from three to two regiments, while the elite motorized "Greater Germany" (*Grossdeutschland*) Regiment was established from the ceremonial *Wachregiment Berlin*.^{cclxxxv}

By the spring of 1941, two motorized divisions – 2 ID (mot.) and 13 ID (mot.) – had been converted to panzer divisions, while eight foot infantry divisions – 3, 10, 14, 16, 18, 25, 36, 60 – had been reorganized as fully motorized formations, making for a total of 10 motorized infantry divisions in the regular German Army. Other motorized units included the *Lehr-Brigade* 900 (Instructional Brigade 900), the Infantry Regiment *Grossdeutschland*, and several *Waffen-SS* divisions, including the *SS-Leibstandarte* "Adolf Hitler."^{cclxxxvi}

With only two regiments of truck-born troops, the motorized division deployed just six battalions of infantry (versus nine for a typical three-regiment foot infantry division). The artillery was towed by trucks or half-track prime movers, while the reconnaissance units were made mobile with motorcycles and armored cars. In 1942 a battalion of self-propelled guns or tanks was added to the division's order of battle, and APCs began to appear in greater numbers. However, in 1941, these formations were essentially infantry units with greater mobility.^{cclxxxvii}

Following the attack on the Soviet Union, the motorized infantry divisions – despite their diminutive numbers – and the mounted infantry elements of the panzer divisions were

immediately recognized for their great value and saw continuous action. In fact, the physical and psychological demands placed on them were “immense.” As one soldier complained: “Motorized transport is only there to make certain we poor *Panzergranadiers* are brought up against the enemy more often than our fellows in the infantry divisions. . . so that we have the dubious advantage of being in action more often.”^{ccclxxxviii}

--Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

3.5: The German Air Force

“At last, a proper war!” remarked *Luftwaffe* Chief of Staff Hans Jeschonnek shortly before the start of the eastern campaign.^{ccclxxxix} After the bitter failure of aerial operations over Great Britain, the *Luftwaffe* general was no doubt anticipating with some relief the impending war in the east, where his air forces could once again return to their primary mission of providing air support to German ground forces and, thus, help to replicate the stunning victories in the west of the previous year. Yet despite Jeschonnek’s observation, a student of German air operations between September 1939 and the spring of 1941 might easily conclude that the *Luftwaffe* had indeed been fighting a “proper war” all along. Certainly in the sense that it had been engaged in costly and continuous combat for the entire 21-month period leading up to *Barbarossa*, in the process sustaining serious losses in both aircraft and aircrews, while the Army had sacrificed a much smaller portion of its forces and even experienced a relative hiatus in the fighting between July 1940 and April 1941.

From the very beginning of the Second World War, the attrition experienced by the *Luftwaffe* had taken a heavy toll: In September 1939, during the invasion of Poland, Goering’s air force had lost 285 aircraft, 18 percent of the operational strength committed to the campaign. Norway and Denmark (1940) cost an additional 242 aircraft, mostly transports. In France and the Low Countries (1940) the *Luftwaffe* sacrificed another 1129 aircraft,^{ccxc} while during the height of the Battle of Britain (July – September 1940) some 1600 aircraft were lost. In fact, from May to September 1940, the German Air Force lost more than 3000 aircraft, a figure equal to 57% of its entire inventory.^{ccxci} And while attrition rates thereafter ebbed and flowed, they continued right through the spring of 1941, with ongoing operations over the British Isles, in North Africa, the Balkans and Crete.

A serious outcome of the *Luftwaffe*’s largely unsustainable rates of attrition was that the overall size of its force structure barely budged between the spring of 1940 and the invasion of Russia:

Luftwaffe Force Structure (May 1940 – June 1941)

5 May 1940:

335 Close Recee
322 Long-Range Recee
1356 Single-Engine Fighters
354 Twin-Engine Fighters
1711 Bombers
414 Dive Bombers
50 Ground Attack
240 Coastal

4782 Aircraft in Total

21 June 1941:

440 Close Recee
393 Long-Range Recee
1440 Single-Engine Fighters
263 Night Fighters
188 Twin-Engine Fighters
1511 Bombers
424 Dive Bombers
223 Coastal

4882 Aircraft in Total^{ccxcii}

What is also striking about these figures is that the Germans began the attack on Russia with 200 fewer bombers than were available in May 1940, while the number of dive bombers – a critical ground support asset – remained virtually static, although the Russian theater of operations was an order of magnitude larger than in the west. The only significant increase between both target dates is in the number of short and long-range reconnaissance assets, but even these would prove inadequate in the vast spaces of the eastern theater of war.

All told, more than 3500 of the aircraft enumerated in the 21 June 1941 table were earmarked to take part in Operation *Barbarossa*, a force which turned out to be hopelessly inadequate – in terms of numbers at least – for the unprecedented scope of the mission. Indeed, as air power historian James S. Corum has observed: “In Russia it was a case of too much front and too few aircraft. Although the *Luftwaffe* performed brilliantly in the early stages of the campaign, it simply lacked sufficient numbers of aircraft to carry out its missions.”^{ccxciii}

Yet despite its modest numbers and already substantial losses, the *Luftwaffe* of 1941 remained a formidable force. Again Corum:

By almost any measure, the *Luftwaffe* was superior to its enemies in 1939-1941. The [Bf 109] fighter was superior to most opponents, and only Britain’s Spitfire could match it in combat. The Ju 88, He 111, and Do 17 medium bombers were some of the best machines of their day. In Poland, Norway, France, North Africa, and Russia, the Ju 87 Stukas proved to be fearsomely effective as close support aircraft. In addition to these combat machines, the *Luftwaffe* could field 500 transport planes, the largest air transport force in the world, and one that played a decisive role in several early campaigns.^{ccxciv}

In addition to possessing aircraft types generally superior to those of the Soviet Air Force (*Voенно-vozdushnikh sil*, or VVS), *Luftwaffe* aircrews were also far better trained and enjoyed a significant edge in experience. The command organization and doctrine of the German Air Force (GAF) allowed for great flexibility, meaning air power could be shifted rapidly between sectors of the front. Moreover, an effective signal network facilitated command and control of deployed air units, enabling *Luftwaffe* field commanders to concentrate their assets at decisive points on the battlefield. These and other attributes of the GAF in 1941 would enable it to virtually sweep the Soviet Air Force from the skies in the opening days of the campaign. Conversely, in matters of

logistics – supply of fuel, spare parts, ammunition, etc. – the *Luftwaffe* possessed “severe if as yet concealed weaknesses.” However, in a campaign planned as a “blitzkrieg,” and meant to last no more than a matter of weeks, such shortcomings did not appear particularly troublesome.^{ccxcv}

The primary task of the *Luftwaffe* in Russia was to furnish the ground forces – in particular, the mobile units, upon whose success outcome of the campaign largely hinged – with direct and indirect air support. Direct support signified the close air support (CAS) mission – i.e., attacking enemy forces at or near the “friendly” main battle line. Indirect support embraced the interdiction of roads, bridges, rail lines, supply depots, troop concentrations and other assets of value to the enemy. *Luftwaffe* field commanders were accustomed to cooperating closely with ground units and, in large part, accepted their supporting role. This attitude was exemplified by Field Marshal Albert Kesselring, commander of the air fleet operating with Army Group Center during the summer of 1941. After the war, he described his harmonious relationship with the army group and his understanding of his mission:

It was my intention in this campaign with its many imponderables to keep in much closer touch with Army Group headquarters and to maintain constant liaison through a *Luftwaffe* General Staff officer who had previously been in the army. He had to report to my command post every evening, explain the “army situation“ for the day and discuss the measures proposed for the morrow, and similarly listen to the “*Luftwaffe* situation“ so that he could explain that in detail to the Army Group Command.

As air commander I had a rather distant survey of the maneuvers of the army and received through the Air Groups (air service liaison) and the Flak Corps direct reports from the army front which sometimes differed very considerably from those of army headquarters. At every evening situation conference I assessed the army situation and instructed my intermediary [Lt.-Col.] Uebe to pass on my criticisms to the Army Group Command unless in urgent cases I had a telephone conversation with von Bock or my Chief of Staff rang his. Von Bock knew that I was not trying to teach him his business, but that my interference was only an understandable reaction of a partner, anxious to help a sister arm linked, for weal or woe, in a common purpose. . .

All the same, the caption of this chapter is: exemplary cooperation between army and *Luftwaffe*. Relying on this harmony, I instructed my air force and Flak generals to consider the wishes of the army as my orders, without prejudice to their subordination to me, unless serious air interests made compliance seem impracticable or detrimental. All my commanding officers and I prided ourselves on anticipating the wishes of the army and on carrying out any reasonable requests as quickly and as completely as we could.^{ccxcvi}

In 1941, the mission of indirect support (interdiction) was better understood and more readily carried out than the true CAS mission. Yet although German air-ground coordination was then still in its infancy, major strides had been made in the application of close air support. When *Barbarossa* began, however, only one air corps was specifically trained and equipped to conduct CAS – a capability for which the *Luftwaffe* as a whole remained ill-prepared.^{ccxcvii} This was 8 Air Corps, commanded by Lt.-Gen. Wolfram Freiherr von Richthofen. One of the outstanding tactical air commanders of World War II,^{ccxcviii} Richthofen had fought with the “Legion Condor” in Spain from late 1936 to 1939, first as chief of staff and then as its final commander. It was here, in the

Spanish Civil War, that the *Luftwaffe* had taken its first tentative steps toward developing a true CAS capability. In Poland in 1939, Richthofen led the newly created close support air corps which, by early October 1939, was renamed 8 Air Corps. In May 1940, he led his 8 Air Corps, and its fleet of Ju 87 *Stuka* dive bombers, into the campaign in the west, garnering the Knight's Cross to the Iron Cross. A brilliant tactical innovator, Richthofen applied himself between the French and Russian campaigns – while also leading his air corps in the Balkan offensive – to refining the *Luftwaffe's* close air support techniques. By June 1941, he had perfected a system with which he had experimented since 1939 – that of directing close air support from the ground using *Luftwaffe* liaisons in armored vehicles with appropriate radio sets to control the action. When the attack on Russia began, *Luftwaffe* airmen, operating directly from the front lines, were thus able to direct *Stuka* attacks on fortified enemy positions. The special CAS teams were assigned to the panzer divisions and were “enormously effective” in identifying the most valuable ground targets, while also reducing so-called “friendly fire” incidents. Observes Corum: “Von Richthofen’s 1941 innovations made the *Luftwaffe* much more effective in supporting the German ground forces. It would be two years before the British and Americans could field similar teams to coordinate their air support for the ground armies.” In Russia, Richthofen’s air corps began its operations in the central sector of the front, furnishing innovative air power to Field Marshal Fedor von Bock’s Army Group Center.^{ccxcix}

Once the attack on Russia got underway, Richthofen’s air corps and the entire eastern air fleet was committed ruthlessly to battle; air operations of all units, in fact, proceeded almost seamlessly from 22 June to the end of October 1941, when weather finally intervened to slow them. The *Ostheer*, inadequately equipped with artillery and anti-tank weapons, came to rely increasingly on air power to fill the voids in its own firepower. The mobile forces also needed air power to help them seal the outer rings of the lines of encirclement they were holding:

The intensity of effort may be gauged by fact that during this period dive-bomber units maintained an average number of sorties per day equivalent to 75 percent of establishment aircraft, whilst fighters maintained about 60 percent and long-range bombers 40-45 percent on this basis. An average scale of effort for the whole period by the total force, averaging some 2500 aircraft, worked out in excess of 1200 sorties per day for aircraft of all types engaged on the front; in periods of great intensity, up to 2000 sorties a day or more were put up.

Despite all this effort and the constant endeavor to eliminate the Soviet Air Force by attacking it at every possible opportunity, this latter aim was never successfully accomplished, notwithstanding the fact some 20,000 Russian aircraft were claimed destroyed up to the end of October. On the contrary, it was the German Air Force itself which became seriously weakened as a result of its own immense efforts. Losses were extremely heavy, due to the enforced use of inadequately prepared and ill-equipped airfields, and especially owing to the great accuracy of Russian A.A. fire, from which both reconnaissance and long-range bomber units suffered particularly. Wastage of aircraft was such that total first-line strength . . . underwent a decline and dropped to approximately 4300 aircraft by the end of December, 1941. Units in consequence had, in some cases, to be merged and for the first time it became apparent that the production of aircraft was inadequate to sustain a long period of heavy air operations.^{ccc}

The discussion to this point may have left the impression that, in German air power doctrine, the *Luftwaffe* was conceived as little more than an auxiliary arm of the Army. Nothing, however, could be further from the truth. German air war doctrine, opines Richard Muller in his impressive

work, *The German Air War in Russia*, as it evolved in the mid- and late 1930s, was “as ambitious and far-reaching as any developed during this heyday of air power prophesizing.”^{ccci} *Luftwaffe* theorists developed a concept they called “operational air warfare” (*operativer Luftkrieg*), which sought to integrate an independent air force into the conduct of modern “total war.”^{ccci} In other words, similar to the U.S. air power planners at the Air Corps Tactical School, Maxwell Field, Alabama, the Germans in the pre-war period also strove to work out meaningful theories on the strategic application of airpower – a perspective underscored by Dr Richard Suchenwirth in a study prepared for the U.S. Air Force Historical Division in the late 1950s:

There are two things which make it absolutely certain that *Luftwaffe* leaders intended, from the very beginning, to utilize the newly created air arm in strategic operations in case of war.

In the first place, the *Luftwaffe* Field Directive on the Conduct of Air Warfare, Section 16, treats strategic air warfare as at least as important as the other two types of aircraft employment. . . In Sections 143-178 and 183-185, the Directive goes on to discuss in detail all the various possibilities in strategic air warfare. In view of the fundamental importance which this Directive was to have as a basis for operational planning, it is inconceivable that the leaders of the new service branch could not have been aware of strategic air warfare as one of their three main missions.

In the second place, we have seen that *Luftwaffe* leaders devoted much thought to the development of that type of aircraft which was indispensable to strategic missions. No less a personage than the Chief of the Air Command Office, Reich Air Ministry, (for all practical purposes, the first Chief of the *Luftwaffe* General Staff), General Walther Wever,^{ccci} had openly urged the development of a four-engine bomber. The fact that this model was known as the “Ural bomber” in *Luftwaffe* circles indicates the intention to wage strategic air warfare in any future war as well as the probable enemy in any future war.^{ccci}

Yet the so-called “Ural bomber,” that indispensable prerequisite for effective strategic air operations, was not to be. On 3 June 1936, General Wever perished in an aircraft accident and work on the bomber was soon suspended. The results, in any case, had been disappointing: Two prototypes produced by the Dornier and Junkers works, the Do 19 and Ju 89, had not evinced acceptable performance; both were “underpowered, unwieldy machines”^{cccv} and never saw active service. Shortly thereafter (1937), the Heinkel firm began development of its own long-range bomber; yet the result, the He 177, also fell far short, despite seeing a significant production run and desultory combat service in the later years of the war. A major flaw with the He 177 was the poor performance of its engines – a problem which was to plague German heavy aircraft development throughout the war.^{ccv}

If then, in the broader scheme of things, the failure to develop the appropriate means helps to clarify why *Luftwaffe* concepts of strategic air warfare were rarely put into practice from 1939 to 1945, more germane to this narrative is that the original *Barbarossa* directive (18 December 1940) failed to even assign a strategic mission to the service for the Russian campaign – no doubt in the conviction that a short “blitzkrieg” style war hardly required one. For the attack on Russia, the role of the *Luftwaffe* was two-fold: Firstly, gain air superiority and, if possible, even total air supremacy; secondly, support the ground forces for the duration of their mobile operations. Only after the general line Volga – Archangel – Astrakhan had been reached were strategic operations

to be conducted (“if necessary”) by bomber forces to eliminate Russia’s remaining industrial centers in the Urals.^{cccvii}

The 1941 campaign did witness a few abortive attempts by the *Luftwaffe* to conduct operations of a strategic nature. Beginning in July 1941, for example, a series of raids were conducted on Moscow; while these continued into the spring of 1942, the results were meaningless, for the means employed were utterly insufficient and the attacks too desultory to have any impact. Attempts were also made on occasion to strike at other centers of the Soviet armaments industry, yet such activities were clearly peripheral to primary mission of the *Luftwaffe* – support of ground forces. Not until 1943/44, when the outcome was no longer in doubt, did the *Luftwaffe* in the east make a more serious stab at a strategic air war in Russia, albeit with no better results.^{cccviii}

Once more invoking the principle that a “rudimentary grounding” in the technical means by which the war was fought is a fundamental prerequisite to accurately gauging the nature of the *Barbarossa* campaign – the details on the major German aircraft models are provided below:

Messerschmitt Bf 109: This sleek single-seat, single-engine fighter was, at its inception, probably the best fighter in the world; by early 1941, it was only outclassed by the British “Spitfire.” The aircraft, which first flew in 1935 and made its public debut during the Olympics in Berlin in 1936, carried the designation “Bf” – for *Bayerische Flugzeugwerke* – even after the company became Messerschmitt AG. The Bf 109 cut its teeth in combat with the Condor Legion in the Spanish Civil War, thereafter playing an integral part in the early successes of German arms from 1939-41. Produced in many series, the first model manufactured in large numbers was the Bf 109E (“*Emil*”), which had replaced earlier iterations of the aircraft in first line combat squadrons by the autumn of 1939. The “E” model, with a top speed of about 360 mph, featured two wing-mounted 20mm automatic cannon along with two 7.92 machine guns mounted over the engine nacelle. It was followed in late 1940 by introduction of the “F” (“*Friedrich*”) series which, outfitted with a somewhat more powerful engine, reached a top speed of 390 mph at 22,000 feet. Intended for precision shooting, the Bf 109F featured one nose-mounted 15mm or 20mm cannon and two 7.92 MGs.^{cccix}

In Russia, some Bf 109s were also fitted with bomb racks to perform as fighter-bombers. Moreover, the Bf 109 employed a new weapon which marked a major increase in the *Luftwaffe*’s effectiveness. This was the SD-2 fragmentation bomb (*Splitterbomb*),^{cccx} the “first true cluster bomb,” which was far more lethal than conventional munitions when used to attack ground troops or vehicles in the open:

Since each SD-2 was a container of 96 bombs that covered an area of a few hundred meters, one aircraft dropping two or three of the canisters could effectively wipe out an entire Soviet road column. The cluster bomb was so effective in the interdiction missions against the Red Army that it was accorded top priority for German munitions production. The U.S. Air Force found the SD-2 such an effective weapon that it copied and produced the bomb after the war; the SD-2 remained in the U.S. inventory as a standard munition into the 1960s.^{cccxi}

On 22 June 1941, the majority of German fighter groups in the east were equipped with the newer, swifter Bf 109Fs, while the rest possessed the older “*Emil*” models. Both were far superior to almost anything the Soviet Air Force could bring to the fight -

their only major deficiency being relatively poor endurance (flight range of about 650 km). On the eve of the campaign, the fighter *Gruppen* ranged along the eastern front registered 858 Bf 109s in their order of battle, of which 657 were fully operational (*einsatzklar*).^{cccxi} Emblazoned with their bold yellow theater markings, the Bf 109s performed magnificently during the opening months of the Russian campaign.^{cccxiii} In the years ahead, more than 70 German fighter pilots – the so-called “*Experten*”^{cccxiv} – would top 100 kills in the east, including two pilots with more than 200 and two even surpassing the implausible figure of 300 kills.^{cccxv} By contrast, in the western theater, only a handful of German fighter pilots ever reached the prestigious “century” of kills – illustrating the immense chasm which existed between conditions on the western and eastern fronts.

Messerschmitt Bf 110: This twin-engine heavy fighter and light bomber was a personal favorite of Air Marshal Goering. A “slim, rakish, low-wing cantilever monoplane,” the Bf 110 equipped the so-called *Zerstörer* (Destroyer) squadrons of the *Luftwaffe*; it represented the first serious attempt to produce a “strategic” fighter capable of escorting bomber formations and penetrating deep into enemy territory. Construction of three prototypes had commenced in 1935, with the first flown successfully on 12 May 1936. When Germany invaded Poland in 1939, 10 *Luftwaffe Gruppen*^{cccvi} were equipped with the aircraft which, owing to limited aerial opposition, served largely in a ground support role during the campaign. Some 350 Bf 110Cs took part in the invasion of France and the Low Countries in 1940, while 220 were available for the Battle of Britain. It was over the British Isles in the summer of 1940, however, where the Bf 110 more that met its match. Although heavily armed with two 20mm automatic cannon and several 7.92 machine guns, the heavy fighter’s poor turning radius and slow acceleration made it easy prey for RAF fighters. The Bf 110s, in fact, suffered such a serious mauling that they were withdrawn from the Channel coast. Yet while they had largely disappeared from the western European theater by the summer of 1941, the Bf 110C/D/E variants then in service were used extensively and with success on the eastern front, where their top speed of 340 mph, varied weapons load and ability to sustain battle damage gave them a new lease on life.^{cccvii}

Dornier Do 17: Of the three twin-engine types which comprised the *Luftwaffe*’s bomber fleet on the eve of *Barbarossa*, the Do 17 was the least modern and had proved the most disappointing in service. Ironically, it was first conceived as a mail plane for *Lufthansa* and as a freight aircraft for the German railways; however the Reich’s Air Ministry soon requested that Dornier build a bomber variant. The Do 17 prototype first flew in the autumn of 1934. Entering service in 1937, the sleek, elegant aircraft – dubbed the “flying pencil” – was the fastest bomber in the world. Fighting with the Condor Legion in Spain in support of Franco’s nationalist forces, the Do 17 was virtually immune to interception by fighter aircraft. Yet just three years later, in 1940 over England, the lightweight craft proved vulnerable to modern fighters. With its limited range, relatively small bomb load of 2200 pounds, and vulnerability to hostile fire, the Do 17 had a minimal role in Operation *Barbarossa*, being operated by two reconnaissance squadrons and three bomber groups. The *Luftwaffe* withdrew the bomber from front-line service by 1942 in favor of its replacement, the Junkers Ju 88. In the final years of the war, surviving Do 17s were used as test beds for new technologies and training schools; some were provided to allied nations.^{cccviii}

Heinkel He 111: A truly exquisite and beautifully handling aircraft, aerodynamically efficient, with an elliptical wing and a completely glazed and streamlined fuselage nose, the He 111 was one of the most outstanding airplanes of the mid-1930s – which was the problem, for by the outbreak of war in 1939 it was already approaching obsolescence. Yet because of the German

aircraft industry's inability to find a suitable replacement, the He 111 was to soldier on to the end of the war, performing anti-shipping and transport roles as well as bombing. It even functioned as a launch platform for V-1 cruise missiles in 1944.^{cccxix}

The aircraft first flew in 1935. Like many of its contemporaries, the He 111 also fought with the Condor Legion in the Spanish Civil War. By September 1939, two thirds of *Luftwaffe* bomber units were outfitted with the He 111, which was to remain the backbone of the German horizontal bomber fleet throughout the war. The bomber, however, had several shortcomings; among them, an inadequate suite of defensive armament, relatively slow speed (ca. 250 mph for the He 111H-1), poor maneuverability and a bomb load (4000 lbs) too light for strategic bombing.^{cccxix} On the positive side, the He 111 was robust and reliable and able to absorb truly remarkable battle damage. Two photographs of aircraft belonging to *Kampfgruppe 100 "Wiking,"* tell the story: In the first, a Soviet "Rata" fighter has rammed an He 111, badly damaging the tail unit and fuselage and ripping a massive hole in the right wing; yet the aircraft still made it back to its air field. In the second photograph, an He 111 has sustained a direct hit from heavy Flak, tearing a nearly two-meter wide gap in the right wing; despite the damage, the pilot flew back to base.^{cccxix}

Painted in a standard camouflage scheme – upper surfaces in shades of dark-green, undercarriage in light blue-gray – with yellow Russian campaign bands embellishing the rear portion of the fuselage, the He 111 was to be an indispensable component of the eastern campaign. According to Horst Boog, the German bomber wings (*Kampfgeschwader*) in the *Barbarossa* order of battle were equipped with 757 fully operational machines^{cccxii} on 21 June 1941, the majority of which were He 111s. During the summer of 1941, they struck at airfields and other key enemy installations; interdicted concentrations of troops; bombed rail lines, roads and bridges; launched occasional "strategic" attacks on major armaments centers (among them, Moscow); even provided close air support. During the crisis-ridden winter of 1941/42, they transported troops and supplies to the crumbling front and, on occasion, functioned as "flying artillery" on low-level missions against Red Army forces. Attrition rates were frightful, and help to explain why, in 1941, the *Luftwaffe* – just as in 1940 – lost numbers of aircraft almost equivalent to its entire force structure at the start of the year.^{cccxiii}

Junkers Ju 87: Despite its slow speed and light armament – making it vulnerable to small arms fire – the Ju 87B *Stuka* was the heart of the *Luftwaffe's* close air support force for the attack on Russia. A Russian soldier fighting near the town of Rzhev, outside Moscow, in August 1942, gave a harrowing account of his introduction to the renowned German dive bomber:

[Our] tanks are moving forward with infantry on board. Having successfully navigated the minefields, they are now approaching the enemy's front line, moving with all their mass and firing on enemy positions – they'll fix everything; they're just about to reach the German trenches, where our infantry will toss their hand grenades, while the tanks crush the German positions.

Suddenly, *Stuka* dive bombers appear above the battlefield from the direction of Rzhev. Confidently and impudently they head straight for the tanks. One tank . . . a second . . . a third explodes from the direct attacks, turning into large black-and-crimson bonfires, but the remaining tanks, quickly dispersing, continue to advance on their objective. The bombers are flying in flights. The lead plane, turning on its siren, gracefully goes into a dive and, having released its bomb on its target, soars skyward again. After it, in single file, dives a second, a third, a fourth . . . a tenth, forming a unique carousel above the hastily scattering tanks.

The bloody feast of the vultures, occurring in eyesight of the charging soldiers, causes a commotion: where are our fighters – why haven't they arrived to protect the tanks and infantry? One group of the birds of prey, having dropped its bombs, flies away, but another takes its place, and the whole grim process repeats – having arranged a merciless “funeral procession,” they don't let their victims escape the fatal pocket.

From that terrible day I could never bear the wild animal howling of German Stukas. The wailing they emit is head splitting; it freezes your soul, casts you into confusion, paralyzes you like the gaze of a venomous cobra, and lingers in your ears for a long, long time. Even after the war, I never once dared to visit a zoo, because I feared the wail or howl of an animal there might bring me to nervous collapse.^{cccxxiv}

The first prototype of the distinctive looking aircraft, with its gull wings and fixed landing gear, flew in the spring of 1935. By the late 1930s, both the original “A” model and a more powerful “B” variant had gone into serial production. A small batch of the dive bombers (Ju 87C) was also built to serve aboard the Navy's planned aircraft carrier, *Graf Zeppelin*, whose construction was never completed. To enhance the psychological effect on enemy ground troops, the Ju 87B was outfitted with sirens operated by wooden propellers mounted on the craft's undercarriage spats; the pitch and intensity of the noise emitted by these “Jerico Trumpets” also managed to frighten many *Stuka* crews early in their training.^{cccxxv}

In Poland and France, the *Stuka* showcased its ability to accomplish both the CAS and interdiction mission. In an era before precision guided munitions, the Ju 87 was a highly accurate bomber, able to strike its target in a diving attack at an angle of about 70 degrees with an accuracy of less than 30 yards. The aircraft was outfitted with special speed breaks, which reduced the speed of the steep dive from 650 to 450 k/h, making aiming easier. However, the pilots soon concluded that their attacks came off better when they did not use the breaks, which were not only cumbersome to operate but, by slowing down the duration of the dive, increased time over target and, hence, the two-man crew's exposure to enemy ground fire.^{cccxxvi}

The *Stuka*'s reputation took a beating in the Battle of Britain, where its slow top speed of about 230 mph and lack of defensive armament (several 7.92 MGs) made it highly vulnerable to RAF Hurricanes and Spitfires. On the Russian front in 1941, however, operating in an environment of near total air superiority, it performed to great effect. All told, the *Luftwaffe* force structure in the east at the start of the campaign included 360 combat-ready Ju 87Bs, 323 of them assigned to Army Group Center.^{cccxxvii} The dive bombers struck a broad array of targets in the enemy hinterland, such as bridges, buildings, field fortifications, trains, railroad lines and railroad installations, as well as concentrations of troops, artillery, tanks and vehicles; as noted, they also furnished close air support for troops along the main battle line. For hard and fixed targets, 50 to 500 kg high explosive bombs were most commonly employed; for attacks on trains, the normal bomb load was one 250 kg and four 50 kg bombs; for attacks against troops and vehicles, fragmentation bombs of varying sizes were used. To increase fragmentation effect, special fuses (called Dinort sticks) were screwed into the nose caps of larger bombs, causing the bombs to detonate just above the ground.^{cccxxviii}

During the summer of 1941, *Stuka* pilots maintained a merciless pace of operations, receiving virtually no rest and sometimes flying multiple sorties a day for weeks on end. The physical and psychological toll taken by such ceaseless combat activity under highly stressful conditions – the noise from the sirens could shatter a crew member's eardrum – could be catastrophic, resulting in

a man's complete nervous collapse.^{ccccxxix} For their part, the Russians would grow not only to fear, but to hate, the German *Stuka* pilots. As one pilot recalled after the war:

Every time I was shot down behind Russian lines [13 times in all!] I was always prepared to shoot myself, because I never would have let them take me alive. I had seen the remains of *Stuka* fliers who had been massacred by Russian soldiers, their stomachs slit open, and so on. The Russians really hated *Stuka* crews.^{ccccxxx}

Junkers Ju 52: No account of the *Luftwaffe* lineup for Operation *Barbarossa* would be complete without paying tribute to the Junkers Ju 52, which saw active service both as a civilian airliner and a military transport. While one Allied pilot evaluating the aircraft shortly after the war's end called it an "aesthetically-unappealing contraption" and a "monstrosity," he nevertheless acknowledged the vital role it had played as a three-engine transport in German military operations.^{ccccxxxi} Throughout the war, the Ju 52/3m carried thousands of troops and many tons of supplies to all combat zones, ferrying ammunition and fuel to forward airstrips and often evacuating wounded to the rear. In the western campaign of 1940, and at Crete in May 1941, the transports made paratrooper drops, losing hundreds of aircraft in the process. In 1942/43 the "*Tante Ju*" ("Aunt Ju"), as the slow and lumbering transport was known in *Landser* slang, bravely supplied friendly forces surrounded at Demiansk and Stalingrad, or isolated in Tunisia – again sustaining frightful losses.

The Ju 52 had first flown in October 1930,^{ccccxxxii} and over the next 15 years its basic design was never altered – a measure of the farsightedness of the craft's designer, Ernst Zindel. The aircraft was used as a transport and a bomber during the Spanish Civil War, taking part in the bombing of Guernica. Although again used as a light bomber over Warsaw in September 1939, it was thereafter employed only as a transport. In this capacity, the Ju 52/3m could carry several tons of supplies distances of more than 1000 kilometers; maximum speed was about 175 mph and defensive armament was light, consisting of several 7.92 machine guns. Despite a laborious rate of climb – our Allied pilot once had the occasion to fly the aircraft up to 10,000 feet, and it "took all of 18 minutes to get there!" – the Ju 52/3m was supremely reliable, stable in flight, simple to operate (although the cockpit layout was a "mess – switches and knobs everywhere"),^{ccccxxxiii} and easy to maintain. It also had an exceptional short take-off and landing (STOL) capability and could withstand serious combat damage. Although obsolescent by the beginning of World War II, the Ju 52/3m served as the backbone of the *Transportverbaende* of the *Luftwaffe* until the end of the war.^{ccccxxxiv}

In the fall and winter of 1941/42, deteriorating weather conditions meant that Ju 52/3m *Gruppen* were often the only option for getting life-sustaining supplies to combat units at the front. The pace of their activity at this time is apparent from the operations of a single transport group in October-November 1941: Flying on the central sector of the front from airfields west and southwest of Moscow, this unit logged nearly 700 sorties during a four week period, delivering 1100 tons of fuel, munitions, equipment and replacement parts while bringing out some 600 wounded – a mission it accomplished despite frequent rainfall, low-level cloud cover and fog, sodden landing strips, and the serious threat of enemy fire from ground and air forces. On at least two occasions, the Ju 52/3m crews delivered their goods to an airfield so close to the front that they had to unload under artillery fire. Four of the transport group's Ju 52/3ms were lost during these critical missions.^{ccccxxxv}

1.3.8: Weapons of War (Red Army)

--22.6.41: Bei Kriegsbeginn hatten die sowj. Luftwaffe nicht weniger Flugzeuge in Besitz als der Gegner. Aber diese bestanden ueberwiegend aus *veralteten Typen*. Die sowj. Konstrukteure hatten zu diesem Zeitpunkt bereits neue Flugzeugtypen entwickelt, deren Eigenschaften denen der deutschen Muster nicht nachstanden. Doch die Umstellung auf die neuen Flugzeugen *ging nur langsam vor sich*. Zu Kriegsbeginn befanden sich auf den Fliegerhorsten nur **16-17% neuer Flugzeuge**. Zudem hatten sich die Flieger mit dem neuen Material noch nicht hinreichend vertraut machen koennen. (B.S. Telpuchowski, *Die sowj. Geschichte des Grossen Vaterlaendischen Krieges*, 43)

--Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

The Soviet Union, observes Evan Mawdsley, “was not a normal state, and Moscow and Berlin had fateful similarities.

Supreme authority was concentrated in the hands of a dictator. Foreign policy was highly ideological. Structures for co-ordinating the activities of different agencies and for fully rational decision-making did not exist. Joseph Stalin had consolidated sole power since the defeat of his major rivals within the Communist party in 1929-30 and the purges of tens of thousands of senior officials (and hundreds of thousands of ordinary people) in 1937-38. Among those murdered in the late 1930s were the more independently-minded Soviet military commanders and diplomats. By 1939-41 fundamental issues of foreign and security policy were decided arbitrarily, not even by the party Politburo but only by Stalin and selected members of the Politburo. Especially important was the premier and foreign minister, V.M. Molotov, described as “one of the most inexorably stupid men to hold the foreign ministership of any major power this century.” Stalin and Molotov were both ignorant of the outside world and, remarkably, they had little understanding of Hitler’s National Socialism. As in Germany, the country’s elite accepted, through conviction or fear, the radical programs of the ruling dictator.^{ccccxxvi}

Under Stalin’s uniquely brutal stewardship – propelled by his iron will – the USSR was to experience a remarkable transformation from an economic backwater into an advanced industrial and military power by the end of the 1930s. As is now, of course, well documented, this transformation was accomplished at the cost of the lives of millions of ordinary Soviet citizens, many slaughtered or starved to death during the forced collectivization, others worked to death in the factories and labor camps. Yet without its blood-stained emergence into the modern world, the Soviet Union would most surely have been enslaved by Hitler’s Germany. Before and during the war Soviet factories, employing modern techniques of mass production, turned out tens of thousands of guns, tanks, vehicles and aircraft, while her railroads delivered tens of millions of troops and untold tons of supplies to the front. The remarkable results of Soviet industrial policy – tethered to an equally successful system of military mobilization – enabled the Red Army to stay operationally committed for fully 88 percent of the 1418 days of warfare on the eastern front between 1941/45, while facing 65-70 percent of the total field strength of the German Army. During this time the Red Army conducted seven major defensive and 160 offensive operations, in the process destroying or disabling more than 600 Axis divisions by May 1945.^{ccccxxvii}

Yet if Russia was only able to wage war victoriously due to Stalin's total recasting of his country in the years before 1941, how ironic is it that he had, first, to wage war on his own people? And ironic as well was Stalin's and the Kremlin leadership's second great pre-war achievement: Imbuing in the great mass of those Soviet citizens who were not among the tortured, enslaved or killed a profound sense of responsibility toward the Soviet state and a willingness to make even greater sacrifices in the Great Patriotic War of 1941/45.^{cccxviii}

4.1: Buildup of the Industrial Base & Armed Forces (A Brief Overview):

The Red Army of the 1920s, while large in size, was essentially a “foot-and-hoof army: an infantry and cavalry force with very limited capability for developing tactical success into operational or certainly strategic success.”^{cccxix} By the mid-1930s, however, Russia's armed forces had fully developed and implemented a concept known as “deep battle” (*glubokii boi*) while also crafting a force structure (including mechanized and airborne corps) which could begin to translate theory into practice.^{cccxl} How, specifically, did this dramatic change come about?

The leaders in the Kremlin had long viewed another internecine world war between the states of the capitalist West as inevitable, a conviction which only hardened after Hitler's seizure of power in January 1933. Such a war presented dangers – Russia might be drawn into it before she was ready – while also offering opportunities: It might enable the Red Army to intervene decisively after the western powers had worn themselves down. It is now well known that Stalin signed his spectacular non-aggression pact with Germany in August 1939 for this very reason – that is, to facilitate another war of attrition between Germany, France and England; one which would end with Soviet Russia emerging as the dominant power on the European continent. What was not known, however, is that the Kremlin leadership had assiduously been preparing their own future war of aggression against the West since at least 1930/31. That this was indeed the case has now been revealed in the pioneering research of Polish-born scholar Bogdan Musial into Soviet archives hitherto inaccessible to western scholars. As he states in the introduction to his electrifying new work, *Kampfplatz Deutschland*:

For decades, international research has agreed that the German assault against the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941 was an ideologically motivated war of aggression, planned and executed as a war of annihilation and of *Lebensraum*. There is sufficient evidence for this, amongst other things statements by Hitler himself. Soviet wartime and post-war propaganda depicted this assault as such, yet at the same time masked the near two-year duration of the German-Soviet military alliance and, above all, their own agenda of aggression.

The most recently discovered records in the Moscow archives show in particular that from the end of the 1920s, with especial intensity after ‘Black Friday’ (the beginning of the international economic crisis, 25 October 1929), the Soviet Union undertook large scale and intense rearmament for an ideologically motivated war of aggression against the West. In 1930 the later Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky designed the concept for the war of annihilation against the West, which envisaged large scale deployment of tanks (50,000), airplanes (40,000), as well as “massive deployment of chemical weapons.”

The aim of the Soviet war of aggression was to spread Communist rule through Europe and the world by armed force. Germany was to have the key role in the Bolsheviks' plans for the world revolution, namely due to its industrial potential, the strength of its workforce, its future disciplined soldiers of the revolution, as

well as its geopolitical situation in the middle of Europe. The Bolsheviks viewed Germany as the key to domination of Europe. . . .^{cccxi}

Since at least 1924, maintains Musial, hopes of a Communist revolution in Germany had faded among the Soviet leadership. In 1925 Stalin succeeded in gaining support for the line of reasoning first expressed by Vladimir Lenin in 1915: “The first Socialist State [i.e., the USSR] shall, if necessary, advance the Communist revolution on its own through force of arms.” In 1927, the Politburo approved corresponding increases in armaments production – an intent which initially went nowhere due to the underdeveloped and backward state of Soviet industry. By 1930, all of Soviet society and the entire economy had been harnessed to the preparation of a war of aggression against the West. Indeed, from the early 1930s, Stalin had pinned his hopes solely on the Red Army as a means of spreading world revolution.^{cccxlii}

The rapid expansion of the Soviet war economy and the Red Army beginning in the early 1930s, along with the latter’s basic restructuring and re-equipping, was supported by the purchase of modern technologies, installations and equipment, and weapons prototypes from the West; these purchases, in turn, were financed through the export of raw materials – such as wheat and wood – and even with increased sales of vodka inside Russia itself.^{cccxliv} Key to Soviet preparations for war, however, was the enormous economic development initiated under the so-called Five-Year Plans, the first which got underway in 1928. Of course, whatever Stalin’s and the Soviet leadership’s ultimate intent,^{cccxliv} they also feared a capitalist invasion before their own forces were ready; hence, much of the economic buildup was centered east of Moscow, in the Urals, Siberia and central Asia.

A few figures should illustrate the spectacular results achieved under the Five-Year Plans. The Russia Hitler had written about in *Mein Kampf* in the mid-1920s had an output of about 4,000,000 tons of steel a year, roughly what it had managed before World War I; moreover, Soviet factories produced fewer than 500 motor vehicles in 1927. By comparison, in 1940 Soviet steel production climbed to 18,300,000 tons, while industry built about 200,000 motor vehicles (mostly trucks). Of course, the dramatic increase in steel production was accompanied by an equally prodigious jump in the manufacture of weapons and shells:^{cccxliv}

Soviet Weapons Production^{cccxlvii}
(1937-40)

	<u>1937</u>	<u>1938</u>	<u>1939</u>	<u>1940</u>
Tanks	1600	2300	3000	2800
Artillery	5400	12,300	17,100	15,100
Mortars	1600	1200	4100	37,900
Rifles	567,400	1,224,700	1,396,700	1,395,000
MGs	31,100	52,600	73,600	52,200
Aircraft	4400	5500	10,400	10,600
Munitions ^{cccxlvii}	- - - - -	13,000,000	20,000,000	33,000,000

At the same time, while the Soviet government limited the construction of new railroad lines (of the 17,000 km of track earmarked for construction under the first Five-Year Plan, only about 5000 were actually built; even less was achieved on the second Five-Year Plan), improvements to

existing tracks and other measures resulted in a four-fold increase in rail traffic between 1928-40.^{ccclviii} In any case the bottom line is this: If the USSR was not yet an industrial power on the order of Germany or Great Britain – and certainly not the United States – it was rapidly becoming one. A nation which, in World War I, had not been able to furnish enough rifles for its armies was outproducing most of Europe a generation later. Indeed, the Soviets had, by 1939, created one of the largest military-industrial complexes in the world.^{ccclix}

The broad increase in the production of weapons and munitions was paralleled by a concomitant expansion in the size of the Red Army. In the years prior to the outbreak of war with Germany, the Soviet General Staff studiously updated and modified its war plans, while altering the Red Army's force generation and mobilization system to reflect the new planning. From 1937-39, the Soviets increased the size and readiness of peacetime forces by converting the traditional territorial-militia force-manning system to a regular cadre system. On 1 September 1939, they enacted the Law on Universal Military Service^{cccl} to furnish the requisite manpower for the new system to succeed. These and other measures enabled the Red Army to "creep up to war" by expanding its size from 1.5 million men in January 1938 to more than five million in June 1941; they also enabled the Army's highly efficient mobilization system to expand the peacetime cadre force to well beyond 500 divisions in wartime. By the time the *Wehrmacht* crossed the Russo-German frontier in the early morning hours of 22 June 1941, Red Army ground forces had swelled in size to more than two dozen armies and 300 divisions of all types, supported by dozens of fortified regions, separate engineering and artillery regiments, and other units. Nearly three million Russian soldiers stood guard in the western theater when the Germans struck.^{cccli}

By the spring of 1941, the Red Army was the "largest and most complex fighting force in the world,"^{ccclii} endowed with larger mechanized, cavalry and airborne forces than any other nation. Yet it was also an army still in the throes of thorough and challenging reforms, including the reorganization and re-equipping of its mechanized forces. Officers and men were far from fully trained and equipped; many divisions were not yet combat ready. As will be explored in more detail below, the Red Army on the brink of war was far from ready to fight.

--Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

4.2: Impact of the Purges

As one account put it bluntly: "Where Hitler had tamed his officer caste, Stalin had killed his."^{cccliii} The purges of the armed forces were part of the Great Purge of the civilian and military establishment which the preternaturally paranoid Soviet dictator had implemented in 1936. Although the Russian army had no discernable tradition of revolt or revolution – its sole attempt to usurp power, the Decembrist coup of 1825, had petered out after a day – Stalin still feared it. Obsessed that his rivals – real or imaginary – might move against him, he responded with homicidal brutality. During the height of the purges in 1937-38, more than 1.5 million people were arrested by the Soviet secret police, the NKVD;^{cccliv} of these, more than 1.3 million received some sort of sentence, while more than 680,000 were executed. The effects of the purges were felt at every level of Soviet society, from the Politburo down to ordinary citizens arrested in the streets. Among those killed were so-called "ex-kulaks," "criminal elements," "socially dangerous elements," "members of anti-Soviet parties," "former tsarist civil servants," and "White Guards." Of course, these designations were applied rather flexibly to any suspect, whether he was a Party member, member of the intelligentsia, member of the armed forces, or a simple worker.^{ccclv}

Although new scholarship has revealed that the NKVD's "*Ezhovshchina*" – "The Reign of Ezhov," a reference to Nikolai Ezhov, leader of the NKVD from September 1936 to November 1938 – had less of an impact on the armed forces than hitherto believed, its impact was nonetheless horrific. All told, some 35,000 officers were arrested or expelled from the Red Army between May 1937 and September 1938;^{ccclvi} of these, about 30 percent were eventually reinstated by 1940, but more than 22,000 were either executed or their fate remains unknown. If that were not enough, a new wave of terror commenced in the fall of 1938, with the result that high-level arrests and executions of key military leaders went on – albeit at a slower pace – right up to the eve of war with Germany.^{ccclvii} In the final analysis, the purges decapitated the leadership of the Soviet armed forces; among those eliminated were:

- 3 of 5 marshals
- 13 of 15 army generals
- 8 of 9 admirals
- 50 of 57 army corps commanders
- 154 of 186 division commanders
- 16 of 16 army commissars
- 25 of 28 army corps commissars^{ccclviii}

According to Evan Mawdsley, the purges of the Soviet military had three primary outcomes, each of which was devastating: a) indispensable trained leaders were lost during a period of rapid Red Army expansion; b) the initiative of the officer corps was "paralyzed," and a "mental state imposed which was the very opposite of the German 'mission-oriented command system;'" and, c) the purges convinced foreign nations – among them Hitler's Germany – that the Soviet military was nothing more than a "broken shell."^{ccclix}

Certainly, the evisceration of the Red Army's officer corps constituted one of the gravest handicaps to Soviet military effectiveness in both the Russo-Finnish conflict of 1939/40 and the initial phase of the war with Germany. As a direct result of the purges – and the rapid ongoing expansion – the Red Army's shortage of skilled specialists reached crisis proportions by 1940. Moreover, the Army faced a shortfall of 36,000 officers on the eve of the German invasion; a figure which climbed to 55,000 following wartime mobilization.^{ccclx} Only 7.1 percent of commanding officers had a higher military education (55.9 percent had a secondary education, 24.6 percent had taken accelerated courses and 12 percent of officers had received no military education at all).^{ccclxi} By June 1941, 75 percent of field officers and 70 percent of political commissars had occupied their posts for less than a year.^{ccclxii} Field commanders at *all* levels held "positions for which they were unqualified, lacked the practical experience and confidence necessary to adjust to changing tactical situations and tended to apply stereotypical solutions, distributing their subordinate units according to textbook diagrams without regard for actual terrain. The results were predictable."^{ccclxiii}

Yet if the purges had broken the back of the Soviet officer corps, they had strikingly solidified Stalin's own hold on power. From this point forward, no one dared challenge his authority on any matter pertaining to war or peace. The implications of Stalin's iron grip on the Soviet state were profound:

The mass purges of 1937 ensured that Stalin would not be threatened, that his despotism would not be challenged, whatever his own paranoia told him. The purges also greatly weakened the position of the army's General Staff in its dealings with the political leadership, most especially with Stalin himself. . . . Stalin – cautious, distrustful and cold-bloodedly ruthless – was increasingly told

what his sycophantic and anxious subordinates thought he wanted to hear. This would play its part in the disaster of June 1941.

In the vital months prior to the launch of “*Barbarossa*,” therefore, decisions on all matters of importance within the Soviet Union were taken by Stalin personally. There were discussions, sometimes lengthy and usually informal, with fluctuating groups from within the “inner circle.” But those who met Stalin on a regular basis saw each other as rivals, and were, consequently, divided among themselves. They were also acutely aware that their tenure was insecure. Their dependence on Stalin was total. So, therefore, was their loyalty to him. This did not make for an open exchange of views. . . . The reinforcement of Stalin’s own views was, therefore, almost guaranteed. This would prove a major weakness, rather than a strength, as invasion loomed.^{ccclxiv}

Recently, some scholars^{ccclxv} have concluded that even more so than the Great Purge, it was the breakneck expansion of the Red Army which was largely to blame for the decline in the Army’s quality and its poor showing in the initial phases of the Russo-German war. Be that as it may, operations on the eastern front reveal that it took the Russians a good two years, perhaps longer, to begin to reach parity with the Germans on the *operational* level of war – a status they would never attain on the *tactical* level. In fact, poor small unit tactics were endemic to the Red Army in the early years of the war . . .

--Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

4.3.1: Infantry & Artillery

“June is a special month all over northern Europe,” reflects Catherine Merridale in her wonderful social history of the Red Army soldier:

In European Russia and Ukraine, it is magical. Winter’s bitter dark and ice are barely even memories, spring’s mud and rain forgiven. Kiev’s famous chestnut trees come into bloom, and so do Moscow’s lilacs. Yalta’s Judas trees. It is the month of the peony and the green willow, the month, in the north, of the white nights.^{ccclxvi}

For the Red Army soldier of 1941, the “magical” month of June was to culminate in humiliation and defeat – a meat grinder of death administered with Teutonic precision by the tanks, guns and aeroplanes of Hitler’s invading armies. By early 1942, more than two million of Russia’s soldiers were dead, most of them simple infantry belonging to the traditional rifle divisions which, in 1941, made up 65 percent of the Soviet force structure. The average Russian rifleman – clad in his olive green uniform, persistently short of food and kit,^{ccclxvii} poorly equipped and poorly led, the object of draconian discipline – had lasted in front-line duty for barely three weeks before being killed or disabled.^{ccclxviii}

It should not have been like this. Spurred on by the poor performance of Soviet arms during the occupation of eastern Poland in September 1939, the colossal failures in the war with Finland in 1939/40 and, perhaps most of all, by the stunning victory of the *Wehrmacht* in the west in the spring of 1940, the Soviet Union had “embarked on a crash program to reinvigorate their armed forces.” The ensuing reforms, named for Commissar of War S.K. Timoshenko, were to affect

virtually every facet of the Red Army. In the course of these reforms, efforts were made to expand and modernize the rifle forces, including adoption of a new rifle division establishment in April 1941, which aimed to replace the former dual peacetime manning level of the division (6000 and 12,000), increase rifle strength, and enhance firepower through “up-gunned” artillery, improved anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons, and the addition of a light tank battalion.^{ccclxix}

What emerged from these reforms was a rifle division of three rifle regiments and two artillery regiments (one gun, one howitzer regiment), as well as reconnaissance, anti-tank, anti-aircraft, engineer, signal and tank battalions. In theory, the new division’s table of organization included 14,483 men, 78 artillery pieces (over 50mm), 150 mortars (50, 82 and 120mm), 54 45mm AT guns, 12 AA guns, 16 light tanks, 13 armored cars, 558 vehicles, and 300 horses.^{ccclxx} In June 1941, however, most of these rifle divisions were well below their authorized strength in manpower (on average 8000 to 10,000 men, or even less), firepower, and logistics support.^{ccclxxi} One of the most serious deficiencies was in motorization, with each rifle division having only 10-25 percent of its prescribed number of trucks, because any new production was needed for the massive expansion of the mechanized corps. This lack of motor transport would later be identified by almost every front-line officer as the reason why the retreat that June so quickly became a rout.^{ccclxxii} Performance in the field was also adversely affected by the lack of an effective infantry anti-tank rifle.

In general, the Soviet 1941 rifle division was short of personnel, weapons, equipment, transport, communications equipment, and logistics support – in other words, just about everything – while also evincing weaknesses in unit and officer training. According to the late John Erickson, the rifle divisions at the beginning of the war – with their “enormous variations in strength” – equaled the equivalent of just 1/3 of a fully outfitted German infantry division.^{ccclxxiii} Such failings “rendered the force hollow and presaged rapid Soviet defeat.”^{ccclxxiv}

The best equipped and most thoroughly professional arm of the Red Army ground forces was the artillery. Indeed, the service had an “unbroken tradition of excellence throughout Russian history;”^{ccclxxv} as far back as 1810, the modernization of the Czar’s artillery had made it “probably the most professional in Europe.”^{ccclxxvi} The Red Army began World War II with an excellent arsenal of artillery pieces which had been designed or upgraded in the 1930s, adding to the range, rate of fire, accuracy and destructive effect of all their artillery.^{ccclxxvii} Soviet artillery bore a resemblance to that of the Germans, only the Red Army had a lot more of it – in 1941 more than 33,000 artillery pieces (for the entire USSR) as opposed to little more than 7000 German light and medium pieces earmarked for *Barbarossa*.^{ccclxxviii}

The Soviet artillery park comprised a mix of guns and howitzers – some obsolete, some modern types – in 76mm, 107mm, 122mm and 152mm calibers. Like the German artillery, most of it was horse drawn, while very few of the tracked artillery pieces could operate off road.^{ccclxxix} Most of the heavier caliber weapons were assigned to the 94 corps artillery and 75 RVGK (High Command Reserve) artillery regiments which supported the armies, corps and divisions; in fact, 92 percent of all Soviet artillery was incorporated into these 169 regiments. The standard artillery piece allotted to the rifle regiments was the short-barreled 76mm Model 1927 regimental gun; divisional artillery included 76mm guns and 122mm and 152mm howitzers.^{ccclxxx}

In mid-July 1941 – first at the important railroad junction at Orsha, southwest of Smolensk; then near the town of Rudnia, between Vitebsk and Smolensk – the Red Army introduced a new and highly secret weapon: The BM-13 “*Katyusha*” (“Little Kate”) multiple rocket-launcher.^{ccclxxxi} Simply put, this rather crude weapon consisted (in its initial configuration) of rails mounted on

the back of truck and fired a salvo of 16 solid-fuel rockets with 132mm caliber warheads.^{ccclxxxii} The Germans dreaded the massed fire of the “*Stalinorgel*” (“Stalin Organ”), as they called it,^{ccclxxxiii} with its infernal and distinctive scream. However, the *Landser* soon figured out that the rockets were inaccurate and the fragmentation effect poor – that they were mainly effective against personnel in the open or against lightly skinned vehicles. . .

Throughout the Russo-German War, the Soviets would rely more on their artillery than any other major combatant. Between 1941 and 1945, they produced more than 500,000 guns and mortars, concentrating on the output of designs already in service in 1941. The destructive power of Soviet artillery – particularly in the later years of the war – often dominated the battlefield. As Dr Max Domarus, historian, archivist and editor of an anthology of Hitler’s speeches and proclamations, stated in the second volume of his copious work – with more than a whiff of verisimilitude – the “successful resistance of the Soviet Union against Hitler’s invasion was, exactly as in the case of Napoleon, above all the glorious work of the Soviet artillery.

Just like the divisions and Guardes of Napoleon, in the Second World War the German Army was suddenly confronted by the immense power, precision and superiority of the Russian batteries and mortars. The Russian cannon outside Moscow in 1941, the rockets of the “*Stalinorgel*” and the 5000 firing guns of Stalingrad all belong indelibly to the picture of the great Russian war of annihilation from 1941 to 1945. And the thunder of the guns, which during the war proclaimed each new victory to the people of Moscow was, at the same time, a salute of honor to the brave and incomparable artillerymen, Russia’s best arm of the service.^{ccclxxxiv}

In practical terms, a 76mm shell produced a crater one meter in diameter and .5 meters deep; a 122mm shell, a crater three meters in diameter and .7 meters deep; and a 152mm shell, a crater fully five meters in diameter and 1.8 meters deep.^{ccclxxxv} In the static warfare that characterized the central sector of the eastern front in August-September 1941, the forces of Army Group Center suffered severe attrition at the hands of ample, well-supplied, and adroitly wielded Red Army artillery. However, similar to the other branches of the Soviet armed forces in 1941, the artillery arm exhibited serious shortcomings:

Contemporary Soviet archival reports and after-action assessments noted several major deficiencies in artillery systems. Inspections conducted in spring 1941 indicated that regimental personnel, in particular junior and mid-range commanders, were poorly trained and unable to employ their artillery effectively in combat. Firing units experienced major difficulties in target acquisition and fire direction and were unable to coordinate their fire with that of supposedly cooperating units. The most serious deficiency found in gun artillery units was their inability to bring effective fire to bear on enemy tanks, which was one of the most critical tasks assigned to artillery units by pre-war regulations.^{ccclxxxvi}

Yet it is doubtful that such deficiencies were apparent to the hard-pressed German *Landser* who, in the El’nia salient, several hundred kilometers west of Moscow, in the summer of 1941, were hammered daily by barrages reminiscent of those of the Great War of 1914/18. . .

--Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

4.3.2: Mechanized Forces

As war with Germany loomed, Soviet mechanized forces were in the middle of a massive reorganization of their force structure and change out of tanks and equipment. To ascertain why this was so, a brief introduction to Soviet doctrinal thinking as it evolved in the 1920s and 1930s is necessary. It is one of the great ironies of history that it was not the Germans but the Russians – led by the “prodigious trio” of generals, Tukhachevsky, Triandafillov and Isserson – who first introduced the concept of an “operational” level of warfare – an intermediate level of warfare falling between the Clausewitzian categories of strategy and tactics. In the process, these highly innovative thinkers devised an “entirely original doctrine” which found its fullest expression in a concept known as “deep operations.” Simply stated, “deep operations” envisaged the use of robust armored and motorized forces – echeloned in depth and cooperating with infantry and artillery – to rapidly breach the enemy front and then exploit the initial success by conducting operational maneuvers far to the rear of the enemy’s main deployment.^{ccclxxxvii} While at the time radically new, such thinking was clearly in line with the manifestly offensive orientation of Soviet military doctrine since the 1920s. As Geoffrey Roberts has argued, “the concept of strategic defense had no place in the doctrinal universe of the Soviet High Command at the time.” Stalin as well was committed to the doctrine of offensive action. Any war fought by the Soviet Union – regardless of the posture of her foreign policy – was going to be fought on the enemy’s soil.^{ccclxxxviii}

The prerequisite for transforming “deep operations” from a concept into a concrete reality was, of course, the creation of a large, independent and effective mechanized force. In 1930, the Russians established an experimental mechanized (tank) brigade; by 1932, they had four such brigades; by 1936, the size of the force had expanded to four mechanized corps, as well as a host of mechanized brigades, tank regiments and tank battalions. In 1938, a Soviet tank corps (the mechanized corps of 1936 were renamed tank corps at this time) was composed of 12,710 men, 560 tanks and 118 guns; by 1939, the Soviets had five such corps in their force structure. Deep operations were also to be promoted by the formation of airborne brigades, which slowly increased in numbers and size up to June 1941.^{ccclxxxix}

In the period before war with Germany, however, the concept of deep operations, while never completely abandoned, was significantly modified – even, it appears, forgotten for a time. In the first place, the Tukhachevsky group^{ccxc} became a victim of the purges and was liquidated in 1937. Secondly, the experiences of the Russians in Spain (1936-39), eastern Poland (1939) and Finland (1939/40) convinced the Soviet military leadership that the use of large, independently operating tank corps was not a good fit for the modern battlefield, while the tanks themselves were too prone to mechanical breakdowns and logistical problems. Thus, in late 1939, the decision was taken to abolish the five existing tank corps and replace them with smaller combined arms units with fewer tanks.^{ccxcxi}

This decision, however, soon collided with the reality of the German “blitzkrieg.” The dramatic German victories in 1939 and 1940 “shattered Soviet confidence” that they had acted judiciously in eliminating the tank corps. As David Glantz puts it, “They looked upon German operations in Poland with wonderment and awe.” Yet the real “wake-up” call was the *Wehrmacht’s* stunning six-week victory over France in 1940. In a series of insightful articles appearing in late 1940 and 1941, the typical Soviet response was: “My God, they picked up on our ideas and are effectively implementing them while we have gone in the opposite direction.”^{ccxcxii}

Finally roused to action, the Red Army leadership hastily began to reestablish a large armored force structure. In July 1940, the creation of nine new mechanized corps got underway; and, in early 1941, the Soviets began forming an additional 20 such corps. All 29 of the mechanized corps were to be partially equipped with new KV (*Klementi Voroshilov*) heavy and T-34 medium

tanks. On paper, each of these corps (each with two tank divisions and one mechanized division)^{cccxciii} embraced 36,080 men, 1031 tanks (including 126 KVs and 420 T-34s), 358 guns and mortars, 268 armored cars, 5165 vehicles, and 352 tractors. Yet despite frantic efforts to accelerate their formation, most of these corps were still seriously understrength in manpower, armor, equipment, and logistical support by June 1941.^{cccxciv} For example, five of the six mechanized corps in the Western Special Military District – i.e., those corps facing Field Marshal von Bock’s Army Group Center – had only been formed in March 1941 and were woefully understrength (unlike the one corps which had been formed in July 1940); none of these five mechanized corps had more than 518 tanks, and two of them possessed less than 100. Seriously exacerbating such shortfalls was the fact that both the officers and men who manned these corps – and their tank and mechanized divisions – were still relatively untrained.^{cccxcv}

Just how far the Red Army was from equipping each of its 29 mechanized corps with more than 500 KVs and T-34s is apparent from the fact that, on the day the Germans struck, only 1861 of these marvelous tanks were in service throughout the entire Red Army; of these, 1475 were unevenly distributed to the mechanized corps in the western military districts. The corps were primarily outfitted with older, light BT and T-26 model tanks, many of which had not been adequately maintained in anticipation of their replacement by superior KVs and T-34s. In fact, as of 15 June 1941, 29 percent of the older model tanks were in need of capital repair, while 44 percent required lesser maintenance.^{cccxcvi}

On paper, the primary Russian tanks of 1941, the 11-ton T-26 light tank and the 14-ton light BT models (there were several) were equivalent at very least to the German Pz II, and most were outfitted with a 45mm main armament, which was similar to the Panzer III.^{cccxcvii} Moreover, both the T-26 and the BT tanks were available in numbers far greater than their German counterparts. Yet German tanks operated within a comprehensive radio net, while Russian tanks were equipped with few radios and hardly any below the battalion level, control being executed through the use of signal flags. As a result, it was far more difficult for Soviet mechanized forces to respond rapidly to the inexorably changing conditions on the battlefield.^{cccxcviii} In any case, all of these Soviet tanks were obsolete by the beginning of *Barbarossa*. On the evening of the first day of the war, the commander of Soviet 10 Army gloomily reported that his superannuated T-26 tanks were only good “for firing at sparrows.”^{cccxcix}

Much superior were the new tank models – the KVs and the T-34s – which were only now just starting to enter the inventory in numbers. The KV-1 was the Red Army’s heavy tank; it weighed nearly 48 tons, was operated by a crew of five, protected by 75-100mm of armor, and fitted with a 76mm main armament. The KV-2 was fitted with a 152mm howitzer for demolishing enemy bunkers; the Russians, however, produced but a few of these tanks, as they were difficult to manufacture and the requirement for the heavy projectile used by the tank was limited.^{cd} On 25 June 1941, D+3 of the German invasion, Chief of the German Army General Staff Halder, in his diary, noted the reported appearance of two new types of Russian tanks. One of them, he observed, was said to weigh 52 tons and possess a 152mm gun. Halder was clearly skeptical that such a huge tank existed and, after listing its putative attributes, placed in parentheses the words “still questionable” (*noch fraglich*).^{cdi}

At the front, however, along the main battle line, far removed from the High Command’s “green table,” German soldiers soon experienced the “shock and awe” of having to deal with such tanks without effective anti-tank and tank guns. . .

On a television documentary some years back, an observer characterized the T-34 as looking “like something made out of cheese by a small child with a knife.”^{cdii} An inelegant and crudely finished

design it may have been, but it was also the centerpiece of Soviet efforts to modernize their mechanized forces. The medium tank weighed about 30 tons, was operated by a crew of five, carried a high-velocity 76mm main armament, had armor protection from 45-52mm, and an excellent top speed of 55 k/h. The tank's 60 percent sloping armor was revolutionary, offering significantly enhanced protection against flat trajectory AT shells, which often failed to penetrate and simply ricocheted away. Adapting the American Christie suspension system, the T-34, with extra-wide tracks and a powerful diesel engine, boasted an "enormous relative power-to-weight ratio, conferring superior mobility on the Russian vehicles." Most historians of the Second World War rate the T-34 among the top two or three tanks produced by any combatant during the war, if not the very best.^{cdiii}

Like the heavy KV models, the T-34 administered a nasty shock to the German invaders, who lacked intelligence on the tank, even though information on it should have been available to them.^{cdiv} The Russians had deployed the T-34 in August 1939 against the Japanese at Khalkin-Gol; however, there is little indication the German High Command ever paid much attention to the fighting there.^{cdv} The standard 37mm and 50mm AT guns of the German Army of 1941 were virtually useless against the T-34,^{cdvi} which at the time was vulnerable only to the powerful German 88mm multi-purpose gun and regular artillery deployed in a direct-fire role. Only through introduction of 75mm anti-tank guns, and a more robust 75mm tank cannon, both in 1942, did the Germans begin to confront the T-34 on more equal terms. In the interim, the German *Landser* were to experience many unpleasant encounters with the tank which soon became their nemesis. . .

--Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

4.3.3: Cavalry & Airborne Troops

Unlike other branches of the Soviet armed forces, the cavalry – Stalin's favorite service branch – had not undergone the wholesale reorganization of the Timoshenko reforms and was thus more combat ready than the rifle and mechanized forces. However, because the Russian military leadership had used the cavalry forces as nuclei for the creation of new mechanized corps, total cavalry forces declined from seven corps and 32 divisions in 1937 to just four corps and 13 divisions by June 1941. The table of organization of a cavalry division called for four cavalry regiments, one tank regiment, artillery and anti-aircraft battalions and support troops; on paper, total strength was 9240 men, 68 guns, 64 mortars, 64 light tanks, 18 armored cars, 555 vehicles and 7940 horses. When war began, the Red Army's cavalry formations boasted 85-90 percent of their personnel and equipment; yet they possessed only 45-50 percent of their vehicles, did not have any AA defenses and had few tanks, since all available armor was channeled to the new mechanized forces.^{cdvii}

The truncation of the cavalry forces would be dramatically reversed in the final six months of 1941, as the cavalry proved to be a highly capable combat arm under conditions prevailing on the eastern front. Beginning in the summer of 1941, the Red Army initially established 30 new light cavalry divisions (3447 horsemen each) – a figure which had climbed to 82 such divisions by the end of the year.^{cdviii} During the winter of 1941/42, when Soviet mechanized units were often immobilized by cold and snow, the cavalry were effective at conducting long-range guerilla operations deep behind the front, cutting lines of communication, attacking German rear area installations, and, in general, supporting activities of the Red Army and partisan units. Moreover, the huge tank losses suffered by the Russians in the opening months of *Barbarossa*, and the corresponding paucity of armor in the Soviet force structure during the first winter of the war, meant that the cavalry were often the only available option for performing mobile combat

operations. A German general who served on the central front that winter offered this assessment of the Russian cavalry:

In the campaign the Russian cavalry, despite many changes in tactics and equipment, achieved a significance reminiscent of old times. In the German army, all cavalry units except one division had been replaced by panzer units. The Russians followed another course. . . Under conditions as characterized in Central Russia by great forest and swamp areas, muddy periods, and deep snow, cavalry is a useable arm. When the German motor failed, the Russian horse's legs continued to move. The tactical employment of cavalry forces was, however, not always suited to the situation and sometimes was even awkward. Leadership and training in the Russian cavalry were not up to the World War I standard.^{cdix}

The airborne forces were among the most elite in the Red Army's force structure. By June 1941, the existing five airborne brigades and manpower from 11 rifle divisions had been used to create five airborne corps, each consisting of 10,400 men organized into three air assault brigades of 2634 men each and a separate light tank battalion. Each of the subordinate brigades had three parachute assault battalions, an artillery battalion, and reconnaissance and engineering companies.^{cdx} Several of the German eastern front veterans with whom this author has corresponded have pointed to the existence of such forces – whose mission was clearly offensive, as the *Wehrmacht* itself demonstrated in 1940/41 with its airborne units – as proof of Soviet intent to wage offensive war against Germany.^{cdxi} However, the lack of fire and logistical support, coupled with the shortfall in dedicated air transport units, compelled the corps to be used as infantry in “fire brigades” after the war began. During its winter offensive of 1941/42, the Red Army did conduct several major airborne operations in support of ongoing efforts to encircle and destroy German Army Group Center; yet these were largely desperate measures employed by the Soviets when other options could not be found, and quickly revealed the weaknesses in training and equipment of the airborne forces: . . .

--Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

4.3.4: Soviet Air Forces

With about 19,500 aircraft, the Soviet Air Force (VVS, or *Voенно-воздушникх сил*) was the world's largest air force in 1941. Like most of the Soviet armed forces, the VVS was also in a stage of re-equipping and expansion in the years prior to the outbreak of war with Germany, while its air forces in the western military districts – in June 1941 about 7100 planes, slightly more than 35 percent of the VVS force structure^{cdxii} – were undergoing extensive reorganization and retraining of personnel. The air force leadership labored frantically to build up its forces, including efforts to create 106 new air regiments^{cdxiii} beginning in 1941; only 19 of these, however, had been formed prior to the outbreak of war, 13 of which were long-range bomber regiments. Several hundred airfields were also built or renovated (including 164 between April and July 1941),^{cdxiv} the majority of them in forward areas – such as eastern Poland – where they were vulnerable to attack by the *Luftwaffe*. Yet this work, too, was unfinished by June 1941, often leaving the newly enlarged VVS units sitting on crowded airstrips or unfinished airfields, frustrating efforts at dispersal or camouflage.^{cdxv}

If there was one area where the myth of the qualitative superiority of German weaponry was wholly accurate it was that of combat aircraft. The aircraft models available to the Soviet Air

Force in the greatest numbers in June 1941 were antediluvian designs; these included the Polikarpov I-15 (biplane) and I-16 “*Rata*” fighters and the DB-3 and SB-2 medium bombers. *Luftwaffe* pilots had encountered most of these types in the Spanish Civil War in the late 1930s. Soviet training and operational standards also fell well short of the *Luftwaffe*, while the lack of radio equipment was a particularly serious shortcoming. With war clouds gathering on the horizon, in 1939/40 the Soviet government and Communist Party approved plans for the production and fielding of an entirely new generation of modern combat aircraft; among them were: Yak-1, LaGG-3 and MiG-3 fighters; Pe-2 and Pe-8 bombers; and Il-2 assault aircraft. Most of these new aircraft types “were technically superior to their corresponding German counterparts,”^{cdxvi} moreover, they were largely missing from *Luftwaffe* intelligence estimates and recognition manuals prior to the invasion. The Il-2 “*Sturmovik*” ground attack plane was a particularly excellent and robust design which was to wreak untold havoc on German ground forces. Unfortunately for the Soviets, these new models were only beginning to enter the inventory in June 1941, when some 80 percent of VVS aircraft were older, essentially obsolete types.^{cdxvii}

If the front-line aircraft were mostly bad, VVS tactical doctrine and aircrew training were even worse. The air force’s mission was limited under the 1936 regulations to close air support of ground forces, the Soviets having, for the most part, abandoned the strategic bombing mission in the late 1930s, when they disbanded their three strategic air armies and canceled production of the four-engine TB-7 bomber.^{cdxviii} Like most of their aircraft, VVS air combat tactics were also obsolete, allowing for no individual initiative and proving overly cautious and inflexible.^{cdxix} Soviet fighter pilots, burdened by glaring deficiencies in equipment, organization and training, were to display an “acute sense of inferiority” vis-à-vis their German counterparts, often avoiding engagements and even turning away from unescorted Ju 52 transports (which had light defensive armament) when these were flying in close formation.^{cdxx} Such behavior, however, can hardly be attributed to cowardice; after all, many fighter pilots began the war with inadequate training, while transition training to qualify pilots for the new aircraft types proceeded at a “snail’s pace” because Soviet Air Force commanders feared training accidents might result in their arrest for sabotage.^{cdxxi} Consequently, in the forward areas, many fighter pilots had as few as four hours experience in the new aircraft when the *Luftwaffe* finally came calling.

In contrast to Soviet fighter pilots, VVS bomber crews displayed remarkable courage – at times, even recklessness, or at least an absence of caution – from the first hours of the war. They were at once thrown into battle in large numbers to parry the advancing *Wehrmacht*, particularly at major river crossings; as a result, they were shot down in appalling numbers – entire formations at a time – by German fighters and anti-aircraft guns. Indeed, Field Marshal Kesselring, commander of German 2 Air Fleet supporting Army Group Center, characterized the obliteration of VVS bomber forces as “sheer ‘infanticide:’”

From the second day onward I watched the battle against the Russian medium bombers which came from the depths of the Russian territory. I thought it close to criminal that these so inept aircraft were sent out to attack in what were, in terms of air tactics, impossible formations. Thus one squadron fell after another; they approached in the same timed intervals, falling easy victim to our fighter pilots, sheer “infanticide,” as I thought it then. . . .^{cdxxii}

Given the debilitating deficiencies of the VVS in almost every area, it is not surprising that the *Luftwaffe* was able to smash it in the air and on the ground in the opening hours and days of Operation *Barbarossa*. That said, it is a myth – and one stubbornly promoted over the years in many accounts of the Russo-German War – that the Soviet Air Force, because of the pounding it

endured in the initial 48-72 hours of the campaign, was mostly absent from the fighting throughout the summer of 1941, only to recover at some later date. This author's analysis of literally hundreds of German primary accounts (unit war diaries, personal diaries, field post, etc.) supports the conclusion that, while the *Luftwaffe* did indeed establish air superiority in the opening stage of the war, it rarely enjoyed total air *supremacy* over the battlefield; and if total air supremacy – that desideratum of air power advocates everywhere – was achieved for short periods over certain sectors of the front in the immediate wake of the invasion, the VVS remained active, at some level, from virtually the first day of the war. The *Luftwaffe*, limited in numbers and necessarily spread thin over the immense spaces of European Russia, could not be everywhere at once; while for its part the VVS focused its efforts, however limited, on the most dangerous component of the German *Ostheer*, the rapidly advancing motorized spearheads. Indeed, from 23 June to 10 July 1941, VVS Long-Range Bomber Aviation flew more than 2100 combat sorties against German tank and motorized columns, while the Soviets as a whole conducted more than 47,000 combat sorties,^{cdxxiii} even if the results were largely negligible. Although these figures (gleaned from the official Soviet account of VVS operations) may well be exaggerated, they tend to corroborate the German experience, which was that the VVS remained very much in existence despite its eviscerating losses. Moreover, by autumn 1941, it was beginning to make a remarkable recovery, even wresting air superiority from the Germans in key sectors of the front. That the Red Air Force was able to do so signifies more than just a tribute to the courage and tenacity of its aircrews, it illustrates that the reforms begun before the war were beginning to bear fruit.

* * * *

1.4: X-1: The Day before the Apocalypse / 22.6.1941: General Information germane to all three Axes of German Attack

1.4.1: The *Ostheer*

--16.-21.6.41 [Pi.Btn. 6 / 6 ID]:

16.6.41: An diesem Tage wurde das Bataillon in den Suwalkizipfel vorgezogen, Unterkunft in Zelten. . .

Anstrengende Hin- u. Hermaersche auf schlechten Wegen setzten ein, aber *in der Truppe glaubte niemand daran, dass es zu einem Kampfe mit Russland kommen wuerde*. Im Gegensatz zu den Vorbereitungen zum Angriff im Westen wurde alles im Unklaren gelassen u. erst am **21 Jun 41** abends **22.00** Uhr wurde der Truppe der Angriffsbefehl fuer den naechsten Morgen bekanntgegeben. . .

21.6.41 [KTB 2./Pi.Btn. 6]: . . . Von **22.00** Uhr bis **22.30** Uhr Verlesung des Aufrufs des Fuehrers an die Wehrmacht durch den Kp.-Chef.

(Dr. H. Voss, *Pi.-Btn. 6 im Feldzug gegen Russland*, 38-40)

--17.6.41: *Hitler erteilt den endgueltigen Angriffsbefehl fuer den Ueberfall auf die Sowjetunion.* (*lexicon-der-wehrmacht*)⁹⁷

--20./21.6.41 (Cavalry NCO w/ **IR 432 / 131 ID**):⁹⁸

On **20 Jun 41** we marched into an area of dense forest, only about four kilometers from the River Bug. Any comfort for man and horse was completely absent; in fact I had to ride a long way to get the horses watered and that was at least three times a day. The conviction grew within me that we were poised to go over the river and therefore over the border into Russia. Most of my comrades to whom I spoke about the situation, however, *still did not think that we were going to attack Russia*; that we were on the threshold of a new campaign and a frightfully uncertain future was inconceivable to us.

We were wrong. Even I, who had known deep down that it was going to happen and hoped like everyone else to get back home, was shocked on the morning of **21 Jun 41**. . .⁹⁹

(M. Kuhnert, *Will We See Tomorrow?*, 71)

--20.-21.6.41: *Barbarossa*: OKW gibt in der Nacht 20./21.6 das Stichwort „*Dortmund*“ durch. Damit ist der Angriffsbeginn fuer den 22.6. befohlen. Das Befehl wird an die Hr.Gr. weitergeleitet. (*KTB OKW*, 417)

⁹⁷ **Note:** Confirm w/ Halder diary / KTB OKW.

⁹⁸ **Note:** Kuhnert does not mention division in which he served (far as I can tell); he does note his regiment as “432.” This regiment belonged to **131 ID (43 AK / 4 AOK)**.

⁹⁹ **Note:** Kuhnert is mistaken—he actually means **22.6.41**, because he immediately notes the barrage that began at **3.15** hours.

--Most of the soldiers who had been transferred to the western border of Russia during the late spring of 1941, in the course of *huge secret troop movements*, did not learn until a *few hours beforehand* that their orders were to march into the Soviet Union...The soldiers were not given the time to consider the matter, but rather presented w/ a *fait accompli* by the order to invade. (H.J. Schroeder, "German Soldiers' Experience," 311)

-- **20.-22.6.41**: Besides practicing and checking equipment, some German soldiers marked their final days of occupation duty w/ soccer games and equestrian competitions. The Ostheer waited for the unusually high, fast-flowing rivers to subside. During the night of **20-21 Jun 41**, von Bock's men moved their heavy wpns forward. The next night (**21-22 Jun 41**) was dark w/ only a *faint crescent of the waning moon*. Austrians of the **137 ID** watched their Soviet counterparts across the border working to improve their positions under illumination provided by vehicle headlights. Sunrise came at **0410** hrs on that Sunday, **22 Jun 41**, but by that time *Barbarossa* was already an hour old. (Kirchubel, *Barbarossa 1941, Army Group Ctr*, 32)

--**21.6.41** (Halder KTB): *Feindnachrichten*: An einzelnen Stellen wird *erhoehte Aufmerksamkeit der Russen* gemeldet. (Vor **8 AK** Besetzen der Stellung.) (F. Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. II, 461)

--**21.6.41**: *Alfred Opitz* recalled that as he and his fellow soldiers lay in their forward positions in Poland on night of 21 Jun 41, the air itself „*smelled of something enormous*.“ (Hart, *German Soldier*, 28)¹⁰⁰

--**21.6.41** (Lt. H.J. Schmidt):

In der Daemmerung zogen auch wir dann ab u. gingen in einer Mulde am *Sudawski-Zipel*¹⁰¹ in Bereitstellung. Jeder empfing **60** Schuss scharfe Munition. Die Gewehre bleiben von da ab geladen. An Schlaf war nicht zu denken. Aber wir hatten ein Radio, was uns leider allzu frueh kaputt ging. Im Reich ahnte man noch nichts u. spielte eifrig Tanzmusik, die wir auf unsere Seele trauefeln [*drip; trickle*] liessen. Die Vormarschstrasse lebte. Fahrzeug hinter Fahrzeug. Um **24 Uhr** wurde uns der Aufruf des Fuehrers verlesen u. die Spannung wuchs geradezu ins Unertraeglich.“

(*Tagebuch*, Lt. Hans Jochen Schmidt, cited in: Dollinger, *Kain, wo ist dein Bruder?*, 78)

--**21.6.41** (**6 ID**):

Am **21 Jun 41** morgens wurde uns in einer Kompaniebelehrung mitgeteilt, dass es am folgenden Tag losgehe. Jetzt war die Spannung natuerlich gross. Denn sehr viele von uns hatten, wie ich, noch nichts vom Krieg gesehen. . . Noch einmal wurden die Fahrzeuge ueberprueft, damit kein unnuetzes Gepaeck mitgeschleppt wurde. Ausserdem wurden Verpflegung, Hafen u. Munition empfangen. . . Am Nachmittag begab sich die Fuehrung vom Zugfuehrer bis zum Rgt.Kdr. als Arbeiter verkleidet in Drillichzeug mit einer Schaufel oder Pickhacke auf der Schulter an die Grenze, um Stellungen auszusuchen u. den Angriffsplan endgueltig festzulegen.

¹⁰⁰ **Note:** See below for more from Alfred Opitz's recollections.

¹⁰¹ **Note:** "Suwalki-Zipfel."

(A. Freitag [6 ID], *Aufzeichnungen*, 50)

--21.6.41:

Tension rose steadily on the German side. By the evening of the 21st we assumed that the Russians must have realized what was happening, yet across the River Bug on the front of **4 Army** and **2 Pz.Gr.**, that is to say between Brest-Litovsk and Lomza, all was quiet. The Russian outposts were behaving quite normally. At a little after midnight, when the entire artillery of the assault divisions and of the second wave too was already zeroed in on its targets, the international Berlin-Moscow train passed w/o incident through Brest-Litovsk. *It was a weird moment.*

(G. Blumentritt, "Moscow," in: *Fatal Decisions*, 46)

--21.6.41 (General Heinrici / C-in-C **43 AK** / Brief an seine Frau):

Wenn dieser Brief abfaehrt, ist der neue Feldzug losgegangen. Er soll einen Nachbarn ausschalten, der uns moeglicherweise *gefaehrlich* werden kann, wenn es gegen England – sei es am Suez Kanal oder auf der Insel – geht. Er soll ferner uns *landwirtschaftliche Gebiete* bringen, die in der Lage sind, soviel zu liefern, dass ganze Europa von ihnen leben kann. Das Letztere ist wohl die Hauptsorge, nachdem Amerika sich bereits inoffiziell im Kriege mit uns befindet. In gewissem Grade spielt natuerlich auch der *weltanschauliche Gegensatz* eine Rolle.

*Wie sich der neue Feind schlagen wird, weiss niemand.*¹⁰² Im Finnenkrieg hat sich seine Fuehrung als *sehr schlecht* erwiesen. Der einfache Soldat is wie im Weltkriege zu Anfang sicher *kein schlechter Gegner*. Die Stimmung in der Truppe soll drueben ganz zuversichtlich sein.

Seit Wochen sind hier bei uns *ungeheure Mengen an Menschen u. Material voruebergeezogen*. Die Entfaltung der Machtmittel ist gewaltig gross. Man hofft auf eine schnelle Entscheidung. Es waere erwuenscht, wenn dieses eintraete.

(J. Hürter, *Ein deutscher General an der Ostfront*, 62)¹⁰³

--21.6.41: "The talk with **Field Marshal von Bock** . . . could be kept brief; we understood each other and were in agreement about the solution to the problems of the attack. When I called on him again in the evening of **21 June 1941** to discuss a few doubts or requests which had arisen in the meantime, I found him, in contrast to how he had been in the closing meetings for previous campaigns, somewhat downcast – a thoughtfulness which dignifies every responsible leader before the start of a fateful, large-scale operation." (Field Marshal Albert Kesselring, *Soldat bis zum letzten Tag*, 117)^{cdxxiv}

--21.6.41 (**PzRgt 15** / **11 PD**):

¹⁰² **Note:** This he would discover very quickly—the Russian opponent was tough, brutal and uncompromising! See his letters of **23./24.6.41!**

¹⁰³ **Note:** Das **43 AK** ueberschritt am **22.6.41** mit der **131, 134** u. **252 ID** bei Mielnik am Bug [die Grenze].

Mit der am **21.6.1941** vom **1a** der **1 PzGr** um **16.45** Uhr erfolgten Durchgabe:
„*Heldensage, Wotan, Neckar 15*“,¹⁰⁴ wurde der Beginn des Feldzuges gegen
Sowjetrussland fuer den **22 Jun 41**, **3.15** Uhr befohlen.

(G.W. Schrodek, *Ihr Glaube galt dem Vaterland*, 123)

--*Attitudes of German troops to invasion of Russia* varied. Some enthusiastic. Others deeply disturbed; in some diaries, no visible reaction. That said, confidence of the German soldier in his ability to defeat Russia was *absolute*:

--Wir Jungen lernten schnell. Gab's mal keinen Urlaub, *ging es in den ‚Bienenkorb,‘* jedem Landser ein Begriff. Dann Urlaubsverbot. Am **22.6.**, einem Sonntag, lagen wir auf dem Rasen hinter den Wohnbaracken. Im Radio ertoente, ‚Krieg mit Russland.‘ *Viele bruellten Hurra u. andere Blickten ernst drein.* (W. Vollmer, „Vor 60 Jahren“) ¹⁰⁵

--But then, one fine day in June 1941, we got new on the radio that Germany was taking on the Russians, too. I remember it well: an icy chill went down my spine. The others [in his unit] didn't seem to be troubled at all. (Karl Rupp, **5. PD**, in: *Voices from the Third Reich*, 127)

--**20.-22.6.41**: Besides practicing and checking equipment, some German soldiers marked their final days of occupation duty w/ soccer games and equestrian competitions. The Ostheer waited for the unusually high, fast-flowing rivers to subside. During the night of **20-21 Jun 41**, von Bock's men moved their heavy wpns forward. The next night (**21-22 Jun 41**) was dark w/ only a faint crescent of the waning moon. Austrians of the **137 ID** watched their Soviet counterparts across the border working to improve their positions under illumination provided by vehicle headlights. Sunrise came at **0410** hrs on that Sunday, **22 Jun 41**, but by that time *Barbarossa* was already an hour old. (Kirchubel, *Barbarossa 1941*, Army Group Ctr, 32)

--**21.6.41 (1 Geb.Div.)**: In seinen Aufzeichnungen aus dem Russlandfeldzug beschrieb der Gebirgssoldat Hubert Hegele aus Wörleschwang den spannungsgeladenen Tag vor dem eigentlichen Angriff:¹⁰⁶

Samstag, 21. Juni 1941

Mit verschlafenen Augen steige ich aus meinen Nachtquartier, einem alten, schoenen Herrschaftsschlitten, der wahrscheinlich schon fuerstlicher Zeiten gesehen hat. Ein herrlicher Morgen ist angebrochen. Und so allmaehlich wird das Gut, das zum Dorfe Grodzisko gehoert, in dem unsere Kompanie untergebracht ist, lebendig. Die Feldkueche dampft, u. das Kochgeschirrgeklapper der Kaffeefasser weckt auch den letzten Schlaefer aus seinem Sommernachts-traum.

Dienst ist fuer heute nicht angesagt, so dass man sich vorkommt wie im hoechsten Urlaub. Und doch ist etwas da, das den ganzen Haufen *nicht zur Ruhe kommen laesst*. Es ist die Naehel von etwas Neuem, Unerforschtem, das in diesen nahen polnischen Waeldern seinen Ursprung haben muss.

¹⁰⁴ **Note:** How romantic!

¹⁰⁵ **Note:** According to Glantz (confirm!), Walter Vollmer's **106 ID** was part of the OKH Reserve for Army Group Center on 22.6.1941.

¹⁰⁶ **Note:** This is a diary. As author later writes: "Gefreite Hegele notierte am Sonntag, dem 22. Juni 1941, in seinem Tagebuch: . . . (205)

Viele Geruechte gingen um in letzter Zeit, angefangen von der Revolution Molotows, der wir im Notfall beistehen sollen, bis zum freien Durchmarsch durch Russland, um den bedraengten Irak gegen seine englischen Angreifer beizustehen. Ein Angriff auf die Sowjetunion? Na, da glauben wir schon gleich gar nicht. Erstens hat Deutschland einen Freundschafts- u. Nichtangriffspakt mit der Sowjetunion abgeschlossen, u. zweitens: einen Kampf gegen dieses riesige Reich, nein, das gibt es nicht.

Was ist nun Wahrheit – was Geruecht? Was wollen denn wir kleine Raedchen in diesem riesigen Getriebe schon wissen? Nichts, rein gar nichts. Nur die Unruhe ist in unseren Herzen ueber dieses bevorstehende Neue. Dass es kommt, ja, das wissen wir. Die Fahrzeuginspektionen – das viele Impfen in letzter Zeit – vor einigen Tagen der Feldgottesdienst, alles deutet darauf hin, dass es bald wieder losgeht. Heute vormittag wird durchgesagt: man solle sein ueberfluessiges Geld nach Hause schicken. . .

Auf der nahen Landstrasse wird der heisse polnische Sand immer wieder u. wieder von den Bergschuhen der Jaeger, den Hufen der Mulis u. den Raedern ihrer Karren gemahlen. Unser Rgt. zieht in den Bereitstellungsraum ein. Wir Motorisierten liegen ja schon eine Woche hier u. hatten neben anderem auch einen interessanten Dienst zu tun. Etliche Mann von der Kp. mussten die „Grenzer,“ die seit der Ziehung der Demarkationslinie im Jahre 1939 hier Dienst tun, bei ihren Patrouillen verstaerken. Ein Grenzer u. zwei Mann von uns, so zogen wir jede Nacht lost fuenf Stunden lang, entlang dem rostigen Grenzdraht. Zur Tarnung der Angehoerigen der Gebirgstruppe mussten wir unsere Muetzen-Edelweiss abnehmen u. ueber unseren Waffenrock eine Zeltplane anziehen. Die ersten Naechte waren ein boeses Gestolper fuer uns zwei Gelaendeunkundige. In wie viele Sumpfloecher sind wir doch getappt – dann erschreckte uns wieder ein Rudel Wildschweine, die urploetzlich vor uns aus ihrem Versteck herausrumpelten – ein glimmender Lichtschein hinter einem Baum *laesst uns zu Stein erstarren* – es war nur eine alte, halbverfaulte Baumrinde, die ihren Phosphor ausstrahlte. Als Entschaedigung fuer solch „reizvolle“ Sommernaechte gab es dann des oeffteren einen kleinen Plausch mit dem Kollegen von der anderen Seite, dem russ. Grenzposten.¹⁰⁷

(Cited in: R. Kaltenegger, *Die Stammdivision der deutschen Gebirgstruppe*, 202-03)

--**21.6.41**: Meine lieben Eltern! Die Stunde ist jetzt gekommen. Morgen werdet Ihr die Nachricht im Radio vernehmen. Wenn ich nun nicht mehr sooft schreiben kann, habt bitte keine Unruhe. Mir gehts *quickgesund* u. ich bin guter Dinge, sowie alle meine Kameraden. Endlich kann ich nun auch einmal mit dabei sein. Bin wirklich stolz darauf. Also nicht unnoetig aufregen...Euer Sohn Hans. Um 0,31 Uhr gehts los... („*Hans Olte*,“ **Nachr.Abt. 52/XII. AK**, quoted in: *Latzel, Deutsche Soldaten*, 39)¹⁰⁸

--**21.6.41**: It was a night of clock-watching. Slowly the hours ticked away, like eternity. It was the same all along the frontier between Germany and the Soviet Union. Everywhere, strung out across an entire continent, the troops lay awake, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, a distance of **930** miles. And along these 930 miles three million troops were waiting. Hidden in *forests*,

¹⁰⁷ **Note:** They actually “chit-chatted” with the Russian border sentry?!?

¹⁰⁸ **Note:** “Olte” is a pseudonym.

pastures, and cornfields. Schrouded by the night, waiting. (P. Carell, *Hitler Moves East*, 15)

--21.6.41: The evening before the war w/ Russia began, we were all quite aware of its imminence. I was called by the official chaplain of the division and asked if I would hear the confessions of soldiers in one of the nearby churches of Eastern Catholics. A great many soldiers made their confessions that evening...On the way back to the barracks, I was accompanied by my best friend, *Brother Fichter*, a Jesuit student...Knowing that the war against Soviet Russia would begin within a few hours, we talked very seriously about the prospects of the Church and the world. *I expressed my dismay about the insane war and my readiness to give my life as a prayer that men might free themselves from the age-old slavery of hatred and war.* (*Embattled Witness*, B. Haering, 4-5)¹⁰⁹

--21.6.41: Last minute preparations for the attack are nearing completion. The *communication links* between Hitler's HQ – now relocated to *Rastenburg* – and the staffs of the Army Group[s] are checked out. Hitler's personal msg ("*An den Soldaten der Ostfront*") is sent to the troops. The trains, which were switched over to the accelerated schedule of traffic, continue to deliver the troops and freight to the frontier. During the second half of 21.6.41, *Luftwaffe* planes arrive *one by one* at the border aerodromes. Sabotage units send prearranged signals about the onset of the attack on 22 June to the many secret agents previously emplaced within the frontier districts. . . . Almost at the same time, during the second half of 21.6.41, Hitler writes to Mussolini. (*Volkogonov*, "*The German Attack*," 84-85)

--21.6.41: Dr Alfred Opitz,¹¹⁰ then a 30-year-old *Obergefreiter* in 18 Panzer Division, recalled after the war:

Am 21. Juni begann es in den weit ausgedehnten rüeckw. Wäeldern von Motorenläärm u. Fahrzeugen zu brausen . . . [see translation below from *Barbarossa Unleashed*] . . .

Des Nachmittags wurde endlich die Kp. auf einer versteckten Waldwiese zusammengerufen, vor sie trat der Kp.-Chef, ein Ob.Lt. aus alter hoher Beamtenfamilie, u. eröffnete mit wenigen Worten, dass in der kommenden Nacht der ***allgemeine Angriff auf die Sowjetunion*** nach dem Willen des „Führers“ beginnen werde. Der entsprechende Armeebefehl wurde verlesen, darin wurden alte Beschimpfungen u. Schmäehungen gegen den Sowjetstaat plötzlich wieder laut u. offen ausgesprochen. Insbesondere sei erwiesen, dass *unzählige sowj. Angriffseinheiten zum Sturm gegen das Deutsche Reich bereitstünden*, der Vertragsbruch sei erwiesen, man müsse dem Verräter in den Arm fallen, ehe es zu spät sei.

Die Chancen fuer einen abermaligen grossen Blitzsieg seien sicher, in wenigen Wochen stüenden unsere Panzerspitzen vor Moskau, welches fallen wuerde, ehe es zur Besinnung kaeme. Der komm. Div.-General habe in sicherer Aussicht auf diesen raschen Sieg bereits seinen *Urlaub fuer Mitte August eingereicht*.

¹⁰⁹ **Note:** Not sure, but believe Häring served with Army Group South.

¹¹⁰ **Note:** Opitz belonged to **8./III/S.R. 101** of **18 PD**.

Ueber der im offenen Karree dastehenden Kp. **lag eisiges Schweigen**, nichts verriet irgendwelche Zustimmung, keines der stummen Gesichter hellte sich auf. Auch der zynische Witz mit dem Generalsurlaub zuendete nicht, wie auch weitere Aeusserungen des Kp.-Chefs ueber die besonderen Methoden der bevorstehenden Kriegfuehrung, naemlich **grausam u. brutal vorzugehen** u. ggf. auch Gefangene u. Zivilisten nicht zu schonen, nur wieder mit **duesterem Schweigen** quittiert wurden. . .

Wie nach dem Wegtreten der Kp. sich zeigte, wurden diese grosssprecherischen Verkuendungen mit **sehr gemischten Gefuehlen aufgenommen**. Das Landsergemuet ahnte nichts Gutes . . . In unbeobachteten Augenblicken machte sich der u. jener in Aeusserungen Luft wie: „**Wenn das Ding nur nicht schiefgeht!**“ „**Na, denn gute Nacht!**“ u. aehnlich. Freilich wurde dieses skeptische Haltung nur mit aeusserster Vorsicht gezeigt. . .

(Alfred Opitz, „Die Stimmung in der Truppe am Vorabend des Ueberfalls auf die Sowjetunion,“ 236-37)

--21.6.41: „Ich habe so das Gefuehl, als ob morgen oder uebermorgen Dinge geschehen, die die Welt mal wieder aufhorschen lassen. Weiter habe ich das Gefuehl, als ob die Dinge auch an mir nicht spurlos vorbeigehen werden. Hoffentlich bringt uns die naechste Zeit dem Endsieg ein ganzes Stueck naeher . . .“ (Uffz. E.N., **IR 18/6 ID**, in: *Buchbender, Das Andere Gesicht des Krieges*, 68)

--21.6.41: „...Wenn dieser Brief in Deine Haende kommt, dann wirst Du schon allerhand Neues in den Zeitungen gelesen haben. Du musst allerdings damit rechnen, dass manchmal eine Nachricht von mir einige Tage ausbleibt. Das liegt dann an der Post oder den Verhaeltnissen. Du brauchst Dir deswegen keine Sorgen machen. *Gott wird mit uns sein, wie er auch bisher mit uns gewesen ist...*(Hptm. Dr. jur. Herbert S., **Kdo. 292 ID**, BfZ)

--21.6.41: Noch bis zum spaeten Abend des Vortages hatte man sich der truegerischen Hoffnung hingegeben, hier in Ostpolen lediglich Stalins' Durchfahrterlaubnis (!) ueber Russland nach Syrien abzuwarten. An einen Krieg gegen Russland dachte bis dahin wirklich niemand. (G. Schrodek, *11. Pz.-Div.*, 116)¹¹¹

--21.6.41: “It is profoundly peaceful everywhere, the cows and horses are in the field and the Panje-horses are raking the potatoes, and what will it look like tomorrow morning? The bombs and shells will explode everywhere and the houses will burn, the residents flee. The contrast is too unreal.” (*Panzer General Joachim Lemelsen*)^{cdxxv}

--21.6.41: „In der Daemmerung zogen auch wir dann ab u. gingen in einer Mulde am Sudawski-Zipel in Bereitstellung. Jeder empfieng **60** Schuss scharfe Munition. Die Gewehre bleiben von da ab geladen. An Schlaf war nicht zu denken. Aber wir hatten ein Radio, was uns leider allzu frueh kaputt ging. Im Reich ahnte man noch nichts u. spielte eifrig Tanzmusik, die wir auf unsere Seele trauefeln [*drip; trickle*] liessen. Die Vormarschstrasse lebte. Fahrzeug hinter Fahrzeug. Um **24 Uhr** wurde uns der Aufruf des Fuehrers verlesen u. die Spannung wuchs geradezu ins Unertraeglich.“ (*Tagebuch, Lt. Hans Jochen Schmidt*, quoted in: (*Dollinger, Kain, wo ist dein Bruder?*, 78)

¹¹¹ **Note:** The **11 PD** began „Barbarossa“ w/ H.Gr.Sued.

--21.6.41: Diary of Private First Class Hänsele (123 ID):¹¹²

Our commander read to us what many could *not at first believe*: the order to attack Russia. At 11 p.m. our company was to be ready to start. I'm in high spirits. At last *my most cherished wish* is coming true. I hope I'll live to see what I have always been dreaming about.

(*True to Type. A Selection from Letters and Diaries of German Soldiers and Civilians collected on the Soviet-German Front*, 17)

--21.6.41 [*River Bug / Brest-Litovsk*]: Gerd Habedanck, a war correspondent, moved forward w/ the 45 ID. Its objective would be the fortress of *Brest-Litovsk*:

We came from Warsaw through heat, dust and jam-packed roads to the Bug. We passed tracts of woodland bristling w/ vehicle parks, artillery batteries in villages and radio relay stations and HQ staffs under tall fir trees.

Silently, absolutely silently we crept up to the edge of the Bug. *Sand had been strewn across the roads so that our hob-nailed boots made no sound*. Assault sections already grouped moved along the road edges in mute rows. Outlines of rubber dinghies were discernible as they shuttled along, raised up against the light of the northern sky.

Joining the btn HQ in an old bunker, part of the original western defenses alongside the Bug, Habedanck looked across the river, where, 100m away, Russians sat in similar casemates. (*Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 29)

--21.6.41 (Priest B. Häring):

The evening before the war w/ Russia began, we were all quite aware of its imminence. I was called by the official chaplain of the division and asked if I would hear the confessions of soldiers in one of the nearby churches of Eastern Catholics. A great many soldiers made their confessions that evening...On the way back to the barracks, I was accompanied by my best friend, *Brother Fichter*, a Jesuit student...¹¹³ Knowing that the war against Soviet Russia would begin within a few hours, we talked very seriously about the prospects of the Church and the world. *I expressed my dismay about the insane war and my readiness to give my life as a prayer that men might free themselves from the age-old slavery of hatred and war*.

(B. Häring, *Embattled Witness*, 4-5)¹¹⁴

--21.6.41 (IR 77 / 26 ID): Rolf Hocker, schildert nachfolgend die Situation:

¹¹² **Note:** Hänsele served in an AT unit. 123 ID belonged to Sixteenth Army of Army Group North.

¹¹³ **Note:** Brother Fichter was killed by a shell on first day of the war (for a very poignant anecdote see, p 6).

¹¹⁴ **Note:** Häring was a Redemptorist Catholic priest who served as a medic on the eastern front. Would find personal liberation thru his informal ministry to his soldiers. He served w/ Army Group Center: "Early in **May 41**, our division was transferred to Poland, the area around Sokol." (3)

Die Grenze war nur durch einen einzigen Stacheldraht, der an hoelzernen Pfahlen befestigt war, markiert u. die russ. Grenztruppen blieben unsichtbar. Es war daher durchgesickert, dass die Parole „Sonnenwende“ als Angriff auf Russland u. die Parole „Wendesommer“ jedoch das Abblasen des gesamten deutschen Aufmarsches bedeutete. . .

Wie heute noch sehe ich am **21 Jun 41** einen Melder vom Kp.-Gef.Std. zum **1. Zug** eilen, der auf einer kleinen Anhoehe lag. Am Fusse des Huegels rief er – mit der rechten Hand winkend – „Sonnenwende.“ Da erfasste mich doch ein sehr *merkwuerdiges Gefuehl*. Ich bin hinter unsere Scheune gegangen, in der der **1. Zug** lag u. schaute in das dunkle russ. Land hinein u. angesichts dieser – nur aus dem Schulatlas kenntlichen – Landmasse beschlichen mich einige Bedenken. Der Fuehrer unseres Zuges versammelte nach Bekanntwerden des Angriffsbefehls die Uffz. zu einem Foto u. spaeter *tranken wir die letzte aus Frankreich stammende Flasche Rotwein* auf eine glueckliche – u. wie wir meinten – siegreiche Heimkehr.

(W. Knecht, *Geschichte des Inf.-Rgts.* 77, 51)

--**21.6.41 (292 ID):**

Die Division schiebt sich waehrend der Nacht in ihren letzten Bereitstellungsraum vor. Dieser Raum liegt mit seinem Ostrand etwa **1½ - 3 km** westl. des Bug. . . . Der Div.Gef.Std., vom **Pi.Btn. 292** bei Fw.Konczytrudy ausgebaut, wird gegen **17.00** Uhr bezogen. Beobachtung der Feindseite ergibt keine Anhaltspunkte dafuer, dass der Russe etwas von unseren Absichten bemerkt hat. Ob die zahlreichen bereits fertigen Befestigungen besetzt sind ist unbekannt. Mit Beginn der Dunkelheit beginnt das Vorziehen der Truppen in die Ausgangsstellungen.

(KTB Nr. 3, **RH 26-292/7**)

--**21.6.41 (256 ID):**

Die X-Zeit wird bekanntgegeben. X-Zeit = **3.05** Uhr. Am Abend gehen die Rgter. in ihre Bereitstellungsraeume bis **100 m an die Grenze heran**. In der Nacht versucht Lt. Kriegsheim, der Fuehrer eines Trupps vom **Lehr-Rgt. Brandenburg (z.b.V. 800)** in Verkleidung die Grenze zu ueberschreiten. Er hatte Auftrag, Sprengungen an den Bruecken u. Daemmen entlang der Strasse Lipsk – Dabrowo zu verhindern.

Der Grenzuebertritt wird vom Russen bemerkt u. es entwickelt sich eine lebhaft Schiesserei, bei der mehrere Russen erschossen werden. Lt. Kriegsheim kommt mit seinen Leuten wieder zur-ueck, da er bemerkt war u. sein Unternehmen an dieser Stelle keinen Erfolg versprach. Er versuchte es an anderer Stelle abermals. Der Grenzuebertritt gelingt ihm. Von seinem Trupp wurde zunaechst bei der Division nichts wieder gehort.

Div.-Gef.-Std.: Mueckenwald [!]

(KTR Nr. 4, **RH 26-256/12**)

--21.-22.6.41: Concealed in forests, farms, and fields along the German side of a frontier of **930** miles, stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea, were **3** million heavily armed soldiers, watching and waiting as the hours ticked away. Ammunition was quietly brought forward, and extra containers of fuel were hung on the tanks and vehicles. Chocolate and cigarettes were distributed, and one bottle of schnapps was supplied for every four [4] men. Finally, during the night of **21-22 Jun 41**, commanders began assembling their men in small units for an announcement that would at last answer their questions and solve their curiosity about what was happening. It was an order of the day from the Fuehrer, which began: "Soldiers of the Eastern Front. . ." (C.G. Sweeting, *Hitler's Personal Pilot*, 155)

--21.-22.6.41 (IR 77 / 26 ID):

Die Nacht vom **21** auf **22 Jun 41** ist klar u. warm. Lautlos treten die Einheiten des **IR 77** nach Eintritt der Dunkelheit aus ihren Quartieren u. ruecken lautlos in die Bereitstellungsraumene. . . Nur die Staubwolken auf den trockenen Feldwegen lassen ahnen, wo die feldgrauen Kolonnen auf die Grenze zustreben. Gespensig still liegt das Land. Es folgen nervengerreibende Stunde des Wartens. . . Was wird die „Stunde X“ bringen? Steht dort drueben wirklich nur eine geringe Besatzung? Erwartet uns mit dem Antreten ein Feuerorkan? Was bringen die naechsten Wochen u. Monate? . . .

Zigaretten, deren Glut die gewoelbte Hand verbirgt, sollen beruhigen. Nur hin u. wieder gefluesterte Worte, die die Kampfbereitschaft nochmals ueberpruefen. Endlich weicht die Hochsommernacht dem ersten fahlen Morgenlicht. Im Norden leuchtet die grosse Wasserflaeche des Wystiter Sees silbern auf. Ansonsten Stille. Die Ruhe vor dem Sturm?

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--22.6.41: Anfangs herrschte fast nur Siegeszuversicht unter der deutschen Spitzenfuehrung und den Truppenkommandeuren. Ein Unteroffizier beim Stab eines Artillerie-Kommandeurs der Pz.Tr. schrieb in seinen ungedruckten Memoiren:

Kurz vor Tagesanbruch am 22. Juni 1941 tauchte Oberleutnant Wieland in unserer Unterkunft auf mit den Worten: „Es geht los gegen Russland. Ich komme gerade von einer Besprechung mit den Generaelen der Panzereinheiten. Einer erklart: in 5 Wochen bin ich in Moskau, darauf der naechste: ich spaetestens in 4, nun konterte der letzte: ich schaffe es in 3 [Wochen]. Es wird also schnell gehen.

(E. Krehl, *Erinnerungen*, 42)

--Excerpts from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

Stahlberg's anxieties about the security of the buildup – whether or not the Russians were now privy to what was about to break over them – were widely shared by the field commanders and their staffs. As then chief of staff of Fourth Army, Colonel Guenther Blumentritt, later wrote:

Tensions rose steadily on the German side. By the evening of the 21st we assumed that the Russians must have realized what was happening, yet across the River Bug on the front of Fourth Army and 2 Panzer Group . . . all was quiet. The Russian outposts were behaving quite normally. At a little after midnight, when the entire artillery of the assault divisions and of the second wave too was already zeroed in on its targets, the international Berlin-Moscow train passed without incident through Brest-Litovsk. It was a weird moment.^{cdxxvi}

Discussing his final activities prior to the impending assault, General Heinz Guderian, Commander, 2 Panzer Group, noted that:

On the 20th and 21st I visited the forward units of my corps to make sure that all preparations for the attack were satisfactorily completed. Detailed study of the behavior of the Russians convinced me that they knew nothing of our intentions. We had observation of the courtyard of Brest-Litovsk citadel and could see them drilling by platoons to the music of a military band. The strong points along their bank of the Bug were unoccupied. They had made scarcely any noticeable progress in strengthening their fortified positions during the past few weeks. So the prospects of our attack achieving surprise were good. . .

On the fateful day of [22 June 1941], I went at 0210 hrs. to my Group command post which was located in an observation tower south of Bohukaly, nine miles northwest of Brest-Litovsk. It was still dark when I arrived there at 0310 hrs. At 0315 hrs. our artillery opened up.^{cdxxvii}

Conversely, Panzer General Lemelsen, Commander, 47 Panzer Corps, was convinced that the Russians had long ago put “two and two” together:

Saturday, 21.6.41 (B-1 Day)

The days have passed quickly; on Wednesday we changed position to [B.] and moved into a really charming little chateau which doesn't really fit with Poland at all. . .

It really is a strange state of affairs: the *Panje*-horses are still running around everywhere here right up to the Bug and they haven't been evacuated, but no doubt it is to preserve the element of surprise as much as possible. Even so, we are certain that the Russians have known for some time about what is going on here. They are working further forward, but it seems as if they have left only the weaker forces up front in order to fight with the bulk of the army further back.

That would not be very pleasant for us. At this time tomorrow we shall know more. . .

It is profoundly peaceful everywhere, the cows and horses are in the field and the *Panje*-horses are raking the potatoes, and what will it look like tomorrow morning? The bombs and shells will explode everywhere and the houses will burn, the residents flee. The contrast is too unreal.

Tonight we will move our command post from the chateau, which would naturally only fall victim to enemy fire, out to a wood, and in the early morning at 0200 hours, I will set off to witness the start of the great new campaign at the front line with the attacking troops.^{cdxxviii}

Meanwhile, the final preparations were being brought to a close, including the checking out of communication links between Hitler's new headquarters in Rastenburg, East Prussia, and Bock's army group, while signal troops completed installation of telephone trunk lines from higher headquarters to ground and air units along the forwardmost line.^{cdxxix} The pressures on commanders and their staffs, the weight of their responsibilities, must have been immense in these final days before the onset of war. At least one superior and trusted officer, Dr Dr Seidel, chief intelligence officer (*Luftflotten-Nachrichtenfuehrer*) in Kesselring's 2 Air Fleet, broke down under the strain and took his life. Kesselring himself made numerous flights in his twin-engine Fw 189 tactical reconnaissance aircraft, from south of Brest-Litovsk to the border of East Prussia, to become better acquainted with the deployment areas of his wings, groups and squadrons. One of his last acts before the onslaught was to visit Field Marshal von Bock on the evening of 21 June. He found the army group commander, in sharp contrast to their final meetings before earlier campaigns, downcast and pensive in appearance – no doubt weighed down by the solemn responsibility he alone shouldered for more than one million men.^{cdxxx}

(Barbarossa Unleashed)

--21.6.41 (26 ID / IR 77): Rolf Hocker, schildert nachfolgend die Situation:

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(W. Knecht, Geschichte des Inf.-Rgts. 77, 51)

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(*W. Knecht, Geschichte des Inf.-Rgts. 77, 53*)

--19 PD:

21.6.41 [19 AR (mot.)]: Die Ankuendigung [ueber dem bevorstehenden Angriff auf Russland] des Rgt.-Kdrs. [i.e. Oberst Lahl] liess die fehlende Aufklaerung in den Feindbereich hinein bereits erkennen. Dennoch bewirkte die Mitteilung des Angriffsbeginns fuer alle Beteiligten eine Erleichterung. Die nervenaufreibende Ungewissheit wich. Die typische Spannung vor einem Offensivbeginn blieb jedoch. . .

Von allen Seiten rueckten die Batterien zum Div.-Ablaufpunkt vor. . . Im Strassengraben um die Kreuzung herum lagen die Melder der einzelnen Kompanien u. Batterien, die selbst abseits in den anliegenden Waldstuecken marschbereit Aufstellung genommen hatten. Entsprechend dem Einsatzplan „faedelte“ Lt. Ahlbrand (I./AR 19) die Batterien nach vorgesehenen Gefechts-einheiten in die Div.-Marsch-Kolonne ein. Im Hinblick auf die im Feindesland zu erwartenden schlechten Strassenverhaeltnisse u. die Absicht, auch Teile der Division mit allen erforderlichen Waffen bestueckt einsatzfaehig zu machen, war die Div. [i.e., **19 PD**] in Kampfgruppen aufgeteilt worden, die jederzeit selbststaendig Einsatz finden konnten. . .

(*R. Hinze, 19. Inf.- u. Pz.-Div., 120 ff.*)

--137 ID:

Der Abend des **21 Jun 41** brachte endlich Gewissheit fuer alle mit einem Aufruf Hitlers. . . Der Angriffsplan der Division war nach den temperamentvollen Weisungen von Gen. der Inf. Geyer [Kdr. **9 AK**] in Anpassung an den grossen Rahmen sehr sorgfaeltig vorbereitet. Alle drei [**3**] Inf.-Rgter. in vorderer Linie sollten beiderseits Grodek den Bug am **22 Jun 41** um **3.15** morgens ueberschreiten u. schnell u. weit nach Osten vorstossen. Als Schwerpunkt-division des **9 AK** verfuegte die **137 ID** fuer den Uebergang ueber insgesamt

etwa **50 Batterien**¹¹⁵ unter dem Befehl des seit **4 Jun 41** der Div. unterstellten **Arko 44**, Gen.-Maj. **Lucht**, sowie drei [3] Pi.-Btn. mit den entsprechenden Brueckenkolonnen.

(*W. Meyer-Detring, 137. Inf.-Div. im Mittelabschnitt der Ostfront, 16-17*)

--Excerpts from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:¹¹⁶

Along with checking weapons and equipment and performing necessary maintenance, some soldiers in the east marked their final days before “X-Tag” with soccer games and equestrian competitions.^{cdxxxix} Tank and motorized units, before slipping into their final assembly areas, carefully reconnoitered their approach routes, as well as the assembly areas themselves, which, as much as possible, were concealed in forested regions. Once in their assembly areas, the mobile assault formations rapidly made ready for combat, which included clearing all barriers and obstacles – such as barbed wire entanglements – along their attack frontage.^{cdxxxix} Radio silence was strictly enforced by all units, ammunition was quietly brought forward, and extra containers of fuel were hung on tanks and vehicles. Artillery and other heavy weapons were shepherded into their firing positions. Telephone wire was laid between the gun batteries and the forward observation posts. Dr Alfred Opitz, then a 30-year-old *Obergefreiter* in 18 Panzer Division, recalled after the war:

On 21 June the noise of motors and vehicles began to roar and drone in the broad extent of forest to our rear. Tanks and heavy artillery seemed to be moving up from there. Now and then a reconnaissance aircraft circled over the river terrain. The air was thick enough to stifle, it smelled of something horrendous.^{cdxxxix}

Last minute reconnaissance of terrain and enemy forces beyond the frontier was carried out, some of the reconnaissance teams going forward to inspect border regions disguised as local hunters and farmers, and even carrying farm implements to complete the deception. Liaison was established with supporting combat and combat-support units, and front-line commanders were briefed on their missions. In the final hours, chocolate and cigarettes were distributed to troops, while some were fortunate enough to receive an allotment of *Schnapps*, one bottle for each four men.^{cdxxxix}

Last-minute briefings were held once the troops had finally learned what their mission was to be – a surprise attack on the Soviet Union. During the night of 21 June, Hitler’s proclamation was read out to the more than three million men assembled along the eastern frontier from the Baltic to the Black Sea, ending weeks and months of agonizing uncertainty about what the future was to bring. The proclamation began, and ended, with the following passages:

Soldaten der Ostfront!

Troubled by deep concerns, condemned to months of silence, the hour has finally arrived in which I may speak to you, my soldiers, openly. . .

At this very moment, Soldiers of the Eastern Front, a concentration of forces is underway which, in its extent and scope, is the largest the world has ever seen. . .

¹¹⁵ **Note:** These batteries were: **12 Battr. AR 137; 12 Btr. AR 17; je 3 Btr. s.Art.Abt. 841, 856; I./AR 109; 1./Stug.Abt. 226; 3 Btr. AR 263 u.a.; Beob.-Abt. 28; Art.Rgts.Stab z.b.V. 622.** (17)

¹¹⁶ **Note:** See end of Chapter 5 for footnote details, etc.

When this greatest front of world history now advances, then it will not only be to secure the conditions for the final conclusion of this great war in general, or to protect those countries affected at this moment, but rather to save the entire European civilization and culture.

German soldiers! You are thus entering into a struggle that is both difficult and laden with responsibility. For:

The fate of Europe, the future of the German Reich, the existence of our *Volk* now lie in your hands alone.

May the Lord God aid us all in this struggle!

Adolf Hitler

Fuehrer and Supreme Commander of the *Wehrmacht*^{cdxxxv}

While it is problematic at best to generalize about human behavior – much less the behavior of some three million men – it is apparent from surviving field post letters and diaries that most of the *Landser* – even those who were not convinced National Socialists – welcomed war with Russia,^{cdxxxvi} convinced as they were of the necessity to eliminate once and for all the growing threat posed by the sinister and secretive Bolshevik state.^{cdxxxvii} A notation of a regimental adjutant (45 Infantry Division) in his diary is, in this sense, instructive:

Today [16 June 1941] the order came. So it is getting serious. The *Fuehrer* has decided, after the collapse of the peace efforts with England, to first overthrow Russia. Only the How and When still present us with a conundrum. With no declaration of war? But: it will be war against the archenemy [*Erzfeind*] of our idea, Bolshevism. And we will know how to conduct it, grimly and resolutely.^{cdxxxviii}

Of course, what is also quite true is that a large majority of German soldiers were imbued with a sublime sense of superiority vis-à-vis their Russian opponents, despite knowing little about them, which also shaped their thinking about a war with Russia. “Most of us are awfully pleased, that it’s finally come to blows again,” noted an officer of 4 Panzer Division in his diary on 22 June.^{cdxxxix} In 296 Infantry Division, the feeling was that the Soviet Union would collapse after some three weeks of fighting. “It’ll go quite fast with the Russians, even if many of us will ‘bite the dust’” (*wenn auch mancher “ins Gras beißen muss”*), wrote a soldier in 296 ID on that fateful Sunday. “But it won’t be in vain, it will be for Germany’s future,” he added.^{cdxli} On the eve of battle, SS-General Paul “Papa” Hausser, Commander, SS Division *Das Reich*, addressed his assembled officers; exuding optimism, he told them that “in a few weeks we want to conduct a victory parade in Moscow.”^{cdxli}

The night of 21/22 June was dark, with only a “faint crescent of the waning moon.”^{cdxlii} Concealed in forests, farmsteads, and fields along the frontier, the “Soldiers of the Eastern Front” waited. Heavily armed and equipped, their weapons *schussbereit*, their hand grenades armed, taking their last, slow draws on their cigarettes, they waited – waited in growing and almost unbearable tension as the final hours, minutes, seconds, ticked irretrievably away. Last minute preparations kept many of the men busy, and few but the most seasoned veterans were able to snatch a few hours of sleep before the “big show” began. What, they wondered, would they encounter beyond the border? Were the Russians waiting for them, or were they still largely in the dark about the

firestorm about to break – about the hecatombs of Red Army dead (and their own, had they known it) which were to follow in its wake?

Below is a sampling of accounts – contemporary and post-war – that offer further insight into the final days and hours of the German *Landser* before the start of Operation *Barbarossa*. The majority of these accounts issue from soldiers belonging to Army Group Center; their diversity illustrates the futility of attempting to reduce human thought and action to a common denominator:

***Oberfeldwebel* Albert Blaich (3 PD)**

20-22 June 1941

In the two nights prior to the start of the attack the regiment's battalions were brought forward to the front. On the evening of 21 June 1941, 6 Panzer Regiment was located about three kilometers west of Koden on the Bug, equipped with [more than 200 tanks]. They all stood ready for their greatest test, although even now nobody could really believe that a new war was imminent.

From midnight, calm set in and the land was as peaceful as ever, or so it seemed to the men. It was June and already rather light. Even in the hours around midnight a pale glimmer stood in the sky. But the nights before an attack were always short. The tension built up too much in every soldier and robbed him of sleep. Only the most hardened and battle-experienced men succeeded in napping.

Suddenly the silence was disturbed by quiet sounds. Weapons clinked, machine guns, carbines, and munition boxes were readied. In front of the river, combat engineers cut through the wire in the riverbank barriers. Something cracked in the bushes, getting ever louder. Assault boats were brought forward and pneumatic boats inflated.

. . . The day of the attack was a Sunday this time, 22 June 1941, the time of the attack was 0315 hours. There was another 30 minutes until then. The soldiers fastened their helmet straps tighter. They didn't yet know whether the other bank was fortified, whether there were dugouts over there. Nothing could be seen. The river bank was overgrown, as it was almost everywhere along the Bug. Tall reeds, undergrowth, and trees blocked the view.

The soldiers glanced at their watches with increasing frequency. It seemed to them as if the hands of their watches moved ever faster. The tension was ratcheted up to its highest point, the men could even hear their own heartbeats. The final minute before the campaign against the Soviet Union began to count down.^{cdxliii}

Dr Heinrich Haape (6 ID)

21 June 1941

It all starts in a few hours! – The Germans are facing what must be an enemy force three times more superior in number; our regiment is positioned at the very front line. The resistance must be broke, despite bunkers, hordes of men, and any amount of devilry. It is a war for Germany's greatness and future.

Until now I have been completely calm; the world seems to me to be peaceful and unconcerned, and right now I feel that peace in nature twice as deeply. And even though a lot, a very great lot of our forces have marched up to the frontier, you can't see any soldiers!

The weather is wonderful, the birds are singing, and the trees are clothed in fresh green. There is a magnificent lake close by and the same atmosphere exists that I had already described to you on Whit-Sunday. [It is] a magical world of a real, living peace. Just before the storm that will make the earth tremble, with all its consequences!^{cdxlv}

Hauptmann Herbert S. (292 ID)

21 June 1941

By the time this letter gets to your hand, you'll have read all sorts of news in the newspapers. You may, however, have to accept that sometimes a message from me takes a few days. That will be because of the mail or the conditions. You don't need to worry because of that. God will be with us,^{cdxlv} just as He has been with us until now.^{cdxlv}

Bernard Haering (Medic and Catholic Priest)

21 June 1941

The evening before the war with Russia began, we were all quite aware of its imminence. I was called by the official chaplain of the division and asked if I would hear the confessions of soldiers in one of the nearby churches of Eastern Catholics. A great many soldiers made their confessions that evening. . . On the way back to the barracks, I was accompanied by my best friend, Brother Fichter, a Jesuit student, a wonderfully good and gifted man. Knowing that the war against Soviet Russia would begin within a few hours, we talked very seriously about the prospects of the Church and the world.^{cdxlvii} I expressed my dismay about the insane war and my readiness to give my life as a prayer that men might free themselves from the age-old slavery of hatred and war. I saw no bright future, I said, for people like us. My friend, on the contrary, insisted, "I do not want to lose my life in this senseless business; I want to spend it for something worthwhile. When the war is over, there will be a great task ahead of us, as ministers of the Church, to serve people and to work for a better, freer world.

Toward midnight, everyone knew that only a few hours remained before we would go into battle. I invited my friends to a prayer service. Crowds of soldiers, including officers of the whole regiment, assisted at the penance service, the general absolution, and the Eucharistic celebration. No distinction was made between Catholics and Protestants. I celebrated without altar and altar stone. It was one of the most moving experiences of my priestly life. Everyone knew what it meant to receive the assurance of peace with the Lord, and the body of Christ as a promise of everlasting life.^{cdxlviii}

Gerd Habedanck (War Correspondent with 45 ID)

21/22 June 1941

We came from Warsaw through heat, dust and jam-packed roads to the Bug. We passed tracts of woodland bristling with vehicle parks, artillery batteries in villages and radio relay stations and headquarters staffs under tall fir trees. Silently, absolutely silently we crept up to the edge of the Bug. Sand had been

strewn across the roads so that our hob-nailed boots made no sound. Assault sections already grouped moved along the road edges in mute rows. Outlines of rubber dinghies were discernible as they shuttled along, raised up against the light of the northern sky.^{cdxlix}

Oberleutnant Juerg v. Kalckreuth (6 ID)

21 / 22 June 1941

The tension is immeasurably high. Everything is being feverishly prepared. And yet there are still a few who believe that the whole affair is just a bluff. . . It is incredible that the paper war [*Papierkrieg*] could flare up again now, of all times. New orders arrive all the time with deadlines, mostly for “immediately.” Many a piece of paper ends up unheeded in a large file marked “outstanding.” It can wait until the baggage train moves up again, perhaps only after weeks – already deep in Russia. . . The 18 IR is to be the “point of main effort.” [*Schwerpunkt-Regiment*] (Now I can write to you about this, because everything will already be well under way long before this letter reaches you). . . The division’s evening messenger brings an entire motor car full of paper, including 20 “secret” messages. Crazy! – Amid this are all the various visitors, for whom I only have a few seconds’ time: Graminsky, the division physician, *Leutnant* Mohn, and a war correspondent who wants to come with us at the start of the attack and make reports. – At 2400 hours I lie down for an hour-and-a-half.

At 0130 hours, we get ready at the command post in order to go to the observation post, where the commander – in his tent – awaits us. With me is *Leutnant* Sengelhoff. – A deathly calm lies over the frontier area. Everybody around us and immediately in front of us moves inconspicuously and quietly forward, to the frontier. – The telephone jangles: the units report that they’ve all completed their preparations. A scouting party receives rifle fire from the direction of Hill 220, no casualties. – Around 0215 hours it begins to dawn; the sky reddens in the east and announces a clear day.^{cdl}

Obergefreiter August Freitag (6 ID)

21/22 June 1941

At a company briefing on the morning of 21 June 1941 we were informed that it would all start the following day. Naturally, tension was now high. For a great many of us, like me, had not yet seen anything of the war. But the Russian was a new and completely unknown enemy even for those who had already taken part in the French campaign. The vehicles were checked once more, so that no unnecessary baggage was dragged along. Provisions, oats, and ammunition were also taken on; and everything was carefully prepared for the following morning.

Then the afternoon was free to carry out our private affairs. We had spread out our ground sheets and, dressed only in shorts, we soaked up the sun. Very few of us could sleep now. Everybody talked about what might happen the next morning. I wrote another letter, for who knew when I would be able to write again.

In the afternoon our commanders, from platoon leader to the regimental commander, dressed in cotton-twill overalls as laborers with a shovel or a pickax over their shoulders, went to the frontier to locate positions and to finalize the

attack plan. The evening slowly declined to a balmy summer's night, the night of the summer solstice.

After we had tended properly to our horses, we began to get ready to move the last two to three kilometers to our assembly area. We crept even more quietly than usual to within a few hundred meters of the frontier. Here, we unlimbered our guns, unloaded the ammunition, and withdrew with the empty limbers about 200 meters back to a depression by a stream. I looked at my watch; it was just approaching 0100 hours. So it had worked. By 0100 hours the deployment was supposed to be complete.

We unbridled the horses, loosened the harnesses, and let the horses tuck into the dewy fresh grass again. We had plenty of time until half past two. A glorious Sunday morning heralded the beginning of summer. Secretly, the thought skulked in the back of our minds: "Will we all still be alive this evening?" And several quietly prayed with me: "God, grant me a good guardian angel" [*Schutzengel*].

At half past two, we readied our horses, put our steel helmets on, and silently loaded our guns. Then we checked over everything again and waited tensely in the last half an hour for the events to come. Tension was high, and while we had not slept, we were awake in a way we had rarely been before.^{cdli}

Helmut Martin (14 ID (mot.))

22 June 1941

On this morning, the light of a radiant rising sun flooded the broad, gentle hills of the East Prussian countryside. A June Sunday dawned and it could not have been any more beautiful, a real feast day, if only it had not brought war with Soviet Russia from 0305 hours.^{cdlii}

I spent the spare time until orders were issued at midday in the vicinity of our quarters. . . Thoughts whirled, driven round by stormy waves of inner turmoil, only to be inundated shortly after by the expectation of coming events, for suddenly it was there, the big adventure that made the blood pulse more strongly in my veins and for which I had always thirsted. The yearning for it had caused me many a moment of frustration in my day-to-day life, had made me unhappy, even angry – sitting inactive in school while outside great battles were going down in history. Success everywhere, but I was stuck at home. There was nothing I could do except stick blue pins into the maps to mark the spearheads of the armies in Poland and later in France. – And now, suddenly overnight, on this Sunday morning, my wish had become reality. The war was now also beginning for me, when only a few months before, I had thought I had arrived too late.^{cdliii}

Ekkehard Maurer (23 ID)

22 June 1941

On 22 June, at 0300 hours in the morning, my [battalion] commander called over to me: "Make a note of this date, 22 June, 0315 hours in the morning. But you really won't need to memorize it, because you won't forget it your whole life long anyway. This is the moment when the greatest catastrophe of German history starts."^{cdliv}

Unteroffizier Eberhard Krehl (Art. Cdr. 121)

22 Juni 1941

Two days before the attack against Russia, we were transferred to Suwalki. . . Shortly before daybreak on 22 June 1941, *Oberleutnant* Wieland turned up in our quarters with the words: “It’s all kicking off against Russia. I’ve just come from a meeting with the generals of the panzer units. One declared, ‘In five weeks I’ll be in Moscow,’ then the next: ‘I’ll be there in four at the latest,’ then the last retorted: ‘I’ll make it in three.’ So it’s going to go very quickly.”^{cdlv}

Siegfried Risse (18 PD)

22 June 1941

0300 hours:

It was still dark. The summer night lay over the banks of the River Bug. Silence, only now and then a brief clanking somewhere. Over by the water, the frogs croaked. Anyone who was there in an assault detachment, or who was among the attack spearhead in the Bug meadows up front that night of 21-22 June 1941, will never forget the creaking courting calls of the Bug frogs. Watches ticked. Clock hands slipped over the luminous dials.

0312 hours:

Many had raised their watches to their eyes. Everyone had a strange feeling in their throat; felt their heartbeat right up into their collar bind. The silence became simply unbearable.

0313 hours:

Everything could still be put back together. Nothing was yet past recall. But with the progress of the clock hand, the war against the Soviet Union, which lay over there in peaceful darkness, crept ever more irrevocably closer.

0314 hours:

The morning dawned weakly on the horizon. Deathly silence still prevailed across the front. Sleepy fields, silent forests. Didn’t they notice, over there, that armies were gathered in the villages and forests? Ready to pounce, division by division, along the entire border. Then the precisely synchronized watches started up:

0315 hours:

As if they had set off a charge, at the same moment, a gigantic bolt of lightning flashed through the night. The muzzles of all gun calibers opened up. Light trails from the Flak shells arced across the horizon. The front at the Bug was lit up by shell fire as far as the eye could see. Then the rumbling thunder rolled like a barrel over the river. Mingled with this was the nightmarish howling of rocket projector batteries. Beyond the river, a sea of smoke and fire seethed up. The slender sickle moon hid behind a rising shroud of smoke. The war took its first, terrible, baleful breath.

Peace was dead [*der Friede war tot*].^{cdlvi}

(*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Chapter 5)

--**22.6.41**: The first Germans across the border were the special forces of **Rgt. 800**, known as the “Brandenburgers.” Many of these were Russian speakers, clad in Red Army or (more likely) security forces uniforms, who were parachuted into Soviet territory or smuggled in on board goods trains in previous days. Their mission was to blow up power facilities, cut communications, activate German “sleeper” agents, ensure that bridges could not be demolished and spread false orders and disinformation. . . With less than two hours to go until the main German attack began, the *telephone lines* had already been cut in an area stretching **50** kilometers inside the border. (See pp. 183-84 for more details)

Across the entire front, the first Soviet troops to face the German attack, in most cases, were the border guards, part of the **NKVD**. They were responsible for the area up to **22** km inside the frontier. They wore uniforms similar to the Red Army, but were distinguished by *green color tabs and green bands around their caps*. The forward Red Army divisions were behind them, between **25-80** km east of the frontier. (C. Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 184)

1.4.1.1: The *Ostheer*—A First Strike Capability?

In the idiom of nuclear war, a “first strike” capability denotes the ability of one nuclear armed power to conduct a devastating surprise attack – perhaps pre-emptive or preventive in nature – against another nuclear power, rendering it unfit to respond effectively and compelling it to admit defeat. Although the German Reich was armed only with an arsenal of conventional weaponry, its objective in Operation *Barbarossa* was fundamentally the same – to inflict a single blow so powerful, so devastating (and perhaps also pre-emptive, or at least preventive), it would be sufficient to crush the Soviet Union in a short campaign of just two to three months duration.

On 22 June 1941, however, Hitler’s *Wehrmacht* enjoyed no advantage over its Red Army opponent in terms of total numbers of personnel or quantities or quality of its weaponry. The only exception in this context would have to do with the German air forces, whose machines were palpably superior – in quality if not in numbers – to the majority of those in the Soviet Air Force order of battle. Conversely, Red Army artillery and its latest tanks, now moving off the assembly lines in significant numbers, were equal or superior to those of the German *Ostheer*, as were several of the primary Soviet small arms, such as their excellent sub-machine guns.

As English historian Paul Johnson has argued, Operation *Barbarossa* was “**seriously underpowered in terms of the magnitude of its objectives**,” and, eventually, “the Germans found themselves fighting a Forties war with late-Thirties weaponry, and not enough even of that.”^{cdlvii} Certainly, as this account has made clear, German ground and air forces committed to the war in the east were manifestly inadequate. There was simply too little of everything – from combat infantry to armored fighting vehicles to bomber and fighter aircraft; and much of what the Germans *did* have often proved ill-suited for the harsh conditions of combat on the eastern front. As noted, Army Group Center, the center of gravity of the initial German attack, had to advance along a **500** kilometer front, but to do so it had less than **1800** tanks and **1000** operation aircraft – or a ratio of about **3.6** tanks and two aircraft per kilometer. Of course, these forces could – and would – be concentrated at critical points; however, the serious disconnect between means and ends is evident nonetheless. A revealing anecdote in the memoirs of Field Marshal Kesselring further underscores this point:

At the beginning of 1941, I flew to Warsaw to confer with the commander-in-chief there, Field Marshal von Kluge, and to issue supplementary instructions about expanding the ground organization in that area. I went back again in May 1941 to patrol the deployment base for my air fleet in the east, and found that the work could not be completed before the beginning of June (primarily due to weather and ground conditions), but still with enough time for the rescheduled *X-Tag* (22 June) to be met. The operational and tactical inspections revealed that the attack by Army Group Center could not be supported to the best possible extent with the forces allotted me by the Commander-in-Chief of the *Luftwaffe*. In a heated exchange in Goering's command train north of Paris, and with the support of my dear Jeschonnek (Goering's Chief of Staff), I succeeded in pressing my case and I was promised the minimum reinforcements of aircraft and Flak troops that had been requested.

I could sympathize with the irate *Reichsmarschall* when he said that I was not the only one making demands, that England still had to be fought. But I had to insist that he appreciate my point of view that an attack should not be started if the forces necessary for it could not be assembled. . . ^{cdlviii}

And, yet, still only two aircraft per kilometer (and 3.6 tanks) to support Army Group Center when war began! By way of comparison, the Soviet offensive in January 1945, on the Berlin front alone, encompassed 6250 tanks, 7560 aircraft and no fewer than 41,600 guns. ^{cdlix} How, then, did the *Ostheer* manage to conduct such a brilliant campaign in the summer and fall of 1941 – seizing hundreds of thousands of square kilometers of European Russia, ^{cdlx} advancing to the gates of Leningrad and Moscow, and occupying the Ukraine, while annihilating virtually the entire peacetime Soviet army – and then some! – in the process? To put a finer point on it: In Belorussia, during the frontier battles from 22 June to 9 July 1941, opposite Army Group Center, the Red Army sustained average daily losses of 23,207 personnel, 267 tanks, 524 guns and mortars and 99 aircraft. During the final six months of 1941, the Germans inflicted an aggregate of 4,308,094 casualties on the Red Army, including nearly 3,000,000 irrecoverable losses (dead, captured and missing). ^{cdlxi} By 31 December 1941, Red Army's staggering equipment losses across the eastern front included 24,400 artillery pieces, 60,500 mortars, over 20,000 tanks and almost 18,000 aircraft. ^{cdlxii}

Perhaps an equally germane question would be: How was the Red Army able sustain such a shellacking yet still manage to assemble the resources for a successful “counterstrike” strategy, which inexorably wore down and eventually stopped the *Wehrmacht* well short of its *Barbarossa* objectives? That duly noted, the answer to our original query is not to be found in the material trappings of the German armed forces but in ***several vital intangibles – most important among them those of surprise, training and experience***; the concept of *Schwerpunkt*; and the doctrinal underpinning of “mission tactics.” In the first place, tactical surprise was achieved along the entire 1800 kilometer front from the Baltic to the Black Sea, giving the Germans a significant opening advantage they were quick to exploit. Secondly, the German eastern armies were able to leverage their superior training and 21 months of combat experience into major force multipliers; indeed, no matter how technically capable some of the new Soviet weapons may have been, that hardly mattered if Soviet tank crews had had little time to operate their tanks or pilots to fly their aircraft. German shortfalls in men and materiel were also partially offset by massing their forces – particularly the mobile units – at certain points, thereby creating force ratios strongly in their favor at key sectors of the front. For the opening attack, Army Group Center's 2 Panzer Group (Guderian) was able to deploy its armor along a 70 kilometer front, while the frontage of 3 Panzer

Group (Hoth) was even narrower (50 kilometers). Similar or even superior *Schwerpunkte* would be achieved in the Ukraine in September 1941, and for Operation “Typhoon,” the assault on Moscow,” in October.^{cdlxiii}

No explanation of the reasons behind the *Wehrmacht's* successes in Russia in 1941 – and, indeed, throughout the period 1939-42 – would be complete without addressing the German military’s doctrinal imperative of “mission tactics” and its incomparable value as a force multiplier. German military traditions – from Frederick the Great to Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, and the elder Moltke – had taught Prussian and German officers how to resolve tactical and operational problems with originality, insight and initiative. Moreover, while most of Clausewitz’s theory had faded away by the early 20th Century, one of his lasting legacies to German military thought was his concept of imponderables: The chaos of war inevitably caused unforeseen events; not to be overwhelmed by such events required flexibility of thought and action in all aspects of war – from grand strategy to small-unit tactics. One outcome of this insight was the doctrine of “mission tactics” (*Auftragstaktik*), which can be defined as the practice of promulgating orders and directives which, while laying out the overall intentions of the higher command, were careful to leave a high degree of initiative and the issuance of specific orders to the subordinate commands:^{cdlxiv}

At the heart of German training was the inculcating of a progressive, universally taught doctrine: a set of basic assumptions, beliefs and operating instructions that all German troops, irrespective of service, learned and were expected to follow. Adherence to this modern, uniform and realistic doctrine, enshrined in the 1936 *Truppenfuehrung* (Troop Leadership) manual, was one of the great strengths of the German Army. Developed in the early 1930s by some of the Army’s best minds, it avoided the parochialism inherent in individual service doctrines and represented a holistic set of procedures for the Army as a whole. The soundness and forward-looking nature of this doctrine made a significant contribution to the military triumphs Germany achieved in the early years of World War II.

Among the basic principles of German doctrine was due emphasis on individual leadership and initiative. The *Truppenfuehrung* emphasized what the Germans termed mission-oriented tactics. That is to say, doctrine expected senior commanders to give subordinates broad orders but to leave the actual implementation of those orders to the discretion and experience of subordinates. Such an approach provided maximum flexibility and initiative. Junior officers did not simply learn “school” solutions to the problems they might encounter but were instead taught to think for themselves, to apply their military knowledge and expertise, to have confidence in their own decisions, and to act upon them.^{cdlxv} . . .

The intangibles outlined above – surprise, training and experience, *Schwerpunkt*, mission tactics – were largely responsible for the *Wehrmacht's* impressive surge from the Russo-German border to the suburbs of Moscow 1000 kilometers to the east in less than six months time. And yet, despite such a brilliant feat of arms,^{cdlxvi} *Barbarossa* was to end in dismal failure. Did the German Army in the east possess a first-strike capability in June 1941? Given that we know the outcome, the answer to this question is obvious: No, it did not possess such a capability. In the final analysis, however, this was only because the Soviet state, and its people, played by a much different set of rules than did the Western democracies. In 1940, the death of 90,000 French soldiers^{cdlxvii} was enough to force France to capitulate. By way of comparison, the Soviet people suffered an average of more than 20,000 civilian and military deaths each and every day of the war for 1418

days. In other words, in less than a single week's time, the Russians sustained significantly more irretrievable losses than did the French during the entire campaign of 1940, and yet they continued to fight – and to die in numbers utterly inconceivable by today's standards. That they *could* do so was, in part, due to their country's prodigious size, and the strategic depth it provided, which bought them time. That they *did* do so was, in large measure, the end result of the brutality of Stalin's regime – by 1940/41, it had broken the back of the opposition through its war on the peasantry (force collectivization), the purges, etc. – coupled with the oppressive and genocidal policies of the German invaders. Be that as it may, it was the incomparable tenacity of the Soviet people and their willingness – coerced or otherwise – to endure such a horrific blood letting which, ultimately, decided the outcome of the war with Germany. Without such a willingness, the “first strike” inflicted by the *Wehrmacht* in the summer of 1941 would have surely sufficed.

(Barbarossa Unleashed)

1.4.2: The Red Army

(**Note:** See, Erickson, *The Road to Stalingrad*, p 104 ff., for some great details on activities of Soviet military commands on eve of war.)

--**19.6.41:** On the Soviet side on this day, AA batteries were beginning to take up firing positions in the Grodno – L'vov zone to the Minsk – Novograd – Volynskii line. However, a significant portion of the batteries of the Western Special Military District were at **gunnery exercises at Camp Krupki**. (R. Aliev, *The Siege of Brest, 1941*, 42)

-- Evening of **21.-22.6.41** – Lt.Gen. Kutznesov (C-in-C **3. Army**) reports Germans had removed barbed wire barriers along border; roar of engines can be heard in forest; trainloads of pontoon equipment, sectional bridges and ammo arriving, etc. (Edwin P. Hoyt, *Stalin's War. Tragedy and Triumph, 1941-1945*, p 25)

--**21.6.41:** June is a special month all over northern Europe.¹¹⁷ In European Russia and Ukraine, it is magical. Winter's bitter dark and ice are barely even memories, spring's mud and rain forgiven. Kiev's famous chestnut trees come into bloom, and so do Moscow's lilacs, Yalta's Judas trees. It is the month of the peony and the green willow, the month, in the north, of the white nights. Mid-summer night fell on a Saturday in **1941**. In Sevastopol, the home of the . . . Black Sea Fleet, it was, as naval officer Evseev remarked in his diary:

A wonderful Crimean evening. [That Saturday], all the streets and boulevards in the city were lit. The white houses were bathed in light, the clubs and theaters beckoned the sailors on shore leave to come inside. There were crowds of sailors and local people, dressed in white, packing the city's streets and parks. As always, the famous Primorskii boulevard was full of people out for a stroll. Music was playing. There were jokes and happy laughter everywhere on the evening before the holiday.

[See text for more details, as Merridale describes the beginning of the German bombing of Sevastopol. She goes on to write about Col.-Gen. D.G. Pavlov, commander of Western Special Military District, who was at a play in Minsk Saturday evening called, *The Wedding at Malinovka*. “The

¹¹⁷ **Note:** I quoted part of this material in *Barbarossa Unleashed*.

good commander did not allow his enjoyment of the play to be disrupted by the news, brought by his intelligence chief, Col. Blokhin, that *German troops along the border appeared to be preparing for action. . .*”]

(C. Merridale, *Ivan's War*, 82-84)

--**21.6.41**: After midnight on **21 Jun 41** [early morning of **22 Jun 41?**], the Berlin – Moscow Express, cleared and checked w/o any deviation from normal practice, passed over the rail bridge and on to Brest-Litovsk w/o a hitch. To the north, nothing disturbed the tranquility of the East Prussian frontier. Southwards, in AGS's attack area, **48 MC** commander reported at midnight that “Sokal is not blacked out. The Russians are manning their posts which are fully illuminated. Apparently they suspect nothing.” That the Russians *lacked suspicions was by no means true*. The Soviet naval command, regional and central, was *definitely uneasy*. [See text for more details.] (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 106-07)

--**21.6.41**: Because everyone was *terrified of Stalin*, and also believed that he “always knew best,” *no one openly opposed him over his prognosis of German timing and targets*. Nor, therefore, did anyone have the energy or initiative to *think for themselves*. Even when General I.I. Fedyuninsky, a Khalkin Gol veteran, reported to **5 Army** that yet another German soldier, having struck an officer, had defected w/ a warning that the main *Wehr-macht* offensive would begin at **0400** the following morning, 22 June, the local GOC only sucked on his pipe: “*There is no need to believe provocation. Don't alert the units. It would sound the alarm to no purpose.*” (J. Colvin, *Zhukov*, 66)

--**21.6.41 (Radio & Telegraph)**: The Russian officer corps did not trust wireless communications, which seemed to them too vulnerable in a society obsessed w/ control. As a result of that distrust, the military districts were acquiring radios slowly and were hesitant to put them to use. . . which meant that on **22 Jun 41** the Red Army radios were not used. Cable communications were mistakenly believed to be more reliable. In fact, only the last few miles of cable, in the immediate vicinity of front HQs, ran underground. Most of the hundreds of miles of telegraph wires hung on poles lining the country's highways and railroads – an obvious and easy target for Hitler's commandos. . . In something approaching criminal negligence, the telegraph lines had been left unprotected on the night of **21 Jun 41** . . . (C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 111-12)

--**21.6.41**: Not all Soviet soldiers invited their own destruction. From Minsk at **02.40** hours on morning of Saturday, **21 Jun 41**, Maj.-Gen. V.E. Klimovskikh (Chief of Staff, Western Special Military District), in one more effort to impress Moscow w/ the seriousness of the situation, sent this signal:

German acft w/ loaded bomb-racks violated the frontier on **20 June**. According to report of **3rd Army** commander, wire barricades along the frontier on the Augustovo –Seina roads though in position during the day are *removed toward evening*. From the woods, *sounds of engines*.

(J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 101)

--**21.6.41**: In the Soviet military commands, there was nothing as yet, apart from private premonitions, to distinguish this Saturday evening, **21 Jun 41**, from any other. . . Red Army officers, senior and junior alike, made their way to the *numerous garrison shows and theaters*; many, like the Red Army men also, *were actually at home*. In the Minsk Officers Club, the popular comedy *The Wedding at Malinovka* was playing to a full house, w/ Col.-Gen. Pavlov, his chief of staff

Klimovskikh and the district deputy cdr, Lt.-Gen. V.I. Boldin, in the audience. The evening pleasures were briefly interrupted by Col. Blokhin, head of intelligence in the Western Special Military District, who reported to Pavlov that “the frontier was in a state of alarm;” German troops had been brought to *full combat readiness* and firing had been reported in some sectors. Pavlov, who passed this on to Boldin, *dismissed it as “some kind of rumor.”* Boldin, however, could not help recounting the latest intelligence summary to himself:

By the evening of **21 June**, German troops had been fully concentrated on the East Prussian, Warsaw and Deblin axes, and the bulk of the forces were now packed into a **30-km** zone in the frontier areas. In Olshanka, south of Suvalki, heavy and medium tanks, heavy artillery, AA guns and “many acft” had been reported. The Germans were setting up positions on the Western Bug; at Byalaya Podlyaska **40** trainloads of bridging equipment and large quantities of ammunition had been unloaded.

At about the time when Pavlov was interrupted in his box at the play, near Sokal (Kiev district command) a *German deserter*, Alfred Liskow, subsequently confessing himself a communist and a worker from Munich, crossed the Soviet lines at about **9 p.m.** He was taken at once to the area officer, Major M.S. Bychkovskii, who heard him say that his commanding officer announced a German attack at **04.00** hours on **22 June**; German guns had taken up their fire-positions, and tanks and infantry were at their start lines. [See text for more details!] (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 105-06)

--Commissar Pimenov, head of the political propaganda section of **6 RD**, had already been branded a “*panic-monger*;” he had written to Pavlov asking permission to take up defensive positions and to *evacuate the wives and children from the Brest fortress*. The staff of the NKVD frontier troops in Belostok had put the *frontier posts on alert on 18 Jun 41* and all were standing by at noon on **21 Jun 41**. But the orders about *no firing on German acft still stood*. (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 101)

--What happened on the frontier, however, and what was made to happen – and not to happen – in its most immediate vicinity had become and still remained *the exclusive prerogative of Stalin*. Responsive to his will, the General Staff had once again between **15-18 Jun 41** circulated a directive to the frontier commands, *forbidding any concentration of troops in the frontier areas and continuing the ban on action against German acft*. Scattered the troops undoubtedly were, both by deployment and by training plans; many in the Western Special Military District were on field exercises, like the **28 RC** (responsible for the Brest fortress and its area) w/ **9** rifle, **3** artillery, and all engineer battalions at work on defenses, its AA guns and their crews away at Minsk on practice shoots, and its signal battalions in camp. The corps cdr had reported that “not less than 1-1½ days” would be needed to assemble the corps. Meanwhile, in the old, historic, crenellated fortress of Brest, the Germans could see Soviet soldiers carrying out their routine drills, complete w/ band. Elsewhere on the Soviet side, the frontier appeared quiet and w/o alarms. (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 101-02)

--Situation in Baltic district was not much different. Denied permission to concentrate, Kuznetsov had managed a *few precautionary measures*; some of his artillery was on its way to its positions, but the lack of gun-towing equipment slowed everything down and even when some of the guns reached their sites, they still needed ammunition. . . Black outs in Riga – Kaunas – Vilna – Dvinsk – Libau had been ordered after the evening of **19 Jun 41**, but all this took time and organization. The bomber forces continued w/ their night-training program from **20-22 Jun 41**; in most of the bomber regiments, the machines were undergoing their post-flight checks round about

dawn – their fuel expended and their crews exhausted. The activation and laying of minefields had come on **21 Jun 41** to a sudden halt; Maj.Gen. V.F. Zotov, chief of the Baltic military engineers, had begun to *call out the civilian population to dig trenches and positions in the frontier areas*, but he called off his engineers when cows from a collective farm had detonated some of the mines – an order given to prevent “the spread of panic.” (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 101)

--Kirponos not only had more troops and tanks than his fellow commanders to the north of the Pripet, he was also *better prepared for battle*. According to Zhukov, Kirponos was *already at his battle hq at Tarnopol by midnight 21 Jun 41*, when he spoke to Moscow giving news of the arrival of a second German deserter bringing information of the *imminense of war*. This incident may possibly have happened, although the regiment and division from which Zhukov said the deserter came are not to be found in the German Army lists. (Neither **222 IR** nor **74 ID** existed in the German Army OOB.) (Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 135)

--Kiev Special Military District: The signs of impending German attack were taken very seriously; the military observed the German build-up and attack preparations, the frontier guards reported on the frontier violations for intelligence and sabotage purposes. In the 10 days from **10-21 Jun 41**, NKVD guards *intercepted eight agents of the OUN*,¹¹⁸ the Ukrainian nationalist movement which had fallen increasingly under German auspices; in German-occupied Poland, the special regiment *Nachtigall*, officially German-officered but w/ Ukrainian “officers” also, had been training under the *Wehrmacht* for many months. . . Kirponos’s covering formations remained *dispersed*, his mobile reserves remained in the interior and his general reserves – **31, 36, 37 RC; 15, 9, 19 MC** – located in the Zhitomir – Kiev area. (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 103)

--On the morning of **21 Jun 41**, the naval patrols reported nothing of significance, although the movement of three German transports, moving from Rumanian ports, caused some mystification in the Black Sea fleet command. Black Sea Fleet warships were coming to Sevastopol; their crews required some rest after the training exercises, and no sailings were planned for the **22nd**. . . (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 103)

1.4.2.1: Red Army Leadership (Profiles):

PAVLOV, Col-Gen Dmitrii G.:

One of the few Soviet veterans of Spanish Civil War to survive Stalin’s purges. Pavlov’s was a secondary command, since Stalin expected the Germans’ main blow to fall in the Ukraine. Stalin had him shot in late **Jul 41**, but Khrushchev posthumously rehabilitated him in **1956**. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa* 1941, 8, 18)

Pavlov’s was the only Soviet army group staff to be arrested and executed during the war. Their fate reflected the shock and scale of the military disaster in Belorussia. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 65)

Oct 41: In one of his interviews w/ Konstantin Simonov, Zhukov related that in that same telephonic conversation, Stalin told him Konev was to be tried by a military court martial after a government commission, headed by Molotov, completed its investigation. Zhukov protested that another trial would only have a negative effect on the army. He recalled that the execution of

¹¹⁸ Note: *Organizatsiia Ukrain'skykh Natsionalistiv* (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists).

D.G. Pavlov had not helped the situation at the beginning of the war. *Pavlov did not have the capability to command anything larger than a division and everyone knew it.* . . Konev, however, was more capable than Pavlov. (68)

General of the Army Dmitrii Pavlov was only **44** years old when he was shot. Molotov, who knew Pavlov well, described him patronizingly as a “sturdy peasant,” loyal and brave, but “not clever enough, and something of a blockhead.” Pavlov had unusually wide experience of war, and his personal courage was proven. A veteran of the Russian Civil War, he had also commanded Republican tank forces outside Madrid in **1937**, for which he was made one of the first “Heroes of the Soviet Union.” During the Winter War w/ Finland, Pavlov led one of Timoshenko’s corps in a daring march across the frozen Vyborg Bay to outflank the defenses of the Mannerheim Line, an action which forced the Finns to make peace. By pre-war (and post-surge) standards, Pavlov was well trained. He had had a “proper” military education at the Frunze Military Academy. He was brought back from Spain at the height of the purges in mid-**1937** to take over the Directorate of Armored Forces. . . Like Zhukov, he had been an example of the kind of brave, energetic, youthful – and ruthless – middle-level leader that Stalin liked to pick out and promote. He was probably “no better and no worse than the other generals commanding army groups and armies on the western frontier in **Jun 41**.” Pavlov’s blunders before, during, or after **22 Jun 41** were not the root cause of the debacle. (For more biographical details see, *E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 61)

ROKOSSOVSKY Lt.-Gen.:

The capable Rokossovsky, just promoted to lieutenant-general (i.e., about **Dec 41**), was once Zhukov’s superior officer, but had lost seniority when in a concentration camp during the time of the Great Purge. He was a Russian, possibly of White Russian stock (since he had been born in Velikiye Luki), and not a Warsaw Pole, as was subsequently claimed by the Soviet Union. He was a quiet, cultured, well-mannered man who would always patiently hear out his subordinates. This, admittedly, was not a Russian characteristic. (*A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 195)

Rokossovskii was highly critical of Zhukov’s command style and *personally offended by it*. (*W.J. Spahr, Zhukov*, 50)

SHAPOSHNIKOV, Marshal Boris M.:

Red Army chief-of-staff (replaced Zhukov in **Jul 41**).

Boris Mikhailovitch Shaposhnikov (**Russian:** Бори́с Миха́йлович Ша́пошников) (Oct 2 [O.S. Sep 20] **1882** — **26 Mar 45**), **Soviet** military commander, was born at **Zlatoust**, near **Chelyabinsk** in the **Urals**. He joined the army of the **Russian Empire** in **1901** and graduated from the **Nicholas General Staff Academy** in **1910**, reaching the rank of colonel in the Caucasus Grenadiers division during **World War I**. In **1917**, unusually for an officer of his rank, he supported the **Russian Revolution** and in **1918** joined the **Red Army**.

Shaposhnikov was one of the few Red Army commanders with formal military training, and in **1921** he joined the Army's General Staff, where he served until **1925**, when he was appointed commander of the **Leningrad** military region. From **1928** to **1932** he commanded the **Moscow**

military region, then the **Privolzhsk** military region. In **1932** he was appointed commandant of the Red Army's Frunze Military Academy, then in **1935** returned to the command of the Leningrad region. In **1937** he was appointed Chief of the General Staff, in succession to **Mikhail Tukhachevsky**, a victim of **Stalin's Great Purge** of the Red Army. In **1940** he was appointed a **Marshal of the Soviet Union**. . .

Fortunately for the Soviet Union, Shaposhnikov had a fine military mind and high administrative skills. He combined these talents with his position in Stalin's confidence to rebuild the Red Army leadership after the purges. *Mozg Armii* was for decades required reading for every Soviet officer. In **1939** Stalin accepted Shaposhnikov's plan for a rapid build up of the Red Army's strength. Although the plan was not completed before the **German invasion** of **Jun 41**, it was sufficiently advanced to save the Soviet Union from complete disaster.

Shaposhnikov resigned as Chief of the General Staff in **Aug 40**, officially due to ill-health but in fact as a result of Stalin's displeasure with the results of **Winter War**. At the time of the German invasion, he was reinstated as Chief of the General Staff (until **Nov 42**) and also became Deputy People's Commissar for Defence, the post he held until his career was cut short by ill-health in **1943**. He held the position of commandant of the Voroshilov Military Academy until his death in **1945**. (*Wikipedia*)

Boris Shaposhnikov, **58**, tough-faced and mild-mannered as a bulldog, planned the Finland strategies, which were lauded by most neutral observers and bungled in the field handling. He is the only Red officer to have been decorated by the Tsar, Trotsky, Lenin and Stalin—testimony to a political nature as canny as it is adaptable. (Without batting an eyelash, he sat on the tribunal which court-martialed and condemned eight of his old Army colleagues, including the late, great Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky.)

Son of a minor civil-service employe, Marshal Shaposhnikov was born in the town of **Zlatoust** in the Urals, in **1910** was top man at the Moscow Imperial Academy. By **1917** he had become a Tsarist colonel. The next year he joined the Red Army and became a prime strategist of the war on the Whites. He has been an active Commander of the Leningrad, Moscow and Volga military districts, Chief of Staff, head of the Frunze Military Academy (Soviet West Point), and he joined Comrade Stalin at the signing of the Russo-German Pact (see cut). But his reputation has always been technical, bolstered by his authorship of several volumes of military history and strategy. (<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article>)¹¹⁹

TIMOSHENKO, Marshal Semen:

One of the most interesting personalities in the Russian High Command. Born in **1895**; Son of a *landless peasant* in *Bessarabia*. Grew up as a farm laborer and received scarcely any education in his youth. In **1915**, he was drafted into service in the Tsarist Army. He distinguished himself in the chaotic fighting after the Russian Revolution to such a degree that he was given command of the **6th Red Cavalry Division** at the **age of 23** and attracted the attention of both Stalin and Lenin. It was said that he could *not read or write* when he was a division cdr. At the War Academy, under *Frunze* and *Tukhachevsky*, he had a chance to make up for what he had missed in his youth. From **1925-30**, he was both commander and political commissar of the **3rd Cavalry Corps**. He was in command of the military district of *Kiev* when the war w/ Poland broke out in **1939**. His loyalty to the Stalin regime was *considered so staunch* that he was untouched while heads were

¹¹⁹ **Note:** Shaposhnikov was on the cover of Time Magazine on **16 Feb 42**.

rolling all around him in the *great purge* of the armed forces in **1937**. After the poor showing of Russian troops in the in the first phase of the war w/ Finland, Stalin appointed him C-in-C at end of **Dec 40**. After a month's preparation, Timoshenko took the offensive, and his complete success in breaking through the *Mannerheim Line* won him the title of "*Hero of the Soviet Union*," appointment as Defense Commissar, and membership in the Supreme War Council. According to Assmann, Timoshenko was the "*born defensive fighter*." (Assmann, *Battle for Moscow*, 318)

Voroshilov's successor as People's Commissar [minister] of Defense, serving to the outbreak of the war and promoted to the rank of Marshal, was Semen Timoshenko. He was a professional by Red Army standards, but like most of the Soviet military leaders he had been only an enlisted soldier in the First World War. In the coming Russo-German War he would prove to be a cdr of limited abilities. (E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 22)

Der sowj. O.B. im Mittelabschnitt der Ostfront, Marschall Timoschenko, einst Schueler des Lehrers Rudolf Schmidt an der Berliner Kriegsakademie...(Woche, *Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 110)

VOROSHILOV, Marshal K.E.

In **1934**, apparently for no better reason than *Tukhachevsky's* advocacy of the independent armored force, he argued: „It is almost axiomatic that such a powerful force as the tank corps is a very *far-fetched idea* and we should therefore have nothing to do w/ it.“ Immediately after T.'s removal [shot at outset of the mil. purges, on **11.6.37**) he *abolished* all tank formations larger than a brigade. (Keegan, *Second World War*, 176)

The pre-war Stalinist "leader-state" lacked effective overall military leadership. This paradox was not just a product of the purges. The People's Commissar (Minister) of Defense from **1925** and up until **May 1940** was Voroshilov, an incompetent crony of Stalin's. Voroshilov was an uneducated worker who had joined the Bolsheviks long before the **1917** Revolution. He became one of Stalin's "team" in the Civil War, and helped the dictator in his rise to power. Voroshilov was rewarded by a seat on the party Politburo from the **1920s**. It was Voroshilov who oversaw the Red Army purges of **1937/38**. Stalin had held him responsible for the Red Army's poor performance in the Winter War w/ Finland and sacked him as a People's Commissar, but Voroshilov kept his position on the Politburo and was one of the five [**5**] members of the all-important State Defense Committee (**GKO**) which was formed in **Jul 41**. (E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 21-22)

ZHUKOV, General Georgi Konstantinovich:

Note: Author W. J. Spahr emphasizes the role of Stalin in shaping Zhukov's leadership style, combining ruthlessness w/ an absolutely iron will. Zhukov's use of abusive language toward his senior subordinates seemed to be almost chronic. (Zhukov, 269-71)¹²⁰

Note: He was probably the *greatest commander of the war*, yet his feats of arms were achieved by the exercise of a *ruthlessness* unthinkable to Dwight Eisenhower's armies. When *Zhukov* led

¹²⁰ **Note:** Unclear if Spahr's latter remark (re: "abusive language") referred only to Z.'s post-war stint as Defense Minister, or also to his behavior during war.

the defense of *Leningrad*, he stationed tanks behind his own front not to kill Germans but to shoot down any of his own men who sought to flee. (W.P. Reese, *Stranger*, foreword [Max Hastings], vi)

Note: Despite his reputation as a supreme military cdr, seems clear that Zhukov could be *very wasteful of human material*. This becomes apparent in his handling of operations associated w/ Operation “Mars,” in Nov-Dec 42. As D. Glantz writes at one point: “Although it had been bloodied in heavy combat, Zhukov permitted the 20th Army to fail and flounder in the Vazuza bridgehead for five more days. He continued issuing attack orders, sending Soviet infantry into the teeth of the German defense...as if to punish the army and its commander for its dismal failure...” (Glantz, *Zhukov’s Greatest Defeat*, 183, 190)

Note: He may have been the greatest operational commander of the war [for Red Army, or for *all nations?*]. He was *ruthless and harsh* w/ his subordinates and earned the *deep enmity* of most of his colleagues. But he was *enormously competent*, brave, and sophisticated in understanding what was possible. (W. Murray, *War to be Won*, 134)¹²¹

Zhukov’s battles were all characterized by the *wanton expenditure of human life*, his overruling of subordinates who were better informed of front-line realities, and his keen instinct for political advancement. His *reckless squandering* of more than **1,000,000** lives in futile attacks on the Moscow front in early **1942** adds up to the greatest defeat suffered not just by the Russian army, but by any army in history. (C. Winchester, *Hitler’s War on Russia*, 39)

“What sort of a man was Zhukov at this period and what of his relationship to Stalin and the subordinate generals? . . . He had either failed, or had been found inconvenient, as a Chief of the General Staff. He just did not fit in. Yet he was a man of proven command experience, and Stalin found for him a fitting and essential role as a trouble shooter, a fixer, someone who could take command in moments of crisis. His strength apparently lay not only in his *operational* ability, but in his *ruthless inexorable determination*. For Zhukov was a *true Russian w/ all the Russian’s inborn respect for brutal authority*. His responsibility was to Stalin, Party and self, in that order; like his fellow generals he felt himself in no way answerable to his subordinates or to his troops. The only criterion was success, and it was immaterial how this was achieved. He who was so careful and diffident, even in the presence of minor political figures like Vishinsky, was frequently a bawling, raging tyrant in the field. When the mood so took him, everything was wrong and nothing could please. Yet he was not so stupid that he would not listen to his staffs or subordinates. . . He was overbearing and contrary w/ his inferiors. . . The descriptions of western observers in **1945** bear witness to the *cold blooded inhumanity of the man*. His detractors say further that he was vain, self-seeking and anxious for fame and glory.” (A. Seaton, *The Battle for Moscow*, 189-92)

Stalin’s *premier military advisor*. Had begun the war as a “*southerner*,” conditioned by his cavalry training and duty in the Ukraine to appreciate the critical strategic importance of the region. Was former cdr of the *Kiev Military District* (1940) and *chief of the General Staff* on the eve of the war, Zhukov’s prewar plans, IAW Stalin’s desires, had given priority to strategic defenses in the Ukraine. During the terrible fighting of summer and fall of 1941, however, he had *recognized the error of his ways*. As *Reserve Front* cdr after **30.7.41**, Zhukov’s attentions shifted to the front’s *central sector*. There, in **Jul-Aug 41**, he *orchestrated the Soviet counteroffensives around Smolensk*, whose ferocity contributed, in part, to the German High Command’s decision to halt the drive on Moscow and instead encircle Soviet forces defending stubbornly in the *Kiev*

¹²¹ **Note:** Compare W. Murray’s judgment of Zhukov w/ that of D. Glantz.

region. Zhukov had later crossed swords w/ Stalin over the necessity for defending Kiev, and when Zhukov's recommendation to abandon Kiev was overruled, Stalin "exiled" him to Leningrad. In the disastrous October days, after the Germans resumed advance on Moscow, Stalin summoned Zhukov to Moscow to help the *Stavka* stave off impending disaster. Commanding in succession the *Reserve and Western Fronts*, Zhukov restored order from confusion and was *instrumental in bringing the German advance to a halt at gates of Russian capital*. In close coordination w/ Stalin, Zhukov then **organized and conducted the Dec 41 Moscow counteroffensive** and, in **Jan 42**, expanded that offensive into a grand, although ultimately futile attempt to *destroy German Army Group Center*. The glorious but frustrating Moscow episode *converted Zhukov into a convinced "northerner."* Thereafter, **Army Group Center became his nemesis**, and Zhukov remained *preoccupied w/ the task of its destruction*. (Glantz, *Zhukov's Greatest Defeat*, 15-16)

Stalin was *mildly criticized by Zhukov* in winter 1941 for mandating an offensive on too broad a front. (Glantz, *Zhukov's Greatest Defeat*, 20) Later, Glantz writes: "Only eight months before [i.e., late winter '41] he had *boldly rebuked Stalin himself* for establishing goals [for the winter counteroffensive] that were too ambitious." (31)

"Like Stalin, Zhukov kept close track of developments and was *not reluctant to become involved in tactical matters*. Zhukov well understood that operational and strategic success often depended on tactical details. (Glantz, *Zhukov's Greatest Defeat*, 175)

"Anyone who had fought Zhukov knew how *stubborn, tenacious, and ruthless* he was. He had lost this battle [Operation Mars / Nov-Dec 42] and w/ it the lives of tens of thousands of Red Army soldiers. But experience had clearly demonstrated that, to Zhukov, *lives were cheap* and Russian manpower resources virtually unlimited." (Glantz, *Zhukov's Greatest Defeat*, 282)

Zhukov was just **43** years old, two decades younger than his opposite number, GFM v. Bock. The son of poor peasants, w/ little formal education, he served w/ distinction as a rank-and-file cavalryman in the First World War. In his mid-**20s**, he fought as a squadron cdr in Budennyi's Red Cavalry in the Civil War. He was a demanding and committed leader, and by the start of the **1930s** he had risen to command a cavalry division. He had his faults; he could be vain, and he was brutal. His accelerated promotion owed something to the **1937-38** destruction of the top tier of cdrs of the Red Army. The **1 Cavalry Army** veterans like Zhukov were the army faction that Stalin and Voroshilov most trusted. *Komdiv* Zhukov was made cdr of **3 Cav Corps** in Belorussia in **Jul 37**. It was important, too, that Zhukov had served in the **1930s** under Budennyi and Timoshenko. This protected him during the purges. . . What did the most to advance Zhukov's career was his victory over the Japanese in the division-level battles at Khalkin Gol in eastern Mongolia in summer of **1939**. In the command shake-up of the summer of **1940**, following the Winter War, Stalin and Timoshenko gave Zhukov one of the Red Army's three most important field commands: the Kiev Military District. This was followed by an even more extraordinary jump to the post of Chief of the General Staff in **Jan 41**, replacing General Meretskov. Zhukov combined a sound tactical sense w/ self-confidence, energy, and a demanding personality. He had established the all-important personal link w/ Stalin; he had the courage to disagree w/ the Soviet dictator on military questions. One of Zhukov's strength – and perhaps part of his attraction to Stalin – was his ruthlessness. . . He was undoubtedly the **outstanding military cdr of the Second World War**. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 114)

1.4.3: Berlin

-- **ca. 15.6.41:** For Hitler, the „old familiar bouts of *insomnia*“ began to attack him as the last days before „*Barbarossa*“ dragged by. By night he lay awake and asked himself what loopholes in his grand design the British might yet exploit. He believed he had plugged them all . . . Yet Hitler could only go to sleep w/ *sedatives*, even after staying up until **3-4:00 a.m.** each morning discussing *Turkey, Russia*, war, and warfare w/ dutiful but wearily henchmen like Himmler, Ley, Hewel, Ribbentrop and Seyss-Inquart. (D. Irving, *Hitler's War*, 268)

-- **18./21.6.41:** By **18 Jun 41**, **200,000** pamphlets had been printed for distribution to the troops. On **21 Jun 41**, Hitler dictated the proclamation to the German people to be read out the next day. Hitler was by this time looking over-tired, and was in a *highly nervous state*, pacing up and down, apprehensive, involving himself in the minutiae of propaganda such as the *fanfares* that were to be played over the radio to announce German victories. Goebbels went to see him that evening. They marched up and down his rooms for three hours. They tried out the new fanfares for an hour. Hitler gradually relaxed somewhat. “The Fuehrer is freed from a nightmare the closer the decision comes,” noted Goebbels . . . At **2:30 a.m. (22 Jun 41)**, Hitler finally decided to snatch a few hours sleep. *Barbarossa* was due to begin within the next hour. (I. Kershaw, *Hitler*, 386-87)

--Saturday, **21 Jun 41:** dawned warm and sunny in both Berlin and Moscow. . . In Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev, crowds filled the streets and parks, drinking beer and *kvass* (a soft drink similar to ginger beer) and eating ice cream. In Berlin, most Soviet embassy staff enjoyed the holiday atmosphere, sunbathing and swimming in the parks. . . (C. Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 154)

--**Berlin, description of:** A city of roughly **4,000,000** in fall of 1940. Population of city spread out over a wide area—roughly **341 square miles**. Four-fifths of the city consisted of *streets and squares, public parks, forest, farmland, waterways, building sites*, and other areas upon which there are no buildings. Experiencing nightly blackouts, RAF bombing raids,¹²² food rationing (fat cards, bread cards, etc.).¹²³ *Air raid shelters* in city had *yellow signs* w/ the word “*Luftschutzraum*” upon it. According to F., Berlin had *10 railroad stations* scattered throughout the city. One of the parks was the **Tiergarten**—a huge park, two and a quarter miles long and three quarters of a mile wide, in which there are widespread trees and winding paths past streams and lakes. . . Not far from the Tiergarten was the **Sieges-Allee**, or Victory Avenue, lined by statues of the *Hohenzollerns* and leading to the **Siegessaule**, Column of Victory, w/ the huge gilt figure of a buxom Victory on the top, but become a worry to the Germans since it *helped guide the RAF in their raids on Berlin*. . . Best restaurants in the city in the neighborhood of the *Kurfuerstendamm*. . . (Note: *Flannery* found Berliners to be, as he put it, “*crude, crass and impolite*.” (H. W. Flannery, *Assignment to Berlin*, 49-53, 68-69, 72-73, 170)¹²⁴

-- Flannery assigned to Berlin in **Oct 40**—to replace William L. Shirer as a “representative of the *Columbia Broadcasting System* in the Nazi capital.” He was leaving his home and family for first

¹²² By Dec 40, some 15,000 Berlin children had been evacuated to the *Sudetenland*. (127) Apparently, there were no air raids in first months of 1941. “. . .we in Berlin hardly knew a war was on during the early part of 1941.” (151, 167)

¹²³ *Flannery*: “The Germans were used to rationing and *had lived on restricted quantities of foods for years*. Many of them told me they were hungry all the time.” (74)

¹²⁴ Description of Reich *Chancellery*, p 64.

time: “I had gone from a bungalow down a tree-shaded street in suburban *St.Louis*, gone from Ruth and Pat, my wife and year-and-a-half-old daughter...” (Flannery, *Assignment to Berlin*, 3-4)¹²⁵

--At the Soviet embassy in Berlin . . . most made ready to enjoy the promise of a fine day on **21 Jun 41**. Ambassador Dekanozov had received *another report about a German attack on 22 June*; while this fell upon the ambassador’s disbelieving ears, the information was transmitted to Moscow, which, during the morning of the **21st** instructed the embassy to arrange an interview with Ribbentrop. The Soviet diplomat charged w/ this duty, V. Berezhkov, found that Ribbentrop was “out of town” and everybody else was “out.” . . . The “communication” was a *demand for an explanation from the German government of the concentration of German troops on the Soviet frontier.*” [See text for more important details.] It was left to Molotov to summon Ambassador von Schulenburg to his office at **9.30 p.m.**, there to repeat the hitherto unanswered and miserably plaintive query: . . . Von Schulenburg, *uniformed himself of the German attack plans*, could give no answer. (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 103-04)

22.6.41: Joseph Goebbels, Tagebuecher:

Neue Fanfaren ausprobiert . . . Aber die Listfanfare bleibt doch die beste . . . schwuelere Atmosphaere. Nun wartet aber die ganze Welt auf das reinigende Gewitter . . . Um **3.30** Uhr beginnt der Angriff. 160 komplette Divisionsen. 3000 km lange Angriffslinie. Alles steht gut. **Groesster Aufmarsch der Weltgeschichte.** Der Fuehrer ist von einem Alldruck befreit, je naeher die Entscheidung kommt . . . Er taut direkt auf. (Alle) Muedigkeit scheint von ihm gewichen . . . Dieses Krebsgeschwuer muss ausgebrannt werden. Stalin wird fallen . . . **3.30** Uhr. Nun donnern die Geschuetze. *Gott segne unsere Waffen!* Draussen auf dem Wilhelmplatz ist alles still u. leer. Berlin schlaeft, das Reich schlaeft . . . Ich gehe ruhelos im Zimmer auf u. ab. Der Atem der Geschichte ist hoerbar. Grosse, wunderbare Zeit, in der ein neues Reich geboren wird. Unter Schmerzen zwar, aber es steigt empor zum Licht. . .

(Cited in: P. Kohl, “*Ich wundere mich, dass ich noch lebe,*“ 23; also, R.G. Reuth, *Goebbels. Eine Biographie*. 480)

1.4.4: Moscow

--**21.6.41** (Evening): [See text for details.]¹²⁶ The **night was sultry, hot and windless**. The Kremlin trees stood motionless in the heat, their leaves flaccid, and people gulped for air in their offices. During an early evening meeting in his Kremlin office, so Pleshakov, Stalin “in all likelihood . . . *ordered the preemptive strike* – maybe in a matter of days, perhaps in a matter of a week . . .” At **10:00** o’clock the storm came. In the bright midsummer dusk, harsh winds created small

¹²⁵ Flannery was stationed at the Adlon, “the leading hotel in Berlin, but it no longer had the best food. On the menu each night were at most two or three choices for the entrée, and there was little variety in them; moreover the food was unappetizingly prepared. Eating at the Adlon *became tiresome in a few weeks*, even though prices were so high that a dinner, at the official rate of exchange, cost upwards of four dollars. But he notes that, “we ate well compared w/ the ordinary German.” (72-73)

¹²⁶ **Note:** According to Pleshakov,

tornadoes of dust on the sidewalks, and curtains framing the open windows billowed. In the next moment thunder struck, and a torrential rain flooded Moscow. . . At **11:00** o'clock the *vozhd* left for his dacha. . . (C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 93-97)

--**21.6.41:** As Molotov summoned von Schulenburg to his office at **9.30** p.m., Dekanozov, all day denied access to Ribbentrop, finally called on von Weizsäcker to deliver a ***protest about German overflights*** [see text]. (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 106)

--**21.6.41:** On **21 Jun 41**, a German sergeant major who had defected in the Kiev Military District warned the Soviet border guards that German troops were moving up for an attack [the next morning]. Zhukov and Timoshenko went straight to the Kremlin. At that last bitter moment, Stalin still said, "*But perhaps the German generals sent this deserter to **provoke a conflict?***" "No," they replied, "we think the deserter is telling the truth." Stalin then redrafted a directive from his CGS and Defense Commissar to refer first to the strong possibility of a German provocation. Subject to that, he ***at last ordered combat readiness*** in the fortified areas of Leningrad, Baltic, Western, Kiev and Odessa military districts to meet a sudden blow by the Germans; dispersal and *camouflage of Soviet acft; and alerts for all units, including air defense*. No other measures were to be taken w/o special orders. (J. Colvin, *Zhukov*, 65)

--**21.6.41:** The *Politburo* acted to create a single command for the armies being brought from the interior military districts to the line of the Dnepr and Dvina. On the night of **21 Jun 41**, a war alert directive went out from Moscow. It ordered all units to *combat readiness* and those close to the border to *man the fortifications and firing points in secret* during the night. Troops on the border were not to respond to any *German provocations* or to take any other action w/o special orders. The directive did not reach all the field commands in the hours left before the German attack, and the *state of readiness otherwise was far from complete*. (Ziemke & Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 23)

--**21.6.41:** In the Kremlin the last illusions were finally being stripped away. Throughout Saturday, the pace of activity in the highest echelons of the government and military had ***accelerated to a fever pitch***. Zhukov received an urgent call from the Hq. of the Kiev Special Military District. A German sergeant-major had just crossed the border: the Germans would attack the next morning. Stalin summoned Zhukov and Timoshenko to the Kremlin. His first thought was that the Germans had sent the defector across in a deliberate move to provoke a conflict. A desperate Molotov summoned the German ambassador, von Schulenburg. Why, Molotov asked, had the ***staff of the German embassy suddenly left Moscow? Why had the German government not responded to the olive branch offered by the TASS announcement of 14 June? Was Germany dissatisfied w/ the way the Soviet Union had been behaving, and if so why?*** These questions were by now irrelevant. Von Schulenburg could give no sensible answer. (R. Braithwaite, *Moscow 1941*, 67)

--**21.6.41:** The Politburo began to assemble. Stalin asked Timoshenko what should be done. Timoshenko suggested that the *forces on the frontier should take up their battle positions*. Stalin still resisted: "It's too soon . . . Perhaps we can still solve the problem by peaceful means." He ordered Zhukov to ***draft a short general warning to the frontier armies***. The result, ***Directive No. 1***, was a ***deeply confusing document***. The troops were warned that a German attack was possible at any moment. They were to *occupy their firing positions in secret*. They were to *disperse and camouflage their acft*. But they were "*to avoid any **provocative action** of any kind which might result in serious complications.*" They were to do nothing more w/o specific instructions. It did not matter. The message was far too late. It did not reach Pavlov's Hq. at the Western Military District until just before **1 a.m.** on **22 Jun 41**. It was passed on to subordinate units only

at **2.30 a.m.** . . Most of the frontline troops did not get Directive 1 until after the Germans had already attacked. (R. Braithwaite, *Moscow 1941*, 66)

--**21.6.41:** Most people believed the message hammered home by years of propaganda. The popular film *If War Shold Come Tomorrow* had shown them that if the Germans attacked (no one doubted it would be the Germans), the Red Army would *carry the fighting into the aggressor's homeland within days*, the German workers would rise to greet them, and victory would come w/ a minimal expenditure of blood. What else could they believe, after all the sacri-fices they had made to give the *Red Army more tanks and as many planes as the whole of the rest of the world put together*. . . It had been rainng heavily for several days. But that Saturday was **21 Jun 41**, Midsummer's Day, and that weekend the summer began in earnest. Those who could, left to relax in their dachas, to cultivate their vegetable gardens, to picnic and to fish in the Moscow River. Those who could not afford such luxuries, who were pinned down by their work, or who still had their exams to take, stayed behind in the city. In the memories of survivors, that *last day of peace has the golden quality of an idyll*. But on that last Saturday night of peace, the generals at Hq. in Moscow knew that the *storm was about to break*. . . (R. Braithwaite, *Moscow 1941*, 61)

--**21.6.41:** What was happening this evening in Moscow? *Poskrebyshev*, assistant to the Chairman of the Soviet People's Commissariats, is constantly delivering reports from the western borders to Stalin's table, each one more worrying than the previous one. The report signed by the Chief of Staff of the Baltic Special Military District, Lt.-Gen. *Klenov*, states: "The Germans have finished the construction of the bridges across the Niemen. . . The civilians have been advised to evacuate to a depth of **20** kilometers from the frontier. . ." The Chief of Staff from the Western Special Military District, Maj-Gen *Klimovskikh*, reports: "barbed wire along the frontier on the route *Augustov – Seiny*, while in place during the day, was pulled down towards the evening. In the woods, there is a sound of engines." Col-Gen M.P. *Kirponos*, cdr of the Kiev Special Military District, reports to the effect that war will begin in a matter of hours. *Stalin wavered*. "He had always been a prisoner of politics, and took decisions only after a great deal of *inner struggle*. At that moment he did not want the war; he knew he was not ready."

That evening, Stalin orders Molotov to invite the German ambassador, *Schulenburg*, in order to explain the situation at the frontier. He insisted this should be done in Berlin: the Soviet Ambassador is to meet Ribbentrop. *Schulenburg*, who has been instructed to destroy the embassy secret papers, listens to Molotov w/ an *inscrutable expression*. He expresses astonishment that "the Soviet government is not in a position to understand the reasons for German dissatisfaction." The Soviet Minister, Molotov, having been one of the main architects of Soviet-German policy, is expecting reassurance. Instead, *Schulenburg* coldly replies: "I cannot give you an answer on that question, and I shall transmit it to Berlin." Ribbentrop refuses to receive the Soviet Ambassador (*Dekanozov*), and dispatches him to State Secretary von *Weizsaecker*. (Volkogonov, "*The German Attack*," 85-86)

--**21.6.41:** The interruption of Soviet signals traffic [by *Brandenburgers* and other saboteurs] was of the utmost importance, coupled w/ the fact that very late – too late – the Defense Commissariat finally stirred from its dangerous tupor. Earlier in the evening, Lt.Gen. M.A. Purkayev, Chief of Staff of the Kiev Special Military District, telephoned to report that a German NCO had deserted to the Soviet lines and informed Soviet frontier guards that an *attack was imminent* and was timed for the morning of **22 Jun 41**. Gen. Zhukov in turn reported this to Timoshenko and to Stalin: the latter ordered Timoshenko, Zhukov and his deputy Vatutin¹²⁷ to the Kremlin w/o delay. With

¹²⁷ **Note:** N.F. Vatutin was the First Deputy Chief of the General Staff.

creditable *presence of mind* Zhukov took a *draft operations directive* for Soviet commanders w/ him. This time Timoshenko, Zhukov and Vatutin determined to ***get that vital permission to transmit an alert***. It was Stalin “plainly worried” who received the commanders: he suggested to the officers that the *German generals had sent this deserter over to the Soviet side “to provoke a conflict,”* but his visitors disagreed quite bluntly . . . [**Note:** After much wrangling and discussion, a **warning order** was transmitted to military commands just after midnight¹²⁸ For Col.-Gen. Kuznetsov’s reaction to the warning order, see text..] (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 109-11)

--**21./22.6.41:** Stalin left for his Nearby Dacha at **11 p.m.** Molotov and other members of the Politburo are said to have joined him there to watch a film. They left at midnight. At about that time General Kirponos telephoned Zhukov and Timoshenko at the ministry to say that a deserter had told the border police that the attack would start at **4 a.m.** Stalin was informed immediately. He was *little moved and went to bed*. (R. Braithwaite, *Moscow 1941*, 68)

--**21./22.6.41:** Stalin arrived at the Kremlin in the early hours of the afternoon on Saturday **21 Jun 41**, well aware that he was no longer the master of events. . . [**Note:** Stalin receives news of a German defector, who revealed the attack plans for the next morning; Stalin “now seemed worried but was still toying w/ the idea that the German generals had sent the defector deliberately ‘to provoke a conflict.’”] . . . He had been subjected to endless warnings [i.e., about an impending German attack] since the beginning of the month, and had been pressed during the entire week to issue directives alerting the troops. That Sunday, [sic! / must mean “Saturday!”] disconcerting as it might have been, did not seem different to him. After conversing for another **15** minutes w/ Molotov and Beria, he felt confident enough to return early to his *dacha* at **11:00** p.m.

Zhukov and Timoshenko felt differently. They returned from the Kremlin to the Ministry of Defense and communicated w/ the various fronts, keeping them all alert. Around midnight their attention was drawn by Kirponos to a second deserter who had swum across the river and informed the NKGB border police that the attack would start at **4:00** a.m. Stalin, who was promptly informed at his *dacha*, was little moved and retired to bed. At **3:30** a.m., the coded telephones starting ringing at the Ministry of Defense, bringing news of heavy German shelling along the entire frontier. Stalin was speechless when Zhukov contacted him on the phone; only his heavy breathing could be heard. Despite Zhukov’s insistence he refused to sanction any counter-measures. By **4:30** a.m., when Zhukov and Timoshenko were on their way to the Kremlin, the German artillery had been pounding Soviet cities, the Soviet air force had been annihilated on the ground and the war machine had started rolling into Russia. At the Kremlin the two Soviet commanders encountered a “very pale” Stalin, “sitting at the table clutching a loaded unlit pipe in both hands.” Present were also the ubiquitous Mekhlis and Voroshilov, Molotov and Beria. Stalin was clearly “bewildered” but desperately hanging on to his misconception, suggesting it might still be “a provocation of the German officers.” He was little moved by Timoshenko’s attempts to “bring him down to earth.” . . . After some reflection, Stalin said, “Hitler surely does not know about it.” As a last resort he wished Molotov to speak to Schulenburg. . .

Well into the morning of **22 Jun 41** Stalin did not exclude the possibility that Russia was being intimidated into political submission. As Molotov confessed to Cripps a week after the eruption of war, the Kremlin had *not anticipated that war* “*would come without any discussion or ultimatum.*” (See, *G. Gorodetsky, Grand Delusion*, 309-13)

¹²⁸ **Note:** Text of this “warning order” to the military districts, and measures it ordered taken, on p. 110.

--Preemptive Strike:

Joseph Stalin was an *insomniac*, often staying up until dawn. . . He had not doubted that Hitler would one day turn his rapacious leer on the Soviet Union, but in Stalin's mind that would not happen before spring 1942, after Britain was on its knees. . . By then Stalin's own plan, which he had *kept secret thus far even from the majority of his generals*, would be in place. It called for a *full-scale attack on the Germans*, one that would allow the Soviet Union to acquire even more of Eastern Europe and joint it to the Red empire. (1)

While the timing of a German attack was settled in Stalin's mind, the generals were far less sanguine. By his order they had developed the *top-secret plan to launch the Red Army's offensive down the road*, but they also knew that if Germany attacked now, the plan would be *irrelevant*, and there was *no defensive strategy* to fall back on, because the dictator deemed such a precaution unnecessary. (2)

One of the things Stalin admired about Hitler was his audacious nature. If Hitler was indeed planning to strike now, he had *picked his moment well*, attacking when the Soviet Union was *extremely vulnerable*. (3)

21.6.41: After much hesitation, on the evening of **21 Jun 41**, Stalin called a *secret meeting* to put the finishing touches on the *preemptive strike plan*. The revised plan called for launching an attack ***within a couple of weeks***.¹²⁹ (4)

Stalin ties hands of his generals on eve of war. . . (Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 4-5)

--Stalin on Eve of War:

He spent the first weeks of spring in mental agony. He *fully intended to strike at Germany first*. . . Was it a good time for a preemptive strike or not? . . . However, Stalin's intelligence . . . reported that Germany was plotting an imminent invasion of the Soviet Union. Stalin didn't trust spies. Having himself betrayed many people . . . he saw no reason to believe others wouldn't do the same. . . His distrust also made sense from another, more objective perspective: spies had been promising a German attack for several months now, and *each warning had proved false*. . . (See text for examples, 70)

The *tension was becoming too much for the vozhd*. Just like his father, he tried to calm himself by drinking heavily. . . The feasts at his dacha had been reasonably joyful, if never relaxed. Now the host remained gloomy, *drinking one glass of wine after another* and making everybody else keep up w/ him. . . (Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 73)

--Warnings of impending German attack:

May-Jun 41: Stalin receives *numerous reports from agents* (spies) about a possible German invasion. "Zeus," stationed in Sofia, reported a concentration of German motorized divisions along the Soviet border on **14.5.41**; on **19.5.41**,

¹²⁹ **Note:** Pleshakov thus supports Suvorow's thesis that Stalin was preparing to attack as early as early **Jul 41**.

“Dora” cabled from Zurich to say that plans for the attack had been finalized; on **20.5.41**, “Extern” from Helsinki, confirmed as much; on **28.5.41**, “ABC,” in Bucharest, testified that war would start in June; “Mars,” in Budapest, gave the date of the invasion as **15 Jun**; “Ramzai,” in Tokyo, [i.e., Richard Sorge] reported the same date. . . (86-87)

German overflights: Between **10-19 Jun 41**, the frontier was violated no fewer than **86** times by German planes; on **20-21 Jun 41**, **55** times. Each time the aircraft flew at least 20-30 miles deep. (87)

Even the servile and opportunistic Beria, who normally told Stalin only what he wanted to hear, reported that the Germans had dispatched numerous saboteurs to Ukraine – Byelorussia – Lithuania. The saboteurs crossed the border individually or in small groups and carried radio transmitters, weapons, currency, and Soviet passports. Some of them were former White Army officers who had fought against the Reds in the same region **20** years earlier. . . On **11 Jun 41**, Beria’s men discovered a telephone cable on the bottom of the San River; the Germans had been monitoring Red Army phone conversations. (87)

Each time Stalin was confronted w/ such information, he said . . . “Hitler and his generals are not so foolish as to *start a two-front war*. The Germans broke their neck on this in World War I. Hitler would never risk such a thing.”¹³⁰ (88)

Note: On of the themes of Pleshakov’s account of final weeks before outbreak of war is that Stalin was under *immense stress*, while Timoshenko and Zhukov (the two generals bearing full responsibility for the army, grew exhausted, discouraged, and cynical. Stalin dismissed Zhukov’s concerns – of impending German attack – as overblown. . . Stalin’s behavior became *more and more erratic*. . . To Zhukov and Timoshenko . . . it sometimes looked as if the *vozhd* was *consumed by anxiety*, but occasionally they got the impression that Stalin had a *strange trust in Hitler* and believed his most blatant lies.¹³¹ (89-91)

Stalin’s behavior on eve of war: Judging by Stalin’s schedule, the *vozhd* was nearly in hiding. In the first half of **Jun 41**, he spent eight [**8**] days away from his office, and between **11-18 Jun 41** he didn’t grant Timoshenko or Zhukov a single audience. This outraged the generals. . . They didn’t know why he was avoiding them. He could have been angered by their nagging, he could have been confident everything was fine, or he could have been planning to have them both arrested. Zhukov felt particularly vulnerable, as several generals rounded up in the June purge had been his subordinates. (92)

Brought together by anxiety and fear, Zhukov and Timoshenko decided to hold their ground. As soon as they had a chance to see the *vozhd*, they told him once again that the *troops had to be put on combat alert*. Stalin exploded, saying doing so would mean war. At the same time, he reluctantly admitted that the *situation was becoming more untenable by the day*. Concerned about the safety of his air force on the border, he finally ordered all aircraft to be painted w/ matte

¹³⁰ **Note:** This was clearly an *idée fixe* for Stalin on eve of war!

¹³¹ **Note:** No reference in text to Hitler’s putative “letter” to Stalin, in attempt to reassure him vis-à-vis German activities along demarcation line.

camouflage by 20 Jul 41[!]. The runways were to be disguised as well. However, those were stopgap measures. (92)

(Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*)

--*Excerpt from Barbarossa Unleashed:*

6.4: Stalin and Soviet Western Front Respond:

The winter of 1941 had been unusually long in Moscow. Snow was falling there as late as the second week of June.^{cdlxviii} On Saturday, 21 June 1941, a warm sun finally broke through and throngs of people made out for the city's parks. Despite the disquieting rumors of impending war with Germany, the official mood in Stalin's capital was one of robust confidence. Only a week before, on 14 June, the Tass news agency had released its now infamous communiqué, insisting that rumors of Germany's intention to tear up the non-aggression pact and attack Russia were "without any foundation." The communiqué also attempted to explain away the now obvious German buildup taking place along the Soviet Union's western frontier, stating that the German troop movements were, "one must suppose, prompted by motives which have no bearing on Soviet-German relations."^{cdlxix} In reality, however, the Soviet political and military leadership were, by now, seriously worried, even panicked, over the burgeoning possibility of an imminent German attack.

In Berlin, the day (21 June) was also pleasantly warm, and most members of the Soviet embassy staff were resting or swimming in the halcyon surroundings of the Potsdam and Wannsee parks. But appearances can be deceiving, for frenetic efforts had been underway for days at the embassy to open a dialogue with their German counterparts, the aim of which was to gain direct access to Hitler. Yet all attempts to make contact with the German Foreign Office were futile now: Hitler's foreign minister, Ribbentrop, had deliberately departed Berlin early that morning, leaving instructions with his staff to hold the Russian ambassador at bay.^{cdlxx}

Rebuffed in Berlin, the Soviets turned frantically to the German ambassador in Moscow, Schulenburg, rushing him to the Kremlin at 6:00 p.m. A clearly agitated Molotov complained about the ongoing violations of Soviet airspace by German military aircraft; furthermore, he wished to know why members of the German embassy staff, along with their wives, had suddenly left the country, resulting in rumors of imminent war. Why had the German government not responded to the "peace loving" Tass communiqué? What was behind the German discontent – "if it actually exists" – with the Soviet Union? Schulenburg's replies failed to allay the Soviet foreign minister's anxieties. The German ambassador did, however, drop "his final hint about the German intentions, which obviously he did not report home. He admitted that 'posing those issues was justified,' but unfortunately he was in no position to answer, as Berlin 'kept him entirely in the dark.' Rather pathetically, Molotov whined that 'there was no reason for the German government to be dissatisfied with Russia.'"^{cdlxxi}

Stalin had arrived at the Kremlin late that Saturday, in the early hours of the afternoon. The massive fortress, one of the largest structures in Europe, was now more than four-and-a-half centuries old, and its massive, red brick walls and tall towers loomed menacingly over the city.^{cdlxxii} By now, the Soviet dictator was well aware that events were rapidly slipping from his grasp. That evening, beginning around 7:00 p.m., Stalin met with many of his closest associates, among them Molotov, Beria, and his top generals, Timoshenko and Zhukov. Since the beginning of June, Stalin had been subjected to an unremitting stream of warnings about Germany's nefarious intentions, but he had tended to fob them off as "provocations." Now he learned that a

German defector had crossed the border and told the local Russian commander that war was to begin on 22 June – in other words, in a few hours.^{cdlxxiii}

Although he was now worried, Stalin, still unable to face head on the disaster about to strike, flirted with the idea that the German generals had deliberately sent the defector “to provoke a conflict.” Nevertheless, after lengthy discussions in his study with both his Commissar (Minister) of Defense, Timoshenko, and Chief of Staff, Zhukov, present, Stalin was finally stirred to issue a directive alerting the armed forces. Directive No. 1, as it was called, was issued by the Main Military Soviet. It read in part: “In the course of 22-23 June 1941, sudden attacks by the Germans on the fronts of Leningrad, Baltic Special, Western Special, Kiev Special and Odessa Special Military Districts will be possible. The task of our forces is not to yield to any provocations likely to prompt major complications.”^{cdlxxiv} Diffident and confusing in its content, the order went on to stipulate that, during the early morning of 22 June, the “firing positions of the fortified regions on the state border are to be occupied secretly,” while all aircraft were to be “dispersed and carefully camouflaged” and “all units . . . put in a state of military preparedness without calling up supplementary troops.”^{cdlxxv}

After the order had been encoded, it was dispatched to the headquarters of the military districts sometime after midnight.^{cdlxxvi} “Discreetly and effectively blockaded by German saboteurs . . . the Red Army frontier units never received Stalin’s directive. Their inland headquarters did – but not until 3.00 o’clock in the morning. As Zhukov and Timoshenko had predicted, the directive caused immense confusion. What should the commanders expect – border clashes or war? If they were not supposed to yield to provocations, should they react at all?”^{cdlxxvii}

Having done what he could – or, at least, what he was willing to do – the *vozhd*, after final discussions with Molotov and Beria, felt confident enough to return to his dacha outside Moscow at 11:00 p.m. Timoshenko and Zhukov, however, hardly propitiated by the general warning to the troops, returned to the Ministry of Defense, where they remained on alert. About midnight, they learned of a second deserter: A soldier from a German infantry division had swum across the river and informed the NKGB border police that the attack would start at 4.00 in the morning. Stalin, although promptly notified at his dacha, was unmoved. He retired to bed.^{cdlxxviii}

Meanwhile, Soviet headquarters charged with protecting the western border, were growing increasingly agitated due to the ominous and burgeoning level of activity now unfolding along the German side of the frontier. The chief of staff of the Baltic Special Military District reported that: “The Germans have finished the construction of the bridges across the [Neman]. . . The civilians have been advised to evacuate to a depth of 20 kilometers from the frontier.” Another report, from the C-in-C of Soviet 3 Army, Lt.-Gen. V.I. Kuznetsov, indicated that the Germans had cleared barbed wire barriers at one of the border crossings, and that the roar of many engines was heard from the woods in that region. These reports, and many others like them, were dutifully passed on to Stalin that evening, before he returned to his dacha.^{cdlxxix}

Not everyone, however, shared such concerns. General D.G. Pavlov, commander of what, in a few hours, was to become Western Front, was 250 kilometers east of the frontier, attending a play, a patriotic musical at a theater in Minsk. Despite the growing buildup of German forces along the border and the continued violations of Soviet airspace by German reconnaissance planes, Stalin had ordered his commanders not to worry, and Pavlov considered it his duty to showcase his *sangfroid*. Just before midnight, Pavlov’s chief of intelligence visited his superior’s box, whispering that the Germans were bringing more troops up to the frontier. Intent on avoiding a potential German provocation, Pavlov brusquely dismissed the warning: “Nonsense,” he said, “This simply cannot be.”^{cdlxxx} And yet: While General Pavlov enjoyed the show, German

commanders were reading Hitler's proclamation to their men, "huddled in small groups around them, by the dim illumination of shielded flashlights."^{cdlxxxii}

The commander of Pavlov's 4 Army, Lt.-Gen. A.A. Korobkov, was at a theater in Kobrin, attending a popular operetta, *The Gypsy Baron*. He knew that his superior wanted everyone to stay calm, and Korobkov was nothing if not a dutiful officer: If Pavlov went to the theater, he would do so as well. Still, he was distracted and unable to enjoy the entertainment. In the early evening, Korobkov had telephoned Maj.-Gen. Klimovskikh, Chief of Staff, Western Special Military District, and reported that the Germans had moved closer to the border. He asked for permission to order his troops to occupy their battle lines:

Klimovskikh said that that was impossible. To Korobkov's immense relief, he was able to leave the theater early. At about 11.00 o'clock, Klimovskikh called and told him to go to headquarters immediately and remain alert throughout the night. Unlike their carefree and trusting boss [i.e., Pavlov], Klimovskikh had a sharp mind. Having smelled a rat, he was now taking his own quiet precautions.

Still forbidden to communicate anything to his troops, Korobkov sent for his staff officers. In the headquarters, the officers wandered from one room to another, discussing the situation in whispers and trying to determine whether the sudden summons meant war. All divisions stationed at the frontier as well as the border guards kept reporting abnormal activity on the German side of the Bug River.^{cdlxxxiii}

(Barbarossa Unleashed)

1.4.5: 22.6.1941—General Information germane to all three Axes of the German Attack

--**Note:** The border battles of 1941—called the *pogranichnaia srazheniia* (the border battles) by the Russians. (Glantz, ed., *Initial Period of the War*, 78)

--**Note:** Im Morgengrauen des **22 Jun 41** trat die deutsche Front *zwischen den Karpaten u. der Ostsee* zum Angriff an. (Philippi & Heim, *Feldzug gegen Sowjetrußland*, 54)

--**Note:** Along almost the entire length of the vast front the German Army achieve tactical surprise. . . Soviet troops were caught in their camps and barracks. With its acft trapped on the ground, the Soviet Air Force suffered grievous initial loss as the *Luftwaffe* worked its destruction. The field fortifications, either *incomplete or unmanned*, were quickly passed by German troops. . . German bombers struck at Soviet towns, communications centers, rear installations and naval bases *before the Soviet radio made any announcement of war or military operations*. (J. Erickson, *The Soviet High Command*, 587)

--**Note:** On the Western and Northwestern Fronts (formed out of the Western and Baltic Special Military Districts) a *catastrophic situation developed w/ terrible rapidity*. Having caught Soviet acft on their aerodromes, the *Luftwaffe* flayed the Russian units attempting to assemble for resistance. Since the main strength of many formations in both districts had been held back at some distances, the disorganized forces made nightmare approach marches under this aerial lash. (J. Erickson, *The Soviet High Command*, 593)

--**Note:** The [German] attack . . . gained ground rapidly, even though the Soviet troops offered often stubborn resistance in the frontier area itself, e.g. at Liepaja, Brest, and Przemysl. There was, however, *no question of a systematic defense* by the Soviet divisions against the German attack. This seems all the more astonishing as the Soviet leadership, in a multitude of reports arriving in Moscow through diplomatic channels, espionage, reconnaissance, or in other ways, had been very well informed that *aggression was imminent*. The argument that the *Soviet Union had been taken by surprise by the German attack is totally devoid of foundation*. Taken by surprise—according to the judgement of the future Soviet minister of defense, Marshal of the Soviet Union Grechko—were the frontier troops alone, but not the government or the senior commands of the army. Besides, the element of surprise cannot explain the *unpreparedness of the defenses*, since the *Soviet theory of war* maintained the *principal that modern wars began w/o a declaration of war, w/ a surprise attack*.¹³² (J. Hoffmann, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: 833)

--**Note:** In addition to the advantage of surprise the Germans had secured a *devastating superiority of numbers and firepower at the points selected for their armored penetrations*. Halder's plan had put the entire tank strength of the German Army into these opening attacks, dividing it into four *Panzergruppen* whose purpose was to perforate the Russian defensive membrane at the first blow, then to wheel inward, isolate, and cut to pieces the mass of the Soviet army as it stood on the frontier. . .

In the north three Panzer divisions (over **600** tanks) and two infantry divisions had an attack frontage of less than **25 miles**. Opposite them stood one weak Russian unit, the **125 RD**. In the center, where Bock's army group carried the *Schwerpunkt* of the opening days, the two Panzer groups, under Hoth and Guderian, comprised seven divisions w/ nearly **1500** tanks between them.¹³³ They were opposed by one complete rifle division (**128 RD**), regiments from four others, and a tank division (**22 TD**) which was understrength and in process of reorganization. On the southern front two Soviet rifle divisions faced six infantry divisions w/ about **600** tanks distributed among them in close support. Small wonder, then, that the comment of a German *Leutnant* of **29 ID (mot.)** was, "*the Russian defenses might have been a row of glass houses,*" and by the afternoon of **22 Jun 41** the leading elements of all four German armored groups were motoring fast along dry, undamaged roads, w/ the sound of gunfire fading in their rear. (A. Clark, *Barbarossa. The Russian-German Conflict 1941-45*, 47-48)¹³⁴

--**Note:** In the border regions, German infantry and mechanized units would rapidly become entangled in forest fighting, for which they were, oddly enough, poorly trained. (See my account of this in *Barbarossa Unleashed*.) As noted by an anonymous "*Kriegsteilnehmer*" in a journal article:

- Seine *Beduerfnislosigkeit*, sein natuerliches Orientierungsvermoegen, die Kunst zu improvisieren, seine handwerkliche Geschicklichkeit u. sein fast instinkthafter Scharfsinn machen den russ. Soldaten zu einem besonders guten Waldkaempfer. Dazu paarte sich noch eine erstaunliche *Anpassungsfahigkeit*, die

¹³² **Note:** This is interesting—then why was Stalin so sure that any German attack would be preceded by an ultimatum?

¹³³ **Note:** Actually, GFM v. Bock's two panzer groups had about **1800** tanks between them.

¹³⁴ **Note:** This account is the *conventional view* which existed for many years—that Germans simply sliced thru Soviet defenses like a knife thru butter in opening weeks of campaign and, in the end, were brought to a halt mostly by mud and snow (not by the Red Army). We now know that, from first day of campaign, it was a much harder, much more costly, "slog" than initially realized.

ihn zu einem *Meister der Tarnung* im Grossen wie im Kleinen werden liess. (724)

- Der Kampf im Walde stellt an die Truppe hinsichtlich Koennen, Moral u. Ausruestung besonders *hoehere Anforderungen*. Nur eine *speziell geschulte Truppe* kann Aussicht auf Erfolg haben. (724)

- Der Angriff im Walde gehoert zu den *schwierigsten Gefechtsarten*, besonders dann, wenn das Waldgelaende viel Unterholz aufweist. Die schlechten Beobachtungsverhaeltnisse, die oft problematische Unterstuetzung der Infanterie durch die *Luftwaffe* u. *Artillerie* u. das schwierige Verbindungswesen innerhalb der Angriffsgruppe vergrossern die Schwierigkeiten erheblich. (726)

- Gegen einen sich planmaesig u. geschickt verteidigenden Gegner verspricht nur ein genau vorbereiteter Angriff nach Bereitstellung der Infanterie u. Feuer-vorbereitung durch die *Luftwaffe*, *Artillerie* u. *schwere Waffen* durchschlagenden Erfolg. Eingehende, fruehzeitig angesetzte *Aufklaerung* u. *Gelaendeerkundung* auf der Erde u. aus der Luft, genaues Einschiessen der Unterstuetzungswaffen u. ihre genuegende Munitionsversorgung, engste Verbindung zwischen Artillerie / Infanterie u. ein einwandfreies Zusammenspiel zwischen *Luftwaffe* / Erdtruppe sind die wichtigsten Angriffsvorbereitungen. (726)

(“*Der Waldkampf (Auf Grund von deutschen u. russischen Erfahrungen im zweiten Weltkriege)*,” 724-26)¹³⁵

--**Note:** So insistent had Stalin been that ***Germany would not attack in the summer [of 1941]*** that even the most rudimentary precautions were lacking. Aircraft were lined up in inviting rows at the main air bases, uncamouflaged. At least **1200** of them were destroyed at **66 bases** within hours of the war's beginning, most of them on the ground. Many units in forward positions had ***no live ammunition to issue***. . . The army itself was in the *midst of a complex redeployment*. A fraction of the army was stationed in the forward echelon, another fraction was behind it, far to the rear, and reserves, larger than either of the echelons in front of them, were still further back. . . Many units were in the process of *moving to new quarters* when the attack came. *Most were under strength*. . . In the first four weeks of *Barbarossa*, **319** Soviet units were committed to battle; almost all of them were destroyed or badly damaged. . . Soviet units at the front fought in *hopeless isolation*, their organization and communication systems in tatters. . . (R. Overy, *Russia's War*, 76-77)

--**Note:** By the afternoon of **22 Jun 41**, the Germans were entering Soviet territory by the hundreds of thousands all along the immense border . . . Tanks, automobiles, and motorcycles *exhaled blue tongues of smoke*, fill the air w/ a pungent smell, and planes passed overhead w/ a swift hissing roar. . . That afternoon nobody in the Soviet Union, Stalin included, *fully appreciated what was happening on the western frontier*. . . Moscow tried but failed. It received only random pieces of the strategic puzzle, and Stalin still thought a counteroffensive was possible. . . [But] the Red Army had been *completely overwhelmed*. (C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 119-20)

¹³⁵ **Note:** For more notes on forest fighting see my Notebook #4, Section 1.2.3. Germans suffered serious losses in such fighting at start of campaign.

--**Note:** Time and again, former German officers recalling the start of the Russian campaign indicate that they *knew very little about their Russian enemy*—his strength, dispositions, even his weaponry. In this context:

In the modern era of real-time satellite imagery, AWACS acft, the J-STARS command and control system, stealth acft, laser-guided wpns, and many other high-tech innovations featured in the Gulf War in 1991, it is *easy to forget how blind armies were fifty years ago*. Although aerial photoreconnaissance was a sophisticated art in 1941 compared to technology available in earlier wars, today it would be regarded as woefully inadequate for reconnaissance and battlefield command and control. Contact w/ the enemy *on the ground* was the only sure method for knowing exactly where he was and at what strength.

Time and again German war diaries express amazement about *how much better armed and disciplined the Russian troops were the farther east the battlefronts progressed . . .*

(Fugate & Dvorestky, *Thunder on the Dnepr*, 135)

--**Note:** General Erhard Raus / German Army on Eve of Invasion:

Insufficiently prepared for the campaign in the east . . . the army nonetheless had to bear the brunt of the fighting. The heartbeat of the army was at the front, where *deficiencies and shortages of any kind were immediately felt*.

From the very first days of the campaign, the vastness of European Russia and the peculiarities of Russian warfare led to the *repeated isolation of individual units and combat teams*. All-around defense and security measures were the only possible remedy, but far from being stressed, these defensive tactics were *frequently not even mentioned in the field service regulations*. The field forces had to improvise them. With regard to our artillery, wire and radio communications *could be lost between gun positions and their observation posts for extended periods*, a complication not previously encountered. As substitutes, field expedients had to be used to maintain communications, including signals transmitted by discs, inscriptions on blackboards read w/ the help of field glasses, mounted messengers, runner, and relayed msgs. Much time had to be devoted to training in Morse code transmission by signal lamps.

The clothing issued to our soldiers proved too heavy for summer wear. As a result, the men perspired too easily, became very thirsty, and were soon caked w/ dirt. . . For protection against the dust, masks for the mouth and nose and goggles should have been issued; individual equipment should have included mosquito head nets. Hard-packed dirt roads cut like glass into shoe leather, and boot soles quickly went to pieces; spare boots should have been available to every soldier.

The German army was *not modern enough to overcome these difficulties easily*; our supply and transportation systems in Russia were especially dependent on improvisation because of the peculiarities of terrain and climate [and lack of good roads and rail infrastructure, too!]. From the *outset of the campaign*, supply col-

umns had to be improvised from motor vehicles of every type that had been requisitioned from private owners. . .

(E. Raus, *Panzer Operations*, 8)

--21./22.6.41: German troops began to move to their battle stations, closing inexorably on the Soviet frontiers: under cover of the night German armor advanced to its start-lines, *all shortly after midnight*. At **01.00** hours on **22.6.41** the separate Army commands in the east transmitted their call-signs indicating full and final readiness – “*Kyffhäuser*” from Fourth Army, “*Wotan*” from Rundstedt’s command. Guderian was on his way to his CP, which he reached at **2.10** hours. The assault troops made their way steadily forward, investing the *thick, green banks of the Bug*. The officers had read or were reading to their men the *Fuehrer’s personal order*, “*To the Soldiers of the Ostfront*.” . . . Already obeying their own laws were the specialists of **Regiment 800**, the “*Brandenburgers*,” many of them Russian-speaking, infiltrated – or dropped by parachute – behind Soviet lines; once there, they proceeded to blow up or incapacitate power and signal facilities, activate German agents, secure bridges vital for German movement from demolition, and spread, by false messages and fake orders, alarm and confusion. Dressed in *Red Army uniforms*, the **800** men were making for Brest fortress or for the bridges over the Bug; a number of men, *smuggled in on Saturday in goods trains or hidden under loads of gravel in rail trucks*, had been in the town of Brest for many hours. At **02.20** hours the Soviet **4 Army** command, having finished the *interrogation of yet one more German deserter* who had crossed Soviet lines west of Volchin, began to circulate this latest confirmation of a German attack due in less than two hours. *The news never got out. The telephone lines had already been cut.* (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 109)

--22.6.41: Aus dem *Wehrmachtsbericht*: “*An der sowjetrussischen Grenze ist es seit den fruehen Morgenstunden des heutigen Tages zu Kampfhandlungen gekommen.*“

--22.6.41: The *Luftwaffe* had flown high into Soviet territory earlier that night. At dawn they swept westward to bomb a string of strategic cities, including Bialystok – Kiev – Brest – Grodno – Rovno – Kovno, as well as the Baltic ports of Tallin and Riga. . . Grodno was under such heavy air attack that the cdr of Soviet **3 Army**, V.I. Kuznetsov, had *barricaded himself in a basement well before first light*. (C. Merridale, *Ivan’s War*, 85-86)

--22.6.41 (Thilo Diary):¹³⁶ 22 June **0300** hours – [*Wehrmacht*] attack against Russia started, border fortifications and rivers not defended (except Bessarabia, Prut, Eleventh Army sector). On the whole *surprise fully successful*. Eleventh Army has to defend, but seizes bridgeheads across the Prut River against fierce enemy opposition. Russian parachute troops dropped over Constanta. (K.W. Thilo, et al., “*German Operations on the Lutsk-Rovno Axis*,” in: D.M. Glantz, *Initial Period of the War*, 296)

--22.6.41: When the big guns opened fire in the early dawn hours of **22 Jun 41** and the first German units crossed into Soviet territory [it soon became apparent that] Russian resistance along the border in most cases [was] *surprisingly light* [and] Soviet artillery activity was *scarcely visible*. . . (Fugate & Dvorestky, *Thunder on the Dnepr*, 135-36)

--22.6.41: Across the entire front, the first Soviet troops to face the German attack, in most cases, were the border guards, part of the NKVD. They were responsible for the *area up to 22 km*

¹³⁶ **Note:** Major Karl Wilhelm Thilo served in Group 1 of Heusinger’s Operations Section, heading the sub-group “South,” responsible for matters pertaining to AGS.

inside the frontier. They wore uniforms similar to the Red Army, but were distinguished by **green collar tabs and green bands around their caps** . . . The forward Red Army divisions were behind them, between **25-80** km east of the frontier. (C. Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 184)

--**22.6.41 (Brandenburgers)**: The first Germans across the border were the special forces of **Regiment 800**, known as the "**Brandenburgers**." Many of these were Russian speakers, clad in Red Army or (more likely) security force uniforms, who were parachuted into Soviet territory or smuggled in on board goods trains in previous days. Their mission was to blow up power facilities, cut communications, activate German "sleeper" agents, ensure that bridges could not be demolished and spread false orders and disinformation. . . With less than two hours to go until the main German attack began, the telephone lines had already been cut in an area stretching **50 km** inside the border.¹³⁷ Soviet communications security was appalling . . .

The fact that German special forces managed to crack the Soviet communications across the **1800** km front from the Baltic to the Black Sea and to **paralyze communications between the 20-km-wide zone held by the NKVD border guards and forward and rear Red Army formations, heading back to Army Hq. 80 km or so in the rear, was a stupendous achievement for them. It was also a disgrace for the Red Army, the NKVD and the Soviet government.** The Soviet military, like Stalin, **did not trust radio** because it was vulnerable to interception. Their procedures were cumbersome and if war was expected (which it was not, officially), **new frequencies and call signs would have to be allocated**. In practice it would take a week to notify units—down to battalion level—of the frequencies and call signs. So, on the morning of **22 Jun 41**, as the wartime alert went out, the **radios were inoperable**. The Red Army and NKVD placed much more reliance on landline, w/ perhaps, good reason. However, only the last **8 km** or so of line, close to Army and Front Hq., was dug in. The rest, stretching over hundreds of kilometers, was **hanging from telegraph poles along roads and railways** in a country where private telephones were pretty rare. The German special forces only had to take out **30** meters or so of dangling cable between two telegraph poles, and an Army or Front was cut off. (C. Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 183-84)

--**22.6.41**: All along the border, Soviet positions and installations were rocked by the roar of **6000** guns—all German. Barracks, supply depots, communication centers, outposts, forward Hq., and military and civilian targets of every description went up in flames. On the western bank of the Bug River, engineers began putting down pontoon bridges, while infantrymen and motorcycle troops moved quickly across the river in rubber dinghies and assault boats. (S.W. Mitcham, Jr., *Men of Barbarossa*, 61)

--**22.6.41**: The Red Army's best formations were deployed *too close to the frontier to maneuver*. Entire army groups possessed *not a single map*.¹³⁸ Schooled in offensive tactics, they often conducted rigid counterattacks, or defended untenable positions, and were surrounded by the more experienced Germans. Everywhere the invader achieved breakthroughs. (R. Tedor, "*Hitler's Generals Ruin the Russian Campaign Strategy*," 66)

--**22.6.41**: The invasion caught the Soviets by surprise. Despite all alarums and warnings, they were not ready. Unexpectedly, bombs showered down on Kiev – Sebastopol – Kaunas – Zhitomir, and other important cities of the rear. Shells rained on Brest-Litovsk, Belostok and other towns on the frontier. Border posts were rapidly overwhelmed. So complete was the sur-prise that junior

¹³⁷ **Note:** Not sure if Bellamy means in general, or only in area of Soviet **4 Army**.

¹³⁸ **Note:** Author gleans this little gem from Viktor Suvorov's *Stalins verhinderter Erstschlag*, 205. Yet it is true, I think, that most of their maps would have been of German occupied territory beyond the demarcation line, given Soviet offensive doctrine.

pilots rushed about their airports, seeking superior officers for orders to take off, while they themselves were being bombed. And many of the highest officers of the army and navy and officials of state were *away from their posts on vacation*. . . On the frontier there was pandemonium . . . Behind the frontier, loudspeakers blared orders [see text] . . . That night, as they had in all other cities of Europe, the **lights of Russia were blacked out. And so, all unwilling, Russia became Armageddon.** (H.C. Cassidy, *Moscow Dateline*, 39-40)¹³⁹

--22.6.41: Operation Barbarossa took the Soviet defenders in the frontier zone completely by surprise. Only in General Mikhail Petrovick Kirponos's Kiev Military District was there a degree of readiness. Many of the trucks and tractors used to tow Soviet guns were *away at construction sites or in the fields*. The Red Air Force had just completed a series of night training exercises, and its *pilots were in bed and their machines short of fuel*. Many men were on leave, and several important border fortress units were *away from their positions, on field training exercises to the east*. Those who were on the border were taken *completely by surprise*. (S.W. Mitcham, Jr., *Men of Barbarossa*, 61)

--22.6.41: Sunday morning, 22 June 1941, followed the first day of summer and the shortest night of the year, known as "white nights" in northern Russia, because the sun never really sets.^{cdlxxxiii} As the first slivers of light emerged tentatively above the horizon far to the east, the first wave of more than three million German soldiers swarmed across the frontier from the Baltic Sea in the north to the Prut River in the south. As virtually all contemporary accounts confirm, complete tactical surprise was achieved along the entire front of more than 1200 kilometers, enabling the German assault teams to capture all bridges intact – most importantly, those over the Bug River in the sector of Army Group Center.^{cdlxxxiv} Within a few short hours, the attackers had shattered the Soviet border defenses and, rapidly exploiting the nearly universal confusion in their enemy's ranks, begun to drive eastward. (*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Chapter 6)

--22.6.41: German troops were due to cross the frontier at first light . . . and just before that time artillery began to shell NKVD and Red Army barracks and HQs. Heavy air raids took place on airfields, marshalling yards and ports as far afield at Kronstadt near Leningrad, Ismail in Bessarabia and Sevastopol in the Crimea. Between 3.00 and 3.30 a.m. the frontier was crossed at numerous places from the Baltic to Hungary, sometimes in the face of a spirited defense by the NKVD border guards who turned out to man the strong points. ***Swarms of saboteurs and diversionists, many of them Lithuanian and Ukrainians, crossed the border w/ the German troops***, having been given the tasks of destroying telephone lines and signal centers and laying ambushes on roads and tracks. (Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 98)

--22.6.41: At **03.15** hours, the German guns on the front facing the Bug opened fire . . . German assault troops, *rubber dinghies* for the crossings, *submersible tanks*, *bridging equipment*, and the *first clashes w/ Soviet frontier guards* who fought it out w/ their rifles and MGs. To the north [i.e., AGN], there was *appreciably less artillery preparation*; w/ the mist and half-light to aid the attackers, German infantry and armor slid out of their concealment and moved on the Soviet defenses. Southwards [i.e., AGS], w/ the day beginning, Rundstedt's armies used their guns on the Soviet defenses, and then raced for their *river crossing on the lower Bug and San*. (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 116)

--22.6.41: At first light on **22 Jun 41** German troops stormed into the Soviet Union. Operation *Barbarossa* had begun. The invasion achieved a *total strategic surprise*. The German offensive was well across the border before Moscow issued the first order to counterattack. By then, several

¹³⁹ **Note:** Cassidy was a war correspondent. His book was first published in **1943**.

hours after sunrise, the Germans had *taken every bridge on all the border rivers from the Baltic to the eastern tip of the Carpathians*. Soviet troops were being *captured in their barracks*. At daylight, the *Luftwaffe* had struck the airfields in western Russia destroying the Soviet planes *on the ground*, and German bombers had attacked the cities on a line from Murmansk to Odessa and Sevastopol. By afternoon, the Germans had *broken Soviet frontier defenses*, and panzer columns were gathering speed as they knifed into stunned and disorganized Soviet forces. (Ziemke & Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 3)

--**22.6.41:** Als die deutsche Artillerie am Sonntag, den 22. Juni, zwischen 3.05 Uhr u. 3.30 Uhr mit einem Feuerschlag zwischen der Ostsee u. den Karpaten den Angriff eroeffnete, wurde das *Tor ins Ungewisse aufgestossen*. Die Bomber, Stukas u. Schlachtflieger der *Luftwaffe* hatten bereits vor Morgengrauen – noch vor Eroeffnung des Artl.-Feuers – die dt.-sowj. Grenze ueberflogen u. Kurz auf ausgesuchte Flugplaetze der sowj. Luftstreitkraefte genommen, von denen viele frontnah lagen. . . Die Ueberraschung gelingt. Beim ersten Tageslicht stuerzen sich die Stuka- u. Schlachtfliegergruppen auf die frontnahen Flugplaetze, waehrend die Bombergruppen Ziele in der Tiefe angreifen. Sie richten *enorme Verwuestungen* an. Kaum vom ersten Einsatz zurueckgekehrt, werden sie neu bestueckt u. starten erneut. In rollenden Angriffen werden die Bomber-staffeln bis zu sechsmal, die Stukas bis zu achtmal eingesetzt. Auch die Jagdflieger beteiligen sich mit Bordwaffen an den Angriffen auf sowj. Flugplaetze, die vielfach ueber keinen oder nur wenig Flak-Schutz verfuegen. Angriffsziele sind nicht nur **31** Flugplaetze, sondern auch Staedte, Hafenanlagen u. sonstige mil. Einrichtungen, wie Quartiere, Bunker u. Artl.-Stellungen. . . . Die enoren Verluste dieses Tages kann man auch damit erklaren, dass viele sowj. Offiziere u. Soldaten in der Nacht auf Sonntag *Urlaub hatten* u. in die naechstgelegene Stadt gefahren waren. (Magenheimer, *Moskau 1941*, 36-37)

--Auch auf dem Boden glueckte die *taktische Ueberaschung* an vielen Stellen, wenn sich auch manche sowj. Verbaende *taffer zur Wehr setzten*. . . Die Deutschen wussten ihren Vorteil zu nutzen u. errangen am ersten Kampftag grosse Erfolge. Die Bruecken an den Grenzfluessen fielen schnell in deutsche Hand, u. die Angriffsspitzen gewannen kaempfend bis zu **20 km** Raum. (Magenheimer, *Moskau 1941*, 37-38)

--**22.6.41:** German troops boring into the Soviet positions and overwhelming the frontier guards, were meanwhile *opening passages for the motorized and armored formations poised to pour in*. (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 120)

--**22.6.41:** By **6 a.m.** nothing less than a gigantic battle stretching from East Prussia to the Ukraine had been joined. In little more than two hours, the situation, particularly in the centre, *had developed dangerously*. . . And yet, w/ fuel and ammunition dumps blown to pieces, towns and bases bombed, raked airfields littered w/ burning planes, tank and vehicle parks in flames, and w/ German troops advancing by columns upon and across the frontiers, the *Soviet Union was still not at war and the Red Army lacked any precise orders to deal w/ the attacks*. (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 124)¹⁴⁰

--*Barbarossa* begins:

At precisely 0315 hours, as the last minutes of the *shortest night of the year ticked away*, a storm of shellfire from thousands of German artillery pieces shattered the calm along a **1800 km (1080-mile)** front. . . Thirty *Luftwaffe*

¹⁴⁰ **Note:** Here, Erickson addresses Stalin's *Directive No. 2*, which goes out at **07.15** hours. Signed by Zhukov as Chief of the General Staff, the directive *stipulated "active offensive operations . . ."* (For more details see, p 124.)

bombers manned by handpicked crews and flying in groups of threes delivered terror and destruction to Soviet airfields and cities. Minutes later, from Memel on the Baltic Sea southward to the Prut River, the first wave of 3½ million German soldiers deployed along the border lunged forward . . . *Barbarossa* had begun. Achieving *total tactical surprise*, the invaders utterly shattered Soviet border defenses within hours. . .

As soon as the sun rose, the *Luftwaffe* followed up its initial attack w/ a force of **500** bombers, **270** dive-bombers and **480** fighters that struck **66** Soviet airfields in the forward areas. . .

In most regions the initial *Wehrmacht* ground advance encountered weak and patchy resistance. German assault troops overran many border posts before the NKVD border guards could assemble, although in some regions troops assigned to local fortified regions *fought to the last man*, delaying the German advance for a few hours while Red Army divisions struggled frantically to man their assigned forward defensive positions. . .

Understanding that effective organization and crisp command and control differentiate armies from mobs, the Germans did all in their power to disrupt both in the Red Army. Even before the initial air strikes, *Brandenburger special operations troops in Red Army uniforms* parachuted or infiltrated into the Soviet rear areas, cutting telephone lines, seizing key bridges and spreading alarm and confusion. Within only hours, these measures and the paralyzing effect of the German air and ground onslaught *utterly destroyed the Red Army's organizational cohesion and command and control*. Worse still, it was soon apparent that this destruction extended through every level of Red Army command from infantry platoon to the High Command in Moscow.

(Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 35)

--**16** hours after the opening of Operation *Barbarossa*, the German Army in the east had *virtually unhinged two Soviet fronts*, the Northwestern and the Western. At their junction, the Soviet **11 Army** had been battered to pieces; the left flank of **8 Army**¹⁴¹ (Northwestern Front) and the right flank of **3 Army** (Western Front) had been similarly laid bare . . . North of Kaunas, German armor was over the river Dubissa and south of the city German tanks were astride the Neman. On the left flank of the Western Front the Soviet **4 Army** was in no position to offer any effective defense; this precarious grip on its life threatened in turn the flank of **10 Army** at the very center of the Western Front and thence the right flank of the **5 Army** on the Southwestern Front, itself already menaced by a German thrust between **5** and **6 Armies**. The covering armies in the Soviet frontier areas were being *skewered apart*. (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 131)

--**22.6.41**: Besides the sheer force and speedy advance of the vastly superior German forces, the greatest difficulty the Soviet defenders experienced was *lack of virtually any information about the current situation at the front*. The *reality was far worse than anyone in Moscow believed*, resulting in a series of impossible orders to counterattack w/ formations and units that had *ceased to exist*. For example, at **2115** hours on evening of 22 June, Stalin and Timoshenko issued *NKO Directive No. 3*, which ordered its three *fronts* in the border region to *conduct a general counter-offensive against the Germans*. During the next several days, they stubbornly insisted the forward

¹⁴¹ **Note:** I believe Erickson means **11 Army**?

fronts implement this directive. In many cases subordinate commanders passed on these orders even though they knew the real situation, simply because those subordinates *feared retribution for refusing to obey*. After several days, however, the *enormity of the initial defeat became obvious to all*. (Glantz, *Barbarossa Derailed*, 31)

1.4.5.1: Special Order of Battle (OOB) & Command Arrangements for Armies / PzGr on 22 June 1941

--To assist the panzer groups in breaking through the border defenses on 22 June 1941 and gaining operational freedom in the enemy's depths, a number of infantry divisions (the number varied with each panzer group) were placed *directly* under their control. For example, six infantry divisions from Sixth Army were assigned to directly to Kleist's **1 PzGr** to punch holes in the Russian's frontier defenses for Kleist's tanks; six infantry divisions (including one in reserve) from Fourth Army were assigned directly to Guderian's **2 PzGr**. As Guderian notes in his memoirs, the infantry divisions were needed to "assist in the initial river crossings" and to provide "a considerable amount of artillery support" for his panzer group; moreover, placing the infantry units directly under his control ensured *unity of command*.¹⁴²

--At the same time, three of the four panzer groups were subordinated to infantry AOKs for the initial attack: **1 PzGr** to Reichenau's Sixth Army, **2 PzGr** to Kluge's Fourth Army, **3 PzGr** to Strauss's Ninth Army. While this topic requires more research, I believe the main rationale for placing the three panzer groups under control of army generals was keep them on a "leash" of sorts—that is, to ensure that impetuous tank generals like Guderian didn't race on too dangerously far ahead of the supporting infantry armies. The only panzer group not subordinated to an infantry army was Hoepner's **4 PzGr**. My guess is that is was because the mission of Hoepner's group was to race forward at breakneck speed—and w/o regard to their flanks—to seize the vital bridges over the Dvina River, several hundred kilometers beyond the Russo-German frontier; hence, there was no operational rationale for placing this panzer group under the potentially stultifying control of an AOK.

--One will recall the palpable anxiety of Hitler and his General Staff from their perspective at the *Gruene Tisch* as Kleist's and Guderian's panzer had raced on far ahead of the supporting infantry during the invasion of France in May 1940. Thus, I'm quite sure that Hitler (and perhaps Jodl, Brauchitsch, Halder and others as well?) did not entirely trust his tank generals and wanted to make sure that he was spared the serious anxiety their race to the English Channel had caused him in 1940!

--Yet as soon as the panzer groups had pushed beyond the frontier and, in the view of the General Staff, gained their operational freedom in the depths of the battle zone, the subordination to the infantry armies was lifted and the infantry divisions returned to the armies.¹⁴³ The *Schematische*

¹⁴² **Note:** H. Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, 147.

¹⁴³ **Note:** "Within **48** hours [of start of Operation *Barbarossa*] GFM v. Bock, in acknowledgement of Hoth having achieved *operational freedom*, released his group from Ninth Army control and subordinated it directly to Army Group Center. . . On **28.6.41**, at **0000** hours, Guderian's subordination under Kluge's Fourth Army was finally lifted and **2 PzGr** placed under the direct command of Army Group Center—this in recognition of the fact that Guderian and his armor had achieved *complete operational freedom*. The panzer general was no doubt relieved to no longer be under Kluge's nominal command—at least for the time being. Relations between the two men had long been strained, and continued to deteriorate after the start of *Barbarossa* . . ." *Barbarossa Unleashed*, 271, 275, 330 f.n. 65.

*Kriegsgliederung vom 27.6.1941 abends*¹⁴⁴ shows that **1, 2 & 3 PzGr** no longer controlled any normal (marching) infantry divisions (**4 PzGr** still controlled the two normal infantry divisions assigned to it on 22.6.1941).

--That said, due to the enduring distrust of Hitler and his General Staff, in early July 1941 GFM v. Kluge was placed in direct command of **2 and 3 PzGr**—a situation which, as matters turned out, did not work out well for anyone!)

* * * *

¹⁴⁴ **Note:** See, *KTB OKW*, Bd. I: 1 Aug. 40 – 31. Dez. 41, 1135-37.

1.5: Army Group South

1.5.1: Opposing Forces & Battle Plans

(**Note:** HQ of Army Group South was at Rzeszów. (Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 181; map in *DRZW*)

(**Note:** For German intelligence picture of Soviet Southwestern Front see, Glantz, *Initial Period of War*, 248 ff.)

--**H.Gr.Süd (Army Group South):** Army Group South was formed on **1 Sep 39** for the Polish campaign, under the command of General (later GFM) Gerd von Rundstedt. In **Oct 39** AGS also became Theater Command East (*Oberbefehlshaber Ost*). On **20 Oct 39** the Army Group was re-designated Army Group A. It was renamed Army Group South on **1 Apr 41** and moved into Rumania. (T-311, Roll 260, *KTB H.Gr.Sued*)

GFM Gerd v. Rundstedt:

Im November 1938 wurde Rundstedt aus der Wehrmacht verabschiedet, weil er gegen den Zeitpunkt des deutschen Einmarsches protestiert. Nach seiner Auffassung ist die Wehrmacht noch nicht kriegsbereit. Im Sommer 1939 wurde er wieder reaktiviert und zum Oberbefehlshaber der **12. Armee** ernannt. Durch deren Umbenennung Anfang September 1939 wurde er dann zum Oberbefehlshaber der **Heeresgruppe Süd** ernannt. Diese führte er dann im Polenfeldzug. Für die Erfolge seiner Heeresgruppe wurde er am 30. September 1939 mit dem Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes ausgezeichnet. Anfang Oktober 1939 wurde er durch seine Position gleichzeitig zum Oberbefehlshaber Ost ernannt. Am 26. Oktober 1939 wurde er durch die Umbenennung seines Stabes zum Oberbefehlshaber der **Heeresgruppe A** ernannt. Mit dieser verlegte er jetzt an die Westfront. Diese Heeresgruppe führte er dann von Mai bis Juni 1940 während des Frankreichfeldzuges. Er führte dabei den Vorstoß der Panzerkräfte durch die Ardennen bis zur Kanalküste und umklammerte dort alliierte Streitkräfte. Am 19. Juli 1940 wurde er zum Generalfeldmarschall befördert. Am 1. Oktober 1940 wurde er dann auch zum Oberbefehlshaber West umbenannt. Erst Ende des Frühjahrs verlegte er dann mit seinem Stab in den Osten. Dort wurde der Stab für den Angriff auf die Sowjetunion zur **Heeresgruppe Süd** umbenannt. Ab dem 22. Juni 1941 führte von Rundstedt zu Beginn des Ostfeldzuges beim Angriff in die Ukraine hinein. Im Oktober 1941 war Rundstedt mit dem sogenannten Reichenau-Befehl, in dem Walter von Reichenau seine Soldaten zur Unterstützung von Hitlers "Weltanschauungskrieg" und zur "Vernichtung des jüdischen Untermenschentums" aufruft, voll einverstanden. Am 3. Dezember 1941 zog Rundstedt gegen Hitlers Befehl die Heeresgruppe aus taktischen Gründen aus Rostow zurück. Daraufhin wurde er von Hitler abberufen und durch **Generalfeldmarschall Reichenau** ersetzt. Im März 1942 wurde er reaktiviert und als Oberbefehlshaber West und Oberbefehlshaber der **Heeresgruppe D** eingesetzt. Im August 1942 misslang ein alliiertes Landeunternehmen bei Dieppe. Entgegen geltendem Kriegsrecht ließ von Rundstedt die in Kriegsgefangenschaft geratenen britischen Soldaten an die Gestapo ausliefern. Nachdem es nicht gelungen war, die alliierten Truppen im Juni 1944 von der Landung in der Normandie abzuhalten, musste von Rundstedt den Posten des Oberbefehlshabers West an **Generalfeldmarschall von Kluge** abtreten. Am 21. Juli 1944 verließ von Rundstedt die Westfront. Er wurde Vorsitzender des "Ehrengerichts" (Ehrenhof des Deutschen Reiches), welches die in das Attentat vom 20. Juli 1944 verwickelten Offiziere aus der Wehrmacht ausstieß und diese damit der Verurteilung durch den Volksgerichtshof auslieferte. Dabei waren neben ihm **Generaloberst Guderian**, die Generale **Walter Schroth** und **Karl-Wilhelm Specht** aktive Mitglieder. Vertreter waren die Generale **Karl Kriebel** und **Heinrich Kirchheim**. Am 5. September 1944 wurde von Rundstedt wieder OB West.

Über **Generalfeldmarschall Keitel** forderte von Rundstedt Hitler auf, den Krieg zu beenden. Im Winter 1944 gehörte er dem Planungsstab an, welcher die Ardennen-Offensive vorbereitete. Am 18. Februar 1945 wurde er mit den Schwertern ausgezeichnet. Am 3. März 1945 wurde er wegen Differenzen mit dem OKW über die Taktik der Ardennenoffensive und wegen des erfolgten Rheinübertritts amerikanischer Truppen bei Remagen erneut seines Kommandos enthoben. Im Mai 1945 wurde er von amerikanischen Truppen in Bad Tölz verhaftet und in britische Kriegsgefangenschaft übergeben. In Nürnberg fungierte er als Zeuge der Anklage in den OKW-Prozessen. Am 5. Mai 1949 wurde er wegen einer Herzerkrankung aus britischer Haft entlassen. (*Lexikon der Wehrmacht*)¹⁴⁵

--**Note:** Clear from map on inside cover of *DRZW*, Vol. 4, that AGS attacked out of the *General Gouvernement* in Poland.

--**Terrain in Southern Theater:** The *Galacian region* through which the Germans struck was *partially wooded and gently undulating*, making it reasonable for armored warfare but w/ excellent potential for effective defense. However, once the border area was clear and the Germans pressed into the interior, the land became *increasingly suited to armored warfare*. With *mile upon mile of treeless steppe* stretching from Bessarabia in the west to the Donets and beyond to the east, the Germans found this ideal terrain to advance upon. (Taylor, *Barbarossa to Berlin. A Chronology*, 23)

--AGS totaled **797,000** men and **715** tanks north of the Carpathians and another **175,000** in the Eleventh Army in the south, roughly 1/3 of the 3 million men and one fifth of the 3350 tanks committed to *Barbarossa*. (Glantz, *Barbarossa 1941*, 217, f.n. 30; also, *Schematische Kriegsgliederung*; also, Luttichau, Chapter VIII, 4.)

--AGS disposed of **38** divisions,¹⁴⁶ including **9** panzer and motorized divisions, against **80** known enemy divisions. The deployment of the enemy units, esp. the *strong massing of troops* near L'vov, indicated a *defense planned close to the frontier*. Because of the *open right flank* of Seventeenth Army (the frontier w/ Hungary) and the fact that Eleventh Army was not ready to attack, success depended on the mobile forces of **1 PzGr** in the northern deployment area breaking through Soviet defenses at a strategically important point and then *operating independently in the enemy's rear area*. **This basic idea dominated the conduct of operations.** (*GSSW*, Vol. IV: 548)

--Between southern Poland and the Black sea lay AGS. It was divided into a northern wing, concentrated between the Pripyat Marshes and the Carpathians, and a southern wing in Romania. In the north lay the strike force: **6 Army**, **1 PzGr**, **17 Army**. To the south lay **11 Army**, as well as **3** and **4 Romanian Armies**, under Generals Petre Dumitrescu and Nicolae Ciuperca, respectively. The northern wing was ordered to destroy Kirponos' very strong forces in Galicia and western Ukraine, secure the Dnepr crossings, and capture Kiev. The southern wing had task of protecting the Ploesti oilfields and, for that reason, **11 Army** divisions were interlaced w/ the less dependable Romanian divisions as "*corset stays*." In all, Rundstedt had **41** German divisions, of which **5** were panzer and **3** motorized. He also controlled **14** Romanian divisions (about **150,000** men). AGS was supported by Loehr's **4 Air Fleet**, which contained **930** acft. (S.W. Mitcham, Jr., *Men of Barbarossa*, 49)

¹⁴⁵ **Note:** See, "Lexikon" for details of his early military career.

¹⁴⁶ **Note:** AGS also had **3** security divisions under the "*Befehlshaber ruckw. Hr.Gebiet 103*," the **99 lei Div.** as Hr.Gr. reserve, and an OKH reserve of **5** infantry and **1** mountain division. (See, *Kriegsgliederung in DRZW*.)

--The area of operations of AGS extended about **700 km** from Lemberg (L'vov) to Kiev and **600 km** from the Black Sea to the Prip'iat Marshes. (K.W. Thilo, et al., "German Operations on the Lutsk-Rovno Axis," in: D.M. Glantz, *Initial Period of the War*, 289)

--Rundstedt's AGS had *extremely difficult missions*: attack the Soviet's main defensive effort; attack w/ only one panzer group; eliminate Red Army forces south of the Rotkino marshes,¹⁴⁷ capture Kiev; occupy the wealthy (in terms of raw materials) Ukraine and reach Rostov on the Don River, ca. **2100 km** from its starting point in occupied Poland. (Kirchubel, *Hitler's Panzer Armies*, 20)

--**Weisung No. 21 (18.12.40)**:

Auch bei der suedlich der Pripetsuempfe angesetzten [H.Gr.] ist in *konzentrischer Operation* u. mit starken Fluegeln die *vollstaendige Vernichtung* der in der Ukraine stehenden russ. Kraefte noch *westlich des Dnjepr* anzustreben. Hierzu ist der Schwerpunkt [underscore in original] aus dem Raum von Lublin in allgemeiner Richtung Kiew zu bilden, waehrend die in Rumaenien befindlichen Kraefte ueber den unteren Pruth hinweg einen weit abgesetzten Umfassungsarm bilden. Der rumaenischen Armee wird die Fesselung der dazwischen befindlichen russ. Kraefte zufallen. . .

(W. Haupt, *Die Schlachten der H.Gr.Sued*, 10)

--**Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa (31.1.41)**:¹⁴⁸

4. *Auftraege an die Heeresgruppen u. Armeen*:

a) *H.Gr.Sued* hat die Aufgabe, ihren starken linken Fluegel – schnelle Kraefte voraus – in Richtung Kiew vorzutreiben, die russ. Kraefte in Galizien u. in der Westukraine noch westl. des Dnjepr zu vernichten u. die Dnjepr-Uebergaenge bei u. unterhalb Kiew fuer die Weiterfuehrung der Operationen jenseits des Dnjepr fruehzeitig in die Hand zu nehmen. Die Operation ist so zu fuehren, dass die schnellen Truppen aus dem Bereich um Lublin zum Durchbruch in Richtung Kiew zusammengefasst werden.

Im Rahmen dieses Auftrages fallen den Armeen u. der Panzergruppe nach naeherer Anweisung des Oberkommandos der H.Gr.Sued folgende Aufgaben zu:

[Note: For specific role of each army and 1 Panzer Group see the corresponding section in this notebook for each army/panzer group.]

(Halder, Franz. *Kriegstagebuch: Tägliche Aufzeichnungen des Chef des Gen.St. des Heeres 1939-1942*, Bd. II: *Von der geplanten Landung in England bis zum Beginn des Ostfeldzuges (1.7.1940 – 21.6.1941)*, H.-A. Jacobsen & A. Philippi (Hg.), Appendix 2, 465)¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ **Note**: In battle map of *GSSW* it is spelled "Rokitno Suempfe."

¹⁴⁸ **Note**: Here I've carved out the portion of the Army's Deployment Directive specifically addressing role of Army Group South.

¹⁴⁹ **Note**: David Stahel cites the diary as: Franz Halder, KTB II, p. 465 (Appendix 2).

--Operational Plans: IAW the Deployment Instruction *Barbarossa*, it was the mission of AGS “to destroy the Soviet forces in Galicia and the Western Ukraine no further east than the Dnepr and to seize the Dnepr crossing[s] at and downstream of Kiev as early as possible.” Originally, Halder had intended to accomplish this by means of a ***wide envelopment maneuver*** from the Polish and Romanian areas of operation. According to different instructions personally from Hitler to operate *solely w/ a strong left wing*, the Army Group’s main effort was determined to lie along the line Lublin – Kiev. The idea of a two-sided envelopment was maintained as a *secondary solution* when Vinnitsa was determined as an objective of attack to be launched as a combined effort by Eleventh and Seventeenth Armies. (K.W. Thilo, et al., “*German Operations on the Lutsk-Rovno Axis*,” in: D.M. Glantz, *Initial Period of the War*, 294)

--Barbarossa-Plan H.Gr.Sued: Der Stab der im Sueden der Ostfront fuehrenden H.Gr. lag im Sommer u. Winter **1940** noch in ***St. Germain bei Paris***. GFM v. Rundstedt—der Grandseigneur der deutschen Generalitaet—liess von seinem Stab erste Ueberlegungen fuer den Aufmarsch u. der sich anschliessenden Opera-tionen aufstellen. Danach mussten **29** Infanterie u. **8** Pz.-Diven. in einem Raid ueber den Bug durch die Ukraine bis zum Dnjepr stossen. Das aufgrund dieser ersten Plaene angesetzte Planspiel verlief negativ, so dass nun ein zweiter Offensivplan erstellt wurde. Danach lag jetzt der Schwerpunkt auf dem linken Fluegel, der bis Kiew vorpreschen sollte, um von hier aus dnjeprabwaerts zum Schwarzen Meer zu dringen, um die „Rote Armee“ in der Ukraine zu umfassen u. zu vernichten. Eine kleinere Kraeftegruppe hatte demzufolge ueber Lem-berg vorzugehen, um die Gegner zu fesseln; waehrend eine gemischte rumaenisch-deutsche Gruppe lediglich defensive Aufgaben an der Kueste durchzufuehren hatte. (W. Haupt, *Die Schlachten der H.Gr.Sued*, 11)

--Operational Plans:

Due to the open right flank of Seventeenth Army and because Eleventh Army was still engaged at the Prut River and initially not even in the attack, the mobile forces of **1 PzGr** were instructed to penetrate Soviet defenses in the northern deployment area at an operationally effective point in order to *operate **independently** behind enemy lines*.

This basic concept governed the overall conduct of operations. . .

The Sixth Army had been instructed to penetrate enemy positions close to the border for the armored forces, to follow the armored forces closely in order to destroy the enemy in the breakthrough area, to assist and support the armored forces in river crossing operations, and at the same time to secure the northern flank of the Army Group toward the Prip’iat Marsh area. . .

Seventeenth Army was tasked w/ cutting off the Lemberg area and then advancing toward Tarnopol – Vinnitsa while the Fourth Rumanian Army was to provide security and cover along the Black Sea coast and the lower coarse of the Prut River.

These were the operational plans of the Supreme Command of the Army and of Army Group South . . .

(K.W. Thilo, et al., “*German Operations on the Lutsk-Rovno Axis*,” in: D.M. Glantz, *Initial Period of the War*, 296)

--Aufmarsch H.Gr.Sued: Der Aufmarsch der H.Gr.Sued . . . lief seit Fruehjahr 1941 auf Hoch-touren. Das H.Gr.Kommando lag zu dieser Zeit noch in Breslau; die *Fuehrungsabteilung* hatte bereits im Schloss Okocim, 30 km SW Tarnow, Unterkunft bezogen. Die der H.Gr. unterstellten Armeen marschierten in folgenden Raeumen von Nord nach Sued:

6 Armee: (GFM v. Reichenau) zwischen Lublin u. Przemysl;

17 Armee: (Gen. d. Inf. von Stülpnagel) zwischen Przemysl u. Tomaszow;

1 PzGr.: (Gen.Obst. v. Kleist) hinter den inneren Fluegeln beider Armeen;

11 Armee: (Gen.Obst. v. Schobert) beiderseits Jassy in Rumaenien.

Die **11 Armee** lag eingeschoben zwischen **3 u. 4 rum. Armee**, waehrend *ungarische Brigaden* im Karpatenraum sicherten.

[**Note:** Haupt continues by quoting the very detailed *Korpsbefehl fuer den Angriff* of **17 AK (56 and 62 ID of 6 Armee)** . . .

Der gewaltige deutsche Aufmarsch—Ende **Feb 41 8** Divisionen, Ende **Mar 41 16**, Ende **Apr 41 30** u. bis Ende **Mai 41** insgesamt **39** Divisionen—der H.Gr.Sued blieb natuerlich den russ. Kommandobehoerden nicht verborgen. . .

Es war eine warme Sommernacht zum **22 Jun 41**. . . Die Frontbreite der H.Gr. betrug in dieser Nacht **1350 km**, wovon **250 km** Karpatengebirge darstellten, in dem *kein deutscher Soldat stand*.¹⁵⁰

(W. Haupt, *Die Schlachten der H.Gr.Sued*, 10-16)

--Am 22. Juni 1941 trat das deutsche Ostheer (ausser der **11. Armee** am Suedfluegel) ueber-raschend ohne Kriegserklaerung auf der *Front von den Karpaten bis zur Ostsee* zum Angriff an. Im Rahmen der H.Gr.Sued war es die Aufgabe der **1 PzGr** (mit **5 Pz.Div.** u. **4 mot.Div.**) im Zusammenwirken mit der **17 u. 6 Armee** auf deren *inneren Fluegeln* die russ. Front zwischen Rawa Ruska u. Kowel zu durchbrechen u. sodann ueber die Linie Berditschew – Schitomir schnell den Dnjepr bei u. unterhalb Kiew zu erreichen. Von hier aus sollte die **1 PzGr** sofort nach Sueden vorgehen, um dem in der Westukraine kaempfenden Feind den Rueckzug ueber den Fluss zu versperren. (Nehring, *Geschichte der Panzerwaffe*, 219)

--It had originally been intended to use the *tactics of the double envelopment*, one armored pincer from Poland joining up w/ another from Rumania in the area of Kiev on the Dnepr. Three months before the opening of the campaign, however, Hitler had *changed his mind in favor of a single envelopment from Poland*, and had given as his reason the fact that the rivers Pruth and Dniester were formidable obstacles across the axis of Rumania. This was only a half-truth, since part of the cause lay in his *nervousness regarding the safety of the Ploesti oilfields*, because he feared that an energetic thrust across the Rumanian frontier might provoke a Soviet counter-offensive into Rumanian territory. (Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 133)¹⁵¹

--Rundstedt's AGS consisted of **1 PzGr**, **6** and **17 Armies** in Poland, and was *separated by Hun-garian territory* from its right wing in Rumania, made up of **11 Army** and **3** and **4** Rumanian

¹⁵⁰ **Note:** Confirm these details w/ other source materials! If I recall correctly, the entire German front from the Baltic Sea to the Carpathian Mountains (that is, excluding **11 Army** in Rumania, which did not attack until start of **Jul 41**) was **1200 km**.

¹⁵¹ **Note:** This is first time I've come across such an analysis for Hitler's decision not to support a double envelopment on front of AGS. Accurate?

Armies. The armies in Poland were to attack eastwards to the south of the Pripyat Marshes into the Ukraine, while the Rumanian-German force moved NE through Moldavia – Bessarabia to join them. Hungary was to join the war against the Soviet Union and put into the field a number of bdes forming the connecting link between the Polish and Rumanian fronts. Rundstedt had total of about **14** Rumanian and **41** German divisions, of which only **5** were panzer and **3** motorized.¹⁵² (Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 133)

--Die endgueltige Fassung der *Aufmarschanweisung* vom **8.6.41** [Note: Erster Entwurf der „Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa“ am 31.1.41.] praezisierte die Aufgaben, *indem der geaenderten Lage infolge des Balkanfeldzuges Rechnung getragen wurde*.¹⁵³ So wurde der H.Gr.Sued *keine gepanzerte Stossgruppe in Nordrumaenien zugefuehrt*, da die dortige 11. Armee zu schwach schien, um einen „Zangenarm“ zu bilden; man fasste vielmehr saemtliche Pz.-Kraefte der H.Gr. im Rahmen der **1 PzGr** auf dem Nordfluegel SO von Lublin zusammen. Die Masse der Angriffskraefte sollte in Form einer *einseitigen Umfassung* den Gegner *westl. des Dnjepr aufreiben* . . . (Magenheimer, *Moskau 1941*, 17)

--According to “*Deployment Order Barbarossa*,”¹⁵⁴ AGS had the task of “destroying the Soviet forces in Galicia and the western Ukraine still west of the Dnepr and capturing the Dnepr crossings at and south of Kiev at an early stage.” Halder’s original intent of achieving these objectives w/ a *large envelopment operation* from southern Poland and Romania, combined w/ a pincer operation by German and Hungarian formations in Galicia, had been *abandoned for various reasons* after Hitler’s decision of **17 Mar 41**. Now the main thrust of the army group was concentrated on the line [axis] Lublin – Kiev, w/ the intention of reaching the same objectives of this initial phase. (*GSSW*, Vol. 4, 546-47)

--Rundstedt was given three to four weeks to reach Kiev and the Dnepr crossings. He was then to turn south to trap enemy forces against the Black Sea with the Caucasus oil region his *ultimate destination*. Rundstedt had to cram the mass of his army group between the *Rokitno Marshes* [i.e., Pripiat’ Marshes] and the Carpathian Mountains. He wanted to create a German-Hungarian force based on Seventeenth Army, but Hitler distrusted Hungary and forbade any formal contact between the two militaries. *Barbarossa* underwent numerous revisions, including “*Aufmarschanweisung* (Deployment Directive) *Barbarossa*” on **31.1.41**. This added Rumania to Rundstedt’s area of responsibility. However, the ensuing 200-mile Hungarian gap between Axis forces in occupied Poland and Rumania created numerous security, logistical and command and control problems.

Army Group’s South *original plan* envisioned a double envelopment during Phase I, employing 1 Panzer Group in the north and Twelfth Army coming out of Rumania. Hitler soon decided against this course of action, and besides in April he ordered Twelfth Army to Yugoslavia and Greece. Eleventh Army took over duties in Rumania but these combined forces would not be ready by 22 June, giving *Barbarossa* its *staggered start* in the far south. Therefore, Rundstedt would find mainly a *frontal war*, punctuated by occasional penetrations and (except for Kiev) relatively small encirclements. (*Kirchubel, Operation Barbarossa 1941 (1), Army Group South*, 15)

-- Army Group South initially consisted of **797,000** men in occupied Poland and **175,000** in Rumania. On *Barbarossatag* Rundstedt commanded **46½** German and allied divisions. Manpower

¹⁵² **Note:** This is only partially accurate!

¹⁵³ **Note:** If I recall, due to Balkan campaign, the 12th Army was replaced by the weaker 11th Army in AGS OOB. Confirm!

¹⁵⁴ **Note:** Original deployment order of **31.1.41**. See also, Halder diary.

and material shortages throughout the Reich meant that units *varied according to when they were created*. While most of AGS consisted only of German units on 22 June 1941, the Eleventh Army had all-German corps and corps with Rumanians under command. . . AGS's armored formations were concentrated in 1 Panzer Group. . . All of his panzers were of German manufacture. The Germans hoped that newer Pz III's and Pz IV's would compensate for the *smaller number of tanks in the reorganized panzer divisions* [Hitler had doubled the number of panzer divisions after the fall of France, significantly reducing the number of tanks in each panzer division but upgrading firepower w/ the Pz III/IVs.] (*Kirchubel, Operation Barbarossa 1941 (1), Army Group South*, 23)

-- Rundstedt also had four **280mm K5** railroad guns transferred from the English Channel. Each required two trains to move and operate and could send a 561lb projectile up to 37.5 miles. (*Kirchubel*, 23)

--Rundstedt's AGS was not as strong as Bock's AGC . . . Thus an encirclement like Belestok-Minsk in Belorussia could not quickly be brought off in the Ukraine; **Rundstedt had a hammer, but no anvil**. Even Russian figures give their own forces in the Ukraine a **6:1** advantage over the Germans in tanks and **2:1** in acft. (Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 75)

-- AGS's *air operations* suffered from a number of handicaps: it was not the main German effort and so not fully resourced, it had **no Stukas** and many of its air assets were committed to the defense of the *Rumanian oil fields*. **Luftflotte 4's** close air support came from two *Gruppen* of Ju-88s and one fighter *Gruppe* fitted w/ ground-attack sights. Seven *Gruppen* of Bf 109s provided fighter cover while the **II Flak Corps** mainly protected 1 Panzer Group spearheads. In April, **V Fliegerkorps** deployed to southeast Poland. It flew in support of Sixth and Seventeenth Armies and von Kleist's panzers. . . The **IV Fliegerkorps** moved from France to Rumania in May. From there it supported the southern flank, initially against Bessarabia and the Crimea. (*Kirchubel*, 24)

--Luttichau's observations:

Rundstedt's exercise of command was hampered by the fact that Hitler had **excluded Hungary as a concentration area and Slovakia also**, but w/ the modification that troops and supplies could be moved in transit. These limitations were responsible for a situation in which Rundstedt's main forces *were separated from his right wing Eleventh Army in Rumania by a 200-mile gap* that could not easily be bridged.

The theater of operations of AGS resembled a parallelogram, tilted westward. From the Black Sea to the Pripyat it measured almost **600 miles**, as the crow flies, and from the Dnepr to the border about **400 miles**. The closest objective was Kiev, 300 air miles from the border. From personal experience, *dating back to World War I*, Rundstedt knew the difficulties posed by such vast an area, the uncertainties of the weather, and the hazards of terrain. He was also *concerned about the relatively small number of troops* compared to the great scope of his mission.

The mission of AGS, it will be recalled, was the destruction of the Soviet forces in the western Ukraine and in Galicia and the capture of Dnepr bridgeheads at and south of Kiev, whence operations in a later phase were to continue in an east-erly or NE direction. Rundstedt realized that he could not fulfill this mission in a

single operation. He therefore planned a maneuver consisting of two, phased, double envelopments. The start of the first was to be set in Galicja, north of the Carpathians and west of the 1938 border. The second double envelopment was to follow immediately and trap those Soviet forces which had escaped the first, in the southwestern Ukraine on the high ground between the Dnepr and the Dnester Rivers. In both maneuvers the main effort was to be on the north wing, spearheaded by the panzer group, while the southern prongs were to be thrust out by the Eleventh Army, across the Prut River.

The army group had tested the feasibility of the plan in a war game on **2 Feb 41** and found that the objective of destroying the Soviet forces west of the Dnepr could *not be attained* if the Russians decided to make a general withdrawal after the first week of the German offensive. The war game also confirmed that the army group's strength was *insufficient for the prescribed mission* and that the German advance would be seriously threatened on the northern and southern flanks. The northern flank threat, likely to be delivered from the Pripyat Marshes would not stop the German drive, but would slow it down. The danger from the southern flank, from the Black Sea coast, would be less pronounced. The lessons learned during the exercise were incorporated in the first army group operation directive.

When Hitler changed the *Barbarossa* directive on **17 Mar 41**, *cancelling the attack from Rumania* and reducing the number of divisions available to the Eleventh Army, he *deprived Rundstedt of the possibility of executing his double envelopment maneuvers*. Rundstedt pleaded w/ Hitler on **30 Mar 41** to permit a secondary drive across the Carpathians and the Prut River, but was turned down. And when Halder repeated the proposal a month later, Hitler again turned a deaf ear.

This decision reduced Rundstedt's operational repertoire to one solution. In the final plan for the operation, he reluctantly settled for *two single envelopments* with the main effort on the left wings. The smaller of the two envelopments was to be executed by Seventeenth Army and might get an assist from the left wing of Eleventh Army. The longer encirclement was to be spearheaded by the **1 PzGr**, followed closely by Sixth Army, with Seventeenth Army serving as a pivot. The Eleventh Army in Rumania was to be the anvil on which the hammer blow of **1 PzGr** and Sixth Army would bear down.

The success of the entire operation *hinged on the breakthrough of 1 PzGr's massed armor* achieving a breakthrough of the Soviet border defenses and penetrating deeply into the rear of the Soviet armies. Kleist's objective was Kiev. The *available road net* dictated that the panzer group be committed north of L'voy (Lemberg), from the sector of the Sixth Army, seize crossings over the Styr River, north and south of Lutsk, and break through to the Berdichev – Zhitomir area as fast as possible. This was the essential prerequisite to preventing the Soviet army from withdrawing too soon and reorganizing in the Stalin Line. After reaching Kiev, the panzer group was to capture bridgeheads over the Dnepr as a flank protection. Then the panzer group was to turn to the SE from the Berdichev – Zhitomir area for the execution of a *wide envelopment maneuver*. Obviously, *speed was essential*, for the later the panzer group achieved its goals,

the more difficult it would be to trap the Soviet forces in the western Ukraine, west of the Dnepr. . .

(Luttichau, *The Road to Moscow*, IV: 2-6)

-- Army Group South: Situated on the right wing, from southern Poland to Romania, this army group was commanded by 65-year-old Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt. At its disposal were 29 infantry divisions (including four so-called “light” divisions), five panzer, three motorized, three security and one mountain division – 41 divisions in all, arranged in three armies (6, 11, and 17) and the 1 Panzer Group.^{cdlxxxv} Commanding the panzer group was General Ewald von Kleist, with more than 700 tanks between his five armored divisions.^{cdlxxxvi} With its *Schwerpunkt* on the left wing – two infantry armies and the Kleist’s panzer group – Army Group South was to break through the Red Army defenses covering the Ukraine and, advancing by way of Berdichev and Zhitomir, gain the line of the Dnepr River at and below Kiev. 1 Panzer Group was then to turn southeast and continue the advance along the Dnepr, preventing the enemy from withdrawing beyond the river and defeating him in battle with an inverted front in cooperation with the advancing infantry. On the far right wing of Rundstedt’s army group, Eleventh Army, operating out of Romania, was to tie down enemy forces and prevent their orderly retreat into the interior of Russia. Operations of Army Group South were supported by 4 Air Fleet, whose order of battle embraced 307 operational bombers and 272 combat-ready fighter aircraft. Also assigned to 4 Air Fleet was 2 Flak Corps, its complement of 88mm guns highly effective in both an air and ground support role. Cooperating with the air fleet were several hundred Romanian aircraft and, after 27 June, a small contingent of Hungarian planes.^{cdlxxxvii} (*Barbarossa Unleashed*, 179)

--Soviet Southwest Front: GFM v. Rundstedt and the cdr of his **1 PzGr**, Col.-Gen. v. Kleist, had drawn the most difficult position of the campaign. The Russian southern front, protecting the Ukrainian grain areas, had been organized in particular strength and w/ great care. Col.-Gen. Kirponos, who commanded the Soviet Army Group Southwest Front, had deployed his **4** armies in two groups in considerable depth. Well-camouflaged lines of pillboxes, heavy field-artillery positions, and cunning obstacles turned the first German leap across the frontier into a costly operation. . . Kirponos instantly blocked the development of large-scale ops and the encirclement of Soviet forces. With armored units rapidly brought up he launched strong counter-attacks and struck heavily at the spearheads of the advancing German divisions. He sent his heavy **KV-1** and **KV-2** tanks into action. . . But most dangerous of all was the **T-34**. After ten [10] days of very fierce fighting, Rundstedt’s armored divisions had penetrated **60** miles into enemy territory. They were involved w/ superior forces, compelled to beat back counter-attacks from all sides. . . A strong enemy was offering stubborn but elastic resistance. Col.-Gen. Kirponos succeeded in evading the planned German encirclement north of the Dniester and in taking his troops back, still in an unbroken front, to the strongly fortified Stalin Line to both sides of Mogilev. Rundstedt had thus not succeeded in achieving the planned large-scale break-through. The timetable of AGS had been upset. (P. Carell, *Hitler Moves East*, 37-40)

--Soviet Southwest Front: For detailed look at forces and dispositions of Kirponos’ front see, Glantz, *Initial Period of War*, 250 ff.)

--Soviet Southwest Front consisted of **5, 6, 12, 26 Armies** backed up by **8** mechanized corps. However, the mechanized corps, while larger than a panzer corps, were also *unwieldy for the inexperienced Red Army commanders* and many had significant problems: the **9** and **19 MC** had only one combat-ready tank division each (the **35** and **43 TD**, respectively), the **15 MC** had no trucks for its **212 Mot. RD** and the **8 MC** was especially scattered across the Ukrainian countryside. Kirponos, however, did *not suffer from the fearfulness and passivity of many Soviet leaders*.

(Kirchubel, *Hitler's Panzer Armies*, 20)

--Besonderer Militaerbezirk Kiew (Suedwestfront): **1913** Frontflugzeuge. (Magenheimer, *Moskau 1941*, 28)

--Because of Stalin's belief that the main German thrust would be into the Ukraine, most of the new mechanized corps were deployed w/ Kirponos' Southwestern Front. These newfangled armored formations were supposed to rectify some of the failings identified after the Finnish war. The idea behind them looked back (w/o attribution of course) to the theories of Tukhachevski and the brilliant practice of the panzer divisions. But as so often in Soviet practice, Stalin and his generals had *gone for speed and quantity rather than quality*. The new formations were *spatchcocked together far too quickly*. They were **ill-equipped, ill-trained, and ill-manned**. Even those that were well led were no match for the German panzers. (R. Braithwaite, *Moscow 1941*, 81)

-- On 22 June, the Southwestern Front contained **8** mech. corps and one armored train btn. . . In total, at beginning of combat ops the front's mech. corps contained **4297** tanks, including **265** KV's, **496** T-34s, **1486** BTs and **1962** T-26s. While these mech. corps would be far more successful than their counterparts in other front sectors, extensive reports would reverberate w/ the same problems—shortages of equipment, lack of training, inadequate logistics, etc. (D. Glantz, *Red Army Ground Forces*, 24-27)

--General Kirponos' military district fielded **907,046** men (including **142,105** in schools), **16,997** guns and mortars, **5465** tanks (**4788** operational) and **5465** acft (**4788** operational)¹⁵⁵ on 22.6.41. (Glantz, *Barbarossa 1941*, 216, f.n. 30)

--Fortified Districts. The construction of new FAs on the western frontier had been started in early **1940** under a project approved by Stalin on the basis of Voroshilov's and Shaposhnikov's report. The building of the fortified areas was not completed by **Jun 41**. . . As for the Ukraine, the **Rava-Russkaya** and **Peremyshl areas** were the best prepared for combat in **Jun 41**. (Roberts, G., (ed.). *Marshal of Victory*. Vol. 1, 251)

--SW Front Mechanized Forces: Kirponos's front, the strongest on the western borders, consisted of **4** armies, **8** mechanized and **7** rifle corps, and **1** airborne corps. . . Kirponos's mechanized contingent was the strongest in the west, permitting him to assign **6** mechanized corps to his **4** forward armies, two of which he allo-cated to each army defending along the projected German main axes north and south of L'vov. Maj.-Gen. K.K. Rokossovsky's and S.I. Kondrusev's **9** and **22 MC** supported Potapov's **5 Army**, and Maj.-Gen. A.A. Vlasov's¹⁵⁶ and I.I. Karpezo's **4** and **15 MC** did the same for Muzychenko's **6 Army**. In addition, *Komdiv* (Div.-Cdr.) A.D. Sokolov's **16 MC** supported Kostenko's **26 Army** and Lt.-Gen. D.I. Riabyshev's **8 MC** backed up Ponedelin's **12 Army**.

In addition, the General Staff assigned Kirponos's forward forces *significant reserves*, including Maj.-Gen. N.V. Feklenko's and V.I. Chistiakov's **19** and **24 MC** and Lt.-Gen. M.F. Lukin's and I.S. Konev's **16** and **19 Armies**. Lukin's and Konev's armies, however, were still deploying

¹⁵⁵ **Note:** Glantz repeats information here, so one of these sets of figures must be wrong.

¹⁵⁶ **Note:** General Andrei Vlasov, C-in-C of **4 MC**, based in L'vov, was a regular soldier w/ a high reputation. He was one of the youngest major-generals of the army and had been awarded the Order of Lenin on Army Day in **Jun 41**. He was to distinguish himself in the battles on the frontier . . . (R. Braithwaite, *Moscow 1941*, 81)

forward to the Dnepr River line on 22 June as part of the *Stavka reserve*. . . On **22 Jun 41**, the following MC had following tank strength:

4 MC = **979** tanks, including **414** new models¹⁵⁷
22 MC = **898** tanks
9 MC = **298** tanks¹⁵⁸
19 MC = **453** tanks

(**Note:** Together, **9** and **19 MC** had only **5** new types of tanks between them!)

(D. Glantz, *Atlas and Operational Summary. The Border Battles*, 25-27)

--**22.6.41 (Kirponos)**: Several factors explained the Russian defenders' relative early success in the south. Southwestern Army Group was perhaps better led, but there is no way of fully comparing Kirponos w/ Pavlov. Col.-Gen. Mikhail Kirponos would be **killed in action in Sep 41**. He had led a regiment in the Civil War and had completed the Frunze Academy. Kirponos, like Pavlov, was an *example of the new blood promoted to senior commands after the Winter War w/ Finland*. He had successfully commanded one of Timoshenko's divisions in the final attack on the Mannerheim Line in early 1940, and for this action he had been made a **Hero of the Soviet Union**. Kirponos was advanced extremely rapidly from div. cdr. to be head of the Leningrad Military District, and then, in **Feb 41**, he replaced Zhukov as commander of the Kiev Military District. At **49**, Kirponos was *relatively old* for a Soviet senior commander,¹⁵⁹ but he was not greatly experienced; his main post before Finland had been five years as commandant of the Kazań Infantry School (1934-39), one of over a hundred such schools.

More important than the ability of the [*front*] commander was the greater strength of the Red Army in the Ukraine, relative to other Soviet theaters.¹⁶⁰ It was Kirponos's good fortune that the *largest concentration of the Red Army* had been stationed in the Ukraine. The **1940/41 offensive strategy of the Red Army** . . . involved a *possible thrust (or counter-thrust) into southern Poland from the Ukraine*. As a result, the Kiev Military District . . . had been provided w/ the strongest forces. (Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 74-75)

--**22.6.41:** While Stalin considered a German attack upon Soviet Union to be most unlikely until Germany had conquered or made peace w/ Great Britain, he was of the opinion that when war did come, the Germans would make their main thrust into the Ukraine to seize its grain, Donets coal and Caucasian oil. This assumption was reflected in Soviet defensive deployments in June 1941: The greater part of the Red Army was to be found in the Ukraine, the forces there being greater than the combined strength of Pavlov's West and Kuznetsov's North-West Fronts. The Soviet troops in Galicja and Bessarabia covering the Ukraine were organized into the South-West and South Fronts. The South-West Front was commanded by Kirponos. He would prove to be better prepared for battle than his fellow cdrs north of the Pripet Marshes. Kirponos was the only front cdr who would recover immediately from the shock of the German invasion and conduct his

¹⁵⁷ **Note:** According to Braithwaite, this corps' **32 TD** had a complement of **300** KV-1s, as well as some T-34s. (See, his *Moscow 1941*, 83)

¹⁵⁸ **Note:** Writes Braithwaite: "**9 MC** . . . was fully up to strength in men. But it had less than a third of its tanks and motor transport. The officers were *raw and over-promoted* [no doubt a result of the breakneck pace of the Red Army buildup!], and many of the drivers had had only a *few hours' experience w/ their vehicles*. (R. Braithwaite, *Moscow 1941*, 84)

¹⁵⁹ **Note:** Really, seems an odd point; certainly when compared to ages of German army group commanders.

¹⁶⁰ **Note:** Also the salient fact that he was only facing a *single German armored concentration*, as opposed to the *two* faced by Pavlov in centre.

defense w/ great skill. In this, he would be aided by the nature of the country. (See, Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 134-35)

--22.6.41: Glantz' overview:

German AGS experienced less initial success south of the Pripiat' Marshes than its neighbors to the north. This was because the Western Bug river, which ran along much of the common border in this area, *impeded the initial German assault* and provided the NKVD and Red Army troops w/ precious minutes to react. More importantly, Col-Gen. M.P. Kirponos had main-tained closer contact w/ the border guards in the days prior to the invasion, moving his forces smoothly through the various stages of alert. Because of the pre-war Soviet belief that *any German attack would focus on the Ukraine*, Kirponos was blessed w/ a relative wealth of mech-anized formations to counter 1 Panzer Group. Even though *none of his mechanized corps were fully equipped or trained*, they gave a much better account of themselves than their counterparts in the Western Front.

Rundstedt's mission was to advance deep into the Ukraine from both southern Poland and Rumania, destroy Soviet forces in the western Ukraine and Galicia, capture Dnepr River bridge-heads at and south of Kiev and prepare for subsequent operations to the east (Rostov and Stalin-grad) or NE (Khar'kov and Voronezh). His army group consisted of *two distinct groups separated by a 330 km (198-mile) gap*. The main group, attacking from southern Poland, included GFM Walter von Reichenau's Sixth and Lt.-Gen. Karl Heinrich von Stülpnagel's [sp?] Seventeenth Armies, and Lt.-Gen. Ewald von Kleist's 1 Panzer Group. Spearheaded by Kleist's armor, this group of seven army and three motorized corps was to attack due east north and south of L'vov to seize Kiev. Rundstedt also hoped to encircle sizeable Soviet forces SW of Kiev between Kleist's advancing armor and the Seventeenth Army's formations. Kleist's 1 Panzer Group, Rundstedt's vital armored spearhead, consisted of Lt.-Gens. von Manteuffel's **3**, von Wieterheim's **14**, and Werner Kempf's **48 PzK**, which fielded a total of **5** panzer and **4** motorized divisions.

Rundstedt's second shock group, designated to conduct a delayed supporting attack from Rumania, consisted of Col.-Gen. Franz Ritter von Schobert's Eleventh Army and the Rumanian Third and Fourth Armies, with a total of three German and five Rumanian army corps. This force was to attack from Rumania to clear Soviet forces from southern Ukraine and the Black Sea coast and, if possible, encircle Red Army forces in the Kamenets – Podol'skii and Vinnitsa regions in cooperation w/ the Seventeenth and Sixth Armies. Initially, Rundstedt's force was backed up by a reserve of one infantry and three security divisions. Col.-Gen. Alexander Lohr's **4 Air Fleet** totaling **750** acft was to support Rundstedt's assault.

Kirponos' *front*, the *strongest on the western borders*, consisted of four armies, eight mechanized and seven rifle corps, and one airborne corps. Lt.-Gens. M.I. Potapov's **5**, N.I. Muzychenko's **6**, F.Ia. Kostenko's **26** and P.G. Ponedelin's **12 Armies** were arrayed in a single echelon from along the Bug river in the north southward to the Carpathian Mountains. Kirponos' mechanized contingent was the *strongest in the west*, permitting him to assign six mechanized corps to his

four forward armies, two of which he allocated to each army defending along the projected German main axes north and south of L'vov. Maj.-Gens. K.K. Rokossovsky's and S.I. Kondrusev's **9** and **22 Mech Corps** supported Potapov's **5 Army**, while Maj.-Gens. A.A. Vlasov's and I.I. Karpezo's **4** and **15 Mech Corps** did the same for Muzychenko's **6 Army**. In addition, *Komdiv* [Div.-Cdr.] A.D. Sokolov's **16 Mech Corps** supported Kostenko's **26 Army** and Lt.-Gen. D.I. Riabyshev's **8 Mech Corps** backed up Ponedelin's **12 Army**. The General Staff assigned Kirponos's forward forces *significant reserves*, including Maj.-Gens. N.V. Fedlenko's and V.I. Chistiakov's **19** and **24 Mech Corps** and Lt.-Gens. M.F. Lukin's and I.S. Konev's **16** and **19 Armies**. Lukin's and Konev's armies, however, were still deploying forward to the Dnepr river line on 22 June as part of the Stavka Reserve.

(Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 46-47)

1.5.2: General Information / Overview of Events

--**Note:** In his book, *Moscow 1941*, Rodric Braithwaite describes scenes of panic among Red Army soldiers in sector of Rokossovsky's **9 MC**—men who had “cut and run” in the shock of battle; men who shot officers who were trying to stem the panic (at one point, Rokossovsky himself was dragged into a lorry and declared a German agent and sentenced to death! He managed to escape); men who mutilated themselves to escape battle, etc. Whole units *panicked when they were attacked in the flank by a small group of enemy tanks and acft*. (See, R. Braithwaite, *Moscow 1941*, 85-86)

--**22.6.41:** At 0100 hours the separate German Army commands in the east transmitted their call-signs indicating full and final readiness - “*Wotan*” from von Rundstedt's command. (Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 109)

--**22.6.41:** Heeresgruppe Sued (*Tagesmeldung*):¹⁶¹

11 Armee: Vor **11 Armee**, die ihre Bereitstellung planmaessig bezogen hat, Untaetigkeit des Feindes.

17 Armee: Gegen nur vereinzelt Feindwiderstand konnten im Grenzabschnitt alle Bruecken unversehrt in Besitz genommen u. der Angriff planmaessig fortgefuehrt werden.

6 Armee: Solokija u. Bugbruecken unversehrt in eigener Hand. Ueberraschung im vollen Umfange gelungen. In ganzer Frontbreite 4 bis 5 km Boden gewonnen.

(K. Mehner, *Geheime Tagesberichte*, 150)

--**23.6.41:** Heeresgruppe Sued (*Tagesmeldung*):¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ **Note:** No precise time provided for these *Tagesmeldungen*.

¹⁶² **Note:** These are entries for **23.6.41**, but clearly appear to address combat activities on the previous day!

11 Armee u. rumaenische Kraefte stehen zur Verteidigung an der rum. Grenze bereit. Vor ihrer Front bleibt der Feind untaetig.

17 Armee: noerdl. der Karpathen bis zur Strasse Tomaszow – Lemberg einschl. eingesetzt, und

6 Armee noerdl. davon bis Wlodawa einschl. konnten [d.h. beide Armeen] gegen nur *vereinzelt* auftretenden Feindwiderstand im Grenzabschnitt alle Bruecken unversehrt in Besitz nehmen. Ueberraschung voll gelungen.

1 Pz.Gr: nahm **11.00** Uhr Tartakow. . .

(K. Mehner, *Geheime Tagesberichte*, 151)

--**22.6.41 (Poland / Near Sokol):**¹⁶³ Bernard Häring, a Catholic priest, had been assigned as a medic to a German division stationed near Bayeux, France, in the autumn of 1940. Here he had conducted a regular – albeit unofficial^{cdlxxxviii} – Sunday mass in the beautiful medieval cathedral at Bayeux for German soldiers stationed in the area. In early May 1941, his division was moved to Poland as part of the *Barbarossa* buildup; on 22 June, it too crossed the frontier in Soviet occupied territory. Recalled Haering:

At the first sign of dawn, our company passed the boundary line and came under attack. And the first man who needed my help – as priest, for he was beyond medical help – was my dear friend and brother who had been so vitally alive only a few moments before, and so anxious to survive in order to rebuild a world gone mad. Brother Fichter had been struck by a shell. His head was shattered and his brains spilled out like water, even while his body was still alive and wrestling against death.

I was utterly overwhelmed, and cried bitterly. It was the first and the last time I wept during the war. Very soon things became so difficult that, if one were to survive, one could not give in to his feelings.

(B. Häring, *Embattled Witness*, 6)

--**22.6.41 (KTB H.Gr.Süd):**¹⁶⁴

3.15 Uhr beginnt planmaessig bei **11 Armee** Stoss- u. Spaehtrupptaetigkeit, bei **17** u. **6 Armee** auf ganzer Front der Angriff. Feind leistet nur geringen Widerstand. Die Grenzflussbruecken im Bereich der H.Gr. bleiben unzerstoert. Allgemein herrscht der Eindruck vor, dass der Gegner ueberrascht u. in seiner Vorpostenaufstellung ueberrannt wurde.

Im Laufe der ersten Vormittagsstunden verdichtet sich der Eindruck, dass auf ganzer Front eine *voellige taktische Ueberraschung* des Gegners gelungen u. auch die feindl. Luftwaffe zunaechst in weitgehendem Masse im planmaessigen Einsatz zerstoert ist. Bisher keine feindl. Lufteinwirkung. . .

¹⁶³ **Note:** Believe this is in sector of AGS. (Confirm!) Author notes that in **Oct 41** his regiment was in combat outside Khar'kov.

¹⁶⁴ **Note:** This is a very long and detailed document, but I've copied most of it here (see text for more details).

6 Armee u. 1 PzGr:

Um die bei Fuehrung u. Truppe des Gegners herrschende Verwirrung auszunutzen, entschliesst sich O.B. d.H.Gr. um **10.00** Uhr auf Antrag des O.B. d. **6 Armee** . . . dem A.O.K. 6 den fruehestmoeglichen Ansatz der schnellen Verbaende des **48** u. **3 AK (mot.)** fuer den Durchstoss aus den gewonnenen Brueckenkoepfen zu befehlen. Die Unterstellung der **1 PzGr** unter A.O.K. 6 bleibt zu-naechst aufrecht erhalten. . .

11 Armee: [see text for details]

17, 6 Armee u. 1 PzGr:

Anlaesslich der oben erwaehten Besprechungen weist O.B. d. H.Gr. die **17** u. **6 Armee** sowie **1 PzGr** daraufhin, dass es in Ausnutzung der gelungenen *taktischen Ueberraschung* nunmehr darauf ankommt, *den Feind nicht mehr zur Ruhe kommen zu lassen* u. am Aufbau von Abwehrfronten unbedingt zu verhindern. Hierzu ist es noetig, den Feind, wo er sich stellt, *ruecksichtslos u. ohne Zeitverlust anzupacken*, am Wegkommen zu verhindern u. durch Angriff zu vernichten.

Dieser fernmuendl. Hinweis wird **18.00** Uhr fernschriftl. wiederholt . . .

Die Zwischenmeldung, die um **19.00** Uhr dem **OKH** erstattet wird, ergibt folgendes Bild:

11 Armee:

Planmaessige eigene Stosstrupptaetigkeit u. weitere Brueckenkopfbildung. Keine Angriffshandlungen des Feindes.

17 Armee:

Feindwiderstand hat sich allgemein versteift, insbesondere vor **4 AK** [durch?] Gegenangriffe.

6 Armee u. 1 PzGr:

Feind konnte die Grenzstellungen in der Tiefe nur teilweise besetzen. Einzelne Gruppen verteidigen z.T. zaeh Bunker u. Stellungsteile. Starker Widerstand bei **44** u. **17 AK**. . .

11 Armee erhaelt gegen **23.00** Uhr den Auftrag, auch am **23.6.[41]** die russ. rum. Grenze zu verteidigen u. die *gewaltsame Aufklaerung* ostw. des Pruth fortzusetzen. Die gewonnenen kleinen Brueckenkoepfe sind zu festigen u. zu erweitern, rumaenische Verbaende duerfen jedoch keinen Rueckschlaegen ausgesetzt werden.¹⁶⁵ . . .

¹⁶⁵ **Note:** This, no doubt, for political reasons!

17 Armee: 23.00 Uhr meldet Chef Gen.Stab der **17 Armee** dem Chef Gen.St. H.Gr.Sued, dass sich die Lage bei **4 AK** verschaerft. Linker Fluegel **24 ID** ist zurueckgedrueckt, Feind steht vor (4 km SO Belzec) Swincie u. bei Wereszyca. [AOK 17] stellt den Antrag, die **13 PD** von Tomaszow auf die inneren Fluegel der **295** u. **24 ID** [-----] zu fuehren.¹⁶⁶

Ein hierauf um **23.30** Uhr zwischen dem 1. Gen.St.Offz. H.Gr. [**Ia**] u. dem Chef des **4 AK** (Obst. i.G. Beutler) gefuehrtes Ferngesprach ergibt folgende Lage bei 4 AK.

Rechter Fluegel **71 ID** u. **295 ID** haben unter zaehen Kaempfen den Durchbruch durch die Bunkerstellung erzielt. [Note: A hand-written sentence follows which is difficult to decipher.] . . . **24 ID**, mit rechtem Fluegel erfolgreich, hat eine **10** km lange linke Flanke. In dieser Flanke befindet sich bisher nur die Aufklaerungsabteilung, die durch starken feindl. Angriff nach Norden zurueckgeworfen wurde. Die[se] kaum geschuetzte tiefe Ostflanke [-----] ist infolgedessen stark bedroht.

262 ID [unterlag dem „Russenschreck“ u. ist ohne Schuld des Div.Kdr. zurueckgegangen.]¹⁶⁷ Der [Ost?]fluegel des Korps [steht] zweifellos [in] schwerer Krisis. Diese wird dadurch behoben werden, dass die **296 ID** zwischen **24** u. **262 ID** im Laufe der Nacht [eingesetzt] werden wird. . .

Chef Gen.St.d. **4 AK** macht ausserdem auf die Gefahr einer operativen Umfassung durch die ueber Uhnou vorrueckenden Feindkraefte aufmerksam. Chef Gen.St.d.H.Gr. nimmt die Ausfuehrungen zur Kenntnis u. stimmt den beabsichtigten Aushilfen zu.

6 Armee u. 1 PzGr:

23.30 Uhr schildert Chef Gen.St. d. **6 Armee** (Oberst i.G. Heim) dem 1. Gen. St.Offz.H.Gr. kurz die kritische Lage bei 3 AK (mot.) die entstanden ist durch

- a) oertlichen Rueckschlag bei **44 ID**,
- b) schweren Verteidigungskampf der **298 ID**,
- c) das am 23. frueh zu erwartende Eingreifen feindlicher mot.mech. Kraefte aus Richtung Luck.

Als erste Aushilfe werden Teile der **14 PD** der **298 ID** zugefuehrt. Ob. **6 Armee** hat darueber hinaus das Heranziehen der **13 PD** ueber Hrubieszow [sp?] in dem Raum der **44 ID** in der Nacht **22./23.6.** befohlen, weil er glaubt, nur durch Einsatz einer weiteren Pz.Div. eine schwere Abwehrkrisis im Raum um Wlodzimierz vermeiden zu koennen, falls die gemeldeten feindl. mot.mech.Kraefte dort am 23. eingreifen. Ausserdem glaubt Ob. **6 Armee** durch den Einsatz der **13 PD** den endgueltigen Durchbruch ueber den Raum Wlodzimierz hinaus in Richtung Luck erkaempfen zu koennen. Der **1 PzGr** ist anheim gestellt, zur Bildung des Schwerpunkts bei **48 AK [mot.]**, bei dem sich durch das Vorgehen der **11 PD** der

¹⁶⁶ **Note:** Hand-written words in brackets, which are difficult to read.

¹⁶⁷ **Note:** Perhaps for obvious reasons, the typed line in brackets was crossed out and replaced by an illegible hand-written sentence!

operative Durchbruch anzubahnen scheint, die **16 ID (mot.) 9** oder **16 PD** als naechste Welle heranzuziehen. . .

Chef Gen.St. d. **6 Armee** wird auf die Gefahr aufmerksam gemacht, die durch den feindl. Vorstoss ueber Uhnou sowohl fuer das **4 AK** wie fuer die Suedflanke der **6 Armee** droht. Er sagt zu, dass fuer den Fall eines derartigen Angriffs Aus-hilfen erwogen werden.¹⁶⁸

17 Armee: 00.10 Uhr erklart Chef Gen.St.d.H.Gr. fernmuendl. dem Chef Gen. St. **17 Armee**, dass der beantragte Einsatz der **13 PD** im Raum des **4 AK** . . . nicht moeglich ist. Die genannte Pz.Div. wird in der Nacht **22./23.6.** in den Raum um Wlodzimierz gefuehrt. Die naechstverfuegbare Pz.Div. muess [underscore in original text] **11 PD** nachgefuehrt werden, um den *Erfolg des 48 AK (mot.) aus-zunutzen u. nach Osten durchstossen*.¹⁶⁹ . . .

Aus der Tagesmeldung, die dem **OKH** gegen **2.00** Uhr durchgegeben wird, ist folgendes hervorzuheben:

1.) Die *taktische Ueberraschung* u. der Uebergang ueber San u. Bug sind *ueber-all gelungen*. Im Laufe des Tages *zunehmender gruppenweiser Widerstand*. *Feind schlaegt sich oertlich zaeh*. Gegen Abend z.T. *starke Gegenangriffe* [des Feindes] insbesondere am linken Fluegel 17 Armee u. im Raum Wlodzimierz bei **6 Armee**. Feind fuehrt anscheinend mot.Reserven aus Raum Shitomir auf Styr u. westl. davon. . . Am Pruth Feind bisher rein defensiv.

Gesamteindruck: Feind hat sich nach Ueberwindung erster Ueberraschung sich gestellt u. nimmt Kampf an. Eigene Luftwaffe beherrscht am **22.6.** den Raum.

2.) Erreichte Ziele u. Raeume:

[See text for details for each army.]

3.) Kraefftegliederung:

17 Armee: 100 lei.Div. 49 Geb.K. unterstellt.
Befh.rueck.H.Geb. 103 mit **454** spaeter auch **444 Sich.Div.**, A.O.K. 17 unter-stellt.¹⁷⁰

4.) Absicht:

H.Gr. wird Feind zupacken wo er sich stellt, am Wegkommen verhindern u. durch Angriff vernichten.

11 Armee bleibt defensiv erweitert oertl. Brueckenkoepfe ueber Pruth u. bindet hierdurch Feind.

¹⁶⁸ **Note:** Possibility of a Soviet counterattack via Uhnou appears to be an issue which had AGS seriously concerned.

¹⁶⁹ **Note:** **11 PD** of **48 PzK** drove deep into Soviet territory on this first day of the war.

¹⁷⁰ **Note:** The “*Kriegsgliederung*” in K. Mehner shows that both of this security divisions were controlled by **52 AK** on **22.6.41**.

17 Armee soll durch fruehzeitigen Durchstoss auf Lemberg den an der Karpathenfront stehenden Feind vom Rueckzug nach Osten abschneiden.

6 Armee strebt wie bisher an, Masse der Pz.Gr. vor ihre Front zu setzen u. aus der Tiefe zu [naehern].

Zusammenfassung:

Der Verlauf des ersten Kampftages uebertrifft durch das **volle Gelingen der taktischen Ueberraschung** die Erwartungen des Oberkommandos der H.Gr. Fuer die Weiterfuehrung der Operation im grossen sind *guenstige Voraussetzungen bei Herr u. Luftwaffe geschaffen*.

Fuer den **23.6.** rechnet das Oberkommando der H.Gr. mit *zaehen oertl. Widerstand des Feindes*, ferner mit dem Eingreifen mot.mech.Kraefte, die aus dem Raum von Shitomir herangefuehrt werden. Das Oberkommando der H.Gr. glaubt, dass es der **17 Armee** am **23.6.** gelingen wird, die feindl. Abwehr im Grenzraum nach Behebung der *oertl. Krisis am linken Fluegel des 4 AK* taktisch endgueltig zu durchbrechen. Im Raum der **6 Armee** wird das Gelingen des Durchbruchs des **48 AK (mot.)** erwartet, dagegen wird bei **3 AK (mot.)** die Weiterfuehrung des Durchbruchsstosses erst nach Behebung der dort am 22. abends entstandenen *oertlichen Krise* u. Durchkaempfen der wahrscheinlichen Schlacht mit den feindl. mot.Kraeften moeglich sein. . .

(T-311, Roll 260, *KTB H.Gr.Sued*)

--**22.6.41:** Dann zeigten die Uhren auf **3.15**. Hunderte von Geschuetzen aller Kaliber . . . Noch im Rauschen der Granaten ueberflogen die Kampf- u. Jagdstaffeln der *Luftwaffe* die Grenze. Doch als sich das eigene Artl.-Feuer nach rueckwaerts verlegte, stuermtten Infanteristen u. Pioniere vor. Die Maenner mit den *schwarzen Kragenspiegeln* [collar patches of the Pioniere?] hatten in den ersten Stunden des neuen Tages die *Schlauchboote u. Floesse* ins Ufergebuesch gezerrt u. ruderten nun die ersten Stosstruppen ueber die Grenzfluesse. Die **6** u. **17 Armee** waren **3.15** Uhr zwischen Wlodawa am Bug¹⁷¹ u. der ungarischen Grenze zum Angriff angetreten. (W. Haupt, *Die Schlachten der H.Gr.Sued*, 16, 21)

--**22.6.41:** The situation for AGS would develop quite differently [than for the other two army groups]. In the Ukraine, the *Wehrmacht* had *bitten granite* because the Red Army was better equipped w/ the latest-model wpns, including **T-34** tanks and **MiG-3** acft, which the Germans scarcely encountered on other fronts and had not expected to encounter at all. In a review of the situation on **24 Jun 41**, Hitler told Jodl, the armed forces chief of operations, that the *strong Soviet resistance in the Ukraine was confirmation of his belief that Stalin had intended to invade Rumania and the Balkans sooner or later* and showed further that Moscow had assigned the protection of Ukraine the *highest priority*. (Fugate & Dvorestky, *Thunder on the Dnepr*, 137)

--**22.6.41:** In the northwest Ukraine, Rundstedt's AGS had almost *undisputed air superiority*, and diversionists¹⁷² were particularly active in the Red Army rear, *cutting telephone and rail commu-*

¹⁷¹ **Note:** In the *Generalgouvernement* [sp?].

¹⁷² **Note:** Strange term. Much prefer saboteurs.

nications so that there was some confusion and loss of control on the Soviet side of the frontier. The Germans used more **native born diversionists** in the Ukraine than elsewhere. Canaris of the *Abwehr* sponsored a Ukrainian nationalist organization known as **Bergbauernhilfe**, composed mainly of Ukrainian Galicians. *A number of armed units were raised . . .* There were a number of *civil uprisings* in the Red Army rear particularly in the area of L'vov, these being suppressed by the Red Army and NKVD w/ the *greatest barbarity*. (Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 135, also 135, f.n. 10)

--22.6.41 (Uffz. Hans Becker):¹⁷³

My first impressions [of Russia] were of a *uniformly brutish and impoverished people, near to beasts than men*. Certainly they **fought like a pack of hungry wolves**. . .

As soon as war w/ Russia broke loose towards the end of **Jun 41** I found myself on the eastern front encountering what seemed to be a **different and terrible race of men**. The very first attacks involved sharp, fierce fighting. The blood of invader and invaded soaked together into the thirsty soil of Mother Russia; she drank our blood and we *gashed her face w/ our gunfire*. The wounded cried aloud for help from the medical orderlies while the rest of us pressed forward. "On, on!" was the frantic order and we had no time to glance back. Like demons our officers drove us eastward, each one determined to be the first company or platoon commander to gain his decoration.

The great Panzer battle at Tarnopol was followed by another titanic struggle at Dubno, where we had no rest for three days or nights . . . [Becker is eventually wounded at Zhitomir.]

(H. Becker, *Devil on My Shoulder*, 22-23)

--22.6.41: Die H.Gr. Nord u. Mitte hatten ihre Pz.-Verbaende tief gestaffelt in vorderer Linie eingesetzt, denen die Ueberwindung des meist schwachen Widerstandes rasch gelang. Nur die H.Gr.Sued, die einen starken Feind in Grenznaehe zu durchstossen hatte, setzte im Schwergewicht am Bug noerdl. von Lemberg (L'vov) vorerst **nur eine Pz.-Div. ein**.¹⁷⁴ Erst in den folgenden Tagen gelang es durch Zufuehrung weiterer gepanzerter Verbaende, den Angriffskeil der **1 PzGr** in zaehen Kaempfen in Richtung Osten voranzutreiben. Allerdings sah sich das Oberkommando der H.Gr.Sued gezwungen, zunaechst die massierten Feindkraefte im Raum Lemberg – Tarnopol – Rowno zu schlagen, ehe man zum Durchbruch in Richtung Kiew u. Schitomir ansetzte. Doch der Gegner reagierte prompt. (Magenheimer, *Moskau 1941*, 38-39)

--22.6.41: Once the invasion began, Kirponos's Southwest Front was *thrown into great confusion*. Moscow's **Directive No. 3**, of 22 Jun 41, ordering the Red Army to counterattack into enemy territory, probably had a *more harmful effect on Southwest Front than elsewhere*. . . In Kirponos's case the order to strike into the enemy rear at Lublin w/ **5** mechanized corps and all air strength – a scaled down version of the pre-war offensive plan – at least matched the balance of forces and the concentration of Russian armor. On paper, the **5** Soviet mechanized corps were

¹⁷³ **Note:** Uffz. Becker was commander of a **Pz IV** in a panzer division on southern front; in his book, he states he was posted to **12 PD**, but this cannot be correct. For **12 PD** belonged to **3 PzGr** on the central axis of the German advance. Becker was eventually taken prisoner in the Ukraine and spent several years in a Soviet prison camp. (22-27)

¹⁷⁴ **Note:** Not sure this is accurate. Confirm!

comparable to two or three panzer groups, and Southwest Front had three more mechanized corps in reserve. But preparation for this hasty counter-blow *distracted Kirponos* from what would have been the more sensible option of concentrating his armor for a mobile defense deeper in Soviet territory. (Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 76)

--22.6.41 [Soviet 15 Rifle Corps]:¹⁷⁵

In **Apr 41**, General I.I. Fedyuninsky (who was later to play a distinguished roll in the war—especially in breaking the Leningrad blockade) was appointed cdr of the **15 [Rifle Corps]** of the Special Kiev Military District, w/ his hq. in the West-Ukrainian town of Kovel, some **30** miles east of the border between the Soviet Union and German-occupied Poland. . . .¹⁷⁶

Although the famous Tass communiqué of **14 Jun 41** dismissed the rumors of Germany's aggressive intentions . . . Fedyuninsky reiterates that “it was *completely contrary to what we were able to observe in the frontier areas*, and he tells the story of how, on **18 Jun [41]**, a German deserter came over to the Russians. While drunk, he had hit an officer, and was afraid of being court-mar-tialled and shot; he also claimed his father was a communist. This German soldier declared that the German Army was going to invade Russia at **4 a.m. on 22 Jun [41]**.

Fedyuninsky promptly “phoned the local army cdr [i.e., **5 Army**] Tank General Potapov, but was told that the whole thing must be “a provocation,” and that “it was no use getting into a panic about such nonsense.” . . . In the early hours of **22 Jun 41**, Fedyuninsky was called over the telephone by Potapov, who ordered that the troops be ready for any emergency, but added that *ammunition had not yet been distributed*.

I had the impression that at Army Headquarters, they were still not quite sure that the Nazis had started a war.

The **15 [Rifle Corps]** was expected to hold a line about 60 miles wide.

We had to deploy our forces and occupy our defensive positions under constant shelling and air bombing. Communications were often broken and combat orders often reached the units w/ great delay. . . Nevertheless, our officers did not lose control, and we reached the defensive positions where the frontier guards had already, for several hours, been waging an unequal struggle. Even the wives of the frontier guards were *in the firing line*, carrying water and ammunition, and taking care of the wounded. Some of the women were *firing at the advancing Nazis* . . .

But the ranks of the frontier guards were melting away. Everywhere barracks and houses, set on fire by enemy shells, were blazing. The frontier guards were *fighting to the last man*; they knew that, in that misty dawn of **22 Jun [41]**, troops were speeding to their rescue.

¹⁷⁵ **Note:** This corps controlled two rifle divisions: **45** and **62 RD**.

¹⁷⁶ **Note:** Ha,ha! What a biased piece of writing—the Soviet border w/ German-occupied Poland? Had not the Red Army occupied eastern Poland?

Throughout that first day, Fedyuninsky's troops withstood the German onslaught, but the Germans threw in more and more new forces, and towards the evening, the Russians, having suffered very heavy losses, began to withdraw. . . In Kovel the ***Bandera gangs***, acting as a German fifth column, were causing havoc—attacking Russian army cars, blowing up bridges, and spreading false reports. As large German armored forces were approaching Kovel from the NW, along the Brest – Kovel road, it was decided to evacuate Kovel. Parts of the **15 RC** continued to fight, while already encircled by the Germans. Even so, in three days' fighting, the main forces of the corps had been pushed back only some **12-20** miles from the frontier. . .

(A. Werth, *Russia at War*, 146-48)

--22.6.41: Rokossovskiy's 9 Mechanized Corps:

The armored spearhead of Rundstedt's attack was Kleist's **1 PzGr**, which penetrated the Soviet **5 Army** in the Vladimir-Volynskiy area on the first day. When Kirponos received Directive No. 3 that evening, some of his forces were still ***400 km away from the Germans*** he was supposed to counter-attack and encircle, but he tried to carry out the instruction.

Rokossovskiy had received instructions from his army hq. at **0400** (Moscow time) on **22 Jun 41** to open the ***sealed envelope*** containing "*special secret*" plans, which could only be authorized by Stalin or Timoshenko. . . Mindful of the risks, then, he nevertheless opened the envelope. His corps was ordered to proceed NW to Rovno, Lusk and then Kovel. This, although Rokossovskiy did not know it at the time, would put it ***absolutely within 5 Army's axis of attack in the 15 May Zhukov pre-emptive strike plan.***

The original, 1968 Soviet edition of Rokossovskiy's memoirs had about **2200** words cut from the author's manuscript around this point, including most of those referring to the above events. In the complete, 2002 edition, they are highlighted. Among them:

Up to the beginning of the war our corps was up to half of its establishment for personnel, but had not received basic equipment: tanks and motor transport. Here, the stocks were no more than **30** per cent of the authorized strength. Some of the machinery had also broken down or was worn out by prolonged use. Put simply, the corps was ***unready for military operation as a mechanized unit in any form.*** There was no way the *Kiev Special Military District [KOVO] headquarters and the General Staff didn't know this.*

His corps was still forming up, but the sealed order treated it as if it was a fully equipped, honed strike force. The implication—and it is only implied, but rather strongly, is that *something was very odd*. The sealed orders ***had not been intended for 22 Jun 41.*** It is one of the ***strongest pieces of evidence in support of Pleshakov's thesis that the Soviets had switched on the 15 May pre-emptive strike plan, probably intended for 1942,*** for want of anything better. . .

(C. Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 199-200)

--22.6.41: Kleist was able to make a penetration w/ **1 PzGr** between the two Russian frontier armies (**5, 6**). The reaction of the Russian mechanized corps was piecemeal, despite the presence of at least *two effective commanders*, A.A. Vlasov and K.K. Rokossovskii, in the **4** and **9 Mech Corps**. (The first of these generals would be *hanged as a traitor in 1946*, the other – released from the GULAG in **1940** – became a Marshal and one of the Red Army's *two or three outstanding field commanders*.) Lack of preparation time, disrupted Soviet communications, and dispersed Red Army formations contributed to the failure, and so did the **low readiness state** of many units. *Large numbers of Russian vehicles broke down on the way to their assignments, or ran out of fuel or ammunition.* Soviet coordination was weak. (Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 76-77)

--22.6.41: Pjotr Dubina 1922 (Luginy bei Shitomir):¹⁷⁷

Am fruhen Morgen des 22. Juni 1941 stand ich auf Posten, bewaffnet mit einem 7.62 mm Mosin-Gewehr der Bauart 1891. . .

Also, ich stand auf Posten u. dachte an die Pruefung, die mir am kommenden Montag bevorstand. Da hoerte ich *lauter werdende Motorengeräusche*. An dem durch die aufziehende Morgenroete leicht gefaerbten naechtlichen Himmel zaehlte ich einige Dutzend von schweren Flugzeugen, die aus dem Westen in Richtung Kiew ueber mich hinwegflogen. Friedlich u. hoch, als ob eine Schar Wildgaense oder Kraniche zoenen, monotonen Brummen. Ihre Erkennungszeichen waren nicht zu sehen, doch der Motorenlaerm schien mir ungewoehnlich fremd zu sein . . . [see text]

Etwa gegen 9 Uhr sahen wir alle noch mehrere deutsche Bomber hoch ueber uns, die in Keilformationen nach Richtung Osten zogen, diesmal mit Jagdschutz. Einer der Jaeger stiess steil herab u. setzte unsere **Po-2** Maschine in Brand, die auf dem Rollfeld stand. Nun wurde uns klar, dass es sich nicht um eine Uebung handelte. . . [See text for more details.]

(Kempowski, *Das Echolot*, 28-29)

--22.6.41: On the first day of the attack the enemy seemed to be *completely surprised along the entire front*. Neither the tactical leadership nor measures taken by higher commands of the Red Army indicated a readiness for battle on short notice. German and Romanian forces were able to penetrate the enemy's most forward positions. Even the Romanians were able to *capture bridgeheads on their section of the Prut front*. Halder's view that no enemy attack was to be expected there and his plan to reorganize Eleventh Army for an attack to the NE as early as **24 Jun 41** were thus confirmed.¹⁷⁸ But it was not yet possible to obtain a clear picture of Soviet intentions—whether to hold the area near the frontier under all circumstances or to withdraw. After the initial surprise, however, Soviet resistance also stiffened considerably in this sector. Counterattacks w/ large forces *significantly slowed the progress of the German advance*. In contrast to the thrusts of the armored units of the two army groups further north, the advance by **1 PzGr** to the Styr between Dubno – Lutsk had to be carried out against *frontally defending Soviet units, which mounted dangerous attacks on the German flanks*. The infantry divisions of Seventeenth Army

¹⁷⁷ **Note:** Seit 1940 freiwillig bei der Roten Armee, bis 1944 als Flugzeugtechniker . . . (709)

¹⁷⁸ **Note:** Even though Eleventh Army and the Romanians did not take part in the main attack, they still conducted minor operations to seize bridgeheads, etc. on **22.6.41**. (See also, Halder War Diary, **22.6.41** for confirmation.)

attacking in the direction of L'voy also made only *comparatively slow progress*.¹⁷⁹ (GSWW, Vol. IV:549)

--**22.6.41:** Early on 22 June, the leading elements of Kleist's **1 PzGr** lunged eastward across the Western Bug river into and thru the forward positions of Potapov's **5 Army**, followed closely by the infantry of Reichenau's **6 Army**. When Col.-Gen. M.P. Kirponos, Southwestern Front commander, received Dir. No. 3 on the night of 22-23 June, his units were still assembling from garrisons as much as 400km away and had to move forward under near-constant German air attacks. Nevertheless, on 22 June and for four days thereafter, Kirponos steadfastly resolved to implement the major counterstroke mandated by the directive. . . However, circumstances forced Kirponos to commit his forces piecemeal . . . and in less than coordinated fashion. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 47, 50)

--**22.6.41:** Gefreiter Erich Kuby, sitting in his Horch vehicle on the edge of a wood, observed: „it was a beautiful morning, cool and clear, w/ dew on the meadows.“ Following the hustle and bustle of the previous week, the „calm before the storm lay over the land.“ Hardly a single vehicle was moving in his sector. All lay motionless awaiting the attack. After receiving the order to drive forward, Kuby noticed the *emerging dawn*. „The **sky was yellow and red**, the outline of the woods silhouetted in black and presently also the Panzers, waiting in long lines.“ The *tranquility of the scene*, w/ battle shockingly imminent, made a deep impression. (*E. Kuby*,¹⁸⁰ *Mein Krieg*, 106-07; quoted in: Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 35)

--**22.6.41:** At first sign of dawn, our company passed the boundary line and came under attack. And the first man who needed my help—as priest, for he was beyond medical help—was my dear friend and brother who had so vitally alive only a few moments before, and so anxious to survive in order to rebuild a *world gone mad*. *Brother Fichter* [see above, entry for 21.6.41, Section 1.3.1] had been struck by a shell. His head was shattered and his brains spilled out like water, even while his body was alive... (*Embattled Witness*, *B. Haering*, 6)¹⁸¹

--**22.6.41:** Offizier Udo von Alvensleben (Zamosk) (**16 PD**):

Wir sind seit 1939 gewohnt, es meist mit einem schnell weichenden Feind zu tun zu haben. Jetzt stossen wir zum ersten Mal auf einen *Gegner, der haertesten Widerstand leistet*. Die **16 PD** rueck von Ozarow bis Bilgoraj vor. . . [see text for more details]

(Kempowski, *Das Echolot*, 31-32)

--**22.6.41:** Oblt. Iwan Kowaljow 1916 (am Pruth):

Am 22. Juni 1941 um 4 Uhr began unsere Bekanntschaft mit der *Luftwaffe* von Reichsmarschall Göring, mit der Luftwaffe, die im grossen u. ganzen ueber 1200 unserer Flugzeuge auf ihren Flugplaetzen mit einem Schlag vernichtete. Dadurch eroberten die Deutschen die *Vorherrschaft in der Luft* blitzartig u. hatten fuer ihr

¹⁷⁹ **Note:** Some of this verbiage, I believe, is more germane to days immediately following **22.6.41**.

¹⁸⁰ **Note:** Kuby was w/ Army Group South. (35)

¹⁸¹ **Note:** Not sure which army group Häring served with; however, on page 11 he notes his unit is fighting at Kharkov in Oct 41. Häring was a Redemptorist Catholic priest who served as a medic on the eastern front. He found personal liberation thru his informal ministry during the war (in totalitarian regime) & man's goodness & God's redemption in people on both sides. He notes that many soldiers were *suspicious of military chaplains*, who were sometimes seen as *too obedient* to Nazi authorities.

Heer volle Freiheit. Die Fuehrung unserer Truppe war *voellig demoralisiert*. Niemand kannte die wahre Lage an der Grenze. Das Trommelfeuer der feindl. Artillerie beim Einmarsch, die ***Sabotage deutscher Sondergruppen in Uniform der Roten Armee*** verursachten einen *kolossal*en u. *nicht wiedergutzumachenden Schaden*.

(Kempowski, *Das Echolot*, 36)

--As elsewhere along the line, almost complete tactical surprise is achieved [on 22 June], and by noon the border areas have been sufficiently cleared for v. Kleist to move his **1 PzGr** to the attack. Protected on both flanks by v. Reichenau's **6 Army**, Kleist's tanks thrust rapidly forward, reaching the Styr River on 24 June and taking Dubno the next day (25.6.41). (*Howell, Soviet Partisan Movement*, 28)

--**22.6.41:** At **0300** hours on 22 June the last train out of the USSR crossed the San River at Przemysl into Greater Germany. From his new CP at Ternopol, Kirponos ordered units forward under cover of darkness. . . NKVD border troops moved from their barracks to their advanced positionis. . . Reconnaissance troops of the **101 Light Inf.-Div.** and commandos from **Inf.-Rgt. 800** – Brandenburgers – rushed the Przemysl bridge over the San that morning. They failed in the face of alerted Soviet defenses but regular infantry secured the crossing later in the day. Further north the **3 PzK** opened the invasion with a barrage of **300** artillery pieces. Opposite L'vov assault guns supported the **1 Mt. Div.'s** attack against **97 Rifle Div.** Kirponos reacted immediately by ordering the **15** and **8 Mech. Corps** against **48 PzK**. Their reaction was piece-meal; **8 Corps** units were garrisoned up to 300 miles from the fighting. The Southwest Front put the **22 Mech Corps** in motion while the commander of **9 Mech. Corps**, Rokossovky, moved on his own initiative. . . At 1300 hours, Stalin dispatched Zhukov to Ternopol. *Luftwaffe* air superiority meant that he had to drive much of the way and didn't arrive until late in the night. Army Group South's *relative slowness* allowed him and Kirponos time to fine-tune their defenses. Fortunately, Zhukov gave Kirponos on-the-spot approval to the latter's counterattack plan to blunt the German assault. (Kirchubel, *Operation Barbarossa (I)*, 32-33)

--**22.6.41:** Kirponos (Southwestern Front) receives orders from Moscow "to proceed w/ the original invasion plan." Stalin orders him to hold the Hungarian border, while launching an offensive into Poland. Lublin was to be captured by the 24th. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 49-50)

--**22.6.41:** Kleist's armor crossed the frontier north of Lemberg [L'vov] supported by infantry of Sixth Army. *Tactical surprise was achieved along the entire front*. German and Soviet sources alike confirm the general impression of *Soviet unpreparedness*. The frontier forces were surprised in their quarters. Soviet acft stood covered on their landing fields. The bunker positions, not yet completed, were only partially occupied by Soviet troops. Whenever the Russians did succeed in weathering the initial shock of invasion, they fought with dogged determination. (C. Luther, "German Armoured Operations in the Ukraine 1941," 455; 465, f.n. 10; also, Oberst P.A. Shilin *Die Wichtigsten Operationen, "Kampfhandlungen in der Ukraine,"* 113; Halder, *KTB*, Vol. 2, 3; *Ia KTB, Pz. AOK 1.*)

--**22.6.41:** Rundstedt's AGS, its left flank launched against Kirponos's Southwestern Front w/ the Sixth and Seventeenth Armies, collided w/ *much more solid resistance*. At Chelm, SE of Lublin, German combat engineers had bridged the Bug; near Krystonopol, German troops had another crossing. By noon, although the Red Army managed to check the enemy infantry attacks, tanks and motorized forces moved through the first breaches; the first echelons of the Soviet **5** and **6**

Armies had managed, however, more or less successfully to man their pill-boxes and fire points. Fedyuninskii's **15 RC** (Potapov's **5 Army**) held the line from Vlodava to Vladimir-Volynsk; late in the day, w/ the divisions suffering losses, the left flank *began to buckle* in on Vladimir – Volynsk. For the moment, but not for long, the right flank (adjoining Western Front) held, though there was *no firm contact w/ Korobkov's 4 Army*.

The most *ominous German pressure*, however, came at the junction of the two Soviet armies, aimed at the gap between the Vladimir – Volynsk and Strumilov “fortified districts.” Both **5** and **6 Army** commanders, Potapov and Muzychenko, *committed their armored forces without delay* – Maj.-Gen. S.M. Kondrusev's **22 MC (5 Army)** and Maj.-Gen. A.A. Vlasov's **4 MC (6 Army)**. At Przemysl, where Stülpnagel's Seventeenth Army had cut into the Soviet defenses, by **18.00** hours the major part of the town had fallen, but Col. Demytyev's **99 RD** launched a counter-attack one hour later. For the moment, the Germans had failed to lift the lid to the approach to L'vov. On the Lutsk – Kiev axis, however, in spite of the hard fighting of **5** and **6 Armies**, German troops had *pushed some 15-17 miles into the Soviet defenses*. The threat of a deep pen-etration – and with it, the outflanking of the main Soviet forces from the north – was clearly developing. Kirponos recognized this, and resolved to *attack the flanks of Kleist's 1 PzGr w/ every available armored formation* – **8, 9, 15, 19, and 22 MC**. While one great tank battle loomed u in the northwest, a *second projected itself in the south*. (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 131)

--**22.6.41 (32 TD / 4 Mech Corps)**:¹⁸²

One of the most junior officers in the divisions under Vlasov's command was Lt. Pavel Gudz. Twenty-one years old and newly commissioned, w/ the *face of a girl and a gentle voice* . . . [After finishing his training w/ distinction] Gudz was commissioned as a lieutenant [second lieutenant?] on **10 Jun 41** . . . Two days later he and **20** other young officers were sent to the Kiev Military District. He was assigned to the **32 Tank Division** in L'vov. The division had **300 KV-1** tanks [confirm!] and was commanded by Colonel Pushkin. . .

[Before start of Operation *Barbarossa*] the **32 TD** had been ordered by Kirponos to check the state of the roads between L'vov and the frontier, on the grounds that they had been damaged by heavy rain. There was no trace of rain: it was a cover story to allow the officers of the division to patrol up to the frontier along the likely German line of attack. This was another of Kirponos' discreet measures to ensure that Southwestern Front was not entirely unprepared when war came.

Gudz was given command of the regimental Hq. platoon, which consisted of five KV tanks, two T-34s, two armored cars, and four motorbikes. . . On Saturday, **21 Jun 41**, he was the regimental duty officer. That evening, as the sun was setting, a German acft flew over the town and left w/o being fired upon. As dawn broke the next morning [**22.6.41**], German planes appeared overhead and attacked the L'vov airport. The Soviet acft *were lined up wing-tip to wing-tip*, and Gudz could see them burning. Some of the German acft peeled off to bomb the barracks of the **32 TD**, and a couple of bombs hit the maintenance shops.

¹⁸² **Note:** According to map in map volume of *GSWW*, the only German panzer unit in area appears to be **11 PD**. So, **32 TD** in action against **11 PD**? Try to confirm!

On his own initiative, Gudz called out the troops, even though one of the senior sergeants warned him not to: “Stalin says there will be no war.” Gudz replied, “Let’s go and fight.” Captain Yegorov [divisional chief-of-staff] and the battalion commander, Captain Khorin, supported him. The division set out for the frontier w/ Gudz and his Hq. platoon at their head. [!]¹⁸³

The Germans started bombing the column. German troops deployed ahead of them. Khorin ordered Gudz to attack. . . A shell from a German AT gun bounced off the tank’s hvy armor. . . Gudz, who was the tank’s gunner as well as its commander, fired a single shot in return and the gun was destroyed. He had his platoon went on to ***knock out five German tanks, three armored personnel carriers and several cars***. The Germans retreated, but Gudz was told not to pursue them across the frontier.

The platoon then set out to rescue some Soviet infantry that had been surrounded. They were too late—all were dead, including a nurse who had evidently been *shot in cold blood* as she was bandaging a wounded soldier.

After lunch the Germans attacked again. Gudz ***knocked out three more tanks***. His driver, Galkin, ***rammed another German tank***, dislodging its caterpillar track and forcing it into a ditch. The ***fields were covered w/ burned-out tanks and dead Germans***. The weather was so hot that the fields of corn caught fire under the shelling, and the corpses swelled up almost immediately.

But the Germans continued to push ahead. Within days the division was forced to retreat—first to L’vov and then to Kiev. . .

(R. Braithwaite, *Moscow 1941*, 82-84)

--22.6.41 (Zhukov to Southwest Front Hq.):

At **16.00** Zhukov had left Stalin’s office and boarded a plane for Kiev, where he met Khrushchev, the First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party – effectively its Viceroy. Zhukov and Khrushchev then drove—it was too dangerous to fly—to Kirponos’ Hq. at Ternopol. Zhukov arrived there late in the evening, and, when he eventually obtained a phone, called Moscow. He was told about Directive No. 3, timed at **21.15**, to which ***his name had been appended, even though he knew nothing about it***. Zhukov swallowed his anger, and confirmed the order to Kirponos. Kirponos hoped to ***attack the German thrust from both sides w/ 3 mechanized corps on each—3700 tanks in all***. This grandiose vision for an operational counterstroke obviously appealed to Zhukov, but it proved impossible to implement in practice. Initially, Kirponos ordered **22 MC** to attack from the north and **15 MC** from the south, but by the end of **23 Jun 41** it had only been possible to commit a part of **10 TD**.

(C. Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 200-01)

¹⁸³ **Note:** Wow! What an amazing act of initiative for a raw, 21-year-old kid!

--22.6.41 (General Riabyshev / 8 Mechanized Corps):¹⁸⁴

An avowed cavalryman, Lt.-Gen. Riabyshev had always trusted horses more than tanks. Only a year earlier he had been in charge of a cavalry corps. . . He spent the morning at the corps' compound in Drogobych, waiting for orders from **6 Army** C-in-C. Meanwhile, the Germans kept up a ferocious bombing of **8 MC**. At **10:00** a.m., a messenger arrived: by the end of the day, Riabyshev's men were to relocate to the woods west of Sambor, which lay very close to the border, which meant that they would soon be in contact w/ German tanks. No evacuation of civilians had been ordered, so the officers were forced to *leave their families in the compound*, which was now blazing but only a few hours earlier had been a secure base and a comfortable home.

The **50-mile** stretch to Sambor proved stressful. The corps, w/ **30,000** men and an awkward assortment of **932** tanks . . . Only **169** of the eight kinds of tanks were the new KVs and T-34s. The older tanks couldn't go more than **300** miles w/o needing repairs, and **197** of them already had serious mechanical problems. Most of the tanks used gasoline – three different kinds of gasoline – but **171** had to have diesel fuel. The tanks' guns were equally diverse: there were five models, demanding five different kinds of shells. To boost morale, the commissars *printed bellicose slogans on the sides of the tanks*. . . The corps soon met their first refugees . . . Many houses along the road had been blasted by German bombs, and several times the soldiers saw dead children lying in the rubble.

(**Note:** See map, p 170, re: “The odyssey of **8 MC**. . .”)

[During the march] bridges collapsed under the weight of the vehicles and the heat caused the tank wheels to tear up the road, making it almost impassable for those in the rear.

When they finally reached the woods at Sambor, they stopped and stared. The trees looked as if they had been hit by a monster thunderstorm and were *burned, bruised, and felled*. Obviously, the *Luftwaffe* had been looking for Soviet troops there. The *devastation frightened Riabyshev's men*. “A hurricane of steel,” somebody muttered.

But Riabyshev didn't have time to contemplate the destruction. He had received a report saying that only **700** of its tanks were ready for battle, since nearly **200** had been lost during the march.

A messenger from Kirponos then showed up unexpectedly, with an order that made *no sense at all*. It instructed Riabyshev to go back to Drogobych and on to the capital of western Ukraine, L'voy, immediately. The exhausting march of **22 Jun 41** had been just a warm-up exercise. Now the corps had to cover another 75 miles.

[See text for more details!]

¹⁸⁴ **Note:** Experiences of **8 MC** on *Barbarossatag* mirror in microcosm the chaos, disorder and futility of the day on the Soviet side!

(C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 168-71)¹⁸⁵

--22.6.41: Glantz' overview:

Early on 22 June, the leading divisions of Kleist's **1 Panzer Group** lunged eastward across the Western Bug river into and through the forward positions of Potapov's **5 Army**, followed closely by the infantry of Reichenau's Sixth Army. When General Kirponos received Directive No. 3 on the night of 22-23 June, his units were still assembling from garrisons as much as 400 km (240 miles) away and had to move forward under near-constant German air attacks. Nevertheless, on 22 June and for four days thereafter, Kirponos steadfastly resolved to implant the *major counterstroke mandated by the directive*. To strengthen his resolve, Stalin dispatched Zhukov to direct Kirponos' operations on the spot. However, circumstances forced Kirponos to *commit his forces piecemeal*, often in hasty attacks from the march which struck the *flanks of the German penetration* in less than coordinated fashion.

Initially, Kirponos ordered his **22** and **15 Mech Corps** to strike the northern and southern flanks of the penetrating German force and restore the border defenses. However, by late on 23 June Karpezo, the **15 Mech Corps** commander, was only able to commit a weak forward detachment from his **10 Tank Div.** into battle. . .

By late on 26 June, Kleist's panzer group was ideally positioned to conduct a pursuit through Rovno to Kiev, the industrial and political center of the Ukraine. By this time, however, Kirponos had finally been able to assemble sufficient forces to *conduct a concerted counterstroke* . . .

Despite all the problems, the counterstroke north and south of Dubno began on 26 June, producing a *tank battle of unprecedented proportions* (over **2000** tanks fought along a **70 km** (42-mile) front. . .

This fierce if costly and unsuccessful Soviet counteroffensive *delayed AGS for at least a week*, helping to create a situation that later tempted Hitler to redirect part of AGC away from Moscow in order to secure the Ukraine. . .

(*Barbarossa 1941*, 47, 50-51)

--22.6.41: Hr.Gr.Sued:

¹⁸⁵ **Note:** In his account, Chris Bellamy writes: "In the confusion of **22 Jun 41**, **8 MC** had initially been ordered forward from its base at Drogobych to Sambor, across the River Dnestr. As w/ Rokossovskiy's orders, this very early move into the teeth of the oncoming tiger could have been ordered as *part of the pan-icked and now pointless implementation of the pre-emptive strike plan*. It was the beginning of a **500-km** odyssey that must rank high in the annals of the futility of war. By the time Ryabyshev's corps would finally meet the enemy near Brody on **25 Jun 41**, *half its tanks had broken down or otherwise been lost*. After a **10-hour** march, Ryabyshev and his men were told to turn round and head back to Drogobych. They arrived to find their *families, some of them dead, in the flaming ruins of the barracks* which had been attacked by German acft. Then the corps was order to L'vov, the capital of western Ukraine. They got there on the morning of **24 Jun 41**, and were *ambushed by Ukrainian partisans of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists sniping at them from the rooftops*." (*Absolute War*, 201)

Taktische Ueberraschung u. Uebergang ueber San u. Bug ueberall gelungen. Im Laufe des Tages zunehmender gruppenweiser Widerstand des Feindes, der sich *oertlich zaeh schlaegt*. Gegen Abend zum Teil *starke Gegenangriffe*, insbesondere am linken Fluegel der 17.Armee u. im Raum Wlodimierz bei 6.Armee. Anscheinend fuehrt Feind mot. Reserven aus Raum Shitomir auf Styr u. westl. davon heran. . . Am Pruth bisher *rein defensives Verhalten* des Feindes.

Gesamteindruck: Feind hat sich gestellt, nach Ueberwindung der ersten Ueber- raschung nimmt er den Kampf an.

Eigene *Luftwaffe* beherrschte am 22.6. den Raum. . .

Es haben erreicht: [See text for details!]

(*Tagesmeldungen der O.-Abteilung des GenStdH*, in: *KTB OKW*, 490)

--22.6.41: Der erste Angriffstag ergab den Eindruck, dass *der Russe vor der H.Gr.Sued noch staerker war als angenommen*. Er wurde straff gefuehrt. Er hatte sich nach Ueberwindung der ersten Ueberraschung an der Grenze zum Kampf gestellt, zaeh verteidigt u. wider Erwarten schnell Gegenstoesse gegen die deutschen Angriffsspitzen angesetzt. Die Grenze war ueberall in grosser Tiefe ausgebaut. Nur einige der vordersten Stuetzpunkte hatten sich kampflös ergeben. Der Suedfluegel der Angriffskraefte bei **17 Armee** hing durch die fast **400 km breite Luecke** im Karpathenraum in der Luft. Und die weit abgesetzte **11 Armee** blieb am operativen Geschehen unbeteiligt, wenn sie auch durch ihr Dasein feindl. Kraefte band. (C. Wagener, *Heeresgruppe Sued*, 50)

--22./23.6.41: When General Kirponos received Directive No. 3 on the night of **22/23 Jun 41**, his units were *still assembling from garrisons as much as 400 km (240 miles) away* and had to move forward under *near constant German air attack*. Nevertheless, on **22 Jun 41**, and for four days thereafter, Kirponos *steadfastly resolved to implement the major counterstroke mandated by the directive*. To strengthen his resolve, Stalin dispatched Zhukov to direct Kirponos' operations on the spot. With Zhukov's approval, Kirponos planned to *attack the German penetration from the north and south w/ two shock groups of three mechanized corps each, with a total of 3700 tanks*. However, circumstances forced Kirponos to *commit his forces piecemeal*, often in hasty attacks from the march that struck the flanks of the German penetration in *less than coordinated fashion*. (For more details see, D. Glantz, *Atlas and Operational Summary. The Border Battles*, 25-26)

--ab **22.6.41**: In the south, Russians put up more effective resistance. There Col. Gen. M.P. Kirponos, had undertaken elementary precautions in last days of peace by mobilizing and redeploying his forces to more defensible positions. In first days of campaign, he assembles **6** mech. corps to attack the flank of *Gen.Obst. Ewald v. Kleist's 1 PzGr*. From the beginning, Kleist's tanks found the going tough. A series of *fierce frontier battles* take place as **1 PzGr** struggles to achieve a breakthrough. While its advance eventually threatens several Soviet armies w/ encirclement, they manage to successfully pull back to the old frontier (although losing much equipment in process). (W. Murray, *War to be Won*, 124)

--ab **22.6.41**: GFM v. Runstedt and the commander of his **1 PzGr** had *drawn the most difficult position of the campaign*. The Russian southern front, protecting the Ukrainian grain areas, had

been organized in particular strength and w/ great care. Col.-Gen. Kirponos, commander of Soviet Southwest Front, had deployed his four armies in two groups in *considerable depth*. *Well-camouflaged lines of pillboxes, hvy field artillery positions, and cunning obstacles* turned the first German lead across the frontier into a costly operation. The divisions of Seventeenth Army had to nibble their way through the lines of pillboxes before L'vov and Przemysl. Sixth Army crossed the Styr in face of stubborn opposition. When Kleist had succeeded in breaking through east of L'vov and the vehicles w/ the white "K" were about to mount their blitzkrieg offensive, Kirponos instantly would block development of large-scale operations and the encirclement of Soviet forces. With armored units rapidly brought up he launched strong counter-attacks and struck heavily at the spearheads of the advancing German divisions. . . After **10** days of very fierce fighting Rundstedt's armored divisions had *penetrated 60 miles into enemy territory*. . . A strong enemy was offering stubborn but elastic resistance. Kirponos succeeded in evading the planned German encirclement north of the Dniester and in taking his troops back, still in an unbroken front, to the strongly-fortified Stalin Line to both sides of Mogilev. Rundstedt had thus not succeeded in achieving the planned large-scale breakthrough. The timetable for AGS had been upset. (P. Carell, *Hitler Moves East*, 37-40)

--**22.-30.6.41** (Kirponos's Countermeasures): [In sector of AGS] the Red Army was engaged in agonizing battles to check the German thrusts. The weight of the German attack fell upon the left wing, w/ Kiev as its objective. At once the Soviet **5** and **6 Armies** were involved in hvy fighting on what was now Kirponos's Southwestern Front. Offensives against the **26** and **12 Armies** had *not yet materialized*; in the Odessa Military District, Tyulenev's **9 Army** formed itself into the Southern Front. Kirponos quickly took action to organize counterattacks to check the German advance against his right flank. To the NE and NW of Rovno, the **19** and **9 MC** were moved up from the interior, together w/ a rifle corps. The **8 MC** (detached from **26 Army**) and the **37 RC** (advanced from the interior) were moved on Brody. For the Rovno area attacks, however, *no unified command was established*. Already the **22 MC** (**5 Army**) had suffered hvy losses in counterattack and fallen back on the Styr River. The **15 MC**, attacking from **22 Jun 41** in the direction of Radekhov (NE of L'vov), failed to achieve any substantial success and fell victim to the Luftwaffe. Only on **25 Jun 41** did advance units of **8 MC** reach Brody after a **400-km** march; on the 26th the corps went into action, but lacked contact w/ other formations and again the Luftwaffe tore much of the formation to pieces. . . The **9** and **19 MC** had begun their move toward the front on **22-23 Jun 41**, getting into action on the 25th. The combined forces of the mech. corps had been intended to strike coordinated blows at German spearheads in the area of Lutsk – Brody – Dubno, and to restore the situation created by the German irruption [sic] at the junction of the **5** and **6 Armies**. Halder on **26 Jun 41** recorded the Russian leadership on this front as "*energetic*," mounting flank and frontal attacks, slowing down the German advance and causing heavy losses. . . The Russian effort against AGS elicited from Halder the remark that Kirponos's command "*one must admit, is doing a pretty good job*." . . . On **30 Jun 41**, Kirponos was ordered to withdraw his forces to the fortified positions of the **1939** Soviet-Polish frontier. [That] evening, Kirponos accordingly gave the order to fall back. (J. Erickson, *The Soviet High Command*, 596-97)

-- **22.-30.6.41**: The summer 1941 campaign in the Ukraine took a different form than the fighting in Belorussia. Southwestern Army Group [Front] under General Kirponos put up a much stouter initial resistance than the defenders of Belorussia, mounting large-scale armored counter-attacks in the Ukraine-Poland border zone. . . More important than the ability of the army group cdr was the greater strength of the Red Army in the Ukraine, relative to other Soviet theaters, and relative to the German invaders. It was Kirponos' good fortune that the largest concentration of the Red Army had been stationed in the Ukraine. The 1940-41 offensive strategy of the Red Army involved a possible thrust (or counter-thrust) into southern Poland from the Ukraine. As a result,

the Kiev Military District (the core of the wartime South-western Army Group) had been provided w/ the strongest forces. Kirponos had **960,000** personnel, **12,600** guns and mortars, **4800** tanks, and **1750** combat acft. . . Even Russian figures give their own forces in the Ukraine a **6:1** advantage over the Germans in tanks and a **2:1** advantage in acft.

All the same, once the invasion began, Kirponos' Southwestern Army Group was thrown into great confusion. Moscow's Directive No. 3, of 22 June 1941, ordering the Red Army to counter-attack into enemy territory, probably had a more harmful effect on Kirponos' forces than elsewhere. . . In Kirponos' case the order to strike into the enemy rear at Lublin w/ **5** mechanized corps and all air strength – a scaled-down version of the pre-war offensive plan – at least matched the balance of forces and the concentration of Russian armor. . . But preparation for this hasty counter-blow distracted Kirponos from what would have been the more sensible option of concentrating his armor for a mobile defense deeper in Soviet territory.

Rundstedt's armored cdr, Kleist, was able to make a penetration w/ **1 PzGr** between two Russian frontier armies (the **5** and **6 Armies**). The reaction of the Russian mechanized corps was piecemeal. . . Lack of preparation time, disrupted Soviet communications, and dispersed Red Army formations contributed to the failure, and so did the low readiness state of many units. Large numbers of Russian vehicles broke down on the way to their assignments, or ran out of fuel and ammunition. Soviet co-ordination was weak. The confused fighting in the western Ukraine – the same place where Tsarist general Brusilov had mounted his famous offensive against the Austro-Hungarians in 1916 – lasted for over a week. The biggest tank battle (so far) of the Second World War was fought out. In the end the huge Soviet force achieved nothing. On 30 June, the Stavka ordered Kirponos to fall back **125** miles to the pre-1939 border – and to the partially dismantled Stalin line. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East, 74-77*)

--**ab 22.6.41** [Soviet tank ops]: German reports reiterate Soviet lack of fuel and ammunition and repeatedly report Soviet tank crews unable to drive and maneuver their vehicles. . . Prisoners of war reports indicate that Soviet tank drivers had not received requisite driver training,¹⁸⁶ and their officers were totally unfamiliar w/ the terrain or the consequences of leaving the road in swampy regions. As a result, entire btns became helplessly mired in the mud and swamps. . . Example of Lt. H. Ritgen's [**6 PD**] experience on second day of war against Soviet tanks on outskirts of Raseiniai in Lithuania [H.Gr.Nord]: Soviet **KV** tanks ram his reconnaissance unit's lightly armored vehicles and, w/o firing a shot, run over and crush them in the mud of a nearby river bed. After hours of desperate combat, the Soviet tanks suddenly grind to a halt in an array of menacing, but immobile pillboxes. Over a period of two days, German sappers engage the immobile iron monsters one by one, blowing them up w/ satchel charges. Once the brave occupants of the tanks have been killed or captured, the Germans discover the tanks had run out of fuel and ammunition and had been ordered to „ram“ the opposing German tanks. Moreover, the guns on the Soviet **KVs** had not even been bore-sighted prior to battle. (*D. Glantz, Red Army Ground Forces, 27*)

--**22.6.-1.7.41**: Von Kleist's Panzer Group breaks thru without much difficulty on a **30-mile** gap along the boundary of Soviet **5** and **6 Armies** in the direction of Rovno; this axis lay across the concentration areas of some of the Soviet mech. corps. On 23 June begins a series of tank engagements between Luck and Rovno as **22, 9** and **19 Mech Corps** are drawn into the fighting. Thus, until 28 June, **1 PzGr** is fighting its way slowly forward in a series of local tactical battles instead of racing away, as had been hoped, toward deep strategic objectives. . . By 1 July, Army

¹⁸⁶ **Note:** A Soviet **8 MC** report prepared by the corps cdr, Maj-Gen D.I. Riabyshev, confirmed that **KV** and **T-34** tank drivers had only **3-5** hours driving training. (27-28)

Group South has reached the area of Rovno, Dubno and Krzemieniec. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 135-36)

--**23.6.41**: H.Gr.Sued: Der **23.6.** hat den Eindruck bestaetigt, dass Feind vor H.Gr. in erwarteter Staerke u. Gruppierung den Kampf im Grenzbereich angenommen hat u. **zaeh u. tapfer kaempft**. Es steht jedoch fest, dass aus dem Raum um Shitomir mot. Verbaende ueber Lueck herangefuehrt worden sind. . . (*KTB OKW*, 491)

--**23.6.41** (Kirponos's Counteroffensive begins): [Kirponos, O.B., Suedwest Front] befahl noch in der ersten Kriegsnacht die Bereitstellung seiner Panzer- u. mot-Brigaden zum Gegenangriff, um die vorgeprellten deutschen Angriffsspitzen abzuschneiden. Das **9** u. **19 MC** stellten sich NO Rowno bereit, das **8** u. **15 MC** beiderseits Brody u. das **4 MC** zwischen Sokal u. Radziechow. . . Die sowj. Panzerangriffe brachen am Morgen des zweiten Kriegstages los u. waren teilweise geschickt gegen die deutschen Flanken angesetzt. Die schweren Panzer vom Typ **KW-1** u. **KW-2** ueberrollten die vorgeprellten Inf.-Kpen. u. die **3,7cm** Pakgeschuetzte, die den Stahlkolossen unterlegen waren. Nur die schweren **8,8cm** Flakgeschuetze waren an diesem Tag die einzigen Waffen, die teilweise die gegnerischen Panzer bei Radziechow vernichten konnten. (W. Haupt, *Die Schlachten der H.Gr.Sued*, 23)

--**Jul 41**: Die H.Gr.Sued stand in der ersten Juliwoche auf gesamter Frontbreite vor der „Stalinlinie.“ Die z.T. mit Bunkern, z.T. mit Feldbefestigungen angelegte Linie von etwa Lachwa in den Pripjetsuempfen ueber Zwiahel – Berditschew – Prokurow – Kamenez-Podolsk war keine durchgehende Befestigungslinie. . . Der Angriff gegen diese Linie gestaltete sich oertlich verschieden. (W. Haupt, *Die Schlachten der H.Gr.Sued*, 28)

1.5.3: Seventeenth Army

--The assignment of Seventeenth Army (13 infantry divisions) called for a sharp push through the border defenses NW of Lemberg (L'vov); and, with the *Schwerpunkt* on its left flank, an advance to the SE along the axis L'vov – Winniza. (C. Luther, “*German Armoured Operations in the Ukraine 1941*,” f.n. 5.)

--Arrayed opposite L'vov was Seventeenth Army under Stülpnagel w/ **228,000** men. These forces were deployed between Schwedler's **4 AK**, Kübler's **49 Geb.K**, and Briezen's **52 AK**. (Taylor, *Barbarossa to Berlin. A Chronology*, 21-23)

--Seventeenth Army under General Carl Heinrich von Stülpnagel was to cut off the area around L'vov and later, under cover provided by **1 PzGr** and Sixth Army, to advance in the direction of Ternopol [sp?]¹⁸⁷ – Vinnitsa. (*GSWW*, Vol IV: 548)

--The Seventeenth Army (**3** corps of **13** divisions), led by Gen.Lt. Karl Heinrich von Stuelpnagel, had the mission of protecting the south flank of the Sixth Army by tying down and cutting off Soviet forces in the L'vov area in a single envelopment launched from the NW of the city. Stuelpnagel's objectives were Ternopol and ultimately the area of Vinnitsa. There the army was to stand in strength at the earliest possible moment. (Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, IV: 6-7)

--Gen.Lt. Stülpnagel: Als solcher wurde er am 20. April 1939 zum General der Infanterie befördert. Das Randienstalter wurde dabei auf den 1. April 1939 festgelegt. Am 30. Mai 1940

¹⁸⁷ **Note:** Or, „Tarnopol?“

wurde er zum Kommandierenden General des **II. Armeekorps** ernannt. Mit diesem nahm er dann am Westfeldzug gegen Frankreich teil. Dabei wurden ihm beide Spangen zu seinen Eisernen Kreuzen verliehen. Am 21. Juni 1940 gab er sein Kommando ab. Er wurde dafür zum Vorsitzenden der Waffenstillstandskommission in Wiesbaden ernannt. Am 20. Dezember 1940 wurde er zum Oberbefehlshaber der neuen **17. Armee** in Südpolen ernannt. Diese führte er dann bei Beginn des Ostfeldzuges beim Angriff auf Südrussland. Dabei wurde ihm am 21. August 1941 das Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes verliehen. Er ist dort auch durch Antisemitismus aufgefallen. Auf eigenen Wunsch wurde er im Herbst 1941 von seinem Kommando entbunden. Am 13. Februar 1942 wurde er zum Militärbefehlshaber Frankreich ernannt. Damit wurde er Nachfolger des **General der Infanterie Otto von Stülpnagel**. Dabei griff er bei Maßnahmen gegen den Widerstand mit aller Härte durch. Am 14. Februar 1944 wurde ihm das Deutsche Kreuz in Silber verliehen. Im Sommer 1944 war **er dann einer der führenden Köpfe des militärischen Widerstandes**. Nach dem Attentat am 20. Juli 1944 wurde in seinem Bereich die Pläne der Verschwörer umgesetzt. Als er feststellte, dass der Plan fehlgeschlagen war, bekam er von **Generalfeldmarschall von Kluge** den Rat unterzutauchen. Stülpnagel lehnte das aber ab, wurde aber seines Amtes enthoben. Er wurde daraufhin zur Berichterstattung nach Berlin befohlen. Auf dem Weg versuchte er sich bei Verdun das Leben zu nehmen. Dabei erblindete er. Im Lazarett in Verdun wurde er dann von der Gestapo verhaftet und nach Berlin gebracht. Er wurde dann aus der Wehrmacht ausgestoßen und vorm Volksgerichtshof am 30. August 1944 zum Tode verurteilt. Noch am gleichen Tag wurde er in der Haftstätte **Plötzensee gehängt**. (*Lexikon-der-Wehrmacht*)

--**Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa (31.1.41)**:¹⁸⁸

4. *Auftraege an die Heeresgruppen u. Armeen: . . .*

17. Armee wird nordwestl. Lemberg [L'vov] die feindl. Grenzverteidigung zu durchbrechen haben. Sie muss anstreben, durch scharfes Vortreiben ihres starken linken Fluegels den Feind in suedostw. Richtung zu werfen u. zu schlagen. Im uebrigen wird die Armee unter Ausnutzung des Vorgehens der Pz.Gr. fruehzeitig den Bereich um Winniza – Berditschew zu erreichen haben, um je nach Lage den Angriff nach Suedosten oder Osten fortzusetzen.

(Halder, Franz. *Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. II. Appendix 2, 466)

--**20./21.6.41 (KTBAOK 17)**:

20.6.41: . . .

Truppeneinteilung „*Barbarossa*“ tritt in Kraft.
Marchbewegungen in die Bereitstellungsraeume planmaessig.
Neue Hauptquartiere der Korps.
Umzug ***Fuehrungsstaffel I*** nach Rudnik.

21.6.41:

Rudnik.

¹⁸⁸ **Note:** Here I've carved out the portion of the Army's Deployment Directive specifically addressing role of Seventeenth Army.

Keine wesentliche Veraenderung des Feindbildes. Immer noch *keine ausgesprochene Besetzung der Grenzstellung* erkennbar.
Starke Schanztaetigkeit.

11.07 Uhr: Eingang des Stichwortes „*Dortmund*.“ Weitergabe s.Anl.
Marschbewegungen planmaessig.

Umzug *Fuehrungsstaffel II* nach Rudnik. O.Qu.-Staffel verbleibt in Reichshof.

Nachm. Staerkerer Gueterverkehr von russ. Seite ueber Bruecke Przemysl.
Anweisung an **52 AK** zu besonderer Wachsamkeit, um eventuelle russ. Massnahmen zu verhindern.

20.00 Uhr. Der Aufruf des Fuehrers „*An die Soldaten der Ostfront*“ wird der Truppe bekannt gegeben.

(T-312, Roll 668, *Ia KTB A.O.K. 17*)

--22.6.41: Bei **17. Armee** gelingt es, alle Bruecken im Grenzabschnitt unzerstoert in Besitz zu nehmen. (*KTB OKW, 417*)

--22.6.41: Dagegen [d.h. im Gegensatz zur **6 Armee**] kam die Nachbararmee des Gen. der Inf. von Stülpnagel *nicht ohne schwere Verluste* durch die Grenzbefestigungen. Das links stehende **4 AK** musste in den ersten Stunden erkennen, dass der *russ. Soldat mit ganz anderer Energie u. Opferbereitschaft kaempfte*, als es bei Franzosen u. Briten im Westfeldzug der Fall war. Am Abend klaffte zwischen der **24** u. **262 ID [4 AK]** eine Frontluecke von **10 km**, die erst in der Nacht durch die aus dem zweiten Treffen nach vorn geholte **296 ID [4 AK]** geschlossen werden konnte.

Auch das benachbarte **49 Geb.K.** kam ueber Anfangserfolge nicht hinaus. So blieb das **52 AK** als Fluegelkorps liegen, da es noch dazu eine Frontbreite von **80 km** bis zur ungarnische Grenze zu sichern hatte.¹⁸⁹ Die schwierigste Aufgabe an diesem Abschnitt hatte die **101 lei.Div.** (Gen.-Maj. Marcks) uebernommen, die die schweren Befestigungen bei Przemysl nehmen sollte, um dem **49 Geb.K.** freie Bahn in Richtung Lemberg zu schaffen. Der erste Sturm auf die Grenzbefestigungen beiderseits der alten k.u.k. Stadt misslang; u. so mussten am Abend die vorgeprellten Stosstrupps u. Sturmkompanien zurueckgenommen werden. (W. Haupt, *Die Schlachten der H.Gr.Sued, 22*)

--22.6.41 (KTBAOK 17):

3.15 Uhr. Die **17 Armee** tritt gem. *Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa* zum Angriff an.

6.00 Uhr. Korps melden auf der ganzen Front nur geringen Feindwiderstand. Beruehrung zunaechst nur mit Grenzschutz. Gegner scheint *voellig ueberrascht worden zu sein*. Bruecke Przemysl nicht zerstoert, Bruecke Radymno unversehrt in unserer Hand. Ueberall *flottes Vorwaertskommen*. . .

¹⁸⁹ **Note:** **52 AK** controlled the **101 lei.Div.**, **444** and **454 Sich.Diven.** (See, K. Mehner, *Die Geheimen Tagesberichte* . . . (OOB at back of volume.)

7.15 Uhr. Zwei, etwa 15 km lange mot.Kolonnen¹⁹⁰ auf Strasse Radymno – Jaworow u. auf Strasse Przemysl – Sadowau Wisznia auf Grodek Jagiellonski.

10.15 Uhr. Lage:

52 AK: 101.lei.Div.: Tartaren-huegel bei Przemysl durch starken Spaechtrupp besetzt. Kein Feuer aus Przemysl. Koluft hat Auftrag zur Aufklaerung im Raum Przemysl u. suedlich.

49 Geb.K.: 257 ID: Nienowice (8.30) – Strasse nach Lemberg bis Waldstueck Dabrowa.

68 ID: Makowiska erreicht. Sieniawa noch geringe Feindkraefte.

1. Geb.Div.: Lubaczow Sued (9.30). **IR 188** soll bis 10.00 Uhr Zaradawa erreichen. Div. will sich in Gegend Borchow bereitstellen, um Lubaczow-Abschnitt zu ueberwinden.

4 AK: Lubaczow – Mlodowce – 3 km suedl. Rudki – Lubica Chrolewska – Strasse Ruda Zurawieska.

Luftlage: V. Fliegerkorps: Bisher rund 150 feindl. Maschinen vernichtet. **V. Fliegerkorps** bereits im 3.Einsatz. (9.50)

Gesamteindruck: Feind ist ueberrascht. Grenzstellungen schwach besetzt. Der Widerstand verstaerkt sich, ist aber ohne Zusammenhang. Wo Feind kaempft, kaempft er tapfer. Wenig Gefangene.

11.15: Feindl. mot.Kolonne mit Spitze von **40 Panzer** auf Strasse von Stryj – Sambor – Chyrow.

H.Gr. erwartet nach erster Ueberraschung Einsatz staerkerer feindl. Kraefte. Er bittet Meldung, ob Einsatz **14 AK (mot.)** zweckmaessig (9.15). Auf Rueckfrage vertritt Gen.Kdo. **4 AK** Ansicht, dass Zeitpunkt noch etwas verfrueht ist, *da Russe vor Rawa Ruska eine neue Verteidigungsstellung aufbaut (10.30)*. A.O.K. schlaegt mit der Begrueendung, dass der Raum noerdl. u. NW Rawa Ruska noch nicht genuegend freigekaempft sei, Einsatz erst fuer Nachmittag oder **23.6.** frueh vor. H.Gr. schliesst sich dieser Auffassung an.

11.30: Eisenbahnbruecke Przemysl genommen.

13.35: Anfrage O.B. H.Gr. bei O.B. A.O.K. ueber Vorgehen 101.lei.Div. ueber Przemysl. O.B. weist u.a. auf *starke Isolierung der 101.lei.Div. nach San-Uebergang* hin. O.B. H.Gr. betont demgegenueber Notwendigkeit, heute Weichheit des Gegners auszunutzen. Darauf Befehl an **52 AK** zum Uebergang **101.lei.Div.** bie Przemysl ueber San, veranlasst durch das Draengen O.B. H.Gr. . . [see text]

¹⁹⁰ **Note:** These are enemy columns?

Im Laufe des Nachmittags versteift sich Feindwiderstand allgemein; besonders vor **4 AK**, wo auch Panzergegenstoesse stattfinden. Eigener Angriff kommt infolgedessen langsamer vorwaerts.

Erreichte Linie: Zwischenmeldung an H.Gr.

19.30 Uhr. Spaet nachmittags *stoest starker Feindangriff NW Rawa Ruska durch rechten Fluegel 262 ID*, bis zur Strasse Ruda Zurawiecka – Lubisca Krol-ewaka durch.

Russe hier abgefangen.

Auf inneren Fluegeln **295** u. **24 ID** bahnt sich eigener Durchbruchserfolg an.

20.00 Uhr. Verschaerfung der Krisis auf linkem Fluegel **4 AK**. **4 AK** stellt eigene Kraefte als Aushilfe bereit. Ausserdem wird **97.le.Div.** so herangefuehrt, dass sie noch auf linkem Fluegel eingesetzt werden kann. **296 ID** wird hinter ge-fahrdete Stelle (Raum Belzec – Rodiwanze – Tomaszow) vorgezogen, **4.Geb. [Div.]** hinter **68 ID** . . .

21.45 Uhr. **52 AK** fragt an, ob Brueckenkopf Przemysl *aufgegeben werden kann*, um Kraefte der **101.le.Div.** auf Ostufer des San nicht zu zersplittern. O.B. entscheidet: Kein Aufgeben ohne Angriff u. ohne zwingenden Grund. Es ist ein kleiner Brueckenkopf (etwa **1** verst.Kp.) zu halten. Masse des eingesetzten Btl. kann auf Nordufer verbleiben.

23.00 Uhr. **97.le.Div.** meldet: Sieniswa [sp?] feindfrei, Furt gesichert. Sogleich Brueckenbau befohlen.

Tagesuebersicht:

Gegner hat nach anfaenglich gelungener Ueberraschung durch unseren Angriff seit Mittag zuerst vor **4 AK**, dann aber auch vor **49 Geb.K.** Kraefte herangeholt u. Widerstand verstaerkt. In den spaeten Abendstunden bahnt sich bei **4 AK** auf inneren Fluegeln **296** u. **24 ID** um Lazowa – Werchrata Durchbruch durch feindl. Stellung an mit Aussicht, morgen auf dem Suedufer der Rata in Richtung Rawa Ruska anzugreifen. Gen.Kdo. **4 AK** will diese Absicht durchhalten trotz starker feindl. Angriffe gegen **262 ID** aus Wald NW u. NO Rawa Ruska. Auch Mitte (**68 ID**) u. linker Fluegel **49 Geb.K.** haben beachtliche Erfolge gegen im Laufe des nachmittags sich verstaerkenden Gegner erzielt. Dadurch Aussicht, der schwer kaempfenden rechten Fluegeldivision (**71 ID**) des **4 AK** weiter vorzuhelfen. Der Gelaendegewinn der **257 ID** ist bei zaehem Widerstand kleinerer oertlicher Feindgruppen hinter dem bei andern Verbaenden zurueckgeblieben.

Raum suedl. Przemysl:

Bei u. suedl. Przemysl (**52 AK**) zunaechst *voellige Ruhe*. In den Vormittagsstunden sogar Bewegungen in suedlicher u. ostwaertiger Richtung. Am spaeten Nachmittag u. Abend Anhaltspunkte fuer Zufuehrung feindl. Verstaerkungen in Raum um Przemysl. . .

Luftlage:

Voller Erfolg des ersten Angriffstages. Zahlreiche Flugzeuge am Boden zerstört oder abgeschossen.

23.6.41:

Rudnik. Im Laufe der Nacht feindl. Gegenangriffe gegen **295 ID** in Gegend Brusno NW abgewehrt.

Am Morgen wird Angriff auf allen Fronten wieder aufgenommen.

Feind verteidigt sich in Bunkern *zaeh u. geschickt*. . .

(T-312, Roll 668, *Ia KTB A.O.K. 17*)

--22.6.41 (24 ID¹⁹¹ / Rawa Ruska genommen (27.6.41)):¹⁹²

Das Einruecken in die Bereitstellung erfolgte fuer die Masse der Truppe erst in den letzten **36** Stunden vor Angriffsbeginn u. zwar entsprechend der gruendlichen Vorbereitungen bei Staeben u. Truppen ohne wesentliche Reibungen. Der Tag der Sommersonnenwende sollte den Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion einleiten. . .

Erste Aufgabe der **24 ID** war es, im Schwerpunkt des **4 AK** die starken feindlichen Grenzbefestigungen zu durchbrechen u. bis Rawa Ruska durchzustossen.

Zur Unterstuetzung des ersten Angriffs standen der Div. *betaechtliche Kraefte zur Verfuegung: sechs le. u. fuenf schw. Art.Abt., drei Moerserbatterien u. eine Stug-Abt.* Um das Moment der Ueberraschung zu wahren, wurde von einem Vorbereitungsfeuer zunaechst abgesehen. Ein Teil der Art. wurde aufgeprotzt bereitgestellt, um der Infanterie schnell folgen zu koennen.

Zur festgesetzten Minute ueberschritten die vordersten Schuetzen der Infanterie – rechts **IR 31**, links **IR 32** – die Demarkationslinie. Die Pioniere stellten sogleich die Uebergaenge fuer Fahrzeuge ueber den breiten u. tiefen Graben¹⁹³ her. Die schwachen feindl. Grenzposten wurden fast ohne Schuss ueberrannt, doch die im Ruecken der vordersten Bataillone *sich hartnaeckig verteidigenden russ. Feldwachen* verursachten die ersten Verluste, ehe sie ueberwaeltigt wurden. Schnell

¹⁹¹ **Note:** This account includes a nice little map!

¹⁹² **Note:** “Im **Apr 41** wurde die Div. durch die **304 ID** . . . abgeloeet u. marschierte in das Innere Belgiens zur Verladung nach dem Osten. . . Nach einer Fahrt durch das fast wie im Frieden liegende deutsche Land erfolgte die Ausladungen im Raume von Krakau. In mehrtaegigen Maerschen wurde das Truppenlager Mielec erreicht . . . Sogleich setzte wieder eine ernste Ausbildungstaetigkeit ein. . . Hier erhielt die **24 ID** als Tarnbezeichnung den Decknamen „Eisbaer.“ So wurde der Eisbaer als taktisches Zeichen bis Kriegsende das Wappentier der Div. Anfang **Jun 41** marschierte die Div. nach Osten in den Raum SW Tomaszow u. bezog Wald- u. Ortsbiwaks. . . Dicht an der durch den sogenannten „Judenwall“ gekennzeichneten Demarkationslinie lagen die vordersten Bataillone. Von den eigenen Beobachtungstuermen, denen solche der Russen gegenueberliegen, hatte man weiten Einblick in das Land jenseits der Grenzlinie. Die Erkundungen wurden z.T. in Uniformen des Zollgrenzschutzes vorgenommen. Auf dem Hoehengelaende, welches sich vom Wielki Dzial bis zur bewaldeten Hoehe mit dem trigonometrischen Signal 390 hinzog, konnte man eine fiebrhafte Taetigkeit – sogar nachts bei Scheinwerferbeleuchtung wurde gearbeitet – beobachten. Die Sowjets betrieben die Fertigstellung ihrer Grenzstellung mit Hochdruck.” (46)

¹⁹³ **Note:** Anti-tank ditches?

naeherten sich die Angriffsspitzen in leicht ansteigendem Gelaende der mehrere km von der Grenze abgesetzten ersten feindl. Bunkerlinie. Bald folgten die gespannten schweren Inf.-Waffen u. die aufgeprotzten Batterien, von denen einzelne Geschuetze sogleich auf nahe Schussentfernung gegen die Scharten der laestigen Kampfstaende angesetzt wurden. Vor diesen war das Vorgehen der vordersten Bataillone zunaechst einmal zum Stehen gekommen, so dass nunmehr vielfach zum *vielgeuebten, planmaessigen* Angriff gegen Bunker uebergegangen werden musste.

Die Sowjets hatten unter Ausnutzung der Erfahrungen aus den Feldzuegen der deutschen *Wehrmacht* in Polen u. Frankreich ihre Befestigungszone meist mit starken, *dreistoeckigen Betonbauten* ausgestattet, welche der Besatzung ein Ausweichen in das unterste Stockwerk gestattete, wenn schwerer Beschuss auf dem Bunker lag, oder wenn der Feind oben eingedrungen war. Fuer diesen Fall konnte innerhalb der Anlage mit Maschinenpistole u. Handgranate noch zaehrer Widerstand geleistet werden. Nach aussen waren diese Kampfstaende mit *bis zu sechs* **Geschutz- u. MG-Scharten** versehen u. diese durch widerstandsfaeihige Stahlblenden¹⁹⁴ geschuetzt. Ihre Lage war meist so, dass sich die Bunker gegenseitig flankierten,¹⁹⁵ weshalb die angreifende Truppe stets die Nachbarbunker niederhalten oder mitangreifen musste, wenn sie einen solchen Betonklotz anging.

Waehend **IR 32** in einen langwierigen Kampf um die Bunker verwickelt wurde, gelang es beim **IR 31**, schwache Stellen in dier Befestigungslinie zu finden u. verhaeltnismaessig schnell die Hoehe **390** zu nehmen u. bis in die Waldstuecke suedl. u. ostw. Monastyr durchzustossen. Damit war *die ersten feindl. Stellung durchbrochen*, u. am Nachmittag gelang noch die Fortsetzung des Angriffs bis auf die Hoehen westl. Werchrata, also **10 km tief** in das feindl. Gebiet. **IR 32** liess sein III.Btl. im Kampf um die Bunker, umging diese westl. u. stiess mit dem II.Btl. bis Werchrata u. die Hoehen ostw. des Dorfes vor. Da der linke Nachbar von den Sowjets zurueckgeschlagen worden u. die zur Verbindung mit diesem eingesetzten Aufkl.Abt. 24 mitbetroffen war, *hing der linke Fluegel des IR 32 in der Luft*, so dass die Div. fuer dieses Rgt. voruebergehend den Befehl zur Verteidigung gab.

Waehrend **IR 31** gegen schwachen Feindwiderstand am **23.6.** gut vorwaertskam, hatte **IR 32** heftige Gegenangriffe der Sowjets aus den Waeldern NW Rawa Ruska abzuwehren. Am **24.6.** konnten beide Regimenter den Angriff fortsetzen. . . Bereits am **25.6.** stand ein starker Spaehtrupp mit dem Kdr. **III./31** an den Waldraendern **1 km** suedl. Rawa Ruska. [Note: See text for details on more difficult combat.] Am **27.6.** stiessen die **IR 31** von Sueden u. **IR 32** von Westen auf Rawa Ruska vor u. nahmen die von feindl. Nachhuten nur noch schwach verteidigte Stadt. Der Feind hatte eine *weitraeumige Absetzbewegung* eingeleitet. Nun galt es fuer die **24 ID**, ihm auf den Fersen zu bleiben. . .

Die Verfolgungskaempfe der naechsten Zeit stellten harte Anforderungen an Mensch, Pferd u. Motor.

¹⁹⁴ **Note:** "Stahlblenden" = some kind of steel gun shield or shielded port.

¹⁹⁵ **Note:** In other words, the bunkers were mutually supporting.

(H. v. Tettau & K. Versock, *Geschichte der 24. Infanterie-Division*, 46-49)

--22.6.41 (257 ID):¹⁹⁶

On the southern wing of the army group, where the frontier was formed by the River San, the divisions of General von Stülpnagel's Seventeenth Army *found things more difficult*. The bank of the San north of Przemysl was as *flat as a pancake*—without woods, without ravines, without any cover for whole regiments. That was why the assault battalions of **257 ID**, from Berlin, could not move out of their deployment areas until the night of **21/22 Jun 41**. “Not a sound” was the order of the rgt. cdr. Weapons were *packed in blankets*; bayonets and gas-mask cases were *wrapped round w/ any soft material that was handy*. “Thank God for the frogs,” whispered 2Lt. Alicke. Their croaking drowned the creaking, rattling, and bumping of the coys making their way towards the river.

At **0315** precisely the assault detachments leaped to their feet on both sides of Radymno. The railway bridge was seized by a surprise stroke. But in front of the customs shed the Russians were already offering *stubborn resistance*. 2Lt Alicke was killed. He was the division's first fatal casualty, the first of a long list. The men laid him beside the customs shed. The hvy weapons rolled on by him, over “his” bridge.

In the south the Soviet alarm system functioned *w/ surprising speed and precision*. Only the most forward pickets were taken by surprise. **457 IR** [**257 ID**] had to battle all day long *w/ the Soviet NCO Training School of Vysokoye*, only a mile beyond the river. The **250** NCO cadets resisted stubbornly and skillfully. Not till the afternoon was their resistance broken by artillery fire. The **466 IR** [same] *fared even worse*. No sooner were its battalions across the river than they were attacked from the flank by advanced [sic] detachments of the Soviet **199 Reserve Division**.

In the fields of Stubienka the *tall grain* waved in the summer wind like the sea. Into this sea the troops now plunged. Both sides were lurking, invisible. Stalking each other. Hand-grenades, pistols, and machine carbines were the weapons of the day. Suddenly they would be facing one another amid the rye—the Russians and Germans. Eye to eye. Whose finger was quicker on the trigger? Whose spae would go up first? Over there a Russian machine pistol appeared from a foxhole. Would it score *w/ its burst*? Or would the hand-grenade do its work first? Only with the fall of dusk did this bloody fighting in the rye-fields come to an end. The enemy withdrew.

The sun set behind the horizon, large and red. And still from amid the grain came the voices, despairing, anguished, or softly dying away: “Stretcher! Stretcher!” The medical orderlies hurried into the fields with their stretchers. They gathered in the bloody harvest. The harvest of one day, of one regiment. It was a big harvest.¹⁹⁷

(P. Carell, *Hitler Moves East*, 27)

¹⁹⁶ **Note:** This division assigned to **49 Geb.K.**, just like General Lanz' division.

¹⁹⁷ **Note:** I'm assuming that the fighting at Stubienka involved **466 IR**?

--22.6.41: Von Stülpnagel's Seventeenth Army, operating on the Tomashuv –Przemysl sector and aiming for L'voy, struck straight at the junction between two "fortified districts," those of Rava-Russki and Przemysl; the former was defended by **41 RD, 3 CD, 97 RD**, and a second echelon formation, **159 RD (6 RC)**; and the latter by **99 RD**, w/ the **72** and **173 RD (8 RC, 26 Army)** in support. As the German guns fired their opening barrages, these formations were *moved from their camps and barracks and sent racing to the frontier*. The alert system here functioned, in the opinion of the chief of staff of **41 RD**, "without fuss." . . . This relative efficiency, *which cost the Germans dear* and which contrasted so sharply w/ the chaos on the Western and Northwestern Fronts, had been achieved in face of considerable odds. . . Col.-Gen. Kirponos at Kiev, in many respects a *truly tragic figure*, did *not lose his nerve* and he had behind him a tough chief of staff, Purkayev, whose nerves were equally good. . . On **21 Jun 41**, Kirponos had duly opened up his CP at Tarnopol. His stubbornness, persistence and foresight paid off in a few hours, for the German armies *had to grind their way through his defenses*. (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 122)

--22.6.41 (**444 / 454 Sich.Diven**): Im Abschnitt der **17 Armee**, war die Hoelle losgebrochen. **444** u. **454 Sich.Diven**. am Suedfluegel hielten Verbindung zu den ungarischen Nachbarn u. griffen zur Fesselung mit Feuer aus allen Rohren den gegenueberliegenden Feind an. Diese Diven. mit *ihrer geringen Beweglichkeit u. aelterem Ersatz, nur zu begrenzten Aufgaben befahigt*, haben sich hier u. im weitem Verlauf in offener Feldschlacht wiederholt bewaehrt. Sie hatten gleichzeitig den links von ihnen angreifenden Diven. (**101.lei. u. 257 ID**) die Flanke frei zu halten. Auch diese Aufgabe konnten sie zunaechst voll erfuellen. (C. Wagener, *Heeresgruppe Sued*, 48)

--22.6.41 (Darstellung Carl Wagener):

52 AK u. 49 Geb.K. griffen beiderseits Przemysl an, mit dem Ziel Lemberg. Die Stosstrupps der **101.lei.Div.**, **257 ID**, **68 ID** u. **1 Geb.Div.**¹⁹⁸ setzten noch bei Dunkelheit ueber den San. Der Handstreich auf die Eisenbahnbruecken in Przemysl u. noerdl. davon bei Radymno gelingt den **IR 228** u. **IR 477**.¹⁹⁹ Bis zum Abend ist ein breiter Brueckenkopf geschaffen. Noerdlich davon²⁰⁰ aber leisten die Russen erbitterten Widerstand. Der Kampf geht den ganzen Tag ueber verlustreich um die Grenzbefestigungen, wobei Teile der vordersten Sturm-bataillone gewonnenes Gelaende *wieder raeumen muessen*. In den hohen Getreidefeldern war zu heftigen Nahkaempfen gekommen. Ein Gegenangriff einer russ. Pz.Bde²⁰¹ brachte den Angriff der **68 ID** zum Stehen.

Das **4 AK**, linkes Fluegelkorps der **17 Armee**, muss sich mit **71 ID**, **24 ID** u. **262 ID**²⁰² durch die starken Befestigungen u. Bunkerlinien im Vorfeld von Lemberg durchkaempfen. Im Verlauf der schweren Kaempfen entstand eine **10 km** breite Luecke zwischen den angreifenden Diven., die erst in der Nacht durch die nach-gezogene **295 ID** geschlossen werden konnte. Die Divisionen der **17 Armee**, *ohne Panzerunterstuetzung*,²⁰³ sind am 1. Angriffstag ueber beschei-

¹⁹⁸ **Note:** Lanz's **1 Geb.Div.** did not cross the San during its attack; it was deployed east of the river.

¹⁹⁹ **Note:** **101lei.Div.**

²⁰⁰ **Note:** Certainly, in sector of Lanz's **1 Geb.Div!**

²⁰¹ **Note:** Formation of Soviet **4 MC?**

²⁰² **Note:** **295** and **296 ID** also controlled by **4 AK**.

²⁰³ **Note:** That is a significant point—**17 AOK** had no tank support on *Barbarossatag*. It did control a single *Stug Abt.* (**243**), attached to **4 AK**. See, K. Mehnert, *Geheime Tagesberichte*.

dene Einbrueche in die Grenzbefestigungen nicht hinausgekommen. Ihre Verluste waren hoch.

(C. Wagener, *Heeresgruppe Sued*, 48-49)

--22.6.41: Initial reverses and confusions, however, could not be wholly avoided. The first bombings wrought considerable havoc among military and civilians alike. As the officers of **41 RD** took up their operational CP at Height 305 in the Rava-Ruski "fortified district," they watched a *long column of disheveled women and weeping children, many the families of divisional personel, leaving the exposed villages for Rava-Ruski itself*. As for the frontier guards, *their families died w/ them or vanished as the battle swept over them*. German Seventeenth Army had also to reckon on the difficulties of forcing the river San, *whose bare banks provided the attackers w/ neither cover nor concealment*. To the NE of Przemysl, however, German assault troops seized the railway bridge over the San w/ a swift blow, but, as the Soviet rifle divisions had manned the Przemysl "fortified district" by **06.00** hours, and the frontier guards fought on, this was merely the prelude to *long and bloody Soviet resistance*. (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 123)

--22.6.41: . . . The advancing German **17th Army** had levelled its major blow in the direction of L'vov. The command of the **17th Army** had deployed **5** infantry divisions in this sector. Despite heavy artillery fire, air strikes, and sustained attacks, enemy forces had been unsuccessful in their efforts to capture the Rava-Ruszkaya fortified zone and break the resistance of the **41 [RD]**. In the afternoon and evening of **22 Jun 41**, the **41 [RD]**, which had two artillery regiments, was reinforced additionally w/ the **209th Corps Artillery Regiment** armed w/ **152-mm guns**. On that day enemy forces sustained great losses w/o achieving any success.

The Peremyshl fortified area was held by the **52nd and 150th Independent MG Battalions** and the **92nd Border Guards Detachment**. They had occupied their emplacements by **6.00** in the morning of 22 June. Together w/ the border-guard troops and the armed volunteer detachments, they were the first to stand up to the enemy fire and attacks.

For several hours the brave defenders of the city repelled the onslaught of the superior enemy force. Then the commander of the border-guard detachment ordered them to withdraw beyond the city limits, where they once again stopped the enemy. In the meantime, **99 [RD]** under Colonel Dementiev approached Peremyshl. On **23 Jun 41**, jointly w/ a composite border-guard battalion, it delivered a counterblow and *threw the enemy out of the city*. (G.K. Zhukov, et al., *Battles Hitler Lost . . .*, 41-42)²⁰⁴

--23./24.6.41 (Darstellung Carl Wagener):

Die H.Gr.Sued setzte am **23 Jun 41** auf der ganzen bisherigen Front ihre Angriffe fort u. warf den Feind an vielen Stellen weiter zurueck. Wo der Feind

²⁰⁴ **Note:** Zhukov continues: "On **23 Jun 41** the Germans renewed their attacks, which were particularly severe in the Rava-Ruszkaya sector. In some places enemy units succeeded in penetrating the **41 [RD]**'s defenses, but thanks to firm control by General Mikushev, the enemy was thrown back to his starting point by a successful counterattack. However, by the close of **23 Jun 41**, the enemy dealt a powerful blow at the junction between the Rava-Ruszkaya and Peremyshl areas, defended by the **97 and 159 [RD]**'s. The latter, which was then being deployed, had considerable numbers of untrained reservists in its ranks and, unable to withstand the enemy attacks, began to withdraw, thus *gravely endangering adjacent units*. The counter-measures taken by **6 Army** commander General Muzychenko failed to remedy the situation and by the close of **24 Jun 41** the gap in the defenses had reached **25 miles**." (42)

wich, bildeten die Inf.-Diven. mot.V.A., die rasch nachstiessen u. wichtige Ge-
laendepunkte in die Hand nahmen.

Bei der **17 Armee** ging dies zunaechst nur **zaeh u. langsam** gegen einen *tief ge-
gliederten u. verbissen kampfenden Gegner* vor sich. Der Lemberg Raum war
ein *stark ausgebauter Festungsbereich*. Es war die schwere u. aufopfernde Auf-
gabe der zu Gunsten des Nordfluegels der H.Gr. **reichlich schwach gehaltenen**
17 Armee, diesem die Voraussetzung zum Durchbruch auf Kiew zu verschaffen.
Sie hat dies mit schwersten Verlusten, schwerer als bei den anderen Armeen, be-
zahlen muessen. Eine besondere Erschwerung fuer sie war die **offene u. immer**
laenger werdende Suedflanke, wo es dem **52 AK** an Tiefe fehlte. Sorgenvoll
sahen daher O.B. u. Komm.Gen. auf das Verhalten der feindl. Karpathengruppe,
die nur kehrtzumachen u. anzugreifen brauchte, um den Angriff der **17 Armee**
zum Stehen zu bringen, wenn nicht Schlimmeres zu erreichen. [!]

Der **101 lei.Div.** des Gen.-Maj. Marcks, der den *ersten Operationsplan gegen*
Russland entworfen hatte, gelang es am **23.6.**, den russ. Teil von Przemysl zu
nehmen.

49 Geb.K. kam nur wenig voran.

24 u. 262 ID des **4 AK** fanden SW Rawa Ruska (NW Lemberg) ueberraschend
eine russ. Frontluecke, in die sie ab **24.6.** hineinstossen, werden dann aber von
feindl. mot.Kraefte(n) angefallen, die sie erst nach Herankommen der **97 lei.Div.**
abschuettern koennen. Die Jaegerregimenter **204 u. 207** schiessen dabei **60** sowj.
Panzer ab. Der **17 Armee** *fehlen aber schnelle Kraefte*, um tiefer durchzu-
brechen.

(C. Wagener, *Heeresgruppe Sued*, 53)

--Apr-Jul 41 (**71 ID**):

1.4.-21.6.41:

Die **71 ID** wird in Galizien eingesetzt, um die Interessengrenze gegen Russland
zu sichern. Die Ausbildung steht im Vordergrund. Die Witterungs- u. Wegever-
haeltnisse sind schlecht, aber fuer die bald einsetzende Vorbereitungen auf einen
Angriff gegen Russland wichtig. Die Unterbringung der Truppe in Haeusern,
Baracken u. Waldlagern ist ausreichend. Ab **17.6.[41]** kennt die Fuehrung der
Div. auch die weiteren Aufgaben. Die Div. soll zwischen Futory – Cieszanów die
Grenze ueberschreiten u. ueber Nemerow Lemberg erreichen. (39)

Foto: **Feb 41** – Besuch des japanischen Gen.St.Chefs bei der Div. in Königs-
brück.

Foto: **Mar 41** – Major Barnbeck ueberwacht die Verladung des **III./IR 194** von
Königsbrück nach Polen.

Foto: **17.6.41** – Barackenlager des Div.Stabes bei Krzeszow.

Foto: **Jun 41** – Bereitstellung in Zamsch.

Foto: **22.6.41** – russ. Feldstellung bei Przenysl.

Foto: **22.6.41** – russ. Panzergraben bei Czarne.

22.6 – 2.7.41:

Die **71 ID** durchbricht mit Verlusten die russ. Grenzstellungen, muss aber bei Niemerow Panzerangriffe abwehren [24.6.], wobei die groesste Teil der russ. Panzer mit den Waffen der Div. zerstört wird. Kaempfer wird der Truppenuebungsplatz Wiszenka genommen, ehe die Div. am **30.6.** jeden Widerstand brechend Lemberg erreicht. Als Armee-Reserve beginnt fuer die Div. am **2.7.** der Marsch durch die Ukraine bis Fastow. (43)

(H. Nölke, *Die 71. Infanterie-Division*, 39, 43)

1.5.4: 1 Panzer Group

--General **Ewald v. Kleist**: Bei der Mobilmachung wurde von Kleist bereits wieder reaktiviert. Er wurde dabei zum Kommandierenden General vom **Generalkommando XXII. Armeekorps** ernannt. Dieses führte er dann zuerst im Polenfeldzug. Im Frankreichfeldzug führte er die **Panzergruppe von Kleist**, mit der er zur Abschnürung des britischen Expeditionskorps beitrug. Am 15. Mai 1940 wurde ihm dafür das Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes verliehen. Nach dem Ende des Westfeldzuges wurde er am 19. Juli 1940 zum Generaloberst befördert. Am 1. November 1940 wurde er dann zum Oberbefehlshaber der **Panzergruppe 1** ernannt. Im April 1941 nahm er mit seiner Panzergruppe am Balkanfeldzug teil. . . Am 10. September 1942 wurde er dann Oberbefehlshaber der **Heeresgruppe A** ernannt. Mit dieser stieß er dann in den Kaukasus vor. Für die Rückführung seiner Truppen nach der Tragödie bei Stalingrad und für die sich anschließenden Verteidigungskämpfe wurde von Kleist am 1. Februar 1943 zum Generalfeldmarschall befördert. Vom 9. März 1943 bis zum 31. März 1944 war er Oberbefehlshaber der **Heeresgruppe Südukraine**, die er bei den Abwehrkämpfen am Donez, Dnjepr und Dnjestr führte. . . Für seine Führungsleistungen wurde er am 30. März 1944 mit den Schwertern zum Ritterkreuz mit Eichenlaub ausgezeichnet. Am gleichen Tag wurde er, nach Meinungsverschiedenheiten mit Adolf Hitler, in die Führerreserve versetzt. Am 20. Juli 1944 wurde er von der Gestapo verhaftet, später aber wieder frei gelassen. Bei Kriegsende wurde er von den amerikanischen Besatzungstruppen Ende April 1945 in Mitterfels in Niederbayern gefangen genommen. Er wurde dann an die Engländer übergeben, die ihn dann ab Anfang Juni 1945 einsperrten. 1946 wurde er an Jugoslawien ausgeliefert. In Jugoslawien wurde er wegen Kriegsverbrechen zu 15 Jahren Haft verurteilt, aber 1948 an Russland übergeben, wo er wegen Kriegsverbrechen zu lebenslanger Haft verurteilt wurde. **Während dieser Haft ist er am 16. Oktober 1954 im Gefängnis von Wladimir, 300 Kilometer östlich von Moskau, verstorben.** Sein ältester Sohn Ewald, der nach der Kapitulation der Festung Breslau in sowjetische Gefangenschaft geriet wurde erst Ende 1955 aus dieser entlassen. (*Lexikon-der-Wehrmacht*)

--Von Kleist had at his disposal **269,000** men between Wietersheim's **14 PzK (13 PD)**, Mackensen's **3 PzK (14 PD, 44 & 298 ID, 191 Stug-Bde)**, and Kempf's **48 PzK (11 PD, 57 & 75 ID, 197 Stug-Bde)**, and in reserve **9 PD and 16 PD, 1 SS Mot. Div. Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler, 5 SS Div. (mot.) Wiking**, and **16 and 25 ID**. He had a total of **750** tanks. During the opening phases of the attack the infantry divisions at the disposal of Kleist's **1 PzGr** were those of the neighboring Sixth Army. Kleist arrayed his units so that **3 PzK** held the northern flank, **14 PzK** the center, and **48 PzK** the southern wing. (Taylor, *Barbarossa to Berlin. A Chronology*, 21)²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ **Note:** Confirm these OOB details w/ *Schematische Kriegsgliederung*, etc. For example, I don't believe any of the army groups had "Assault Gun brigades;" there were only some **11** assault guns battalions and **5**

--1 PzGr tank strength:

9 PD: 8 Pz I, 32 Pz II, 11 Pz III (37), 60 Pz III (5), 20 Pz IV, 12 PzBef. (**Pz.Rgt. 33**)

11 PD: 44 Pz II, 24 Pz III (37), 47 Pz III (5), 20 Pz IV, 8 PzBef. (**Pz.Rgt. 15**)

13 PD: 45 Pz II, 27 Pz III (37), 44 Pz III (5), 20 Pz IV, 13 PzBef. (**Pz.Rgt. 4**)

14 PD: 45 Pz II, 15 Pz III (37), 56 Pz III (5), 20 Pz IV, 11 PzBef. (**Pz.Rgt. 36**)

16 PD: 45 Pz II, 23 Pz III (37), 48 Pz III (5), 20 Pz IV, 10 PzBef. (**Pz.Rgt. 2**)

(T.L. Jentz, *Panzertruppen*, 190-92)

--Soviet Forces along the Line of Advance of 1 PzGr:

a) **1 PzGr: 299, 111, 75, 57, 298, 44 ID** (first echelon).

b) Frontage in kilometers = **65**.

c) **87, 124 RDs** (Soviet formations on frontier in area of **1 PzGr** offensive)

(J. Erickson, *The Soviet High Command*, 592)

--German doctrine at the time subordinated a panzer group under an infantry army for the purpose of creating the *initial breakthrough*; accordingly, **1 PzGr** fell under Sixth Army. According to the *Barbarossa* plan, taking Kiev by *coup de main* represented von Kleist's *first operational objective*. (Kirchubel, *Hitler's Panzer Armies*, 20)

--Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa (31.1.41):²⁰⁶

4. *Auftraege an die Heeresgruppen u. Armeen: . . .*

Erste Aufgabe der **1 PzGr** wird es sein, im Zusammenarbeit mit der **17 u. 6 Armee** die feindl. grenznahen Kraefte zwischen Rawa Ruska u. Kowel zu durchbrechen u. ueber Berditschew – Shitomir fruehzeitig den Dnjepr bei u. unterhalb Kiew zu gewinnen. Sie wird von hier aus ohne Zeitverlust den Angriff nach Weisung des Oberkommandos der H.Gr. entlang des Dnjeper in suedostw. Richtung fortsetzen zu haben, mit dem Ziel, den in der Westukraine kaempfenden Feind am Ausweichen ueber den Dnjepr zu verhindern u. durch Angriff im Ruecken zu vernichten.

(Halder, Franz. *Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. II. Appendix 2, 465-66)

--**13 PD:** The German commander of AGS made the decision to *break through the Soviet border defenses w/ his foot marching infantry divisions*. As a result, **13 PD**, under command of *Gen.Lt. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Rothkirch u. Panten*, crossed the Bug River near Hrubieszow (now Novovolynsk) at **17.50** on **23 Jun 41** into Soviet territory on the second day of the campaign. As the division moved into the Soviet Union it immediately *ran into difficult traffic conditions on roads jammed w/ the combat troops and horse-drawn supply trains of the infantry divisions* on the unpaved roads of the Ukraine. Farther north in AGC, the commander of **2 PzGr** had insisted to his commander that he be *allowed to launch the attack w/ the motorized infantry of his panzer*

assault gun coys on entire eastern front. Other details are incorrect as well.

²⁰⁶ **Note:** Here I've carved out the portion of the Army's Deployment Directive specifically addressing role of 1 Panzer Group.

and motorized infantry divisions to avoid the delays in struggling through the foot-marching infantry. (R.H.S. Stolfi, *German Panzers on the Offensive*, 34)

--20./21.6.41 (Ia KTB 1 PzGr):

20.6.41:

Rudka.

. . . **14 PD**, Gleiskettenteile 9 u. **16 PD** treffen in ihren Bereitstellungsraeumen ein.

21.6.41:

Barackenlager suedl. Wolka Labunska.

6.30 Uhr wird die *Fuehrungsabteilung* in den vorgeschobenen Gef.Std. suedl. Wolka Labunska verlegt.

11.45 Uhr geht von der H.Gr. das Stichwort [i.e., „*Dortmund*“] ein, wonach der Angriff wie vorgesehen am **22.6.** stattfindet. . .

16.15 Uhr teilt **AOK 6** durch Stichwort mit, dass der Angriff am **22.6.**, **3.15** Uhr beginnt.

Die Pz.Gr. gibt sofort das Stichwort an die unterstellten Verbaende weiter u. zwar:

[List of units and times they were notified.]

Die Ausladung der **16 ID (mot.)** u. der **I. SS A.H.** beginnt an diesem Tage.

11 PD, **13 PD** u. **SS Wiking** erreichen am Spaetabend ihre befohlene Bereitstellungsraeume. Damit steht die Pz.Gr. mit ihren vorderen Div. bereit zum Grenzüebertritt.

Ein Tagesbefehl des O.B. geht heraus. Er soll am **22.6.** morgens allen unterstellten Truppen bekanntgegeben werden u. hat folgenden Wortlaut:

Soldaten der **1 PzGr!**

Der Fuehrer hat sich entschlossen den bolschewistischen Sowjet-Feind zu zerschlagen, bevor er uns – aus altem Hass gegen den Nationalsozialismus – bei unserem Englandkrieg in den Ruecken faellt.²⁰⁷

Die **1 PzGr** ist in diesem Feldzug wieder an wichtiger Stelle eingesetzt. Sie soll mit den ihr unterstellten Inf.-Div. ein Loch in den bolschewist-

²⁰⁷ **Note:** Old “yarn” about “*Barbarossa*” as preventive (or preemptive) attack.

ischen Grenzwall schlagen u. dann mit ihren Schnellen Verbaenden tief nach Osten vorstossen.

Dann wird die vor uns stehende russische Armee auseinanderfallen.

Deshalb gibt es bis zu diesem Zeitpunkt fuer uns **keine Ruhe u. keine Rast**. Unaufhaltsam, ruecksichtslos u. hemmungslos muessen wir vorstossen, bis das Ziel erreicht ist.

Ich bin fest davon ueberzeugt, dass die Truppe von Kleist ihre neue Aufgabe ebenso schnell erfuellen wird, wie in Frankreich u. Serbien.

Es lebe der Fuehrer!

(T-313, Roll 3, *KTB Nr. 6 Pz. A.O.K. 1*)

--Am **22 Jun 41** trat das deutsche Ostheer (ausser der **11 Armee** am Suedfluegel) ueberraschend ohne Kriegserklaerung auf der *Front von den Karpaten bis zur Ostsee* zum Angriff an. Im Rahmen der H.Gr.Sued war es die Aufgabe der **1 PzGr** (mit **5 Pz.Div.** u. **4 mot.Div.**) im Zusammenwirken mit der **17 u. 6 Armee** auf deren *inneren Fluegeln* die russ. Front zwischen Rawa Ruska u. Kowel zu durchbrechen u. sodann ueber die Linie Berditschew – Schitomir schnell den Dnjepr bei u. unterhalb Kiew zu erreichen. Von hier aus sollte die **1 PzGr** sofort nach Sueden vorgehen, um dem in der Westukraine kaempfenden Feind den Rueckzug ueber den Fluss zu versperren. (Nehring, *Geschichte der Panzerwaffe*, 219)

--**22.6.41**: German **44** and **298 ID** blasted openings for **13** and **14 PD** in the north (**3 PzK**); **57** and **75 ID** did the same for **11 PD** in the center (**48 PzK**); **14 PzK** followed some distance to the rear. Almost immediately Kirponos ordered his mechanized corps to the point of rupture in a *much more realistic counterattack* than the one Stavka ordered. The **41 TD** of **22 MC** was already stationed on the border, and the **9** (Maj.-Gen. K.K. Rokossovsky) and **19 MC** followed close behind. Two great rivers of armored vehicles moved toward each other. The **14 PD** hit the combined **87 Rifle** and **1 Antitank** bulwark; the defenders conducted a fighting withdrawal only when outflanked by the *Landser*, but maintained their cohesion. However, there would be only a few bright spots such as this for Southwest Front. On the first day of the invasion, at Alexandrovska – almost within sight of the border, **3 PzK** destroyed **267 tanks**.²⁰⁸ Near Radziechov, a see-saw battle raged between **15 PzRgt (11 PD)**, reinforced w/ 88mm flak guns and a Soviet tank division.²⁰⁹ By **1600** hours on **23 Jun 41**, **46 KV-1** and **KV-2** tanks littered the battlefield. Fierce *Luftwaffe* interdiction, spread-out deployments, poor roads, untried leaders and units resulted in uneven combat. Soviet counterattack forces *arrived and attacked in small groups of 20-30 tanks which the Germans defeated in detail. Entire regiments became mired in swamps*. (Kirchubel, *Hitler's Panzer Armies*, 21)

22.6.41 (1a KTB 1 PzGr):

Wald suedl. Wolka Labunska.

²⁰⁸ **Note:** Not sure this is accurate; this tank battle most likely occurred on **23.6.41**. See, D.M. Glantz, *Initial Period of the War*, 311.

²⁰⁹ **Note:** Did this “see-saw battle” begin on **22.6.41**?

Nach ruhig verlaufener Nacht wird um **3.15** Uhr auf der ganzen Front der Pz.Gr. angetreten.

Durch Handstreich fallen die Strassenbruecke Sokal-Sued u. die Eisenbahnbruecken bei Grodeck u. Horodlowice unbeschadigt in unsere Hand. Der Angriff geht anfangs gegen schwachen Widerstand ueberall fluessig voran. Der Feind ist anscheinend vollstaendig ueberrascht. Auf Grund des schnellen Vorwaertskommens der Inf.-Diven. des **48** u. **3 [Pz.K.]**²¹⁰ wird um **7.00** Uhr beiden Korps die Genehmigung zum Vorziehen ihrer Pz.-Diven. bis an den Bug gegeben.

Gegen **11.00** Uhr wird beim **48 PzK** Tartakow genommen u. beim **3 PzK** gelingt es der **298 ID**, auch die Bruecke bei Piatydnie unversehrt in ihre Hand zu bekommen. Daraufhin wird das Nachstossen der **11** u. **14 PD** befohlen, um ein Setzen des Feindes zu verhindern.²¹¹ Ziel zunaechst die Styr-Uebergaenge. Kurz darauf tritt auch ein entsprechender Befehl der H.Gr.Sued u. der **6 Armee** ein.

Mit Fortschreiten des Tages versteift sich vor allem vor **48** u. **3 PzK** der Widerstand. Einzelne Bunkerbesetzungen NO von Sokal leisten erbitterten Widerstand u. koennen nur einzeln durch Einsatz schwerster Waffen unschaedlich gemacht werden. Am Nachmittag ist die Lage folgende:

48 PzK hat mit seinen Inf.-Diven. die Linie Perespa – Tartakow – Jozefka erreicht. A.A. der **11 PD** ist um **14.00** Uhr von Tartakow in Richtung Stojanow angetreten.

29 AK hat in zuegigem Vorgehen Linie Ostrand Wald westl. Poryck – Lachnow [sp?] u. die Luga bis Janiewiczze erreicht.

3 PzK steht mit **44 ID** im Bunkerkampf westl. Janow. **298 ID** ist nach handstreichartiger Wegnahme der Bruecke bei Piatydnie zum Angriff gegen den Wald **6** km NW Wlodzimierz angetreten. Hier kommt es zu schweren Kaempfen, da der Russe inzwischen aus Wlodzimierz mot.Verstaerkungen, darunter auch Panzer, in den Wald vorgeworfen hat.

Gleichzeitig mit dem Befehl zum Vorziehen der **11 PD** an den Bug erhalten **13** u. **16 PD** den Befehl nach vorne zu ruecken u. zwar **13 PD** in den Raum Zamosc (ausschl.) – Bilgoraj (ausschl.), **16 PD** ueber **9 PD** hinweg in den Raum Bilgoraj – Janow – Lubelski. Ein schneller Einsatz dieser Pz.Div. hinter **11 PD** oder nach Sueden ist dadurch gewaehrleistet.

Bis zum Einbruck der Dunkelheit gelingt es den Inf.-Diven. des **48 PzK**, bis an die allgemeine Linie Perespa – Spasow – Wald NO Tartakow – Bobiatyn – Jozefka gegen hartnaeckigen Gegner vorzudringen. Die A.A. der **57 ID** erreicht sogar Torki u. erbeutet einige Zugmaschinen. **11 PD** erreicht mit seinen ver-

²¹⁰ **Note:** Of course, in the war diaries, these corps are not designated as panzer corps, rather as motorized corps—e.g., XXXXVIII AK (mot.) I'll have to decide whether I want to stick w/ "Pz.K." designations & Arabic numerals, or use Roman numerals and "mot."

²¹¹ **Note:** Thus, by midday, due to successes of attached infantry divisions, Kleist's armor beginning to advance.

staerkten Pz.Rgt. noch in der Nacht Stojanow, das es am naechsten Morgen angreifen will.

29 AK erreicht mit **111 ID Poryck** [sp?] u. ueberschreitet noerdl. davon an mehreren Stellen die Luga. **299 ID** gelingt es in scheidigem Vorgehen mit zwei Inf.-Rgtern. die Luga Zwinarejka bei Zamlice zu erreichen u. bei Biskupice nach Norden einen Brueckenkopf zu bilden. . .

Bei **3 PzK** hat sich der Feindwiderstand am meisten verstaerkt. **44 ID** steht immer noch beiderseits Janow im Bunkerkampf. Der Angriff der **298 ID** hat keine Fortschritte gemacht, da gegen Abend der Russe auch von SO, unterstuetzt von Panzern, angreift.

14 PD hat bisher nur ihre A.A. ueber den Bug gefuehrt. Die Div. selbst liegt noch westlich des Bug. Auf Uscilug u. **14 PD** erfolgen am Abend *die ersten russischen Bombenangriffe*. Sonst findet an diesem Tage keine Fliegerangriffe statt. . .

Der Feind wurde auf der ganzen Front der Pz.Gr. durch den Angriff ueberrascht. Die vorderen Feldbefestigungen waren z.T. nicht besetzt u. es gelang ihm nicht mehr die Stellungen planmaessig zu besetzen. Soweit dem Feind die Besetzung gelang, kaempfte er zaeh. Die Bunkerstellung ist teilweise nicht fertig gestellt.

Das auf Zusammenarbeit mit der Panzergruppe angewiesene **V. Fliegerkorps** vernichtete an diesem Tage durch ueberraschendem Vorstoss gegen die feindl. Einsatz-haefen u. Bodenorganisationen **396** Flugzeuge am Boden; **60** feindl. Maschinen werden im Luftkampf abgeschossen. Hierbei zeigt sich die *grosse Ueberlegenheit* der eigenen Jagd- u. Kampfverbaende gegenueber den russischen.

II. Flakkorps, mit je einem Rgt. den beiden vorderen A.K.'s unterstellt, ist an diesem Tage mit der Masse zum Schutz der Aufmarschstrassen u. der Bug-Uebergaenge eingesetzt. Einzelne Geschuetze bekaempften mit Erfolg *feindl. Grenzbunker*.

23.6.41:

Wald suedl. Wolka Labunska.

Zwischen **0.00** u. **0.30** Uhr ruft der Chef des Gen.St. der Armee den Chef des Gen.St. der Pz.Gr. an u. teilt ihm mit:

GFM von Reichenau habe befohlen, dass **13 PD** dem **3 PzK** wegen der *kritischen Lage bei Wlodzimierz* zur Verfuegung zu stellen sei. . .

(T-313, Roll 3, *KTB Nr. 6 Pz. A.O.K. I*)

--Excerpt from my *Uman* article:

Operating from eastern Poland, 1 Panzer Group was to break through the Soviet frontier forces between Rawa Ruska and Kovel and advance along the axis Berditshev – Shitomir on the Dnepr at and below Kiev. After completion of this first phase, Kleist was to wheel to the SE into the backs of the Soviet forces in the western Ukraine and prevent an operational withdrawal across the Dnepr. Thus surrounded, the Soviet Ukraine Front could be pinned and destroyed *west* of the Dnepr River.

Facing the armored armada of 1 Panzer Group was a formidable foe: Col.-Gen. Kirponos and his SW Front. The four armies which composed Kirponos's command (the largest of the Soviet defensive concentrations) were deployed in great depth covering the vital Ukrainian *breakbasket*. The Soviet defensive positions harbored nests of *well-camouflaged pillboxes* and bristled with *heavy field artillery* and cunningly laid obstacles. Equally ominous was the fact that Kirponos had concentrated the bulk of his forces on both sides of the axis L'vov – Berditshev – Kiev; thus along the projected *Schwerpunkt* (point of main effort) of 1 Panzer Group. Strong motorized and armored reserves were held ready in the area Shepetovka – Proskurov – Shitomir,²¹² equipped in part w/ new T-34 and KV super-heavy tanks, about which the Germans possessed little intelligence. South of Kirponos, in Bessarabia, Tylenev's Southern Front confronted Schobert's weak Eleventh Army.

On 22 June 1941 Kleist's armor crossed the frontier north of Lemberg support by infantry of Sixth Army. Tactical surprise was achieved *along the entire front*. Under a *glowing, oppressive sun*, the divisions of **3** and **48 PzK** punched a deep hole in the Soviet bunker positions along the Bug. Farther south, Stülpnagel's infantry threw bridgeheads across the San at Przemysl and Rodymno. The Russian defenders, however, recovered quickly from the initial shock of invasion and fought w/ a skill and determination to which the conquerors of Poland and France were unaccustomed. Behind stacks of straw and in trees and farmsteads lurked Soviet marksmen, armed in part w/ rifles outfitted w/ telescopic sights. The ubiquitous cornfields teemed w/ Soviet infantry in well-hidden positions which were only cleared after *ferocious hand-to-hand combat*. Col.-Gen. Franz Halder, Chief of the German General Staff, noted in his diary the toughness of individual Soviet units in combat, and the fact that some Soviet bunker crews preferred to blow themselves up with their bunkers than to face captivity.

Despite the bitter resistance of the defenders, by the morning of 23 June the penetration of Kleist's armor at the junction of Soviet **5** and **6 Armies** had become "an accomplished and menacing fact."

(C. Luther, "German Armoured Operations in the Ukraine 1941," 455-56; also, Erickson, *The Road to Stalingrad*, 163; Wagener, *Hr.Gr.Sued*, 48-49)

--**22.6.41**: Kleist's **1 PzGr** broke through w/o much difficulty on a **30-mile** gap along the boundary of Potapov's **5** and Muzychenko's **6 Armies** in the direction of Rovno. This axis lay across the concentration areas of some of the Soviet mechanized corps. (On **23.6.41** began a series of tank engagements between Luck – Rovno as **22, 9** and **19 Mech Corps** were drawn into

²¹² **Note:** Map for 22.6.41 in GSWW confirms this reserve deployment.

the fighting, and until **28 Jun 41 1 PzGr** was fighting its way slowly forward in a *series of local tactical battles instead of racing away*, as had been hoped, towards deep tactical or strategic objectives. Potapov's **5 Army** fell back to the NE on the Pripet Marshes where it was to live to fight – most successfully – another day.²¹³ By **1 Jul 41**, the Germans had reached the area of Rovno – Dubno – Krzemieniec. (Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 135-36)

--**22.6.41**:²¹⁴ As the bombers passed over the frontier, Soviet guards, already alerted by the noise of the engines, saw *bursts of white rockets from the German lines and responses from the acct.* Pre-cisely at **04.15 hours (Moscow time)**, the German guns opened fire on the frontier posts and positions, targets already *accurately pinpointed*. AGS had three river barriers to brave from the outset: the Western Bug – San – Prut. Nor was the German command unaware of the strong Soviet defenses and the *deep echeloning of Kirponos's armies* in the northern part of the front. At the same time, there were *gaps in the defenses*, which AGS exploited by committing the German Sixth Army and von Kleist's panzer group at the *junction of the Rava-Russki and Strumilov "fortified districts,"* against the left flank units of the Soviet **5 Army** and part of the right flank of Soviet **6 Army**.

Supported by their artillery fire, the German assault boats were launched into the Bug, which was on average some *70 meters wide in these southern parts*, and made for the Soviet bank. Soviet frontier troops, w/ their rifles I.M.G.s and grenades, put up what resistance they could. Where possible, the *unfortunate families of the frontier guards* crowded into a block-house or took shelter in basements; at Sokal, Capt. Bershadskii's detachment fought to defend the wooden bridge over the river, *though his wife and eleven-year-old son lay dead in the shattered buildings of the frontier post*. In the Krystynopol area, German assault troops seized the bridge, while units of Soviet **124 RD** rushed up from five miles away to support the frontier troops. At Vygodanka, the railway bridge over the Bug was guarded by the **128 NKVD Railway Rgt.**, w/ a strength of 20 men; here, a German motor-cycle assault troop tried to rush the bridge. Within an hour, the frontier on the Western Bug was the scene of *scores of furious engagements*; the frontier guards, *lacking heavy wps and short of ammunition*, called for support from the Red Army. (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 121-22)

--**23.-25.6.41 (48 PzK)**: Aber die Korps der **1 PzGr (48 u. 3 PzK)** haben bei Wladimir Wolynsk (suedl. Kowel) die feindl. Front zerissen u. stossen nun trotz grosser Verkehrsschwierigkeiten ab **24.6.** mit schnellen Kraefte durch. Die **11 PD** kommt als Spitze des **48 PzK** am **25.6.** in einem Zuge bis Dubno (SW Rowno). Damit klafft zwischen der russ. **6 u. 5 Armee** eine Luecke von 50 km. Aber der Feind wirft seine mot.mech Verbaende gegen den deutschen Durchbruchskiel u. schnei-det der **11 PD** im Ruecken die Verbindung nach rueckwaerts ab. **11 u. 16 PD** kaempfen tagelang nach allen Seiten gegen ueberlegenen Feind bei Dubno, der dabei ueber 100 Panzer verliert. Erst nach Herankommen der **111 ID** koennen sie an die Fortsetzung des Angriffs nach Osten denken. (C. Wagener, *Heeresgruppe Sued*, 54)

--**23.-28.6.41 (3 PzK)**: Auch das **3 PzK** muss sich nach seinem Durchbrechen am **24.6.** heftiger Angriffe in Flanken u. Ruecken erwehren, kann sich aber in den naechsten Tagen behaupten u. mit der **14 PD** unter Abschuss von 150 Feindpanzern bis Luck (westl. Rowno) durchstossen. Die Bruecke ueber den Styr ist leider gesprengt. Nach Norden deckt den Vorstoss der Pz.Gr. v. Kleist das **29 AK** NW Luck. Und das noerdlichste Korps der H.Gr., das **17 AK**, ist am Suedrand des

²¹³ **Note:** In fact, Soviet **5 Army** would become a real thorn in side of AGS's left flank for many weeks to come.

²¹⁴ **Note:** Believe all combat action described here took place in sectors of **6 AOK** and **1 PzAOK**, both of which were attacking across the Bug River.

Sumpf- u. Waldgebietes in langsam fortschreitendem Angriff Richtung Kowel, unter ständiger Abwehr feindlicher Vorstoesse gegen seine Nordflanke. Am **28.6.** rückt die **62 ID** in Kowel ein. Auch hier waren die Verluste beträchtlich. Allein die **56 ID** meldete in den bisherigen 7 Kampftagen den Verlust von **1000 Mann**. (C. Wagener, *Heeresgruppe Sued*, 54-55)

1.5.5: Sixth Army

--GFM v. Reichenau: Bei der Mobilmachung wurde er zum Oberbefehlshaber über die **10. Armee** ernannt. Diese Armee führte er dann zu Beginn des 2. Weltkrieges in den Polenfeldzug. Dort wurden ihm zuerst beide Spangen zu seinen Eisernen Kreuzen verliehen. Für die Leistungen der Armee im Polenfeldzug wurde ihm am 30. September 1939 persönlich durch Adolf Hitler das Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes verliehen. Am 1. Oktober 1939 wurde er zum Generaloberst befördert. Nach dem Polenfeldzug wurde seine Armee bei der Überführung in den Westen zur **6. Armee** umbenannt. Er blieb weiter deren Oberbefehlshaber. Dann führte er die Armee in den Westfeldzug. Nach dem Westfeldzug wurde von Reichenau zum Generalfeldmarschall befördert. Auch bei Beginn des Ostfeldzuges im Sommer 1941 führte er seine Armee beim Angriff auf Südrussland. . . Als besonders bezeichnend für die Art Reichenaus gilt der sogenannte Reichenau-Erlass vom 10. Oktober 1941 über das Verhalten der Truppe im Ostraum. Am 1. Dezember 1941 wurde er dann zum Oberbefehlshaber der **Heeresgruppe Süd** ernannt. Am **15. Januar 1942** erlitt Reichenau einen Schlaganfall. Daraufhin sollte er zur Behandlung in das Reich gebracht werden. Am 17. Januar 1942 wurde er dann mit dem Flugzeug von Poltawa nach Leipzig gebracht, um dort behandelt zu werden. Bei der Zwischenlandung in Lemberg wurde Reichenau anscheinend schwer verletzt. Während des Weiterfluges ist er an einem Herzinfarkt gestorben. Er wurde mit einem Staatsbegräbnis im Beisein von Reichsmarschall Göring und GFM Rundstedt auf dem Invalidenfriedhof in Berlin beigesetzt. (*Lexikon-der-Wehrmacht*)

--North of Seventeenth Army, von Reichenau's Sixth Army (also 13 infantry divisions)²¹⁵ had an important *duel assignment*: to cover the open northern flank of the Panzer Group and, with strong forces, to support its operations in the direction of Shitomir. (C. Luther, "German Armoured Operations in the Ukraine 1941," f.n. 5.

--Sixth Army was to *force an opening for the armor in enemy positions near the frontier* and then follow the armored units closely to destroy the enemy, provide assistance at river crossings, and cover the northern flank of the army group in the direction of the Pripet marshes. To accomplish the first task, the *armored group was placed under the commander of Sixth Army* and itself [the panzer group?] took over several infantry divisions of Sixth Army to ensure that transport movements could be carried out smoothly. (*GSWW*, Vol IV: 548)

--Von Reichenau had at his disposal some **145,000** men during the initial stages of the operation but later would recover the infantry divisions *temporarily seconded to 1 PzGr.*, placing his strength close to a quarter million men. Sixth Army corps commanders: Vierow's **55 AK** HQ, Kienitz's **17 AK**, Koch's **44 AK**, Obstfelder's **29 AK**. The Sixth Army deployed behind 1 PzGr [?] but took up positions to its north and rear as it advanced, protecting the armor from the many Soviet units that retreated into the marshes. (Taylor, *Barbarossa to Berlin. A Chronology*, 21)

²¹⁵ **Note:** On **22.6.41**, appears roughly half of Reichenau's units were temporarily attached to Kleist's panzer group to assist w/ initial breakthrough. (See, *DRZW*, "Die materielle Ausstattung des deutschen Ostheeres am 22.6.1941."

--During the first phase of the operation, Sixth Army (w/ 4 corps of 12 divisions) had the mission of following the armored wedge, destroying the forces broken through, and speedily reaching the area Berdichev – Zhitomir. Thus, the Soviet army was to be prevented from making a stand in the fortifications of the Stalin Line. Thereafter, Sixth Army was to stand ready to *pivot SE to cut off the withdrawal* of the Soviet forces west of the Dnepr in cooperation w/ **1 PzGr** on the left, and Seventeenth Army on the right. At same time, Reichenau had the additional task of *protecting the army group north flank*. (Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, IV: 6)

--**Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa (31.1.41)**:²¹⁶

4. *Auftraege an die Heeresgruppen u. Armeen: . . .*

6. Armee wird im Zusammenwirken mit Teilen der **1 PzGr** die feindl. Front im Gebiet beiderseits Lucki zu durchbrechen u. unter Deckung der Nordflanke der H.Gr. gegen Einwirkung aus dem Bereich der Pripjet-Suempfe mit moeglichst starken Kraeften u. moeglichst rasch der Pz.Gr. auf Shitomir zu folgen haben.

Sie muss bereit sein, nach Weisung des Oberkommandos der H.Gr. mit starken Kraeften westl. des Dnjepr nach Suedosten einzuschwenken, um im Zusammenwirken mit **1 PzGr** den in der Westukraine kaempfenden Feind am Ausweichen ueber den Dnjepr zu verhindern u. zu schlagen.

(Halder, Franz. *Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. II. Appendix 2, 466)

--**22.6.41**: Bei **6. u. 4. Armee** fallen die Solokija- u. Bug-Bruecken unversehrt in eigene Hand. . . (KTB OKW, 417)

--**22.6.41** (Sixth Army launches its attack):

On the northern wing of AGS, at Reichenau's Sixth Army, on the Bug, *good progress was made on the first day of the campaign*, in spite of difficulties which **62 ID** had in building its bridge.

Maj.-Gen. von Oven's 56 ID crossed the river w/o any hitch w/ the very first wave of rubber dinghies. The artillery fire lay so squarely on the well-reconnoitered enemy positions that the attackers suffered practically no casualties. Halfway through the morning a pontoon bridge was in position in the sector of **192 IR [56 ID]** at Chelm. The artillery crossed at high speed. On the very first day the regiments of **17 AK** pushed ahead 9 miles right through the Russian frontier fortifications.

(P. Carell, *Hitler Moves East*, 26)

--**22.6.41** (Darstellung Carl Wagener):

²¹⁶ **Note:** Here I've carved out the portion of the Army's Deployment Directive specifically addressing role of Sixth Army.

Bei der auch an *Heerestruppen* staerkeren **6 Armee**²¹⁷ waren **11** Inf.-Diven. Schulter an Schulter um **3.15** Uhr zum Angriff angetreten,²¹⁸ alle Pz.Diven. zurueckgehalten, um erst nach Einbruch der Infanterie nachgezogen zu werden. Auch hier schlug zunaechst die *Stunde des Infanteristen u. Pioniers*. **1 PzGr**, der **6 Armee** unterstellt, sollte mit ihren schnellen Diven. erst zum Durchbruch auf Kiew antreten, wenn ihr die Infanterie das Sprungbrett u. Flankenfreiheit geschaffen hatte.

Am rechten Fluegel der **6 Armee** griff das **44 AK** mit **9** u. **297 ID** an. Ihnen u. den links anschliessenden Diven. des **48 PzK** (**57** u. **75 ID**) gelang es, im ersten Ansturm in die vordersten Feindstellungen einzubrechen, eine Bug-Bruecke unbeschadigt zu nehmen, so dass in den Mittagsstunden schon die **14 PD**²¹⁹ aufgesessen ueber den Fluss nachgezogen werden kann. Der Feind zog sich hinter dem Schutz von Nachhuten u. Gegenstoessen nach Osten zurueck. **57** u. **75 ID** gingen noerdl. Prystynopol ueber den Bug, um hier der **11 PD** den Weg nach Osten freizukaempfen.

In der Mitte des Abschnitts der **6 Armee** hatte die **1 PzGr** einen eigenen Gefechtsstreifen zugewiesen erhalten, in welchem die ihr unterstellten **3 PzK** u. **29 AK** mit Infanterie (**44, 111, 298, 299 IDs**) das Loch zum Durchbruch schlagen sollte. Das **14 PzK** war noch weiter rueckwaerts zurueckgehalten.

Am Nordfluegel der **6 Armee** war das **17 AK** mit **62** u. **56 ID** angetreten mit der Aufgabe, in die feindl. Grenzbefestigungen einzubrechen u. die Nordflanke der Armee u. H.Gr. gegen eine Feindeinwirkung aus den Pripjetsuempfen abzudecken. Die Lage in den Pripjets war noch ungeklaert. Beide Diven. konnten rasch den Buguebergang erzwingen u. in Richtung Kowel einen **14 km** tiefen Einbruch erzielen.

(C. Wagener, *Heeresgruppe Sued*, 49-50)

--**22.6.41 [17 AK]**: Die Armee des GFM v. Reichenau bildete den linken Fluegel [der H.Gr. Sued]. Das **17 AK** stand mit **56** u. **62 ID** im noerdlichsten Abschnitt. Es war Aufgabe des Korps, den Fluegel der Armee zu den Pripjetsuempfen zu schuetzen. Trotz haertesten Widerstands der gegenueberliegenden zwei Soviet-Divisionen konnten die beiden deutschen Divisionen bis zu **14 km** an Boden gewinnen!

In schweren Kaempfen drang die Division [**56 ID**] im Laufe des Tages bis zu **14 km** ueber den Bug vor. Die Angriffsspitzen sahen bereits Luboml. Als die Dunkelheit einbrach, fehlten vom mittelsten Rgt. (**IR 171**) zwei Bataillone, die *so ungestuem vorgeprellt waren, dass sie von den Russen abgeschnitten wurden*. Zum Glueck gelang es der Tapferkeit u. Umsicht des Rgt. Kdrs. Oberst v. Erdmannsdorff, die Bataillone im Laufe der Nacht wieder aus der feindl. Umklammerung zur Div. zurueckzufuehren. Ausserordentlich kritisch gestalteten sich die

²¹⁷ **Note:** That is, **6 AOK** was stronger than **17 AOK**.

²¹⁸ **Note:** Reichenau's **6 Army** only directly controlled three corps and **5 IDs** on 22.6.1941. Roughly half of its infantry was assigned temporarily to Kleist's **1 PzGr**, to create the breakthrough across the border for the armor. Of course, Kleist's panzer group was subordinated to **6 AOK**.

²¹⁹ **Note:** This cannot appear correct. I believe author means the **11 PD**, which belonged to **48 PzK**. **14 PD** was much farther north and controlled by **3 PzK**.

Verhaeltnisse zeitweise beim rechten Fluegelregiment **IR 192**. Zunaechst wehrte sich die russ. Bunkerbesatzung am Bug bei Wilczy-Przewoz zaeh u. heldenhaft **bis zum letzten Mann**. Beim weiteren Vordringen des Rgts. machte sich der besonders starke Feindwiderstand an Bahn u. Strasse Chelm – Luboml – Kowel unangenehm bemerkbar, zumal der rechte Nachbar, die **62 ID**, *erhebliche Schwierigkeiten* auf seinem linken Fluegel hatte.²²⁰

Hinzu kam im Laufe des Tages ein fuer die **56 ID** *recht stoerendes Eingreifen des Gen.Komm. (17 AK)*. . . [Note: Div. is denied desperately needed artillery support by corps' decision. See text for details.]

Die Kaempfe beim **IR 192** wurden infolgedessen verlustreicher, als es noetig war, u. stellenweise sehr kritisch. . .²²¹

(W. Haupt, *Die Schlachten der H.Gr.Sued*, 21-22)

--22.6.41: Schon am ersten Tag schoben sich die drei mot. Korps der **1 PzGr** rechts am **17 AK** vorbei an die Front. Die **44** u. **298 ID** nahmen bei Hrubaschow die unbeschadigte Bugbruecke in Besitz, ueber die schon am Nachmittag die **14 PD** rollte. Damit konnte auch das rechts stehende **44 AK** Bogen gewinnen. Als sich der Durchbruch der **1 PzGr** schon am ersten Tag abzeichnete, waren auch das **29 AK** u. das **48 AK (mot.)** ueber den breiten Grenzfluss gegangen, so dass die **6 Armee** am ersten Kriegstag bereits Bewegungsfreiheit zu bekommen schien. (W. Haupt, *Die Schlachten der H.Gr.Sued*, 22)

--22.6.41 (**56 ID**):²²²

Als die Div. am **22.6.** ueber den Bug ostw. Chelm antrat, war sie ausbildungsmaessig u. ihrem inneren Gefechtswert nach auf einem Hoehepunkt, der vor- u. nachher wohl kaum erreicht worden ist. Die Div. hat im Russlandfeldzug den glaenzenden Ruf bestaetigt, den sie sich im Frankreichfeldzug erworben hatte. Jetzt zeigten sich die Fruechte der harten Ausbildungsmonate, ueber die mancher reichlich gestoehnt u. vor allem kraeftig geschimpft hatte. Aber die beste Ausbildung u. Schulung waeren umsonst gewesen, wenn diese *saechsischen Truppen* . . .

Angriffskaempfe bis Kowel:

Nachdem die Div. sich in den letzten Tagen vor dem russ. Feldzugsbeginn in Nachtmarschen an den Bug herangeschoben hatte u. die Erkundungen durchgefuehrt waren unter umfassenden Vorsichtsmassnahmen in der Daemmerung u. in Zivilkleidung u. mit landwirtschaftlichen Geraeten versehen, griffen am **22.6.** um **3.18 Uhr**²²³ die drei Inf.-Rgter. nebeneinander an u. zwar rechts **IR 192**, Mitte **IR 171**, links **IR 234**, jedes Rgt. mit einer Pionier- u. Pz.Jaeg.Kp., waehrend die A.A. die offene Nordflanke sicherte.

²²⁰ Note: Appears that Werner Haupt simply copied most of this word for word out of the **56 ID** history prepared by the *Arbeitskreis* of the division!

²²¹ Note: This quote gleaned from: *Aus der Geschichte der 56. ID*, Fulda, 1968.

²²² Note: This account contains a nice little map!

²²³ Note: So this division's initial assault began three minutes after start of main assault (**0315** hours)?

Die ersten Flosssackwellen der Infanterie kamen ohne wesentliche Gegenwehr aus den russ. Bunkern am ostw. Flussufer ueber den Bug. Beguenstigt wurde die unbemerkte Bereitstellung der Infanterie mit dem Instellungbringen der schweren Waffen u. dem Zuwasserbringen der Flosssaecke durch das ***lebhaftes Konzert der Bug-Froesche***, das alle anderen Geraeusche uebertoente.

Das Artl.Regt. der Div. hatte seine Batterien in den beiden letzten Naechten vor dem Angriff so in Stellung gebracht u. vermessen, dass sein um **3.18** Uhr einsetzendes Artl. Feuer einwandfrei auf den befohlenen Feindzielen lag. . .

In schweren Kaempfen drang die Div. im Laufe des Tages bis zu **14 km** ueber den Bug vor. Die Angriffsspitzen sahen bereits Luboml. Als die Dunkelheit einbrach, fehlten vom mittelsten Rgt. (**IR 171**) zwei Bataillone, die so ***ungestuem vorgeprellt waren, dass sie von den Russen abgeschnitten wurden.*** Zum Glueck gelang es der Tapferkeit u. Umsicht des Rgts.-Kdrs., Oberst v. Erdmannsdorff, die Bataillone im Laufe der Nacht wieder aus der feindl. Umklammerung zur Div. zurueckzufuehren.

Ausserordentlich kritisch gestalteten sich die Verhaeltnisse zeitweise beim rechten Fluegelregiment **IR 192**. Zunaechst wehrte sich die russ. Bunkerbesatzung am Bug bei Wilczy-Przewoz zaeh u. heldenhaft ***bis zum letzten Mann.*** Beim weiteren Vordringen des Rgts. machte sich der besonders starke Feindwiderstand an Bahn u. Strasse Chelm – Luboml – Kowel unangenehm bemerkbar, zumal der rechte Nachbar, die **62 ID**, *erhebliche Schwierigkeiten* auf seinem linken Fluegel hatte.

Hinzu kam im Laufe des Tages ein fuer die **56 ID** *recht stoerendes Eingreifen des Gen.Komm. (17 AK)*. . . [Note: Div. is denied desperately needed artillery support by corps' decision. See text for details.]

Die Kaempfe beim **IR 192** wurden infolgedessen verlustreicher, als es noetig war, u. stellenweise sehr kritisch. Der umsichtigen u. standhaften Fuehrung des Rgts. durch seinen hervorragenden Kdr., Obst.Lt. Ratcliffe, war es – neben der Tapferkeit der Truppe – in starkem Masse zu verdanken, dass die Lage gemeistert wurde.

Waehrend der Feind am **22.6.** frueh einen voellig ueberraschten Eindruck machte – die deutsche Luftaufklaerung beobachtete die Alarmierung der in Luboml kasernierten russ. Truppen – *versteifte sich der Feindwiderstand in den Vormittagsstunden so*, dass schon im Laufe des Tages nachhaltig auf der Gegenseite verteidigt wurde u. ***erbitterte Gegenstoesse*** gefuehrt wurden. Der ***Russe von 1941*** war nicht mehr der von **1914/18**. Dies wurde den aelteren Offizieren, die den ersten Weltkrieg erlebt hatten, bald klar. Im Gegensatz zum russ. Soldaten vor fast **30** Jahren kaempfte der Sowjetsoldat ausserordentlich tapfer, zaeh u. fanatisch.²²⁴

Gegen diesen Gegner arbeitete sich die Div. am **23.-24.6.** unter harten Kaempfen bis an den Westrand von Luboml vor, um am **25.6.** mit Teilen den Ort von Norden umfassend den Widerstand zu brechen u. am **26.6.** zunaechst gegen ver-

²²⁴ **Note:** This paragraph would make for a nice quotation in book!

bissene Abwehr, dabei russ. Panzer u. Flieger, sich fast **20** km nach Osten vorzukaempfen, die V.A. . . . noch **10** km weiter. Der **27.6.** brachte die in Marschgruppen vorgehende Div. trotz gelegentlicher Nachhutskaempfe des Feindes bis zu **20** km vorwaerts.²²⁵ . . .

Die Strapazen fuer Mann u. Pferd bei *gluehender Hitze u. tiefen Sandwegen* waren recht gross.

Die Erfolge der ersten Feldzugwoche waren aber nicht leicht erkaufte; die Div. verlor in diesen 7 Tagen: **40** Offz., **1012** Uffz./Mannsch. an Toten, Verwundeten u. Vermissten, davon die Infanterie *etwa 20% ihrer Gefechtsstaerke*. Am schwersten hatte **IR 192** am **22.6.** beim Kampf um u. ostw. des Bug zu leiden, ferner **IR 234** am **25.6.** bei Borki (NO Luboml), als es *drei schwere, mit Panzern gefuehrten russ. Angriffe abwehrte*. Hier kam es zu Nahkaempfen in hoechem Getreide mit grossen Offz.-Verluste. Infolgedessen betrug der Ausfall an Offz. bei diesem Rgt. vom **22.-29.6.** die erhebliche Zahl von **32%**.

(*Arbeitskreis der Division* (Hg.), 28-32)

--**ca. 23./24.6.41**: Auch die Divisionen der **6 Armee** halten sich nicht auf. Da aber die **17 Armee** abhaengt, muessen die Kraefte an ihrem Suedfluegel nach Sueden Front machen u. voruebergehend zur Verteidigung uebergehen. Zwei Divisionen (**9** u. **297 ID**) fallen dadurch fuer den weiteren Vorstoss nach Osten aus. Immer wieder stellt sich bei der Armee, wie bei der ganzen Heeresgruppe *das leidige Problem der offenen Flanke*. (C. Wagener, *Heeresgruppe Sued*, 54)

--**23.-28.6.41**: Auch das **3 PzK** muss sich nach seinem Durchbrechen am **24.6.** heftiger Angriffe in Flanken u. Ruecken erwehren, kann sich aber in den naechsten Tagen behaupten u. mit der **14 PD** unter Abschuss von **150 Feindpanzern** bis Luck (westl. Rowno) durchstossen. Die Bruecke ueber den Styr ist leider gesprengt. Nach Norden deckt den Vorstoss der Pz.Gr. v. Kleist das **29 AK** NW Luck. Und das noerdlichste Korps der H.Gr., das **17 AK**, ist am Suedrand des Sumpf- u. Waldgebietes in langsam fortschreitendem Angriff Richtung Kowel, unter staendiger Abwehr feindlicher Vorstoesse gegen seine Nordflanke. Am **28.6.** rueckt die **62 ID** in Kowel ein. Auch hier waren die Verluste betraechtlich. Allein die **56 ID** meldete in den bisherigen 7 Kampftagen den Verlust von **1000 Mann**. (C. Wagener, *Heeresgruppe Sued*, 54-55)

1.5.6: Eleventh Army

(**Note**: For key background on German Eleventh Army, role in Romania, strategic importance of Romania, operational plans, troop strength, etc., See, Lutichau, *The Road To Moscow*, IV: 24, ff.)

--Col.-Gen. Ritter von Schobert had taken command of Eleventh Army in Romania on **24 May 41**. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: 547)

--**Eugen Ritter von Schobert**: Mit diesem Korps nahm er dann am Polenfeldzug teil. Im Westfeldzug kommandierte er noch immer das **VII. Armeekorps**. Ihm waren inzwischen beide

²²⁵ **Note**: Appears it took **56 ID** several days to break through the Russian defenses and begin to push well beyond the border.

Spangen zu seinen Eisernen Kreuzen verliehen wurden. Am 29. Juni 1940 wurde ihm das Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes verliehen. Am 19. Juli 1940 wurde er zum Generaloberst befördert. Er wurde dann Anfang Oktober 1940 zum Oberbefehlshaber der **11. Armee** ernannt. Diese befehligte er dann auch zu Beginn des Ostfeldzuges beim Angriff auf Südrussland. Am 2. Juli 1941 trat seine Armee dabei mit dem **XXX., LIV. und XI. Armeekorps** zum Angriff an und überschritt den Pruth. Am 12. September 1941 landete er bei einem Erkundungsflug mit seinem Fieseler Storch in Frontnähe in einem Minenfeld der Roten Armee. Er wurde dabei ebenso getötet wie sein Pilot, Hauptmann der Luftwaffe Suwelack. (*Lexikon-der-Wehrmacht*)

--Die **11. Armee** wurde am 5. Oktober 1940 im **Wehrkreis IV** aufgestellt. Anfangs wurde der Stab mit dem Decknamen **Kommandostab Leipzig** gebildet. Im April 1941 wurde der Stab nach **München**, im **Wehrkreis VII**, verlegt. Jetzt erhielt der Stab den Decknamen **Kommandostab München**. Vom 24. Mai bis zum 22. Juni 1941 war der Stab zugleich auch Oberkommando der Truppen des deutschen Heeres in Rumänien. Seine Aufgabe war es, mit den ihm unterstellten Truppenteilen die rumänischen Ölfelder bei Ploesti vor einem möglichen sowjetischen Angriff zu schützen. Am 22. Juni 1941 wurde der Stab dann endgültig zur 11. Armee umbenannt. **Nach der rumänischen Kriegserklärung an Rußland am 24. Juni wurde dem Armeekommando 11 zusätzlich das rumänische Gebirgskorps unterstellt.** Am 2. Juli 1941 überschritt die Armee den Pruth und drang anschließend über den Dnjestr bei Mogilew auf Proskurow vor, wo sie Anschluss an die 17. Armee fand. (*Lexikon-der-Wehrmacht*)

--Most of the German forces in Romania under Eleventh Army command were concentrated in the area north of Iasi for the planned attack across the Prut. After the government of Romania declared its readiness to participate actively and offensively in the war, the *question of command of Romanian forces and German forces* was solved by Marshal Antonescu being made their nominal commander, while the HQ staff of Eleventh Army was to plan and supervise the actual execution of operations. [See text for more details on German-Romanian command arrangements.] (*GSWW*, Vol IV: 548-49)

--To the south lay the German 11th and Rumanian 3rd and 4th Armies. Deployed around the Rumanian border town of Jassy, Schobert's 11th Army had at its disposal Kortzfleisch's **11 AK**, Salmuth's **30 AK** and Hansen's **54 AK**—a total of **175,000** men. Also attached were four Rumanian infantry divisions, one cav bde and two mountain bdes. (Taylor, *Barbarossa to Berlin. A Chronology*, 23)²²⁶

--Rundstedt's second shock group, designated to conduct a *delayed supporting attack* from Rumania, consisted of Col.-Gen. Franz Ritter von Schobert's Eleventh Army and the Rumanian Third and Fourth Armies, w/ a total of **3** German and **5** Rumanian army corps. This force was to attack from Rumania to clear Soviet forces from southern Ukraine and the Black Sea coast and, if possible, encircle Red Army forces in the Kamenets – Podol'skii – Vinnitsa regions in cooperation w/ Seventeenth and Sixth Armies. (Glantz, *Barbarossa 1941*, 47)

--**11 AOK**: Am aeussersten Suedfluegel der Front, wo die **11 Armee** mit dem **11, 30 u. 54 AK** aufmarschiert war, geschah am **22.6.1941** allerdings noch nichts. Kein Trommenfeuer, kein Angriff ueber die Grenze, nur ein paar Stosstruppunternehmen, teilweise in rumaenischen Uniformen, ueber den Pruth, um den Feind to fesseln u. im unklaren ueber die eigenen Absichten zu halten. An dieser Stelle der deutschen Front, welche **die guenstigste Stossrichtung in den Ruecken des Feindes** bot, wird zunaechst leider nur verteidigt. Die **11 Armee** ist auch nicht stark

²²⁶ **Note:** Confirm these details!

genug, sie hat nur **8 deutsche Diven.** u. ausser einer **Stug-Abt.** keinen Panzerverband.²²⁷ Ein Teil der Diven., die **50, 72, 76 u. 198 [ID]** waren auch eben erst vom Balkanfeldzug gekommen u. hatten ein paar Tagen der Auffrischung dringend notwendig. (C. Wagener, *Heeresgruppe Sued*, 47)

--**Rumaenische Armeen:** Die **3 u. 4 rum. Armee**, die zusammen mit der **11 Armee** hier aufmarschiert waren, zaehlten zwar an die **20 Verbaende**, aber **6** davon sind Kav.-Bde. u. auch die uebrigen sind *nicht modern ausgeruestet*. **Es fehlt ihnen an Panzer- u. Luftabwehr, an Beweglichkeit ueberhaupt**. Ein Angriff gegen eine russ. Front ist ihnen nicht zuzutrauen. Und auch zur Grenzsicherung gegen einen moeglichen russ. Angriff auf das rumaenische Oelgebiet sind sicherheitshalber die deutschen u. rum. Diven. gemischt eingesetzt. Auch der Befehlsweg des **AOK 11** ist erschwert. . . [See text for details of awkward command arrangements w/ Rumanians.] (C. Wagener, *Heeresgruppe Sued*, 47-48)

--The forces in Rumania consisted of von Schobert's **11 Army**, of 7 German infantry divisions, and **3 and 4** Rumanian Armies totally the equivalent of about **14** Rumanian divisions. **11 Army** formed the center between the two Rumanian armies but had *detached one corps* to Rumanian **4 Army**, one infantry division to safeguard Ploesti, and some further small groupings had been allotted to Rumanian formations. The task of **11 Army** and Rumanian **3 Army** was merely to safeguard Rumanian territory by *remaining passive until seven days after the start of the war*,²²⁸ by which time it was hoped that the Red Army in the Ukraine would be either encircled or withdrawing. **11 and 3 Armies** would then advance by way of Kamenets Podolskiy – Mogilev Podolskiy into the Ukraine in an attempt to pin Soviet forces there, while Rumanian **4 Army** was to move on Odessa. (Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 134)

--The Eleventh Army (**3** corps of **6** divisions) was to *confine itself to diversionary holding attacks and the protection of the Rumanian border* during the first phase, then go over to a *limited offensive* during the second. The Army's right and center, consisting largely of Rumanian units (Third Army w/ **4** divisions and **6** bdes under German control; and Fourth Army w/ **8** divisions and **4** bdes under Rumanian command), would be expected to push across the Prut toward the Dniester, while the left, a force consisting of German divisions, would if possible attack from the NW corner of Moldavia via Mogilev–Podolskiy. In conjunction w/ Seventeenth Army, this force would close the trap for the Soviet units holding in the area east of Kamenets–Podolskiy and Vinnitsa. (Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, IV: 7)

--**Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa (31.1.41)**:²²⁹

4. *Auftraege an die Heeresgruppen u. Armeen:* . . .

Die 11. Armee hat den fuer die deutsche Kriegsfuehrung lebenswichtigen rumaenischen Raum gegen den Einbruch russ. Kraefte zu schuetzen. Im Rahmen des Angriffs der H.Gr.Sued wird sie die gegenueberliegenden feindl. Kraefte durch Vortaeuschen des Aufmarsches staerkerer Kraefte zu fesseln u. bei fortschreitender Entwicklung der Lage im Verein mit der Luftwaffe den geordneten Rueckzug der Russen ueber den Dnjepr im Nachstoss zu verhindern haben.

²²⁷ **Note:** Check Kurt Mehner, *Die Geheime Tagesberichte*, for confirmation.

²²⁸ **Note:** German Eleventh Army and Rumanian forces did not begin their attack across the Prut River until **2.7.41**.

²²⁹ **Note:** Here I've carved out the portion of the Army's Deployment Directive specifically addressing role of Eleventh Army.

(Halder, Franz. *Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. II. Appendix 2, 465)

--**13.30**: “AGp.South reports that own patrols have crossed the Prut River between Galatz and Huși and Jassy w/o encountering any resistance. Bridges are in our hands.” (Burdick & Jacobsen, *Halder War Diary*, 412)

--Halder KTB:

13.30 Uhr Op.:

b) H.G.Sued meldet, dass eigene Patrouillen zwischen Galatz – Husy – Jassy ueber den Pruth gegangen sind u. keinen Widerstand gefunden haben. Bruecken sind in die Hand genommen. . .

(F. Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. III: 4.)

--Halder: “The time is not ripe yet for a decision on how to employ Eleventh Army. Our assault troops have crossed the Prut River at various points and have seized the bridges. But there are no signs that the Russians are yielding the area between the Pruth and the Dniester.” . . . (Burdick & Jacobsen, *Halder War Diary*, 413)

--**22.6.41 (Karpathen Front)**: Auch an der Karpathenfront, wo **4** ungarische Bde. sichern, blieb der grosse Krieg noch aus. Einige Schiessereien u. Ueberfalle an den Paessen, aus Nervositaet hervorgerufen, war alles, was der 1. Kriegstag hier brachte. Ungarn hatte *einen Eintritt in den Krieg mit Russland abgelehnt*, obwohl in den letzten Monaten an seiner Grenze eine ganze russ. Armee, die **12 [Armee]**, mit zahlreichen Gebirgsdivisionen drohend aufmarschiert war. Diese Armee war, weil nicht gebundenu, fuer die H.Gr.Sued eine grosse Gefahr. Wenn sie kehrt machte, konnte sie dem Angriff der **17 Armee** mit *grosser Ueberlegenheit* in die Flanke stossen. (C. Wagener, *Heeresgruppe Sued*, 48)

--**ab 22.6.41**: Russ. Spaehtrupps, die sich ab Mittag des **22.6.** bemerkbar machen, wurden ueberall an der rumaenischen Grenze abgewiesen. Diese Spaeh- u. Stosstrupptaetigkeit nahm in den naechsten Tagen auf beiden Seiten zu, wobei die **198 ID** mit **IR 305** einen Brueckenkopf ueber den Pruth gewinnen²³⁰ u. gegen wiederholte russ. Angriffe halten konnte. (C. Wagener, *Heeresgruppe Sued*, 48)

--On **1 Jul 41**²³¹ Eleventh Army and the Rumanians started to cross the Pruth in their advance towards the Dniester, against Red Army troops who were *ready for battle and well equipped w/ tanks*. Von Schobert’s divisions were of marching infantry and Rumanian cavalry w/ *little to no air support*, as they marched steadily forward, they covered *no more than an average of about eight miles per day* because of the aggressiveness and mobility of the Soviet armored rearguards, which, in open terrain so ideally suited to tanks, forced the invading columns to deploy several times a day. Red Air Force bombers and fighters carried out harassing attack, and the *frequent and sudden cloudbursts* churned the rich black soil into liquid glue, bringing all wheeled movement to a halt for hours. Even field guns drawn by six pairs of horses came to a standstill. (Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 136)

²³⁰ **Note**: Check, *KTB OKW*, “*Tagesmeldungen*,” etc.

²³¹ **Note**: Actual date it began to advance was **2.7.41**; see, *KTB OKW*.

1.5.7: Divisional War Diaries (Army Group South)

--30.4.41 [1.Geb.Div]:

Solivar.

18.00 Uhr: Gen.Maj. Lanz u. Htpm. i.G. v. Eimannsberger (Ib) treffen ueber Budapest – Kaschau ein.

18.30 Uhr: Persoenliche Ruecksprache D.K. (mit Ia) mit Chef **49. (Geb.) A.K.** Dabei Gruendaetzliches ueber den bevorstehenden Einsatz bekanntgegeben. D.K.²³² vertritt die Ansicht, dass die geplante Verwendung der **1.Geb.Div.** (nach einer Verschiebung nach Norden, Einsatz ueber Przemysl auf Lemberg) **weder der Guete noch der Eigenart der Div. entspraecht**. Div.Kdr. bat, alles daranzusetzen, dass fuer die Div. **eine andere, bessere Verwendung**, wenn moeglich am linken Fluegel der H.Gr. List [?] herbeigefuehrt wird.

(T-315, Roll 39, Ia KTB Ost Nr: 1)

--18.6.41 [1.Geb.Div.]:

Chef **Sturmatterie 1/243**, der Div. ab 19.6. unterstellt, (Oblt. Gruber) meldet sich. **Sturmatterie** ist auf dem Marsch von Reichshof her u. schloss 24.00 Uhr hinter **Marschgruppe Hofmann** im Wald suedl. Tarnograd auf.

(T-315, Roll 39, Ia KTB Ost Nr: 1)

--19.6.41 [1.Geb.Div.]:

Vorm.

Rgt 98 u. 99 haben die Endraeume planmaessig erreicht.

10.00: Div.Kdr. bei Kdr.-Besprechung durch Komm.Gen. in Lezaisk.

22.30: **Marschgruppe Hofmann** im Endraum eingetroffen.

Mittags: Div.Gef.Std. nach Pierocki verlegt.

(T-315, Roll 39, Ia KTB Ost Nr: 1)

--20.6.41 [1.Geb.Div.]:

Befehl²³³ Gen.Kdo. ueber B-Tag = 22.6. trifft ein. . .

18.30: Kdr.-Besprechung auf dem Div.Gef.Std. Pierocki.
Punkte:

²³² D.K. = Div.Kdr.

²³³ **Note:** Not clear from layout of diary precisely when this order arrived.

1.) Appell an die Chefs der Pz.Jg.Einheiten. **600 fdl. Panzer in unserem Abschnitt!**

2.) Vortrag der Kdren **98** u. **99** ueber ihrem Angriffsplan; vom Div.Kdr. gebilligt.

3.) Vortrag Div.Kdr. ueber **Flak- u. Sturmbatterie-Einsatz**.

[See text for more details.]

Abends: **G.J.R. 98** bisher um Dzikow in Unterkunft rueckt in seinen Bereitstellungsraum. . .

6./Fla 48 mit Hofmann eingetroffen. Anl. 175.

[Wetter ist] heiter, abnehmender Mond 1/5 [?].

(T-315, Roll 39, Ia KTB Ost Nr. 1)

--**21.6.41** [1.Geb.Div.]:

11.30: Anruf Gen.Kdo.: **Reiseziel Dortmund!** Also der Angriff „*Barbar-ossa*“ beginnt planmaessig 22.6.41 3.15 Uhr.

11.45-13.00: Getarnte fernmuendl. Durchgabe an Kommandeure durch **0 1**. . .

Mit Einbruch der Dunkelheit rueckt die Truppe in die *Sturmausgangs- bzw. Feuerstellungen*.

Die Bereitstellung u. der Angriff am 22.6. vollziehen sich planmaessig nach dem Div.-Befehl.

(T-315, Roll 39, Ia KTB Ost Nr. 1)

--**22.6.41** [1.Geb.Div.]:

3.00: Div.Kdr. auf seinem vorgeschobenen Gef.Std. im „*Judengraben*“ am Grenzzaun eingetroffen.

3.15: Die Div. tritt planmaessig zum Angriff an. *Artillerie schweigt*.²³⁴ Es fallen vereinzelte Schuesse, der Gegner scheint *vollkommen ueberrascht*.

4.00: *Gefechtsgruppe Picker* erreicht Westrand Uskowse.

4.15: *Gefechtsgruppe Kress* kaempft vor Hoehe 273 gegen *zaehen Widerstand sibirischer Truppen*.

4.30: *Gefechtsgruppe Kress* naehert sich mit II.Btl. in breiter Front Oleszyce Str.

5.00: Oleszyce vom **3./Geb.Pi.Btl. 54**, **6./Fla.48** u. **Stug.Abt. 1./243** durchkaempft. . .

6.40: **I.R. 188** erhaelt Befehl zum Antreten.

6.45: **II./G.J.R. 99** nimmt Zalesia, **I./G.J.R. 99** (mit Teilen **II./99**) noch im Kampf um 273.

7.00: Oleszyce gesaeubert. Im Schlosspark noch vereinzelte Schiessereien. . .

8.00: *Gefechtsgruppe Kress* im Vorgehen auf Opaka.

²³⁴ **Note:** No preliminary bombardment?

9.30: II./G.J.R. 99 nimmt Sucha Wola. Aufklaerung erreicht die Lubaczowka.
9.40: 3./G.J.R. 98 hat ostw. Zaprzekop Verbindung mit **Btl. Lanz der 71 ID** aufgenommen.²³⁵

12.00: Stand des Angriffes:

--**Gefechtsgruppe Kress:** Waldraender SO Sucha Wola, **I./G.J.R. 99** Lipina.

--**Gefechtsgruppe Picker:** Linie Opaka – Zaprzekop, **II./G.J.R. 99** beginnt, mit **6. u. 8. Kp.** bei Kamienna Gora ueber die Lubaczowka zu gehen. . .

17.00: Verst. **IR 188** scheidet mit Erreichen des Waldrandes noerdl. Onyszki aus dem Verband der Div. aus. . . zur **68 ID** zurueckgetreten. . .

20.00: Div.Gef.Std. in einspringende Waldecke 2½ km SW Opaka verlegt.

Der erste Gefechtstag war im 1. Operationsabschnitt des Ostfeldzuges bis zum Erreichen des Dnjepr, zusammen mit dem 6.8. (Angriff auf Podwyssokoje), der **schwerste u. blutigste Kampftag der Div.**

Der **22.6.41** forderte allein **20 blutige Offz.-Verluste**, davon **8 gefallen**.

Die Truppe musste sich nach den Erfahrungen u. Gewohnheiten der Frankreich- u. Jugoslawienfeldzuege erst an einen *so zaehen u. gewandten Feind*, als welchen sich der Russe herausgestellt hatte, gewoennen.

(T-315, Roll 39, *Ia KTB Ost Nr. 1*)

--**22.6.41** [**6./Fla.Btl. (mot.) 48 / 1.Geb.Div.**]:²³⁶

Die Kp. hatten den Auftrag die Bereitstellung der Div. sowie der Angriff aus der Bereitstellung gegen Tieffliegerangriffe zu schuetzen sowie waehrend des weiteren Vorgehens sich bietende Erdziele zu bekaempfen. Hierzu waren der **2.Zug** dem **G.J.R. 99**, der **3.Zug** dem **G.J.R. 98** unterstellt, waehrend der **1.Zug** den Auftrag erhielt, unter Fuehrung des Kp.Chefs ueber Ustkowce auf Oleszyce vorzustossen, durch die Stadt durchzustossen u. am Suedrand in Stellung zu gehen. . .

3.45 Uhr wurde ohne Feindwiderstand die Grenze ueberschritten, **4.00** uhr Ustkowce erreicht. **4.30** Uhr stiessen die Geschuetze am Nordrand von Oleczyce auf ersten Widerstand. Das Feuer wurde sofort eroeffnet. Die Strasse entlang u. rechts u. links in die Haeuser feuernd wurde **4.45** Uhr der Schlosspark sowie die Kaserne am Suedrand der Stadt erreicht, wo die Russen *ernsthaften Widerstand leisteten*. Durch Handgranaten wurden die Russen gezwungen sich vom Zaun des Schlossparkes zurueckzuziehen, waehrend die Kasernengebäude in Flammen aufgingen. Zu dieser Zeit drangen die Sturmgeschuetze von SO her in Oleczyce ein u. stiessen am Schlosspark vorbei in den Westteil der Stadt. Unter *hartnaeckigem Widerstand* durch die Russen u. staendigem Feuern der Geschuetze hatte sich der Zug um **5.30** Uhr durchgekaempft u. ging befehls-gemaess am Suedrand von Oleszyce in Stellung gegen Tieffliegerangriffe.

²³⁵ **Note:** This battalion I believe was led by Hubert Lanz's brother.

²³⁶ **Note:** This company, outfitted w/ **2 cm flak**, supported advance of Lanz's division.

Verluste:

1 Mann schwer

2 Mann leicht verwundet

(Kp.Chef Streifschuss am r.Unterarm) . . .

Um **14.20** Uhr unterstuetzten der **3.Zug** das Vorwaertsgehen der **1.Kp.** ueber die Lubaczowka, durch Niederkaempfen von **Hecken- u. Baumschuetzen** sowie einer B-Stelle am Waldrand des jenseitigen Flussufers. . .

Munitionsverbrauch:

1940 2 cm Sprenggranatpatronen

120 2 cm Panzergranaten

(T-315, Roll 41, *Anlagen Bd. 8 zum KTB Ost Nr. 1*, „Kampfbericht vom 22. Juni 1941“)

--19.-21.6.41 [11. PD]:

19.6.41:

Die Div. erlaesst den Befehl fuer den Weitermarsch aus dem Rastraum Szczewrczeszyn – Nieko in den endgueltigen Bereitstellungsraum Nowosiolki – Tyszowce – Zamosc – Rachanie. . .

Um **20.00** Uhr abends tritt das Pz.Rgt. aus dem bisherigen Unterkunftsraum um Puskow zum Marsch in den Rastraum Szecebreszyn [sp?] – Bilgoraj an.

Der Div.-Stab verlegt von Mielec in einem Sprung nach Zamosc.

20.6.41:

Unter Fuehrung Kdr. **11. Schutz-Brig.** tritt die Masse der Div. aus bisherigem Unterkunftsraum Lager Mielec Marsch in den Rastraum Bilgoraj – Nisko an.

Die Div. erlaesst den Befehl fuer den Angriff. . .

Das verst. Pz.-Rgt. marschiert, am Abend antretend, aus bisherigem Rastraum in den endgueltigen Bereitstellungsraum zum Laszczow.

21.6.41:

Seit den fruehesten Morgenstunden rollt die Masse der Div. aus bisherigem Rastraum in den endgueltigen Bereitstellungsraum Tyscowce – Zamosc – Rashanie.

Div.-Stab verlegt von Zamosc nach Nowosiolki. Der neue **Ia**, Major i.G. Selmayr [sp?] trifft ein.

(T-315, Roll 2320, *Ia KTB*)

--22./23.6.41 [11. PD]:

Der Angriff der Infanterie, der um **3.25** Uhr ueber die Grenze beiderseits Sokal angetreten ist, schreitet gut vorwaerts. Bereits **4.00** Uhr frueh ist der Sokal-Berg genommen, die Bruecken ueber den Bug sind unversehrt in eigener Hand. Auf Grund dieser guenstigen Lage orientiert der Komm.Gen. den **Ia** fernmuendl., dass mit Antreten der Div. schon sehr bald zu rechnen sei.

Die **Kampfgruppe A** erhaelt deshalb Befehl, sich sofort marschbereit zu machen. Um **6.30** Uhr befiehlt der Chef des **48 PzK** das Antreten der Div. u. Vorruecken bis in die Gegend Bojanice u. Koroerow. Dieser Befehl wird durch den Befehl des Komm.Gens. „antreten“ abgeaendert u. die Kampfgruppe bis an den Bug herangefuehrt. . .

Waehrend die Kampfgruppe rollt, die Pz.A.A. mit Anfang **8.00** Uhr bereits Sokal erreicht, geht vom Korps den Befehl ein, dass die Div. nur bis westl. des Bug heranzufuehren sei u. nur die Aufklaerung bis zum Styr freigegeben ist. Auf Rueckfrage des **Ia** genehmigt das Korps, dass auch das Kradschtz.-Btl. ueber den Bug gefuehrt wird u. ueber den erkundeten Raum ostw. des Bug marschiert.

Um **11.00** wird auf Befehl des Komm.Gens. der Div. **voellige Handlungsfreiheit gewahrt**. Die verst. A.A. tritt deshalb **12.00** Uhr von Sokal Richtung Osten auf der Panzerstrasse Mitte an. Vereinzelte Bunker, ueber die der Infanterie-Angriff hinweggegangen ist, verzoe gern zunaechst das Antreten der A.A. u. machen den Einsatz einer Battr. **8.8 cm Flak** der **I./R.G.G.** [?] notwendig. Diese Bunker leben im Laufe des Tages weider auf, koennen jedoch den Vormarsch der Div. nicht aufhalten. Sie muessen spaeter durch Stosstrupps der nachfolgenden Infanterie genommen werden. . .

Hinter der verst. A.A. tritt **15.00** Uhr das Pz.-Rgt. auf der Pz.Strasse Mitte an. Das Kradschtz.-Btl. verbleibt zunaechst im Raum SO Sokal. **Kampfgruppen B u. C** sowie **Marschgruppe D** erhalten Befehl, sprungweise nachzuziehen. Die verst. A.A. nimmt im Angriff nach kurzem Kampf Tartakow u. hat den Ort **16.00** Uhr fest in der Hand.

Waehrend das Hoehengelaende ost- u. suedostw. durch starken Feind mit Artillerie besetzt ist, entschliesst sich der Div.-Kdr., mit einer Pz.-Abtl. rechts ausholend, diesen Gegner anzugreifen u. zu vernichten. Der Angriff, der um **17.00** Uhr beginnt, fuehrt zum vollen Erfolg u. zur Bereinigung der Lage ostw. Tartakow bis **19.00** Uhr.

Auf dem Div.Gef.Std., der um **12.00** Uhr von Nowosiolki antretend, nach Sokal-Ost verlegt wird, gibt der Div.-Kdr. dem **Ia** seinen Entschluss fuer die Nacht bekannt u. die notwendigen Befehle an die Kampfgruppen. Der Div.-Kdr. will noch in der Nacht mit dem durch die A.A. verst. Pz.Rgt. auf der Pz.-Strasse Mitte vorstossen u. die Styr-Uebergang bei Szczurowice [sp?] in die Hand nehmen. Das Kradschtz.-Btl. soll dem verst. Pz.Rgt. folgen. Der alte Auftrag die Styr-Uebergange bei [illegible] u. Beresteczko in die Hand zu nehmen, bleibt bestehen. Die **K.Gr. B u. C** sowie **Marschgr. D** sollen moeglichst noch heute Nacht den Bug ueberschreiten u. sich in den Waldstuecken SO Sokal bereithalten. Das Vor-

ziehen der **K.Gr. B u. C** stoesst spaeter auf grosse Schwierigkeiten durch das Einfaedeln von Teilen des **14 PzK**, die die Kampfgruppen auseinanderreissen. **Kp.Gr. C** u. die nachfolgende **Marschgr. D** erreichen daher erst **23.6.** nachm. u. abends das Ostufer des Bug.

Fuehrungsabteilung verlegt, um **21.00** Uhr von Sokal-Ost antretend, nach Horbkow.

Wetter: klar, warm.

Neu unterstellt: **I./Rgt. „General Göring.“** [sp?]

s.Art.Abt. 844.

23.6.41:

In der Nacht rollt das verst. Pz.Rgt., bei dem sich der Div.-Kdr. befindet, auf der Pz.Strasse Mitte vor. Stojanow, vom Feinde besetzt, wird in den fruehen Morgenstunden angegriffen u. genommen. Im weiteren Angriff stoesst die Spitze des Pz.Rgt. gegen **6.00** Uhr auf starken Panzerfeind in dem Waldstueck 2 km noerdl. Radciechow. Bereits am spaeten Nachmittag des Vortages hat die Luftaufklaerung in dieser Gegend starke feindl. mot.Kraefte mit Panzern gemeldet, die auch in den fruehen Morgenstunden des **23.6.** erneut durch Luftaufklaerung bestaetigt waren.

Im Laufe des Vormittags kommt es noerdl. u. westl. Radciechow zu einem **sehr starken Panzergefecht**, in dem von etwa **50-60** Panzern des Feindes, dabei solche **schwerster Art, 35** vernichtet wurden. Erst gegen Mittag zieht sich der Gegner mit diesen schweren Verlusten nach SW zurueck, versucht jedoch im Laufe des nachm. . .

(T-315, Roll 2320, *Ia KTB*)

--16.-21.6.41 [14. PD]:

16.6.41:

9.30: 1 Flak-Abt. um Chelm feuerbereit.

10.00: Adjutantenbesprechung, um nochmals die *schwierigen Marschbewegungen vom Ausladebahnhof zu den Zwischen- bzw. Endunterkuenften* klarzulegen. . .

Nachmittags verschafft sich der Div.Kdr. zusammen mit dem **Ia** einen Einblick in das Aufmarsch- u. Bereitstellungsgelaende, soweit moeglich, auch in das einzusehende Feindgelaende.

17.6.41:

Div.Kdr. mit **Ia** u. **Ib** zum Planspiel beim **3 PzK**, das den Durchstoss der schnellen Verbaende behandelt.

Stab **AR 4 (mot.)** mit I. u. III.Abt. u. Pz.B.Bttr. werden den Artl.Kdrn. der **44 ID** (I.) u. **298 ID** (Stab, III.Abt. u. Pz.B.Bttr.) unterstellt. . .²³⁷

²³⁷ **Note:** For the attack on **22.6.41**, **14 PD** loaned out its artillery to **44** and **298 ID**.

18.6.41:

II./AR 4 (mot.) wird zum Artl.Einsatz der **44 ID** noch mit eingesetzt, da Artl.-Verbaende der **SS** noch nicht eingetroffen sind.

Luftschutz ab **19.6.** abends: **le.Flak-Abt. 93** im Raum Bialopole-Janki zum Schutz der Pz.Bereitstellung . . .

19.6.41:

Div.Kdr. zur Besprechung zur **1 PzGr** nach Rudka.

In der Nacht werden nach vorwaerts verlegt:

Krdschtz.Btl. 64 in den Wald 13 km SO Chelm, **PzRgt 36** in Raum Teratyn . . .

[see text for more details]

20.6.41:

Vormarschbefehl mit beabsichtigter Gliederung fuer den Marsch. Es ist fuer beide Faelle des Einsatzes: Pz. oder Schtz. vorn [underscore in original], die Bereitstellung eingenommen.

Der Durchstoss soll mit dem Krdschtz.Btl. als Vorhut u. dem Pz.Rgt. am Anfang des Gros gefuehrt werden. . .

Div.Kdr. faehrt zur Einblicknahme in das Gelaende nach vorn; gleichzeitig besucht er die in der Nacht vorgezogenen Truppe.

21.6.41:

17.20: Eingang des „*Barbarossa-Befehls*“ Angriff **22.6.41, 3.15** Uhr.

20.00: wird der neue Gef.Std. in Janki besetzt.

Die bisherige Beschraenkung der Leucht- u. Feuererlaubnis gegen feindl. Flugzeuge innerhalb der **5-km** Grenzzone wird **20.20** Uhr aufgehoben.

Truppe ist in bester Stimmung. Ueberall die grossen Fragen: Welche Wirkung wird der erste grosse Feuerschlag auf die Russen haben? Ist der Angriff ueber-raschend oder sind die riesigen Bewegungen des Aufmarsches vom Gegner erkannt? Der Truppe wird der *Erlass des Fuehrers* bekanntgegeben.

(T-315, Roll, 656, *Ia KTB Nr. 2*)

--22.-24.6.41 [14. PD]:

Verlauf der Nacht ruhig.

3.15: Angriffsbeginn mit einer *2-stuendigen Artl.Vorbereitung*. Wie im Westen bei der Somme-Offensive wurde auch hier das **4 AR (mot.)** als Verstaerkungs-Artl. mit eingesetzt, u. zwar bei **Arko 3**:

Rgt. Stab mit B.Btr., II. u. III.Abt. bei **298 ID** (noerdl.) Angriffs-Div. u. I.Abt. bei **44** (suedl.) Angriffs-Div.

Die Div. hat den Auftrag, sich SO Chelm bereitzustellen, um nach Bilden eines Brueckenkopfes bei Wlodzimierz den Erfolg der Inf.Diven. auszunutzen u. nach Osten durchzustossen. . .

In Planspielen vorher war die beabsichtigte Durchfuehrung der Grenzkaempfe besprochen worden. Besonders fuer die **14 PD** wurde dabei herausgestellt u. von der Div. ausdruecklich beantragt, **die Div. nicht in Kaempfe um die Grenzstellung einzusetzen**, sondern sie soll frisch den Durchstoss von Wlodzimierz aus beginnen.

Flak-Rgt. 6 schuetzt den Artl.Aufmarsch am Hrubieszow u. die Bereitstellung der Div.

Die Inf.Divn. haben beim Grenzuebertritt nur geringe Gegenwehr, Bruecken werden unbeschadigt genommen. . .

Gegen **11.00** Uhr erreicht **44 ID** Ludzin u. **298 ID** mit rechtem Rgt. Piatydnie, mit linkem Rgt. Kol.Karzunek.²³⁸

12.00: Gewinnt das **3 PzK** durch Luftaufklaerung den Eindruck, dass Feind nach Osten abbaut u. **44 ID** bald das beherrschende Hoehengelaende von Woszczatyn gewinnt. Die Div. bekommt deshalb **12.25** Uhr den Befehl, **13.00** Uhr anzutreten u. mit Anfang bis in Hoehe Izow vorzuziehen. Wenn moeglich soll Div. sofort weiter vorgezogen werden. Div. tritt in der bereits am **20.6.** befohlenen Gliederung an (siehe Anlage 2 zu Div.-Befehl v. **20.6.41**).

15.25: Schriftlicher Befehl von Komm.Gen.: „Div. hat sofort von Zosin ueber Uscilug – Piatydnie auf Wlodzimierz wieder anzutreten. Panzerstrasse derzeit voellig frei von Verkehr!“

Div. setzt daraufhin sofort den Vormarsch fort.

Das zunaechst gute Vorkommen der Inf.Divn. kommt zum Stoppen, da sich der Russe nach der ersten Ueberraschung sammelt u. zum Gegenangriff uebergeht, der durch Artl. u. Pz. unterstuetzt wird.

16.00: Krdschtz.Btl. 64 (Vorhut) ist mit Anfang **16.00** Uhr bis **1** km SW der Brueckenstelle vorgekommen.

Div.Gef.Std.: Zosin.

Pz.AA 40, die mit Anfang bis zur Bruেকে Piatydnie vorgestossen ist, erhaelt dort sich verstaerkendes Artl.-Feuer.

Lage bei Inf.-Divn.:

44 ID: bei Janow liegen geblieben. Hoehengelaende Woszczatyn noch nicht erreicht.

298 ID: mit einzelnen Teilen zurueckgenommen, haelt Ostrand des Waldes noerdl. Piatydnie. . .

17.00: Anfang des Gros **17.00** Uhr Hrubieszow.

17.15: Gegenangriff mit Pz. in die Flanke der Aufkl.Abt. aus Wald Las maj Nowosiolki. Durch Luftaufklaerung werden Nord- u. Suedrand Wlodzimierz stark feindbesetzt gemeldet. Eigene Aufklaerung wird nach NO vorgetrieben, da Abdrehen eines Teiles der Div. noerdl. der Pz.Strasse beabsichtigt ist.

²³⁸ **Note:** „Kol“ = Kolschose? (sp?) (Collective Farm?).

17.30: fährt der Div.Kdr. zur persoenlichen Beurteilung der Lage nach vorn. Um die Brueckenstelle Uscilug unbedingt zu sichern, wird eine Kp. **Krdschtz. Btl. 64** der **Pz.AA 40** unterstellt. Zum Niederkaempfen der Bunker in der Grenzstellung, die z.T. erneut besetzt sind, wird eine Kp. **Pz.Pi.Btl. 13** vorgezogen.

17.35: erfolgt die ersten Luftangriffe auf die Div. (etwa **20** Flugzeuge), bis **19.00** Uhr noch **2** weitere schwere Angriffe. Da die **8.8-cm-Bttrn.** des Flak-Rgts. gerade im Stellungswechsel nach vorn sind, konnte Abwehr nur durch le.Bttrn. u. M.G. erfolgen.

Die Div. geht seitlich der Strasse in Fliegerdeckung, da ein weiteres Vorziehen z.Zt. nicht erfolgen kann.

20.30: wird Div.Gef.Std. nach Strzyzow verlegt. **Krdschtz.Btl. 64** sichert den Bugabschnitt zwischen Zosin u. Czernikow, anschliessend nach Westen **S.R. 103**.

Das Artl.Feuer auf **Pz.AA 40** nimmt zu. **Pz.AA 40** hat **18.00** Uhr bereits 7 Verwundete, **Krdschtz.Btl. 64** durch Luftangriffe **3** Tote. Nach Gefangenaussagen befinden sich vor Wlodzimierz Teile der **87 [RD]**, dabei das **96 Inf.-Rgt.** Westl. Wlodzimierz sollen Pz. bereitgestellt sein.

(Anlage der Bunker: bis zu **4** Schiessscharten, mehrere getrennte Kammern. Bunkerbesatzung ist z.T. durch Kommissare *eingesperrt u. wird bis zum Letzten geopfert.*)

23.6.41:

Auf Grund der Feindnachrichten ergibt sich folgendes Bild:

Mit Zufuehrung von weiteren Feindkraeften (Inf.-Divn. u. mot.Verbaende) in Gegend Wlodzimierz u. Angriffen aus ost-, suedost- u. nordostw. Richtung muss gerechnet werden. Auftrag fuer verst. **Pz.AA 40** ist der Schutz der Bruecke bei Uscilug . . . [see text for more details]

Die in vorderer russ. Linie eingesetzten Politischen Kommissare u. Parteiangehoerigen haben den Auftrag, hartnaeckigen Widerstand sicherzustellen. . .

8.15: Inf.Divn. haben **8.15** Uhr in schweren Kaempfen den Brueckenkopf erweitern koennen. **14 PD** wird zum Durchstoss auf Wlodzimierz angesetzt. Nach Vorbefehl u. muendl. Orientierung der Kdrs. durch den Div.Kdr. ueber Lage u. Absicht ergeht **10.30** Uhr der schriftl. Befehl an die Truppe.

Die Div. sichert weiter mit Teilen den Uebergang bei Uscilug u. gewinnt mit Masse ueber den linken Fluegel der **298 ID** ausholend die Hoehen noerdl. Wlodzimierz. . .

Die im Sicherungsabschnitt des **Krdschtz.Btl. 64** liegenden noch kampfkraeftigen Bunker werden durch Pi.Stosstrupps ausgehoben. Hartnaeckiger Widerstand *bis zum letzten in allen Kampfanlagen*.

10.30: treffen unklare Meldungen ueber *Einsatz von Gas* ein, die sich jedoch nicht bestaetigen. . .

11.55: . . . Der Uebergang ueber die Bruecken geht nur stockend, da starke Verstopfung durch Inf.Kolonnen.²³⁹

15.45: wird Div.Gef.Std. nach Uscilug-Zaluze verlegt. . .

(Erfahrungen: Kriegsgliederungsmaessig sind bei den roten Btl'n. *Gastrupps mit Gelaendekampfstoff* [ground contaminating agent] vorhanden, mit deren Einsatz ggf. zu rechnen sei.)²⁴⁰

24.6.41:

0.15: geht schriftlicher Befehl an die Truppe: Vorgehen auf Luck, um dort die Styr-Uebergaenge zu gewinnen.²⁴¹ In den Morgenstunden werden Bunker im suedl. Abschnitt des **Krdschutz.Btl. 64** unter Einsatz von **8.8-cm-Flak** wirksam bekaempft.²⁴²

(T-315, Roll, 656, *Ia KTB Nr. 2*)

--20./21.6.41 [44. ID / *Ia KTB*]:

20.6.41:

7.50: Hptm. Pfützenreuter meldet die Feuerbereitschaft der **II./26 (Flak)** ab **1.30** Uhr in den befohlenen Feuerstellungen. . .

Tagesmeldung:

“ . . . **II./AR 63** eingetroffen. 2/3 der Zugmaschinen zur Reparatur im Reiche. . .

Wasserstand des Bug:

Seit gestern um **13** cm gefallen. – Keine besonderen Beobachtungen beim Russen.“

Allgemeine Anordnungen fuer die Nachrichtenverbindung. . .

15.30: Chef des Stabes mit *Kodeis 6*²⁴³ beim Ia: Einsatz der Eisenbahnpioniere an Bruecke Grodek.

21.6.41:

15.00: Eintreffen des B-Tages u. y-Zeit.

²³⁹ **Note:** Is this a reference to **PzRgt 36** moving across the Bug? Or is it already across the river?

²⁴⁰ **Note:** As I discovered during my research for *Barbarossa Unleashed*, German High Command was indeed convinced Red Army would resort to gas and/or chemical warfare. Thus, the troops received training to combat this perceived threat.

²⁴¹ **Note:** This entry just to illustrate progress being made by **14 PD**.

²⁴² **Note:** **14 PD** still attempting to suppress enemy bunker positions on third day of war.

²⁴³ *Kodeis* = *Kommandeur Eisenbahn* (I believe).

19.00: Gef.Std. Wechsel nach Swierszczow.

(T-315, Roll 911, *Ia KTB Nr. 6*)

--22./23.6.41 [44. ID / Ia KTB]:

22.6.41:

1.00: Meldung an Gen.Kdo. **3 PzK:** Befohlene Bereitstellung **0.00** Uhr beendet.

2.30: Kdr. [der Div.] faehrt zur Div.-B.-Stelle u. folgt mit Angriffsbeginn dem **IR 134**.

3.15: Beginn der Feindseligkeiten.

3.30: **IR 134** nimmt Bruecke Grodek unversehrt in die Hand.

4.09: Befehl des Korps, dass sofort mit Brueckenschlag fuer Kriegs- u. Behelfsbruecke zu beginnen ist.

4.35: **Ia** meldet ans Korps: „Vorspiel“ erreicht, **4.30** Uhr mit Brueckenschlag begonnen. . .

8.45: **Ia** meldet ans Korps: **IR 134** „Eisenbart“ erreicht. Liegt z.Z. im Kampf mit Bunkern suedl. Janow.

8.50: Befehl an **IR 132:** Rgt. ist in dem Raum um Wygadanka Pkt. **233.8** vorzuziehen.

10.00: Kom.Gen. **3 PzK** auf Div.Gef.Std. u. wird vom **Ia** ueber die Lage der Div. orientiert.

12.30: Gef.Std. Wechsel nach Ludzin. . .

16.15: **IR 131** erbittet Nebel, hat vor seinem Abschnitt **4** Panzerkuppeln u. **11** Staende festgestellt. **Ia** bespricht daraufhin mit **Arko 127** die Lage u. Einsatz der Art. gegen Bunker.

16.50: Befehl an **AA 44**, **Pz.Jg.Abt.46**, **Pi.80** zur Bildung einer Vorausabtl.

17.35: Fdl. Bombenangriff im Abschnitt **IR 131**.

18.45: **Ia** meldet ans Korps: Fortsetzung des Angriffs bei **IR 134** heute nicht mehr moeglich, da Gefechtsaufklaerung viele neue Bunker erkannt hat, die frontal auf das Rgt. wirken. Der Ausgang des beabsichtigten Angriffs des **IR 131** nicht vor Dunkelheit ersichtlich. Absicht der Div. bei Morgengrauen mit beiden Rgt. wieder anzugreifen. Res.Rgt. wird dicht ans rechte Rgt. herangezogen.

18.50: Nach Ruecksprache Kdr. mit **Ia** entschliesst sich Kdr. den beabsichtigten Angriff bei **IR 131** zu stoppen.

18.55: Befehl an **IR 131** heute nicht mehr anzugreifen. . . .

20.10: **Arko 127**, Kdr. **IR 131**, Kdr. **AR 704** u. Kdr. **Pi.80** werden vom Div.Kdr. fuer den Angriff am **23.6.** frueh eingewiesen.

20.15: An **IR 134:** Angriff der Div. am **23.6.**, **5.00** Uhr frueh, wird nur durch **IR 131** durchgefuehrt. . .

22.00: Div. Befehl fuer die Fortsetzung des Angriffs am **23.6.**

23.6.41:

4.45: Chef fragt u. unterrichtet **Ia** ueber Lage. Russe hat starke Kraefte nach Wlodzimierz geworfen. Bei **298 ID** gab es waehrend der Nacht teilweise *oertl. Krisen*.

Vom **3 PzK** wird ueber **44 ID** ueber Bruecke Wygadanka – hier Anfang fruehestens **8.00 Uhr** – **13 PD** herangefuehrt, mit Auftrag am Spaetnachmittag ueber **44 ID** einzugreifen u. die Enge von Wlodzimierz zu oeffnen. Zwischen **4.00-5.00 Uhr** starker deutscher Bombenangriff auf Wlodzimierz. . .

5.29: Ia an Korps: **IR 131** mit 3 Btl. in die H.K.L. eingedrungen. . .

7.00: IR 134 meldet, dass II.Btl. in Janow eingedrungen. **2./Pi.80** wird dem Rgt. unterstellt. . .

7.57: IR 131 meldet: Angriff geht fluessig vorwaerts, die beiden Fluegel-Btl. haben Bunkerlinie ganz durchstossen. . .

Kdr. **13 PD** nimmt Verbindung mit Div.Kdr. auf. Div. hat Auftrag, noch am selben Tag ueber **44 ID** zum Angriff anzutreten, um die Studzianka-Uebergang zu gewinnen. . .

(T-315, Roll 911, *Ia KTB Nr. 7*)

--**22.-24.6.41 (57 ID / Ia KTB):**

22.6.41:

Die Div., dem **48 PzK** unterstellt, trat im Rahmen der gesamten Ostfront am **22.6. 03.15 Uhr** ueber den Bug zum Angriff an.

Gemaess ihrer Kampfauftrag hatte sie, mit der *Schwerpunkt links*, den Bug-Uebergang im Abschnitt Zawisznia – Sokal Sued zu erzwingen u. den Feind zu-naechst von den Hoehen 234 (SO Peturczyca) u. 254 (Sokalberg) zu werfen. Nach Erreichung dieses 1.Angriffszieles hatte sie unverzueglich den Wald suedl. Herbkow [sp?] zu durchstossen, die Hoehen suedl. Tartakow im Besitz zu nehmen u. die Panzerstrasse Mitte zu gewinnen. Als rechter Nachbar traten die **297 ID**, als linker Nachbar die **75 ID** gleichzeitig an.

Die Artl., die durch unterstellte u. zugefuehrte Einheiten *sehr verstaerkt war* (Feuerplan siehe Anlage), begann um **03.15 Uhr** mit einem massierten Feuer-schlag.

Unter dem Schutz dieser Feuerwand u. der Nebelgranaten traten die **IR 179 rechts** u. **IR 199 links** mit ihren unterstellten Pionier-, Sturmpionier-, Sturmgeschuetz- u. Flakeinheiten (siehe Anlage) gegen das Feindufer an. **IR 217** folgte zur Verfuegung der Div.

Bereits **03.30** war die Strassenbruecke bei Sokal durch Handstreich genommen. Der Uebergang an der Bruecke u. mit Flosssaecken u. Sturmbooten entwickelte sich Zum um Zug,²⁴⁴ der Bug wurde ueberall unter geringen Verlusten ueberschritten u. durch die Ueberraschung beguenstigt, schritt der Angriff gegen Sokal u. die Hoehen rasch fort.

Bis **15.00 Uhr** hatte die Div. die Linie (Perespa) NW von Perespa – Tartakewiec [sp?] erreicht, ihre A.A. war bereits im Vorgehen auf Stejanow [sp?].

²⁴⁴ **Note:** That is, without delay!

Im Laufe des Nachmittags jedoch setzte aus gut getarnten Bunkern *zaeh* Abwehr ein u. der Kampf um diese *Bunker modernster Art* war bis zum Abend noch nicht abgeschlossen. Waehrend die Rgter. weiterstiessen, mussten diese Bunker im Ruecken der Div. durch Stosstruppe einzeln niedergekaempft werden.

Der Div.Gef.Std., der zunaechst auf der Opulske-Hoehe war, wurde am Morgen nach Kloster Sokal verlegt.

23.6.41:

Nachdem am Abend des **22.6.** die rechte Nachbardivision im Angriff auf Kertczyn war u. die linke Nachbardiv. bei Tartakewiec stand, setzte das **48 PzK** am **23.6. 03.30** Uhr aus der erreichten Linie den Angriff zur Gewinnung des Styr fort. Alle Anzeichen sprechen dafuer, dass der Gegner westl. des Styr keinen nachhaltigen Widerstand mehr leisten wuerde.

Die Div. griff um **03.00** Uhr in ihrem Angriffsstreifen mit *Schwerpunkt* noerdl. des Waldes NO Perespa in Richtung Lebaczewka [sp?] gegen den Styr-Abschnitt Beresteczke – Lipa an. Sabinewka – Stejanow – Druzkopol [sp?] waren erste Angriffsziel. Hierzu griffen die Gefechtsgruppen IR 179 u. **IR 199** bei gleichbleibender Artl.-Gliederung in ihrem bisherigen Gefechtsstreifen an. Das verst. **Pi.51** blieb zur endgueltigen Niederwerfung der Bunker mit den noetigen Schwerwaffen [i.e., Flammenwerfer?] im Raum der Gefechtsgruppe **IR 179** zurueck. Nach Niederkaempfung des letzten Bunkers sammelte das **Sturm-Pi.Btl. 51** zur Verfuegung des Korps um Peturzyca. . . . [Discussion of movements of other units of **57 ID.**]

Im noerdl. Gefechtsstreifen standen, infolge des am Vorabend durchgefuehrten Pz.-Angriffs²⁴⁵ nur mehr schwache eingegrabene Kraefte gegenueber. Stoerend wirkten hier vor allem Baumschuetzen u. einzelne M.G., die aus den Kornfeldern feuerten. Im suedl. Gefechtsstreifen konnte bald zur Marschkolonnen uebergegangen werden. Die Marschbewegungen, die *wiederholt durch fdl. Flieger angegriffen wurden*, stellten bei grosser Hitze u. tiefversandeten Wege an Mann, Ross u. Maschine grosse Anforderungen. . .

Trotz aller Schwierigkeiten erreichte die Div. in den Nachtstunden die Linie Rzyszczew – Brany als Tagesziel, wobei die *durchschnittliche Marschleistung* bei schwierigem Gelaende **30 km** betrug. . .

Der Feind, der vor der Div. nur schnelle Truppen, Kav., mot.Inf. u. an KLV gehaengte Geschuetze hatte, ging im ganzen Abschnitt bedraengt auf den Styr zurueck. . .

24.6.41:

²⁴⁵ **Note:** Would this have been an attack by **11 PD**, which was the panzer division controlled by **48 PzK** at this time?

Die Div. ging zunaechst ohne Feinberuehrung, jedoch durch **Bomber u. Tief-
flieger wiederhold angegriffen**,²⁴⁶ in ihren Gefechtsstreifen weiter vor u. schickte
sich an, eben mit rechtem Rgt. ueber den Styr zu gehen, als ein Korpsbefehl um
15.15 Uhr sie anhielt.

(T-315, Roll 980, *Ia KTB Nr. 5*)

--18.-21.6.41 (75 ID / Ia KTB):

18.6.41:

Die Bereitstellung der Div. laeuft so an, dass sie bis **22.6.41 01.00** Uhr, beendet
ist.

Das Heranziehen der Heeres-Artillerie in ihre Stellungen wurde vom Gen.Kdo.
befohlen. . .

Div.St.Quartier (Fuehrungstaffel) nach Kol.Warzow verlegt.

19.6.41:

Korpsbefehl ueber voraussichtlichen Angriffsbeginn geht ein.

Abwehrbereitschaft gegen den unter Umstaenden in den Aufmarsch einbrech-
enden Feind ist gewahrleistet. . .

20.6.41:

Die Bereitstellung geht planmaessig weiter.

Angriffsbefehl geht an Truppenteile.

21.6.41:

Angriffszeit trifft vom Korps ein, ist auf den **22.6.41, 3.15** Uhr befohlen.

Angriffszeit wird mit Schluessel an Truppenteile weitergegeben.

(T-315, Roll 1074, *Ia KTB Nr. 3*)

--22./23.6.41 (75 ID / Ia KTB):

22.6.41:

Bereitstellung um **1.00** Uhr beendet. **3.15** Uhr Angriffsbeginn.

Nach gruendlicher Artl.-Vorbereitung uebersetzen die beiden Angriffsregimenter
5.30 Uhr rasch den Bug u. stuermt die Hoehen bis zur Bunkerzone bei Kol.
Rawszczyzna. Das aus den besonders geschickt u. stark ausgebauten Bunkern
schlagende Feuer hemmte den Angriff. Nach Abtasten der feindl. Stellung wurde
beim **III./IR 202** hart an der Strasse Sokal – Tartakow eine Luecke entdeckt, durch
die der Kdr. Hptm. Pintschovius kurz entschlossen mit seinem Bataillon durch-
stiess. Oberst Block liess sein Rgt. nachfolgen u. der bei ihm anwesende Div.-Kdr.

²⁴⁶ **Note:** More proof of fact – as I pointed out (pointedly!) in *Barbarossa Unleashed*, that VVS never completely swept from the skies, even in first days of campaign.

uebertrag die Bekämpfung der Bunker dem **II./IR 222**, welches mit *Sonderwaffen* [e.g., Flammenwerfer; Sprengmittel?] verstärkt wurde. Auch dem **IR 222** gelang es mit Teilen noerdl. an der Bunkerzone vorbeizukommen. Das **IR 202** warf Feind aus Kol. Tartakow,²⁴⁷ brach in schwungvollem Angriff Feindwiderstand in Horbkow u. stiess auf Tartakow vor, das es in hartem Kampf um **13.30** Uhr vollstaendig in die Hand bekam. Inzwischen war es dem **IR 222** gelungen, gegen geringeren Feindwiderstand noedl. an Horbkow vorbei die Hoehe 234.0 (ostw. Kopylow) zu nehmen.

Besonderes Augenmerk wurde der freien Nordflanke gewidmet. Hier war eine starke feindl. Kraeftegruppe in den Waeldern bei Poryck gemeldet. Diese verhielt sich untaetig u. fuehlte nur mit schwachen Kraeften gegen die eigene Sperrlinie am Karbow (Bobiatynka). Der **AA 175** gelang es bei Ulwoweck den Bug ueberschreitend an dieser Feindgruppe unbehelligt vorbeizukommen u. an die Div. bei Steniatyn Anschluss zu finden.

Am Nachmittag wurde Tartakow von staerkeren Feindkraeften mit Panzern nochmals angegriffen. Alle Angriffe wurden abgewiesen. Vor der am Abend anrollenden **11 PD** wich der Feind nach SO.

[trocken, heiter]
[Abgang: **St.Nbl.Rgt. 2**]

In der Nacht (**23.00** Uhr) fuehlte der Feind gegen den Nordfluegel des **IR 222** vor. Er wurde auch hier abgewiesen. Sonst Ruhe.

II./IR 222, das vor den Bunkern festliegt, schliesst diese ein u. stellt sich mit neu unterstellter **1./Pi.Btl. 175**, **1./St.Pi.Btl. 51**,²⁴⁸ Pi.-Zug **IR 202** u. **172**, 1 Batterie 21 cm Mörser, 2 s.F.H., 2 8.8 cm Flak zum Angriff bereit.

Div.Gef.Std. ab **11.00** Uhr Suedostecke Wald ostw. Konotopy, ab **22.00** Uhr Horbkow.

23.6.41:

Die Div. setzt die Vorrueckung fort. Zum Schutz der Nordflanke war das **IR 172** u. die **AA 175** eingesetzt.

Feind kein offener Widerstand mehr, Freischaerler, *bewaffnete Frauen*; staendige Ortskaempfe. . .

Die Bunkergruppe bei Kol.Rawszczyzna wird angegriffen. Gegner verteidigt sich aeusserst zaeh. Bunker werden mit Sprengmitteln (Hohlladungen, geballten Ladungen usw.) geknackt. Am Abend waren alle **18 Bunker** in unserer Hand.

24.6.41:

²⁴⁷ **Note:** "Kol.Tartakow" = Kolchose Tartakow?

²⁴⁸ **Note:** I'm quite sure that the "St." stands for "Sturm."

Um **7.00** Uhr tritt die Div. mit dem **IR 202** aus dem Brueckenkopf Choloniow an, geht weiter vor, ungeachtet der *weit offenen rechten u. linken Flanke*, da die beiden Nachbardivisionen stark abhaengen, u. bildet Abends noch bei Boromel einen Brueckenkopf ueber den Styr. . . Div. wird mittags dem Gen.Kdo. **55 AK** unterstellt. . .

(T-315, Roll 1074, *Ia KTB Nr. 3*)

--**18.-21.6.41 (298 ID / Ia KTB):**

18.6.41:

Bau-Btl. 110 meldet, dass die Wege durch den Regen vom **17.6.41** *sehr schwierig geworden sind*. Die Div. befiehlt der **Pz.Jg.Abt. 652** Abstellen von Kraefte zur Verfueg. des **Bau-Btl. 110**.

IR 525 meldet die Veraenderung seiner Unterkuenfte, **Fla-Btl. 603** das Beziehen seiner Bereitstellungsraum.

Arko 3 meldet, dass **II./AR 60** u. **s.Art.Abt. 607** im Laufe des **18.6.41** ihre Protzenstellungsraeume erreichen. . .

19.6.41:

Div.Gef.Std.:
Hrebenne

Arko 3 meldet, dass das Einruecken in die neuen Feuerstellungen gemaess dem Befehl Anl. 285 in der Nacht vom **18.** zum **19.6.41** planmaessig durchgefuehrt ist. Weiter meldet er Eintreffen verschiedener Einheiten. . .

Der Div.Stab wird nach Hrebenne verlegt. . .

ss.Haub.Abt. I/814, Rgt.-Stb. A.R. 25 mit II. u. III.Abt. treffen ein. . .

20.6.41:

Div.Gef.Std.:
Hrebenne

Arko 3 ueberreicht den Art.Befehl fuer den Angriff ueber den Bug, der den Div. Befehl zur Grundlage hat. . .

In dem fuer die Unterbringung der Div. ohnehin sehr engen Raum ist, wie am **20.8** [sic!] gemeldet wird, seit **19.6.41** auch **Pi.Btl. 50** untergebracht. . .

21.6.41:

Div.Gef.Std.:
Hrebenne

In der Nacht Heranziehen in die Bereitstellungsraeume.

16.55:²⁴⁹ Der **Ic** des **3 PzK** gibt fernmdl. *verschluesst* gemaess Anlage 283 den B-Tag 22.6. u. Y-Zeit 3.15 Uhr durch.

[Bis?] [illegible] wird diese Zeit nach dem Schluessel der Div. fernmdl. an die ihr unterstellten Einheiten sowie an **Kdr. N. 43** durchgegeben. . .

23.50: N. **298** meldet Einnahme der Bereitstellung.

(T-315, Roll 1984, Ia, KTB Nr. 4: 15.5.- 29.8.41)

--22./23.6.41 (298 ID / Ia KTB):

22.6.41:

Div.Gef.Std.

Hrebenne.

Ab **16.00** Uhr

Zaluze.

0.00: **IR 525**, Lt. Sperling, meldet Beendigung der Bereitstellung.

0.20: **Fla-Btl. 603** meldet Einnahme der Bereitstellung.

1.40: **Pz.Jg.Abt. 298** meldet Einnahme der Bereitstellung.

1.50: Desgl. **Pz.Jg.Abt. 652**

2.00: Meldung **IR 526**, Lt. Müller: Bereitstellung beendet.

2.10: Meldung **IR 527** durch einen Ord.Offz.: Bereitstellung beendet.

2.10: Meldung **Pi.Btl. 298**: Bereitstellung beendet.

3.15: . . . eroeffnet die Art. das Feuer.

Befehlsgemaess geht anschliessend die Inf. ueber den Bug.

Sie hat dabei die Kriegsgliederung gemaess Anl. 360.

Dazu kommt die Art. gemaess Art.Gliederung (Anl. 271), weiter **Fla-Btl. 603** u. **Stug-Abt. 191**.

3.19: Lt. Müller meldet fernmdl., das erste Teile ueber den Bug gehen. Gegenueberliegendes Dorf brennt bereits. . .

3.25: **Art.Kdr. 3** meldet: Angriff verlauft planmaessig, keine Gegenwehr.

3.28: Lt. Müller, der als [VB] der Div. zu **IR 526** abgestellt ist, meldet von dort Uebersetzen mit den Teilen eines Btl. gelungen. *Truppe in Feindstellung eingedrungen*. Von art.- u. inf. Gegenwirkung nichts zu spueren.

3.30: Lt. Sperling, der als [VB] der Div. zu **IR 525** entsandt ist, meldet von dort: Sicht vom Rgt.Gef.Std. behindert. Von Art.Gegenwehr des Russen nichts zu spueren; Inf.Gegenwehr nicht feststellbar. . .

3.35: Meldung an Gen.Kdo **3 PzK**: Angriff verlauft planmaessig, keine Gegenwehr. . .

Nach unbestaetigter Meldung ist Grodek unbeschadigt in eigene Hand gefallen.

Weisse Leuchtzeichen [i.e., „Hier sind wir!“] jenseits des Bug festgestellt. . .

²⁴⁹ **Note:** Final two numbers have been “penciled” over, thus hard to decipher. First three digits are clearly **16.5x**.

3.45: meldet Lt. Müller: Bei Erreichen des Waldrandes durch **IR 526** geringer Feindwiderstand. Truppe in Wald eingedrungen. Rgt.Gef.Std. wird nach Foerster Uscilug verlegt. . .

3.55: Art.Kdr. 3 meldet: Um **3.45** Uhr Strasse Zaluze – Wydranke von **IR 526** erreicht. Flieger sieht keine feindl. Art.Stellung. Zur Zeit keine feindl. Art.-Gegenwehr.²⁵⁰

4.05: Arko 3 meldet: Um **3.50** Uhr hat **6./IR 525** die Hoehe suedl. Tatarenschanze erreicht.

4.10: Befehl Gen.Kdo. **3 PzK Ia**, Major Krähe (fernmndl.): Es soll bescheunigt mit dem Brueckenbau begonnen werden, auch mit dem Behelfsbruecken des **Bruecken-Bau-Btl. 560**. , ,

4.10: Vom **IR 526** meldet Lt. Müller fernmdl.: NO Uscilug an der Strasse nach Wydranka erheblicher Feindwiderstand. Obst.Lt. Kempff gefallen.

4.10: Fliegermeldung wird vom **3 PzK** mitgeteilt:
(Zeit der Beobachtung **3.15 – 4.00** Uhr)

1.) Feindwiderstand vor **3 PzK** gering. Schwache feindl. Art.Feuer **4** km SO Uscilug. . .

3.) Feind. Mot.-Verbaende (auch auf Lkw. verlastete Inf.) sowie einzelne Panzerkampfwagen (auch schwerere Typen) verlassen Wlodzimierz u. stellen sich bereit in Waldstueck 5 km NW Wlodzimierz. . .

6.) Gesamtbild:

Gegner laedt aus u. stellt sich bereit im Waldgebiete 6 km NO Wlodzimierz. . .

4.20: Arko 3 meldet: Um **4.10** Zielpunkte **68 u. 72** durch **IR 526** erreicht.

4.25: Arko 3 meldet:

1.) Infanterie hat Ostrand Uscilug erreicht.

2.) Rechtes Btl. **IR 525** hat Eisenbahn erreicht.

3.) Aus Gegend Zaluze sieht man Infanterie *eine grosse Anzahl Gefangener zurueckbringen*. . .

4.31: Arko 3 meldet:

Wald suedl. Brzezina erreicht.

4.33: IR 526, Lt. Müller, meldet fernmdl.:

Etwa um **4.25** Uhr hat **IR 526** den Strassenknick westl. Wydranka erreicht u. *bleibt zunaechst dort liegen*, um *schwere Waffen nachzuziehen*.

4.35: IR 525, Lt. Sperling, meldet fernmdl.:

1.) Uscilug durchschritten.

Reserve-Kp. **I./IR 525** im Haeuserkampf.

2.) Nach Meldung von **4.35** Uhr schwacher Feindwiderstand ostw. Uscilug gebrochen.

3.) . . . Mit Brueckenbau wird begonnen. . .

4.40: Arko 3 meldet: **II./AR 298** setzt z.Zt. geschuetzweise ueber. . .

4.52: Arko 3 meldet: SO Uscilug der Panzergraben druch **IR 525** erreicht. . .

4.55: Pi. 298 meldet fernmdl.: Beginn des Brueckenschlages bei Luszkow um **3.50** Uhr.

4.55: 3 PzK teilt fernmdl. mit, dass um **3.35** Uhr mot.Verbaende, darunter einzelne Panzer, aus Wlodzimierz in den Wald 5 km NW Wl.[odzimierz] in Marsch erkannt sind.

²⁵⁰ **Note:** Obviously, division was concerned about just how vigorous the artillery response from the Russians would be.

5.15: Meldung Lt. Müller bei **IR 526** fernmdl.: **I./IR 526** liegt ostw. Foersterei Uscilug vor **2 Bunkern** fest u. stellt sich zum Angriff darauf bereit. Res.Kp. wird nachgezogen. . .

5.45: Arko 3 meldet von **AR 25**:

Eigene Infanterie in Wydranka eingedrungen. . .

5.47: Meldung **IR 526** durch **Arko 3**:

Wydranka in deutscher Hand.

6.00: Arko 3 meldet:

Starker feindl. Widerstand in Gegend Karczunek durch **Beob.Abt. 13** gemeldet.

Es wurde Art.-Unterstützung angefordert.

6.05: An Gen.Kdo. **3 PzK 01**, Hptm. Guderian . . .²⁵¹

6.18: Arko 3 meldet:

II./AR 25 beschiesst ab **6.15** Uhr Bunker ostw. J.Dudarewo mit Erfolg. . .

6.30: Arko 3 meldet: Wydranka-Nord erreicht. Im Wald ostw. Wydranka noch vereinzelt Widerstand. Eigene vordere Infanterie befindet sich in der zweiten Bunkerlinie ostw. Uscilug.

6.30: Arko 3 meldet: Infanterie hat die Kreuzung Hauptstrasse mit Eisenbahn bei Piatydnie erreicht . . .

6.40: Pi. 298 meldet fernmdl.:

1.) Eisenbahnbrücke Uscilug frei von Sprengladungen.

2.) Bis dahin auch Strasse minenfrei.

3.) Fertigstellung der Kriegsbrücke Zaluze voraussichtlich **7.30** Uhr.

6.45: IR 525, Oblt. Opitz, meldet fernmdl. von **P.188**, **4** km ostw. Uscilug:

Teile I.Btl. haben Brücken bei Piatydnie erreicht u. unversehrt in der Hand.

6.45: Stug.Abt. 191 meldet durch Verbindungsoffizier: Kampfstaffel um **6.30** Uhr angetreten.

7.05: Arko 3 meldet: Eigene Truppe **1** km ostw. der Brücke Piatydnie im Vorgehen.

7.25: IR 525, Obst. Szelinski, meldet: Das Rgt. ist laengs der Strasse nach Wlodzimierz durch die Bunkerlinie durch. – Rueckwaerts halten noch Bunker, um die gekaempft wird. Sprengmittel erbeten.

Auch das rechts rueckw. gestaffelte Flanken-Btl. des Rgt. wird von Bunkern noch belaestigt.

7.28: Die Sprengmittelanforderung wird sofort an **Abt. Ib** weitergegeben u. wird befriedigt werden.

7.35: Der Herr Div.Kdr. teilt fernmdl. mit: Brückenbau bei Uscilug wird erst um **9.00** Uhr beendet sein. Er hat angeordnet, dass auf der Brücke Luskow, die bald fertig sein muss, bald eine Battr. vorgezogen wird. . .²⁵²

7.45: Div.Kdr. teilt fernmdl. mit: **IR 526** tritt z.Z. gegen die Befestigungen bei Kol.Karczunek an.

Eine fruher eingegangene Meldung, dass diese vom Feind frei seien, klaert sich dahin, dass lediglich die auf der Karte *klein geschriebene* Kol.Karczunek feindfrei ist.

7.50: . . . Das *aufgekommene Geruecht ueber* Gasverwendung durch den *Russen ist unrichtig*.²⁵³

²⁵¹ **Note:** Might this be Heinz Guderian's son?

²⁵² **Note:** Division now trying to get the hvy weapons (artillery, etc.) across the bridges.

²⁵³ **Note:** Such reports about alledged use of gas by the Russians were quite common on this first day of the war.

7.50: Arko 3 meldet: . . . **II./IR 525** bereits um **7.10** Uhr die Hoehe 500 m [von?] Mikulicze erreicht.

7.50: IR 525 meldet nochmals durch Funkspruch das Durchbrechen der Bunkerlinie u. neuen Rgt.Gef.Std.

7.53: AR 298, Oblt. Hecking, meldet fernmdl.: Die Bunkern feuern noch. Sprengversuche der Inf. mit eigenen Mitteln blieben erfolglos.

8.30: AA 298, Major v. Poser, wird fernmdl. endgueltig der Befehl erteilt, nach den Art.- u. Stug-Einheiten u. **IR 526** (Rest) ueber den Bug zu gehen. . .

9.05: Pi.Btl. 298 meldet fernmdl.:

1.) 16-t-Bruecke wurde um **8.45** Uhr fertiggestellt. . .

9.20: Pz.Jg.Abt. 652 meldet das Erreichen des befohlenen Raumes um Janki.

9.40: IR 525, Oblt. Opitz, bittet fernmdl. um *moeglichst schnelles Uebersetzen der schweren Pak*, da nach unbestaetigten Meldungen von Landeseinwohnern etwa 200 Panzerwagen in dem Wald NO Wlodzimierz sich befinden sollen.

Dort auch schon Panzerangriffe, aber nicht schwerer Natur.

9.43: Lt. Sperling auf dem alten Gef.Std. **IR 525** erhaelt fernmdl. den Befehl, an der Brueckenstelle Uscilug moeglichst schnelles Heranbringen der angeforderten Pak durchzusetzen.

9.45: Lt. Müller auf altem Gef.Std. **IR 526** meldet fernmdl.:

Bruecke angeblich soeben durchgebrochen. **AA 298** kann nicht hinueber. Naehere Meldung folgt.

9.45: Kdr. Pz.Jg.Abt. 298 erhaelt fernmdl. den Befehl, die Abteilung zu sammeln u. ueber die Bruecke nach Uscilug zu sichern. Dort sammeln zur Ver-fuegung der Div. an der Kreuzung Strasse-Eisenbahn.

9.49: Lt. Müller meldet fernmdl.: Heftiger Kampflaerm aus Kol.Karczunek.

10.05: IR 525 . . . fordert Heranfuehren der **Sturm-Battr.** [Stugs], die infolge der Brueckenverhaeltnisse noch nicht ueber den Bug gefuehrt werden konnte.

10.10: IR 525, Obst. Szelinski, meldet fernmdl.:

1.) Linkes Btl. bis auf **200** m an den Waldrand des Waldes NO Wlodzimierz herangekommen, rechtes Btl. liegt hart westl. Chrypalicze.

2.) Soeben treffen die Sturmgeschuetze ein. Rgt. wird unter allen Umstaenden versuchen, vorwaertszukommen, obwohl die Lage wegen des Abhaengens des linken Nachbarn (**IR 526**) links ungeklaert ist. . .

10.35: Arko 3 meldet: Suedl. Kirche Mikulicze wird noch gekaempft. Desgl. in Waldstueeck Las maj. Uscilug, hart westl. der Gitterlinie 52 . . .

10.40: Arko 3 meldet: Feindl. Widerstand im Walde suedl. Kol.Karczunek.

10.50: Der Div.Kdr. teilt fernmdl. mit: Auch die Sturm-Art. fuer **IR 526** soll wegen Nichtfertigstellung der Bruecke bei Luszkow ueber die Uscilug-Bruecke vorgezogen werden.

10.55: Fuehrer des Funk-Kabel-Trupps des Korps meldet: Die Bruecke bei Luszkow ist durch das erste Sturmgeschuetz beschaedigt, nur dieses ist jenseits des Bug.²⁵⁴ Die Bruecke soll in etwa **25** Minuten wieder hergestellt sein.

²⁵⁴ **Note:** So, by **10.55** that morning, only one Stug was across the Bug, and it damaged the bridge at Luszkow in crossing it. However, as war diary reveals, the Stugs were in action across the Bug only a short time later.

10.55: Arko 3 meldet: Eigene Infanterie hat Panzer-Abwehr-Graben bei Kol.-Karczunek erreicht (**III./IR 526**).

11.10: meldet **IR 525**, Obst. Szelinski:

10.50 hat **I./IR 525** die Kreuzung Eisenbahn-Strasse suedl. des Waldchens Las maj. Piatydnie erreicht. – **II./IR 525** tritt soeben mit Sturmgeschuetzen zur Saeuberung des Suedteils des Waldes an. – Es hat den Auftrag Chrypalicze unbedingt zu nehmen. . .

11.30: meldet **Beob.Abt. 13** ueber **Arko 3: 10.50** Uhr eigene Sturm-Art. hat vordere Linie **IR 525** erreicht.

11.45: meldet **Arko 3:**

Sturm-Art. kommt in Waldstuecken Piatydnie gut vorwaerts.

7./ u. **8./AR 298** jenseits des Panzergrabens in Stellung gegangen.

Nach Fliegermeldung Strasse Uscilug – Wlodzimierz keine Zerstoerungen oder Sprengungen erkannt. Eigene Teile auf Hoehe **3** km ostw. Wydranka. (**10.30** Uhr).

1 Geschuetz **8./AR 298** zum Bunkerbeschuss abgezweigt.

12.10: Lt. Müller meldet fernmdl.: **IR 526** hat sich mit 2 Btl. (rechts II./, links III./) im Walde Las maj. Uscilug bis zu dem Wege unter dem „Z“ von Karczunek (Karte 1 : 100.000) vorgearbeitet; liegt dort vor Panzer-Kuppel fest; wartet auf Stugs.²⁵⁵

12.15: O.1 3 PzK teilt fernmdl. mit:

Die Panzer sollen anlaufen u. brauchen dazu die Flieger; ob wir diese dringend benoetigen. . .

Der **O.1** des **3 PzK** teilt noch mit, dass nach Meldung des Div.Kdr. die Sturmgeschuetze soeben durch Zaluze durchgekommen sind, also den Bug auf der zu-naechst beschaedigten Bruecke ueberschritten haben.

12.18: Meldung **Pz.Jg.Abt. 652**, Prinz am Waldeck: Abteilung steht suedl. Luszkow. Bruecke verstopft.

12.30: Pi. 298, Lt. Augsbach, meldet: Bruecke bei Luszkow seit **11.30** wieder in Betrieb. **3 Battr. Sturmgeschuetze sind inzwischen uebergegangen**.

13.20: Ia fernmdl. an **IR 527:**

Rgt. geht ueber Hrebenne nach Luszkow vor. Dort wird es nach der **Pz.Jg.Abt. 652** den Bug auf der Bruecke ueberschreiten. – Nach Ueberschreiten des Bug hat das Rgt. das Waldstueck bei Wolka Wydraniecka zu erreichen.

14.00: Tagesmeldung IR 526 trifft ein. Einzelheiten s.Anl. **369**.²⁵⁶

Das Rgt. ist im wesentlichen vor der Stellung in Kol.Karczunek liegegeblieben, nachdem es mit 3 Btl. den Bug ueberschritten hatte.

14.25: Kdr. **IR 526** meldet fernmdl.:

III./IR 526 nach funktelegrafischer Meldung des Btl.Kdr. *in der Gegend der Kol. Karczunek eingeschlossen*.

²⁵⁵ **Note:** Appears division had at least one battery of assault guns supporting each of its advancing infantry regiments.

²⁵⁶ **Note:** The complete “Tagesmeldung” of **IR 526** is copied directly below (No. 2, “**298 ID / Anlagen zum Ia KTB**”).

14.30: Div.Kdr. fasst den Entschluss, *Bewegungen im Augenblick einzustellen* u. um **16.30** Uhr einen neuen Angriff nach erneuter Art.-Bereitstellung anzusetzen.

Der General kommt zu dem Entschluss aufgrund folgenden Eindrucks:

Die Rgter. **IR 525** u. **IR 526** [**IR 527** no doubt held in reserve] kommen z.Zt. nicht vorwaerts, da sich der Feindwiderstand versteift hat.

14.35: . . . Obst. Dr. Klepp meldet noch die Meldung, dass das III.Btl. eingeschlossen ist, hat *sich als falsch* herausgestellt.

15.00: Aufgrund des Entschlusses von **14.30** Uhr geht der Befehl fuer den Angriff am **22.6. 17.00** Uhr heraus. . . Infolge der Zeitknappheit wird der Angriffsbeginn aber erst auf **17.00** Uhr festgesetzt.

15.29: Die **AA 298**, die bereits gegen **12.30** Uhr vom Div.Kdr. persoenlich angesetzt ist, um ueber Edwardpole vorgehend die Hoehen sudw. Werba zu gewinnen u. gegen den Turja-Abschnitt Rominopol [sp?] – Zamosty aufzuklaeren, meldet, dass sie schon suedl. Karczunek auf feindl. Bunker gestossen ist u. zu-naechst nicht weiterkommt. . .

16.15: 44 ID teilt mit, dass sie Gegend Janow erreicht hat.

16.15: Meldung **AA 298** trifft ein, wonach sie bereits um **12.15** Uhr mit ersten Teilen Bug-Bruecke bei Luszkow ueberschritten hat.

16.25: IR 525, Obst. Szelinski, meldet:

Aus dem Wald Las maj.Nowosiolki u. aus Nowosiolki gegen Mikulicze u. Chrypalicze vorgehende feindl. Schuetzen. – Panzer bisher nicht erkannt. Das Rgt. bittet um Art.Feuer auf dem Wald Las maj.Nowosiolki. . .

17.00: Pz.Jg.Abt. 652 meldet Eintreffen der gesamten Abteilung am Ostrand Zaluze.

17.00: (sehr verspaetet) trifft eine Mitteilung des **3 PzK** ein, wonach um **13.50** Uhr am Nordteil des Waldes 6 km SW Wlodzimierz *feindliche Panzerwagen* erkannt sind. . .

17.20: AA 298 meldet, dass nach Vorstoss bis **800 m** suedostw. Kol. Karczunek weiteres Vorkommen unmoeglich ist. . .

17.55: IR 526, Obst. Dr. Klepp, meldet fernmdl.:

II./IR 526 am Ostrand des Waldes Las maj. Uscilug.

III./IR 526 hieran anschliessend SW Przydadki.

I./IR 526 haengt anscheinend noch vor Bunkern in Kol.Karczunek zurueck.

18.05: Ein Battr.-Chef der **Stug.Abt. 191** meldet: Raum noerdl. des Lug (Gefechtsstreifen **IR 526**) durchkaemmt, bis teils eigene Art.- u. Inf.-Feuer, teils Betriebsstoffmangel weiteres Fahren unterbunden hat. Er bestaetigt den derzeitigen Stand des **II./IR 526**; dieses hatte unter anscheinend **2** Feindgeschuetzen zu leiden.

18.40: 2 Funksprueche des **3 PzK** melden, dass Nord- u. Suedrand von Wlodzimierz stark feindbesetzt ist; die Bruecke ist nicht gesprengt. . . In Waeldern **15** km ostw. Wlodzimierz *keine Feindansammlungen* erkannt.

18.45: AA 298 meldet Edwardpole feindbesetzt. Die Abteilung wird weiter nach Norden ausholen.

18.54: AA 298 meldet, dass um **15.00** Uhr Polomiane erreicht ist. Vorkommen nach Osten wegen Sumpfes unmoeglich.

19.10: AA 298 meldet, dass Edwardpole erreicht. Schwere Waffen u. Fahrzeuge mussten wegen des Sumpfes zurueckgelassen werden.

19.35: IR 525 meldet, dass es unter schweren Art.Feuer liegt u. Gegenangriff aus Gegend Piatydnie erfolgt. Es erbittet Art.-Unterstuetzung u. Munition.

19.45: Aufgrund der Gesamtlage u. des Eindrucks, dass der ***Widerstand der Russen sich ueberall verstaerkt, der eigene Angriff dagegen im Augenblick nur wenig vorwaerts kommt***, entschliesst sich der Div.Kdr., ***den Angriff fuer heut [sic] einzustellen u. fuer die Nacht zur Verteidigung ueberzugehen***. Entsprechender Befehl geht . . . [beider Rgter].

20.50: IR 526 meldet seine vordere Linie:

Ostrand Las maj. Uscilug (suedl.Haelfte) – Ostrand Wald Las maj. Piatydnie.²⁵⁷

. . . .

21.00: AA 298 meldet, dass **2 Bunker** westl. Edwardpole noch feindbesetzt sind; sie werden von Infanterie angegriffen. . .

Gegen **24.00:** Der Div.Befehl fuer die Fortsetzung des Angriffs am **23.6.41** geht aufgrund des entsprechenden Korpbefehls heraus.

IR 527 wird zwischen IR 525 u. IR 526 ingeschoben. – Der Angriff soll zu-naechst von IR 527 u. IR 526 vorgetragen werden, IR 525 soll zu-naechst den Brueckenkopf bei Piatydnie halten u. spaeter als Div.Reserve nachgefuehrt werden. – Der Sicherungsauftrag der **Pz.Jg.Abt. 298** bleibt bestehen. – **Stug.Abt. 191** unterstuetzt IR 527 . . .

23.6.41:

[**Note:** For wonderful anecdote see, „gegen **6.00**“ below!]

Div.Gef.Std.

Zaluze

ab **18.45** Uhr Wlodzimierz

[Rgt.Stab **AR 25** mit II. u. III.Abt. wieder der **25 ID (mot.)** unterstellt.]²⁵⁸

2.00: . . . Verbaende des *V. Fliegerkorps* [wird] den Angriff der Div. durch Bombenabwurf auf Wlodzimierz unterstuetzen . . . Der Angriff wird um **4.15** Uhr erfolgen. . .

4.10: Befehlsgemaess beginnt der Angriff . . . Der Angriff geht anfangs schnell vorwaerts. . .

gegen **6.00:** Bei den Trossen treten ***panikartige Erscheinungen auf***. Es ist dort die Parole aufgekommen, dass ***feindl. Panzerwagen angreifen***. – Die z.T. ***im***

²⁵⁷ **Note:** So it appears that IR 526 had largely negotiated both forest belts and reached the far (eastern) edge?

²⁵⁸ **Note:** 25 ID (mot.) lent two battalion of its artillery to 298 ID to support its attack.

Galopp zurueckflutende Trosse jagen bis am Div.Gef.Std. vorbei auf die Bruecken zu. Am Div.Gef.Std. u. an den Bruecken werden die Trosse durch energisches Eingreifen zum Stehen gebracht. Es stellt sich spaeter heraus, dass *eigene Sturmgeschuetze fuer fremde Panzer gehalten werden*. Diese gerieten in Gefahr, von der eigenen Truppe beschossen zu werden. . .

11.45: Stug.Abt. 191 meldet . . . dass **IR 526** z.Zt., aus dem Wald heraustretend, Wlodzimierz angreift. . .

13.30: 3 PzK teilt mit, dass die eigene Truppe die Waldstuecke 6 bzw. **10** km NW Wlodzimierz durchschritten hat u. sich **1** km ostw. der Waldstuecke im Angriff befindet. . .

15.00-15.05: AA 298 meldet: Antonowka u. Radowice feindfrei. Eigene Panzer in Bielín. Vormarsch durch Heckenschuetzen gehemmt. . .

15.30: IR 527 meldet, dass es um **15.15** mit **II.** u. **III./IR 527** in Wlodzimierz eingedrungen ist. . .

16.55: AA 298 meldet: Feindl. Panzerangriff um **16.10** auf Hoehe 231. . .

17.00: B.B. 13 meldet, dass die inzwischen ueber die Div. hinweggegangene V.A. der **13 PD 3-4** km NO Wlodzimierz auf Feind gestossen ist. . .

18.40: Funkspruch des **3 PzK** unterstellt verschiedene Einheiten, darunter **Arko 3** der **14 PD**.

18.47: Tagesmeldung des **Fla-Btl. 603** meldet *mehrere Fliegerangriffe des Russen* u. 1 Abschuss durch die 2.Kp.

19.20: Pi.Btl. 298 meldet, dass gegen **17.00** Uhr bei den *laengst genommenen Bunkern* in Ndl.Uscilug *versprengte Feindteile angetroffen wurden*. Der Feind fluechtete nach Angriff. – Die Befestigungsanlagen werden im Zukunft gesprengt. . .

22.30: Pz.Jg.Abt. 298 meldet Kampf mit Heckenschuetzen.

[**AR 25** scheidet aus Div.-Verband aus. **II. Arko 60** scheidet aus dem Div.-Verband aus. **Arko 3, Artl. Rgt.Stab 511**, selbstaendige **Abt. 731** u. **607**.]

(T-315, Roll 1984, Ia, KTB Nr. 4: 15.5.- 29.8.41)

--21./23.6.41 (298 ID / Anlagen zum Ia KTB):

[**Note:** In its „Tagesmeldung“ to **3 PzK** on **20.6.41**, **298 ID** makes following observation: “f. Ausbau der Befestigungen im ganzen Abschnitt fortgesetzt. Instellungbringen von Geschuetzen erkannt.“ **298 ID** would have a difficult time w/ these fixed defenses on **22.6.41!** (**298 ID** Abt. Ia Nr. 1376/41 geh. Betr. Tagesmeldung an Gen.Kdo. [**3 PzK**]. T-315, Roll 1985, Ia, Anlagen zum KTB Nr. 4: 16.6.-28.6.41.)]

1) **21.6.41 (298 ID / betr.: Leuchtzeichen):**

Anlage **360a** Entwurf!
Geheime Kommandosache!

298 Infanterie-Division

Div.Gef.Std., den **21.6.41**

Abt. **Ia** Nr. 211/41g.Kdos.

Betr.: Leuchtzeichen.

Entgegen den bisher bestehenden Befehlen treten ab **22.6.41, 0.00** Uhr, folgende Leuchtzeichen in Kraft:

- 1.) Leuchtpatrone weiss = „Hier sind wir“
- 2.) Signalpatrone Einzelstern rot = „Feuer vorverlegen“
- 3.) Signalpatrone Einzelstern grün = „Feind greift an“
- 4.) Rauchbündelpatrone violett oder blau = „Panzerwarnung“

Saemtliche anderen Leuchtzeichen . . . treten vom gleichen Zeitpunkt ab ausser Kraft. . .

Fuer das Div.Kommando
Der erste Generalstabsoffizier

(T-315, Roll 1985, *Ia, Anlagen zum KTB Nr. 4: 16.6.-28.6.41*)

2) **22.6.41 (IR 526 / Tagesmeldung):**

Anlage **369** zum KTB 4
der **298 ID**, Abt. **Ia**.
Tagesmeldung IR 526 vom 22.6.41
Durchgegeben um 14.00 Uhr

Seit Angriffsbeginn mit 3 Btl. Bug ueberschritten. Das Btl. rechts u. das Btl. links haben Brueckenkopfstellung glatt erreicht; mittleres bei Foersterei Uscilug auf starke Bunker, die von Art. nicht getroffen waren, gestossen. Die Besatzungen der feindl. Bunker verteidigen sich zaeh.

Mittleres Btl. starke Verluste.

Nach Nachziehen der schweren Waffen traten wir aus der Brueckenkopfstellung mit 2 Btl. an. Ein Btl. bleibt zur Sicherung des Ueberganges in Brueckenkopfstellung zurueck.

Angriffsverlauf der beiden vorderen Btl. zunaechst normal.

Zahlreiche Baumschuetzen aufgetreten. – Vor der Stellung in Kol.Karczunek u. Wald suedl. davon liegegeblieben.

Einbrueeche ueber Panzergraben gelangen an verschiedenen Stellen.

Weiteres Vordringen zunächst nicht moeglich, da Art. fehlt.

Dem rechten Fluegel-Btl. ist es gelungen, den Wald suedl. zu umgehen u. hat Meldelinie Durchlauf erreicht. –

Weitere Angriffe nach Feuerbereitschaft der nachgezogenen schweren Waffen.

(T-315, Roll 1985, *Ia*, Anlagen zum KTB Nr. 4: 16.6.-28.6.41)

3) 22.6.41 (298 ID / Tagesmeldung an 3 PzK):

Anlage **393** zum KTB
der **298 ID**, Abt. **Ia**

298. Infanterie-Division
Abt. Ia

Div.Gef.Std., den **22.6.41**

Tagesmeldung an
Gen.Kdo. 3 PzK

a) Nach anfaenglichem schnellen Vorwaertskommen infolge Ueberraschung sich versteifender feindl. Widerstand von der Linie ostw Piatnydnie – Kol.Karczunek ab.

Am spaeten Nachmittag Gegenangriffe des Russen. . .

b) Linie . . . [see text for long list of towns; most likely represent position of the HKL at end of day] . . .

d) Nordwestrand Zaluze. **IR 525** u. **IR 526** durch Verluste vermindert, aber noch einsatzfaehig. . .

h) *Mehrfache russ. Luftangriffe* ohne eigene aktive Luftabwehr.

298. Inf.Div.
[gez.]

Major i.g.

(T-315, Roll 1985, *Ia*, Anlagen zum KTB Nr. 4: 16.6.-28.6.41)

4) 22./23.6.41 (IR 526 / Tagesmeldung):

Anlage **399** zum KTB 4
der **298 ID**, Abt. **Ia**

Inf.Rgt. 526

O.U., den **24. Juni 1941**

Tagesmeldung
Betreffend die Ereignisse vom 22. u. 23.6.41

Am **22.6.41** war der Uebergang des Rgts. ueber den Bug u. die Bildung des Brueckenkopfes planmaessig verlaufen. Die Fortsetzung des Angriffs in ostw. Richtung verzogerte sich infolge der Notwendigkeit, die innerhalb des Brueckenkopfes noch hartnaeckig gehaltenen Bunker, die der stuermenden Infanterie stellenweise *erhebliche Verluste zugefuegt hatten*, zu erledigen. Dies gelang bis **7.30** Uhr, zu welchem Zeitpunkt auch die schweren Waffen, deren Heranbringung durch das *versumpfte Ueberschwemmungsgebiet* gegenueber Luszkow erhebliche Verzoegerung erfahren hatte, zur Stelle waren.

Schon die bis dahin eingelaufenen Meldungen der **3./ (Radf.) Kp.** u. die nach Nord u. NW eingeleitete Aufklaerung bestaetigten die Richtigkeit der Auffassung, dass im Norden kein erheblicher Gegner stand u. auch der Wald von Horodlo im grossen feindfrei sei. Das Rgt. setzte daher **7.45** Uhr den Angriff planmaessig fort u. gelangte mit dem II. u. III.Btl. an die befestigte Linie, die sich westl. Kol.Karczunek in suedl. Richtung durch den Las maj Uscilug²⁵⁹ erstreckte. Eine Umgehung der Bunker war nur dem II.Btl. moeglich, das am suedl. Waldrand vorging u. so rascher als das III.Btl. an den Ostrand des erwahnten Waldes gelangte.

Das III.Btl., das im Nordteil des Uscilugswaldes vor die Bunkerlinie geriet, konnte diese vorerst nicht nehmen u. *erlitt erhebliche Verluste*. Das Rgt. setzte daraufhin das bisher bei Wydranka in Reserve gestandene I.Btl. auf Kol. Karczunek in der Absicht an, den dortigen Nordfluegel der Feindstellung einzudruecken. Mittlerweile gelang es dem III.Btl. nach Wegnahme von 2 besonders stoerenden Bunkern durch Pionier-Stosstrupps u. nach starker Art.Vorbereitung durch die Div. bis **17.00** Uhr die feindl. Befestigungslinie zu durchbrechen u. ostw. Raum zu gewinnen.

Der Versuch des Rgts., dieses Bataillon noch am **22.6.41** an den Ostrand des Waldes Las maj Piatydnie vorzubringen, misslang gegenueber den geschickt unter Ausnutzung der Waldbedeckung kaempfenden durch Freischaerler verstaerkten Feindteile, sodass *einzelne Kampfgruppen abgesprengt wurden u. erhebliche Verluste erlitten (11./ u. Teile der 12./Kp.)*. Inzwischen sollte um **16.30** Uhr die Kol. Karczunek durch den gleichzeitigen Angriff des I.Btl., der am noerdl. Ufer des Bug um den Ostrand des Uscilugswaldes herum in den Ruecken der Feindstellung entsendeten Stug-Abt. 191 u. der inzwischen bei Edwardpole aufgetauchten **3./ (Radf.) Kp.** genommen werden. Der Angriff der Stug-Abt. blieb gegenueber den Bunkern *wirkungslos*, auch das I.Btl. blieb liegen u. die **3./ Kp.** vermochte, festgehalten durch einen verstreut kaempfenden Gegner, nicht Raum zu gewinnen.

Das Rgt. entschloss sich daher, die Befestigungen bei Kol. Karczunek ueberhaupt *liegen zu lassen*, um im Vordringen auf Wlodzimierz nicht aufgehalten zu werden. Das I.Btl. erhielt daher den Befehl, den Angriff einzustellen u. wurde durch den Uscilugwald dem III.Btl. nachgezogen. Die einbrechende Dunkelheit setzte den Kaempfen mit folgender Gruppierung ein Ziel.²⁶⁰

II.Btl. am SO-Rand des Uscilugswaldes,

²⁵⁹ **Note:** From context, must be name of a major forested region.

²⁶⁰ **Note:** Did diarist not mean an „Ende“ vice a “Ziel?”

III.Btl. (mit stark mitgenommenen Verbaenden) noerdl. davon,
I. Btl. (fast intakt) im Wald SO Kol. Karczunek.

Am **23.6.41** wurde aus dieser Gruppierung **4.10** Uhr der Angriff zur Wegnahme von Wlodzimierz im Sinne des inzwischen von der Div. erteilten Angriffsbefehls angesetzt. Das II.Btl. warf den Gegner in einem sehr gut gefuehrten Gefecht durch den Wald Las maj Piatydaie zurueck u. gewann dessen Ostrand. Da am linken Fluegel das III.Btl. abgeblieben war, setzte das Rgt. nunmehr das I.Btl. zum beschleunigten Angriff durch den Las maj Piatydnie, also links vom II.Btl. auf Zastawek an u. nahm das *hartmitgenommene* III.Bt. in Reserve. Da das I.Btl. aus Gruenden, die in der Gefechtsfuehrung des Btl.Kdr. lagen, nicht durch den Uscilugwald vorkam, entschloss sich der Rgt.Kdr, den Angriff auf Wlodzimierz allein mit dem II.Btl. u. zwar im Einklang mit Teilen des **IR 527**, die noerdl. der Bahn vorgekommen waren, durchzufuehren. Dieser Angriff fuehrte **13.10** Uhr zur Wegnahme der Stadt, die schon vom Gegner geraeumt worden war, wobei unterwegs verschiedene Stockungen durch die ***Erledigung einzelner Freischaerler*** entstanden, die aus Gehoeften u. Scheuenen z.T. mit Gewehren, z.T. mit M.G. schossen u. bis zum Anzuenden ihrer Schlupfwinkel standhielten.²⁶¹ . . .

Allgemeiner Eindruck.

Der Angriff des Rgts. traf einen in ***stark befestigter sehr geschickt angelegter Stellung liegenden, bis zum letzten kaempfenden Gegner***. Es handelt sich hierbei aber nur um vorgeschobene Teile u. um Freischlaerler. ***Die Masse*** [i.e., main body] ***des Gegners ging zurueck***. Auch feindl. Artillerie griff erst am zweiten Kampftag mit erheblichen Teilen ins Gefecht ein, feindl. Flieger machten sich nur bei den Trossen bemerkbar. Daher auf Feindseite vorlaeufig hinhaltender Widerstand unter Aufopferung der eingesetzten Teile. Stark durch Freischlaerler insurgierte Gebiete, Bevoelkerung z.T. passiv, z.T. feindselig oder auf Gelegenheiten wartend.

Die Staerke der feindl. Kampfanlagen wurde ***erheblich unterschaezt***. Bie den Befestigungen von Karczunek handelte es sich durchwege um *permanente sehr gut angelegte Werke*, die dort, wo die Wegnahme erforderlich war, durchwegs mit Pionierstosstrupps genommen werden mussten, weil sie allen Angriffsmittel des verstl. Rgts. standhielten. Selbst die **5 cm Flak** erzielte gegenueber der Panzerkuppel eines solchen Werkes keine Durchschuesse.

[gez.]

[name illegible]

(T-315, Roll 1985, *Ia, Anlagen zum KTB Nr. 4: 16.6.-28.6.41*)

5) 23.6.41 (3 PzK / Korpsbefehl fuer Fortsetzung des Angriffs):

Anlage **398** zum KTB 4
Der **298 ID, Abt. Ia**

²⁶¹ **Note:** In other words, they were smoked out of their hiding places in the farmsteads and barns!

Generalkommando [3 PzK]
Ia op.

Korps Gef.St. 22 Juni 1941
20.30 Uhr

Korpsbefehl
fuer die
Fortsetzung des Angriffs am 23.6.41

Ich spreche der **44** u. **298 ID** meine Anerkennung fuer den energisch gefuehrten Durchbruch durch die Tiefe des russ. Grenzverteidigung aus.

1.) Gegenueber dem **3 PzK** ist am **22.6.** die **87. russ.Schtz.Div.** [**87 RD**] z.T. in ihrer *stark ausgebauten Hauptkampfstellung* aufgetreten. Mit der Moeglichkeit, dass der Russe sich waehrend der Nacht nach Osten absetzt, ist zu rechnen.

Rechts hat **29 AK** die Luga [sp?] – Uebergaenge bei Zamlicze [?] und s. dl. [?] Biskupice erreicht.

Links stellt sich **17 AK** in Linie Kocury – Sawosze [sp?] zum Angriff gegen die H.K.L. westl. Lobowl [sp?] bereit.

2.) **3 PzK** setzt Angriff mit beiden Inf.Div. in den bisherigen Gefechtsstreifen aus der erreichten Linie fort, um den befohlenen weiten [U.i.O.] Brueckenkopf bei Wlodzimierz zu gewinnen. . .

3.) **14 PD** stellt sich so bereit, dass sie am **23.6.** je nach Erkundungsergebnis ueber rechtes oder linkes Rgt. der **298 ID** angreifen kann, sobald die Moeglichkeit fluessigen Vorgehens auf Luck gegeben ist. . .

4.) Aufklaerung.

Fortsetzung der Aufklaerungsauftraege fuer **22.6.**

a.) Erdaufklaerung.

Es kommt darauf an, dem Feinde heute Abend u. vor allem auch in der Nacht mit starker [U.i.O.] Gefechtsaufklaerung an der Klinge zu bleiben. . . .

b.) Luftaufklaerung.

Hauptaufgabe der Morgenaufklaerung durch **14 PD** mit 5./(H) 14 ist Feststellung ueber Verbleib des Gegners ostw. der Bahnlinie . . . [see text for details] . . .

6.) Korps Gef.Std.: bleibt zunaechst noch Fw.Kazmierowka [sp?]. Er wird ueber den Bug vorverlegt im Zuge der Panzerstrasse, Zeitpunkt wird noch bekannt gegeben.

[gez]
General der Kavallerie

(T-315, Roll 1985, Ia, Anlagen zum KTB Nr. 4: 16.6.-28.6.41)

1.5.8: Case Study 1: Start of Operations on Lutsk-Rovno Axis (14 PD, 44 & 298 ID (3 PzK))

--General der Kavallerie Eberhard v. Mackensen:

Im Polenfeldzug war er dadurch zum Generalstabchef der **14. Armee**. Bereits in diesem Feldzug wurden ihm beide Spangen zu seinen Eisernen Kreuzen verliehen. Im November 1939 folgte seine Ernennung zum Chef des Generalstabes der **12. Armee**. Am 1. Januar 1940 folgte seine Beförderung zum Generalleutnant. Nach dem Westfeldzug wurde von Mackensen am 1. August 1940 zum General der Kavallerie befördert. Am 15. Januar 1941 wurde er dann zum Kommandierenden General vom **Generalkommando III. Armeekorps** ernannt. Mit dem Korps stand er ab Juni 1941 in Südrussland im Kampf. Für seinen Vorstoß durch die Stalin-Linie nach Kiew wurde er am 27. Juli 1941 mit dem Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes ausgezeichnet. (*Lexikon-der-Wehrmacht*)

--**14 PD**: This division was formed in 1934-35 as the 4. Infanterie-Division by expansion of Infanterie-Regiment 10 of the old Reichswehr. In September 1939 it participated in the campaign against Poland and, in May 1940, in the western campaign. On August 15, 1940, the division was reorganized as the 14. Panzer-Division. After service in Yugoslavia in April 1941, it was transferred in June 1941 to the southern sector of the eastern front, where it was continuously engaged. Virtually **destroyed in January 1943 at Stalingrad**, the division was reformed in March 1943 in France, and in October 1943 it again was transferred to the southern sector of the eastern front, where it fought in the Dnieper River Bend area in December 1943. Although there are no records of the division available dated later than October 15, 1943, the situation maps of Lage Ost show that from January through July 1944 the division took part in operations in the Kirovograd, Zvenigorodka, Kishinevo, and Jassi areas. In August it withdrew from the front for rest and refitting and in September 1944 the division was transferred to Riga. From October 1944 to April 1945 it participated in position defense in the Libau area. (UG / RGFC)

--**44 ID**: The 44. Infanterie-Division was formed by expansion of the Viennese Infanterie-Regiment 4 after the annexation of Austria. It participated in the campaign against Poland in 1939 and in the invasion of France as far as the Tours area in May 1940. In the latter part of June 1940 the division moved to the La Rochelle area for training and coastal defense and was transferred in April 1941 to the Kielce area of Poland. The division took part in the invasion of Russia in the southern sector on June 22, 1941, advancing via Janow, Lvov, Dubno, Zhitomir, Korosten, Byshev, Poltava, and Akhtyrka to the area east of Kharkov. It was **destroyed at Stalingrad in January 1943**. In March 1943 the division was re-formed in Belgium, receiving the honorary title „Reichsgrenadierdivision Hoch- und Deutschmeister" in May 1943. It was transferred to north-east Italy for antipartisan operations in September 1943 and on November 21, 1943, the division began combat operations in the Frosinone-Cassino area where it remained until the latter part of August 1944. Although no records of this division dated later than August 30, 1944, are available, situation maps of Lage Suedwest and Ost show that it withdrew from Italy in September 1944 and arrived in November at Pecs, Hungary, for refitting. It defended the Pecs and Barcs areas of Hungary and the Komarno and Nove Zamky areas of Slovakia until March 1945, when it moved to Austria and defended the area southeast of Graz until the end of the war. (UG / RGFC)

--**298 ID**: No unit history appears to be available in UG / RGFC.

--**22.6.41**: Schon am ersten Tag schoben sich die drei mot. Korps der **1 PzGr** rechts am **17 AK** vorbei an die Front. Die **44 u. 298 ID** nahmen bei Hrubaschow die unbeschädigte Bugbruecke in Besitz, ueber die schon am Nachmittag die **14 PD** rollte. Damit konnte auch das rechts stehende **44 AK** Boden gewinnen. Als sich der Durchbruch der **1 PzGr** schon am ersten Tag abzeichnete, waren auch das **29 AK** u. das **48 AK (mot.)** ueber den breiten Grenzfluss gegangen, so dass die **6 Armee** am ersten Kriegstag bereits Bewegungsfreiheit zu bekommen schien. (W. Haupt, *Die Schlachten der H.Gr.Sued*, 22)

--**22.6.41** (General Mackensen's Darstellung):

Als in der Fruehe des **22 Jun 41** die Inf.-Diven. des **3 PzK** unter dem Donner von **300 Geschuetzen** bei u. vorwaerts Hrubieszow ueber den Bug stuermt, nahm wohl auch der groesste Optimist nicht an, dass das **3 Pz** bereits am **19.** Operationstage, dem **10 Jul 41**, sein erstes, 450 km entfernt liegendes Operationsziel erreicht haben wuerde. Wie fern lag Kiew!

Aufgabe des erst wenige Wochen vor Ausbruch der Feindseligkeiten mit Russland in Lublin durch Umwandlung seines Generalkommandos u. seiner Korpstruppen zum Panzerkorps gewordenen **3 PzK** war, nach Durchbruch durch die russ. Grenzbefestigungen am linkel Fluegel der der H.Gr.Sued voraus-eilenden **1 PzGr** so schnell wie moeglich die Gegend von Kiew zu erreichen – als Grundlage fuer die weiteren Operationen. Wie wurde diese Aufgabe in 18 Tagen geloest?

Die Schlesier der **298 ID** u. die Ostmaerker der **44 ID** durchbrechen in den ersten beiden Tagen in kuehnen Ansturm die zueh verteidigten feindl. Grenzbefestigungen. Schon am zweiten Tag gelingt es, zunachst die **14 PD** ueber den linken Fluegel des Korps, dann auch die **13 PD** ueber u. an seinem rechten Fluegel vorbei nach vorn zu werfen. Beide Panzerdivisionen wetteiferten nun, nachdem sie suedostw. u. ostw. von Wlodzimierz erste operative Bewegungsfreiheit gefunden haben, im Vorgehen auf das gesteckte Ziel. . .²⁶²

Waehrend die **298 ID** noch im Ruecken der Pz.Diven. hart um den gesicherten Besitz von Wlodzimierz kaempfen muss, die **44 ID** bereits unter den Befehl eines anderen Korps getreten ist, kaempfen die Panzer des Korps bei u. suedl. Aleksandrowka ihre erste Panzerschlacht. Sie fuehrt zur Vernichtung von **267** feindl. Panzer u. damit zu vollem Erfolg.²⁶³ Schon am **25.6.** wird Luck genommen, der Styr ueberschritten. . .

(Eberhard v. Mackensen, *Vom Bug zum Kaukasus*, 11)

--Border Battles on the Lutsk – Rovno Axis / Overview by Glantz:

Kirponos had several armies under his command, but the two that we will be concerned w/ were Potapov's **5 Army** and Muzychenko's **6 Army**. Potapov's army defended along the Lutsk – Rovno axis, an axis that untimately extended toward Kiev. Muzychenko's army covered the L'vov sector. [See text for actual disposition of these armies.]

²⁶² **Note:** About the Panzerstrasse in his attack sector Mackensen writes: [Sie war] die einzige durchgehende, meist befestigte Strassenverbindung Hrubieszow – Wlodzimierz – Luck – Rowne [Rovno?] – Zwiachel – Shitomir – Kiev . . .“ (11)

²⁶³ **Note:** This massive tank-on-tank battle could not possibly have occurred on **22.6.41**, as Robert Kirchubel writes (*Hitler's Panzer Armies*, 21). While Mackensen does not offer a precise date, from his account clear that neither of his panzer divisions saw any significant action on *Barbarossatag*. This tank battle most likely occurred on **24.6.41**. David Glantz seems to confirm this (see, his *Initial Period of War on the Eastern Front*, 264-69, for details).

In the depth of the defense were additional units, these generally aligned along the old fortified positions of the Stalin Line along the old Polish-Russian border. Here there were a string of fortified regions and several cavalry divisions, distributed along the length of the old border. Fortified regions were also deployed along the new border itself such as the **2nd** and **4th Fortified Regions**. Of course, there were a series of border guard detachments defending along the border as well. . .

The chart shows you the general *armor correlation of forces*. Basically, there were many KV and T34 tanks in the Soviet force structure [i.e., of Southwestern Front]. [See text for details.]

Correlation of Armor

<u>German</u>	<u>Soviet</u>
636	2272 (576)²⁶⁴
1	3.6

[Vladimir Volynski Sector / 22.6.41]:

In discussion the day-by-day operations, I will focus first on the area around Vladimir Volynski to understand how the German attack progressed and how the Soviets initially committed their mechanized forces to combat. Later, we will look at the great meeting engagement and the *attempted envelopment of 11 PD by Soviet mechanized forces near Dubno*.

This was the situation on the eve of the attack in the Vladimir Volynski sector. The **41 TD** was conducting field exercises in the north minus its motorized regiment, which was garrisoned at Lutsk. The **124 RD** had one rgt. forward and two regiments back in camp. The **2nd Fortified Region** had some units deployed along the border interspersed w/ forces of the **90th Border Guards Detachment**. The **87 RD** was in lager just east of Vladimir Volynski w/ all three of its regiments. . .

German forces facing Soviet **5** and **6 Armies** consisted basically of Sixth Army and **1 PzGr** . . . There was quite a stacking and concentration of German forces in this region preparatory to the main attack. . .

On the *first day of combat*, **22 Jun 41**, the German thrusts developed along two principal axes. The first axis, in the north by way of Vladimir Volynski, initially involved operations by two German infantry divisions (**298** and **44 ID**).²⁶⁵ Subsequently, **13** and **14 PD** advanced through those infantry divisions along the Lutsk – Rovno axis.²⁶⁶

In the south, the initial German attack was conducted by **75** and **57 IDs**.²⁶⁷ Very early on the infantry were overtaken by **11 PD**, which then spearheaded an armored thrust along an axis running through Dubno – Ostrog. . .

²⁶⁴ **576** = hvy KV or T34 tanks.

²⁶⁵ **Note:** Both **298** and **44 IDs** subordinated to Kleist's panzer group at start of attack. See, *GSSW*, 186-87.

²⁶⁶ **Note:** When did these panzer divisions begin to move forward, on 22nd or 23rd?

²⁶⁷ **Note:** Also both assigned to **1 PzGr** for start of the offensive.

During the first day of combat, the Soviet garrison troops along the border were surprised. Many of the border detachments and elements of the *fortified regions* were encircled, but it took the Germans 2/3 days to reduce those small pockets. The **87 RD** reacted fairly quickly and the Soviets dispatched one of their **10 AT** bdes forward. In most of the major sectors, the Soviets had one, two, or even three of these AT bdes.

The first units the Soviets dispatched forward on the expected axes of the German armored advance were these AT bdes. This one was the *1st AT Bde*, commanded by Maj.-Gen. K.S. Moskalenko, who later rose to command **40 Army**. His unit was about the first to meet **14 PD** as it came roaring down the road out of Vladimir Volynski.²⁶⁸ On **22 Jun 41**, orders went out almost immediately from Kirponos' Hq. to the mechanized corps to *close forward as rapidly as possible*.

The first corps to do so was **22 MC**. Of course, that corps **41 TD** was already located close to the attack sector and it was ordered to send elements southward to assist **87 RD**. Meanwhile, the **19 TD** and **215 Mot. Div.** Hastened forward to join in the counterattack, which was anticipated somewhere in the area east of Vladimir Volynski. Similar orders went out to Rokossovsky's **9 MC** and Feklenko's **19 MC**.

Essentially from Lutsk to Rovno, and from Korosten and Berichev further in the rear, a *solid stream of Soviet armor attempted to make its way forward*. In most cases, this movement was *severely interdicted by German air strikes*. The basic *lack of good roads* hindered the German advance, but also frustrated the redeployment of the Soviet operational and strategic reserves. . . These mobile divisions arrived *one after the other, and they were strung out for over 120 km along the road*. Hence, as they arrived counterattacks developed in *piecemeal fashion*.

In the south, **15 MC** was ordered northward to strike at the German penetration forming near Radeshev. The **37** and **10 TDs** sent out forward detachments of roughly **30-40** tanks each w/ some motorized infantry to intercept the German advance, engage it and, of course, hopefully stop it. Simultaneously, **4 MC** received the first of *several conflicting orders*. . . The **4 MC** divisions moved *back and forth constantly for about four days* until they were finally brought back and reassembled to cover the closer approaches to L'vov. . .

Figure **132** is a more detailed map of the action in the Vladimir Volynski region on the first day of combat. There have been many stories told about *Soviet tank divisions running off the roads into swamps*. . . In fact, many Soviet units *ended up in swamps, partly as a result of the Germans having air superiority, and hence, it was unhealthy to travel by road*. Thus, the Soviets moved their units off the roads and the price they paid was that many Soviet mobile units ended up *bogged down in the swampy parts of this region*. . .

²⁶⁸ **Note:** Appears that **14 PD** was first committed to action on **23.6.41** (p 261-63)

The map depicts the German advance to Vladimir Volynski and the reaction of **87 RD**. All three regiments of the Soviet division deployed forward fairly quickly, and the newly arrived **1st AT Bde** established a defensive shield blocking the road running east to Lutsk. The German **299 ID** attack split the Soviet **124 RD** from **87 RD**. This was the beginning of essentially the first encirclement that would occur in the Southwestern Front sector.²⁶⁹

The overall situation map for **23 Jun 41** portrays the *initial German commitment of 14 PD*. The next day both **13** and **14 PD** launched attacks eastward along the Lutsk road. By this time **11 PD** was already *racing deep into Soviet defenses*, engaging the forward detachment of Soviet **10** and **37 TDs** and apparently doing considerable damage . . .

On **23 Jun 41** in the Vladimir Volynski sector, the **87 RD**, or at least two regiments of the division, were now encircled and isolated just south of the city. **13 PD** was moving forward, and by this time **14 PD** had already cleared Vladimir Volynski and was preparing to race eastward down the highway toward Lutsk . . .

(D.M. Glantz, *Initial Period of the War*, 250-64)

--German Operations on the Lutsk – Rovno Axis / Lt.-Gen. Karl W. Thilo:

[**Note:** At the time, Thilo was a *group leader* at the **OKH** responsible for operations on the southern part of the front.]

In **1941** I served in the Operations Section ((GS) Heusinger as Chief) of the **OKH** . . . Within the Operations Section, **Group I** (headed by Lt.Col. (GS) Gehlen) had overall responsibility for the eastern theater of war. This section consisted of sub-groups South (Thilo), Center (Ziervogel) and North (v. Rumohr), which corresponded to the three army groups. I (then a major of the GS) was personally responsible for dealing w/ matters pertaining to Army Group South. My task was to receive, twice a day by telephone, the situation reports of the army groups and their armies, as well as estimates of the situation and concepts of operations. These were then put into writing and general situation maps were drawn. . .

[See text for more details.]

(K.W. Thilo, et al., “*German Operations on the Lutsk-Rovno Axis*,” in: D.M. Glantz, *Initial Period of the War*, 290)

--3 PzK Operations / Maj.-Gen. Heinz Guderian:

[**Note:** General Guderian at the time was on the staff of **3 PzK**. He was an **01** (1. *Ordonnanzoffizier*, today comparable to **S3**). His commanding general was General der Kavallerie von Mackensen; he wrote periodic reports about the events of **1941** for our people at home.]

²⁶⁹ **Note:** Must confirm that these actions took place on **22.6.41**, but appears from maps that they in fact did.

First I want to answer the following questions:

1. *What was the composition of the force you fought in?*

Two infantry divisions fought w/ **3 PzK** in the first phase, the crossing of the Bug. After the buildup of forces in the initial bridgeheads, two panzer divisions (**13** and **14 PD**) would follow and push forward. . .

3. *What was your knowledge of the enemy?*

It was very poor. In my recollection it was limited to our visual observations across the Bug River. It seemed to us that the Russians were *unaware of our assembly movements*.

4. *When did the first Soviet counterattacks start?*

The first counterattacks hit us on the third day of our offensive, **24 Jun 41**. They continued and increased in intensity from day to day, as von Mackensen's letters show and as Col. Glantz's maps revealed.

Now let me describe **3 PzK** operations in some detail.

The Hq. of **3 PzK** was stationed at Lublin. The corps fought at first under command of Sixth Army. When the operations of the panzer divisions began, the corps came under **1 PzGr**. The left flank was secured by **17 AK**. But soon its two infantry divisions were left behind, as the panzer divisions got underway and advanced rapidly forward. Now let me quote from the text of one of *Mackensen's first letters*. It is interesting to hear a *voice of that time*, a little subjective naturally:

“When, during the morning hours of **22 Jun 41**, the infantry divisions of **3 PzK** stormed across the Bug near and forward of Hrubieszow, amidst the thunder of 300 guns . . .

It was the mission of **3 PzK** to reach the Kiev area as quickly as possible after breaking through the Russian border fortifications on the left wing of **1 PzGr**. . . This **3 PzK** had been *transformed into an armored corps in Lublin* only a few weeks before the outbreak of hostilities w/ Russia . . .

The Silesians of the **298 ID** and the Ostmark troops of **44 ID** in the first two days penetrate the tenaciously defended enemy fortifications in a bold assault. As early as the second day, first the **14 PD** succeeds in advancing through the corps' left wing, then **13 PD** succeeds in its advance through and past the corps' right wing. Both armored divisions now compete in advancing toward their set objective, after having gained their *initial operational freedom* SE and E of Wlod-zimierz – Vladimir Volynskij. . .

While **298 ID** is still engaged to the rear of the armored divisions in holding and securing Wlodzimierz, and **44 ID** has already been *placed under command of another corps*, **3 PzK** armored forces are *fighting their first armored battle at and south of Aleksandrowka*.²⁷⁰ -

²⁷⁰ **Note:** This tank battle seems to have taken place on **23.6.41**, not on first day of campaign, as Kirchubel asserts.

It ends in the destruction of **267** enemy tanks²⁷¹ and is a roaring success. Luck is seized by **25 Jun 41** . . .

(Maj.-Gen. Heinz Guderian, “3rd Panzer Corps Operations,” in: D.M. Glantz, *Initial Period of the War*, 308-11)

1.5.9: Case Study 2: Start of Operations on Lutsk-Rovno Axis (11 PD, 57 & 75 ID (48 PzK))²⁷²

--**11 PD**: The 11. Panzer-Division was formed on August 1, 1940, from the 11. Schuetzen-Brigade (which had fought in the campaign in France) and from Panzer-Regiment 15. In April 1941 it fought in the Balkans and captured the city of Belgrade. The division was transferred in June 1941 to the southern sector of the eastern front, and to the central sector in October 1941. In the summer of 1942 it returned to the southern sector. A year later, in the summer of 1943, it took part in the Belgorod and Kursk offensives. In the autumn of 1943 the division was heavily engaged in the Krivoi Rog area and in February 1944 it suffered grave losses in the Korsun encirclement. Shortly afterward, in the spring of 1944, the remnants of the division were transferred to southern France, where personnel of the 273. Reserve-Panzer-Division were added to it. In July 1944 it was shifted to Toulouse and in August of the same year it took part in the delaying action after the Allied landings in southern France and in the withdrawal to Alsace. In September 1944 the division participated in the defense of the Belfort Gap and subsequently withdrew to the Saar area. It also saw action in the counteroffensive in the Ardennes in December 1944, and was engaged in the Trier area in January 1945. (UG / RGFC)

--**57 ID**: The 57. Infanterie-Division was formed in the summer of 1939 from reservists. It participated in the campaign against Poland in September 1939 and in the western campaign in May 1940. In June 1941 it was transferred to the southern sector of the eastern front, where it fought in offensive operations from Sokal, Brody, Cherkassy, Kremenchug, Poltava, Kharkov, and Oboyan to Voronezh. In the fall and winter of 1942-43 the division took part in defensive actions and withdrew to the Lebedin-Sumy area. It suffered heavy losses during the summer offensive in the Belgorod-Kharkov area. Although no records of this division dated later than June 30, 1943, are available, situation maps of Lage Ost show that it defended the Sumy area in July and August 1943, the Lubny area in September, the Kanev area in October and November, and the area southwest of Cherkassy, where it was encircled in February 1944. The division was re-formed in late April 1944 and assigned to the central sector to defend the Gorki and Rogachev areas until it was again encircled in July 1944. According to the Potsdam catalog the division was disbanded as of August 13, 1944. (UG / RGFC)

--**75 ID**: The 75. Infanterie-Division (2. Welle) was formed from reservists in Schwerin, Wehrkreis II, on August 25, 1939. In September 1939 it was transferred to the Truppenuebungsplatz Baumholder for training and later that year to the Saarbruecken area for border security

²⁷¹ **Note:** War diary of **OKW** notes following for **22.6.41**: “**14 PD**: Anfang Kol. Zosien (2 km westl. Uscilug, Aufkl. Abt. ostw. des Bug.” On **22.6.41**, **14 PD** was only panzer unit assigned to Mackensen’s panzer corps and, according to KTB OKW, only its reconnaissance battalion had crossed the Western Bug. Thus its armored regiment could not have been in combat on *Barbarossatag*; tank battle at Alexandrovka must have taken place on **23.6.41**. From KTB OKW it appears that neither **13 PD** nor **16 PD** saw combat on **22.6.41**. (*KTB OKW*, 490)

²⁷² **Note:** Initial breakthroughs in sector of **11 PD** made by **57** and **75 ID**.

along the Saar River. In May and June 1940 the division participated in the western campaign with frontal attacks against the Maginot Line, advancing south to the Besancon area after the breakthrough of the Line. After cessation of hostilities part of the division marched to Saarbruecken and part to Bruchsal for entraining and movement to southern Poland in the Lublin and Zamosc areas for training and preparation for Operation "Barbarossa" (invasion of Russia). On June 22, 1941, it took part in this invasion in the southern sector by crossing the Bug River and advancing to Sokal, Dubno, and Berdichev, and participated in the encirclement of Kiev, after which it advanced northeast to Romny, Sumy, Belgorod, and Voronezh. In September 1942 the division took Voronezh and in October of the same year it withdrew west toward Sumy for its defense until the summer of 1943 and then to the Dnieper River in the Kiev area. Although there are no records of the division available dated later than December 31, 1943, the situation maps of Lage Ost and Heeresgruppe Mitte show that the division was in the Vasilkov area south of Kiev in January 1944, withdrawing to Berdichev in March, Proskurov in May, Stanislav in July, and Borislav in August 1944. It had withdrawn to the vicinity of Cracow by early January 1945 and to the Ostrava area in northeastern Moravia in late April 1945. (UG / RGFC)

--10.-21.6.41 (11 PD / PzRgt 15):

10.6.41:

Tatsaechlich blieb den Angehoerigen des Rgts. nur noch bis Anfang **Jun 41** Zeit, das ausgelassene Wiener Leben zu leben.²⁷³ . . .

Dann aber ist's soweit u. heisst es am **10.6.1941** – erst einmal fuer die Kampfstaffel des Rgts. – Abschied zu nehmen. Abschied zu nehmen von Wien, von lieben . . .

(Die Fahrzeuge des Trosses verladen am **12.6.41**.)

13.6.41:

Ueber Oderberg – Krakau geht's per Bahn bis Nisko, wo das Rgt. am **13 Jun 41** entlaedt u. in den zugewiesenen Unterkunftsraum Stalowa Wola marschiert. Im Verband der **1 PzGr** wird hier die **11 PD** . . . dem **48 PzK** unter Gen.Lt. Kempf unterstellt.

In Stalowa Wola tut sich weiter nichts, wenn man von den ueblichen Verrichtungen u. der Verleihung von *bulgarischen Tapferkeitsauszeichnungen* [!?!] absehen will.

19.-21.6.41:

Am **19.6.1941** wird dann das Rgt. ueber die San in den Raum westl. Sokal vorgezogen u. biwakiert danach bei Lasow, **30** km vor der polnisch-russ. Demarkationslinie.

Hier fuehlt man foermlich, dass *etwas in der Luft liegt*. Dennoch soll es noch bis zum Abend des **21.6.** dauern, bis die Schleier fallen u. auch die Maenner des **PzRgt 15** in Kp.-Appellen mit der Tatsache konfrontiert werden, dass sich

²⁷³ **Note:** **11 PD** was obviously quartered in and/or around Vienna at start of **Jun 41**.

Deutschland ab **22 Jun 41** im Kriegszustand mit der Sowjetunion befindet. Die **11 PD** ist fuer den Angriff am morgigen Tage vom Korps als Schwerpunkt-Division vorgesehen u. soll ihren Stoss in die Tiefe des feindl. Aufstellungen fuehren.

Das Unbegreifliche wird damit bittere Wirklichkeit.

Obwohl zum Optimismus erzogen, *will es den Soldaten des Rgts. **nicht so recht eingehen***, was man ihnen bei den abendlichen Appellen ueber den russ. Gegner zu sagen weiss. Schon gar nicht, dass man naemlich seine Kampfswagen mit ihren Kanonen nur so „*durchpusten*“ koenne²⁷⁴ u. dass die in dichten Schwaermen anfliegenden russ. Flugzeuge, ohne gross zu zielen, nur so heruntergeholt werden koennen.

Nun es hoerte sich alles recht einfach an. Auch das der bevor-stehende Feldzug ohnehin ***in 4 Wochen zu Ende sein wuerde***. . .

Man darf wohl mit Rechten annehmen, dass es in dieser Nacht vom **21/22 Jun 41** wohl kaum einen Soldaten gegeben hat, der sie schlafend verbrachte. Zu sehr be-laden waren die Gedanken eines jeden, was sich dann auch in den noch schnell geschriebenen Briefen an die Lieben daheim niederschlug.

(G.W. Schrodek, *Ihr Glaube galt dem Vaterland*, 118)

--**21.6.41** (Angriffsbefehl / PzRgt 15):

PzRgt 15
Abt. **Ia**

O.U., den **21.6.1941**

Befehl fuer den Angriff

1. Feind

vor [**48 PzK**] in etwa Div.-Staerke – **46. Schuetz.-Div.** – in befestigter Grenzstellung, die sich in nicht grosser Tiefe auf den jenseitigen Hoehen des Bug hinzieht.

Weiter rueckwaerts groessere Reserven oder neue durchlaufende Stellungen nicht erkannt.

2. 48 PzK

greift am B-Tag, Y Uhr, mit den unterstellten Inf.Diven. – **57 ID rechts**, **75 ID links** – ueber den Bug an u. durchbricht die feindl. Stellung, um sodann mit seinen schnellen Verbaenden in allgemeiner Richtung Osten bis zum Dnjepr durchzustossen.

Rechts greift **287 ID** – **44 AK** – an.

²⁷⁴ **Note:** At start of tank-on-tank combat w/ the Soviet **KVs**, the many direct hits made the German tanks make no impression on the massive Russian tanks. Writes the author: “*Um Gottes willen, wo bleibt denn da jene Ueberlegenheit den russischen Panzern gegenueber, die man doch eigentlich mit den eigenen Panzerkanonen nur so **durchpusten** kann?*“ (126) That aside, due to superior German tactics and experience, this first large tank battle of **11 PD** is a big success for the Germans, who only suffer one or two tanks destroyed and one damaged.

Links geht das **3 PzK** mit **14 PD** in vorderer Linie von Hrubieszow ueber Luck – Rowne auf Kiew vor.

3. **11 Pz.Div.**

stoest mit vorderste Pz.Div. des Korps, sobald die Infanterie das Loch geschlagen hat, entlang der Panzerstrasse Mitte – Sokal – Tartakow – Stonajew – Radziechow - . . . [see text for more towns] vor, um zunaechst den Styr-Uebergang bei Szczurowice zu erzwingen u. dann ruecksichtslos u. unaufhaltsam ueber Dubno – Ostrog – Polonne – Berditschew bis zum Dnjepr vorzudringen. . .

Panzerangriffe des Feindes sind durch *unsere ueberlegenen panzerbrechenden Waffen* im sofortigen Gegenangriff zu erledigen.²⁷⁵

5. Auftrag fuer das PzRgt 15

Vorstoss entlang der Panzerstrasse Mitte, Styr-Uebergang bei Szczurowice handstreichartig zu nehmen u. fuer Div. aufzuhalten.

6. Gliederung . . .

[See text for remainder of this 2½ page order!]

(G.W. Schrodek, *Ihr Glaube galt dem Vaterland*, 119-21)

--**21.6.41**: The operations order issued to **15 PzRgt (11 PD)** on the day before the invasion read thus:

As soon as the infantry has broken open a hole, attacks as the lead panzer division of the corps along the central *Panzerstrasse* . . . as soon as the Styr River crossing is accomplished at Szczurowice,²⁷⁶ push without looking back or stopping (“*ruecksichtslos u. unaufhaltsam*”) over Dubno, Ostrog, Polonne, Berdichev to the Dnepr. [See text for rest of quote.]

(Cited in: Kirchubel, *Hitler's Panzer Armies*, 20; see also, G.W. Schrodek, *Ihr Glaube galt dem Vaterland*, 119)

--**22.6.41**: *Tagesbefehl 11 PD*:

Soldaten der 11. Panzer-Division!

Der Fuehrer ruft zum Kampf gegen den Bolschewismus, dem Urfeind unseres nationalsozialistischen Reiches.

Der Kampf wird an einigen Stellen schwer, Entbehrungen u. Strapazen ueberall sehr gross sein.

Die *Gespenster-Division* wird sich wie in Serbien auf den Feind stuerzen, wo wir ihn treffen—ihn angreifen u. vernichten.

Ich weiss, dass ich mich, wie in Suedost, auf jeden von Euch, vom aeltesten Offizier bis zum juengsten Mann unbedingt verlassen kann.

²⁷⁵ **Note**: Of course, their “*panzerbrechende Waffen*” were in no way superior to the **KV-1s**, **KV-2s** and the **T-34s** they were about to engage!

²⁷⁶ **Note**: Should this note be: Szczurowice?

Unsere Parole bleibt der Angriff, unser Ziel der Dnjepr. Dort wollen wir, wie vor Belgrad, wieder die Ersten sein.

Heil dem Fuehrer!
Gez. Crüwell
Generalmajor

(Cited in: Schrodek, *Die. II. Panzer-Division*, 116; also cited in: Schrodek, *Ihr Glaube galt dem Vaterland*, 121)

--**22.6.41**: Near Radziechov, a see-saw battle raged between **15 PzRgt (11 PD)**, reinforced w/ 88mm flak guns and a Soviet tank division.²⁷⁷ By **1600** hours on **23 Jun 41**, **46 KV-1** and **KV-2** tanks littered the battlefield. Fierce *Luftwaffe* interdiction, spread-out deployments, poor roads, untried leaders and units resulted in uneven combat. (See, Kirchubel, *Hitler's Panzer Armies*, 21)

--**22.6.41 (PzRgt 15 / 11 PD)**:²⁷⁸

„*Heldensage, Wotan, Neckar 15*“

Mt der am **21.6.1941** vom **1a** der **1 PzGr** um **16.45** Uhr erfolgten Durchgabe: „*Heldensage, Wotan, Neckar 15*“, wurde der Beginn des Feldzuges gegen Sowjetrußland fuer den **22 Jun 41**, **3.15** Uhr befohlen.

Im Osten, jenseits des Bug, zeigten sich bereits die ersten roetlichen Schimmer des angebrochenen neuen Tages, als puenktlich um genau **3.15** Uhr – im Bereich des **48 PzK** – unter einem gewaltigen Feuerschlag der Artillerie, der schweren Wurfgeraete u. Nebelwerfer, der Flakgeschuetze u. schweren Infanteriewaffen, die **57 ID** u. die **75 ID**, zum Angriff gegen die sowjetischen Grenzstellungen vorgeht.

Der voellig ueberraschte Feind leistet zunaechst keinen Widerstand, u. unbeschaedigt faellt die wichtige Bugbruecke von Sokal in deutsche Hand. Auf den Hoehen ostw. des Bug erreicht die Infanterie die noch im Ausbau befindlichen Bunkerstellungen, ohne auch hier auf nennenswerten Widerstand zu stossen. Von einigen sich zach verteidigenden Bunkern abgesehen. Gegen **5.00** Uhr ist diese Bunkerlinie jedenfalls bereits durchstossen u. der Sokalberg genommen.

Die erste Luftaufklaerung meldet zurueckgehende Feindkolonnen. Bei diesen feindl. Einheiten handelt es sich um . . . [see text]

Bis um **10.00** Uhr hat der Angriff der beiden Inf.-Diven. weiter gute Fortschritte gemacht.

Um die Ueberraschung des Gegners wie auch die ersten Erfolge auszunutzen, haelt das Korps den Zeitpunkt fuer gekommen, die Freigabe der **11 PD** fuer einen

²⁷⁷ **Note:** From Glantz's map volume it appears that this "see-saw battle" took place on **23.6.41**, not on *Barbarossatag*, as Kirchubel seems to imply.

²⁷⁸ **Note:** **PzRgt 15** did not see action on *Barbarossatag*, but this account includes an *amazing anecdote*, which I can relate in full!

Stoss in die Tiefe des Feindes zu erbitten. Der Bitte wird entsprochen, u. mit der Aufkl.Abt. an der Spitze ueberschreitet die **11 PD** ab 15.00 Uhr bei Sokal den Bug.

Da sich zu dieser Zeit noch einige Feindbunker behaupten, liegt die Vormarschstrasse teilweise noch unter gezieltem feindl. Feuer. Doch unbeirrt von dieser Feindeinwirkung geht's vorwaerts.

Die Infanterie, bei der sich mittlerweile die ganz aussergewoehnlichen Anstrengungen dieses 1.Kriegstages mehr u. mehr bemerkbar machen, bleibt schliesslich bei *sich versteifendem Feindwiderstand* gegen Abend liegen.

Das aber ist der Augenblick, wo erstmalig auch wieder das **PzRgt 15** auf den Plan tritt und, sich entfaltend, auf breiter Front vorgeht. Doch bis auf einiges Geplaenkel mit russ. Infanterie gibt es von diesem 1.Kriegstag des Rgts. . . ***nichts Sonderliches*** zu berichten. Lediglich fuer den als Kradmelder eingesetzten Uffz. Alfred Höckendorf der **4./15** ist dieser **22.6.1941** ein besonders ereignisreicher.

Dicht hinter den Kampfwagen seiner Kp. herfahrend, erhaelt das Hinterrad seines Krads ploetzlich einen Treffer u. faellt damit fuer den weiteren Einsatz aus. Ihm selbst passiert dabei zum Glueck nichts. Bedauerlicherweise geschieht dies aber inmitten eines riesigen Kornfeldes, das immer noch *voll von russ. Soldaten steckt*. Fuer kurze Zeit verbleibt zwar noch Feldw. Bergander mit seinem Panzer bei ihm, der aber bald wieder zur Kp. nachfahren muss. Dann ist Höckendorf allein u. um ihn die Russen, die die deutschen Kampfwagen an sich vorbeifahren gelassen haben, ohne sich zu zeigen.

Es dauert auch gar nicht lange, da tauchen die ersten Feindsoldaten auf, mit denen sich Höckendorf ***in unerbittlichen Mann-gegen-Mann-Kaempfen ausein-andersetzen hat***. Dabei gelingt es ihm, die ersten Gefangenen zu machen u. auch einen Russen, der als Nahkaempfer auf Feldw. Berganders Panzer aufgesprungen war, herunterzuschliessen. Obwohl ihm das Glueck hier zur Seite steht, so gilt es doch fuer ihn, schnellstens in die sichere Naehue eigener Leute zu kommen. Die Stellungen der deutschen Infanterie liegen ungefaehr 1 km zurueck, u. das ist in dieser Situation ein verteufelt weiter Weg. Doch was hilfts. Er muss hin, u. so stolpert er los, seine ersten 3 Gefangenen als Schild vor sich hertreibend. [!]

Immer neue feindl. Soldaten tauchen auf, welche er z.T. entwaffnen u. gefangen nehmen kann. Schon sind es 6, u. je weiter er zurueckgeht, werden es immer mehr u. mehr. [!]

Als er letztlich vor den Schuetzenloechern der Infanterie aufkreuzt, da war die Zahl seiner Gefangenen auf etwa 40 angewachsen u. das Erstaunen ueber diese Leistung i.A. verstaendlicherweise gross.

Ungefaehr 10 weitere Russen, die den Kampf einer Gefangenschaft vorgezogen haben, blieben als Tote auf dem Weg Höckendorf's zurueck.

An diesem ersten Kriegstag fiel der ebenfalls mit Höckendorf als Kradmelder eingesetzte Leo Prause. Er erhielt einen Bauchschuss, an welchem er kurz danach verstarb.

Gegen **23.00** Uhr . . . als die vordersten Teile der **11 PD** angehalten werden, steht das **PzRgt 15** westl. von Stojanow, **25 km** im Feindesland, u. igelt sich ein. Ganz allgemein verlaeuft diese erste Russlandnacht ruhig.

23.6.41:

Schon um **3.30** Uhr Antreten zum weiteren Angriff nach Osten. Mit der I.Abt. an der Spitze wird Stojanow genommen u. werden dabei auch *die ersten Feindpanzer abgeschossen*. Um **5.30** Uhr geht's bereits weiter weiter u. marschieret die **11 PD** mit dem **PzRgt 15** an der Spitze auf Radziechow zu. . .

[**Note:** What follows is detailed description of the *Panzerschlacht von Radziechow* – and first encounter w/ **KV** tanks!]

Als dann gegen Nachmittag des **23.6.** diese erste grosse Bewahrungsprobe des Rgts. im Russlandfeldzug dem Ende entgegengeht u. der Gegner unter grossen Verlusten nach Sueden zurueckgeworfen wird, bleiben **46** seiner Panzer vernichtet auf dem Schlachtfeld von Radzeichow zurueck. An diesem Ergebnis mit beteiligt war auch die Flak-Abt. der Div.

Seitens des Rgts. hatte man neben Feldw. Albrecht auch den Verlust eines Kommandanten von einem Wagen der 6.Kp. zu beklagen. Auch fiel hier Gefr. Pyka der **4./15**, der bei Untersuchen eines abgeschossenen Feindpanzers von einem verwundeten Russen aus diesem Panzer mit dessen Pistole erschossen wurde.²⁷⁹

Wie spaeter bekannt wird, befehligte ein Sohn des Generalissimus Stalin jene russ. Panzerarmada. . .

Waehrend das **PzRgt 15** nach der Panzerschlacht noch bei Radziechow verweilt, um erst am Abend ostw. weiterzuziehen, gewinnt das verst. **Schtz.-Rgt. 110** mit der **2./PzRgt 15** an der Spitze inzwischen Szczurowice u. bildet dort einen Brueckenkopf. Die Styr-Bruecke ist hier zerstoert. Dennoch ist damit der erste Auftrag der **11 PD** erfuellt.

(G.W. Schrodek, *Ihr Glaube galt dem Vaterland*, 123-28)

--11 Panzer Division Operations / Kradschtz.-Btl. 61/ H.J. v. Hoffgarten & E. Lingenthal:

[**Note:** v. Hoffgarten commanded a motorcycle coy; Lingenthal was a coy cdr in a tank battalion in **11 PD**.]

Information about the enemy:

²⁷⁹ **Note:** So, despite battling the heavy Soviet **KV** tanks, **PzRgt 15** only lost one or two of its own tanks?

After the **11 PD** had been transferred to the maneuver area at Mielec, NE of the city of Tarnow in Galicia, all the units continued their training until **19 Jun 41**. Even then there was *no information on the Russian army or on the impending campaign*. This was also because the distance to the Russian border was **200 km** by air. . .

Motorcycle Battalion 61 Operations:

Mot.-Bat. 61 arrived at an assembly area in the close vicinity of the Bug River between Sokal – Krystynopol, that is at the USSR border, on **21 Jun 41** after a 2½ day march, which covered **250 km** from Mielec – via Jaroslau – Tomaszow – Lubelski – Rawa Ruska. [See map, p 326]

After the opening of hvy artillery fire at **0315** on **22 Jun 41**, the battalion had to wait until dawn to cross the river on an amphibious bridge. A small bridgehead had been created by other units. Since specifically the **15 PzRgt** was the spear-head from the Bug River onward, the motorcycles were only engaged in smaller encounters between **22-25 Jun 41**. Enemy resistance was *weak and disorganized* during these days. . . It was not until **26 Jun 41** that the motorcycle battalion, as an advance force, met *stronger enemy resistance* in Ostrog, in the Dubno area, following a **90 km** march. . .

Assessment of the Soviet Soldier and of Russian Combat Tactics:

The individual Russian was well trained and a tough fighter. His infantry gunnery was excellent, a fact which was proved by many of our casualties being ***shot through the head*** [i.e., snipers]. His equipment was simple but sufficient. All soldiers wore a summer uniform of ***earth brown***, which camouflaged well. The armament of the Russian infantrymen in those border battles did *not differ much from our own*. Their food was very Spartan and by no means comparable w/ ours. The Russian soldier, of course, was *confronted w/ the completely new experience of facing the professional combat tactics of the German panzer divisions*, using all the important elements of maneuverability, surprise operations, night attacks, and close cooperation between tanks and infantry [and acft one might add.].

The Russian combat tactics in the border battles conveyed the following impression to us. Coys and platoons were *left completely alone and on their own during their operations*. There was practically *no cooperation w/ the artillery or w/ the tanks*. There was neither extended, nor combat reconnaissance. Also radio communications from superior to lower echelons or to neighboring units probably did *not really exist or work*. This was probably the reason why the Russian units . . . were *unable to conduct coherent operations* during the border battles. . .

(Lt.-Gen. H.J. v. Hoffgarten & Brig.-Gen. Edel Lingenthal, “*11th Panzer Division Operations*,” in: D.M. Glantz, *Initial Period of the War*, 318, 325, 335)

--**23.6.41: 11 PD’s first encounter w/ T-34s / Edel Lingenthal**²⁸⁰

²⁸⁰ **Note:** Too bad this combat action didn’t take place on **22.6.41**! Yet I can still of course briefly discuss it.

The advance coy of **15 PzRgt** moved southward from Stojanov on the morning of **23 Jun 41**. Since light Russian tanks were firing at us, the first battalion of **15 PzRgt** deployed w/ two coys in advance. When they arrived at the little hill between Sabinovka and Radziechov, they recognized some **30** or more enemy tanks downhill, which immediately opened fire on them at a distance of about **800 – 1000** meters. Five tanks—two Pz II and three Pz III—were *hit w/in a few minutes*, w/ five soldiers killed and many wounded.

The fire of the German tanks was *absolutely ineffective* in the beginning. Later, the Pz IV fired HE (high explosive) ammunition w/ *delayed action fuses*. This ammunition ignited the reserve fuel barrels above the Soviet tanks' engine compartments, so that some Russian tanks were destroyed. Then this encounter was broken off by both sides. . .

German armor again tried to destroy Russian tanks in the afternoon. To accomplish this they moved against the Russian's flanks. But just as had occurred in the morning, the Pz III gun *did not penetrate the Russian armor*, not even when firing from the flank and at distances of only about **300** meters.

When the Russian units had withdrawn in the late afternoon, we took a look at the destroyed Russian tanks and reached the following conclusions:

1. We had *no information or knowledge whatsoever of this new tank type, the T-34*.
2. This tank was superior to all German tanks fielded at that time in respect to following: armor, armor-piercing capability of the gun, and mobility on rough terrain

This was a *shocking recognition to the German tank and tank destroyer units and our knees were weak for a time*. But soon the Germans took advantage of two other essential differences between Russian and German tanks:

1. In German tanks the commander and the gunner can work independently both w/ good vision devices, whereas the Russian gunner had to *do all the tasks of the tank commander as well*, so that he could only fire his gun or command his tank.
2. German tanks were excellently equipped w/ *wireless radio communications and telephones*. The Russians had nothing like this on their tanks.

(Lt.-Gen. H.J. v. Hoffgarten & Brig.-Gen. Edel Lingenthal, “*11th Panzer Division Operations*,” in: D.M. Glantz, *Initial Period of the War*, 33637)

1.5.10: Case Study 3: German Mountain Troops Encounter Savage Resistance at Oleszyce—1 Geb.Div. (48 Geb.K.)

--Note: Das **49 Geb.K.** befehligte als Komm.Gen. General Ludwig Kübler, der Begründer der deutschen Gebirgstruppe. Ihm zur Seite standen als Chef d.GenSt. des Gebirgskorps Oberst i.G.

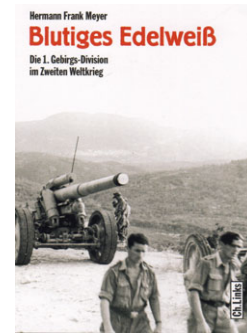
Jodl, als erster Generalstabsoffizier [Ia] Hauptmann i.G. Herre. Zum Geb.Korps gehoerten die 1 u. 4 Geb.Div. unter der Fuehrung der Generale Lanz u. Eglseer. Weiter waren die 125 ID u. die 97 le.Div. unterstellt. . . Die Gebirgsdivisionen waren zu zwei Gebirgsjaegerregimentern gegliedert. Diese Gliederung entsprach den Aufgaben u. Erfordernisse des Kampfes im Gebirge. Die Inf.-Diven. verfuegten dagegen ueber drei Inf.Rgter. Beim Kampf im Flachlande machte sich das Fehlen des dritten Rgts gefechtsmaessig schwer fuehlbar. Die Geb.Diven. waren immer zu Aus-hilfen gezwungen, um sich die notwendigen Reserven zu schaffen.²⁸¹ (H. Steets, *Gebirgsjaeger bei Uman*, 9)

Bloodstained Edelweiss. The 1st Mountain-Division in the Second World War

Hermann Frank Meyer

Blutiges Edelweiß. Die 1. Gebirgs-Division im Zweiten Weltkrieg
(Bloodstained Edelweiss. The 1st Mountain-Division in the Second World War)
(Berlin: Ch. Links-Verlag, 2007)

www.linksverlag.de



The Edelweiss – worn on the cap and sleeve – was the insignia of the 1st Mountain-Division of the Wehrmacht, an elite troop resurrected in the Federal Army (Bundeswehr) eleven years after the end of the war under the same name by former leaders of the Wehrmacht. In these circles and in a post-war Comrades Association of the Mountain Troops (“Kameradenkreis der Gebirgstruppe”) the Edelweiss is regarded even now as a symbol of the “best German military tradition in war and peace”. In honouring this tradition, however, no one speaks about the war crimes committed in the Second World War. How did they come about, who gave the criminal orders, who followed them, why were such inhuman actions carried out? And how was it possible that after the war every single attempt to hold inquiries or even preliminary proceedings were flatly and scandalously turned down so that the perpetrators were never called to account? These are the fundamental questions that the author has raised and tried to answer.

The author has researched not only the judicial proceedings held in Germany, Greece and Italy, the “South East General Trial” (Suedostgeneralprozess CaseVII), submitted to the American war trials in Nuremberg, but he has also studied all the relevant documents of the Wehrmacht. He went through documented memoirs of former mountain soldiers, he evaluated their private notes or diaries and he analyzed documents by military experts and historians writing after the war about the 1st Mountain-Division, published in Germany, Italy, Greece and the United Kingdom. His research led him to travel to ten countries and to consult more than two dozen archives. In Greece and in Albania he visited more than two hundred villages to see the real locations and to question contemporary witnesses. He was often the first German there since the Second World War. Although more than sixty years after the events, the villagers have not forgotten those atrocities.

In his introduction, the author describes the creation of the 1st Mountain Division by the National Socialists and outlines the career of Herbert Lanz, General of the Mountain Troops, who was in charge of the Division fighting the Eastern campaign and who was later promoted to command the XXIIInd Mountain-Army-Corps. He then describes the actions in the campaigns against Poland, France, Yugoslavia and the war of extermination against the Soviet Union (“The 1st Mountain Division in combat from September 1939 to March 1943”).

Having sustained very heavy losses in its push into the Caucasus, the Division was transferred to the Balkans for some “freshening up” where the men were then involved in a major operation against

²⁸¹ **Note:** This may help to explain why General Lanz was not happy with the roll his division had been given for the attack, and why he complained about to AOK 18 on 30 Apr 41 (see, *KTB I. Geb.Div.* for this day).

the partisans in Montenegro("Operation Black: Action against partisans in Montenegro, May / July 1943").

Review by the British author Richard Hargreaves in www.felgrau.net
(<http://www.felgrau.net/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?t=28354>)

I shall start out by saying what Hermann Frank Meyer's Blutiges Edelweiß is not. It is not a combat history of 1 Gebirgsjäger Division. Indeed, it's not really a divisional history, but the history of a division. The bulk of the book is devoted to the division's time in Greece and the Balkans from mid-1943 until the war's end. Above all it is a history of the division's role in occupational policy.

To that end, it succeeds magnificently. It is an outstanding piece of research and scholarship, drawing upon official papers, personal letters, memoirs and dozens of images and maps. Frank does not ignore the division's battles, but in many cases he focuses on the ideological aspects of them, such as **Lemberg 1941**. This, of course, will not be to everyone's tastes, but it's one of the most impressive books on World War II I've picked up. It's also one of the most comprehensive (just shy of 800 pages). If you want the battles of 1 Geb Division, read Kaltenecker's history. If you want the complete picture, read both books.

(Source: <http://hfmeyer.com/english/publications/edelweiss/rezensionen.html>)

--General der Gebirgstruppen Hubert Lanz:

Hubert Lanz war der Sohn des Forstrates Otto Lanz und dessen Ehefrau Berta. Er trat nach seinem Abitur am 20. Juni 1914 als Fahnenjunker in das Infanterie-Regiment "Kaiser Friedrich, König von Preußen" (7. Württembergisches) Nr. 125 in Stuttgart ein, mit dem er im August 1914 ins Feld zog. Das Regiment wurde an der Westfront eingesetzt, wo Lanz bereits am 9. September 1914 schwer verwundet wurde. Nach mehreren Monaten im Lazarett und der Beförderung zum Leutnant am 4. Februar 1915, kam er erneut an die Westfront zurück. Bei Kriegsende war er Oberleutnant und wurde in die Reichswehr übernommen. Nach zahlreichen Lehrgängen wurde er am 1. Februar 1928 zum Hauptmann befördert. Am 1. Oktober 1932 übernahm er die 9. Kompanie des Infanterie-Regiments in Gumbinnen, wo er am 1. August 1934 zum Major befördert wurde. Anschließend wurde er 2. Generalstabsoffizier im Generalstab der Heeresdienststelle Kassel, dem späteren Generalstab des **IX. Armeekorps**. Am 1. März 1937 wurde er zum Oberstleutnant befördert und zum 1. Generalstabsoffizier des IX. Armeekorps ernannt. Am 10. November 1938 übernahm er in Bad Reichenhall das Kommando über das Gebirgsjäger-Regiments 100. Am 1. August 1938 wurde er zum Oberst i.G. befördert, am 26. August 1939 übernahm er die Geschäfte eines Chefs des Generalstabes beim Wehrkreiskommando V in Stuttgart. Ab dem 15. Februar 1940 war er Generalstabschef des **XVIII. Armeekorps**. Für seine hervorragende Stabsarbeit und seine persönlichen Leistungen wurde er am 1. Oktober 1940 mit dem Ritterkreuz ausgezeichnet. Am 26. Oktober 1940 wurde er Kommandeur der **1. Gebirgsdivision**, am 1. November 1940 wurde er zum Generalmajor befördert. Im Januar 1941 wurde die Division für das Unternehmen "Felix", der Eroberung Gibraltars bereitgestellt. Im April 1941 nahm die Division am Balkanfeldzug teil, ab Juni 1941 am Rußlandfeldzug. Am 1. Dezember 1942 wurde er zum Generalleutnant befördert und am 17. Dezember 1942 in die Führerreserve des OKH versetzt. Für die Erfolge der 1. Gebirgs-Division wurde er am 23. Dezember 1942 mit dem Eichenlaub ausgezeichnet. Am 28. Januar 1943 wurde er zum General der Gebirgstruppe befördert und mit der Führung der **"Armeeabteilung Lanz"** beauftragt. Am 26. Januar 1943 war er von Adolf Hitler bei einer Besprechung persönlich beauftragt worden, die Stadt Charkow mit den ihm unterstellten Verbänden auf jeden Fall zu verteidigen. . . Obwohl er offensichtlich gegen einen Führerbefehl verstoßen hatte, wurde letztendlich nicht Hausser für den Verlust des Prestigeobjektes Charkow zur Verantwortung gezogen, sondern General Lanz, der am 20. Februar 1943 durch General der Panzertruppe Werner Kempf ersetzt und in die Führerreserve versetzt wurde, obwohl er darauf bestanden hatte, dass Haussers SS-Panzerkorps den Kampf um die Stadt fortsetzte. . . Im April 1945 stand das

XXII. Gebirgskorps in den Alpen. Am 8. Mai 1945 geriet er in amerikanische Gefangenschaft und wurde 1947 im "Südost-Generale-Prozess" wegen Kriegsverbrechen und Verbrechen gegen die Menschlichkeit zu 12 Jahren Haft verurteilt. Nach nur drei Jahren Haft wurde er wieder entlassen. (<http://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de/>)²⁸²

--**26.8.39:** Wurde die Division mobil gemacht. Im September 1939 nahm die Division am Polenfeldzug teil. Bei der Heeresgruppe Süd stieß die Division aus der **Slowakei** nach Polen vor. Nach Kämpfen bei Krempna und dem San-Übergang bei Sanok kämpfte die Division bei Lemberg. Im Oktober 1939 wurde die Division in die Eifel verlegt und nahm ab Mai 1940 am Westfeldzug teil. Die Division stieß durch Luxemburg und Belgien an die Maas und überquerte den Fluss im Raum Fumay. Bei Coucy le Chateau kam es zu Kämpfen am Oisne-Aisne-Kanal. Es folgten Kämpfe um den Chemin des Dames. Im Juni griff die Division über die Aisne bei Soissons an und überquerte bei Chateau-Thierry die Marne. Es folgten Verfolgungskämpfe zur Seine, zur Loire und bis an den Cher. Im Januar 1941 wurde die Division dann für die Eroberung Gibraltars im Raum Besancon bereitgestellt. Nachdem dieses Unternehmen nicht stattfand, nahm die Division am Balkanfeldzug teil. Über Cilli-Karlstadt stieß sie auf Agram-Bihac vor. Im Mai 1941 folgte die Verlegung in die Slowakei und ab Juni 1941 die Teilnahme am Ostfeldzug. Die Division stieß auf Lemberg vor und durchstieß die Stalin-Linie. (<http://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de/>)

--**27.4.41:** Wurde die Div. nach der Slowakei verladen. . . . Fuer eine kurze Zeit genossen er u. seine Kameraden die slowakische Landschaft, die in dieser Zeit eine herrliche Ablenkung vom Kriegsgeschehen bot. Man fuehlte sich einfach wohl. Am **10 Mai 1941** wurde die Div. nach Krynica verlegt, einem huedschen polnischen Badeort, wo der Stab das Hotel Patria bezog, das zwei prominenten Kuenstlern gehoerte, Jan Kiepara u. Martha Eggert, die sich damals in den Vereinigten Staaten aufhielten. Lanz wohnte in ihren Raeumen u. feierte dort seinen **44. Geburtstag** zusammen mit seinem Bruden Albrecht, dessen **71 ID** in der Naehe lag. Beide waren sich bewusst, dass sie nur deshalb jetzt zusammensein konnten, weil den Angriff auf Russland drohte, der fuer sie u. ihr Vaterland voller Unheil sein konnte. Sie machten einen langen Spaziergang, auf dem sie *ihre persoenlichen Befuerchtungen ueber die Zukunft* besprachen. Die *Angst vor dem Angriff auf Russland* liess sie mehr als einmal nachdenklich verstummen.

Am spaeten Nachmittag desselben Tags kehrte Lanz an die Demarkationslinie mit Russland zurueck. Er wollte sich persoenlich ueber das anlaufende Unternehmen „*Barbarossa*“ informieren. . . . Zwei Tage spaeter fuer er nach Lancut, einem alten polnischen Staedtchen, zu einer *wichtigen Besprechung*. Er traf dort auf einen bunten Strauss an hoeheren Offizieren. Gen.-Obst. Franz Halder . . . fuehrte den Vorsitz bei dieser Zusammenkunft ueber „*Barbarossa*“, die alle hoeheren Offiziere umfasste, soweit sie der **17. Armee** . . . unterstanden. Alle Komm.Gen. u. Div. Kdren. waren mit ihren Staeben anwesend. . . . [See text for details.] Zwei Tage spaeter rief Gen. der Gebirgstruppen Kuebler seine kommandierenden Generale zusammen, um seine Anweisungen zu erteilen. [See text.] . . . Lanz, der als *Grenzschutzsoldat verkleidet* seinen Angriffssektor eingehend erkundet hatte . . . (Burdick, *Hubert Lanz*, 98-100)²⁸³

--**Mai/Jun 41:** Versammlung und Aufmarsch in der Slowakei und in Galizien, **1.5.-21.6.1941**.

²⁸² **Note:** See text in the “*Lexikon*” for more details on Khar’kov and Italy/Balkans.

²⁸³ **Note:** See text, pp 99-100, for details of general officer meeting w/ Halder, whose confident remarks allayed Lanz’ anxiety about *Barbarossa*. However, in conference w/ his corps commander a short time later he expresses his doubts about the impending assault, given the paucity of German forces assigned to carry it out.

Bis Anfang **Mai 41** sind alle Teile der Div. im Bahntransport ueber Wien – Pressburg – Kaschau im Raum um Presov in der noerdl. Slowakei versammelt.

Der ganzen Mai ueber liegen wir in der *landschaftlich herrlichen Gegend* zwischen den **Waldkarpaten** u. der **Hohen Tatra**, wobei gegen **10.5.41** eine Verschiebung von Presov ueber die slowakische Grenze in den Raum von Krynica u. Neu Sandez erfolgt. Wir befinden uns jetzt auf polnischem Boden unweit der historischen Staetten der *Durchbruchsschlacht von Tarnow – Gorlice im 1. Weltkrieg*. Zu unserer Linken liegt immer noch die Tatra, deren **Felsen u. Gipfel** uns locken, deren bekannte Kurorte Zakopane u. Schmeks das Ziel macher Gelaendebesprechung sind. Auch Krynica selbst ist ein Platz von Rang. Weiter droben im Norden wird es dann allerdings mehr laendlichpolnisch, also ohne Komfort. Ueberall aber muten die *rauschenden Tannenwaelder* heimatlich an u. mancher Gang durch ein stilles Wiesental laesst uns den Krieg fast vergessen.

Gegen **Ende Mai** erhaelt die Div. die ersten Vorbefehle fuer das Unternehmen „*Barbarossa*“ . . . Mit einigen Offizieren faehrt der Div.-Kdr. ueber Reichshof u. Tarnograd an die Demarkationslinie suedl. Dzikow, um den Einsatz zu erkunden. Die Wegeverhaeltnisse sind miserabel u. geben einen Vorgeschmack fuer die Zukunft.

Bei strahlendem Sommerwetter geht es Anfang **Juni** nach Osten. In mehreren Kolonnen schiebt sich die Div., der Tarnung wegen wird meist nachts marschiert, durch das Oelgebiet von Jaslo in die Gegend Rzeczow – jetzt Reichshof – u. den Raum von Lancut – Lezajsk.²⁸⁴ Dort trifft der Angriffsbefehl ein. Im Verwaltungsgebaeude des maerchenhaften schoenen Schlusses des Grafen Potocki, wo der Korpsstab Kuebler liegt, werden in mehrstuendiger Besprechung alle Einzelheiten fuer den **22.6.41** befohlen.

An der neuen Front ist es noch voellig friedlich. Deutscher Zollgrenzschutz patrouilliert auf gedeckten, ausgetretenen Waldpfaedchen der Demarkationslinie entlang, die durch einen hohen Maschendrahtzaun von den Russen markiert ist. Dahinter stehen, wie die Hochsitze auf einer Jagd, die Beobachtungstuermchen u. Staende der russ. Posten.

Bis zum **20.6.41** werden die Waelder noerdl. der Demarkationslinie erreicht. In der folgenden Nacht ruecken die Regimenter **98 u. 99**, das uns unterstellte **IR 180** sowie unsere Artillerie in ihre befohlenen Abschnitte ein u. beziehen vom **21. auf 22.6.41** ihre Sturmausgangs- u. Feuerstellungen.

Nur noch wenige Stunden trennen uns vom Beginn des groessten Angriffs der Geschichte. Jeder von uns hat das Gefuehl, *an der Schwelle gewaltiger Ereignisse zu stehen, die unser Schicksal bestimmen*. Trotz unseres Selbsbewusstseins beschleicht uns etwas Unfassbares, fast Bedrueeckendes. Wir ahnen die Weite Russlands, die Staerke seiner Armee, die Leidensfaehigkeit u. Opferbereitschaft dieses Volkes. Wir ahnen es. . .

²⁸⁴ **Note:** Great map of Slovakia & southern Poland at: <https://www.lonelyplanet.com>, when I looked up the High Tatra Mountains! Rzeczow – Lancut appears to be just N/NW of Przemysl. In fact, the map shows most all the locations noted by Lanz for **May/June 41**.

(Lanz, *1. Gebirgsdivision*, 134-35)

--Bis zum **20.6.41**: Der Stab des **49 Geb.K.** hatte sich im Verwaltungsgebäude *des maerchenhaft anmutenden Schlosses des Grafen Potocki in Lancut* einquartiert. Dort erhielt das Korps u. damit auch die **1 Geb.Div.** die entscheidenden Anweisungen fuer den **22 Jun 41**, den Tag des Angriffs . . . „*Ich wuensche Ihnen, meine Herren, u. Ihrer braven Truppe heissen Herzens allen Erfolg.*“ Mit diesen Worten verabschiedete Gen. Kübler die versammelten Div.-Kdren. mit ihren Gen.St. Offizieren. An der Front war alles unheimlich still. Deutscher Zollgrenzschutz patrouillierte tattaeglich entlang der Demarkationslinie . . . Auf Hochsitzen u. auf Beobachtungstuermen sasses die russ. Posten u. schienen das heraufziehende militaerische Unwetter nicht zu bemerken. Bis zum **20 Jun 41** bezogen die [**IR**] **98** (Picker) u. **99** (Kress), das der **1 Geb.Div.** zugeteilte **IR 188** sowie die Div.-Artl. ihre gut getarnten Sturm- u. Feuerstellungen in den Bereitstellungsraeumen.²⁸⁵ Jeder . . . Soldat der Division hatte das *beklemmende Gefuehl, dass er an der Schwelle gewaltiger Ereignisse stuede*, die bald das Schicksal aller entscheidend bestimmen wuerden.

(R. Kaltenegger, *Die Stammdivision der Gebirgstruppe*, 200-01)

--**20.6.41: Gefechtsstaerke** der **1. Geb.-Div.**:²⁸⁶

- Offiziere **264**
- Beamte **4**
- Uffz. **1778**
- Mannsch. **11.590**
- Pferde/Tragetier **5945**

(R. Kaltenegger, *Die Stammdivision der Gebirgstruppe*, 204-05)

--**20.6.41: Personalbestand** der **1. Geb.-Div.**, **20.6.1941**:

- Offiziere **446 / 293**²⁸⁷
- Beamte **73 / 7**
- Uffz. **2598 / 1902**
- Mannsch. **16.320 / 12.482**
- Insgesmt **19.437 / 14.684**

(Meyer, *Blutiges Edelweiss*, 52)

--**20.6.41 (Waffen u. Gliederung):**

Bei Beginn des Feldzuges wurden die beiden Hauptsaeulen der **1 Geb.Div.**, die **Geb.-Rgt**er **98** u. **99**, von den Obtl. Egbert Picker u. Hermann Kress gefuehrt. Zu einem Rgt. gehoeren . . . [see text]

Darueber hinaus wurden fuer den Russlandfeldzug der Div. folgende Abteilungen angeschlossen:

²⁸⁵ **Note:** “Dzikow” hiess das unbekannte Dorf in Ostgalizien, unweit der dt.-russ. Demarkationslinie, in dessen Umgebung die Gebirgsjaeger der [**IR**] **98** u. **99** sowie die getarnte Div.-Art. aufmarschiert waren . . . (202)

²⁸⁶ **Note:** Kaltenegger’s figures obvious differ slightly from those of Meyer’s.

²⁸⁷ **Note:** First figure is “*Verpflegungsstaerke*,” second figure is “*Gefechtsstaerke*.”

- **Geb. A.R. 79**
- **Geb. Pi.Btl. 54**
- **Geb.Aufkl.Abt. 54**
- **Geb.Pz.Jaeg.Abt. 44**
- **Geb.Nach.Abt. 54**
- **Geb.San.Abt. 54**
- **Geb.Jaeg.Feld-Erz.-Btl. 79**
- **Geb.Jaeg.Btl. 54**

Insgesamt gehoerten am **20.6.41** der **1. Geb.Div. 19437 Mann**. Sie verfuegten ueber genau:

- **14842** Gewehre
- **3263** Pistolen
- **600** Maschinenpistolen
- **368** l.MG u. **70** s.MG
- **63** l.Gr.W. u. **42** s.Gr.W.
- **54** Pz.Abwehr-Kanonen (3,7 cm Pak)²⁸⁸
- **36** leichte u. **12** schwere Geschuetze²⁸⁹
- **429** Pkw
- **813** Lkw
- **23** Omnibusse
- **207** Motorraeder mit Beiwagen u. **300** ohne
- **40** Krankenwagen
- **1186** Fahrgespanne

Neben **41 Meldehunden** mussten **6349** Tragtiere gepflegt werden. Auf ihnen wurde Geraet, Muni-Kasten, Gr.W., Granaten, MG-Reservelaeufer u. die Rucksaeche der MG-Schuetzen transportiert, waehrend die uebrigen Geb.Jaeger ihre Rucksaeche selbst tragen mussten.

Die ueberwiegende Teil der Truppe *stammte aus Schwaben u. Bayern*. Ihr Anteil belief sich auf etwa **65%**. Aus der „Ostmark,“ dem annektierten Oster-reich kamen etwa **17%**, rund **7%** aus dem Rheinland, Westfalen u. Hessen u. **7%** aus Schlesien u. dem Sudetenland. Die restlichen **4%** waren in den uebrigen Teilen Deutschlands beheimatet.

(Meyer, *Blutiges Edelweiss*, 52-53)

--**21.6.41**: Am **21 Jun 41** waren die Angehoerigen der Div. in die vorderste Stellung an der Demarkationslinie vorgerueckt. Um **11.30** Uhr erhielt Lanz den entscheidenden Befehl vom vorgesetzten **49 Geb. AK**. „*Reiseziel Dortmund!*“ lautete die verschluesselte telefonische Durchsage, was im Klartext bedeutete: „*Der Angriff ‚Barbarossa‘ beginnt planmaessig 22.6.41 3.15 Uhr.*“

²⁸⁸ **Note:** According to account of Roland Kaltenecker, the division also possessed four **5** cm AT guns. See, *Die Stammdivision der deutschen Gebirgstruppe*, 212.

²⁸⁹ **Note:** The art.rgt. comprised: **36** l.F.H. (10.5cm) and **12** s.F.H. (15cm). See also, G.F. Nafziger, *German Order of Battle. Infantry in WWII*, 469-70.

Waehrend alle Truppenteile Punkt **14.00** Uhr bestaetigen, mit Einbruch der Dunkelheit ihre „*Sturmausgangs- bzw. Feuerstellungen*“ einzunehmen, erliess Lanz einen Tagesbefehl [**14.00** Uhr] im Jargon der Zeit, der an alle Truppenteile ging:

Die **1.Geb.Div. holt den Teufel aus der Hoelle.**

Der Teufel steht vor uns!

Wir werden ihn vernichten!

Es lebe das Edelweiss!

Heil dem Fuehrer!

Der Bereitstellungsbefehl war der Kpen. am **20 Jun 41** bekanntgegeben worden. Die Kp.-Chefs *schworen die Soldaten* – so im Tagebuch des **III./98** – *auf die Notwendigkeit eines Einsatzes gegen Sowjetrußland ein*. Ganz in diesem Sinne rief der Btl.-Chef Salminger bei der Verlesung des Angriffsbefehls seinen Soldaten zu:

Der Kampf [geht] um *Sein oder Nichtsein unseres Volkes* u. [muss] mit der restlosen Vernichtung der bolschewistischen Armee enden. Weg u. Ziel liegen klar vor uns. Mit Verlesung des Fuehrer-Befehls werden die letzten Zweifel hinweggefegt. Ein heiliger Wille beseelt Offizier u. Mann.

(Meyer, *Blutiges Edelweiss*, 53)

--**21.6.41**: Von diesen drei Angriffsformationen [i.e., Army Groups] hatte die suedliche unter GFM v. Rundstedt die laengste Front, aber die wenigsten Divisionen. Sie sollte die Pripjet-Suempfe im Sueden umgehen u. mit den verbuendeten rumaenischen Einheiten suedostwaerts auf den Dnjepr vorstossen. Innerhalb des Gesamtplans sollte die **17 Armee** unter Stulpnagel die deutsch.-russ. Demarkationslinie entlang dem Bogen Lemberg – Tarnopol – Winniza ueberschreiten. Das Angriffsziel fuer das **49 (Geb.) AK** war Lemberg, wobei die **1. Geb.-Div.** den Hauptstoss fuehren sollte.

Lanz studierte in der ihm verbleibenden Zeit das Gelaende u. suchte die gegnerische Staerke zu ermitteln. Er fuhr dazu an der Grenze entlang u. legte die *Ausgangsstellungen, die Vormarschroute, die Angriffspositionen u. die Befehlsstellen* fest. Das Gelaende war leicht huegelig von ein paar Wasserlaefen u. zahlreichen Baumgruppen durchsetzt. Das kleine Dorf Oleszyce mit seinem *mittelalterlichen Schloss* lag mitten darin. Ein russ. Grenz-Rgt. hatte das Dorf *zu einem Bastion ausgebaut* u. sein Hauptquartier in dem Adelssitz aufgeschlagen. Die Russen hatten *zahlreichen Beobachtungstuerme* entlang der *stacheldrahtbefestigten Grenze* errichtet u. arbeiteten laufend am Ausbau der Befestigungen. Die Erkenntnisse ueber Qualitaet u. Quantitaet der Russen waren so duerftig, dass sie Lanz voellig im Dunkeln liess.

Frueh morgens am **21 Jun 41** erfolgte ein Telefonanruf von Kueblers Stab: „B-Tag 22. Juni.“ Am spaeten Nachmittag traf noch eine lakonische Notiz ein: „Bestimmung Dortmund, 22. Juni, 3.15 Uhr.“ . . . Als letzte Massnahme vor dem bevorstehenden Angriff rief Lanz seinen Stab zusammen. Sie gingen noch einmal genau ihre Planung durch. Lanz gab dabei auch den sogenannten Kommissar-Befehl des Fuehrers bekannt. Er erklarte, *er werde diesen Befehl nicht veroeffentlichen*, sondern gefangene Kommissare als Kriegsgefangene behandeln. Anders zu handeln, verstosse gegen die Kriegsregeln u. sein eigenes Glaubensbekenntnis.

Vom Div.-Gefechtsstand kam die Anweisung: „*Die Gebirgs-Division holt den Teufel aus der Hoelle*. Der Feind steht vor uns. Wir werden ihn vernichten. Lang lebe das Edelweiss.“ Am Abend [?] traten die Angriffstruppen zum Vorstoss an. Lanz bezog einen Beobachtungsposten

direkt an der Demarkationslinie, der sinnigerweise in einem Friedhof lag. Um 3.15 Uhr brach *ohne Art.-Vorbereitung*²⁹⁰ der gewaltigste Feldzug der ganzen Menschheitsgeschichte mit lautem Getöse los. Scharfschuetzen erledigten alle sich zeigenden Grenzwachen, waehrend die Pioniere den rostigen Drahtverhau an der Grenze sprengt. Der Angriff rollte. (Burdick, *Hubert Lanz*, 100-102)

--22.6.41: Im Mai 1941 wurde das XXXIX. Gebirgs-Korps der 17. Armee unterstellt. Der Stab unter dem Kommando von **General der Infanterie Ludwig Kübler** zog im Schloss des Grafen **Potocki** in **Lancut** unter. Dort erhielt das Korps die Anweisungen für den 22. Juni 1941, den Tag des Angriffs auf die Sowjetunion. Bis zum 20. Juni bezogen die Gebirgs-Jäger-Regiment 98 (Oberst Picker) und 99 (Oberst Krefß), das zugeteilte Infanterie-Regiment 188 sowie die Divisions-Artillerie ihre Stellungen.

Die Gliederung der Gefechtstruppen der 1. Gebirgs-Division (ohne zugeteilte Truppenteile) sah am 22. Juni 1941 wie folgt aus:

- Divisionskommandeur: Generalmajor Lanz
 - Ia der Division: Major Steets
 - Ib der Division: Hauptmann von Eimannsberger

- Gefechtsgruppe Krefß (Gebirgs-Jäger-Regiment 99) mit 3 Bataillonen
- Gefechtsgruppe Picker (Gebirgs-Jäger-Regiment 98) mit 3 Bataillonen
- mot. Gefechtsgruppe Oberstleutnant Lang
- Artilleriegruppe Winkler (AR 79)
- Feldersatzbataillon unter Major Baumgartner

Gesamtstärke:²⁹¹ 264 Offiziere, 4 Beamte, 1.778 Unteroffiziere, 11.590 Mannschaften, 5.945 Pferde und **Tragtiere**. ([https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/1._Gebirgs-Division_\(Wehrmacht\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/1._Gebirgs-Division_(Wehrmacht)))

--22.6.41: Gefreite Hegele notiert am Sonntag, dem 22.Juni 1941, in seinem Tagebuch:

Sonnwendnacht ist heute. Um 1 Uhr werden wir zwei Horschposten zurueckgeholt. . . [See text.]

An Schlaf ist nicht zu denken, zu gross ist die Spannung in uns. Allenthalben sieht man die *dunklen Schatten der Gruppen u. Gruepchen beisammen stehen*; der nahe Angriff fuehrt sie so zum Diskutieren zusammen.

Es ist 2 Uhr. Soeben gehen die Pioniere unseres Stosstrupps die Strasse entlang vor. Ganz langsam u. sehr leise bewegen sie sich vorwaerts. Ein Gespensterzug. Kein Ton darf laut werden, damit der russ. Posten ja nichts merkt. Gleich darauf erhaelt auch unser Geschuetz den Auftrag, ebenfalls bis an den Stacheldraht vorzugehen, unter Wahrung der groesstmoeeglichen Ruhe. Das ist nun *leichter gesagt als getan*; denn unser Geschuetz ist ja kein MG, das man auf den Buckel nehmen kann. Die Fahrzeuge bleiben hier im Wald u. kommen erst nach, wenn das Gefecht im Gange ist. Also Mannschaftszug.²⁹² Je ein Kasten Panzer – u. Sprenggranaten wird am Panzerschild angehaengt, u. nun kann die Schieberei u.

²⁹⁰ **Note:** No artillery preparation? Confirm!

²⁹¹ **Note:** These figures much different from those of H.F. Meyer (*Blutiges Edelweiss*); believe I should trust Meyer's figures!

Zieherei losgehen. Nochmals wird jeder ueberprueft, ob auch alles richtig sitzt, dass nicht die Gasmaske scheppert oder der Spaten an das Seitengewehr schlaegt. Der Stahlhelm wird aufgesetzt, die Bergmuetze ins Koppel gesteckt.

Wir schieben unser Geschuetz auf die Strasse u. ziehen es dann hart am Rand nach vorne. Bald kommen wir ins Schwitzen; es ist eine muehevoll

Arbeit, das schwere Geschuetz auf dieser Landstrasse vorwaertszubringen. . . Erst als wir von der Strasse auf das Wiesengelaende abbiegen koennen, geht es besser vorwaerts. . . . Ganz verschwommen sieht man den Grenzzaun; **200** m moegen noch bis dahin sein. Dunkle Haufen liegen davor; es ist der Pionierzug. Die Jaeger der **7.Kp.**, unsere Kameraden vom Stosstrupp, kommen nun auch . . .

2.55 Uhr. Noch **20** Minuten bis zum Angriffsbeginn. . . Kein Laut ist zu hoeren, nur bei ganz genauem Hin hoeren vernimmt man leises Fluestern. **20** Meter sind wir vom Grenzdraht entfernt. Vorbildlich ist die Bereitstellung unseres Stosstrupps gelungen; nichts hat der Gegner gemerkt. Ahnungslos stehen die russ. Posten auf ihrem B-Stand. Zwei Mann sind es – sie werden die ersten sein, die fallen.

3.06: Wenn man nur eine Zigarette rauchen koennte. Wolkenlos ist nun der Himmel, u. mit troestlicher Herrlichkeit strahlen die Sterne auf uns Menschlein nieder, aber immer staerker mischt sich das Silbergrau des Morgens in ihre funk-elnde Pracht. . .

Kleine klaren Gedanken kann man fassen in den letzten Minuten – braucht's auch nicht. Mit einem kleinen Gebet bitte ich unseren Herrgott, er moege mir beistehen.

3.10: Noch **5** Minuten. Maskenhaft grau sind die Gesichter der Kameraden. Stur geradeaus ist der Blick, der Druck um das Herz wird immer staerker. Die Pioniere beginnen nun ganz leise, kaum hoerbar, mit grossen Scheren ein paar Gassen in den Draht zu schneiden. 2 Minuten haben wir noch; von weit her dringt der Ruf eines Tragtiers.

3.15: Endlich! Eine Hand hebt sich u. gibt das Zeichen. Wie von Magneten ange-zogen, starrt alles auf die Hand des Stosstruppfuehrers. Und mit dem Hochheben der Hand durchgellen zwei Schuesse unserer Scharfschuetzen die Nacht. Die beiden russ. Posten sinken in sich zusammen. Der Feldzug gegen die Sowjet-union hat begonnen.

(R. Kaltenecker, *Die Stammdivision der deutschen Gebirgstruppe*, 205-07)

--**22.6.41** (Anfang der Schlacht / General Lanz erinnert!):

Im Bereich der H.Gr.Sued war bei der alten oesterreichischen Festung Przemysl, westl. des San, das **Geb.K. Ku**bler mit der **4 Geb.Div.** hinter dem Suedfluegel, mit der **1 Geb.Div.** an der noerdl. Korpsgrenze angesetzt.

²⁹² **Note:** In other words, they have to “manhandle” the gun forward by themselves. Later, Gefreiter Hegele refers to his weapon as an “8-Zentimeter-Geschuetz.” So, I assume it is some kind of mountain gun used by mountain troops. (207)

In den Waldern um Dzikow, einer armseligen galizischen Siedlung, hatten sich die **Geb.Jg.Rgt. 98** (Picker) u. **99** (Kress) gut getarnt, unter dem bewaehrten Schutz der Div.-Artl., sprungbereit gemacht. Feindwaerts des Waldrandes, dicht an der deutsch-russ. Demarkationslinie, im sogenannten „Judengraben“ hatte der General in einem Erdloch seinen vorgesch. Gef.Std. bezogen, um von hier, das kommende Gefechtsfeld ueberblickend, schnell mit dem langen Arm seiner schweren Waffen eingreifen zu koennen.

Noch lag beklemmende Ruhe ueber den Ganzen. Hin u. wieder *erhellte das flackernde Licht einer russ. Leuchtkugel das Vorfeld*. Unbarmherzig rueckte der Uhrzeiger der „X-Zeit“ zu. Kurz nach **3.00** Uhr frueh, loesten sich, wie *schemenhafte Gestalten*, die ersten Gebirgsjaeger vom Waldrand, um im Fruehnebel langsam den Wiesenhang zum Grenzzaun hinanzusteigen. Da peitschten die ersten Gewehrschuesse aus den Holztuermen russischen Grenzwachen. Schlagartig antworteten zwei Gebirgsgeschuetze u. jagten Tuerme samt Besatzung in die Luft. Am Grenzzaun knackten die Drahtscheren. Ringsum lebte Gefechtslaerm auf. Die Schlacht hatte begonnen.

Noch wussten wir nicht, wie lange u. wie hart sie werden sollte. [Doch?]²⁹³ schon der ersten Eindruck stimmte uns alte Landser nachdenklich. Die russ. Grenztruppe, kenntlich an ihrem *gruenen Muetzenbesatz*, stellte sich nach der ersten Ueberraschung, verbissen zum Kampf.

In ihrem heftigen Abwehrfeuer konnte unser Angriff nur langsam Boden gewinnen. Schon brannte der Ort Oleszice. Im Schlosspark wurde wild gekaempft. Rasch stiegen die Verluste!

„*Wenn das so weitergeht*,“ meinten meine Kommandeure bei der abendlichen Lagebesprechung, „*gehen wir schweren Zeiten entgegen*.“ Wie wir laengst wissen, bestand diese Auffassung zu Recht.

Vorerst aber glaubten wir im berechtigten Vertrauen auf unsere Maenner, unsere „Jaeger“, an einen Sieg auch in Russland. . .

(H. Lanz, *Wie es zum Russlandfeldzug kam*, 35-36)

--**22.6.41** (Erste Begegnung mit Mongolen! / Wilder Kampf in Oleszyce): Lautlos u. schemenhaft bewegten sich im ersten Morgengrauen die Angriffsspitzen der Gebirgsjaeger-Rgter. aus ihren Bereitstellungsraeumen heraus u. drangen gegen den russ. Grenzzaun vor. Das **G.J.R. 99** hatte die Hoehe 273 u. Oleszyce Stary zum Ziel, das **G.J.R. 98** die Kuppe 242 u. den Ostteil des vorgenannten Ortes. . . Auf dem rechten Fluegel der **1 Geb.Div.**, wo das **G.J.R. 99** (Kress) auf eine starke russ. Stellung am Forsthaus auf der Hoehe 273 gestossen war, zerriss gezieltes Feuer das Schweigen der Nacht. Und schon lief der Gefechtslaerm die gesamte Front entlang. Gefreiter Hegele berichtete ueber die ersten Angriffsaktionen in seinen Aufzeichnungen:

Gerade, als wir uns mit unserem Geschuetz durch den Draht zwaengen, braust ein Staffel Bomber . . . daher u. das Gedroehn ihrer Motoren gibt erst so richtig den Auftakt zum Kampf. Die ersten Granaten unserer Artillerie heulen ueber uns; sie schieisst auf schon laengst ausgemachte Ziele. Unser Stosstrupp kommt sehr

²⁹³ **Note:** Word cut off at binding during photocopying.

zuegig vorwaerts, Gegenwehr ist ueberhaupt keine da – es ist ganz unheimlich; irgend etwas stimmt da nicht.

Wir mit unserem **8-Zentimeter-Geschuetz** haben sehr schwere Arbeit, mit den Jaegern Tuechfuehlung zu halten . . . [See text for more details.] An einer Strassenkreuzung in Uszkowca gehen wir mit unserem Geschuetz in Stellung u. sichern nach Sueden.

Ein paar Haeuser brennen von den Treffern unserer Artillerie. Weinende Frauen u. Kinder laufen sinnlos umher, allerlei Haushaltungsgeraet unter dem Arm. . . Von vorne kommen etliche Jaeger mit den ersten gefangenen Russen . . . Sind das ueberhaupt noch Menschen? Nein, bestimmt nicht, so schauen nur gefaehrliche Tiere aus. Kleine, gedrungene Gestalten sind in Uniformen gezwangt. Auf den nur tierhaft zu nennenden Koepfen sitzen gruene Schirmmuetzen. Die Gesichter sind zwei riesige Backenknochen, ein breitgezogener Mund mit wulstigen Lippen. Die Nase ist plattgedrueckt u. die Augen, mein Gott, diese Augen, es sind nur ein paar Schlitze, aber aus ihnen blitzt uns unversoehnlicher Hass u. Todfeindschaft entgegen. Es sind Mongolen, wie wir sie bisher nur von Bildern her kannten.²⁹⁴ . . .

Inzwischen, sind ja unsere Autos nachgekommen. Schnell noch ein paar Muni-Kisten zugeladen, einen Kasten Sprenggranaten lege ich mir gleich auf das Trittbrett . . . Stellungswechsel – auf – marsch! u. los geht die brausende Fahrt, hinein nach Oleszyce. Schon zischen die ersten Kugeln um die Koepfe; man hoert sie kaum im Summen des Motors, Brennende Haeuser, eingestuerzte Giebel, herabhaengende Draht u. viele tote Jaeger u. Pioniere; das ist der erste Anblick. . . Die Garbe eines russ. M.G. hat uns gefasst, dass der Wagen nur so scheppert.²⁹⁵ Max, unser Fahrer, gibt Vollgas, u. mit Vollgas rasen wir in die Kurve . . . Jochen, unser Melder, fuehrt uns zu einem grossen Gebaeudekomplex, der von Baeumen u. Straeuchern fast ganz verdeckt ist, dem Schloss mit Park von Oleszyce. . . Das Geschuetz geht gleich in Stellung an der Suedpforte der Schlossmauer. Neben uns liegen zwei deutsche Stugs halb umgekippt. Sie wollten hier bei diesem Eingang in den Schlosspark; der war aber zu schmal, u. bei dem folgenden Wendemanoeuver hatten sie einander gerammt. [**Note: Gefreiter Hegele** goes on to graphically depict the chaotic scene and wild combat in town of Oleszyce.] Im Nu ist der Nahkampf in seiner unerbittlichen Haerte entbrannt, wobei kurze Spaten, Handgranaten u. Pistole die Hauptrolle spielen. . . Still, Grabenstille ist auf einmal – kein lebender erdbrauner Gegner ist mehr zu sehen.

Doch ploetzlich flammte die Kampftaetigkeit wieder auf. Der Div.Kdr. wurde waehrend eines Gefechtes durch eine Kugel an der rechten Schulter gestreift. Das Schloss Oleszyce wurde nach der Eroberung durch die Gebirgsjaeger zum Verbandplatz bestimmt.

Am Nachmittag . . . wurde der Park nochmals zu einem heissen Feuerherd. Es schien, als seien die Roten, die wir schon zweimal ins Jenseits geschickt haben, alle wieder lebendig geworden. [!] Von Baumwipfeln, aus Straeuchern u. Hecken, aus allen Kellerloechern kommt der Feuerueberfall auf die Verwundeten, Sanitaeter u. Aerzte. . . Es wird abend, ehe der Kampf hier zu Ende geht;

²⁹⁴ **Note:** My lord, what a paragraph—so pregnant with so much meaning!

²⁹⁵ **Note:** “Scheppern” = to clatter, rattle.

u. erst unter Einsatz von Flammenwerfern wurde der letzte Widerstand ausgerauechert.

Waehrend in Oleszyce der zaehle Kampf den ganzen Tag ueber immer wieder aufflammte, stiessen die beiden Gebirgs-Jaeger-Rgter. der **1 Geb.Div.** an dem Ort vorbei, weiter nach Osten, in Richtung Lemberg vor. Naechstes Angriffsziel der Edelweissdivision war der Lubaczowka – Flussabschnitt, rund **13 km** von der Sturmausgangsstellung der Div. entfernt. Zuegig griffen die Gebirgsjaeger an u. erreichten gegen **19.00** Uhr das befohlene Ziel. [See text for more details.] . . .

Am Abend des ersten Angriffstages fasste der **Ia** der **1 Geb.Div.**, Major Steets, seine Tagesmeldung an das **49 Geb.K.** wie folgt zusammen:

Der Tag war *ungewoehnlich schwer*. Die Div. verlor allein **18 Offiziere**. Die Truppe, in 16stuendigem, heissem wechselvollem Kampf stark angestrengt, stellte sich schnell auf *die ungewohnte u. hinterhaeltige Kampfweise des Feindes ein*. Gefangene wurde wenig gemacht. Um so groesser waren die Verluste des Feindes. Gefangenenaussagen ergaben, dass Teile der Grenztruppen u. der **97 Schtz.-Div.** vernichtet wurden. . .

Die Rote Armee hatte sich ueberraschenderweise verbissen zum Kampf gestellt. Gegen ihren heftigen Widerstand konnte die deutsche *Wehrmacht* nur langsam an Boden gewinnen. Nach dem ersten Kampftag schrieb Hegele in seinem Notizbuch:

Der erste Kampftag im Russlandfeldzug ist vorbei. *Er war hart, mehr als hart*. Nun wissen wir mehr als gestern abend. Wird das hier immer so weitergehen? Viele unserer Kameraden sind nun schon zugedeckt vom heissen polnischen Boden. Vom Rgt. hat das II.Btl. am meisten bluten muessen . . .

Lange kann ich nicht schlafen; zu stark haengen die Gedanken am heutigen Tag, besonders am *Grauen vom Schlosspark Oleszyce*. Und nun liegt feierliche Stille ueber dem Schlachtfeld an der Grenze. Oben am wolkenlosen Nachthimmel die Millionenpracht der Sterne, auf der Erde die weissen Leuchtkugeln der Deutschen u. die roten der Russen; sie bilden den „Zauber der Nacht.“ Und morgen?

Die naechsten Tagen brachten den Grosskampf mit russ. Panzer bei Jazow Stary . . . beiderseits der grossen Nord-Sued-Strasse von Jaworow nach Niemirow. Vorsorglich hatte der **Ia** der **1 Geb.Div.** die Befehle fuer die erhoehte Panzerabwehrbereitschaft hinausgegeben. Die Pz.Abwehrwaffen der Div. bestanden aus **4 5** cm- u. aus **54** kleinen **3.7** cm Pak. (R. Kaltenecker, *Die Stammdivision der deutschen Gebirgstruppe*, 207-12)

--22.6.41: *Hermann F. Meyer's account of the battle:*

Am **22 Jun 41** traf Lanz um **3.00** Uhr in seinem vorgeschobenen Gef.Std. am Grenzzaun ein. Hier erwartete er „in einem Erdloch dicht am Draht den Angriff.“ Ein Viertelstunde spaeter gingen die Kpen. planmaessig voran. Minuten darauf erhielt Lanz die erste Meldung von der Front: „Es fallen vereinzelt Schuesse,“ lautet sie, „der Gegner scheint *vollkommen ueberrascht*.“ Neun Jahre nach Kriegsende fasste er seine Eindruecke ueber den ersten Kampftag mit diesen Worten zusammen: [see, Lanz's account below]

Tatsächlich war der erste Tag „**der schwerste u. blutigste**“ der Div. bis zum Erreichen des Dnjepr: Unmittelbar hinter dem Grenzzaun kam es zu schweren Kämpfen im Schlosspark von Oleszyce. „*Im Nu sind die schlitzäugigen **Montgolen** in erbitterten Einzelkämpfen mit den Jägern verkrallt. Zähefleischend [snarling] stürzen sie sich mit **asiatischer Wildheit** auf die Jäger,*“ formulierte auch Wilhelm Kühle seine ersten Eindrücke im üblichen Jargon in einer Chronik des **IR 98**. Allein **8** der vorausstürmenden Offiziere fielen am ersten Kampftag, **12** wurden verwundet. Die hohen Verluste wurden schnell mit der „**hinterhältigen Kampfweise der Bolschewisten**“ begründet, die von ihren Kommissaren die Weisung hatten, gezielt auf Offiziere zu schießen. Als ein weiterer Grund wird die *Brutalität der Kommissare gegenüber den eigenen Soldaten* angeführt:

„Unter Führung von Oblt. Spindler (Chef der **13. Kp.**) u. Lt. Göller wurde in zähem u. erbittertem Nahkampf ein Feindnest nach dem anderen ausgehoben. . . Die Roten standen meist mit **von Kommissaren zusammengebundenen Fuessen** in tiefen, ausgezeichnet getarnten Schützenlöchern u. waren gezwungen, sich bis zum Letzten zu verteidigen. **150** Tote oder schwerverwundete Bolschewisten bedeckten nach Abschluss des Kampfes das Feld. Gefangene wurden bei dem ersten erbitterten Gefecht keine gemacht.“

Auch Lanz wurde gleich zu Beginn des Russlandfeldzuges durch einen Streifschuss an der Schulter verletzt. Durch den Blutverlust geschwächt, war er zusammengebrochen. Zuvor war er noch in eine frisch ausgeschachtete Grube gestiegen, um den darin aufgereihten ersten Toten der Div. „*seine Ehre zu erweisen.*“ Sie hatten alle der von Oblt. Spindler geführten **13./IR 98** angehört, darunter der Skiweltmeister Willy Walch aus Stuben am Arlberg. Offensichtlich hatten die Geb.Jäger unterschätzt, wie hartnäckig der Gegner sich verteidigen würde: „Die Truppe musste sich nach den Erfahrungen u. Gewohnheiten der Frankreich- u. Jugoslawien-Feldzüge erst an einen so zähen u. gewandten Feind, als welcher sich der Russe herausgestellt hatte, gewöhnen,“ lautete eine Erklärung für die vielen Toten u. Verwundeten.

Hier bestätigte sich aber sicher auch Lanz' *Demarche bei Kübler*, den er am **30 Apr 41** vergeblich um „*eine andere, bessere Verwendung*“ seiner Div. gebeten hatte: Die für den Gebirgskampf geschulten u. ausgerüsteten Jäger verfügten **nicht ueber die gleiche Ausrüstung u. Ausbildung** wie gewöhnliche Inf.-Divisionen.

(Meyer, *Blutiges Edelweiss*, 53-54)

--22.6.41: General Lanz's account of the battle:

Lautlos u. schemenhaft bewegen sich im ersten Morgenrauen die Angriffsspitzen der Regimenter aus den Waldraendern heraus gegen den russ. Grenzraum. *Unheimliche Ruhe* liegt ueber dem kommenden Schlachtfeld. Ein unvergesslicher Eindruck auf dem vorgeschobenen Div.-Gef.Std. im sogenannten **Judengraben**, unmittelbar am feindl. Zaun.

Dann bricht ploetzlich das Feuer auf dem rechten Fluegel los, wo das **IR 99** auf eine starke russ. Stellung am Forsthaus auf der Hoehe 273 gestossen ist. Und schon laeuft der Gefechtslaerm die ganze Front entlang, als die **98er** das russ. Hindernis mit Sprengladungen beseitigen. Noch ist es nicht Tag, der ***Nebel kriecht langsam ueber die nassen Wiesen***, da naechern sich die ersten Jaeger dem in ***Baumgruppen versteckten Oleszyce***. Es ist das Zeichen fuer unsere Artillerie, das wohl vorbereitete Feuer zu eroeffnen. Sofort antwortet der Gegner. Als es hell wird, ist die Grenzschlacht in *vollem Gang*. Offenbar ist der Feind fuers erste ueberrascht. Aber er *fasst sich schnell* u. leistet nun einen uns bislang *unbekannten Widerstand* (**97. Schtz.-Div.** u. Teile eines *asiatischen Grenzwachkorps*).

Die Pioniere unter Oblt. Mugler stuermen den Schlosspark in Oleszyce, wo die *schlitzaeuigen Mongolen* erbittert kaempfen. Von den hoehen Baeumen u. aus dem schon brennenden Schloss feuern ihre Scharfschuetzen auf jede Bewegung. Fuer den verwundeten Mugler uebernimmt Kopp von sich aus das Kommando. Der ganze Ort brennt. Ueberall wogt der Kampf. *Sturmgeschuetze* u. **2-cm Kanonen** helfen den Jaegern muehsam vorwaerts. *Die Verluste sind erheblich*. Aber wir setzen uns durch, *Haus fuer Haus wird genommen*. Nach Wegnahme der befestigten Hoehe 273 stoest das **IR 99** auf Lipina vor u. nimmt Zalesie.

Die **98er** erobern Oleszyce, treiben einen Stosskeil auf die Lubaczowka vor u. drehen mit dem linken Fluegel an der Div.-Grenze entlang auf Lubaczow ein, wo der rechte Fluegel der **71 ID** unter Fuehrung des *Major Dr. Lanz* mit den Gebirgsjaeger Schritt gehalten hat. Waehrenddessen ist das **IR 188** rechts neben den **99er** ueber Wola Milkowska angetreten u. hat die *ausgedehnten Waelder* suedl. davon gesaubert. Die *Radfahr-Kp. 99* ist auf Zapatowska vorgestossen u. haelt dort die Bruecke ueber den Bach offen.

Bis zum Mittag ist der *Widerstand auf der ganzen Front gebrochen*. Aber die Haerte des Kampfes u. die beiderseitigen Verluste sprechen eine eindringliche Sprache. *Die Zeiten von Frankreich u. Jugoslawien sind vorbei*. Schon nach diesem ersten Begegnungstag besteht *kein Zweifel* mehr, was uns bevorsteht. *Es geht hart auf hart, es geht aufs Ganze*. Wider Erwarten bleibt die Nacht ruhig. Gott sei Dank, denn ruhe tut not. Ein sternklarer, milder Sommernachtshimmel woelbt sich feierlich ueber dem Gefechtsfeld. Der Feind *schanzt* drueben am Waldrand. Was wird der naechste Tag bringen?

(Lanz, *I. Gebirgsdivision*, 136)

--22.6.41: *Charles Burdick's biographical account of the battle:*

Lanz hatte sich auf die Operation gut vorbereitet. Das erste Ziel war Oleszyce, ein enges Strassendorf mit dem Schloss u. einem Park in seinem Ostteil. Zwei Hoehen, mit **273** auf der einen Seite u. **242** auf der anderen Seite bezeichnet, beherrschten das Dorf. Lanz hatte Oberst Hermann Kress u. sein **Geb.-Jg.-Rgt. 99** fuer die Hoehe **273** eingesetzt u. Oberst Egbert Picker u. das **Geb.-Jg.-Rgt. 98** fuer die andere Hoehe. Er legte die Zwillingstuerme der Dorfkirche als Trennungslinie zwischen den beiden Rgtern. fest. Waehrend die Truppe ueber die

Grenze vordrang, eröffnete die Artillerie das Feuer,²⁹⁶ u. eine Bomberstaffel von Heinkel 111s flog ueber sie hinweg. Der ohrenbetaubende Laerm leitete wuerdig den Sonntagmorgen ein.

Es war klar, dass der *Angriff die Russen ueberrascht hatte*. Sie ergriffen keinerlei sofortige Verteidigungsmassnahmen, so dass die Deutschen eine vor dem Dorf gelegene Bruecke ueberschreiten konnten. Als die Angreifer aber in das Dorf eindringen, *aenderte sich das Bild*. Die zur Verteidigung eingesetzte **97 leichte Inf.-Div.**,²⁹⁷ mit einigen zusaetzlichen Gliederungen, war offenbar eine *kampferprobte Einheit*, die die anfaengliche Ueberraschung schnell ueberwand. Das Rgt. Kress, bei dem sich Lanz befand, erstieg die Hoehe **273** unter Verlusten, die anzeigten, mit einem wieviel schwierigen Gegner man es nun zu tun hatte. Lanz musste feststellen, dass die Russen – darunter viele Mongolen – sich teuer verkauften. Von seinem erhoehten Standpunkt aus konnte Lanz beobachten, wie Pickerts Vorstoss auf der anderen Seite auf *harten Widerstand* traf. Er eilte zu ihm herueber.

Als er dort eintraf, fand er seine Leute in einem *Mann gegen Mann-Kampf* mit den Verteidigern verwickelt, das Dorf in Flammen, die Bevoelkerung ziellos umherirrend u. der Nahkampf hin- u. herwogend boten *ein hoellisches Bild*. In dem Laerm u. dem Durcheinander war an eine Uebersicht nicht zu denken. Am Nachmittag hatten die Deutschen jedoch das Schloss in ihrer Hand, u. der Kampf laerm wurde von einer *geisterhaften Stille* abgeloeset. Lanz, der gesehen hatte, welche ueberragende Rolle sein Adjutant Haupt. Kopp bei der Brechung des Widerstandes gespielt hatte, heftete spontan sein eigenes Eiserne Kreuz an dessen Brust. [!]

Kurz danach traten die Russen mit starken Kraefte zum Gegenstoss an. Lanz, der sich hinter einen Holzzaun geduckt hatte, spuerte, wie ein *Geschoss seine Schulter streifte u. den Schulterriemen wegriss*, bevor es den Mann neben ihm traf. Wenn die *Wunde von Lanz auch nicht lebensgefaehrlich war, so blutete sie doch heftig*. Das Gefechtsfeld zu verlassen, lehnte er aber ab. Aufgeputscht von dem Kampf u. von der Sorge um seine Maenner beherrscht, goennte er sich keine Ausspannen. Er eilte von einer Stelle zur anderen, brachte *Ordnung in das Chaos*, gab den Kaempfern seine Anweisungen. Sobald er an einer Stelle etwas geklaert hatte, eilte er zur naechsten. Sein bewaehrter Fahrer Moll war geschickt genug, Lanz ueberallhin zu folgen, sobald dieser zu einem neuen Brennpunkt des Geschehens eilte.

Im Laufe des Nachmittags hatten die Deutschen einen Grossteil des Dorfes besetzt u. konnten *ihren Vormarsch fortsetzen*. Sie konnten zugleich ueber den *hoehen Preis* nachdenken, den sie fuer einen bescheidenen Erfolg zahlen muessen. An der Hauptstrasse durch Oleszyce *hoben Einwohner rasch ein Grab fuer die deutschen Gefallenen aus*. In Zeltbahnen, Ueberzuege u. anderes geeignete Material gewickelt, bildeten die Leichen ein makabres Kriegsdenkmal. Mit einer Gedenkpause ehrten die verschwitzten u. verschmutzten Kaempfer ihre toten Kameraden. Zufaelig erschien Lanz auf der Bildflaeche, verstand sofort die

²⁹⁶ **Note:** Confusing here. So, artillery fire did not begin promptly at 0315 hours, but sometime shortly thereafter?

²⁹⁷ **Note:** Don't recall seeing so-called "light" divisions in Red Army OOB; check Glantz' maps for more information.

Situation u. **stieg in das Grab zu den Leichen**. Langsam nahm er seine Muetze ab u. salutierte vor den Gefallenen. Die Einsicht, dass der Krieg Opfer kostet, stand ihm vor Augen, aber auch die Befuerchtung, dass diese Opfer *viel zu gross sein koennten*.

Kurz darauf **brach Lanz, durch den Blutverlust geschwaecht, zusammen**. Der Arzt verlangte, er solle zum Div.-Gef.St. zurueckgehen, um sich zu erholen. Bereits nach einer Stunde war Lanz *wieder an der Front*. Seine Rgter.stiessen weiter von Oleszyce aus durch *Kornfelder, Waldstuecke u. kleinere Siedlungen* vor, bis sie um **19.00** Uhr ihre Tagesziele erreichten. Der erste Tag war *lang u. blutig genug gewesen*, um nicht mehr als **13-15** km russ. Boden zu besetzen. Als Lanz, uebermuedet, seine Gedanken sammelte, um die Ereignisse Revue passieren zu lassen, konnte er sich nicht der Sorgen erwehren. Wenn auch seine Div. ihre Aufgabe *hervorragend erfuehlt hatte*, hatte der Tag doch **mit den schlimmsten Verlusten geendet, die bis jetzt zu verzeichnen waren**. Immerhin hatten die Russen *eindrucksvollen Widerstand geleistet*. Auch wenn sie unter *enormen Verlusten* zurueckgedraengt worden waren, hatten sie nicht aufgegeben. Es war ganz klar, dass *der Feldzug in Russland mit anderen Massstaeben gemessen werden musste* als die Feldzuege in Polen, Frankreich u. Jugoslawien. . .

(Burdick, *Hubert Lanz*, 102-04)

23.6.41: [An diesem Tage], um **6.00** Uhr morgens, als die Gebirgsjaeger den Gegner gestellt hatten, traten sie auf breiter Front zum Angriff an. *Aeussert hart waren die Gefechte*, was allein daran zu ersehen ist, dass vom Bataillon Fleischmann bei den Kampfhandlungen auf der Hoehe **235**, dicht vor dem russ. Stuetzpunkt Nabaczow, von **5** Kp.-Chefs **4** gefallen waren. Trotz der massiven Gegenwehr der Russen u. der empfindlichen Verluste der eigenen Truppe erreichten die Gebirgsjaeger bis zum Mittag des **23 Jun 41** das befohlene Tagesziel. Ueberall dort, wo sich die russ. Truppen den Gebirgsjaegern stellten, hatten sie sich *zaeh geschlagen*. *Geschickt verteidigten sie sich unter Ausnutzung der hochstehenden Getreidefelder u. dichten Waelder*. Hegele schrieb darueber: [See text for details.] (R. Kaltenecker, *Die Stammdivision der deutschen Gebirgstruppe*, 213)

24.6.-1.7.41: Als ihnen am dritten Kampftag die *ersten sowj. Panzer* entgegenrollten, musste Lanz, der sich *stets an vorderster Front aufhielt*, zu seiner Verwunderung feststellen, dass die Panzergranaten der **3,7cm-Pz.-Abw.-Kanonen** (Pak 37) an den 30-Tonnen-Kampfwagen „abspritzten.“ Daher liessen die Geb.Jaeger, in Erdloechern hockend, Die Panzer *ueber sich hinwegrollen*, um sie „von hinten, durch Aufspringen u. Einwerfen von Handgranaten, zu vernichten.“ . . . Die Gesamtzahl der so “erledigten Panzer” belief sich drei Tage spaeter zwar auf **170** u. am **1 Jul 41** auf **200**, aber entsprechend hoch waren auch die Verluste der Geb.Jaeger. Wegen *ununterbrochener Gefechte* verlief der Vormarsch auch an den folgenden Tagen ausgesprochen *zaeh*. . .

Als die Geb.Div. nach den ersten acht Tagen des Feldzuges vor Lemberg stand, hatte sie neben einer grossen Menge von Kampf- u. Panzerspaehwagen, Geschuetzen u. einem Oellager die unvorstellbar hohe Anzahl von **390-400** Feindpanzern zerstoert. Ihre eigenen Verluste bezeichnete sie mit **843 Mann**, von denen **329** gefallen waren. [**Note:** Advance element of **1 Geb.Div.** entered Lemberg on early morning of **30.6.41**.] Nachdem die Rote Armee die Stadt *widerstandslos* geraeumt hatte, trafen die einmarschierenden Jaeger auf eine *begeisterte ukrainische*

Bevoelkerung, die sie als „Befreier vom Sowjetjoch“ mit Blumen begruesste. (Meyer, Blutiges Edelweiss, 55, 57)

* * * *

1.6: Army Group Center

1.6.1: Opposing Forces & Battle Plans

(**Note:** For German intelligence assessments of Southwest Front – and serious failures of that assessment – see, Glantz, *Initial Period of War*, 184, ff.)

GFM Fedor von Bock:

--Since October 1940, Bock's headquarters had been located in the city of Posen, in occupied Poland. By 21 June 1941, however, he had transferred his headquarters much farther to the east, to the village of Rembertow on the eastern outskirts of Warsaw, the Polish capital.^{cdlxxxix} (*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Section 5.6.2)

--**S. Mitcham:** Bock was a non-Nazi (as opposed to anti-Nazi, but wholeheartedly supported Hitler's military policies [?]. Arrogant and cold-blooded – humorless, vain, inflexible, etc. Made many enemies; had nothing but contempt for civilians, etc. (*Hitler's Field Marshals and their Battles*, 145, ff.)

--**S. Mitcham:** Bock was opposed to invading Russia in 1941 and even refused to issue the infamous Commissars' Order to his army group. His HQ was a hotbed of the anti-Hitler conspiracy after Col Henning von Treschow became his **Ia** (Chief of Ops) in 1941. Bock's personal aides . . . were both involved, as were several others, including Lt. Fabian von Schlabrendorff, who was one of the few conspirators to survive the war. But Bock would not join the conspiracy. (See, *Hitler's FMs and their Battles*, 151)

--**Mitcham & Mueller:** By now {1940/41} even Bock was sick of the excesses of the Nazi regime and went so far as to knowingly tolerate having members of the anti-Hitler conspiracy on his staff. (39-40)

--**Schlabrendorff:** For his assessment of Bock see, pp 57-58. Good quote!!! Try to bring him onto side of conspirators! Bock disturbed by Russian campaign – “er wisse nicht, wie dieser Krieg gewonnen werden solle.” Sabotages „Commissar Befehl.” (58-59)

--**Kirchubel:** The 64-yr-old v. Bock has been described as a “difficult man.” In **Apr 1918** Major v. Bock had garnered the *Pour le Merite* for “reckless bravery.” He spoke French fluently, and English and Russian well. Usually the “stoic guardsman,” he was the *only senior leader to question Barbarossa* when briefed on its plan in **Jan 41**. (*Barbarossa 1941*, 16)

--**Lew Besymenski:** “Alle herkoemmlichen Vorstellungen von einem preussischen Offizer u. Junker trafen auf das Aeussere dieses *langen, hageren Mannes mit den zusammengekniffenen Lippen, dem Monokel u. den golddurchflochtenen Schulterstuecken zu.*“ (*Schlacht um Moskau*, 23)

--**Lew Besymenski:** See his account of Bock's meeting w/ Hitler on 3 Dec 40, when Hitler visited him on his birthday – discussion over Barbarossa. Bock skeptical about coming campaign; does not please Hitler. (p 29) (See also Bock diary entry for **1 Feb 41**: Hitler says, “*Ich bin ueberzeugt, dass unser Angriff wie ein Hagelsturm ueber sie hinweggeht.*” (*Schalcht um Moskau*, 31-32)

--**A. Seaton:** “Apart from those who had doubts as to the need to go to war, only the **60-year-old, elegant, tall and spidery** GFM v. Bock seems to have *openly questioned Hitler’s political and strategic aims*. Formerly an officer of the Kaiser’s foot guards and a man whose main military ability appeared to be in the field of strategy, v. Bock was arrogant, aloof, cynical, vain and unbending. Yet he was on good terms w/ Hitler, of whom he stood a little in awe. When, on **3 Dec 40**, the Fuehrer visited the sick v. Bock to congratulate him on his birthday, the field-marshal learned for the first time of the dictator’s intention to attack the Soviet Union. He immediately voiced his fears. Russia, v. Bock said, was an enormous country and its military strength was unknown; he believed that such a war might be difficult even for the Wehrmacht.” (*The Battle for Moscow*, 31)²⁹⁸

--**Gerbet:** *At no time was Bock a National-Socialist*. On the contrary, “There are indications that he had scant regard for nazi pomp. He was of the opinion that he stood above the raw political and propaganda intrigues of the Nazis. The story is told that during an official reception at the *Reich Chancellery* in 1938, *Hermann Goering*, like Bock a wearer of the *Pour le Merite*, approached him and said that as wearers of Germany’s highest military honor they could actually be good friends. Bock answered w/ an *icy stare* and told Goering in no uncertain terms that the medal at their throats did not place them on the same social level. On the other hand Bock regarded *Hitler* as head of state and supreme commander of the armed forces and *in his diary refers to him almost reverentially*. As a high-ranking cdr during the Third Reich’s early victories in the Second World War, Bock usually concluded his orders of the day w/ ‘*long live the Fuehrer*,’ not ‘*hail to the Fuehrer*’ as the cdrs who were adherents of national-socialism did.” (*Gerbet*, 19-20; also, *Turney*)

--**Blumentritt:** „[He] was one of our foremost military brains. Like Rundstedt and Manstein he had a talent for controlling operations on the largest scale. He was a tall, slender man, a *typical Prussian of the old school*. During the First World War he had been for a time Chief Operations Officer at the HQ of Army Group German Crown Prince, on the Western Front. He was vivacious, often sarcastic, and expressed his thoughts clearly and well. He *did not look his age* and might have passed for a man of forty. However, his health was not perfect, for he suffered from frequent *stomach pains*.” (*Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 42-43)

--**Blumentritt:** According to him (*Stabschef 4 AOK*), “von Bock was a very difficult man to serve, and von Kluge would have been glad to get out of his sphere.” (Quoted in: *B.H.L. Hart, German Generals Talk*, 151)

-- **Note:** For details on front sector held by Army Group Center, GFM v. Bock’s plan of attack, see, *Luttichau manuscript*, **VIII:84**)

-- **Mission** given to GFM v. Bock’s AGC is to encircle and destroy the enemy in Belorussia. Two deep thrusts are to be made – one in the north from the area of Suwalki in East Prussia and one to the south from the area of Brest-Litovsk along the northern edge of the Pripet Marshes. (For details see, Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 116-17; **III:67**)

²⁹⁸ **Note:** GFM v. Bock would see Hitler again, for about an hour, on **2 Feb 41**; the conversation covered the same ground as that two months earlier. Hitler was “breezily optimistic” and regarded the early collapse of the Soviet Union as a foregone conclusion. But v. Bock again brought up the question of strategic aims, and remained unconvinced by Hitler’s answers. . . According to Seaton, v. Bock was the only senior general who questioned the political/strategic aims of “Barbarossa.” (31-32, 35)

--In the final days before “X” Tag, Field Marshal von Bock, Commander, Army Group Center, drove frequently to the eastern frontier,^{cdxc} meeting with front line commanders and coordinating last minute details or changes of plan. His powerful army group, the largest of the three, comprised **51** divisions, **1.3** million men, and more than **1800** tanks; as noted, its mission was to envelop, surround and destroy the forces of Soviet Western Front in Belorussia before moving on its first operational objective, the city of Smolensk some 600 kilometers beyond the German-Soviet demarcation line. After achieving these initial successes, the *Barbarossa* directive and OKH deployment plan called for strong mobile elements of Army Group Center to be shifted northward, to support the German advance through the Baltic and on Leningrad. Like Halder, however, Bock secretly hoped that the momentum of his initial plunge eastward would render such requirements null and void and enable his forces to continue their drive all the way to Moscow, whose capture, he believed, would be decisive. (See, *Barbarossa Unleashed*, Section 5.6.2)

--*Excerpt from Barbarossa Unleashed:*

2.5: Field Marshal von Bock Takes Command

In his study of Bock’s campaigns of 1941/42, Alfred W. Turney offered a vivid depiction of the austere Prussian field marshal who would lead more than one million men of Army Group Center into battle on 22 June 1941:

He was tall, thin, narrow-shouldered, ramrod straight. His sharp features, piercing green eyes, and thin-lipped expression gave him an emaciated, almost hungry appearance. He seldom smiled; his humor was dry and cynical. His arrogant, aloof manner, unbending military bearing and cold absorption in his profession foretold a determination, industry, and nerveless physical courage for which war correspondents would give him the awesome title of “master of the total assault,” as he ordered hundreds of thousands of Germany’s finest young men into the terrifying maw that was the final battle of Moscow in late 1941.^{cdxcii}

2.5.1: His Military Career

Born on 3 December 1880 at Kuestrin, Brandenburg, Fedor von Bock was the son of a well-known general from an old military family. Perhaps predestined to become a soldier, he attended school in Wiesbaden and Berlin, thereafter joining the Royal Prussian Cadet Institute at Gross-Lichterfelde, where he was universally respected for his outstanding accomplishments. He apparently had a flair for such academic subjects as mathematics, history and modern languages; he spoke fluent French and very good English and Russian.^{cdxciii}

Throughout Bock’s early years, the father inculcated in his son the idea of unconditional loyalty to the state and set his professional path on a career in the Prussian military. Bock was taught that it was his life’s duty as a soldier to contribute to the glory of Prussian Germany. The teachings of the father would stay with the son throughout his life. Following service as a senior NCO, in March 1898, at the age of 17, he passed the selection board and was commissioned as a second-lieutenant with the 5 Foot Guards Regiment in Berlin-Spandau. Effective 10 September 1908, he was promoted to first lieutenant (*Oberleutnant*). From 1910-12 he underwent general staff training, and was promoted to captain (*Hauptmann*) in March 1912. During this period, he joined the Army League, where he first met several of the future Third Reich’s top military leaders – Brauchitsch, Halder and Rundstedt.^{cdxciii}

With the outbreak of World War I, Bock saw action on both the western and eastern fronts. During the war he served in general staff positions and as a battalion commander in the field. He proved himself to be a fearless leader of men, garnering the Iron Cross First and Second Class, the Order of the House of Hohenzollern and, in April 1918, the *Pour le Mérite*. He ended the war as a major.^{cdxciv}

As one of post-Imperial Germany's finest soldiers, he was taken up in the 100,000-man *Reichswehr* after the war. Over the next dozen years, he occupied important staff and field commands, rising to the rank of major general (*Generalleutnant*) in 1931. In 1933, when Hitler came to power, he commanded Military District 2 (*Wehrkreis 2*), with its headquarters in Stettin.^{cdxcv} Much has been written about Bock's putative posture toward Hitler and the National Socialist movement. Suffice it to say here that he was never a Nazi. As a young officer on his staff later observed: "[Bock] found the entire business of National Socialism wholly repugnant."^{cdxcvi} During the war in Russia, he even tolerated the presence of a large anti-Hitler cabal among his staff; conversely, he was much too cautious, much too vain and ambitious - enticed as he was by the professional opportunities offered him by Hitler's wars - to ever make common cause with the military resistance to the Hitler's Germany. Furthermore, it appears that he - like many conservative German generals - was captivated by the "Fuehrer's" stunning successes during the 1930s and the early years of the war.

His rise in rank and stature progressed throughout the mid- and late 1930s. In 1935, he was promoted to lieutenant-general (*General der Infanterie*) and became commander of the Army Office Berlin (later Army Group 3). In October 1936, Bock married Wilhelmine Gottliebe Jenny (nee von Boddien), with whom he would have a daughter. During the *Anschluss* (March 1938), he marched into Austria at the head of Eighth Army, for which he was promoted to full general (*Generaloberst*). In November 1938, Bock replaced Gerd von Rundstedt as commander of Army Group 1 in Berlin.^{cdxcvii} By this point in his brilliant career, Bock appears to have made a favorable impression on Hitler. However, he was difficult to work with and could be hard on subordinates; as a man, history has judged him harshly: "Arrogant and cold-blooded, Bock's humorless, vain, inflexible, and irritating personality earned him many enemies, both in the Army and in the Party. He had nothing but contempt for all civilians and did not get along well with his subordinates."^{cdxcviii}

Having played a major role in the operational planning for the attack on Poland, Bock was appointed C-in-C of Army Group North for the campaign, which commenced on 1 September 1939 and unleashed the Second World War. In this first demonstration of what the world christened "blitzkrieg," Bock "proved to be a master of fast-moving operations of large formations."^{cdxcix} For his role in the short campaign he was one of the first to be awarded the Knight's Cross. In October 1939, Bock was transferred to the western front; his Army Group North now renamed Army Group "B." With this army group he took part in the French campaign, albeit in a secondary role. However, he was given the honor of reviewing the military parade through Paris on 14 June 1940 at the Arc de Triomphe and was among the 12 German generals promoted to field marshal on 19 July 1940.^d

After more than four decades serving Imperial Germany, the Weimar Republic and, now the Third Reich, the orbit of Bock's spectacular military career had finally reached its apex. Yet as this anecdote from 1941 - early in the war in Russia - reveals, even a brave and stoic German field marshal could become a bit squeamish when confronted directly with the horrors of Hitler's war in the east:

(*Barbarossa Unleashed*)

--**Jun 41**: Die letzten Tage vor dem **22 Jun 41** wurden zur Abstimmung der einzelnen Teile des Falls „*Barbarossa*“ genutzt. Bock fuhr haeufig zur Demarkationslinie. Am **14 Jun 41** war er zum letzten Mal bei Hitler. (Lew Besymenski, *Die Schlacht um Moskau*, 32)

--**Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa (31.1.41)**:²⁹⁹

4. *Auftraege an die Heeresgruppen u. Armeen: . . .*

b) *H.Gr.Mitte* zersprengt – starke Kraefte von ihren Fluegeln aus vortreibend – die feindl. Kraefte in Weissrussland, gewinnt durch Zusammenfassen ihrer suedl. u. noerdl. Minsk vorzufuehrenden schnellen Kraefte fruehzeitig den Bereich um Smolensk u. schafft so die Voraussetzung fuer das Zusammenwirken starker Teile ihrer schnellen Truppen mit der H.Gr.Nord zur Vernichtung der im Bal-tikum u. im Bereich von Leningrad kaempfenden feindl. Kraefte.

Im Rahmen dieses Auftrags fallen nach den naeheren Weisungen des ObKdo. der H.Gr.Mitte den Panzergruppen u. Armeen folgende Aufgaben zu: [see sections on individual panzer groups and armies of AGC]

(Halder, Franz. *Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. II. Appendix 2, 466)

--**21.6.41**: For locations of headquarters of numerous corps and divisions belonging to Army Group Center see, K.-J. Thies, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg im Kartenbild*.

--**21.6.41** (approx. date): GFM v. Bock unterschied einen Befehl an die Truppen, worin er den Gedanken Hitlers wiedergab.

Es ist Deutschlands Schicksal, das Geschwuer des Kommunismus auszurotten. Noch niemals in der Geschichte befand sich Deutschland in einer so guenstigen Lage. Wir werden diese grosse Mission erfuellen. Noch nie war Deutschland so gut fuer die Erreichung dieses Zieles vorbereitet.

(Lew Besymenski, *Die Schlacht um Moskau*, 32-33)³⁰⁰

--**22.6.41 (Heeresgruppe Mitte)**: Kraefte der H.Gr. am **22 Jun 41**:

9 Pz.-Div.

6.5 (mot.)-Div. = 16.5 schnelle Verbaende

1 Kav.-Div.

31 Inf-Div.

3 Sich.-Div.

50.5 Divisionen

Kopfstaerke der H.Gr.: 1 308 730 insgesamt.

²⁹⁹ **Note:** Here I've carved out the portion of the Army's Deployment Directive specifically addressing role of Army Group Center.

³⁰⁰ **Note:** In his source footnote, Besymenski writes oddly: "Rueckuebersetzung. Deutsche Quelle steht nicht zur Verfuegung." So, can I trust this Bock quote?

Heeresgruppenfront: 500 km

Artillerie:

421 leichte Batterien
329 schwere Batterien

750 Batterien

Luftflotte:

36: Aufklaerer
372: Kampfflugzeuge
276: Stukaflugz.
72: Zerstörer
324: Jagdflugz.
155: Transportflugz.

1 235 Flugzeuge

(*KTB H.Gr. Mitte, RH 19 II/120*)

--*Excerpt from Barbarossa Unleashed:*

--Army Group Center: Since subsequent chapters will follow the 1000 kilometer advance of this army group – along the route taken by Napoleon in 1812, running through the ancient cities of Minsk and Smolensk to the outskirts of Moscow – its order of battle and *Barbarossa* mission will be outlined in more detail. Commanding Army Group Center, the largest of the three, was 60-year-old Field Marshal Fedor von Bock, with whom the reader has already become familiar.^{di} Deployed along a 500 kilometer front from Suwalki in the north to below Brest-Litovsk in the south, the army group was composed of the following forces on the eve of war with Russia:

1,308,730 personnel

50.5 divisions
31 infantry
9 panzer
6½ motorized
3 security
1 cavalry

Artillery:

421 light batteries
329 medium & heavy batteries^{dii}

750 total batteries

The ground forces were organized into two armies (4 and 9) and two panzer groups (2 and 3). Among the artillery assigned to the army group were 17 210mm heavy howitzer (*Moerser*) battalions and four 150mm rocket projector (*Nebelwerfer*) battalions (out of seven on the entire

eastern front). Bock's army group also boasted six of the 11 assault gun battalions in the *Barbarossa* order of battle. 2 Panzer Group, commanded by General Heinz Guderian, was the largest of the four tank groups in the east, with a complement of about 930 tanks distributed among five panzer divisions. 3 Panzer Group, led by General Hermann Hoth, possessed about 900 tanks in its four armored divisions. In total, the army group had more than 1800 tanks, considerably more than the other two army groups combined. Resources assigned to the armies and armored groups of Army Group Center also included large numbers of combat engineers (such as units for repair and construction of bridges), 35 construction battalions, 11 battalions dedicated to road repair, as well as units from the Organization Todt and the Reich Labor Service (*Reichsarbeitsdienst*).^{diii} . . .

The plan of attack called for Army Group Center to destroy opposing Soviet Western Front forces in Belorussia by means of a deep double envelopment directed toward the Belorussian capital of Minsk, roughly 250 to 300 kilometers beyond the German-Soviet frontier.^{div} This was to be accomplished by the two panzer groups, with Hoth operating north of the Belostok salient from the Suwalki triangle, which projected deep into Russian territory; and Guderian attacking south of the salient, out of the German controlled General-Gouvernement of Poland, on either side of Brest-Litovsk, via Slutsk toward Minsk. A shorter double envelopment – inside the pincers of the armored forces – was to be made by General Adolf Strauss' Ninth Army on the northern wing and Field Marshal Guenther von Kluge's Fourth Army in the south, with the objective of encircling Western Front forces inside the Belostok salient. When these objectives had been secured, the tanks and motorized infantry of 2 and 3 Panzer Groups were to push on rapidly to the east – preventing Western Front forces from reestablishing solid lines of resistance along the Dvina-Dnepr river lines, fording both of the river lines, and linking up again near Smolensk – some 600 kilometers from the start line and for Bock's army group the first operational objective of the campaign.^{dv}

As stipulated in the original *Barbarossa* directive, after the Red Army had been routed in Belorussia, Army Group Center was to send “strong mobile forces” northward to assist the drive of its northern neighbor through the Baltic toward Leningrad. Only after the attainment of key objectives in the north – such as the occupation of Kronstadt and Leningrad – was the attack to be continued toward Moscow, “an important center of communications and of the armaments industry.”^{dvi}

(*Barbarossa Unleashed*, 179-81)

--Hr.Gr. Mitte also had six (6) *Sturmgeschuetzabteilungen* (out of 11 employed in the attack in Jun 41; also five (5) *Sturmgeschuetzbatterien* (Hr.Gr.Nord). Hr.Gr. Mitte also had attached 17 **21cm** *Moerser-Abteilungen*, and four (4) *Nebelwerferabteilungen* (out of 7 on the eastern front). For more details see, „*Kriegsgliederung 'Barbarossa,'* OKH Gen St d H/Op Abt (III), Stand 18.6.41, in: *Mehner* (Hg.), *Geheime Tagesberichte*, 500 ff.)

--Soviet Western Front: For quite detailed assessment of Soviet Western Front forces see, Glantz, *Initial Period of War*, 187, ff.

– Soviet 4 Army: By June 1941, Maj.-Gen. A.A. Korobkov's **4 Army** (chief of staff – Col. L.M. Sandalov) was covering **150 km** of the USSR national border on the Brest-Minsk axis. It consisted of [see text]. . . The construction of defensive works in the **4 Army's** first (and main) line of defense – pillboxes and additional field-type positions in the Brest Fortified District – began back in 1940 at the beginning of summer. Its forward line (and by **Jun 41** only it had been

completed; work in depth had not even begun), ran along the eastern bank of the Bug River . . . [see text]. . . Work on the district's fortifications progressed slowly and could not be completed by **1941**. (Aliiev, *Siege of Brest 1941*, 19-23)³⁰¹

--Soviet Western Front: Facing the field marshal's army group along the eastern frontier was the *Soviet Western Front*. Commanded by General D.G. Pavlov, its four armies (**3**, **4**, **10**, and **13**) comprised **671,165** men, **2900** tanks, **14,171** guns and mortars, and over **1500** combat aircraft.^{dvii} Despite its impressive size (and numerical superiority in tanks, artillery and aircraft to Bock's army group and supporting air fleet), Pavlov's front was not the center of gravity of the Soviet deployment, for significantly larger forces were positioned further south, covering the Ukraine and ready for offensive operations directed at southern Poland. Moreover, the mass of Pavlov's forces, including three of his six mechanized corps, were deployed far forward, in the Belostok salient. The enemy's vulnerable configuration, Bock knew, would make his operational mission far easier, for his armies and panzer groups already enveloped Pavlov's forces on both flanks.^{dviii} (See, *Barbarossa Unleashed*, Section 5.6.2)

--Soviet Western Front: Pavlov's [West Front's] forces were very impressive on paper: **678 000** men, **2200** tanks and **1550** combat acft. The **17 MC**, w/ which he would attempt a counter-attack against the Grodno breakthrough [Hoth], was the best equipped formation in the Red Army; it had **1022** tanks, including **352** of the new KV and T-34 types. Pavlov's West Front was not, however, the center of gravity of the Soviet deployment, and substantially larger Red Army forces were located further south, in the Ukraine (the pre-war Kiev Military District), ready for offensive operations into southern Poland. But in reality it was Pavlov who faced the main German force, Bock's AGC.

Pavlov's forces were also in a particularly dangerous geographical position. The Soviet army groups to the north and south at least had their flanks covered (one by the Baltic, the other by the Carpathian Mts and the Black Sea); in contrast, both of the West Front's flanks were open to attack. What made the situation much worse was the particular deployment of the army group: three [**3**] of Pavlov's four [**4**] armies, w/ **3** of his **4** mech. corps, were crammed into the large salient, around the border town of Belostok, that jutted into German-occupied Poland. Belostok was strategically important to the Red Army as a rail hub, and Red Army tank and aviation units in the salient were poised to support a possible Soviet advance into southern Poland. The Belostok salient was some **80** miles deep and **125** miles wide. . . It was Stalin and the High Command who put these forces in the trap at Belostok. . . Thus, Pavlov was a victim, in part, of the Soviet High Command's decisions about where it would deploy its forces. . . Once the war began, Pavlov was in an impossible situation. His signals network was put out of action almost immediately. The HQs of the **3** armies in the Belostok salient could not communicate w/ their divisions, and Pavlov, **150** miles away in Minsk, could not reach the **3** forward army cdrs. He could neither obtain situation reports nor give appropriate orders. On 22 June he received orders from Moscow to counter-attack, but he could not even pass these on. (E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 62)

--Soviet Western Front: After Stalin's central European land grab in 1939-40, the Red Army in Poland stood closer to Berlin than to Moscow. However, the bulk of the Western Special Military District (WSMD – "Special" meaning that it could supposedly fight w/o substantial reinforce-

³⁰¹ **Note**: For a detailed discussion of construction of defenses in Brest Fortified District see, Aliiev, *The Siege of Brest 1941*, 21 ff. Author notes, for example, that by **21.6.41 128 concrete pillboxes** had been built in the BFD. However, only **23** of them were combat ready. (22) In addition to the pillboxes were the field-works located between them, which were to be manned by units of **4 Army**. See text for many more great details, including impact caused by shortage of troop accommodations.

ment) occupied *dangerously exposed positions* in the *Bialystok salient* between East Prussia and occupied southern Poland. Since the acquisition of these new territories signified the high point of Soviet interwar foreign policy, Stalin insisted that Col-Gen Pavlov, cdr of WSMD, fight hard to keep them. Yet these Soviet forces in the massive *Bialystok salient* were ripe for v. Bock's picking. The Western Special Military District (WSMD) occupied a **270-mile** front, most of it along this treacherous bulge. The district had issued its Order **008130** on **26.3.41**, ordering all units to achieve full strength by **15.6.41**, but resources fell far short of good intentions. (Kirchubel, *Barbarossa* 1941, 8, 15)

1.6.2: General Information / Overview of Events

--**21./22.6.41 (Col.-Gen. Pavlov)**: At **9 p.m.** that evening [**21 Jun 41**] while Pavlov was still at the play [in Minsk], a German sapper called Alfred Liskow stole across the Soviet lines. . . [See text for details on him.] He told his Soviet captors that German artillery units along the border had orders to *start shelling their targets on the Soviet side w/in the next few hours*. At first light, he continued, "rafts, boats and pontoons" would be thrown across the Bug, the *marshy river* that divided German-occupied Poland from the Soviet sector to the east. The attack on the Soviet Union was poised to begin w/ devastating force. Information of the same kind was relayed by deserters elsewhere on the land frontier. . .

Col.-Gen. Pavlov³⁰² had never even gone to bed [that night]. There had been an awkward briefing w/ a few staff officers straight after the play, and then, at **0100** in the morning, he had been called to front hq. for a telephone conversation. The man at the other end of the line in Moscow was the Soviet defense commissar, Timoshenko. He was calling to check the situation of the border troops. "Well," he began, "how is it where you are? Quiet?" Pavlov replied that there had been *considerable German activity at the front line*, including a *buildup of motorcycle rgts and special forces*. "Just try to worry less and don't panic," Timoshenko replied. "Get the staff together any-way this morning, because something unpleasant may happen perhaps, but *don't rise to any pro-vocation*. If there is a special provocation, call me."

Pavlov later recollected that he spent the next two hours w/ his senior officers. One by one they reported on their troops, on the *dismal problems of supply, and on their lack of readiness for battle*. Some units had been dispersed on exercises, others needed stocks of fuel or ammunition, and all were more or less *paralyzed by inadequate or poorly organized transport*. The railways were still running on peacetime schedules, and almost every front-line regiment was *short of motor vehicles*. The army could not even requisition trucks, for there were almost *no civilian cars in Stalin's Soviet Union*. Pavlov and his men were still busy w/ these questions at **3.30 a.m.**, the moment scheduled for the German land assault.³⁰³ Coincidentally, it was also the time when Timoshenko called again. "He asked me what was new," Pavlov recalled. "I told him that the *situation had not changed*."³⁰⁴ By then, a dozen cities in the borderlands had been engulfed in flames. (C. Merridale, *Ivan's War*, 83-85)

--**22.6.41 (Tagebuchnotizen GFM v. Bock)**:

³⁰² **Note:** While at the play, Pavlov had dismissed reports he had received from his chief intelligence officer that war was beginning! (83)

³⁰³ **Note:** Actual time of German assault was **0305** or **0315**, depending on location.

³⁰⁴ **Note:** I wonder if these remarks by Pavlov were made at his trial; or perhaps in Timoshenko's memoirs?

Alles tritt planmaessig zum Angriff an. Merkwuerdigerweise hat der Russe keine einzige der wenigen noch vorhanden Bug-Bruecken gesprengt.

Fahrt nach Brest. Mittags ist dort erst eine Bruecke, die Eisenbahnbruecke, zum Uebergang benutzbar; alle Kriegsbruecken sind noch im Bau. –

Dann Fahrt zum **12 AK**, zur Gruppe Guderian u. zum Panzerkorps Lemelsen. Waehrend sonst alles glatt laeuft, sind bei Lemelsen Schwierigkeiten beim Bug-Uebergang, weil die Anmarschwege zur Kriegsbruecke im Sumpf versacken. –

Der feindl. Widerstand scheint zunaechst nur maessig stark. Die Frage, ob der Russe planmaessig ausweicht, ist noch nicht zu beantworten; im Augenblick spricht ebensoviel dafuer wie dagegen. Auffallend ist, dass er an keiner Stelle, ausser nordwestl. Grodno beim **8 AK**, nennenswerte Artillerie zeigt. –

Unsere Luftwaffe ist den Russen scheinbar turmhoch ueberlegen.

(BA-MA, H 08-22/9: Nachlass Generalfeldmarschall Fedor von Bock (*Tagebuchnotizen Osten, 22.6.1941 bis 5.1.1942*))

--**22.6.41** (Diary / GFM v. Bock):

Everything began according to plan. Strangely the Russians didn't blow a single one of the existing Bug bridges. Drove to Brest [Litovsk]. Not until noon was there a bridge, the railroad bridge, usable for crossing there; all military bridges are still under construction.

Then drove to **12 AK**, to the Guderian Group and to the Panzer Corps Lemelsen [**47 PzK**]. While everything else was going smoothly, Lemelsen was having difficulties crossing the Bug, because the *approach roads to the military bridges were sinking into the swamp*.

Enemy resistance appeared at first to be only moderately strong.

The *question as to whether the Russians are conducting a planned withdrawal cannot yet be answered*; at the moment there is just as much evidence *for as against it*. It is striking that **nowhere have they shown noteworthy artillery**, apart from NW of Grodno against **8 AK**.

Our air force is apparently *far superior to the Russian's*.

(*GFM v. Bock. The War Diary*, K. Gerbet (ed.), 224)³⁰⁵

--**22.6.41** (David Stahel's Account):³⁰⁶

³⁰⁵ **Note:** The next day (**23.6.41**) GFM v. Bock noted in his diary: "Lack of culture and the state of the roads are indescribable. The Russians are *defending themselves stubbornly*. *Women have often been seen in combat*. According to statements made by prisoners, political commissars are spurring maximum resistance by reporting that *we kill all prisoners!* Here and there Russian officers have shot themselves to avoid being captured." (225)

Indecisive Border Battles

The war on Germany's eastern frontier began at **3.15** a.m. w/ powerful artillery bombardments at the points of main concentration along the front. The barrage was soon followed by the advance of panzer and motorized divisions w/ the *Luftwaffe* poised to strike Soviet airfields at first light. ***The largest military operation in history was underway.***

Aiding the German advance, Soviet deployments in their first strategic echelon opposite AGC were set well forward, w/ only the most *rudimentary prepared defenses* and, owing to Stalin's intransigence, received no warning of the impending invasion until it was literally underway. Compounding the problem, the strategic deployment of the Soviet **3, 10** and **4 Armies**, which according to pre-war Soviet plans were to absorb an initial German blow, were *heavily concentrated in the west of the **Belestock salient** largely between the joint armored thrusts of 2 and 3 PzGr*, thus greatly facilitating their encirclement. Not surprising therefore, in the early hours of **3 PzGr's** surge eastward, forward units reported "***only very weak or no enemy contact.***" . . .

In similar fashion the commander of the **43 AK** in Kluge's **4 Army**, General of Infantry Gotthard Heinrici wrote home to his family on **24 Jun 41** that the Soviet soldier fought "*very hard.*" Heinrici then concluded: "*He is a much better soldier than the Frenchman. Extremely tough, devious and deceitful.*"³⁰⁷ . . .

On the Soviet side the invasion induced nothing short of *utter chaos* which was most strikingly evident in the Western [Special] Military District opposite AGC. Here the Soviet command structure was rendered ***largely redundant almost from the very beginning*** *owing to a near total loss of communications at most levels of the chain of command.* The complete disarray prevented coherent knowledge of the current situation from being gathered and consequently the development and execution of a coordinated Soviet response. Racked by internal confusion and the growing external pressure, the WSMD's hasty slide towards disintegration was worsened by the Soviet High Command's erroneous adherence to pre-war plans, which called for immediate counter-attacks. Unable to properly prepare or direct these attempts, they inevitably resulted in piecemeal attacks of little effect, but carried out at great cost to Soviet forces.

On the second day of the offensive, Halder proclaimed operations at AGC to be proceeding "according to plan" and talked of soon achieving "***full operational freedom***" behind the shattered Soviet front. . . In contrast to his superiors, GFM v. Bock's impression was a *far more guarded one*. His diary noted the *stubborn resistance of the Soviet defenders prompted by **political commissars** who were spurring their men to "maximum resistance."* He also recorded w/ a note of unease that the *state of the roads* was "*indescribable.*"

³⁰⁶ **Note:** I've broken up David's account, placing portions of it w/ sections in this notebook on **2 PzGr** and **3 PzGr**. David's account is, of course, excellent, but I think he weights his analysis too strongly toward the viewpoint that the Germans were having a most difficult time of it right from the start. This is indeed true in part, but he seems to place more emphasis on the problems the *Ostheer* was facing than on its many amazing successes.

³⁰⁷ **Note:** Johannes Hürter, *Ein deutscher General an der Ostfront. Die Briefe und Tagebücher des Gotthard Heinrici 1941/42* (Erfurt, 2001), p 63.

(D. Stahel, *Operation Barbarossa and Germany's Defeat in the East*, 153-58)

--22.6.41 (GFM v. Bock): Dann kam die Nacht zum **22 Jun 41**. Der GFM notierte damals, dass er um **3 Uhr 15** eine Tasse Kaffee trank u. auf die ersten Meldungen von der Front wartete. Um 7 Uhr morgens flog er zusammen mit seinen Adjutanten Graf Lehndorff u. Graff Hardenberg zu den Truppen, die die sowj. Grenzfestung Brest stürmten. So begann der Krieg, den nicht nur Hitler wollte, sondern auch seine Feldmarschalle. (Lew Besymenski, *Die Schlacht um Moskau*, 33)

--22.6.41: Adamczyk was in **20 ID (mot.)**. He describes elation of him and his comrades at start of attack of **3 PzGr** – artillery bombardment, watching the *Stukas* dive on their targets, etc. Makes for a nice quote! (See, W. Adamczyk, *Feuer! An Artilleryman's Life on the Eastern Front*, 86-87)

--22.6.41: The *Luftwaffe* had flown high into Soviet territory earlier that night. At dawn they swept westward to bomb a string of strategic cities, including Bialystok – Kiev – Brest – Grodno – Rovno – Kovno, as well as the Baltic ports of Tallin and Riga. . . Grodno was under such heavy air attack that the cdr of Soviet **3 Army**, V.I. Kuznetsov, had *barricaded himself in a basement well before first light*. (C. Merridale, *Ivan's War*, 85-86)

--22.6.41 (Cavalry NCO / **IR 432 / 131 ID (43 AK)**):³⁰⁸

At exactly **3.15 a.m.**, in the faint first light of day I was on my way to water the horses at the [Bug] river when the *whole area exploded*. All hell was let loose and I prayed for the strength to hold my two horses. The noise and sight were indescribable, the earth seemed to tremble, all the batteries came alive out of the darkness of the pine trees. Flames shot towards the border followed by the explosion of shells on the other side. All around us were what appeared to be great sheets of lightning, torn through by flames while thunder crashed and boomed. The barrage kept on and on, no one could hear anything else and orders had to be given by hand signal. We were ordered to march towards the river, where special units had already erected a pontoon bridge, over which, although we could not hear them, we could see our tanks rumbling. For an hour and a half the firing continued, and then we could hear the Russian planes attacking our invading troops; many of them got shot down by our fighters. [See text for rest of Kuhnert's graphic account.]³⁰⁹

(M. Kuhnert, *Will We See Tomorrow?*, 71-72)³¹⁰

--22.6.41: Heeresgruppe Mitte (*Tagesmeldung*):

³⁰⁸ **Note:** In his book, *War Without Garlands* (118), R. Kershaw noted that Kuhnert "a cavalry NCO," crossed the border w/ Army Group South in June. But that is inaccurate, for Kuhnert's unit was, in early **Jul 41**, moving "northeast, in the direction of Minsk." (80.)

³⁰⁹ **Note:** While Kuhnert does not note his unit, he does write: "Looking out for our divisional insignia, a *blue square w/ a horizontal white line* . . . Even better if I spotted the number **432** in one corner of the blue square, as that would be my regiment." (73) According to G. Nafziger, **IR 432** was part of **131 ID**. (*German Order of Battle. Infantry in WW2*, 162.)

³¹⁰ **Note:** Kuhnert was promoted to Sergeant (*Feldwebel*) in opening days of Russian campaign. (78) Appears that, by then, he was leading the *regimental rider troop*. (78)

Der Feind wurde von unserem Angriff zunaechst voellig ueberrascht. Erst im Laufe des Tages verstaerkte sich der Feindwiderstand an einzelnen Stellen. Russ. Absicht im grossen laesst sich noch nicht erkennen.

Die *deutsche Luftwaffe* hat sich bis jetzt der russischen *weit ueberlegen* gezeigt.

Es haben erreicht: [see text for details].³¹¹

Zusatzmeldung:

4 Armee: Angriff geht bei geringem Feindwiderstand gut vorwaerts, u. hat in Ausnutzung der *voll gelungenen Ueberraschung* u. auf ganzer Breite bis **06.00** Uhr **4-5** km Boden gewonnen. Bugbruecken bei Koden, bei Brest (Eisenbahnbruecke) *unversehrt* in eigener Hand.

Die Armee im Abschnitt Wlodawa-Strasse Ostrolenka-Bialystok einschl. traf suedl. Brest auf teilweise zaeheren Widerstand. Bis **12.00** Uhr waren vorderste Teile beiderseits Brest vorbeigestossen. Um die Zitadelle dauert der Kampf an. Noerdl. Brest konnten die Lesna-Uebergaenge in Besitz genommen werden. Bug-Bruecken wurden ueberall *unversehrt* genommen.

9 Armee: [See text for details.]

(K.-J. Thies, *Der Ostfeldzug – Ein Lageatlas*, “Lage am 22.6.1941 abds., Heeresgruppe Mitte;“ also, K. Mehner, *Geheime Tagesberichte*, 150)³¹²

--**22.6.41:** As they moved up, the roads became increasingly clogged w/ artillery moving into their final positions. “28s, 15s, 21cm mortars [howitzers], there was no end. They marched across log-corduoy roads, through sand and woods to their assembly areas. In a village jammed w/ SP assault guns, they discarded equipment except that required for action. Vehicles were left behind. Infantry squads began to shake out in assault formation. (*Intvw, G. Knopp*, in: *Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 34-35)

--**22.6.41:** The time was **0300** hours. It was still dark. The summer night lay heavy over the banks of the Bug. Silence, only occasionally broken by the clank of a gas-mask case. From down by the river came the *croaking of the frogs*. No man who lay in the *deep grass of the Bug that night of 21/22 Jun 41*, w/ an assault troop or some advance detachment, will ever forget the *plaintive croaking mating-call of the frogs on the Bug*. (P. Carell, *Hitler Moves East*, 16)

--**22.6.41:** It was at **03.00** that Pavlov, following his general „instruction“ from Timoshenko, sent out the code-word GROZA, which permitted formations to *go over to full combat readiness and for the fire-points in the “fortified districts” to be fully manned*. This order, vague as it was, lost what little utility it had since it *failed to reach many formations*. **4 Army** in Pavlov’s command had been *isolated for some time*, but not before it had heard from the Brest fortress that the *electrical power had gone, that the water supply was damaged and the telephone lines cut*. The signals officer, Col. Litvinenko, sent out repair squads and at **03.30** hours **4 Army** was again in

³¹¹ **Note:** Provides detailed information on advance of army group by late **22.6.41** (although no exact time given).

³¹² **Note:** In Army General Staff map for evening, **22.6.41**, one can already clearly detect the nascent envelopment of Red Army forces in Novogrod – Belostok sector.

contact w/ Minsk and Brest. [See text for more details of actions by Pavlov's command.] (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 111)

--22.6.41: At Koden,³¹³ where the bridge across the Bug was vital for the rapid deployment of German armor, in sector of Soviet **4 Army**,³¹⁴ Soviet frontier guards were summoned from their positions by their German counterparts w/ shouts of "important business." The German assault parties quickly machine-gunned the Russians as they made their appearance and seized the bridge, which was *not mined*. Across the railway bridge at Brest [i.e., the fortress?] also spanning the Bug, German assault infantry and combat engineers cut down the Soviet sentry, machine-gunned the Soviet detail in its guard post and, after a rapid inspection, tore out the demolition charge from the central pier. (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 115-16)

--22.6.41: General Dmitri Pavlov . . . was on his way back from a concert party when the Germans attacks. There was *no one responsible on duty at his Hq.* He himself did not get there until **4.00 a.m.** It was only then that he saw Directive No. 1, authorizing him to put his *forces on alert*. But by that time communications between front hq. and its subordinate units were being disrupted by the German raiding parties [vague]. Orders to units could not be sent or received, still less implemented. Pavlov could form *no coherent idea of what was going on*. He soon lost any real control of his troops. (R. Braithwaite, *Moscow 1941*, 69)

--22.6.41 (Pavlov puts forces on wartime footing): At **0430**, the C-in-C of the Western Special Military District issued his first combat order to the District's army cdrs.: "In view of the wide-spread military actions on the Germans' side, I order: to alert the troops and to go on a *war-time footing*." The words "military actions" were written in *pencil* in place of the stricken "*border violations*." The **4 Army** Hq., which had been experiencing actual combat since **0315**, received the order only at **0500**. (R. Aliev, *The Siege of Brest, 1941*, 97)

--22.6.41: Faced w/ Bock's onslaught on 22 June, which was preceded by a blanket of *Luftwaffe* air strikes that decimated Pavlov's air force at its airfields before its acft could leave the ground, the Western Front's *command and control organs suffered immediate and almost total paralysis*. The Hq. of Korobkov's **4 Army** was *never able to establish reliable communications* w/ headquarters above and below it. Even though Kuznetsov's **3** and Golubev's **10 Armies** maintained tenuous radio communications w/ Pavlov's Hq., they were hardly more functional as command elements. On the first day of the war, on Pavlov's order, his deputy, Lt.-Gen. Ivan V. Boldin, *flew through a swarm of hostile German acft to 10 Army Hq.* outside Belostok w/ orders to organize a *strong counterstroke* to halt the German offensive. Golubev's Hq. consisted of two tents in a small *copse of wood* alongside an airstrip, where the army's commander was attempting to counter the German invasion despite shattered telephones, constant radio jamming, and total confusion caused by multiple teams of German *Abwehr* [counterintelligence] troops operating in his rear area. Through Boldin, Golubev tried in vain to launch a counterstroke on **23 Jun 41** w/ his strong but scattered mechanized corps IAW prewar plans, but w/in days **10 Army ceased to exist** except as fugitives seeking to break out of German encirclements. (Glantz, *Barbarossa Derailed*, 31)

--Das H.Gr.Kommando zog in dieser Nacht erste Bilanz: Die Grenze war an allen Stellen überschritten u. die mot. VA standen bis **40 km** jenseits. Am erfolgreichsten hatte sich der Vorstoss der **3 PzGr** gestaltet, die bereits ueber den Njemen gegangen war u. die sowj. **3. Armee** im Norden

³¹³ **Note:** In sector of **18 PD**, if I recall correctly.

³¹⁴ **Note:** Writes Erickson: "[Soviet] **4 Army** guarded the six bridges over the [Bug] river – two rail bridges, four road bridges, and only the railway bridge at Brest was mined. The others were *not prepared for demolition* and so far no order had come through about blowing up the railway bridge." (112)

umgangen hatte. Damit war ein Keil zwischen die sowj. H.Gr. Nordwestfront u. Westfront getrieben. (*W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 23)

--Erst als die VA der mot. Verbaende ueber die Grenzfluesse oder durch die verfilzten Grenzwaelder nachfolgten, gelang es stellenweise die feindl. Postierungen zu durchbrechen, zu ueberumpeln u. freien Weg nach Osten zu gewinnen. Doch dann trat ploetzlich ein maechtiger Verbuedeter des Gegners auf, den dt. Offiziere u. Soldaten nach den bisherigen Feldzugserfahrungen nicht einkalkuliert hatten: *die russ. Landschaft mit ihren **Waeldern, Suempfen u. Sandwegen***.

Die im Sueden angetretene **2 PzGr** stiess schon kurz nach Ueberquerung des Bugs suedl. von B.-L. auf ein riesiges Sumpfggebiet, in dem alle Fahrzeuge, auch die schweren Panzer, steckenblieben. So erging es auch der im Norden vorgehenden **3 PzGr**, die auf unerwartet heftigen Widerstand stiess, nachdem die *urwaldaehnlichen Waldgebiete* durchfahren waren. (*W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 22-23)

--On the right wing **2 PzGr** crossed the Bug at Brest-Litovsk, bypassing the fortress, which was to be attacked by **12 AK**. The divisions of the two armored corps on this front (**24 & 47 PzK**) *advanced rapidly, ignoring enemy units on their flanks*, which were to be eliminated by infantry later. On the northern wing of the army group, **3 PzGr** captured intact the three [3] bridges over the Neman at Olita and Merkine, the essential prerequisite for the rapid fulfillment of its task. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV, 526-27)

--Worst disasters occur in the center of Soviet front. Within first **16** hours, the German advance had unhinged the *Northwestern Front* from the *Western Front*. Slavishly following Moscow's orders, Lt.Gen. D.G. *Pavlov* ordered counterattacks; in doing so, he shoveled his units into the jaws of the encirclement. (*W. Murray, War to be Won*, 122-23)

--At the end of the first day, German commands were still uncertain about Russian intentions. Few prisoners had fallen into German hands. Soviet infantrymen were found in many instances w/ only **15** rounds of ammunition. Artillery response to the German attack had been negligible, and Red Army armored units inexplicably had not been engaged in significant numbers. (*Luttichau Manuscript, "The Road to Moscow,"* VI: 8-12)

--Artillery preparation: What the **28 RC** (Maj.-Gen. Popov) recorded was similar to an entry in the Soviet **4 Army** war diary:

. . . like thunder from a clear sky, throughout the depth of the frontier zone, unexpectedly, the roar of a barrage. The surprise Fascist artillery-fire burst on those points where the rifle and engineer units building fortifications were spending the night, on sections located on the Brest training ground and on the frontier guards' posts. The most intensive artillery fire was directed against the military cantonments of Brest and especially on the Brest fortress. The latter was *literally covered all over w/ uninterrupted artillery and mortar fire*.

(Cited in: J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 118)

--Anecdote: Through Kobrin, lately evacuated by Soviet **4 Army** staff, and battered by German dive-bombers, walked those engineer officers who had just the day before been inspecting the district exercises. They were searching for the senior officers who were due to attend the exercises, and who might have orders of some kind. In the town, ripped by bombing, *the populace*

listened amazed to the Moscow news broadcast relayed over the loud-speakers, with its breezy keep-fit exercises followed by the news of socialist triumphs in Soviet factories (the same items heard by the stupefied listeners in the Berlin embassy). (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 118)

--22.6.41 (0700 / Soviet 3 Army): [Despite fact war had broken out hours before] some msgs [from Soviet units] talked of calm for a few hours more and even, in the case of Golubev's 10 Army, of a *successful repulsion of the German troops*. By 0700, some officers were starting to report that they had lost contact w/ their men, that *whole units had simply disappeared*. As Pavlov would later tell his interrogators: "Kuznetsov [C-in-C 3 Army] informed me, w/ a *tremble in his throat*, that the only thing that was left of the 56 Rifle Division was its number." The men may have been dead or captured, or, like those of the 85 Rifle Division, they may simply have fled south. . .³¹⁵ (C. Merridale, *Ivan's War*, 86)

--22.6.41 (1 RC / Soviet 10 Army): From the point of view of the Russians on the front lines, the first day of *Barbarossa* caught them *totally by surprise*. In an operational review at the 1 RC of 10 Army, held at 1900 on June 22, the comments were made:

Approximately up to two infantry divisions of the enemy supported by artillery and aviation at 0500 of June 22, 1941 violated the state border, overcame the resistance of the border guard units, and continued their advance to the east and southeast. The units of the 8 RD were not able to occupy the forward positions before the enemy got there and they are now on the defensive line Schuchyn – Grabovo – Vorkovo – Konty. During the day there was *no communication w/ the HQ of the 10 Army either by radio or telegraph*. Phone communications w/ the divisions is *frequently disrupted*. Heavy losses in the units are being reported.

This commentary is typical of the confusion and disorientation that prevailed in the units in position to bear the full fury of the German invasion. (Fugate & Dvorestky, *Thunder on the Dnepr*, 144-45)

--*Excerpt from Barbarossa Unleashed:*

6.1: 0305 & 0315 Hours – The Artillery Preparation³¹⁶

The launch of Operation *Barbarossa* was preceded by several preliminary actions of note. In the final hours before the outbreak of war, German special operations forces, belonging to 800 Regiment – the so-called "*Brandenburgers*" – many of them Russian speaking, infiltrated or were dropped from aircraft inside Soviet held territory. Once behind Soviet lines, they proceeded to blow up or otherwise incapacitate power and signal stations, activate German agents, seize bridges vital for German operations (and secure them from demolition), cut telephone lines, and, in general, foment alarm and confusion. Wearing Red Army uniforms, the *Brandenburgers* made for the fortress of Brest-Litovsk or for the bridges over the Bug. Some of the men, secreted across the frontier the day before on goods trains, or concealed beneath loads of gravel in rail trucks, hid out in the town of Brest for many hours before the attack began. At 0220 hours, barely 45 minutes before the start of the German bombardment, Soviet 4 Army, having interrogated yet another German deserter, attempted posthaste to circulate this latest confirmation of the imminent attack.

³¹⁵ **Note:** Both of these rifle divisions belonged to 4 Rifle Corps (3 Army).

³¹⁶ **Note:** Excerpt from Chapter 6 of *Barbarossa Unleashed*; see text of book for footnote details, etc.

The news, however, never got out: German special forces had already severed the telephone lines.^{dxix}

At precisely 0300 hours, 30 Heinkel He 111 and Dornier Do 17Z medium bombers, elements of several bomber wings, droned across the German-Russian demarcation line at high altitude. The vanguard of the *Luftwaffe's* eastern air fleet, the clutch of bombers – their hand-picked crews with many hours of night flying experience – set out, in groups of threes, to strike fighter bases between Belostok and Minsk and at other locations behind the central front. The bombers flew over sparsely populated regions of marsh and forest, their aircrew scanning the still darkened terrain for navigational clues, while ahead of them the first yellow and red hues of a new day marked the eastern horizon. As the aircraft approached their targets – still undetected – they began their descent. By 0315 hours they were roaring in at low level, ready to disgorge hundreds of small SD-2 fragmentation bombs from their open bomb bays.^{dx}

On the ground, in the sector of Lt.-Gen. Geyr von Schweppenburg's 24 Panzer Corps, the highway bridge across the Bug River at Koden, 40 kilometers south of Brest-Litovsk, was vital to the deployment and advance of the corps' armor. As a result, a *ruse de guerre* was concocted to seize it. The Russian frontier guards were summoned by their German counterparts with shouts of "important business." As the Russian guards approached, they were machine gunned by the German assault party, which had seized the bridge by 0310 hours, five minutes before the artillery preparation was to begin. To Guderian's "immense relief," Geyr had thus gained a bridgehead which would ensure his tanks access to Panzer Route 1 – the *Panzerstrasse* leading via Kobrin and Slutsk to Bobruisk.^{dxxi}

As the final minutes ticked away, senior German officers assembled at observation points along the front to observe the spectacle about to begin. General Guderian, Commander, 2 Panzer Group, after all his subordinate corps had reported their troops ready for action,^{dxii} made off at 0210 hours for his CP – located in a wooden observation tower south of Bohukaly and overlooking a bend in the Bug River – arriving there an hour later, at 0310.^{dxiii} From the tower, Guderian could observe the lights of the city of Brest-Litovsk, 15 kilometers to the southeast. The formidable citadel of Brest-Litovsk, however, "with its forts and casemates pointing at the German line like an anchored battleship, lay in darkness."^{dxiv} General Lemelsen, 47 Panzer Corps, drove down to the Bug River with his escort officer to watch his riflemen and combat engineers in their assembly areas.^{dxv} Field Marshal von Kluge, Commander, Fourth Army, and his staff were in the sector of 31 Infantry Division, also close to Brest-Litovsk and just a few kilometers from the Bug. As Kluge's chief of staff, Colonel Guenther Blumentritt, recalled, "We watched the German fighter planes take off and soon only their tail lights were visible in the east. . . . As [zero hour approached], the sky began to lighten, turning to a curious yellow color. And still all was quiet."^{dxvi}

Suddenly, at 0305 hours, thousands of German guns opened fire on the left wing of Army Group Center (Ninth Army and 3 Panzer Group) and along the front of Army Group North. Ten minutes later (0315 hours), thousands of guns began to bellow on the right wing of Army Group Center (Fourth Army and 2 Panzer Group) and along the front of Army Group South.^{dxvii} For the preparatory bombardment, Field Marshal von Bock had assembled more than 60 battalions of *Heeresartillerie* (GHQ artillery), including 15 100mm cannon battalions (*Abteilungen*), 16 50mm medium field howitzer battalions (s.F.H. 18), 17 210mm heavy howitzer (*Moerser*) battalions, and four 150mm *Nebelwerfer* rocket projector battalions. All told, the army group bristled with some 750 batteries of light, medium and heavy artillery, massing its several thousand guns along a 500 kilometer front.^{dxviii}

Although the opening artillery barrage was of relatively short duration (in many cases lasting no longer than several minutes), no one who took part in it – or witnessed it – was ever to forget it. To Dr Heinrich Haape (6 ID), waiting to provide first aid to the assault troops of his battalion, the barrage resembled a “mighty clap of thunder,” the flashes from the guns turning “dawn into daylight.”^{dxix} Artillery of every caliber fired point-blank at known or suspected Russian field positions and fortifications, while shells from mortars and other high-angle fire weapons traversed the dawn sky in arc-like orbits as they sought out their targets beyond the frontier. To Colonel Blumentritt it seemed as if “a miracle” had happened, when the Russian artillery, for the most part, failed to respond: “Only very rarely did a gun open fire from the far bank.”^{dx} *Soldat* Franz Frisch, an artillerist in a motorized *Heeresartillerie* battalion (100mm cannon), took part in the cannonade, recalling that the sustained “drumfire,” as it swelled to an infernal roar, created a level of noise which he found “incredibly uncomfortable.”^{dxxi} “The thunder of guns awakened us at 0315 in the morning,” wrote a soldier from Berlin:

34 batteries are firing. We can see the barrage from the edge of the forest, since we are merely 7 kilometers away from the frontier (Bug). Soon towns are burning, white flares shoot up, the front rages like a storm. When there is Flak fire, gray streaks rise into the sky, slowly drifting away. A plane goes down burning. The sky, at first clear and red, gradually turns purple mixed with green. There is a gigantic smoke cloud behind the low silhouette of the horizon and it drifts leadenly to the right.^{dxii}

Oberleutnant Siegfried Knappe, an artillery officer in 87 Infantry Division, was struck by the pungent odor of pine needles as he wandered among the 180 men of his battery to conduct final checks. The men, he knew, were supremely sure of themselves. “Their confidence was total, like that of a diamond cutter taking a chisel to a priceless gem. . . I was confident the world had never seen anything like them,” he later wrote. Knappe checked the forward observation post. Then, at the designated time, his battery opened fire on a small village across the frontier:

I was not in the front line with the infantry but at a little hill about a half kilometer away, which I thought would be a good place from which to watch the effectiveness of our fire. I could see our shell bursts clearly from my observation post, as well as the oily black-and-yellow smoke that rose from them. The unpleasant, peppery smell of burnt gunpowder soon filled the air as our guns continued to fire round after round. After 15 minutes we lifted our fire, and the soft pop-pop-pop of flares being fired replaced it as red lit up the sky and the infantry went on the attack.^{dxiii}

A veteran of 19 Panzer Division and prolific military historian, the late Rolf Hinze, was struck by the odd juxtaposition of the gunfire with dance music wafting from the radios of the military vehicles:

The tension became unbearably high. Nerves seemed to vibrate. . . A few minutes before 0300 . . . the hum of the motors in the west made the presence of the first German bombers felt. At exactly 0300 hours, they crossed the frontier. [At 0305 hours] the artillery fire began abruptly from all gun barrels positioned along the front line. The all-encompassing tension like that before a storm was discharged in a thundering artillery barrage at the start of the attack. Everyone felt this deafening declaration of intent by a great Army to be a powerful event which would never be forgotten by any participant, regardless of its damaging impact on the peace of nations. We were proud to take part in such an event as a small

cog in the vast Army machinery – an event which would later be regaled by the history books. The relentless forward movement of all units, whether horse-drawn, on foot, motorized, or in the air, this imposing demonstration of numbers, triggered a veritable mass frenzy, all rushing forward. If, in this strange atmosphere, this electrically charged mood, you could even hear dance music from some of the tanks, this produced a rather incongruous atmosphere. The German radio station broadcast dance music all night with rolling news bulletins, for which everyone waited eagerly.^{dxxiv}

Along the front of 17 Panzer Division, northwest of Brest-Litovsk, some 60 batteries (240 guns) were assembled on a front of eight kilometers. At precisely 0315 hours, the division unleashed a hurricane of fire across the Bug – 80-90 meters wide in this sector – against known Russian field positions and bunkers. A post-war history of 40 Rifle Regiment, a component of 17 PD, graphically portrayed the regiment's role in the bombardment:

The air roars. Commands can barely be understood. Our infantry guns fire 60 rounds per gun in 10 minutes. Flak guns finish off the bunkers along the enemy bank. Soon, fires on the other side of the Bug can be seen. At 0340 hours, the bombs from the *Stukas* strike the enemy positions. From 0415 hours, the transport [of troops and weapons] across the river begins.^{dxv}

In the sector of 18 Panzer Division, 50 batteries of all calibers disgorged a furious cannonade and a protective smoke screen.^{dxvii} *Leutnant* Georg Kreuter contributed to the opening barrage with his two 150mm medium infantry guns (s.IG 33). Because the guns' shell fire merged with the general bombardment, it was impossible for him to discern its effect on the far side of the Bug. What he did clearly observe, however, was an unfortunate Ju 87 *Stuka* dive bomber, which dove into the ground after being struck by a shell from a German gun. Such "friendly fire" incidents were far from uncommon on this day, or any other day on the eastern front.^{dxviii}

One of the salient characteristics of warfare in the first half of the 20th Century was the progressive blurring of distinctions between soldiers and civilians, with the latter all too often becoming its innocent victims. In this account from *Obergefreiter* August Freitag (6 Infantry Division), civilians begin to prepare themselves for an uncertain and perilous future:

At 0300 hours, we saw and heard the first *Stuka* units approaching. At precisely 0305, the first bombs fell. . . Immediately afterwards, the artillery also started up. The atmosphere had broken and we could breathe freely again. Then we also heard the first MGs firing. The civilians emerged from their houses, alarmed by this night-time disruption. But they soon realized what was going on. They hurriedly ran back into their houses to fetch things like beds, clothes, chairs, tables, and the like, to hide them in the garden behind the bushes or in the rye fields.

At about 0320 we also received the order to move our position forward. . . Now it was time to quickly limber up the guns and load the ammunition in order to reach the rifle companies, whom we were, of course, there to support. Shortly after 0330 we passed through the frontier. To our left, right, and ahead of us, white Very signal lights bore witness to the unstoppable advance of the German infantry.^{dxviii}

The 10 Panzer Division, a component of 46 Panzer Corps (2 Panzer Group), was held in reserve on 22 June and, thus, did not participate in the opening attack; its artillery, however, was assigned to 18 Panzer Division (47 Panzer Corps) for the opening barrage (*Feuerschlag*). An excellent unit history, published by the 10 PD veterans' organization (*Traditionsgemeinschaft*) in 1993, offers a vivid picture of the preparations required for the artillery barrage, as well as of the barrage itself:

In the late afternoon of 21.6.[41], the observation posts are manned, the computing units move into the firing positions. When evening falls, the *Fuehrer's* proclamation is read out, which begins with the words: "Soldiers of the Eastern Front!" And suddenly all the guessing games that had been going on are at an end, everybody knows that the weapons will be doing the talking once again. . .

Weather reports, known as "Barbara Reports" by the artillerymen, have been coming in every two hours since evening at the batteries' computing section posts. The trajectory of the shells is, of course, influenced by various factors, such as temperature, air pressure, humidity, wind direction, and wind force. When firing blind, these variables have to be taken into account, and so every two hours the computing units calculate all the firing commands for the planned *Feuerschlag* anew. And then the X-hour is announced: 22.6., 0315 hours!

At 0300 hours, the firing commands are adjusted for the last time, there is nothing more for the computing units to do. The guns are aimed and loaded, the battery officers have the handset of a field telephone to their ear; they look at their watches. The artillery commander has reserved for himself the order to open fire. Over on the horizon, a pale light, just a narrow sliver, is very weakly discernible. A quiet shiver, more like a thrill, takes hold of the soldiers standing in the night. The battery officer repeats the words which are coming out of the telephone: "10 minutes more." – "5 minutes more." – "1 more minute." – "30 seconds more." – "15 seconds more, - and 10 seconds, - 8, 7, 6, 5, 4 – battery. . ." He raises his arm and thrusts it down, the command "Fire!" erupts from his mouth like thunder and lightning – a single bolt of lightning flashes across the whole sky, a deafening crash tears through the silence. And then shell after shell speeds across the Bug, rising to a drum fire due to the sheer numbers of batteries standing to the left and right.

Over there, a wall of dense smoke and dust rises sluggishly, blotting out the pale slivers on the horizon. Then suddenly German rocket projector batteries join the fray: howling and whining, whole series of rockets with long trails of fire and smoke sweep across into the inferno. The first rays of sun light up the edges of the clouds and the wall of smoke in a bloody red. And with the first light come the *Stukas*, seeking out their targets, positioning themselves in a row, circling and plunging earthward, dropping their bombs and pulling up again. And behind them, black smoke pours up into the sky again. . .

When day has come and the rolling barrage has ended at the limit of the artillery's range, as the gunners from 90 Artillery Regiment collect the empty cartridges and the ammunition boxes and the sounds of combat across the advancing front rumble like a receding storm, suddenly Russian bombers appear above the German positions, approaching in strict formation, as if on maneuvers.^{dxix}

Nimble German fighters, Bf 109s, from the air field at Biala Podlaska, rose to challenge the enemy bombers, pouncing on them suddenly from behind. Firing short bursts from their 20mm cannon, they summarily shot down one of the intruders; a second bomber was soon hit and broke apart in mid-air. None of the Russian bombers made it through to their objective that day.^{dxxx} (*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Chapter 6)

--Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

6.2: The Ground Attack – Initial Contact with the Red Army³¹⁷

Between 0305 and 0315 hours, the anonymous assault party captured in the photograph, and thousands more just like it, poured across the demarcation line under cover of the protective artillery barrage (and artificial smoke) and began their deadly journey into the unknown. On the right wing of Army Group Center (Fourth Army and 2 Panzer Group), where the frontier meandered along the Bug River for more than 200 kilometers,^{dxxxi} the assault parties crossed in rubber dinghies or assault boats (*Sturmboote*), while armored fighting vehicles, artillery and motorized infantry were soon advancing across the captured Bug bridges. At many other points along the river combat engineers labored furiously to build additional bridges to shepherd troops, weapons, vehicles and equipment to the far bank. In other instances, weapons and equipment were ferried across the Bug, while in the sector of 18 Panzer Division, just above Brest-Litovsk, a battalion of tanks, specially outfitted for the purpose, plunged right through the four-meter deep river and crawled up the eastern bank.^{dxxxii}

On the left wing of Army Group Center (Ninth Army and 3 Panzer Group), armor and infantry burst forth from the Suwalki triangle through heavily wooded and almost trackless sandy terrain. Here the “roads” running east into Lithuania were little more than narrow sandy tracks, many of which had never been crossed by a motor vehicle before; in fact, the terrain was often so inhospitable that enemy resistance, however slight, could not be countered by deployment off the roads. The result was that the long columns of men and vehicles were repeatedly forced to halt, with the many forest fires also contributing to the confusion.^{dxxxiii}

Despite such difficulties, tactical surprise was achieved (as noted) along the entire front. As Field Marshal von Bock recorded laconically in his diary, “Everything began according to plan.”^{dxxxiv} Indeed, enemy resistance was, at first, desultory or even non-existent. As noted in the OKW war diary, the Russian border defenses, during the morning hours, were penetrated to a depth of four to five kilometers along the entire front;^{dxxxv} by the end of the day, German mobile units on both wings of Army Group Center had advanced well beyond the frontier. Many Polish and Lithuanian peasants, glad to be rid of their Soviet oppressors, greeted the invaders with gifts of salt and bread, their traditional gifts for travelers.^{dxxxvi}

Conversely, some of the NKVD border units, and troops assigned to local fortified regions, fought with great tenacity to the last man – a harbinger of what was to come in the days and months ahead.^{dxxxvii} As the day went on, and the Red Army began to recover from the shock of invasion, resistance began to stiffen, with the most horrific combat taking place inside the Soviet fortress of Brest-Litovsk (see directly below, Section 6.2.1). Red Army mechanized units even managed to pull off several ill-coordinated counterthrusts. In the ensuing narrative, a more detailed look will be offered into the experiences of the soldiers of Army Group Center on

³¹⁷ **Note:** Excerpt from Chapter 6 of *Barbarossa Unleashed*; see text for footnote details, etc.

this first day of the war. As is wont to do, the “action” will proceed from right to left, beginning with the activities of General Heinz Guderian’s 2 Panzer Group.

(*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Chapter 6)

--22.-25.6.41 (Western Front Actions): The Soviet **3 Army** under Lt.-Gen. V.I. Kuznetsov, holding the right flank of Western Front, found itself at once in grievous difficulties. Hammered by three divisions of the German **8 AK**, the **56 Rifle Rgt.** of **3 Army** fell back to the SE; the **85** and **27 RDs (3 Army)** also fell back, taking up positions on **23 Jun 41** to the S and SW of Grodno. On the left flank of the Western Front, held by **4 Army**, the **49, 42, 6** and **75 RDs** likewise made to retire. An attempt to assemble **14 Mech Corps** (Maj.-Gen. S.I. Oborin) in the area of Prushany-Kobrin for a counterattack failed. The forcing back of **4 Army** troops put the **10 Army**, holding the center, in a serious position even on the very first day. The **13 Mech Corps** (Maj.-Gen. P.N. Akhlyustin) – short of tanks, fuel and ammunition – found itself heavily engaged, and was forced to pull back. The left flank of **10 Army** was heavily pierced; contact was lost w/ **4 Army** and nothing was known of what was happening in the Brest – Baranovichi direction.

Red Army General Paylov, Front commander, had almost *lost control of the situation*.³¹⁸ On the evening of **22 Jun 41**, he ordered **3** and **10 Army** cdrs to mount on 23rd a counterattack w/ two mechanized and one cavalry corps from south of Grodno, driving north to take the enemy in the flank. The **6** and **11 MCs** and the **6 Cav. Corps** were accordingly placed under Lt.-Gen. I.V. Boldin and formed into a mixed mech.-cavalry group. But only the **11 MC** (Maj.-Gen. D.K. Mostovenko) – attached to **3 Army** – was at the place required. The **6 MC (10 Army)** had first to cover some **45 km**, as must the divisions of **6 Cav. Corps**. On the morning of **23 Jun 41**, only **11 MC** was in position; that morning the *Luftwaffe* caught **6 MC** on the march and the **36 Div.** of **6 Cav. Corps**. Both were badly battered. On **24 Jun 41**, **6** and **11 MC** staged their attack, which exhausted itself on the 25th, when losses, punishment at the hands of German AT and aviation forces, as well as shortage of fuel and ammunition became too much. General Pavlov’s Western Front command began to *break to pieces*. Contact between the Front staff and the armies fighting at the frontier was frequently lost. No precise information could be obtained about developments on the flanks and in the rear. The signals and supply services rapidly succumbed to *disorganization and chaos*; supplies of fuel and ammunition all too often failed. (J. Erickson, *The Soviet High Command*, 593-95)

--23.6.41 (Tagebuchnotizen GFM v. Bock):

Es geht vorwaerts, am besten bei der *Panzergruppe Hoth*, die abends unter unmittelbaren Befehl der H.Gr. tritt. Bei *Panzergruppe Guderian* geht es nicht so glatt. Die Schwierigkeiten des Ueberganges bei Brest, wie beim Korps Lemel-sen wirkten sich hemmend auf den Betriebsstoffnachschieb aus. . .

Kulturlosigkeit u. Wegezustand sind unbeschreiblich. –

Der Russe wehrt sich zaeh. Mehrfach sind Frauen im Kampf festgestellt. Politische Kommissare treiben – nach Gefangenenaussagen – die Truppe zum aeussersten Widerstand, indem sie verbreiten, dass wir *alle Gefangenen umbringen!* Hier u. da haben sich russ. Offiziere erschossen, um der Gefangennahme zu entgehen.

³¹⁸ **Note:** Actually, I believe he had almost lost complete control of the situation! I imagine Stalin would agree w/ me!

(BA-MA, H 08-22/9: Nachlass Generalfeldmarschall Fedor von Bock (*Tagebuchnotizen Osten, 22.6.1941 bis 5.1.1942*))

1.6.3: 2 Panzer Group

--Gen.Obst. Heinz Guderian:

Ab dem 1. Oktober 1928 wurde er dann in der Heeres-Abteilung (T 1) des Truppenamtes (TA) im Reichswehrministerium eingesetzt. Schon 1929 bezog er bei einer Übung eine Panzerdivision mit ein, wurde aber trotz des Erfolges vom Inspekteur der Verkehrstruppen, **General Otto von Stülpnagel**, gerügt, da dieser gepanzerte Verbände über Regimentsstärke für illusorisch hielt. Am 1. Februar 1930 übernahm Guderian als Kommandeur die **3. (Preußische) Kraftfahr-Abteilung**. Als solcher wurde er am 1. Februar 1931 zum Oberstleutnant befördert. Ab dem 1. Oktober 1931 war er dann als Chef des Stabes bei der Inspektion der Kraftfahrtruppen (In 6) eingesetzt. Am 1. April 1933 wurde er zum Oberst befördert. Am 15. Oktober 1935 wurde er zum Kommandeur der neu gebildeten **2. Panzer-Division** in Würzburg ernannt. Als solcher wurde er am 1. August 1936 zum Generalmajor befördert. Am 1. Februar 1938 wurde er zum Generalleutnant befördert. Als solcher wurde er am 4. Februar 1938 zum Kommandierenden General des **XVI. Armeekorps** ernannt. Am 1. November 1938 wurde er zum General der Panzertruppen befördert. Am 20. November 1938 wurde Guderian zum Chef der schnellen Truppen im Oberkommando des Heeres ernannt. Im Sommer 1939 wurde er zum Kommandierenden General des **XIX. Armeekorps** ernannt. Als solcher nahm Guderian bei der **Heeresgruppe Nord** am Polenfeldzug teil. Ihm wurden bereits in den ersten Wochen die Spangen zu seinen Eisernen Kreuzen verliehen. Für die Leistungen seines Korps wurde er am 27. Oktober 1939 mit dem **Ritterkreuz** des Eisernen Kreuzes ausgezeichnet. 1940 nahm er dann mit seinem Korps bei der **Heeresgruppe A** am Frankreichfeldzug teil. In der zweiten Phase des Frankreichfeldzuges wurde sein Panzerkorps zur **Gruppe Guderian** erweitert. Der von ihm entwickelte Einsatz geschlossener Panzerverbände bewährte sich hier. Am 19. Juli 1940 wurde er zum **Generaloberst** befördert. Zu Beginn des Russlandfeldzuges führte er dann die **Panzergruppe 2** beim Angriff auf Mittelrussland. Mit seiner Panzergruppe trug Guderian wesentlich zu den Siegen bei Kiew, Orel und Brjansk bei. Am 17. Juli 1941 wurde ihm das **Eichenlaub** zum Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes verliehen. Ritterkreuz (27. Oktober 1939) Eichenlaub (17. Juli 1941) (*lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de*)

--**Note:** The German commander of AGS made the decision to **break through the Soviet border defenses w/ his foot marching infantry divisions**. . . Farther north in Army Group Center, the commander of **2 PzGr** [Guderian] had insisted to his commander [GFM v. Kluge] that he be *allowed to launch the attack w/ the motorized infantry of his panzer and motorized infantry divisions* to avoid the delays in struggling through the foot-marching infantry. (R.H.S. Stolfi, *German Panzers on the Offensive*, 34)

--**Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa (31.1.41)**:³¹⁹

4. *Auftraege an die Heeresgruppen u. Armeen: . . .*

³¹⁹ **Note:** Here I've carved out the portion of the Army's Deployment Directive specifically addressing role of 2 Panzer Group.

2 Pz.Gr. durchbricht bei u. noerdlich Kobryn in Zusammenarbeit mit 4 Armee die feindl. grenznahen Kraefte u. schafft durch rasches Vorgehen auf Sluzk u. Minsk in Verbindung mit der in die Gegend noerdl. Minsk vorstossenden 3 PzGr die Voraussetzung fuer die Vernichtung der im Gebiet zwischen Belostok – Minsk stehenden Feindkraefte. Ihre weitere Aufgabe wird es sein, beschleunigt in enger Fuehlung mit 3 PzGr die Gegend bei u. suedl. Smolensk zu gewinnen, das Zusammenfassen feindlicher Kraefte im Bereich des oberen Dnjepr zu verhindern u. damit der H.Gr. die Handlungsfreiheit fuer weitere Aufgaben zu wahren.

(Halder, Franz. *Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. II. Appendix 2, 466)

-- 19.-20.6.41 (Dr. Bunke / 31 ID):

In der Nacht vom 19 zum 20 Jun 41 blieben wir in unseren Stellungen [i.e., just outside Brest-Litovsk]. Wir bauten sie aus u. munitionierten sie, damit nur noch die Geschuetze vorgebracht werden mussten. Diese Arbeiten waren schnell verrichtet, u. dann lagen wir in unseren Loechern u. horchten in die Nacht hinein. Dort herrschte Ruhe, es war nichts los. Unsere Ziele erkannten wir selbst jetzt in der Dunkelheit. Es war eine mondhelle Sommernacht. Ploetzlich stieg gegenueber von uns eine Leuchtkugel auf. Sie bewies, dass am gegenueberliegenden Ufer russische Horchposten lagen.

Ich unterhielt mich mit einem Zugfuehrerleutnant von der 12. MG-Kp. des IR 82. . . Auch er glaubte wie ich, dass dieser Rummel u. *dieser Aufmarsch doch den Russen nicht verborgen geblieben sein konnte*, u. wir erwarteten einen heissen Gang in unserem Kampf um Brest-Litovsk. Dann ging ich rueber zu Hans Bachmann, drueben am Eisenbahndamm. [see text for more fascinating details]

Ich ging zurueck. Wir lagen noch Stunden in unseren Loechern u. lauschten in die kuehle stille Juninacht hinein. Manche waren eingenickt, ich lag u. traemte u. schreckte erst auf, als drueben am Ufer einige Wasservogel klatschend aufstiegen. „*Wildgaense rauschen durch die Nacht mit schrillum Schrei nach Norden, unstete Fahrt habt acht, habt acht, die Welt ist voller Morden.*“ Eine groessere Wirklichkeit fuer den Inhalt dieses Liedes konnte es fuer mich nicht geben. Bevor die Sonne ihre ersten Strahlen am Horizont zeigte, schlichen wir zurueck. Uebermorgen wuerde es ernst werden u. wieder losgehen; ich war bereit.

(Dr. Bunke, *Der Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, 211-14)

--21./22.6.41 (Guderian's CP):

Nine miles on the near side of the Bug, outside the village of Volka Dobrynska, on Hill 158, stood one of the wooden observation towers which had sprung up on both sides of the frontier during the past few months. At the foot of Hill 158, in a patch of wood, was the advanced CP of 2 PzGr. "The white G's," the men called the group, because the large white letter "G" which all vehicles bore as their tactical identification sign. "G" stood for Guderian. At a glance a vehicle was recognized as "one of ours." Guderian had introduced the idea during the cam-

paign in France. It had proved so successful that Kleist adopted it and had ordered the vehicles of his panzer group to be painted w/ a white “K.”

During the preceding night, the night of **20/21 Jun 41**, the staff officers had arrived in *greatest secrecy*. They were now sitting in their tents or office buses, bending over maps and written orders. No signals came from the aerials: strict radio silence had been ordered, lest the monitoring posts of the Russians become suspicious. Use of the telephone was permitted only if strictly necessary. ***Guderian’s personal command transport***—two radio-vans, some jeeps, and several motorcycles—stood parked behind the tents and buses, well camouflaged. The command armored car approached. Guderian jumped out. “Morning gentlemen.”

The time was exactly **0310**. A few words, then Guderian drove up the hill w/ his command transport to the observation tower. The luminous minute-hands of their wrist-watches crept round the dials. [See text for rest of this graphic account!]

(P. Carell, *Hitler Moves East*, 16-18)

--**22.6.41 (2 PzGr)**: Die **2 PzGr** soll am Angriffstag beiderseits der Festung Brest-Litovsk den Bug ueberschreiten, die russ. Front aufreissen u. in rascher Ausnutzung der Angriffserfolge den Raum Roslawl – Jelna – Smolensk erreichen. Ein erneutes Festsetzen des Gegners u. die Bildung einer Front sind zu verhindern.

Der Befehl des Gen.-Oberst Guderian dazu lautet:

Unsere Panzergruppe, am rechten Fluegel der Armee, u. dieser vorausgehend, durchbricht die Grenzstellungen beiderseits Brest u. stoest entlang der Panzerrollbahn 1 & 2 auf Sluck u. Minsk u. sodann in den Raum von Smolensk vor, um den Zusammenhang des feindlichen Heeres zu vernichten. Nach dem Durchbruch ist von entscheidender Bedeutung, ohne Ruecksicht auf Flankenbedrohung, unter vollster Ausnutzung der Motoren, ohne Ruhe u. Rast, Tag u. Nacht marschierend, so weit vorzustoessen, als es der Brennstoff gestattet. . . *Es kommt darauf an, viel zu fahren, wenig zu schiessen.*

(Oberstlt. J. Dingreiter, *Die Vierziger*, 38)

--**22.6.41**: From Guderian’s memoirs:

On the fateful day of **22 Jun 41**, I went at **02.10** hrs. to my Group CP which was located in an observation tower south of Bohukaly, **9** miles NW of Brest-Litovsk. It was still dark when I arrived there at **03.10** hrs. At **03.15** hrs. our artillery opened up. At **03.40** hours the first dive-bomber attack went in. At **04.15** hrs. advance units of the **17** and **18 PD** began to cross the Bug. At **04.45** hrs., the leading tanks of the **18 PD** forded the river. For this they were equipped w/ the waterproofing that had been tested for Operation „*Sea Lion*,“ which enabled them to move thru **13** feet of water.

At **06.50** hrs. I crossed the Bug in an assault boat in the neighborhood of Kolodno. My command staff, consisting of **2** armored wireless trucks, a number

of cross-country vehicles and some motorcyclists, followed at **08.30** hrs. I began by following the tank tracks of 18 PD and soon reached the bridge over the Lesna, whose capture was important for the advance of **XLVII Pz.Kps.** . . . At **10.25** hrs. the leading tank coy reached the Lesna and crossed the bridge. Next to arrive was the division cdr, General Nehring. I accompanied the **18 PD** in their advance until mid-afternoon. At **16.30** hrs. I returned to the bridgehead at Kolodno and from there I went at **18.30** hrs. to my CP. We had managed to take the enemy by surprise along the entire Panzer Group front. To the south of Brest-Litovsk, the **XXIV Pz.K.** had captured the bridges over the Bug intact.

(Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, 153-54)

--**22.6.41 (2 PzGr / 3 PD):**

The **2 PzGr**, operating **190** km to the south of Hoth, had a *more difficult advance*. While some bridges across the Bug River . . . were seized in the initial assault, GFM v. Bock observed that at Brest, which sat on the road to Moscow, the first bridge over the river was only secured at noon. Complicating matters, General of Panzer Troops Joachim Lemelsen, cdr of **47 PzK** . . . reported that he was having difficulties crossing the captured bridges because the approach roads were *literally sinking into the swamplands under the hvy weight of traffic*.³²⁰ Even once across the Bug, German forces still had to contend w/ the Brest fortified district which was to prove a thorn in the army's side long after the armored spearhead had passed it by. Difficulties continued to mount when a central route of the panzer group's right wing, made up of the **24 PzK** . . . under General of Panzer Troops Freiherr Geyr von Schweppenberg, was found to consist of "catastrophic road conditions" that were deemed "impossible" to traverse. As a result, **3** and **4 PD** had to share the same road, which was deemed "hardly traversable" for wheeled vehicles. The delays and subsequent loss of the bridge over the Muchaviec River meant that in the course of the day the distance advanced [**3 PD**] was only **18 km** when it should have been **80 km**.³²¹

(D. Stahel, *Operation Barbarossa and Germany's Defeat in the East*, 155-56)

--Soviet Forces along the Line of Advance of 2 PzGr:

- a) **2 PzGr: 3, 4, 17, 18 PDs** (first echelon).
- b) Frontage in kilometers = **70**.
- c) Elements of **6, 42, 75 RDs, 22 TD** (not in state of readiness). (Soviet formations on frontier in area of **2 PzGr** offensive)

(J. Erickson, *The Soviet High Command*, 592)

--*Excerpt from Barbarossa Unleashed:*³²²

³²⁰ **Note:** See, *GFM v. Bock. The War Diary 1939-1945*, Klaus Gerbet (ed.), p 224.

³²¹ **Note:** See, Horst Zobel, "3rd Panzer Division Operations," in: David M. Glantz (ed.), *The Initial Period of War on the Eastern Front*, 241.

³²² **Note:** See, *Barbarossa Unleashed* for more details.

The opening attack of Army Group Center struck the left flank of Lt.-Gen. V.I. Morozov's 11 Army of Soviet Northwestern Front and the entire span of General D.G. Pavlov's Western Front. The mission of Bock's powerful mechanized forces (9 panzer and 6 motorized divisions) was to pierce Soviet defenses on both flanks of the Belostok salient and, advancing along the Minsk-Smolensk axis, envelop, encircle and annihilate Russian forces west of the Western Dvina and Dnepr river lines. For Guderian's assault formations, the war began at 0315 hours, supported by an artillery barrage of 30 minutes duration. In an order to his subordinate divisions, the brilliant panzer general had let it be known just how much he expected of his men:

Our panzer group, on the right wing of the army^{dxviii} and advancing ahead of it, is to break through the frontier positions on both sides of Brest[-Litovsk] and strike out along *Panzerrollbahn*^{dxix} 1 and 2 toward Slutsk and Minsk, and then into the area of Smolensk, in order to destroy the cohesion of the enemy army. After breaking through, it is of decisive importance to advance as far as the gasoline will take us, at full throttle, without pause or rest, marching day and night, without consideration for any threat to the flanks. . . The main thing is to advance far, and to shoot little. [*Es kommt darauf an, viel zu fahren, wenig zu schießen.*]^{dxl}

There was "little finesse" to the panzer group's opening moves, as it simply struck the center of Lt.-Gen. A.A. Korobkov's 4 Army.^{dxli} The group's two forward panzer corps,^{dxlii} 47 and 24 Panzer Corps, echeloned in depth,^{dxliii} crossed the Bug on both sides of Brest-Litovsk. The fact that they attacked immediately, in the forwardmost line, was because Guderian had prevailed over his superior, Field Marshal von Kluge, C-in-C Fourth Army, in a tactical dispute prior to the start of the campaign. Kluge had argued that his infantry should make the initial penetration to preserve the armored forces, which would then exploit the breakthrough. Guderian demurred, insisting instead that his tank units be committed at once to smash through the front and exploit resultant breakthroughs without loss of time. The panzer leader appealed to Bock, and the field marshal came down on Guderian's side, allowing him "much freedom to execute operations as he saw fit and to commit his armor immediately as he desired."^{dxliv}

Within minutes (0324 hours), the first riflemen of 3 Panzer Division (24 Panzer Corps) were across the river, while heavy weapons also began to move across the bridge at Koden. A minute later, one of the assault units (*Gruppe Kleemann*) reported that the enemy had yet to show himself; only a single round of artillery had been fired near the bridge. Fifteen minutes later, *Oberst* Kleemann reported that two of his companies were across the river; and, by 0350, the first tanks of the division were rolling across the bridge.^{dxlv} Forming the spearhead was the third battalion of 3 Panzer Division's 6 Panzer Regiment. In one of the battalion's Panzer IV tanks rode *Oberfeldwebel* Albert Blaich, a platoon leader in 12th Company:

The enemy defensive fire was weak, and after only a few hours the soldiers of 3 Panzer Division had cleared the enemy riverbank and the town of Stradecz. At 1000 hours, the main body of the panzer regiment could begin to advance, while the 3rd Battalion, advancing in the lead, fought the first nests of resistance.

In the afternoon, the heavy Panzer IVs of 12th Company set off again. *Oberfeldwebel* Blaich stood at the open turret of his tank and looked through his field glasses at the flat terrain dotted with bushes and many swamps. But his attention was fixed on the small town of Przuluki.

After only a few meters, the first shots popped. There was a crackling in the headphones, then the voice of the battalion commander sounded:

“Blaich platoon, sheer off to the right ahead of the town and then attack from the flank!”

“*Panzer marsch!*”

Albert Blaich shouted the order into the throat microphone, then he closed the hatch. Shortly after that, 12th Company found itself in a difficult fight with Russian anti-tank guns. Bent over the observation slit, Blaich observed the houses of the small town. His commands then followed. The tank slid off the road and rolled through open meadow land. Beside it rolled the tanks from the same platoon. In a wide formation 12th Company now attacked the village; resistance became more intense. The muzzle flash of an anti-tank gun flared in front of a white painted house.

“Turret 11 o’clock – distance 800 meters – armor piercing shells!”

The gunner, *Unteroffizier* Engel, and the loader, *Gefreiter* Greiner, were ready. The turret was already swinging in the indicated direction; the shell was already in the barrel. The gunner had the target in his sights. Blaich looked through the eyepiece once more. There was another flash over there. Missed! The next shot would be theirs.

“Fire at will!”

Unteroffizier Schulz abruptly stopped the tank. Milliseconds later, the shot cracked. The men involuntarily ducked their heads as the reverberations of the gun discharge made the tank shake.

“Forward!”

At the moment the tanks began to advance again, a tall, fiery glow flared up over by the AT gun. Then, only billows of smoke could be seen.

“Bulls-eye!”

The tanks rolled at high speed into the town. About 50 meters away from them another AT gun exploded and flew into the air. It hit the tank of *Feldwebel* Kuehn, the second tank in Blaich’s platoon. Ahead of them a house went up in flames: everywhere the picture was the same. Gradually the Russian defensive fire abated.

“Blaich, go through the town with your platoon immediately and take possession of the *Rollbahn*,” came the voice of *Hauptmann* Schneider-Kostalski [the battalion commander] through the headphones.

Blaich shouted his orders into the throat microphone again. Then the four Panzer IVs rolled on. Through the observation slit Blaich saw a destroyed AT gun, its

protective shields smashed and twisted. The barrel projected almost vertically into the sky and the gun crew lay dead on the ground beside it.

“Keep going – just keep going!” bellowed Blaich. “We have to get through the town!”

Przyluki was traversed at high speed. To the north, Blaich saw a fiery glow and thick clouds of smoke on the horizon – that must be where Brest-Litovsk, which the Russians had turned into a fortress, was burning. . .^{dxlvi}

24 Panzer Corps’ other tank unit, 4 Panzer Division, also met little resistance as it crossed the Bug. “The first assault detachments crossed in assault boats and rafts,” recalled Hans Schaeufler, a signal officer in the division:

At 0400 hours, we moved to a staging area in a patch of woods right on the river [Bug]. The resistance across the way was slight. At 1200 hours, we crossed the river on pontoon ferries with our radio vehicles. The tanks still had to wait, because the crews manning the bunkers at the bridges were still firing. Our vehicles wormed their way through the knee-deep sand of the Bug lowlands. The civilians, former Poles, were very friendly. They cooked eggs and milk for us.^{dxlvii}

Soviet resistance throughout the morning was predominantly light; by late afternoon, the forwardmost elements of 24 Panzer Corps – the tanks encrusted with dust, obscuring the large white “G” adorning their hulls^{dxlviii} – had advanced 18 to 30 kilometers beyond the Bug and were heading east unhindered along the *Panzerstrasse* (Panzer Route 1) toward Bobruisk.^{dxlix}

Northwest of Brest-Litovsk, Lemelsen’s 47 Panzer Corps (two panzer, one motorized infantry, one regular infantry division) also made its way swiftly across the Bug. [**Note:** For account of **47 PzK** see, Section **1.6.10.**]

(*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Section 6.2.1)

--**Crux:** As it grew dark around **2200**, the southern prong of von Bock’s AGC had broken thru the Russian border defenses, engulfed the Soviet **4 Army**, and swept many miles into Soviet territory. The **18 PD**, spearheading Lemelsen’s **47 PzK**, chased all of **40 miles** down Panzer Route 2, coiling for the night some **25 miles** short of Pruzhanay.³²³ General Geyr’s **24 PzK** was less fortunate. It had veered too far south into the Pripyat Marshes in its initial drive and had not started rolling on Panzer Route 1. . . The infantry corps, struggling thru clouds of dust over deeply rutted secondary roads, encountered only sporadic opposition. . . (*Luttichau Manuscript*, “*The Road to Moscow*,” VI: 8-12)

--By evening, the panzer group was fighting around Maloryta, Kobrin, Brest-Litovsk and Pruzana. From map, appears **24 PzK** had advanced some 40 km to Kobrin; **47 PzK** advanced 50 km to Pruzana. (*Guderian*, 155)

--By **1500 hrs**, Guderian’s **3 PD**, followed by **4 PD**, have worked their way around the fortress of Brest and into the open country near Kobrin. No sooner did the Germans cross the border than

³²³ **Note:** It could not have been **25 miles** short of Purzana!!!

they hit sandy terrain which multiplied their fuel consumption; they also learn quickly that the Soviets fight better in the woods than they do. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa* 1941, 32-33)

--**3 PD**: By mid-afternoon, Model's division – led by Gruppe Lewinski – has cleared the frontier defenses and penetrated nearly **12** miles toward Kobryn on the Mukhavets River. Both north and south of Brest, along w/ the other three [**3**] tank divisions of Guderian's command that make the initial assault across the Bug (**4, 17** and **18 PD**), the **3 PD** has torn a **30**-mile-wide hole in the front of Maj-Gen A.A. Korobkov's 4 Army. (*Newton, Hitler's Commander*, 119-24)

--**3 PD**:

19.00: In der Abendmeldung an das Korps kommt zum Ausdruck, dass die Div. am empfindlichsten die Gelaendeschwierigkeiten, weniger den fdl. Widerstand verspuert hat. . .

20.10: [Mention of] groessere Marschstockungen, die nach Ansicht des Chef des Gen.Stabes des **24 PzK** auf die schwierigen Wegeverhaeltnisse vor der Bruecke Huznie, aber auch auf die schlechte Fahrdisziplin zurueckzufuehren sind. . . Die Div. setzt ihren Marsch auf der Vormarschstrasse fort unter erheblichen Verstopfungen, die teilweise auf die schlechte Strassendisziplin, teilweise auf das Dazwischenschieben anderer Kolonnen zurueckzufuehren ist. . .

(*KTB Nr. 3, RH 27-3/14*)

--**3 PD**: [Oblt. Albert Blaich]:

Note: Oblt. Blaich served w/ **12./III./PzRgt 6/3. PD** during the opening months of the Russian campaign. He was an *Oberfeldwebel* at this time and a *Zugfuehrer* in the **12. Kp.** (which consisted of **Pz. IVs**). Blaich was wounded on **6 Sep 41** and did not see action again until late **1942**. Ritterkreuztraeger (24.7.41). He had also fought in the Spanish Civil War. He was killed in action in Hungary in **Mar 45**.

21.-22.6.41: In den letzten beiden Naechten vor Angriffsbeginn wurden die Abteilungen des Rgts. an die Front vorgezogen. Am Abend des **21. Jun 41** stand das **Pz.Rgt. 6** etwa **3** km westl. von Koden am Bug, ausgeruestet mit **56** Pz. II, **108** Pz. III, **32** Pz. IV u. **11** Befehlspanzer.

Ab Mitternacht kehrte Ruhe ein u. das Land, so kam es den Maennern vor, schien friedlich wie immer. Es war Juni u. schon ziemlich hell geworden. Selbst in den Stunden um Mitternacht stand ein blasser Schein am Himmel. Zu stark baute sich in jedem Soldaten eine Spannung auf, die ihm den Schlaf raubte. Nur den hartgesottenen u. in vielen Kaempfen bewaehrten Maennern gelang ein Nickerschen. (41)

Ploetzlich wurde die Stille durch leise Geraeusche gestoert. Waffen klirrten, MG, Karabiner, u. Munitionskaesten wurden bereitgelegt. Vor dem Fluss durchschnitten Pioniere den Draht der Uferhindernisse. Es knackte im Gebuesch, immer lauter werden. Sturmboote wurden vorge-schoben u. Flosssaecke aufgepumpt. (41)

Die Y-Zeit rueckte naeher. Angriffszeit war **03.15** Uhr. Noch **30** Minuten waren es bis dahin. Die Soldaten banden sich ihre Stahlhelmmriemen fester. Noch wussten sie nicht, ob das andere Ufer befestigt war, ob es drueben Bunker gab. Nichts war zu erkennen. Das Flussufer war verwildert, wie fast ueberall am Bug. Hohes Schilf, Unterholz u. Baeume verwehrten die Einsicht. (41-42)

Immer oefters schauten die Soldaten auf ihre Uhren. . . Die Spannung ging auf den Hoehepunkt, sogar der eigene Herzschlag war zu hoeren. Ploetzlich zischte eine Leuchtspur gegen den fahlen Himmel, die ersten Geschuetze schossen in die Nacht. . . (42)

22.6.41: Das Trommelfeuer entwickelte sich rasch zu einem Orkan. Um **03.15** Uhr traten die Pioniere u. Schuetzen an, um die Bugbruecke bei Koden in Besitz zu nehmen. Minuten spaeter fiel die Bruecke unbeschuedigt in ihre Hand. (42)

(**Note:** See pp 42-45 for Blaich's and division's activities over the remainder of this first day of „Barbarossa.”)

(Hans-Joachim Roell, *Oblt. Albert Blaich. Als Panzerkommandant in Ost u. West*)

--**4 PD:** On „B-Tag,” **4 PD** attacked across the Bug River south of Brest-Litovsk and advanced through the forested area east towards the area of Kobryn. The tactical superiority of the Germans was total and the first clashes were very limited. The division captured the city of Kobryn just after **1500** hours on **23 Jun 41** and then marched in direction of Minsk, guarding the southern flank of **3 PD**. (*R. Michulec, 4. Pz.-Div., 4*)

--**4 PD:**

(**Note:** Zeitangaben nach *mitteleuropaeischer Sommerzeit*. Sonnenaufgang bei Brest-Litowsk am **22.6.** etwa **4.10** Uhr; Sonnenuntergang etwa **20.45** Uhr.)

22.6.41: Der Aufruf Hitlers wird, soweit es moeglich ist, nachts der Truppe verlesen. Wie wird er aufgenommen? Was empfindet u. denkt der Soldat zu Beginn dieses neuen Kriegsabschnitts? Er ist von *ausserordentlichem Vertrauen* in die politische u. militaerische Fuehrung erfuellt. Er haelt den *Krieg gegen Russland*, mit dem er vor kurzem noch ueberhaupt nicht rechnete, fuer *unumgaenglich*. . . Bisher haben wir unglaubliche Erfolge errungen. So wird es jetzt wieder sein, bei unserer *Uberlegenheit in Fuehrung u. Kriegserfahrung*. . . – Es gibt auch *kein grosses Gruebeln u. lange Eroerterungen fuer u. wider*. (195)

3.30 Uhr setzt die erste Welle der *Schuetzenbrigade* auf Schlauchbooten ueber den Bug. Keine Feindabwehr. Es folgen die vorgeschobenen Beobachter des **AR 103**, dann auf Flossackfaehren schwere Waffen, einzelne Fahrzeuge, Einzelgeschuetze der Artillerie, eine leichte Batterie. Es herrscht klares Sommerwetter. Das Gelaende, Randgebiet der Pripjet-Suempfe, ist flach, ausser bei den spaerlichen u. kuemmerlichen Doerfern von Wald u. Buschwerk bedeckt u. von Wasser-laeufen u. Suempfen durchsetzt. Die einzig nach Osten fuehrende „Strasse“ ist ein tief-verstandeter Feldweg. (195)

Um **4.00** Uhr beginnt das **Pz.Pi.Btl. 79** bei Sostaki mit dem Bau einer **16-to.-** Bruecke. Die Wassertiefe erweist sich mit **2,30** m. groesser, als angenommen. . . Inzwischen ist **3** bis **4** km ostw. des Bug das rechts angreifende **SR 12** bei Punkt 149 im Wald auf Feindwiderstand gestossen. Einzelne Bunker, werden dort zaeh verteidigt, auch Gr.W. u. Pak treten auf. Vorge-zogene eigene Geschuetze greifen *aus offenen Stellungen* ein. . . Erste Gefangene werden gemacht. (195-97)

Der Betriebstoff der Panzer geht zur Neige [i.e., by end of the day]. Wegen der Wege-verhaeltnisse war der Tagesverbrauch *ungewoehlich hoch* gewesen. (197)

[**Note:** See text for more details of **22.6.41**. Crux: Am Abend des ersten Angriffstages sind die Spitzen der Division in Luftlinie **45 km** tief vorge-stossen.]

(Joachim Neumann, *Die 4. Panzer-Division 1938-1943*)³²⁴

--**18 PD:**

RH 27-18/20: KTB Ia. This operations war diary offers terrific insights into open days of fighting. The *Panzertruppen* of the division are elated at their successes in first **48** hours, which reveal the “unconditional superiority” of their tanks over those of the Soviets. Of course, they have yet to “meet” the **KV-1s** and **T-34s**. Due to delays caused by traffic jams, etc, the operations staff (*Fuehrungsstaffel I*) of the division is unable to immediately catch up with their division cdr, General Nehring, who is leading from the head of his division. As of end of **23.6.41**, the mass of the division’s Rifle-Bde has been unable to cross the Bug. The flouting of regulations governing the advance of mot. troops contributes to the traffic problems. Diary also describes wild – almost surreal – attack on divisional HQ on night of **24.6.41**, involving inebriated Russian soldiers and “Flintenweiber!”

--**45 ID:** [See below, Section **1.4.8.** for assault on fortress of Brest-Litovsk]

--**2 PzGr:**

RH 21-2/927: KTB (22.6.-1.7.41). This is one of the better war diaries I have examined. It is very detailed; very precise. For example, it tracks the movements of **2 PzGr** divisions on an almost hourly basis. Diary addresses *extraordinary difficulties Pz.Gr. faced in moving its wheeled-vehicles across the Bug*, due to very poor roadways (deep sand). In first two [2] days of “Barbarossa,” Pz.Gr. destroyed **220** enemy tanks. (See, end of diary for **23.6.41**.)

--**22.6.41 [2 PzGr / Ia KTB]:**

Gr.H.Qu.: Im Wald Nadl. Chotylow, **16** km westl. Brest-Litowsk.

Wetter: Trocken.

³²⁴ **Note:** Neumann is a former division member. He writes on p. IX: “Vom **16.5.** bis **31.7.40** u. vom **1.9.41** bis **1.3.42** war ich nicht Zeuge der Ereignisse.“

1.00: Das Kennwort „*Kyffhaeuser*“ = Bereitstellung beendet, ging von den unterstellten Korps bis **00.30** planmaessig ein u. wurde an **AOK 4** um **1.00** weitergegeben.

2.00: Der Bef. [i.e., Guderian] faehrt zum vorgeschobenen Gef.Std. suedl. Bohukaly (**15 km** nordwestl. Brest-Litowsk) vor.

3.15: Der Angriff hat planmaessig begonnen.

Die ersten bei der **2 PzGr** eingegangenen Einzelmeldungen:

3.36: **12 AK** meldet, **31 ID** mit vordersten Teilen ohne wesentlichen Feindwiderstand Bug ueberschritten. Eisenbahnbruecke bisher unzerstoert.

3.45: **24 PzK** meldet: Divisionen ohne Feindwiderstand Bug ueberschritten, Bruecke Koden durch Handstreich **5 Minuten** vor Angriffsbeginn unversehrt in eigener Hand, Panzer gehen bereits ueber die Bruecke.

3.55: Die Schuetzen der **17 u. 18 PD** haben ohne besonderen Feindwiderstand Ostufer des Bug erreicht u. sind im fluessigen Vorgehen. Bisher *keine feindl.. Art*.

4.20: **12 AK** meldet, dass alle Inf. Divisionen uebergegangen sind. Ueberall nur geringer Feindwiderstand.

4.35: **24 PzK** meldet, dass U-Panzer der **3 PD** schon mit vordersten Teilen Strasse u. Eisenbahn hart ostw. des Bug erreicht haben. . .

5.35: Der Feind ist ueberall ueberrascht, der Uebergang ueber den Bug in ganzer Breite gelungen. . . **24 PzK** hat Bug in ganzer Breite ohne Feindwiderstand ueberschritten.

12 AK: Feindwiderstand versteift sich nach Buguebergang. . . **47 PzK:** Angriff schreitet bei geringem Feindwiderstand planmaessig fort. . .

8.00: **47 PzK:** **18 PD** mit **4** Panzerkompanien uebergegangen, ist nach Einnahme der Hoehen noerdl. Szumaki im Vorgehen mit Panzern auf Wistycze (**10 km** noerdl. Brest-L.) **17 PD** mit **S.R. 40** ueber Jackowycze hinaus im Vorgehen auf Eisenbahn Brest-L. – Wysokie-Litewkie.

12.00: Bruecken ueber den Bug: [**Note:** Entry very detailed; shows status of each division, when bridges in their respective sectors available for crossing, bridge-building details, etc.]

13.30: Die im Anmarsch auf Widomla gemeldeten fdl. Panzer wurden durch die aus Panzern u. Krdschtz. gebildete Spitze der **18 PD** ostw. Widomla geschlagen u. sind im Zurueckweichen. **18 PD** stoesst in Richtung auf Pruzana vor. . .

16.30: Lage:

24 PzK erreichte Linie:

255 ID: V.A. Oltusz (30 km ostw. des Bug)

1 KD: V.A. Hwoznica (19 km ostw. des Bug)

4 PD: mit Schtz.Brig. bei Brodziatyn (18 km ostw. des Bug)

3 PD: mit Schtz.Brig. ostw. Faustynow [sp?] (11 km ostw. des Bug; Krdschtz.Btl. bei Michalin (18 km ostw. des Bug). Wegeverhaeltnisse machen weiteres Vorkommen in ostw. Richtung unmoeglich. Div. ist daher **15.00** mit verst. Pz.Rgt. voraus ueber Przyluki (10 km suedl. Brest-L.), Huznie auf Panzerrollbahn 1 angesetzt. . .

47 PzK: Der Durchbruch durch die Grenzstellung ist gelungen.

18 PD: mit Pz.Brig. auf Pruzana angesetzt, in Panzerkampf bei Peliszczce (28 km nordostw. Brest-L.) u. in Gegend 18 km ostw. Widomla.

17 PD: mit **S.R. 40** im Kampf bei Lyszczyce (20 km nordnordwestl. Brest-L.), mit V.A. im Vorgehen auf Rudawiec (7 km nordostw. Lyszczyce) . . .

Das Korps meldet Feindansammlungen u. Ausladungen bei Zabinka mit Panzern u. Art. Absicht: Durchstoss auf den Szczara-Abschnitt. . .

17.30: Bei **18 PD** Peliszczce u. ostw. geht schwerer Panzerkampf weiter. Stuka haben zwischen **15.00** u. **16.00** Uhr dort eingegriffen.

18.30: Rueckkehr des Bef. [Guderian]. Der Bef. traegt dem im H.Qu. der **2 PzGr** anwesenden GFM v. Kluge die Auffassung ueber die Lage u. die Absicht der **2 PzGr** fuer den naechsten Tag vor:

Feind, etwa **4** Divisionen stark, steht in friedensmaessiger Aufstellung vor der **2 PzGr**. Der Bef. hat auf Grund persoenerlicher Eindruecke waehrend seiner Fahrt die Ueberzeugung, dass der Feind durch den Angriff voellig ueberrascht wurde u. daher nur oertl. Widerstand zu leisten in der Lage ist.

GFM v. Kluge dagegen ist der Ansicht, dass der Feind planmaessig ausweicht u. starken organisierten Widerstand an rueckwaertigen Abschnitten leisten will.

Der Bef. meldet die Absicht: Noch in der Nacht Gewinnen des Jasiolda-Abschnitts, am **23.6.** Gewinnen des Szczara-Abschnitts.

22.00: Lage: Feind, tief gegliedert in weiten Unterkunftraeumen, durch Angriff ueberrascht, leistet nur oertl. Widerstand.

24 PzK:

255 ID: mit Anfang (A.A.) in Oltusz (13 km suedwestl. Maloryta)

1 KD: mit Radfahr.-Abt. in Zburaz (7 km west. Maloryta), mit Anfang der Div. in Hwoznica.

4 PD: mit V.A. (Krdschtz.) Strassenkreuz **12** km nordostw. Maloryta, mit Div. Anfang von Orlanka nach Osten angetreten.

3 PD: mit verst.Krdschtz.Btl. in Franopol (19 km ostsuedostw. Brest.-L.) u. Bulkowo (15 km ostw. Brest.-L.) Pz.-Brig. im Marsch zur Panzerrollbahn 1 hat Huznie

(3 km ostw. Brest.-L.) durchschritten.

10 ID (mot.): im Einruecken im Raum um Biala-Podlaska. . .

47 PzK:

18 PD: Spitze der Pz.Brig. bei Poddubno (20 km suedwestl. Pruzana)

17 PD: Bei Lesna - Bruecke Rudawiec (22 km noerdl. Brest) . . .

Absicht der 2 PzGr:

In der Nacht vom **22./23.6** Gewinnen des Jasiolda-Abschnitts (90 km nordostw. Brest.-L.); am **23.6.** Gewinnen des Szczara-Abschnitts.

(KTB Nr. 1, **RH 21-2/927**)

--**23.6.41** [2 PzGr/ Ia KTB]: Kaempfe im Pripjet-Gebiet ostw. Brest-L.; Vorstoss auf den Szczara - Abschnitt.

Gr.H.Qu.: bis **0800** Uhr Nadl. Chotylow; **11.-14.30** Uhr Turna (20 km nord-nordostw. Brest-L.); ab **19.00** Uhr Pruzana (Schlosspark)

Wetter: Trocken.

4.00: Der Bef. [Guderian] faehrt ueber Koroszczyn (12 AK) zum **47 PzK** u. zur **18 PD** Richtung Pruzana. . .

5.40: **24 PzK:** . . . **4 PD:** Mit V.A. noch bei Strassenkreuz 12 km nordostw. Maloryta, mit Div.-Anfang P.Pozezyn (7 km suedwestl. des oben genannten Strassenkreuzes).

3 PD: Anfang bei Bulkowo (30 km westsuedwestl. Kobryn). . . **47 PzK** steht mit

18 PD dicht suedwestl. Pruzana. . .

10.25: Meldung **24 PzK:** Kobryn genommen. . .

11.00: . . . Pruzana wurde von der **18 PD** genommen. Der Bef. hatte mit Funk-spruch von **9.18** Uhr Betriebsstoffabwurf bei Poddubno fuer **18 PD** gefordert. Als Antwort darauf funkt der **Ia** nach Ruecksprache mit dem Quartiermeister: „Betriebsstoff durch die Luft aussichtlos.“

Die Betriebsstofflage bei den vorderen Teilen des **47 PzK** ist deshalb besonders schwierig, weil An- u. Abmarschwege der Bugbruecken aeusserst schlecht sind u. das Nachziehen aller Raederfahrzeuge erschweren. Ein grosser Teil der Rad-fahrzeuge ist noch nicht ueber den Bug.

Nach nochmaliger Anforderung wird erreicht, dass nach Flugplatz Pruzana zweimal **10cbm** Betriebsstoff durch die Luft zugeführt werden. Eintreffen ist fuer **15.00** u. **18.00** Uhr zugesagt.

Das **46 PzK** wird angewiesen, durch die Verkehrsregelungsorgane die Betriebsstoffkolonnen des **47 PzK** bevorzugt vorzuschieben. Fernerhin wird um **14.00** Uhr der Oberstlt. i.G. Nagel nach Siedlce zurueckgesandt, um den Gross-transportraum des **47 PzK** vorzuziehen. . .

16.15: 24 PzK: . . . 4 PD: Mit Pz.Brig. Suedrand Kobryn ohne Betriebsstoff, da Betriebsstoffwagen auf den grundlosen Wegen steckengeblieben sind. **3 PD:** Anfang bei Horsk (**33** km nordostw. Kobryn) im Vorgehen auf Bereza-Kartuska. . . **47 PzK: . . . 18 PD:** Im Vorgehen auf Rozana. **17 PD:** Im Vorgehen noerdl. Panzerrollbahn **2** auf Strasse Pruzana – Lyskow.

46 PzK meldet schwieriges Nachziehen der letzten Teile der **17** u. **18 PD** ueber den Bug wegen schlechter Wegeverhaeltnisse. Letzte Teile **18 PD** werden nicht vor **24.6. 12.00** Uhr, **17 PD** nicht vor **23.6. 20.00** Uhr ueber den Bug sein. Verkehr auf Rollbahnen verlaeuft reibungslös. . .

20.30: Mitgehoerter Funkbefehl 47 PzK an **18 PD:** „Strasse Bialystok – Wolkowysk – Slonim bedeckt mit Kolonnen des Feindes aller Waffen auf Rueckmarsch nach Osten. Szczara-Uebergaenge bei Slonim vor dem Feind gewinnen! *Eile geboten!*

21.00: . . . Die Raederteile der **17** u. **18 PD** kommen nur langsam nach, da die An- u. Abmarschwege an den Brueckenstellen uebermaessig versandet sind. Die Pz.Gr. erstrebt jedoch unter Ausnutzung des letzten Tropfens Betriebsstoff den Szczara-Abschnitt noch heute zu gewinnen, besonders um dem von Bialystok ueber Wolkowysk Richtung Slonim zurueckgehenden Feind den Weg abzuschneiden.

Der Bef. befiehlt an **12 AK** u. **24 PzK**, schnelle V.A. an den Szczara-Abschnitt zu entsenden.

22.00: Der Chef der Pz.Gr. faehrt zur **18 PD** vor, um die Div. anzutreiben, noch in der Nacht den Szczara-Abschnitt zu gewinnen. . .

22.00: 24 PzK: . . . 4 PD: Mit verst. Pz.Rgt. bei Kobryn Betriebsstoff ergaenzend, mit Teilen bei u. ostw. Miedna (**24** km suedl. Brest-L.). **3 PD:** nahm **16.30** Uhr Bereza-Kartuska mit nur leicht beschaedigter Bruecke u. ist im Vorstoss auf den Szczara-Abschnitt. . .

Absicht des Korps: Weiterstossen entlang der Pz.Rollbahn 1. . .

47 PzK: . . . 18 PD: Durchschritt mit Anfang **20.00** Rozana (Fernmdl. Meldung von **23.35** Uhr) u. ist im Vorgehen suedl. Pz.Rollbahn 2 auf Slonim. **17 PD:** Im Vorgehen ueber Lyskow, Rozana auf Slonim. . .

Absicht der Pz.Gr.: Noch in der Nacht vom **23./24.6.** Gewinnen des Szczara-Abschnitts. Ziel fuer **24.6.:** Sluck u. Baranowicze.

Durch die **2 PzGr** wurden im Verlauf der ersten zwei Kampftage **220** russ. Pz.Kpfgw. zerstört, davon durch verst. **PzRgt 18 110** Panzer. . .

24.00: M.G.Btn. 5, bisher Gr.-Reserve, wird dem **47 PzK** zum Schutz der Westflanke unterstellt, da die Schuetzen beider Pz.-Div. nocht nicht heran sind.

(KTB Nr. 1, **RH 21-2/927**)

1.6.4: Fourth Army

--Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa (31.1.41):³²⁵

4. *Auftraege an die Heeresgruppen u. Armeen: . . .*

4. *Armee* erzwingt mit Schwerpunkt beiderseits Brest-Litowsk den Uebergang ueber den Bug u. oeffnet hierdurch der **2 PzGr** den Weg auf Minsk. Mit der Masse ihrer Verbaende ueber die Schara suedl. u. bei Slonim vordringend, vernichtet sie unter Ausnutzung des Vorgehens der Panzergruppen die im Gebiet zwischen Belostok – Minsk befindlichen Feindkraefte im Zusammenwirken mit **9 Armee**. Weiterhin wird es ihre Aufgabe sein, hinter **2 PzGr** folgend, unter Deckung ihrer Suedflanke gegen die Pripjet-Suempfe den Uebergang ueber die Beresina zwischen Bobrujsk – Borysau zu erzwingen u. den Dnjepr bei u. noerdl. Mohilew zu gewinnen.

(Halder, Franz. *Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. II. Appendix 2, 467)

--**22.6.41**: At 0100 hours the separate German Army commands in the east transmitted their call-signs indicating full and final readiness - “*Kyffhäuser*” for Fourth Army. (Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 109)

--**22.6.41**: Im ganzen konnte bis zum Abend eigentliche Grenzstellung durchbrochen werden. . . Absicht des Russen im grossen *laesst sich nocht nicht erkennen*, da die Fernaufklaerung bisher keinerlei grosse Bewegungen auf den Ost-West-Strassen festgestellt hat. Unsere *Luftwaffe* had sich der russ. bis jetzt weit ueberlegen gezeigt. (*Tagesmeldung, H.Gr.Mitte*, RH 19 II/128)

--**AOK 4**:

KTB, **22.6.-28.6.41**: Of course, this source provides the requisite overview of events – the “big picture.” KTB offers some useful statistics on achievements of **Fliegerkorps II** in first two days of campaign: **716** enemy planes destroyed vs. loss of only **12**. On **23.6.41**, v. Kluge – after noting presence of **100** destroyed Soviet tanks on the road to Pruzana – avers that “ein **Panzerschreck** sei wirklich *unnoetig, es seien „binahe laecherliche Dinger*.” Andererseits haben sich die

³²⁵ **Note:** Here I’ve carved out the portion of the Army’s Deployment Directive specifically addressing role of Fourth Army.

Russen z.T. tapfer geschlagen, sie sind *auf die deutschen Panzer gesprungen u. haben mit Pistolen in die Luken geschossen.*“ General v. Kluge also complains about the poor march discipline of Luftwaffe ground units: „*Die **Indisziplin der Luftwaffe** hindert die ganze Operation.*“

(RH 20-4/1199)

--22.6.41 [Ia KTB / AOK 4]:

3.15: Tritt die Armee nach einem starken Feuerschlag planmaessig zum Angriff an. Schon nach kurzer Zeit laufen Meldung ein, dass die Angriffsstruppen gut vorwaertskommen u. die Wegnahme der Bruecken gelungen ist.

4.20: Ist gemeldet, dass alle Angriffs-Divisionen den Bug ueberschritten u. keinen oder nur schwachen Widerstand gefunden haben.

4.45: Meldet **Ic**, dass er den Eindruck hat, dass der Feind voellig ueberrascht ist. Eine Flieger-Division hat um Befehl gefunkt, was sie tun soll, aehnlich eine andere Befehls-stelle in Minsk. . .

5.30: Diktirt der Chef [i.e., Blumentritt] einen Befehl an die Korps, dass der Feind anscheinend voellig ueberrascht worden sei u. der O.B. schaerfsten Vorstoss befohlen hat. . .

7.50: Ruft der O.B. von der **2 PzGr** aus den Chef an. Er ist der Auffassung, dass der Feind allerdings ueberrascht worden ist, dass seine Hauptkraefte aber weiter rueckwaerts stehen u. deshalb nicht unter die Ueberraschung fallen. Die Luftwaffe muesse veranlasst werden, den Verbleib der Masse der Russen zu klaeren. . .

8.00: Meldete der Chef des **Fliegerkorps II**, dass das Korps alle Angriffe in der 100 km = Zone durchgefuehrt habe u. jetzt mit denen gegen die 200 km = Zone beginne. **100** fdl. Flugzeuge seien am Boden zerstoert, die eigene Verluste gering. Der Chef teilt den Wunsch der Armee auf Feststellung der russ. Haupt-kraefte mit, u. zwar a) ob sie in der Rueckbewegung, b) oder bereits in einer rueckwaertigen Stellung aufgebaut . . . [word illegible]

9.00: Kehrt der O.B. von seiner Fahrt an die Front zurueck. . . Der Chef meldet ueber die Lage u. dass die Luftwaffe bisher nichts gemeldet habe, was als Grundlage fuer eine operative Beurteilung dienen koennen. Das **Fliegerkorps II** habe entsprechende Anweisung bereits erhalten. . . Immerhin seien auf schmalem Raum doch **6** [fdl.] Divisionen bestaetigt. Demgegenueber betonte der O.B., dass der Feind *kaum mit seiner Masse an der Grenze laege*, die Hauptkraefte vielmehr weiter rueckwaerts zu suchen seien. . .

In der naechsten Zeit lief eine Reihe von Meldungen ein, aus denen hervorging, dass die eigene Truppe in z.T. schwerem Vorarbeiten waren. Der ueberraschte Feind schlug sich an einzelnen Stellen hartnaeckig, einige leichte Pz.Gegenstoesse wurden abgewiesen. Einige der Bruecken ueber Muchawiec u. Lesna [sp?] fielen unzerstoert in deutscher Hand. Auffallend wenig fdl. Artl. griff ein. . . . Ein aufgefangener offener Funkspruch meldete die Vernichtung des Stabes

der russ. **3. Armee** durch deutsche Flieger, worauf Moskau Funken im Klartext verbot. Die eigene Luftwaffe erkaempfte sich von Stunde zu Stunde immer eindeutiger die Luftueberlegenheit. . .

10.00: Teilte der Chef dem **Ia** der H.Gr. mit, dass sich die Lage noch nicht beurteilen lasse, weil die Luftwaffe erst klaeren muesste, ob auf den grossen Strassen im russ. Hinterland ein Verkehr von West nach Ost oder umgekehrt stattfindende. Es seien wenig Gefangene gemacht u. nur ganz schwache Artl. beim Feinde aufgetreten. Er – der Chef – glaube persoendlich, dass der Russe politisch u. militaerisch ueberrascht sei. Es sei immerhin denkbar, dass er die deutsche Fuehrung durch seine Funksprueche in raffiniertes Weise ueber seine Absichten zu taeuschen versuche, um rueckwaerts eine neue Abwehrfront aufzubauen. Dageben spreche aber:

- a) das Nicht-Zerstoeeren der Bug-Bruecken,
- b) das Ausbleiben von Angriffen der russischen Luftflotte gegen die Buguebergaenge,
- c) die Ausruestung der Gefangenen mit nur 15 Patronen, womit eine auch nur voruebergehende Verteidigung in den Grenzstellungen nicht moeglich sei;
- d) die Ruhe bei Bialystok, wo bisher starke Kraefte gemeldet waren, Ansammlungen jetzt aber nicht erkennbar seien.

Das seien alles Punkte, die fuer eine Ueberraschung der Russen im Grossen sprachen u. in der Tat muesse die Lage fuer den Kreml schwierig sein. . .

12.00: Um Mittag begannen die Pz.-Divisionen sich von den Inf.-Divisionen nach vorn zu loesen. . .

12.45 [Brest]: Der O.B. liess sich durch den Komm.-Gen. des **12. AK** ueber die Lage bei seinem Korps berichten. Dabei stellte sich heraus, dass die Lage in der Zitadelle [i.e., Brest-Litowsk] voellig unklar war. In den Hohlraeumen sasssen ueberall noch Russen, alles war „dort verfilzt“, eigene u. russ. Truppen durcheinander. General Schroth hatte voruebergehend erwogen, die Zitadelle zu raehmen u. erneut mit Artillerie beschieszen zu lassen. Doch hatte er davon Abstand genommen, weil er das Eroberte nicht aufgeben wollte. . . Der O.B. befahl, dass der Div.-Kdr. [**45. ID**] sich persoendlich in die Zitadelle zu begeben habe, um die Lage zu klaeren u. zu bereinigen. Er regte ferner das Heranholen von Flammenwerfern auch der anderen Divisionen zur Wegnahme der Zitadelle an. . .

15.15: Der O.B. hatte sich von General Schroth ueber die Lage unterrichten lassen. . . Anschliessend draengte er auch das **24 AK [mot.]** zum Vorgehen mindestens bis in Hoehe von Zabinka. Fuer dieses Korps meldete der Chef der **2 PzGr** dem O.B., dass die **3. PD** ueber Brest vorgefuehrt werden soll, um das unwegsames Gelaende geradeaus zu vermeiden. Bei dieser Gelegenheit sprach [- - ch] der O.B. dahin aus, dass der Feind nach der Lage erst ziemlich weit hinten, etwa bei Minsk, energischen Widerstand leisten koenne, daher muesse man „so schnell als moeglich vor.“

16.40: Fuhr der O.B. wieder nach vorn.

Anschliessend setzte der Chef auf eine kurz vorher erfolgte Besprechung mit dem O.B. hin auseinander, dass eine genaue Beurteilung der Lage auch heute Abend noch nicht gegeben werden koenne. Jedenfalls ist es gelungen, ueber-raschend durch die russ. Grenzbefestigungen durchzubrechen. Der Russe war – *unvorstellbar* – nicht auf den deutschen Angriff vorbereitet. . .

Vom Aufbau einer rueckwaertigen Stellung zur eintscheidenden Abwehr sei durch die Fernaufklaerung bisher nichts festgestellt worden. . .

18.40: Ruft der O.B. von der **45 ID** bei Terespol den Chef an u. schildert die wenig erfreuliche Lage in der Zitadelle von Brest, wo sich der Feind sehr zahe haelt. **40 bis 50** eigene Leute sind in sehr prekaerer Lage. Der Div.-Kdr. will, da kein Blut unnoetig geopfert werden soll, die Leute zuruecknehmen, was aber vielleicht nicht glueckt. Er, der O.B., habe befohlen, einen neuen zusammen-gefassten Angriff nur zu fuehren, wenn die Leute herausgekommen seien. Dann sollen das schwere Wurfgeraet u. Moerser mit Betongranaten wirken. *Jedenfalls sei der **kleine Fleck Erde** es nicht Wert, seinetwegen Blut zu vergiessen. . .*

19.10: Teilt Gen.Ob. Guderian dem Chef mit, er habe den Eindruck, dass der Feind „in seinen weitgedehnten Friedensunterkuenften“ voellig ueberrascht worden sie. Planmaessig habe der Russe die Stellung bestimmt nicht geraeumt. Er selbst wolle den errungenen Vorteil voll ausnutzen u. heute noch die Jasiolda erreichen. . . Noch waehrend dieses Gespraeches traf der O.B. um **19.20** Uhr bei dem Gen.Obersten [Guderian] ein.

19.30:³²⁶ Meldet der Flieger-Verb.-Offz., es haetten:

Flieg.Korps II rund **100** Russenflugzeuge abgeschossen,
 215 am Boden zerstort;

Flieg.Korps VIII rund **63** Russenflugzeuge abgeschossen,
 194 am Boden zerstort.

19.50: Meldet **2 PzGr**, dass die **18 PD** mit zwei Pz.Abteilungen Poddubno [sp?] (**20 km** suedwestl. Pruzana) erreicht habe.

(KTB Nr. 8, **RH 20-4/1199**)

--**22.6.41 (9 AK):**³²⁷ One of the key positions of the Germans lay north of Brest, in the zone of General of Infantry Hermann Geyer's 9 AK, where they had to launch a difficult assault across the Bug River. [See text for background on Geyer.] Geyer had retired from the Army on **30 Apr 39** . . . After the fall of Poland, however, he was recalled to active duty and named C-in-C of **9 AK** on **25 Oct 39**. He led his corps w/ considerable success [distinction] in Belgium and France the following year. He redeployed it to Poland in **Sep 40**. Like most of General Geyer's operations, everything also went according to plan on **22 Jun 41**. Dinghies and assault boats were used in the initial assault, and the bridgehead was quickly established. By **0900**, a heavy equipment

³²⁶ **Note:** Check original document. Unclear if time in question is **9.30** or **19.30** hours. The entry is placed in the KTB between entries for **9.00** and **10.00** hours.

³²⁷ **Note:** **9 AK** controlled **137, 263, 292 ID**.

bridge had been completed, and trucks, artillery, and assault guns poured across the river. Less than **six hours** after the campaign began, the **9 AK** was in full pursuit mode. (S.W. Mitcham, Jr., *Men of Barbarossa*, 61-63)

--**22.6.41**: Meyer-Detring, Wilhelm,³²⁸ *Die 137. Inf.-Div. im Mittelabschnitt der Ostfront*, ca. 1962. This account contains some good information on activities of division before **22.6.41**. Some **50 batteries** (**200** guns) supported division's attack on "X-Tag." Excellent account of „eine klassische 'Kesselschlacht' im Kleinen," fought by the division on **25.6.41** and clearly displaying Germans' superior training/tactics at beginning of „Barbarossa." Account also makes clear that German soldiers were uncomfortable fighting in Russia's primitive forests, and less well-trained than their antagonists to do so. Division cites struggles of the horses and problems w/ tracked vehicles of French origin used by the AT coys of the inf.-rgts.; these vehicles had to be replaced w/in days.

--**Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:**

Adjoining 2 Panzer Group on the left, Field Marshal Guenther von Kluge's Fourth Army struck the southern face of the Belostok salient with several infantry corps along a front of more than 100 kilometers.^{di} The army recorded in its war diary that, by 0420 hours – in other words, in little more than one hour – all of the attacking divisions were across the Bug and reporting little to no resistance.^{dii} Almost immediately after the attack began, the army's signal intercept service listened in on a Russian message which graphically reflected the confusion in the enemy's ranks: "We are being fired upon. What shall we do?" The senior Soviet headquarters to whom the frantic query was directed responded contemptuously: "You must be insane. And why is your signal not in code?" As Fourth Army Chief of Staff, Colonel Blumentritt, recalled after the war, "all went according to plan."^{diii}

On the left wing of Fourth Army, the assault parties of 23 Infantry Division stormed across the frontier. One of them was led by *Feldwebel* Becker. Exploiting the cover of the opening barrage, and clutching his 9mm Walther P 38 pistol in his right hand, he rushed forward toward a railway embankment, motioning for his men to follow; together, and to their astonishment, they reached the embankment without any discernable reaction from the Russian border troops. Instinctively bent over for protection, the men climbed up the embankment, crossed the tracks and pressed on, the enemy opposite them now responding with isolated fire. On his right, out of the corner of his eye, Becker noticed a German motorized column moving along a road; as far as he could see in either direction German troops, widely dispersed and recognizable by their field gray uniforms, were advancing briskly. The tension drained from Becker's body. The start of the attack had gone smoother than anticipated; he had not lost a man.^{diiii}

For *Gefreiter* Kredel, another infantryman in 23 ID, this Sunday, 22 June, was unforgettable for many reasons, most significantly because it was his first day ever in action – his "baptism of fire." At precisely 0315 hours, he leaped forward and began to run as fast as his legs could carry him, his machine gun cradled on his shoulder. To ease his anxiety, a veteran had assured him that the first wave, exploiting the surprise of the attack, usually made it through unscathed, while those coming after bore the brunt of the enemy's reaction. As he ran, he noticed that bullets were whistling passed his helmet; they made an odd sound, he thought. He watched as a wooden observation tower on the far side of the river, struck by a German anti-tank shell, suddenly disintegrated, sending fragments of wood along with Russian soldiers hurtling through the air. *Panzerjaeger* in open vehicles (*Kuebelwagen*) roared passed him, their light 37mm anti-tank guns

³²⁸ **Note:** Meyer-Detring was the division's **Ia**; see p. 113.

in tow. In the next moment, German artillery fire began to drop short among the assaulting troops, evoking cries and curses from the wounded. Providently, the “friendly” artillery abruptly shifted its fire forward.^{dliv}

42-year-old Major Werner Heinemann, a decorated World War I veteran and battalion chief in 67 Infantry Regiment (23 ID), approached this first day of the war with palpable foreboding. A committed anti-Nazi, Heinemann had been placed under house arrest in 1934 and, following his own petition, was released from active service in the *Wehrmacht*. In 1940, he had been put back on active duty and took part in the French campaign, as both a company and battalion commander. Now, in the final hours before war with Russia, on the warm summer night of 21/22 June, his men were quietly moving up to the frontier and assembling for the attack. They had their work cut out for them: Thickets of barbed wire, some 15 rows of them, one after the other, lined the border. Heinemann’s assault units would have to cut through this wire before they could begin their attack; to perform this task, an abundance of wire cutters were on hand.^{dlv}

With the final minutes of peace slipping away, Heinemann’s thoughts suddenly turned to his experiences in Russia as a young soldier in the Great War. His heart was troubled. He recalled the country’s seemingly endless expanses and the difficulties encountered there because of the terrain. More than most, he recognized the gigantic task now facing the German Army. And while he knew that his men were, at this very moment, in their highest state of readiness and strength, he could not shake loose from the thought that this imminent attack on Russia was an inconceivably irresponsible enterprise, not to mention a breach of the non-aggression pact which had been in place for the better part of two years.^{dlvi}

As the final shadows of the shortest night of the year dissolved into sunlight, the artillery opened up along the front of 23 Infantry Division. Minutes later, Heinemann’s two lead companies stirred into action, cutting through the thickets of wire and advancing in open order (*entfaltet*) toward their first objective – a village on the far side of the frontier. Above them, squadrons of German bombers in tight formations winged eastward toward their targets. On the ground, the artillery barrage was coming to an end, with the exception of several heavy howitzers. Yet here, too, the big guns fired short, their 210mm shells dropping among the forwardmost German infantry who had just skirted passed the frontier, sending impressive columns of dirt and smoke into the air. Very signal lights soon filled the dawn sky with bright red bursts: “The artillery is firing short! Lift your fire!” (*Artillerie schießt zu kurz! Feuer vorverlegen!*) Yet the damage had been done, the battalion sustaining several wounded and its first dead soldier of the Russian campaign (a radioman in its signal section)^{dlvii}

After the initial assault groups had forced their way through the lanes cut in the wire, Major Heinemann, at the head of his tactical operations staff, set out for the frontier – a moment he recalled in his memoirs (in third person):

Later, only many months later, his adjutant, Ekkehard Maurer, confided in him that he [Heinemann] had, back then, turned around at the entry point through the cut barbed wire entanglements and, to his adjutant and the special-missions staff officer, Zitelmann, who were following close behind him, said with an expression and tone more serious than any his long-trusted subordinates had ever seen in him: “Always remember this moment! It is the beginning of the end!” [*Es ist der Anfang vom Ende!*]

At that time, those words, which were even utterly forgotten by the commander, hardly penetrated the consciousness of his subordinates. In any case, they were

young and more carefree than the “Old Man,” and it seemed even to him that the deeply serious statement had arisen out of the unconscious of his heavy thoughts. But it happened just as it is described here and that is why it is reported, in order to show how the clash of arms back then was approached with the most insightful and grave misgivings.^{dlviii}

Lt.-Col. Meyer-Detring, chief operations officer (Ia) of Fourth Army’s 137 Infantry Division, described the initial experiences of his division as they crossed the Bug in a sector some 100 kilometers northwest of Brest-Litovsk and north of the Polish town of Siedlce:

After careful preparations, in the night of 21.-22.6.[41] the regiments’ assault companies had advanced to the west bank of the Bug. Pneumatic boats and assault boats for the crossing lay ready. Shortly after 0300 hours, General Bergmann arrived at the advanced division command post on the river embankment of the Bug. The telephone operator at the switchboard in the cramped dugout recalled:

“The matter was made more difficult because in the excitement we had forgotten the portable switchboard and now had to construct our own switchboard relay. We had connected both neighboring divisions, Artillery Commander 44 and 9 Army Corps. For me, the humble soldier, the following hours were unforgettable. The general’s calm, kind manner had impressed me deeply. That day was also a great experience for me from a military perspective, because the corps commander and the artillery commander came to the dugout later.”

The attack began in the early morning hours of the 22.6.[41] – 0315 hours – with a barrage from all weapons and calibers lasting one minute. Under cover of this fire from around 200 barrels of between 100 and 210mm, the first infantry formations embarked across the river and everywhere reached the opposite bank without a fight. Somewhere, a village was burning. Our own artillery then continued its incessant firing, now striking target areas located farther back, in line with the tactical plan of fire, and after 25 minutes transitioned to observed fire. Large elements of the infantry were already on the opposite bank, and still nothing stirred on the enemy side. The surprise had succeeded flawlessly! Approximately one hour after the start of the attack, the first isolated pockets of resistance flared up in the bunkers, but were immediately quelled through rapid and ruthless action. Contrary to expectations, the enemy artillery also remained silent, so that the construction of the bridge could begin immediately. Eight hours later, the division’s heavy weapons were already rolling across the completed bridge.^{dliv}

Despite the good beginning, 137 ID was to sustain serious losses on this day, fighting in the forests and border villages against an enemy who often resisted with determination. Divisional records show that its casualties amounted to 345 men (73 killed, 262 wounded 10 missing) on the first two days of the war.^{dlv}

Like many other German headquarters, Fourth Army was also astonished by the virtual lack of enemy artillery fire (*ganz geringe Artillerie-Taetigkeit*) encountered in the initial hours of the attack. At 0900 hours, Kluge returned to his headquarters following a visit to 2 Panzer Group. The army had, by now, identified six Russian divisions opposite a narrow sector of its front. Nevertheless, Kluge was convinced that the main enemy forces were not along the border, but

further back in the interior. Fourth Army had earlier requested (about 0800) that 2 Air Fleet fly reconnaissance well behind the front to locate Red Army forces astride the army's axis of advance. By late afternoon, however, long-range aerial reconnaissance (*Fernaufklaerung*) had revealed no signs of major defensive preparations farther to the rear.^{dlxi}

Despite the mostly smooth going, by late morning, reports were beginning to trickle in to Kluge's headquarters indicating that enemy resistance – while still largely desultory in nature – was stiffening. At several points, the Russians had fought with real tenacity (*hartnaeckig*); they had also conducted several minor armored thrusts, which were easily repulsed.^{dlxii} Moreover, here and along the rest of the front, many of the Soviet frontier units, facing a crushing local German superiority of forces, had simply melted away into the forests, marshes and cornfields; after the main German assault columns had passed by, they often emerged from their hiding places to fall on German supply troops, medical personnel, motorcycle messengers and other easy targets,^{dlxiii} or they simply shot at German soldiers from concealed positions. In innumerable contemporary German accounts – field post, personal diaries, war diaries – a word suddenly began to appear with disturbing frequency – *Heckenschuetze*, or sniper. Indeed, from the first hours of the war, the German *Landser* faced a tenacious and deadly adversary who was to torment him unremittingly – the Russian sniper.

(Barbarossa Unleashed)

--**23 ID:** Very detailed and intense anecdote (11 pp.) about first day of „Barbarossa;“ at one point, as Heinemann making his way thru enemy barbed wire obstacle at head of his staff, he looks back and, with a grave demeanor, tells his adjutant: “Denkt immer an diese Minute! Es ist der *Anfang vom Ende!*” Account of “X-Tag” continues w/ the Ereignisse von Sklody – Here H. Btl. is ordered – for no useful purpose – to attack a line of Red Army bunkers. The line of some **22** highly-modern bunkers proves to be virtually impregnable; cannot be taken; many casualties result. H. decides to suspend attack and dig in. His superiors demand – repeatedly! – that he continue the assault, take the bunkers; H. refuses, repeatedly! See text for remainder of this account, and courage of H. to stand up to his superiors. (Werner Heinemann, *Pflicht u. Schuldigkeit: Betrachtungen eines Frontoffiziers im Zweiten Weltkrieg*. 2010, 257 (Btm.Kdr., **IR 67/23 ID**))³²⁹

--**137 ID (10.-21.6.41):**

Am **19 Jun 41** geben die Rgts.-Kdre. den B-Tag u. die X-Zeit bekannt. Wie sah es nun auf der anderen Seite des Bug aus, dessen Hochwasser erst Anfang **Jun 41** auf seine Normalbreite von etwa **150** m zurueckging? Eine sorgfaeltig organisierte Erdbeobachtung, Vermessung u. Luftbild-aufklaerung ergaben, dass der Russe entlang des ganzen Ufers in einer Tiefe von **5** km Feldbefestigungen, betonierte Kleinkampfanlagen u. Schuetzengraeben baute. Die Baustellen, auf denen neben Soldaten auch Zivilisten beschaefigt waren, wuerden staendig vermehrt. Es wurde auch nachts, anfangs z.T. bei hellem Scheinwerferlicht u. sehr laut, spater nur noch bei abgeblendetem Licht u. fast geraueschlos,

³²⁹ **Note:** I received a letter about this creatively and intelligently organized memoir from W. Heinemann's daughter, Dr. Birgit Heinemann (**28.2.10**). Her father fought in WWI (Russian and France, earning **EK 1 & II**), served in the interwar Reichswehr, left the military in **1934** (following “Hausarrest” due to his anti-Nazi sentiments), in **Feb 40** again drafted into the military. In **1940** in France was Kp.-Chef and later Btl.-Kdr. in **IR 67/23. ID. 1940/41:** promotion to Major, Btm.-Kdr. **III./67**, later the last Rgt.-Kdr. of **IR 67** (which was disbanded due to heavy losses in winter **41/42**). Later served as Obst.Lt. and Oberst in **302. ID (1942/43)**. Wounded (blinded) on **16.9.43**.

gearbeitete. Erkannt wurden Bunker leichter u. schwerer Ausfuehrung, Kampfgraeben u. Feldstellungen, ab **10 Jun 41** Drahthindernisse u. Panzergraeben. Am **16 Jun 41** waren etwa 110 Anlagen z.T. noch unfertig, im Div.-Streifen festgestellt. . .

Auch auf unsere Seite wurde kraeftig gearbeitet. Nacht fuer Nacht verliessen Arbeitskommandos der Div. den Unterkunftsraum u. begaben sich an die Grenze. Graeben u. Stellungen fuer schwere Waffen wurden ausgehoben u. sofort wieder mit frischem Rasen getarnt, ausgehobene Erde zurueckgeschafft, Geschuetze im Pferde- oder Mannschaftszug in Stellung gebracht. Alles ging lautlos, kein Lichtschein, kein Klappern der Spaten an die Seitengewehr verriet das emsige Leben u. Treiben in der Nacht. Mit dem Morgengrauen jedes neuen Tages erstarnte jede Bewegung. Vereinzelt nur erschienen, als Grenzbeamte oder wie der Kdr. der IV./AR 137 als Bauer mit Stohhut u. Sense getarnt, Erkunder oder Einweisungs-kommandos am Flussuefer.

Der Abend des **21 Jun 41** brachte endlich Gewissheit fuer alle mit einem Aufruf Adolf Hitlers. . . Der Angriffsplan der Division war nach den temperamentvollen Weisungen von Gen. der Inf. Geyer [Kdr. **9. AK**] in Anpassung an den grossen Rahmen sehr sorgfaeltig vorbereitet. Alle drei [3] Inf.-Rgter. in vorderer Linie sollten beiderseits Grodek den Bug am **22 Jun 41** um **3.15** morgens ueberschreiten u. schnell u. weit nach Osten vorstossen. Als Schwerpunktdivision des **9 AK** verfuegte die **137 ID** fuer den Uebergang ueber insgesamt etwa 50 Batterien³³⁰ unter dem Befehl des seit **4 Jun 41** der Div. unterstellten Arko 44, Gen.-Maj. Lucht, sowie drei [3] Pi.-Btn. mit den entsprechenden Brueckenkolonnen.

(W. Meyer-Detring, *137. Inf.-Div. im Mittelabschnitt der Ostfront*, 16-17)

--137 ID:

Nach sorgfaeltig getroffenen Vorbereitungen hatten sich die Angriffs-Kompanien der Rgter. in der Nacht vom **21./22.6.41** an das Westufer des Bug herangeschoben. Flosssaecke u. Sturmboote zum Uebersetzen lagen bereit. Kurz nach **3.00** Uhr traf General Bergmann auf dem vorgeschobenen Div.Gef.Std. an der Uferboeschung des Bug ein. . .

Der Angriff begann im Morgengrauen des **22 Jun 41** – **3.15** Uhr – mit einem Feuerschlag aller Waffen u. Kaliber von einer Minute Dauer. [?] Im Schutze dieses Feuers aus etwa 200 Rohren zwischen **10** u. **21** cm setzten die ersten Teile der Infanterie ueber den Fluss u. erreichten ueberall kampflos das jenseitige Ufer. . . . Die eigene Artillerie feuerte unaufhoerlich weiter, erfasste jetzt nach Feuerplan weiter rueckwaerts gelegene Zielraeume u. ging bereits nach **25** Minutes in beobachtetes Feuer ueber. Schon waren grosse Teile der Infanterie am jenseitigen Ufer, u. noch immer ruehrte sich auf der Feindseite nichts. Die Ueberraschung war restlos gelungen! Etwa eine Stunde nach Angriffsbeginn flackerte der erste vereinzelt Widerstand aus Bunkern auf, wurden jedoch . . . sofort gebrochen. Wider erwarten schwieg auch die fdl. Artillerie, so dass

³³⁰ **Note:** These batteries included: **12** Battr. **AR 137**; **12** Btrr. **AR 17**; je **3** Btrr. s.Art.Abt. **841, 856**; **I./AR 109**; **1./Stug.Abt. 226**; **3** Btrr. **AR 263** u.a.; **Beob.-Abt. 28**; Art.Rgts.Stab z.b.V. **622**. (17)

sofort mit dem Brueckenschlag begonnen werden konnte. Acht [8] Stunden spaeter rollten bereits die schweren Waffen der Div. ueber die fertiggestellte Bruecke. . .

Erste Schwierigkeiten brachte das Gelaende ostwaerts des Bug. Weite versandete Strecken verzoegerten den Vormarsch u. dadurch auch den Brueckenverkehr betraechtlich. Schon staute sich dort auf mehrere Kilometer Fahrzeug hinter Fahrzeug, u. nur schrittweise ging es vorwaerts, da die im Sand stecken-gebliebenen Fahrzeuge einzeln durch Schiebekommandos freigemacht werden mussten. . .

Im Laufe des Nachmittags, **10-12** Stunden nach dem Buguebergang, verdichtete sich vor den Inf.-Rgtern. u. der Aufklaerungs-Abt. die Feindabwehr, besonders in Waeldern. *Sehr schnell mussten wir erkennen, dass Waldkaempfe den Russen mehr lagen als den Deutschen.* Schon vom ersten Tag an traten die Worte „Heckenschuetzen“, „Baumschuetzen“, „hinterhaeltige Kampfweise“ usw. in den Meldungen zunehmend auf. . .

Dieser sich versteifende Widerstand wurde durch unzusammenhaengende Gegenstoesse der ersten fdl. Panzern unterstuetzt. Sie wurden muehlos abgewiesen. Diese leichten Panzer u. Pz.-Spaehwg. waren unseren Pz.-Abwehrwaffen weit unterlegen. Wenn der Russe nichts Besseres hatte, konnte nichts schiefgehen! . . [Note: Text includes one brief account of a Soviet tank attack in a Birkenwaeldchen, broken up by **Stug.Abt. 226**.]

Am Abend des ersten Angriffstages stand die Division **20 km tief** im Lande des offenbar voellig ueberraschten Gegners, der nur unzusammenhaengend Widerstand leistete. . . Ein paar hundert Gefangene waren erster Beweis des Erfolges. Die eigenen Verluste waren ertraeglich.

(*W. Meyer-Detring, 137. Inf.-Div. im Mittelabschnitt der Ostfront, 19-21*)

--**137 ID: 23.00** [this is approximate time]: . . . Ueber den Kampf des ersten Tages ist zu sagen, dass der Feind nirgends einen zusammenhaengenden Widerstand leistete, sondern sich nur in kleineren Gruppen, besonders in Waeldern, hier aber hartnaeckig zur Wehr setzte. (*KTB, RH 26-137/4*)

--**23.6.41** [*Kriegsbericht General Heinrici (43 AK)*]³³¹ *an seine Familie / oestlich des Bug*:³³²

Wir haben gestern eine russ. Division gegenueber gehabt, die in der Ueber- raschung voellig zersprengt ist. Ueberall in den grossen Waeldern, in den zahl- losen Gehoefen sitzen verlorene Soldaten, die oft genug hinterruecks schiessen. Der Russe fuehrt ueberhaupt hintertueckisch Krieg. Unsere Leute haben darauf- hin mehrfach stark aufgeraemt, ohne Gnade. . .

³³¹ Note: Das **43 AK** ueberschitt am **22.6.41** mit der **131, 134** u. **252 ID** bei Mielnik den Bug, bildete die Suedflanke der Schlacht von Bialystok u. ging dann weiter nach Osten vor. Heinricis Korps war bis zum **4.7.41** der **4 Armee** (Kluge), dann der **2 Armee** (Weichs) unterstellt.

³³² Note: Several of these initial entries amplify the sinister dialectic which resulted in ever-increasing brutality and barbarism on both sides.

(J. Huerter, *Ein deutscher General an der Ostfront. Die Briefe u. Tagebuecher des Gotthard Heinrici 1941/42.* 62-63)

1.6.5: Ninth Army

--Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa (31.1.41):³³³

4. *Auftraege an die Heeresgruppen u. Armeen:* . . .

9. *Armee* durchbricht in Zusammenarbeit mit **3 PzGr** mit Schwerpunkt auf dem Nordfluegel die feindl. Kraefte westl. u. noerdl. Grodno, stoest in Richtung Lida – Wilna vor u. vernichtet unter Ausnutzung des Vorgehens der Panzergruppen u. in Verbindung mit **4 Armee** die im Gebiet zwischen Belostok – Minsk befindlichen Feindkraefte. Weiterhin wird es Aufgabe der Armee sein, hinter der **3 PzGr** folgend, die Duena bei u. suedostw. Polacac (Polock) zu ge-winnen.

(Halder, Franz. *Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. II. Appendix 2, 467)

--*Excerpt from Barbarossa Unleashed:*

German Ninth Army, commanded by the 61-year-old General Adolf Strauss,^{dlxiv} advanced on a broad front against the northern face of the Belostok salient, its attack striking Lt.-Gen. V.I. Kuznetsov's Soviet 3 Army. The *Schwerpunkt* (point of main effort) of Strauss' attack was on his left, where the three infantry divisions of his 8 Army Corps burst out of the Suwalki triangle from a start line east of Augustovo and smashed into Soviet 56 Rifle Division covering Grodno.^{dlxv} Kuznetsov's army, short of ammunition and lacking proper reserves, its telephone lines cut and radio communications disrupted by German saboteurs or the tenacious *Luftwaffe* bombing, soon found itself in a perilous predicament.^{dlxvi}

The mission of 8 Army Corps (8, 28, and 161 ID) was to protect the southern flank of 57 Panzer Corps (3 Panzer Group) by seizing the border defenses southeast of the Suwalki triangle and securing crossings over the Neman at and above the ancient fortress of Grodno. 8 Infantry Division, on the corps' right flank, had Grodno directly within its attack sector. The fighting was ferocious:

The bunker line on the border consisted of more than a dozen works clustered around Hill 150 which commanded the secondary road to Grodno. Under cover of an artillery barrage by 29 batteries, 38 Infantry Regiment, 8 Infantry Division, attacked the position. An engineer assault company, reinforced by an anti-tank platoon and an 88mm anti-aircraft section, was attached to the regiment with the task of destroying the bunkers. The first resistance was encountered less than a mile from the border. A dug-in tank covered an anti-tank ditch, behind which stood groups of bunkers on both sides of the road. The preparatory fires had not silenced them. Anti-tank guns and machine guns concentrated their fires on the embrasures.

³³³ **Note:** Here I've carved out the portion of the Army's Deployment Directive specifically addressing role of Ninth Army.

The engineer assault teams worked their way through wheat fields, fortunate to find cover in them and then behind earth mounds near the bunkers. Blinding the apertures with flamethrowers, individual engineers charged up to the bunker walls and with extension ladders scaled them. From the relative safety of their perches, they lowered explosive charges to the apertures, blasted holes into ventilation and periscope shafts, then poured gasoline into them followed by smoke grenades and chain charges. Meanwhile, other demolition teams blasted the often hidden entries to the bunkers.

In some of the storied bunkers, each level had to be destroyed in this manner, down to the basement. Rarely did the Russian crews, which numbered from 20-50 men, surrender, and most of the defenders fought to the death. In some instances survivors believed to be dead came to after hours and resumed the fight, requiring the same position to be neutralized all over again.^{dlxvii}

Farther west, Strauss' 129 Infantry Division (42 Army Corps) quickly reached its initial objectives that morning.^{dlxviii} By 0445 hours, the first Soviet prisoners were being marched to the division CP for interrogation:

The prisoners give the impression that they had been taken completely by surprise by the attack. Some say that they had had neither weapons nor ammunition at hand; others claim they were surprised in their sleep (as a result, some of them appear without boots or socks). The prisoners are willing to make statements, but are, however, not apprised of the intentions of their commanders (e.g., they do not even know the orders for the platoons or companies, or whether frontier positions should be held or not).^{dlxix}

During the course of its advance 129 Infantry Division was at first unable to clear rear areas of all Soviet troops (an almost universal problem in the opening days of the war). Dispersed enemy elements often emerged from their hiding places to attack the division's supply troops as they moved up behind the assault groups. From one farmstead captured by the advancing infantry early that morning, Soviet troops suddenly opened fire on German baggage train vehicles hours later. The Germans responded by pulverizing the farmstead with artillery fire, leaving behind 14 dead and seven wounded Russians. In a similar incident, this one in late afternoon, troops of 129 ID at the railroad station at Grajewo (captured that morning), were fired upon by Red Army soldiers concealed in a farmstead. A platoon from the division's replacement battalion (*Feldersatz-Btl.*) quickly cleared out the enemy, losing two men in the process. From the papers of a dead Russian officer it was discovered that Soviet battlegroups had been ordered to let the German combat troops pass by, and then fall upon their supply traffic circulating on the roads behind the front. Such skirmishes, so typical of Red Army tactics, were to continue for days.^{dlxx}

The experiences of Ninth Army's 256 Infantry Division (20 Army Corps) were also typical. The division attacked with all three infantry regiments up front, debouching from the Suwalki triangle in a southeasterly direction. While key terrain features and villages in the path of the advance were rapidly secured, the attacking battalions, on more than one occasion, were forced to clear tenaciously resisting Red Army troops from bunker positions. Moreover, a major axis of advance (*Vormarschstrasse*) taken by the division, as it pushed into Soviet held territory, turned out to be little more than a "sea of sand," as registered in the divisional war diary:

The division's *Vormarschstrasse* via G. Haczitowka to Kuryanka is in a very poor condition. On this side of the frontier it was alright, but immediately after

crossing over the frontier, the road went through a sea of sand. Many vehicles got stuck and could only be put back to rights with the help of others. In addition to that, the bridge across the stream along the border collapsed after a short time as a result of the great strain and heavy use it was subjected to by the GHQ artillery and the assault guns, and it could only be used again after a lot of intense work.^{dlxxi}

Despite such difficulties – common of those encountered up and down the front by the attacking German formations – the combat infantry of 256 ID pushed on impetuously toward their objectives. By 1230 hours, lead elements of 481 Infantry Regiment reached an airfield several kilometers north of the small town of Novy Dvor, just as a large group of Red Army aircraft were frantically trying to get airborne. The German infantry unleashed a torrent of heavy machine gun fire; along with a battery of 75mm assault guns from 210 *Sturmgeschuetz* Battalion,^{dlxxii} they shot up 38 of the Soviet planes on the ground, along with several hangars in which other planes were housed. By 1315, the town of Novy Dvor itself, with its thriving Jewish community dating back to the early 16th Century, was in German hands. Only six of the town's Jews would survive the war, three of them in the partisan movement.^{dlxxiii}

(Barbarossa Unleashed)

--22.6.41: Post-war memoir of Uffz. Helmut Pabst.³³⁴

This time I was with the leading wave. The units moved up to their positions quietly, talking in whispers. There was a creaking of wheels—assault guns. Two nights before, we had looked over the ground; now we were waiting for the infantry. They came up in dark, ghostly columns and moved forward through the cabbage plots and cornfields. We went along with them to act as artillery liaison unit for the second battalion. In a potato field the order came “Dig in!” No. 10 Battery was to open fire at 0305 hours.

0305. The first salvo! At the same moment everything sprang to life. Firing along the whole front—infantry guns, mortars. The Russian watch-towers vanished in a flash. Shells crashed down on all the enemy batteries, which had been located long before. In file and in line, the infantry swarmed forward. Bog, ditches; boots full of water and mud. Ahead of us the barrage crept forward from line to line. *Flame-throwers* advanced against the strong-points. The fire of machine-guns, and the high-pitched whip of rifle bullets. My young wireless operator, with forty pounds' load on his back, felt a bit queasy during the first half-hour. Then, at Kanopky Barracks, came the *first serious resistance*. The company ahead was stuck. “Assault guns, forward!”

We were with the battalion commander on a small hill, 500 yards from the barracks. Our first man wounded—one of the runners. We set up the wireless. Suddenly we were *fired on from close quarters*. A sniper. We picked up our rifles

³³⁴ **Note:** Uffz. Pabst, 30 years of age, was in Ninth Army; served with an artillery unit as a Signals NCO. He was a former law student and veteran of the German occupation of France. From the first week of the Russian campaign Pabst kept a diary in the form of letters to his parents and friends in Frankfurt-on-Main, and particularly to his father, who had served in Russia in WWI. (5) (**Note:** Pabst's was one of the first post-war memoirs to be published by a common German soldier (1957)).

for the first time. Although we signalers, we must have been the better shots—the sniping stopped. Our first kill.

The advance went on. We moved fast, sometimes flat on the ground, but irresistibly. Ditches, water, sand, sun. Always changing position. Thirsty. No time to eat. By 10.00 o'clock we were *already old soldiers* and had seen a great deal: abandoned positions, knocked-out armored cars, the first prisoners, the first dead Russians. . .

(Helmut Pabst, *The Outermost Frontier*, 9-10)

--**129 ID**:

22.6.41:

3.05: Am **22.6.41** beginnen die Kampfhandlungen zur befohlenen Zeit um **3.05** Uhr. Die Infanterie ueberschreitet die Grenze, die Artillerie nimmt bekannte Feindziele . . . unter Feuer. Kurz nach Feuereroeffnung ist vom vorgeschobenen Div.Gef.-Std. das hell brennende Grajewo zu sehen. Der vom Div.Gef.Std. aus zu sehende russ. Beobachtungsturm wird **3.15** Uhr durch eine Pak in Brand geschossen.

3.25: Erreicht **II./IR 185**³³⁵ mit vordersten Teilen das brennende Mierucie.

3.30: Erreicht **Pz.Zug 3** Grajewo.

3.40: Erreicht **I./185** Konopki, **II./185** nimmt zur gleichen Zeit die Hoehen suedlich Mierucie.

3.55: Im Abschnitt des **IR 428** u. **IR 430** ueberschreiten die angesetzten Stosstrupps an allen Stellen planmaessig die Reichsgrenze. Die Beobachtungstuerme entlang der Grenze werden in Brand gesetzt u. koennen von den Russen nicht mehr benutzt werden. Die im Abschnitt des **IR 430** angesetzten Stosstrupps nehmen **3.55** Uhr Tozcylowo, Karnowo, Skrodzkie. Feind scheint sich, nur geringen Widerstand leistend, zurueckzuziehen.

4.20: **IR 428** nimmt Reszki, Rudki u. Stare ohne Feindwiderstand. . .

4.45: Nimmt die linke Kp. des **II.Batls. [IR 185]** nach hartem Gefecht Bogusze. Die ersten Gefangenen werden zum Div.Gef.Std. zur Vernehmung in Marsch gesetzt. Die Gefangenen machen den Eindruck, als seien sie von dem Angriff voellig ueberrascht worden. Einige sagen aus, weder Waffen noch Munition in Haenden gehabt zu haben, andere geben an, beim Schlafen ueberrascht worden zu sein (sie erscheinen daher z.T. ohne Stiefel u. Struempfe).

³³⁵ **Note:** On **22.6.41**, the **129 ID** had three inf.-rgts/ = **427., 428., 430 IR**. (See, G.F. Nafziger, German Order of Battle. Infantry in WWII, p. 160) The **IR 185** was most likely temporarily assigned to the division to support its initial attack. On **24.6.41** is following entry in KTB: “Div.Kdr. faehrt zum Rgts.-Gef.Std. **IR 185**, um dem Kdr. **IR 185** den Befehl ueber die vor Osowiec stehenden Kraefte zu uebergeben u. sich gleichzeitig von ihm zu verabschieden.” That appears to be the final reference to this regiment in KTB of **129 ID** through **1.7.41**.

Die Gefangenen sagen willig aus, sind jedoch ueber Absichten ihrer Fuehrung nicht im Bilde (z.B. sind nicht einmal die Auftraege der Zuege oder Kom[panien] bekannt, oder ob z.B. Grenzstellungen gehalten werden muessen oder nicht). . .

5.20: . . . **II./185** erreicht Grajewo u. stoesst bis zu den Kasernen am Suedrand von G. vor. . .

9.35: . . . Feind weicht auf der ganzen Front vor **IR 185** – nur noch schwachen Widerstand leistend – zurueck. . .

14.30: Erreicht **IR 185** mit **I./185** Opartowo, mit **II./185** Okol.³³⁶

[- - -]: Aus den Papieren eines gefallenen russ. Offiziers geht hervor, dass die bekaempften Kampfgruppen Auftrag hatten, die fechtende Truppe vorbei marschieren zu lassen, um anschliessend den Verkehr auf den Nachschubstrassen zu stoeren bzw. zu unterbinden. . .

(*KTB, RH 26-129/3*)

--**256 ID:**

RH 26-256/12: KTB (portions from **22.6.-14.7.41**). Interesting remarks on **21./22.6.41** about employment of *Brandenburg special forces* in divisional sector. The division experiences some tough going on first two days of campaign, against a stubbornly resisting enemy. In the Panzerschlacht um Kuznika (which ended on **26.6.41**), the Division destroyed **256** Soviet tanks!

1.6.6: 3 Panzer Group

Col.-Gen. Hermann Hoth:

--**3 Pz Gr** led by Col.-Gen. Hermann Hoth, who possessed a “*boldness hard to parallel in World War II.*” In **Mar 41**, for example, faced w/ putting together his scheme of maneuver w/in the advance of AGC toward Moscow, Hoth would advise the ascetic but fiery cdr of AGC, GFM Fedor v. Bock, that the *initial encirclement of Soviet forces should close just east of Smolensk*, an awe inspiring **700 km** from the border. . . Bock notes in his wartime diary that he was in *essential agreement* w/ Hoth but that the High Command of the Army insisted on a *more conservative encirclement closely ca. 350 km into the Soviet Union just east of Minsk*. (See, R.H.S. Stolfi, *German Panzers on the Offensive*, 16)³³⁷

--Mit dem Rangdienstalder vom 1. November 1938 wurde er zum *General der Infanterie* befördert. Im Polenfeldzug befehligt er beim Angriff auf Südpolen noch immer das der **10. Armee** unterstellte **XV. Armeekorps (mot.)**. Für die Leistungen seines Korps wurde Hoth bereits im September 1939 mit beiden Spangen zu seinen Eisernen Kreuzen ausgezeichnet.

³³⁶ **Note:** Only a representative sample of the **129 ID**'s advances on this day – villages captured, etc. – are included in this entry.

³³⁷ **Note:** Also check Gerbet (Bock's diary) for **Mar 41**.

Außerdem wurde ihm am 27. Oktober 1939 das Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes verliehen. Ende 1939 verlegte er dann mit seinem Korps an die Westfront. Er führte das Korps dann auch im Westfeldzug. In diesem wurde sein Korps dann auch als Gruppe Hoth bezeichnet. Am 30. Juni 1940 wurde sein Korps wieder zum **XV. Armeekorps (mot.)** umbenannt, er blieb aber weiter der Kommandierende General. Nach Abschluss des Westfeldzuges wurde Hoth am 19. Juli 1940 zum Generaloberst befördert. Mitte November 1940 wurde aus seinem Stab dann der Stab der **Panzergruppe 3** gebildet. Zu deren Oberbefehlshaber wurde Hoth nun ernannt. Diese Gruppe führte er dann beim Ostfeldzug zum Angriff auf Mittelrussland. Für die Führung der Gruppe wurde ihm am 17. Juli 1941 das Eichenlaub zum Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes verliehen, was ihm persönlich von Adolf Hitler verliehen wurde. Am 7. August 1941 wurde er namentlich im Wehrmachtsbericht genannt: "*Am Verlauf dieser gewaltigen Schlacht waren die Armeen des Generalfeldmarschalls von Kluge und der Generalobersten Strauß und Freiherr von Weichs, die Panzergruppen der Generalobersten Guderian und Hoth sowie die Luftwaffenverbände der Generale der Flieger Loerzer und Freiherr von Richthofen ruhmreich beteiligt.*" Ritterkreuz (27. Oktober 1939) Eichenlaub (17. Juli 1941) Schwerter (15. September 1943) (*lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de*)

--By nightfall on 22 June, the Germans had forced open a gap just north of Grodno between Soviet Northwestern and Western Fronts. (*Gilbert, Second World War, 199*)

--Schon um die Mittagszeit drang Panzer (**39 PzK**) in Oltia ein und sicherten die unzerstoerten Bruecken. (*Hoth, 54*)

--Seized all three bridges over the Nemen. Dem **57 PzK (12 PD)** gelang es, in Merkine am Nachmittag einzudringen u. die Zerstoerung der Njemenbruecken zu verhindern. Am Abend befand sich das Pz.-Rgt. im Vorgehen auf Varena. (*Hoth, 53*)

--Division of Hoth's **5 AK** – despite bitter enemy resistance, a VA of the corps had crossed the Nemen by evening between Merkine – Olita. (*Hoth, 53-54*)

--Was war fuer den 23. Juni anzuordnen? Im Stabe der **3 PzGr** bestand kein Zweifel, dass die durch Ueberraschung erreichten Vorteile am naechsten Tage mit aller Kraft ausgenutzt werden mussten. Die Pz.-Korps mussten weit nach Osten Gelaende gewinnen. . .“ (*Hoth, 55*)

--Operationally, Hoth pulls off a major coup by *splitting the boundary* between the Northwest and West Fronts. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941, 32-33*)

--By the evening of **23 Jun 41**, **3 PzGr** had punched a gap some **130 km wide** between the Russian Northwestern and Western Fronts. (J. Erickson, *The Soviet High Command, 595*)

--Sixteen hours after the opening of Operation “*Barbarossa*,” the German Army in the East had *virtually unhinged two Soviet fronts*, the NW and the Western. At their junction, Soviet 11th Army had been battered to pieces; the left flank of the 8th Army (NW Front) and the right flank of 3rd Army (W Front) had been similarly laid bare. . . German tanks were astride the Niemen. (For more details see, *Erickson, Road to Stalingrad, 131-32*)

--**Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa (31.1.41)**:³³⁸

³³⁸ **Note:** Here I've carved out the portion of the Army's Deployment Directive specifically addressing role of 3 Panzer Group.

4. *Auftraege an die Heeresgruppen u. Armeen: . . .*

3 *Pz.Gr.* durchbricht in Gegend noerdl. Grodno in Zusammenarbeit mit **9 Armee** die feindl. grenznahen Kraefte u. schafft durch rasches Vorgehen in die Gegend noerdl. Minsk in Verbindung mit der von Suedwesten auf Minsk vorstossenden **2 PzGr** die Voraussetzung fuer die Vernichtung der im Gebiet zwischen Belostok – Minsk stehenden Feindkraefte. Ihre weitere Aufgabe wird es sein, beschleunigt in enger Fuehlung mit **2 PzGr** die Gegend bei u. noerdl. Witebsk zu erreichen, das Zusammenfassen feindlicher Kraefte im Bereich der oberen Duena zu verhindern u. damit der H.Gr. die Handlungsfreiheit fuer weitere Aufgaben zu wahren.

(Halder, Franz. *Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. II. Appendix 2, 466)

--19.-22.6.41 (3 PzGr):

Der Aufmarsch der **3 PzGr** im Suwalki-Zipfel vollzog sich vom **19.-22.6.41** planmaessig. Die **3** zur Verfuegung stehenden kurzen Naechte sowie das Vorhandensein von nur **2** Aufmarschstrassen machten es erforderlich, mit Teilen bei Tage in die Bereitstellungsraeume einzuruecken. Dieser Nachteil war bewusst in Kauf genommen worden, um mit der Masse der Divisionen zum spaetesten Zeitpunkt an der Grenze zu erscheinen. Die Geheimhaltung blieb trotzdem gewahrt.

Alle Aufmarschbewegungen vollzogen sich bei guter Verkehrsdisziplin reibungslos. Stoerungen durch SS-Verbaende konnten durch Eingreifen des **AOK 9** behoben werden. . . Die Divisionen stellten sich unter dem Schutz der Artillerie, schweren Waffen u. Flak vorzueglich getarnt zum Angriff bereit. **22.6.41 2.00** Uhr war die Bereitstellung ungestoert beendet.

(„*Gefechtsberichte Russland*,“ **RH 21-3/732**)

--Soviet Forces along the Line of Advance of 3 PzGr:

- a) **3 PzGr: 7, 12, 20 PDs** (first echelon).
- b) Frontage in kilometers = **50**.
- c) **128 RD**, one rgt. of **188 RD** (Soviet formations on frontier in area of **3 PzGr** offensive)

(J. Erickson, *The Soviet High Command*, 592)

--**22.6.41:** On 22 June, Hoth's armor had broken through the main Soviet defensive belt and driven a deep wedge north of Grodno between Soviet Northwestern and Western Fronts, while also capturing intact the three bridges over the Neman River at Olita and Merkine, an essential prerequisite for the fulfillment of the panzer group's mission. Within **48** hours, Field Marshal von Bock, in acknowledgement of *Hoth having achieved operational freedom*, released his group from Ninth Army control and subordinated it directly to Army Group Center. (*Barbarossa Unleashed*, 275)³³⁹

³³⁹ **Note:** This change [i.e., lifting of **3 PzGr's** subordination to Strauss's Ninth Army] came into effect at **2400** hours on **23 Jun 41**; at the same time, **5** and **6 AK**, allotted to Hoth for the breakthrough operations on 22 June, reverted back to the control of Ninth Army. (BA-MA **RH 21-3/788**, *KTB Panzergruppe 3*,

--22.6.41: Oblt. Richard D. (Stab/Pz.Nachr.Abt. 83 / 7 PD):

And now at **0330** hours it all began, perhaps not as abruptly as it had in the west and not on the scale that it had in the world war, but a quarter of an hour later the first *Luftwaffe* air wings roared back, and now squadron after squadron travels eastward. And all the while the sun shone. . . . You now know more than we do, because there is now no opportunity to listen to the radio, and everything will happen at once, and the spaces will be so vast that you can even find them on our wall map. We have maps that reach a long way to the east, and if you remember Napoleon's army did that on foot, but we're motorized and we'll get it done in **14** days.

(Oblt. Richard D. (35 232), *Collection BfZ*; cited in: *Barbarossa Unleashed*, 216)³⁴⁰

--22.6.41: Hans Hertel, a staff officer attached to **39 PzK**, described the "Russian way of war" as it unfolded on 22 June 1941, and how the *Landser* responded with equal determination and toughness:

When we crossed over the Soviet frontier at **0315** hours on the morning on 22 June 1941, we were aware that this campaign would defy comparison to any previous operations. Even the campaign in the Balkans had proceeded at lightning speed. But, from the outset, the strength of the Red Army and the vastness of the Russian territory made a much tougher and longer fight necessary. Above all, the Red Army soldier was a different soldier to any of our previous opponents. We could already see that in the first hour. Our cries of "*ruki wjerch!*" (hands up!) were completely ignored. Here, they all fought, even in the most hopeless of situations. We experienced Red Army soldiers who lay "wounded" or "dead," let us pass by, and then suddenly shot at us from close behind. What protection is there against a fighting style like that? Only steely ruthlessness. Thus the campaign in the east wore a grim mask from the first hour on. The Soviet soldiers fought with a death-defying determination [*Todesverachtung*] which we had never encountered in any western opponent.

(K.-R. Woche, *Zwischen Pflicht u. Gewissen*, 99-100, cited in: *Barbarossa Unleashed*, 263)

--22.6.41: Hoth's **3 PzGr** attacked from East Prussia into Lithuania side by side w/ Hoepner's **4 PzGr** of AGN, and it experienced the *same difficulties crossing the heavily wooded and almost trackless sandy terrain*. Enemy resistance was more determined than in the north. Some of the NKVD border troops, although *w/o any artillery support, fought to the very end*, and the *Lituanian Corps* [?], which barred the progress of the panzer group, put up an unexpectedly tough resistance. The few roads running from west to east were little more than narrow sandy woodland tracks, many of which had *never been used by a vehicle before*, and enemy resistance, however light, could not be overcome by deployment off the road. In consequence columns were repeatedly halted and the *many forest fires* added to the confusion. Any bogged or broken down vehicles completely blocked the route, and the wooden bridges over the network of streams had to be strengthened to convert them to vehicle carrying. At von Brauchitsch's insistence, some of

23.6.41.)

³⁴⁰ **Note:** See my bibliography in *Barbarossa Unleashed*.

the routes had been *allocated to the infantry formations*, but there were in fact too few routes for either armor or infantry. . . **19 PD** was halted for hours by a column of nearly **2000 Luftwaffe** lorries, many of them loaded w/ telegraph poles, which had ignored the vehicle march table, and **Ninth Army**, forgetful of its own orders, began to drive the infantry divisions forward, urging them to form mobile detachments by centralizing their limited number of motor vehicles. These motorized elements took to the panzer axes as there was no other fast routes available to them. (A. Seaton, *The Russo-German War 1941-45*, 118)

--**22.6.41**: In the face of these many difficulties [see paragraph above], the advance of Rudolf Schmidt's **39 PzK** and Knutzen's **57 PzK** at first made slow progress, not reaching the road bridges over the Nemen, about **30-40** miles beyond the East Prussian border, until midday on **23 Jun 41**. IAW their normal practice, Soviet cdrs had *held back their armored mechanized corps* ready to use them against the flanks of the German thrusts, but they were *unable to commit all their mechanized troops in a coordinated counteroffensive* because of the chaotic conditions resulting from poor communications and the German air offensive. (A. Seaton, *The Russo-German War 1941-45*, 118-19)

--**22.6.41 (Halder KTB)**:

Noerdl. von Belostok hat die ***Panzergruppe Hoth*** einen *besonders starken Erfolg zu buchen*. Sie ist durch das Wald- u. seeige Gelaende durchgestossen bis an den Njemen, dessen wichtige Uebergaenge bei Olita u. Merkine unzerstoert in unsere Haende fielen. Die Pz.Gr. hat entgegengeworfene Teile von **8 feindl. Divn.** zer-sprengt. Ihr gegenueber steht kein organisierter Feind. ***An dieser Stelle scheint die operative Bewegungsfreiheit gewonnen zu sein.*** . . .

(F. Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. III, 5)

--**22.6.41 (David Stahel's Account)**:

Indecisive Border Battles

Aiding the German advance, Soviet deployments in their first strategic echelon opposite AGC were set well forward, w/ only the most *rudimentary prepared defenses* and, owing to Stalin's intransigence, received no warning of the impending invasion until it was literally underway. Compounding the problem, the strategic deployment of the Soviet **3, 10** and **4 Armies**, which according to pre-war Soviet plans were to absorb an initial German blow, were *heavily concentrated in the west of the **Belestok salient** largely between the joint armored thrusts of 2 and 3 PzGr*, thus greatly facilitating their encirclement. Not surprising therefore, in the early hours of **3 PzGr's** surge eastward, forward units reported "*only very weak or no enemy contact.*"

Luftwaffe reconnaissance counted just one enemy artillery battery in its path.³⁴¹ Before the end of the day Hoth's panzer group was on the Nemen River w/ captured bridges in Olita and Merkine. The penetration of the Soviet front, Halder suggested, had already won the panzer group *freedom of operational man-*

³⁴¹ **Note:** "Panzerarmeeoberkommandos Tagesmeldungen 21.6. – 31.8.41," BA-MA RH 21-3/43, Fol. 11 (22 June 1941).

euver.³⁴² Yet, in spite of its success, the panzer group's war diary includes this observation:

Where the enemy appears he fights tenaciously and courageously to the death. Defectors and those seeking to surrender were not reported from any positions. The struggle, as a result, will be harder than those in Poland and the Western Campaign.

(D. Stahel, *Operation Barbarossa and Germany's Defeat in the East*, 153-55)

--22.6.41 [3 PzGr / RH 21-3/732]:

Die Divisionen stellten sich unter dem Schutz der Artillerie, schweren Waffen u. Flak vorzueglich getarnt zum Angriff bereit. [Um] **2.00** Uhr war die Bereitstellung ungestoert beendet. . . Der Auftrag der Panzergruppe war, dem linken Fluegel der Heeresgruppe Mitte voraus, ueber Njemen – Wilna u. suedl. zu-naechst bis zur Linie Molodeczno – Narocz-See vorzustossen. . .

[Um] **3.05** Uhr trat **3 PzGr** zum Angriff an, unterstuetzt durch Bombenangriffe des **8 Fliegerkorps** gegen Olita u. Kalvarija. Die Grenzhoeehen wurden rasch genommen. . . An allen Stellen der Front wurde nur geringer Feindwiderstand, keine Artillerie gemeldet. . . Das **5 AK** hat in besonders schneidigem Angriff gegen fdl. Bunker bei Lazdijai staerkere Feindkraefte zersprengt u. mit besonderen Marschleistungen noch am 1. Tag den Njemen ueberschritten.³⁴³ Allmaehlich mehrten sich im Verlauf [des Tages] in Verlustmeldungen u. Gefangenenaussagen die Anzeichen, dass doch staerkerer Feind westl. des Njemen stand als zu-naechst vermutet. . . Festgestellt wurde, dass Teile ohne scharfe Munition, angeblich zu einer Uebung ausgerueckt waren. Luftangriffe des Feindes fanden am **22.6.41** nicht statt. Von einer planmaessigen Fuehrung im Grossen war nichts zu merken. Der Widerstand erfolgte in unzusammenhaengenden Gruppen, die zahlreichen Feldbefestigungen waren nicht oder nur schwach besetzt.

Wo sich der Gegner stellte, kaempfte er zaeh u. tapfer bis zum Tode. Ueber-laeufer u. Ergeben wurden von keiner Stelle gemeldet. *Der Kampf wurde dadurch haerter als in Polen u. im Westfeldzug*. Am **13.10** Uhr wurde von **39 AK [mot.]** der Njemen-Uebergang Olita genommen, **2** unversehrte Bruecken fielen in eigene Hand. Das erste Ziel der Pz.Gr., Durchstoss ueber den Njemen, war erreicht, ohne lange Grenzkaempfe, die **OKH** erwartet hatte, auch ohne Bau von Kriegsbruecken. . . Auch der Uebergang Merkine fiel am **1. Angriffstag** in die Hand des **57 AK [mot.]**. . . Die Bevoelkerung begruesste die Truppe in freundlicher Haltung u. empfand anscheinend ihren Einmarsch als Befreiung vom bolschewistischen Joch.

Die Zusammenarbeit mit **8 Fliegerkorps** war besonders eng u. lebendig. . . Die Herrschaft im Luftraum war nahezu voll am **1. Angriffstag** erkaempft. Wie in

³⁴² **Note:** The direct notation for Halder's diary: Franz Halder, *Kriegstagebuch: Tägliche Aufzeichnungen des Chefs des Generalstabes des Heeres 1939-1942*, Bd. III: *Der Russlandfeldzug bis zum Marsch auf Stalingrad (22.6.1941 – 24.9.1942)*, Hans-Adolf Jacobsen & Alfred Philippi (Hg.). Stuttgart, 1964, p 5. (22 June 1941).

³⁴³ **Note:** Apparently, **5. AK** had been attached to **3 PzGr** for the border crossing.

Polen wurde der Feind durch die eigenen Luftangriffe in die Waelder getrieben, aus denen er erfolgreich Kleinkrieg gegen rueckwaertige Teile u. Kolonne fuehrt. . . . Die eigene Luftaufklaerung wurde zu Beginn der Kaempfe durch fdl. Jaeger gestoert u. in groessere Hoehen gedruickt. . .

Eine hoehere Fuehrung [bei den Russen] trat in den ersten Tagen ueberhaupt nicht in Erscheinung. Die untere Fuehrung war unbeweglich, schematisch u. ohne schnelle Entschlussfassung in Anpassung an die jeweilige Lage. . . Kein Unterfuehrer hat den Entschluss zur Zerstoeerung einer Bruecke gefunden. Ein gefangener Pionier-Offz. hatte sich an den Befehl gehalten, die Bruecke Olita um **19.00** Uhr zu sprengen. . . . Der einzelne Kaempfer war *haerter als der Weltkriegskaempfer*, wohl doch eine Folge der bolschewistischen Idee, aber auch aufgehetzt durch seine politischen Kommissare. . .

(„Gefechtsberichte Russland,“ **RH 21-3/732**)

--23.6.41 [3 PzGr / RH 21-3/732]:

Feindeindruck: Der Feind war nicht so stark wie angenommen u. auch nicht verteidigt, sondern nach Osten auswich. . . Es galt, die Ueberraschung moeglichst weit nach Osten auszunutzen, um einem neu organisierten Widerstand an Wilja, Beresina u. Duena zuvorzukommen. . . Die bei Olita gemeldete russ. **5 PD** fuehrte einen heftigen Angriff gegen die Brueckenkoepfe bei Olita. Die eigene **7 PD** hat hier ihre schwerste Panzerschlacht seit Kriegsbeginn gewonnen u. dabei **80 fdl. Panzer** abgeschossen. . .

Unter staendigem Kampf, auf schlechtesten Wegen drang **39 AK [mot.]** Richtung Wilna vor. . . **57 AK [mot.]** kam ueber Merkine langsamer nach Osten vor, weniger durch Feindwiderstand als durch den einen nur zur Verfuegung stehenden schlechten Sandweg aufgehalten. . .

Die Wege wurden immer schlechter. Alle als Strassen eingezeichnete Verbindungen erwiesen sich als unbefestigte, nicht unterhaltene Sandwege. . . Angriffe des Feindes aus der Flanke u. im Ruecken kamen hinzu u. verlangsamten das Vorgehen.³⁴⁴ . . .

Die Nachrichtenverbindungen begannen jetzt schwieriger zu werden. Die Fernsprechverbindung war haeufig gestoert. . . Der Funkverkehr war durch lange Maersche der Staebe haeufig stundenlang unterbrochen, neue *franzoesische Geraete* waren ausgefallen, da sie den Marsch auf den schlechten Wegen nicht aushielten.

(„Gefechtsberichte Russland,“ **RH 21-3/732**)

--23.6.41 (Tagebuchnotizen GFM v. Bock):

Es geht vorwaerts, am besten bei der *Panzergruppe Hoth*, die abends unter unmittelbaren Befehl der H.Gr. tritt. Bei *Panzergruppe Guderian* geht es nicht so

³⁴⁴ **Note:** This report also addresses the traffic problems caused by infantry divisions using the same Panzerstrassen as **3 PzGr**; a further problem was posed by elements of the Luftwaffe also using one of these roads – some **3000** vehicles in 2 marching groups behind **19 PD** (for details see, p. 7)

glatt. Die Schwierigkeiten des Ueberganges bei Brest, wie beim Korps Lemel-sen wirkten sich hemmend auf den Betriebsstoffnachschub aus. . .

(BA-MA, H 08-22/9: Nachlass Generalfeldmarschall Fedor von Bock (*Tagebuchnotizen Osten, 22.6.1941 bis 5.1.1942*))

--**22.6.41 (7 PD / Tank Battle of Olita)**: The 7 PD put together a series of advances *more dramatic and effective than those of any other division in World War II*. The division would attack out of East Prussia at **0305** on **22 Jun 41**, and seize the road junction **17 km NO** of Minsk, the capital of Byelorussia, at **2200** on **25 Jun 41**. For most intents and purposes, 7 PD *set the northern arm of the encirclement of vast Soviet forces defending the road to Moscow*. . . The Germans would first face tough and tactically aggressive Soviets in a violent tank battle at Alytus (Olita) **80 km** into Soviet-occupied Lithuania. The division's **25 PzRgt** quickly seized intact two bridges there over the Nemen River in an impressive *coup de main* at **1245**, but the Soviets recovered and launched strong tank attacks from the NE against the German bridgehead. In the ensuing combat from **1430 – 2000** on **22 Jun 41**, the panzer regiment would destroy **70** Soviet medium and hvy tanks for the loss of a handful of German tanks, most of which were repairable and soon back in action. The tank battle of Olita was bitter w/ the Russians showing their peculiar tenacity in defense, reckless courage in the attack, and unnerving capability to take punishment. The Soviets, however, managed to halt 7 PD for only the **5.5** hours of the tank battle and the Germans were ready to move again around midnight on **22 Jun 41**. (R.H.S. Stolfi, *German Panzers on the Offensive*, 16-17)

--*Excerpt from Barbarossa Unleashed*.³⁴⁵

Panzer General Hermann Hoth's 3 Panzer Group began their attack at precisely 0305 hours, supported by the fighter, ground attack, dive bomber and bomber squadrons of Richthofen's 8 Air Corps. It was a starlit night, and Hoth and his two panzer corps commanders, Generals Rudolf Schmidt (39 Panzer Corps) and Adolf-Friedrich Kuntzen (57 Panzer Corps), watched from forward command posts as their armor and motorized infantry (along with two corps of marching infantry) headed due east out of the Suwalki triangle into Soviet occupied Lithuania. The Red Army border defenses on 3 Panzer Group's front were relatively weak, while many of the field fortifications were not even occupied; Soviet artillery was largely a non-factor. Facing Hoth was V.I. Morozov's 11 Army, which anchored the left wing of the Soviet Northwestern Front. Morozov's army was no match for Hoth's seasoned troops, and soon the Red Army defenders were disappearing into the woods in the face of the unrelenting German onslaught.^{dlxxiv} Where the enemy did put up a fight, he acquitted himself well, often fighting to the death. Few prisoners were taken.^{dlxxv}

While Hoth's tank group attacked along a "dry" front, and thus did not have to contend with a major river barrier, it still had its own terrain challenges to contend with; particularly (as noted above) the thick belts of woodland and roads which were no more than sandy tracks, hardly suited for tanks and vehicles weighing many tons. The forward motion of the mobile units was also affected by the poor march discipline displayed by some units, while the armor of 57 Panzer Corps was slowed by numerous physical barriers placed in its path and stoutly defended by the enemy.^{dlxxvi}

The initial objective of 3 Panzer Group was to reach the Neman River on a broad front, cross over the river, and establish bridgeheads beyond it. The first to accomplish this goal was *Oberst* Karl

³⁴⁵ **Note:** See text of book for footnote details, etc.

Rothenburg's 25 Panzer Regiment of 7 Panzer Division (39 Panzer Corps). By midday, the tanks of Rothenburg's reinforced panzer regiment had thrust over 50 kilometers into enemy territory and, in a daring *coup de main*, seized intact the bridge spanning the river at Olita (Alytus), as well as a second bridge a short distance to the east. A captured Red Army engineer officer explained that he had been given orders to destroy both bridges at 1700 hours; adhering strictly to those orders, he had made no attempt to blow them up before the Germans arrived.^{dlxxvii}

The highly-decorated Rothenburg, holder of the *Pour le Mérite* (World War I), and the *Ritterkreuz* (World War II), immediately pushed on across the river at both points before the defenders could react. Within an hour, however, the Soviets were furiously counterattacking with armor, buttressed by infantry and artillery. In the ***ensuing six-hour tank-on-tank engagement***, pitting Soviet 5 Tank Division against 25 Panzer Regiment, 80 Russian tanks were knocked out, while Rothenburg's *Panzermaenner* clung tenaciously to their fragile bridgeheads. Yet the panzer regiment also suffered heavily: If only a handful of its tanks became permanent losses in the tank battle, many had been destroyed along the approach routes leading into Olita – victims of Soviet T-34s in good, hull-down fighting positions. Some of the German tanks – mostly light Pz 38(t)s of Czech design^{dlxxviii} – had their turrets blown clean off their hulls.^{dlxxix}

If the Russians had gotten the worst of the tank duel on the eastern bank of the Neman, they had also fought with tenacity and courage. Reflecting on the furious combat this day, Rothenburg called it the “toughest battle of his life.”^{dlxxx} Only days later, the splendid panzer leader would be dead.^{dlxxxi}

One of the infantry units assigned to Hoth's armored group for the opening assault was 35 Infantry Division (5 Army Corps), affectionately referred to by its soldiers as the “Fish Division” – its symbol a smiling fish - in a not so oblique reference to its commander, Maj.-Gen. Fischer von Weikersthal. Following the artillery preparation, *Gefreiter* Gerhard Bopp, a radio operator in the division's reconnaissance battalion (35 AA), moved out with his unit at 0330 hours; a half hour later (0403), they reached the border – here only discernable by bundles of straw – and advanced into Lithuania, moving through largely open and undulating terrain. In his personal diary, Bopp recorded the first hours of the campaign as they unfolded in his sector:

All along the horizon columns of smoke from burning houses. The populace (Lithuanians) greets us joyfully, some with tears in their eyes. The girls and children throw flowers at us and all the vehicles are decked out with lilac blossoms, like in maneuvers . . . if there were no war.

Around 0700, the first prisoners, shaven bald heads, Mongol faces, etc. Then the first fatalities . . . dead horses, etc. – through artillery fire before reaching the Kirsna River in the Didžioji region. Shells strike to the left and right of the road, but at great distances away. We get through unscathed. We capture the bridge over the Kirsna intact. After a brief stop, we continue to [a location] where there has been intense enemy resistance since midday, which is only broken that evening. There, bivouac and provisions are in short supply, because the roads are sandy and in poor condition, and so the field kitchen can barely get through. There is only a little warm food and coffee.^{dlxxxii}

The assault teams of 6 Infantry Division (6 Army Corps) went forward at 0305 hours, decamping from the Suwalki triangle in a thick fog, which severely limited visibility. They cut lanes through the enemy's wire entanglements, spread over the meadows and cornfields, and slipped across the

frontier. A flight of gull-winged *Stukas* peeled off and dived on the border town of Kalvaria, where a Russian staff was thought to be quartered, leaving it enveloped in smoke and flames. The division advanced with two regiments in the line (18 and 58 IR) and one in reserve (37 IR).^{dlxxxiii} The attackers, meeting negligible resistance, rapidly gained their initial objectives; by late morning, however, a battalion of 18 Infantry Regiment, supported by artillery and combat engineers, was abruptly halted by a cluster of concrete bunkers near Akmenynai. The bunkers were savagely defended by their occupants, the battalion sustaining serious casualties. Here resistance would not be broken until the next day, and only then with the support of Flak artillery and flamethrowers.^{dlxxxiv}

Soon the first prisoners were being shepherded to the rear. “We gazed at them eagerly,” recounted *Assistenzarzt* Heinrich Haape. “They were about a platoon strong and wore shabby khaki-yellow uniforms, loosely-flapping, unmilitary looking blouses and had clean-shaven heads. Their heavy faces were expressionless.” As the sun rose in the sky, the day grew hot. Haape continued: “As the men marched the dust rose, until we were all covered in a light yellow coating – battledress, rifles, faces and hands. Men and vehicles assumed ghostly outlines in the dust-laden air. I wet my dry lips with a little water from my bottle and was glad when the order was given to halt. It was noon, and we rested in a small wood.” Suddenly, Haape craned his neck skyward, his attention riveted on a formation of Russian bombers approaching from the east:

They circled to make sure of their target. But this time they had to reckon with the Messerschmitts. The 109’s swooped like hawks into a flight of pigeons. They attacked from the sun, firing as they dived. Breaking off the attack they zoomed to regain height for another attack and one by one the bombers were picked off. One Russian burst into flames, a second followed, and like torches they sank toward the ground. It surprised me to see how slowly they fell. A wing broke off another bomber and the plane spun earthward. I noticed two parachutes drifting gently above it. Our fighters continued the attacks until every bomber had been shot down. The action had taken 10 minutes at most.^{dlxxxv}

A dispatch rider came roaring up to Haape on a motorcycle. One of the bombers had crashed and exploded among the staff of an artillery battalion, engulfing many of the men in a wall of flame. Extra medical help was urgently needed. By the time Haape arrived, 15 of the artillerymen were already dead; behind a hedge lay nine more wounded men, five of them so badly burned he held out no hope of their survival beyond a day or two. The conscientious doctor did what he could, most importantly sending for a field ambulance. Two hours later he was again underway, looking for his battalion, with which he had broken contact.^{dlxxxvi}

By early afternoon matters were deemed well enough in hand for corps headquarters to issue orders to 6 ID to begin a general pursuit of the enemy. With Russian resistance largely shattered, the division’s infantry marched on eastward, along two axes of advance (*Vormarschstrassen*) in the direction of the Neman River, more than 70 kilometers beyond the frontier. By late afternoon, the 6 ID’s improvised reconnaissance battalion,^{dlxxxvii} led by Cavalry Captain (*Rittmeister*) Georg *Freiherr* von Boeselager, had already covered more than 50 kilometers. Pushing on through endless tracks of forest and marsh, Boeselager then struck out for the bridge over the Neman at Prienai, only to be stopped abruptly by a well-organized and superior enemy defense, which inflicted considerable losses on the squadron. The capture of Prienai, the crossing of the Neman, would have to wait until the following day.^{dlxxxviii}

On the far left flank of 3 Panzer Group, abutting the boundary with Army Group North, 26 Infantry Division (6 Army Corps) attacked alongside its neighbor to the south (6 ID). The 1st

Battalion of the division's 77 Infantry Regiment quickly reached its initial objective, the opposing high ground, with no enemy contact; 2nd Battalion, after eliminating several Russian combat outposts (*Gefechtsvorposten*), also advanced successfully. Only the regiment's 3rd Battalion, its companies echeloned behind the 2nd Battalion, encountered stiff resistance – from an NKVD border strongpoint which fought to the end, punishing the attackers with painful losses.^{dlxxxix}

Following capture of its initial objectives, 77 IR sent out well-armed patrols to reconnoiter, but they reported no contact with the enemy, who had apparently withdrawn. By late morning, the regiment's battalions had reassembled and were ready to begin their pursuit march.^{dxv} It was a march which they – along with 35 ID, 6 ID, and dozens more of the foot infantry divisions – would continue for weeks, behind the tanks and mobile infantry motoring far beyond them to the east. For hundreds of kilometers they would march, in insufferable heat along sandy tracks – their boots kicking up clouds of fine dust which engulfed uniforms and equipment and filled every pore – across desolate terrain and through belts of primeval woodlands; all the while maintaining constant combat readiness because of the threat posed by dispersed Red Army units, which lingered in the forests, marshes and cornfields, prepared to fight it out rather than to surrender. The days and weeks ahead would often push the *Landser* to the limits of their physical and psychic endurance, and sometimes well beyond. A vitally important story, but a story to be told later on.

(*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Chapter 6)

--3 PzGr:

Von einer planmaessigen Fuehrung im Grossen war nichts zu merken. Der Widerstand erfolgte in unzusammenhaengenden Gruppen, die zahlreichen Feldbefestigungen waren nicht oder nur schwach besetzt.

Wo sich der Gegner stellte, kaempfte er zaeh u. tapfer bis zum Tode. Ueberlaeufer u. Ergeben wurden von keiner Stelle gemeldet. *Der Kampf wurde dadurch haerter als in Polen u. im Westfeldzug.*

Die Zusammenarbeit mit **8. Fliegerkorps** war besonders eng u. lebendig. . . Die Herrschaft im Luftraum war nahezu voll am **1. Angriffstag** erkaempft. Wie in Polen wurde der Feind durch die eigenen Luftangriffe in die Waelder getrieben, aus denen er erfolgreich Kleinkrieg gegen rueckwaertige Teile u. Kolonne fuehrt. . . Die eigene Luftaufklaerung wurde zu Beginn der Kaempfe durch fdl. Jaeger gestoert u. in groessere Hoehen gedreuekt. . .

Eine hoehere Fuehrung [bei den Russen] trat in den ersten Tagen ueberhaupt nicht in Erscheinung. Die untere Fuehrung war unbeweglich, schematisch u. ohne schnelle Entschlussfassung in Anpassung an die jeweilige Lage. . . Der einzelne Kaempfer war *haerter als der Weltkriegskaempfer*, wohl doch eine Folge der bolschewistischen Idee, aber auch aufgehetzt durch seine politischen Kommissare. . .

(„*Gefechtsberichte Russland*“, **RH 21-3/732**)

--Luttichau account:

Hoth's right corps, the **57 PzK**, under General der Pz.Tr. Adolf Kuntze, also won a bridgehead over the Nemen, by afternoon, at Merkine. And even an infantry corps, the **5 AK**, advancing between the two panzer corps, managed to do the same by **1800**, but in this case the bridge had been demolished.

At the end of the first day, both of Hoth's panzer corps had crossed the Nemen and four [4] of Strauss's infantry divisions [**9 AOK**] had closed to the river. An estimated **8** Soviet divisions had been dispersed, and Hoth had gained operational freedom. "An impressive success," General Halder observed.

Such successes on a broad front, seemingly won w/ ease and recorded in terse entries in war diaries, were the result of *many small actions fought w/ uncommon courage and ingenuity*. The **8 AK** breakthrough of the Soviet border defenses offers a good example. [Note: See text for graphic account of this combat action, including harrowing attacks by engineer assault teams on enemy bunker positions using flame throwers, explosive charges, gasoline, grenades, etc. Most of the Russian bunker crews fought to the death.] . . .

Meantime, the infantry pushed on and by nightfall **5 AK**³⁴⁶ had closed to the Nemen, but failed to take Grodno that night, largely because of the menace of Maj.-Gen. D.K. Mostovenko's 11 Mech Corps, which struck at **5 AK's** south flank w/ an estimated **600** tanks. . .³⁴⁷ Grodno would soon become the focus of a large-scale Soviet armored counterattack. On its way to the Nemen, **5 AK** made an unpleasant discovery: partisans! [See text for details.] The first reaction to partisan warfare was *disbelief and consternation*. . . The German command suddenly was confronted w/ the disturbing realization that it was no longer possible or safe to disregard, as it could in World War I, stragglers and isolated units behind the front. . .

(Luttichau Manuscript, "The Road to Moscow," VI: 13-19)

--7 PD:

Tank battle of 7 PD.³⁴⁸ The **7 PD** achieved an initial deep penetration. Border defenses were weak in relation to what had been reported by intelligence, „and enemy artillery never emerged in any consequential strength.“ By **12.45** hours on the first day, the bridge spanning the River Neman at Olita was captured intact. The bridgehead was immediately counter-attacked by Russian heavy tanks supported by infantry and artillery. During this first tank-on-tank battle of the Russian campaign, **82** Soviet tanks were shot into flames. Olita village burned furiously. Numbers of German tanks smouldered along the roads leading into it. Rubber treads on road wheels formed miniature flaming hoops. Many had turrets blown clean away. All had been picked off during the advance by dug-in Russian tanks. **7 PD** almost immediately burst out of its bridgehead on the other side of the River Neman, but Oberst Rothenberg, cdr of **PzRgt 25**, was to call the engagement „the hardest battle of my life.“ (Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 52; see also, Manteuffel, *7. Panzer-Division*, 135-37; **III:68**)

³⁴⁶ **Note:** Some concern in this paragraph as to whether Luttichau is referring to the correct army corps. It might be **8 AK**, not 5 AK. For **23.6.41**, Luttichau states that it was **8 AK** which was battling the Soviet **11 Mech Corps**. (VI: 30)

³⁴⁷ **Note:** Did this tank engagement occur on **22. or 23.6.41**?

³⁴⁸ **Note:** Seaton says this tank battle took place on **23.6.41**. (**III:69**) Confirm date!

--7 PD:

RH 27-7/46: This is the **Ia KTB Nr. 3** (again, addressing first **10-12** days of “Barbarossa”). Division sustains numerous counter-attacks by Russian tanks on **22.6.41**, destroying **70** of them. On **24.6.41** division notes that the Russians have *poisoned the wells*. Like other divisions examined here, **7 PD** struggles w/ poor, sandy roads, traffic jams, etc. Division also sustained huge tank losses – many no doubt only temporary due to breakdowns – during first few days of combat (see entry for **2130**, **28.6.41**). For total tank strength see entry for **1400**, **30.6.41**).

--19 PD:

22.6.41 [19 AR (mot.)]: Dass das Rgt. bei dem um **3.00** Uhr beginnenden Angriff so spaet antrat, lag daran, dass die **19 PD** erst als dritte Welle Einsatz fand.³⁴⁹ Der Angriff in erster Welle oblag der **18 ID (mot.)**. Die **12 PD** folgte als zweite Welle. Danach sollte die **19 PD** einen Vorstoss nach dem Vorbild des Durchstosses bei Sedan durch die Maginot-Linie in die Tiefe des Feindes durchfuehren.

Die Einheiten rueckten nach Erreichen der Bereitstellungsraeume beiderseits der Anmarschstrasse in lichte Kiefernwaldstuecke u. tarnten die Fahrzeuge. . . Die Spannung steigerte sich bis zum Unertraeglichen. Die Nerven schienen zu vibrieren. . . Die Uhrzeiger schlichen voellig unbeeindruckt auf ihrem gewohnten Rundwege. Soweit moeglich, versuchte man, *die Nerven mit **Radiomusik** zu beruhigen*. . .

Wenige Minuten vor **3.00** Uhr . . . machten sich durch Motorengebrumm westlich die ersten deutschen Bomber bemerkbar. Punkt **3.00** Uhr ueberquerten diese die Grenze. Gleichzeitig begann schlagartig die Artl.-Feuer aus allen in erster Linie eingesetzten Rohren. . . Jeder empfand diese lautstarke Willens-bekundung eines grossen Heeres als ein machtvolles Ereignis, das ein Teilnehmer . . . wohl niemals vergessen wird. Man empfand stolz, an einem solchen Ereignis als kleines Raedchen der gewaltigen Heeresmaschinerie teil-zunehmen, an einem Ereignis, ueber das spaeter die Gesichtsbuecher berichten wuerden.

Das Vorwaertsstreben aller Truppenteile, ob bespannt, zu Fuss, motorisiert oder als Flieger, ja diese imponierende Massendemonstration loeste eine regelrechte, vorwaertsgerichtete Massenpsychose aus. Wenn man in dieser eigenartigen Stimmung, der elektrisch geladenen Atmosphaere, *von manchen Fahrzeugen noch **Tanzmusik** hoerte*, dann erzeugte das eine in sich widerspruchsvolle Stimmung. Der Deutschlandsender strahlte die ganze Nacht hindurch Tanzmusik mit eingeschalteten Nachrichten aus, auf die jedermann wartete. . .

Man beobachtete Bomberwelle auf Bomberwelle, die den feindwaerts aufzuklaerenden Flugplaetzen zustrebten. Auch Fernbomber mit weitergesteckten Zielen ueberflogen mit Jaegerschutz die Truppe. Die Bomben-

³⁴⁹ **Note:** The **19. PD** belonged to **57. PzK (3 PzGr)**. The division, with other units of Hoth’s panzer corps, was packed into the Suwalki Gipfel.

einschlaege lagen anfangs nicht fern, so dass die Luftdruckwellen die wartende Truppe noch erreichten, deutlich in den Ohren spuerbar. . . Zwischen **9.00** u. **10.00** Uhr ueberquerten die Anfaenge des Rgts. die Grenze. . . Die erste Truppenwelle musste gut vorangekommen sein, daraus zu schliessen, dass man kein Gefechtslaerm mehr hoerte. Die zweite Welle folgte. Es trat eine als unheimlich empfundene Stille ein. Die Marschkolonne hielt mehr, als dass sie fuhr . . . alles in prallem Sonnenschein, auf den dort typischen welligen, unbefestigten Strassen. . .

Das Warten in der ungeheuren Hitze dieses **22.6.41** war schwer ertraeglich. Jegliche Marscherleichterung, wie etwa das Oeffnen des Koppelschlosses, Abnehmen des Stahlhelms oder Oeffnen des obersten Feldblusenhakens, waren verboten. Beiderseits der Rollbahn gingen die waehrend des Wartens in breiter Kette das Gelaende absuchenden Leichengraeber des Reichsarbeitsdienstes [RAD] vor. [?] Sie nahmen sich der grossen, in der Hitze bereits anschwellenden Pferdekadaver an. . .

Ueber die Gefechtslage vorn war wohl niemand unterrichtet. Eine grosse Stockung trat dadurch ein, dass ein Flakfahrer infolge Uebermuedung in der unheuren Hitze des ersten Marschtages ingeschlafen war. . . Am ersten Tage kam abends die Verpflegung, wenn auch spaet, noch heran, an den folgenden Tagen nicht mehr. . .

(R. Hinze, 19. Inf.- u. Pz.-Div., 120-130)

ca. 22.-26.6.41 [19 PD]: Der Marschweg der **19. PD** schwenkte nach einigen Marschtagen von der „P-1“ (Panzerstrasse 1) in Richtung Sueden (Bodanow – Wolozy – Sabotniki – Zemloslaw an der Gawia). Hier trafen die zuerst marschierenden Kradschuetzen auf erheblichen Widerstand, wurden auch von den Seiten angegriffen. Ein ueber die Gawia errungener Brueckenkopf musste voruebergehend wieder aufgegeben werden. Die uebrigen Div.-Teile waren durch seitlich angreifende Feindeinheiten von den vorn eingesetzten Teilen abgeschnitten. . . Die Division marschierte daraufhin in Gefechtsformation auf. Die einzelnen Batterien machten sich mit dem Eintreffen sofort feuerbereit. Damit endete die strapazioese, nervenaufreibende, spannungsgeladene, heisse Zeit der ersten Vormarschtage. *Niemand hatte bis dahin ein Auge zutun koennen oder duerfen*, was sich allerdings laenger nicht haette durchhalten lassen. Hierzu ein Bericht:

(R. Hinze, 19. Inf.- u. Pz.-Div., 133-34)

--**20 PD:** *Diary of Sergeant-Major Helmuth A. Dittri.*³⁵⁰

22/6. We have already been moving for three hours toward the Russian border. Our attack is to begin at 3.05 a.m. and should be a complete surprise to the

³⁵⁰ **Note:** In the text, it states that Dittri was serving with **21 PD**; this, however, was not possible, for this panzer division was not established until later in 1941, and then saw action in North Africa. The confusion most likely stems from the fact that Dittri was a member of the **21 Panzer Regiment**, a component of **20 PD**.

enemy. The Russians haven't the *faintest idea* of what is going on! Their towns and villages along the border are *brightly lit up*.

The *Fuehrer's proclamation* is read to us. The time for a show-down has arrived. We'll show them which is the leading power of Europe. The front stretches from Finland to the Black Sea, a line as firm as a wall and exerting a pressure which *no force in creation can withstand*.

Evening. We approach our first day's objective, the village of Olita. Here we encounter the *first serious resistance* of the enemy. Olita is in flames . . .

On the high ground behind Olita there is again *strong resistance*. For the first time *we meet Russian tanks*. Their crews are certainly brave. *If their machine catches fire they keep firing till the last possible moment*, and when they finally leave their tank they continue the fight with their small arms. Everywhere, as far as the eye can see, *towns and villages are burning*. . .

(True to Type. A Selection from Letters and Diaries of German Soldiers and Civilians collected on the Soviet-German Front, 14)

--**26 ID**: One battalion of the **IR 77** sustained **67** casualties attacking an **NKWD** border strongpoint. According to author, the battalion had not first awaited arrival of the heavy wpns, and was still too influenced by the relatively easy time they had had in France. But Russia would be different! Attacking on *Barbarossatag* on the far left flank of Hoth's 3 Panzer Group, 77 Infantry Regiment (26 Infantry Division) learned a bitter, and costly, lesson – the Russian soldier was not to be compared with previous antagonists:

“X-hour” has arrived. Whistles sound. Rifle squads leap up and storm forward across the frontier. Only quickly overcome the uncertainty! The nervousness subsides. Our soldiers are filled with resolve.

1st Battalion, on the right, has been tasked with pushing through to the hills directly in front of it and, after taking possession of them, to hold that position for the time being. 2nd Battalion, on the left, has the same mission, while the 3rd Battalion is to follow 2nd Battalion at staggered intervals and cover the Russian frontier posts identified to the north of the attack sector and to neutralize these in the course of the further attack.

While 1st Battalion reaches its objective in the shortest possible time without enemy contact, the 2nd Battalion first has to overpower a few Russian outposts, which had evidently been advanced there by the Russian border guards to the north.

The dogged fighting style of the Russians was evident, even in these early moments. Only by jumping quickly aside at the last minute did the commander of 2nd Battalion evade the detonation of a hand grenade, which a dying Russian, who had been shot down, had thrown between his legs. The 3rd Battalion had its first serious contact with the enemy. After reaching the NKVD frontier post, it did not, unfortunately, await the deployment and support of the heavy weapons, but instead swung into an attack against the outpost.

The officers and men were, no doubt, still overly influenced by the previous, relatively easy days of battle in France. This was to have dire consequences. The Russian NKVD garrison hadn't the slightest intention of surrender or flight. They opened fire with machine guns and rifles, and fought tenaciously to the very last man. When the outpost was taken, 3rd Battalion had the lives of six officers, 12 NCOs and soldiers to mourn. Three officers and 46 NCOs and soldiers were wounded. A sad result.^{dxci}

(*Barbarossa Unleashed*, pp. 262-63)

--26 ID:

22.6.41 [IR 77]:

Ploetzlich hoch in der Luft ein pfeifendes Brausen. Deutsche Flugzeuge jagen ueber uns nach Russland hinein. Bald ist die „Zeit X“ da. Noch **10** Minuten bis dahin. Vor uns regt sich noch nichts. Auf einen Schlag donnern am Nordende des Wytiter Sees die Geschuetze der Nachbardivisionen los. Wir sehen das Aufblitzen der Abschuesse u. wir sehen das Einschlagen der Granaten auf der anderen Seite. Die „Stunde X“ ist da. Trillerpfeifen schrillen auf. Schuetzen-gruppen springen hoch u. stuermen vorwaerts ueber die Grenze. Nur raus aus der Ungewissheit. Die Nervositaet weicht. Entschlossenheit ergreift unsere Soldaten. . .

Waehrend das **I./77** sein Angriffsziel ohne Feindberuehrung in kuerzester Zeit erreicht, muss **II./77** erst einige russ. Grenzvorposten niederkaempfen. . . Schon in diesen ersten Minuten zeigte sich die verbissene Kampfweise der Russen. Der Kdr. des **II./77** entging im letzten Augenblick durch einen schnellen Sprung der Detonation einer Handgranate, die ihm ein niedergeschossener, sterbender Russe zwischen die Beine warf. [!] Das **III./77** hat die erste ernsthafte Feindberuehrung. Nach Erreichen der NKWD-Grenzwache wartete es leider die Bereitstellung u. Unterstuetzung durch schwere Waffen nicht ab, sondern schwenkte zum Angriff auf den Stuetzpunkt ein.

Offizier u. Maenner *standen wohl noch zu sehr unter dem Eindruck der letzten verhaeltnis-maessigen leichten Kampftage in **Frankreich***. Das sollte bitter raechen. Die russ. NKWD-Besatzung dachte nicht an Uebergabe oder Flucht. Sie eroeffnete das Feuer aus MGs u. Gewehren u. kaempfte verbissen bis zum letzten Mann. Als der Stuetzpunkt genommen war, hatte das **III./77** sech [6] Offiziere, **12** Uffz. u. Mannsch. als Gefallene zu beklagen. Drei [3] Offz. u. **46** Uffz./Mannsch. waren verwundet. . .

Nach Erreichen des ersten Angriffsziels schickten die Einheiten auf Befehl des Rgts. sofort kampfkraeftige Spaehtrupps vor. Doch die stiessen ins Leere; keine Feindberuehrung. . . [Es] erging an das Rgt. der Befehl, sich zu sammeln u. den Vormarsch in Richtung Mariampol anzutreten. So gliedert sich das Rgt. am spaeten Vormittag zum Verfolgungsmarsch, der jetzt ueber viele Wochen durch Oedland u. urwaldaehliche Waldgebiet hinter den vorausjagenden Pz.-Divisionen der Pz.Gr. Hoht herfuehrt oder deren Flankenschutz dient. Ueber versandete Wege u. durch morastige Urwaldpfade verlangt dieser Marsch unvorstellbare

Anstrengungen in steter Kampfbereitschaft, denn das Gebiet ringsum ist voll von versprengten russ. Truppenteilen.

(*W. Knecht, Geschichte des Inf.-Rgts. 77, 53-55*)³⁵¹

1.6.7: Divisional War Diaries (Army Group Center)

--22.6.41 [6 ID]:³⁵²

3.05: Angriffbeginn. Die Inf.-Rgter treten an.

3.15: geht ein Stuka-Angriff auf Kalvarja nieder, das, in Kuerze in Rauchwolken gehuellt, daliegt. – Beide Inf.Rgter. kommen gut vorwaerts.

3.30: Die Gefechtsstaende der Inf.Rgter. werden gegen **3.30** Uhr vorverlegt. *Ueberall nur geringe Gegenwehr. . .*

10.30: In Gegend Akmenynai sind Bunker festgestellt worden, aus denen der Gegner sich zaeh verteidigt. Das Btl. [**IR 18**] hat binnen kurzer Zeit erhebliche Verluste. . .

ab 17.30: Gegen **17.30** Uhr stoest sie [die Vorausabteilung / VA] auf den noch aus den Bunkern bei Vorwerk Pajrauziai [sp?] heftige Widerstand leistenden Feind u. erleidet ziemliche Veluste. . . **II./18** liegt im Verlauf des ganzen Tages noch im Kampf vor den Bunkern bei Akmenynai. Zur Unterstuetzung des Angriffs wird ihm eine Pionier-Kp **742** zugefuehrt. . .

Verluste am 22.6.41:

6 Offiziere gefallen, 5 verwundet;
48 Uffz. u. Mannsch. gefallen, 101 verwundet
19 vermisst.

(*KTB Nr. 4, RH 26-6/8*)

--22.6.41 [29 ID (mot.)]:

6.00: Die Division rueckt wie befohlen ab **6.00** Uhr in die befohlenen Bereitstellungsraeume. . .

9.15: . . . Es lag folgende bereits um **9.00** Uhr beim **01** (Oblt. v. Mutius) eingegangene bezw. von diesem fernmuendlich aufgenommene Lageorientierung vor: Widerstand am Bug gleich Null; nur einzelne M.G., kaum Artillerie. . . Gefangenenaussagen: Vollkommene Ueberraschung, Truppe ist noch in Kasernen u. Lagern. . .

³⁵¹ **Note:** Bei der H.Gr.Mitte war das **6 AK** u. in seinem Verband die **26 ID**, u. also unser Rgt. beauftragt, den Flankenschutz der H.Gr.Mitte nach Norden zu uebernehmen. Alle unsere Maersche u. Kaempfe, sei es in Abwehr oder Angriff, dienten bis zum Ende der Oktoberoffensive nur dieser Aufgabe. (55)

³⁵² **Note:** See also, Horst Grossmann, Geschichte der 6. ID, 40-41.

12.00: Meldet die Division an **47 PzK**, dass die Division den Bereitstellungsraum westl. Siedlce erreicht hat. . .

16.30: . . . **29 ID (mot.)** ueberschreitet im Anschluss an **17 PD** Bruecke Lozowica u. erreicht zunaechst den Raum suedwestlich Kamianics – Litewskie.
...

19.30: Meldet der um **17.00** Uhr vorausgesandte **04**, dass Strasse Konstantynow – Janow Podlaski von haltenden Teilen der **17 PD** dicht belegt sei, die seit **2** Stunden auf Abruf zum Uebersetzen warten. Vor der Bruecke angeblich Stauungen wegen schlechter Wege. . .

(*KTB, RH 26-29/6*)

--**22.6.41**[**45 ID**]:

0.30: Bis **0.30** melden alle Truppenteile (mit Ausnahme Panzerzuege) mit dem Stichwort "Kyffhaeuser" die Beendigung der Bereitstellung.

0.45: Dem Gen.Kdo. **12. AK** wird beendete Bereitstellung der Div. bis **0.45** Uhr gemeldet. . . Auf russischer Seite ist alles ruhig. Das uebliche Geraeusch der Arbeiten an den Befestigungen sowie das von rangierenden Lokomotiven auf Bahnhof Brest ist zu hoeren.

3.15: Das Feuer der Artl. beginnt an der ganzen Front. Schwerpunkt des Feuers im Gefechtsstreifen der Div. auf Zitadelle Brest is klar erkennbar. Das hier zum ersten Male im Ernstfall verwendete, reihenweise gezuendete schwere Wurfgeraet [i.e., rocket projectors?] macht zunaechst einen sehr starken Eindruck. Abschuesse u. Einschlaege des **60** cm Geraetes sind in der Masse des Feuers nicht wahrzunehmen. Einzelne hohe Feuersaeulen im Feindgelaende zeigen an, dass Munitions- oder Betriebsstoffvorraete getroffen sein muessen. An fdl. Gegenwehr ist nur viele Kilometer ostw. Brest Flakabwehr mit Leuchtspurmunition gegen dort anscheinend erfolgende Tiefangriffe der eigenen Luftwaffe sichtbar.

3.19: Tritt die Inf. befehls-gemaess in Schlauchbooten zum Angriff ueber den Bug an.

3.27: Meldet **IR 135**, dass die Eisenbahnbruecke in eigener Hand ist. . .

3.28: Meldet **IR 130**, dass das erste Schlauchboot das jenseitige Ufer ohne Gegenwehr erreicht hat. Das Uebersetzen nimmt zunaechst bei beiden Rgtern einen vom Feinde unbehinderten Verlauf. Die erste Stoerung ergibt sich dadurch, dass **4** der zur Wegnahme der Muchawiec-Bruecken eingesetzten Sturmboote durch Volltreffer eigener Artillerie ausfallen [i.e., *friendly fire incident*]. Mit dem Rest der Boote beginnt Lt. Kraemers, **Pi.Batl.81**, trotzdem das Unternehmen. Es gelingt ihm, gleichzeitig mit Teilen **IR 130** (s.u.) die **3** ersten Muchawiec-Bruecken ostw. der Flussgabel zu erreichen. Nachdem an einem Staudamm nochmals **2** Boote ausgefallen sind, faehrt Lt. Kraemers mit dem letzten Boot an

dem von den Russen vollbesetzten Zitadellenkern unter starken fdl. Flankenfeuer vorbei u. besetzt die letzte Bruecke. Beim Auflegen der Hakenkreuzfahne auf die dritte genommene Bruecke [*as a recognition signal?*] faellt er durch Kopf-schuss.

3.45: IR 130, mit grossem Schwung beiderseits der Panzer-Rollbahn 1 vorstossend, erreicht **3.45** Uhr die Strassenbruecke dicht ostwaerts Zitadellen-Suedinsel (Hipp-Bruecke) zunaechst ohne wesentliche Gegenwehr u. dringt mit Teilen in die Suedinsel ein.

3.55: Beginnt **2./Pi.81** mit Brueckenbau (8 to) vom deutschen Ufer dicht westlich der Nordspitze Westinsel zur Nordinsel. An der Eisenbahnbruecke u. in Gegend der geplanten Suedbruecke (Suedspitze Suedinsel) beginnt gegen **5.00** Uhr Faehrbetrieb. . . **IR 135** dringt mit dem **III. Bat1.** unter Voraussendung der **11.Kp.** (Radfahr-Kp.) in die Westinsel ein u. erreicht mit einem starken Stosstrupp ziemlich bald die Kerninsel. Masse **I./IR 135** stoesst in die Nordinsel hinein; Teile gehen gleich in Richtung Zentralbahnhofgelaende weiter vor.

4.03: Gibt der **Ia** eine Zwischenmeldung an das **12 AK**. Es wird dabei gemeldet, dass der Angriff planmaessig angelaufen u. die Masse der vorn eingesetzten Teile ueber den Fluss gesetzt ist. Die Luftueberlegenheit sei im Raume der Division vom Jagdgeschwader **Moelders** mit Luftkaempfen, die sich zwischen Biala Podlaska u. Brest-Litowsk abspielten, klar erkaempft worden.

4.15: Gehen Sturmgeschuetze der Nachbar-Division ueber die Eisenbahnbruecke. Die Gefechtsstaende der vorn eingesetzten Inf.-Rgter, des **AR 98** u. des Pi.Batls. werden an bzw. ueber den Bug verlegt.

4.30: Gegen **4.30** Uhr beginnt der Feind vor **IR 130** anscheinend sich einzeln nach Ueberwinden des ersten Schreckens zu verteidigen. Das meldet auch **IR 135**, **4.38** Uhr . . . Bei der Division besteht zu dieser Zeit der Eindruck, den sich der Div.Kdr. auch persoendlich bei **IR 130** verschafft hat, dass der Feind infolge voelliger Ueberraschung nur mit solchen Teilen zum Widerstand bereit ist, die nicht unter der tatsaechlichen u. moralischen Wirkung des Artl.-Vorbereitungsfeuers gestanden haben. *Die Meldungen der Nachbar-Divisionen, die kaum auf Widerstand stossen, lassen keinen Schluss darauf zu, dass der Feind irgendwie ernste Abwehr einrichtete.* [!]

4.40: Wird das Gen.Kdo. durch den **Ia** fernmuendlich wie folgt orientiert: Die Division ist mit **IR 135** ueber den Bug. **IR 130** kommt ebenfalls gut vorwaerts. Faehrenbau hat begonnen. **2 Muchawiec-Bruecken**, dicht ostw. Suedinsel, in der Hand der Division. Auf der Nordinsel haben sich Feindteile gefasst u. verteidigen sich. . .

5.00: Meldet der Verbindungs-Offizier zum **12 AK**, dass dort die Auffassung besteht, das Korps sei „*ins Leere gestossen*.“ [!] Gleichzeitig meldet er, dass die Nachbar-Divisionen gegenueber geringem Feindwiderstand etwa auf gleicher Hoehe mit **45 ID** sind.

5.00: . . . Der vorausgeeilte Stosstrupp Lt. Loehr des **IR 130** hatte **5.10** Uhr gleichzeitig mit Lt. Kraemers (s.o.) die Wulka-Bruecke erreicht. Dabei sind **80**

Gefangene gemacht worden. Die ersten Gefangenenaussagen ergeben, dass der Feind voellig ueberrascht war.

5.00: Trifft der O.B. der **4. Armee**, GFM von Kluge, beim Div.-Gef.-Std. ein. Er wird ueber die Lage orientiert. . . ***Aus seinen Bemerkungen geht hervor, dass die Ueberraschung vor der ganzen Armee-Front voll gelungen ist.*** Dies geht u.a. aus einem mitgehorte[n] offen gefunkt[n]en Spruch einer russ. Fliegerdivision hervor, die anfragt, was nun eigentlich zu tun sei.

5.30: . . . Die Lage bei **IR 135** stellt um diese Zeit sich wie folgt dar: Die Nordinsel wird vom **I.Batl.** aufgeraemt; einzelne hartnaeckige Schuetzen halten sich hier noch. . . Verbindung zum **III.Batl.**, das in die Westinsel u. mit Teilen in die Kerninsel eingedrungen ist, besteht z.Zt. nicht. Die Lage auf der Insel ist nicht voll geklaert. Rgts.-Gef.Std. auf der Nordinsel.

5.55: . . . Verb.-Offz. zum **12 AK** meldet **6.00** Uhr, dass **34 ID** das Fort V genommen hat. Etwas spaeter meldet Kdr. **IR 130**, dass vorderste Teile (**II.Batl.**) **200** m vor der Wulkabruেকে liegen u. Verbindung zu **34 ID** (mit vordersten Teilen auf gleicher Hoehe) hergestellt ist. Teile **IR 135** seien ueber die Nordinsel in Richtung Stadt weiter vorge-drun-gen. . .

6.00: . . . Artl. kann im gesamten Abschnitt nach Auskunft Kdr. **Pi.81** noch nicht uebergesetzt werden.

6.25: Ia orientiert den Chef des Generalstabes des **12. AK** ueber die Lage u. meldet: Auf der Nordinsel wird noch gekaempft. **IR 135** raemt hier auf. ***Die Division glaubt, die Zitadelle bald fest in der Hand zu haben.*** Suedinsel ist bereits in der Hand der Division. Ein oertlicher Gegenstoss von Panzern zwischen Stadt u. Zitadelle ist durch **14./IR 130** abgewiesen worden. **IR 130** befindet sich mit den vordersten Teilen **250** m vor der Kowel-Eisenbahnbruecke. . . .

Die ersten beiden Muchawiec-Bruecken ostw. der Flussgabel sind fest in eigener Hand; die Muchawiec-Bruecken suedostw. der Stadt stehen unversehrt, sind aber noch nicht gesichert. Die Eisenbahnbruecke ist verstopft, da hier ein **8,8cm** Flakgeschuetz eingebrochen ist.

6.30: Meldet **IR 135**, dass Rgt.-Gef.-Std. auf die Nordinsel verlegt wurde. Die Lage auf dem Zitadellenkern ist weiterhin ungeklaert. Da der Feindwiderstand sich hier anscheinend versteift, wird vom Rgt. die Zufuehrung einer zunaechst nur fuer den Buguebergang unterstellten M.G. Kp. des **IR 133** zur Unterstuetzung der auf dem Zitadellenkern kaempfenden Teile beantragt u. von der Div. zugewiesen.

5.45: Erreicht **1./IR 135** den Eisenbahnfaecher etwa **800** m noerdl. der Hipp-Bruecke.³⁵³

³⁵³ **Note:** There is an Oberst Hipp in the **45. ID**. Appears he commanded either **IR 130** or **135**.

6.20: **IR 130** hat inzwischen die Wulkabruecke u. die Kowel-Eisenbahnbruecke (**6.10** Uhr) fest in Besitz genommen, wobei insgesamt **9** Panzerkampfwagen durch M.G., Pz.Abw.Bue., Pak u. Artl. vernichtet wurden. . .

6.45: Meldet **Pi.Batl.81**, dass auf der 8 to Faehre bei Westspitze Nordinsel ueber den bug gesetzt werden kann. . .

7.30: Etwa ab **7.30** Uhr gewinnt Div. auf Grund verschiedener Meldungen zum erstmalig den Eindruck, dass doch staerkere Teile der russ. Zitadellenbesatzung sich hinter unserer vorderen Linie zum Widerstand gesetzt haben. Artl. Unterstuetzung in Zitadelle ist jetzt nicht moeglich, da die Infanterie zu eng mit dem Gegner verkaempft ist.

7.15: Wird Oberst Welcker, Kdr. **AR 98**, verwundet.

7.40: Orientiert Kdr. **IR 130** den Div.Kdr. wie folgt ueber die Lage: Zitadellenkern anscheinend *ziemlich stark besetzt u. tapfer verteidigt*. . . Der Div.Kdr. teilt darauf mit, dass das **IR 133**, bisher Korpsreserve, zum Einsatz im Gefechtsstreifen des **IR 130** angefordert werde. . .

7.45: Wird bekannt, das Hptm. Praxa, Kdr. **III./IR 135**, im Hof des Zitadellenkerns um **4.45** Uhr gefallen ist.

8.10: Hat inzwischen ein Offz. **I./AR 99** gemeldet, dass Teile des **III./IR 135** vor dem Zitadellenkern festliegen u. etwa **35%** (?) Verluste haben.³⁵⁴

8.15: Meldet **IR 130**, das Hoehe **140** um **7.30** Uhr genommen ist. . .

8.30: Orientiert der **Ia** den Chef des Gen.Stabes des **12. AK** wie folgt: . . . In der Zitadelle auflebender russ. Widerstand. Es wird beantragt, die Korpsreserve der Div. zur Verfuegung zu stellen.

8.40: . . . Insbesondere sind die eigenen Offiziers-Verluste jetzt schon verhaeltnismaessig hoch; sie sind hauptsaechlich auf Baum- u. Dachschuetzen zurueckzufuehren. . .

8.45: . . . Anschliessend (**9.00** Uhr) teilt **Ia** Gen.Kdo. mit, dass die Korpsreserve (**IR 133**) der Division unterstellt wird. . .

10.00: Bis **10.00** Uhr verstaerkt sich der Eindruck, dass das Aufraeumen der Zitadelleninseln zunaechst noch staerkere Kraefte binden wird. . . [Es] wird bekannt, dass Hptm. Kraus (Kdr. **I./AR 99**) u. **2** weitere Offz. des **AR 98** gefallen sind. **IR 135** meldet **9.50** Uhr, dass Westinsel in der Hand des Rgts. sei, ebenso die Westhaelfte der Nordinsel. Das Rgt. versuche, ueber die Nordbruecke die im Zitadellenkern eingeschlossenen Angehoerigen des **III.Batls.** zu entsetzen. Etwas spaeter wird bekannt, dass die **9./IR 135** am Nordrand der Nordinsel festliegt u. versucht, nach Osten durch-zubrechen. . .

³⁵⁴ **Note:** The question mark is in the original text. No doubt they were skeptical of this reported loss, when things had for most part been proceeding smoothly.

10.50: . . . Auf Grund weiterer Meldungen (insbesondere des **IR 135**) ueber Feindbesetzung der Zitadelleninsel u. nach Ruecksprache mit Kdr. **IR 130** entschliesst sich der Div.Kdr. den Auftrag an **IR 133** (s.o.) auf Grund der neuen Lage abzuaendern. Es ist nunmehr folgendes beabsichtigt: **I./IR 133**, verst. durch **13./IR 133** [i.e., I.G.], soll zunaechst Westinsel, darnach den Zitadellenkern saeubern. Von hier soll Uebergang zur Suedinsel u. deren weitere Saeuberung erfolgen. . . Zur weiteren Saeuberung wird vom Gen.Kdo. eine Bttr. **Neb.Abt.6** (bisher der **31 ID** unterstellt) zur Verfuegung gestellt. (Eintreffen gegen Abend).

11.45: Meldet Kdr. **IR 130**, dass Oblt. Miescke auf einem Turn der Suedinsel **10.10** Uhr die Reichskriegsflagge gehisst habe, u. dass er daraus schloesse, hier sei kein Widerstand mehr, es handele sich nur um Strichfeuer [i.e., *grazing fire* (MG)]. . . Oberst John will mit einer einzelnen Haubitze der **III./AR 98** den fdl. Widerstand an der Nordbruecke brechen, um von hier aus die eingeschlossenen Teile auf der Kerninsel entsetzen zu koennen. Die endgueltige Saeuberung der Westinsel (durch **I./IR 133**) sei Voraussetzung fuer Erfolge auf der Kerninsel. . .

12.00: Etwa **12.00** Uhr orientiert der Div.Kdr. den Komm.Gen. wie folgt: **IR 130** wird nach Zufuehrung der beiden dazu befohlenen Battn. ueber Pkt. **140** weiter angreifen. In der Zitadelle wird noch sehr viel geschossen. *Erhebliche Offizier-Verluste*. Ein Batl. **IR 133** soll auf die Westinsel zur Saeuberung angesetzt werden. . .

Der Komm.Gen. gibt darauf folgende Unterrichtung: Feind ueberall im Zurueckweichen; Ausnahme Zitadelle Brest. Tagesziel des Gen.Kdos. ist **Zabinka**. Er befiehlt, dass "nichts mehr in die Zitadelle zu stecken" sei u. schlaegt vor, die Zitadelle abzuriegeln, kaempfende Teile herauszuziehen u. den Gegner mit schwerer Artl. zu beschiessen u. zu zermuerben.

12.30: Ergeht daraufhin Befehl an **IR 133** zum Aufraeumen der Westinsel nur eine verst. Komp. einzusetzen; sie soll nach Erfuellung dieser Aufgabe auch auf den Zitadellenkern vorstossen, wenn das ohne grosse Verluste moeglich ist. . .

12.50: . . . Die Suedinsel sei so gut wie gesaeubert; vom Zitadellenkern herueber zur Suedinsel werde geschossen. Die Stadt schein voellig ruhig zu sein, es seien schon eigene Fahrzeuge durchgefahren. Teile der **13.** u. **14./IR 130** sowie der **1.** u. **10.** Kp. haben im Verlauf des Angriffes die Hauptstrasse durch den Suedteil der Stadt durchstossen u. sich am Westrand der Stadt (beim Viadukt) mit den am Suedrand der Stadt entlang vorstossenden Teile der **2.Kp.** zum weiteren Angriff nach Pkt. **140** vereinigt. Diese Tatsache ist von entscheidender Bedeutung. Die Truppe in der Zitadelle sind somit von der Stadt abgeschnitten.

13.00: Ruft der Komm.Gen. an, der nach Ruecksprache mit dem O.B. [GFM v. Kluge] ueber folgende Punkte unterrichtet zu werden wuenscht: . . . Der Komm.Gen. verlangt, dass die Lage auf der Zitadelle noch am **22.6.41** bereinigt werden muss. Er werde dazu Flammenwerfer u. Sturmgeschuetze, soweit moeglich, zur Verfuegung stellen. Wenn die Stadt Brest frei sei, solle das **IR 130** die Zitadelle von Osten her nehmen. . . Im uebrigen sei der Wunsch des O.B.,

dass der Div.Kdr. sich persönlich an Ort u. Stelle von der Lage auf der Zitadelle ueberzeugt.

Zusammenfassend kann zu diesem Zeitpunkt folgendes gesagt werden: Es ist gelungen, die Buguebergaenge bei Best-Litowsk einschliesslich der Eisenbahn so in die Hand zu bekommen, dass unbehindertes Nachziehen der westl. des Bug befindlichen, auf diese Uebergaenge angewiesenen Teile der Armee gewaehrleistet ist. . . *In der Zitadelle selbst ist die Division noch nicht Herr der Lage. Der Feind verteidigt sich hier in einem Masse, wie es die Division nach dem starken Feuerschlag u. den zuversichtlichen ersten Meldungen der Truppenteile nicht erwarten konnte.*

Die Lage wechselt dauernd, weil der Feind in den ihm genau bekannten Festungswerken jeweils an den Stellen auftaucht, von denen aus ihm eine Einwirkung auf unsere Bewegungen moeglich u. von der eigenen Truppe deshalb nicht zu verhindern ist, weil die einzelnen Dach- u. Baumschuetzen nicht erkannt werden koennen. Eben diese fdl. Einzelschuetzen fuegen der Division empfindliche Verluste zu, insbesondere an Offizieren.

13.50–14.30: Ueberzeugt sich der Div.Kdr. in Gegend Rgts.Gef.Std. **IR 135** persönlich von der Lage. Kdr. **IR 135** hat sich inzwischen **6** durch seinen Abschnitt fahrende, an sich fuer **34 ID** bestimmte Stugs unterstellt u. laesst mit diesen auf die Kerninsel beiderseits der Nordbruecke schiessen, um mit dieser Unterstuetzung einen Entsatz der in der Zitadelle eingeschlossenen Teile seines **III.Batls.** zu ermoeglichen. . . Inzwischen treten weitere Verluste, insbesondere von Offizieren ein. Auch in schon genommenen Teilen der Inseln fallen noch immer zahlreiche gut gezielte Gewehrschuesse aus Verstecken u. kosten erhebliche Verluste. Eine restlose Bereinigung der Lage auf der Zitadelle ist noch nicht zu erzielen. . .

16.10: Meldet der Div.-Kdr. nochmals dem Komm.-General seine Absicht fuer den naechsten Tag: In den fruehen Morgenstunden starke Artl.-Vorbereitung, danach Angriff IR 133 auf Zitadellenkern. **IR 135** haelt zunaechst mit Hilfe der noch verbliebenen **2 Stugs** die erreichten Stellungen.

18.30: Trifft der O.B. der **4. Armee** bei der Div. ein u. wird ueber die Lage orientiert. Er befiehlt, dass kein unnuetztes Blut im Kampf um die Zitadelle vergossen werden soll [underline in original text], da die Kaempfe nur noch oertliche Bedeutung haben. Der Feind soll ausgehungert werden. Fernmuendliche Befehle in diesem Sinne ergehen an die Truppenteile.

IR 130 erreicht noch im Laufe des Nachmittags sein Tagesziel **Hoehe 144** (bis **16,15** Uhr) mit unterstellter **1.** u. **6./AR 98**, ohne indessen deren Feuerbereitschaft abzuwarten. Fuer die Nacht wird befohlen: die Zitadelle von allen Seiten einzuschliessen . . . u. Ausbruchsversuche des Feindes zu verhindern. . . Am Morgen des **23.6.41** soll nach Artl.-Vorbereitung von **3.00 – 4.30** Uhr der Zitadellenkern genommen werden.

Ein Befehl des **Arko 27** ergeht **21.00** Uhr, wird aber mit Befehl des Arko am **23.6.41, 0.30** Uhr widerrufen. Ursache hierfuer ist der Entschluss des Div.-Kdrs., auf Grund des bis etwa **23.30** Uhr gewonnenen Feindeindrucks (Ausfalls-

versuche nach allen Seiten) u. der Weisung des O.B. (s.o.) den Zitadellenkern am **23.6.41** frueh **nicht** anzugreifen.

Absicht ist nunmehr, bis **5.00** Uhr die Truppen in einem der Sicherheitszone entsprechenden Umkreis von dem Zitadellenkern wegzuziehen u. ab **5.00** Uhr mit einem zermuerbenden Zerstoeerungsfeuer auf den Zitadellenkern zu beginnen. . . . **Arko 27** werden fuer das Zerstoerungsschiessen die Moerser-Abt. der beiden Nachbar-Div. unterstellt. . .

(KTB, RH 26-45/20)

--**22.6.41** [129 ID]:

3.05: Am **22.6.41** beginnen die Kampfhandlungen zur befohlenen Zeit um **3.05** Uhr. Die Infanterie ueberschreitet die Grenze, die Artillerie nimmt bekannte Feindziele . . . unter Feuer. Kurz nach Feuereroeffnung ist vom vorgeschobenen Div.Gef.-Std. das hell brennende Grajewo zu sehen. Der vom Div.Gef.Std. aus zu sehende russ. Beobachtungsturm wird **3.15** Uhr durch eine Pak in Brand geschossen.

3.25: Erreicht **II./IR 185**³⁵⁵ mit vordersten Teilen das brennende Mierucie.

3.30: Erreicht **Pz.Zug 3** Grajewo.

3.40: Erreicht **I./185** Konopki, **II./185** nimmt zur gleichen Zeit die Hoehen suedlich Mierucie.

3.55: Im Abschnitt des **IR 428** u. **IR 430** ueberschreiten die angesetzten Stosstrupps an allen Stellen planmaessig die Reichsgrenze. Die Beobachtungstuerme entlang der Grenze werden in Brand gesetzt u. koennen von den Russen nicht mehr benutzt werden. Die im Abschnitt des **IR 430** angesetzten Stosstrupps nehmen **3.55** Uhr Tozcylowo, Karnowo, Skrodzkie. Feind scheint sich, nur geringen Widerstand leistend, zurueckzuziehen.

4.20: **IR 428** nimmt Reszki, Rudki u. Stare ohne Feindwiderstand. . .

4.45: Nimmt die linke Kp. des **II.Batls.** [**IR 185**] nach hartem Gefecht Bogusze. Die ersten Gefangenen werden zum Div.Gef.Std. zur Vernehmung in Marsch gesetzt. Die Gefangenen machen den Eindruck, als seien sie von dem Angriff voellig ueberrascht worden. Einige sagen aus, weder Waffen noch Munition in Haenden gehabt zu haben, andere geben an, beim Schlafen ueberrascht worden zu sein (sie erscheinen daher z.T. ohne Stiefel u. Struempfe).

Die Gefangenen sagen willig aus, sind jedoch ueber Absichten ihrer Fuehrung nicht im Bilde (z.B. sind nicht einmal die Auftraege der Zuege oder

³⁵⁵ **Note:** On **22.6.41**, the **129 ID** had three inf.-rgts/ = **427, 428, 430 IR**. (See, G.F. Nafziger, German Order of Battle. Infantry in WWII, p. 160) The **IR 185** was most likely temporarily assigned to the division to support its initial attack. On **24.6.41** is following entry in KTB: "Div.Kdr. faehrt zum Rgts.-Gef.Std. **IR 185**, um dem Kdr. **IR 185** den Befehl ueber die vor Osowiec stehenden Kraefte zu uebergeben u. sich gleichzeitig von ihm zu verabschieden." That appears to be the final reference to this regiment in the war diary of the **129 ID** through **1.7.41**.

Kom[panien] bekannt, oder ob z.B. Grenzstellungen gehalten werden muessen oder nicht). . .

5.20: . . . **II./185** erreicht Grajewo u. stoesst bis zu den Kasernen am Suedrand von Grajewo vor. . . .

9.35: . . . Feind weicht auf der ganzen Front vor **IR 185** – nur noch schwachen Widerstand leistend – zurueck. . .

14.30: Erreicht **IR 185** mit **I./185** Opartowo, mit **II./185** Okol.³⁵⁶

[- - -]: Aus den Papieren eines gefallenen russ. Offiziers geht hervor, dass die bekaempften Kampfgruppen Auftrag hatten, die fechtende Truppe vorbei marschieren zu lassen, um anschliessend den Verkehr auf den Nachschubstrassen zu stoeren bzw. zu unterbinden. . .

(*KTB, RH 26-129/3*)

--**22.6.41** [137 ID]:

0.00: Die Vorbereitungen fuer den Angriff wurden planmaessig gemaess Angriffsbefehl u. **0.00** Uhr beendet.

3.15: Um **03.15** Uhr trat die Division zum Angriff an. Waehrend der Artillerie-Vorbereitung gelang es den Regimentern, den Bug ohne wesentliche Feindeinwirkung zu ueberschreiten. Von einem organisierten Widerstand war nichts zu merken. Die Ueberraschung war voll gelungen. Erster Widerstand im Waldstueck noerdl. D.Wierzchuca Nadbuzna u. Westrand Sledzianow wurde nach kurzem u. heftigem Gefecht gebrochen.

4.15: Wurde der Brueckenbau an der erkundeten Stelle noerdl. Molozew befohlen. . .

4.55: [i.e., sometime after this time but before **6.47** Uhr]: Fdl. Fliegerangriffe richteten sich gegen Flakstellungen westl. Grodek. Etwa **15** Flugzeuge wurden ueber dem Raum der Division abgeschossen. . .

12.30: Fertigstellung der Kriegsbruecke. Sturmgeschuetze (**16** t Faehre), l.F.H. **18** u. schwere Waffen der Infanterie wurden auf Faehren uebergesetzt. Erster staerkerer Widerstand des Feindes im Waldstueck noerdl. Klepacz u. Hoehen suedl. davon. Suedl. Klepacz wurde durch **IR 448** eine Batterie erobert u. etwa **200** Russen niedergemacht. . .

14.00: Gegen **14.00** Uhr Panzerangriffe bei **AA 137** u. **IR 448**, die unter Vernichtung von etwa **10** Panzer abgeschlagen wurden. Der Uebergang ueber den Bug verzoegerte sich durch die sehr versandete Abfahrt. . .

³⁵⁶ **Note:** Only a representative sample of the **129. ID**'s advances on this day – villages captured, etc. – are included in this entry.

23.00 [approx. time]: . . . Ueber den Kampf des ersten Tages ist zu sagen, dass der Feind nirgends einen zusammenhaengenden Widerstand leistete, sondern sich nur in kleineren Gruppen, besonders in Waeldern, hier aber hartnaeckig zur Wehr setzte.

(**Note:** On following page, KTB – prepared by Oberlt. Hilbertz, **01** – note the following: Am **22.6.41** frueh unterstanden der **137 ID** [u.a.]:

Artillerie:

Arko 44
Art.Rgts.Stab 622
Art.Rgt. 17
Art.Abt. I./109 (10 cm Kan.)
Art.Abt. 841 (s.F.H.)
Art.Abt. 856 (21 cm Moerser)
Stug.-Abt. 226
B-Abt. 28

Pioniere:

Pi.Btl. 752 (bsp.)
Bruecko B (mot.) 23
Bruecko B (mot.) 635

Heeresflak:

Fla.Kp. 6/55

(*KTB, RH 26-137/4*)

--**22.6.41** [**256 ID**]:

3.05: Ueberfliegen die ersten deutschen Flugzeugen die russ. Grenze, gleichzeitig beginnt das zusammengefasste Artl.-Feuer auf die russ. Stellungen. Nach **20** Minuten langer Artl.-Vorbereitung treten die **3** Inf.-Rgter. zum Angriff ueber die Grenze an.

3.30: Die ersten Meldungen laufen von **IR 481** ein. **3.30** Uhr ist G.Hacitowka genommen. Ein Btn. wird in Bunkerkaempfe in Gegend G.Hacitowka verwickelt.
. . .

6.30: Ist Hoehe **176** u. **8.45** Uhr Kurjanka genommen.

Bei **IR 476**, das rechts von **IR 481** ueber Krasne u. Lipsk angreift, geht es zunaechst ebenfalls gut vorwaerts, das Rgt. wird jedoch in Gegend Krasne in hartnaeckige Bunkerkaempfe verwickelt u. stoest auch in Gegend Lipsk auf starken Feindwiderstand.

IR 456, das links von **IR 481** angreift, ueberschreitet den Wolkuszanka-Bach u. durchbricht nach Ueberwindung des Feindwiderstandes in Gegend Zabicki die fdl. Bunkerlinie. . .

Gleichzeitig mit **IR 456** treffen die vordersten Teile von **IR 481** an den Bruecken von Siolko ein. Nach kurzem Kampf werden die Bruecken **10.30** Uhr unzerstoert genommen. . .

Div.Gef.Std. macht Stellungswechsel nach Kurjanka. Nach Eintreffen in Kurjanka wird Lt. Kriegsheim schwer verwundet von **2** Leuten zum Div.Gef.Std. gebracht. Er hatte seinen Auftrag nur z.T. erfuehlen koennen, ein Teil seiner Leute war versprengt, der andere Teil war gefallen.

Die Vormarschstrasse der Division ueber G.Haczitowka [sp?] nach Kurjanka befindet sich in einem sehr schlechten Zustand. *Diessseits der Grenze war sie in Ordnung, doch unmittelbar nach Ueberschreiten der Grenze fuehrte die Strasse durch ein Sandmeer.* Viele Fahrzeuge blieben stecken u. konnten erst wieder mit Hilfe anderer flott gemacht werden. Hinzu kam, dass die Bruecke ueber den Grenzbach infolge der starken Beanspruchung u. starken Belastung durch die Heeresartillerie u. Sturmgeschuetze nach kurzer Zeit auseinander brach u. erst nach schwierigen Arbeiten wieder benutzt werden konnte.

12.30: IR 481 stoest indessen nach Durchschreiten von Siolko unaufhaltsam in Richtung Nowy Dwor vor. Erreicht um **12.30** Uhr den etwa **4** km noerdlich Nowy Dwor gelegenen Flugplatz, zerstoert dort mit der unterstellten Stug.-Bttr. u. s.M.G. Feuer **38** im Start begriffene Flugzeuge am Boden u. schieisst mehrere Flugzeughallen in denen ebenfalls noch Flugzeuge standen, in Brand.

13.15: Sind die vordersten Teile des Rgts. nach Ueberwindung des Feindwiderstandes in Nowy Dwor eingetroffen u. sichern sich sofort nach Osten, Sueden u. Westen gegen Panzerangriffe. . . **IR 476** kommt nur langsam ueber Lipsk in Richtung Dabrowa vorwaerts. . .

Sofort nach Eintreffen der Meldung von der Besetzung von Nowy Dwor wird die VA ueber Siolko nach Nowy Dwor vorgezogen, um befehlgemaess ueber Kuznika auf Indura vorzustossen. Alle vorher bestimmten Teile treten zu dieser Zeitpunkt zur VA u. werden nach Nowy Dwor in Marsch gesetzt.

15.00: Greift der Feind bereits Nowy Dwor aus ostwaertiger Richtung mit Panzern an, der Angriff wird abgeschlagen. . .

19.00: Tritt VA von Nowy Dwor nach Sueden an, stoest jedoch bereits dicht suedl. Nowy Dwor auf so starkem Feindwiderstand, dass sie etwa **3** km vor- kommt u. **21.30** Uhr dort liegen bleibt. Die VA meldet, dass sie gegenueber dem starken Feindwiderstand am Abend nicht mehr angreift sondern am **23.6.41 4.00** Uhr anzugreifen beabsichtigt.

IR 481 geht infolgedessen um Nowy Dwor unter Sicherung nach allen Seiten zur Ruhe ueber. **IR 476** erreicht im Laufe des Abends Dabrowa, hat dort gegenueber

starkem Feindwiderstand heftige Kämpfe zu bestehen. Obwohl Dabrowa vom Russen hartnäckig verteidigt wird, gelingt es dem Regiment den Ort nach allen Seiten zu umstellen.

Div.Gef.Std.: Kurjanka.

(KTB Nr. 4, **RH 26-256/12**)

--**22.6.41** [292 ID]:

0.00: Gegen [dieser Zeit] ist die Artillerie feuerbereit.

2.00: Bis [dieser Zeit] hat die Infanterie ihre Ausgangsstellungen am Sueduefer des Bug bezogen. Im Verhalten des Feindes werden keinerlei Veraenderungen beobachtet. Die allnaechtlich bei Milewo – Minczewo durchgefuehrten Betonarbeiten finden bei hellem Scheinwerferlicht statt. Die russ. Lkw. fahren noch wie bisher mit Licht Baumaterial.

3.00: Gegen [dieser Zeit] *geht die Sonne wie eine rote Sichel auf*. Der Div.Kdr. befindet sich auf der Div.-Beob.-Stelle, ostwaerts Fw.Konczytrudy.

3.15: Um [dieser Zeit] beginnt das auessert starke Feuer der Artillerie. Chrolo-wiece brennt, die russ. B.-Stellen werden durch Nebel geblendet, innerhalb der ersten halben Stunde sind bei allen **3** Rgtrn. **2-4** Kpn. ohne nennenswerten Widerstand ueber den Bug gesetzt. Die erste Ueberraschung ist vollkommen gelungen.

4.00: Zwischen **4.00** u. **5.00** Uhr schieisst nur vereinzelt fdl. Artillerie auf das Duenengelaende bei Tonkiele.

5.30: Bis [dieser Zeit] hat verstaerktes **IR 508** die Hoehe **161.5** u. den Waldrand **1.5** km suedwestl. Bujaki erreicht u. treibt Aufklaerung nach Zajeczniki – Bujaki u. Rogawka vor. **IR 509** hat Wolka Zamkowa, **IR 507** Milewo Minczewo erreicht. Die ersten **2** Gefangenen, zu Befestigungsarbeiten eingesetzt, bestaetigen, dass sie von unserem Angriff vollkommen ueberrascht worden sind.

9.00: Die Kriegesbruecke des der Division unterstellten **Pi.Btl.178** ist als erste im Korps bereits um **9.00** Uhr fertig. Bald danach wechselt der Div.Gef.Std. in das Waeldchen zwischen Runice u. Milewo Minczewo.

In den Waeldern u. Kornfeldern ringsum gelegentlich Schiessereien. In Drohiczyn gibt es bei Spaehtrupunternehmungen Verluste. Unter anderem faellt hier der Kdr. des **III./IR 508**, Major Pueschel.

9.30: Gegen [dieser Zeit] haben die **3** Rgtr. gegen nur oertlich, aber sehr zaeh Widerstand leistenden Feind die allgemeine Linie Zajeczniki – Koczery – Hoehe 171.4 – suedl. Molkowice erreicht. Vor **IR 508** hat der Russe sogar noch einige Bunker besetzen koennen.

16.00: Zwischen **1600-1700** Uhr liegt rechts **IR 508** beiderseits Hoehe **162.7** noerdl. Slochy Annopolskie. Infolge starker Flankierung aus den Befestigungen dicht noerdl. Slochy Annopolskie wird das Rgt. aufgehalten. **IR 509** u. **IR 507** liegen ostwaerts u. nordostwaerts Rogawka im Feuer mehrerer leichter u. einer schweren Battr. fest. Die bei den Rgrtn. eingesetzten Sturmgeschuetze koennen nicht ueber den Kamianka-Abschnitt hinueberwirken.

17.30: Der Div.Kdr. der gegen **17.30** Uhr zum **IR 509** ostwaerts Rogawka vorgefahren ist, gewinnt eindeutig den Eindruck, dass *ohne neuen Artl.Aufmarsch eine Weiterfuehrung des Angriffs sehr verlustreich werden wuerde*. Andererseits ist die Zeit so vorgeschritten, dass der Entschluss gefasst wird, den Angriff erst morgen frueh fortzusetzen. . . Unter anderem *wird der Div.Gef.Std. hart suedwest. Sytki gegen 17.30 Uhr von 40 Russen angegriffen*, die abgewehrt werden. Mehrfach werden ueber dem Abschnitt der Div. russische Flugzeuge abgeschossen.

Die VA ist in die Gegend um Sytki vorgezogen worden. Der Schwerpunkt wird nach links verlagert, der Artl.-Aufmarsch dementsprechend noch am Abend durchgefuehrt. Fuer die Nacht bildet **IR 508** einen „Igel“ am Ostrand der Hoehe **162.7**. **IR 509** u. **IR 507** liegen in der erreichten Linie etwa **600** m westlich Siemiatycze – D.Czartajew.

(KTB Nr. 3, **RH 26-292/7**)

--**22.6.41** [3 PD]:³⁵⁷

1.15: Die Angriffsgruppen melden ihre Uebersetzbereitschaft.

2.25: Die gesamte Flak ist feuerbereit.

2.30: Arko 143 meldet die Feuerbereitschaft der Artl.

2.40: Der Ia meldet dem Ia des Gen.Kdos., die Div. gefechtsbereit.

3.15: Y-Zeit: Artl. Feuer ist planmaessig angelaufen.

3.20: Der Div.Kdeur. orientiert vom vorgeschobenen Gef.Std. den Ia, dass der Handstreich auf die Bruecke Koden [*over the Bug, I assume*] wahrscheinlich gelungen ist.

3.24: Arko **143** meldet, dass die Bruecke fest in unserer Hand ist. Bereits **1** Inf. Geschuetz ueber die Bruecke, ebenso die ersten Schuetzen auf dem jenseitigen Uefer.

3.25: Gruppe Kleemann meldet, dass Feindeindruck „gleich Null“ ist. Nur ein vereinzelter Artl.Schuss in Gegend Bruecke Koden.

³⁵⁷ **Note:** This source is a good example of insights offered by an “Ia KTB” during initial hours of Operation “Barbarossa.” Appears **3 PD** suffered from considerable delays on *Barbarosstatag* due to poor roadways and traffic jams.

3.40: . . . Bei Gruppe Kleemann sind bereits 2 Kpn. herueber, bei Okezyn wird eine 8 to Bruecke gebaut.

3.45: Der Ia meldet dem Chef des Stabes, dasss Bruecke Koden fest in die Hand genommen ist. Oberst Schilling orientiert den Ia, dass auch die Bruecke bei Terespol [sp?] genommen ist. . .

3.50: **II./SR 3** ist bereits ganz auf dem jenseitigen Ufer u. die ersten Panzer der verst. **III./PzRgt 6** rollen ueber die Bruecke. . .

9.35: Feindeindruck: Bisher sehr schwacher Feind. . .

10.30: **K 3** meldet, dass der beabsichtigte Vormarschweg (rot) ostw. des 2. Zwischenzieles ungangbar ist, da stark versumpft. . .

11.00: Vorausabteilung der Brig. Linnarz am Bahndamm bei Stradecz. Dort sind erhebliche Verstopfungen durch *katastrophale Wegeverhaeltnisse* aufgetreten. . .

14.30: [Another mention of] katastrophale Wegeverhaeltnisse. . .

16.30: [Mention of] U- u. Watpanzer der **III./PzRgt 6**. . . [Mention of] teilweise hartnaeckigem Widerstand.

18.40: . . . **K 3** kaempft sich jedoch hartnaeckig durch die schlechten Wegeverhaeltnisse durch. . .

19.00: In der Abendmeldung an das Korps kommt zum Ausdruck, dass die Div. am empfindlichsten die Gelaendeschwierigkeiten, weniger den fdl. Widerstand verspuert hat. . .

20.10: [Mention of] groessere Marschstockungen, die nach Ansicht des Chef des Gen.Stabes des **24. PzK** auf die schwierigen Wegeverhaeltnisse vor der Bruecke Huznie, aber auch auf die schlechte Fahrdisziplin zurueckzufuehren sind. . . Die Div. setzt ihren Marsch auf der Vormarschstrasse fort unter erheblichen Verstopfungen, die teilweise auf die schlechte Strassendisziplin, teilweise auf das Dazwischenschieben anderer Kolonnen zurueckzufuehren ist. . .

(*KTB Nr. 3, RH 27-3/14*)

--**22.6.41** [7 PD]:

0305: Angriff auf der ganzen Front.

0340: Hoehe **198** von eigenen Schuetzen ueberschritten. **S.R. 6** hat nur schwachen Widerstand.

0345: . . . **S.R. 7** nur schwacher Feindwiderstand.

0405: Befehl an Kdr. **Pz.Rgt. 25:** Rgt. an die Grenze heranziehen, Bereitstellung suedlich Trumpalis c **8** links **1**. [?]

0415: **Pi. L. 1** wird hinter **Pz.Rgt. 25** an die Grenze vorgezogen, um die Strasse Suwalki, Kalvaria von Minen zu raeumen.

0520: Muendlicher Befehl an **Pz.Rgt. 25** zum Antreten Richtung Kalvaria. . .

0800: Vorderste Teile der Division befinden sich an der Strasse nach Kalvaria.

1245: Bruecken Olita u. **4,5** km ostwaerts davon unversehrt in unsere Haende gefallen.

1400: Starker Angriff feindlicher Pz.Wagen auf den noerdlichen Brueckenkopf.

1530: Meldung vom Pz.Rgt., dass Pz. Angriff auf Ostufer abgeschlagen.

1700: Meldung von **Pz.[Rgt.] 25**, dass Gegner seine Panzerangriffe staendig wieder-holt.

2130: Tagesmeldung fernmuendlich an **39. AK [mot.]**, Inhalt in Stichworten: Gegen zeitweise ernste Widerstaende gelang es um **12.45** Uhr mit verstaerktem Pz.Rgt. unter Fuehrung von Oberst Rothenburg die Bruecken Olita u. suedostw. davon unversehrt in die Haende zu bekommen u. an beiden Punkten einen Brueckenkopf zu bilden. Ab **1430** Uhr bis **2000** Uhr wehrte das Rgt. staerkere fdl. Pz.Angriffe auf die Brueckenkoepfe ab u. vernichtete hierbei **70** mittlere u. schwere Pz.Kpf.Wgn. . .

(KTB Nr. 3, **RH 27-7/46**)

--**22.6.41** [18 PD]:

3.15: Beginn der Artl.-Vorbereitung auf der gesamten Front. Nach den ersten Artl.-Abschuessen setzen die ersten Teile auf Flossaecken bereits ueber. Es gelingt ihnen, am anderen Ufer bei schwacher fdl. Gegenwehr Fuss zu fassen u. programm-gemaess vorzudringen.

4.43: Durchwatet die ersten Panzer (Pz III u. IV) den Bug. Die Schuetzen-Bde vernichtet nach Ueberwindung schwacher Gegenwehr am Nordufer des Bug, unter Einsatz von durchwateten Teilen der Pz.-Bde u. uebergesetzten Teilen der **II./AR 88** staerkeren Feind in Czelejewo. Ueberall wird der Feind mit Unterstuezung der Luftwaffe zum Rueckzug gezwungen.

8.00: Gegen **8.00** Uhr erreichen bereits einige Kompanien (**6./Pz.Rgt. 18**) der Pz.-Bde, nachdem sie den Bug mit Teilen durchwatet haben, den Uebergang ueber die Lesna bei Wistycze. Sie stossen, ohne Ruecksicht auf das Fehlen der Masse der Verbaende der Pz.-Bde (nichtwatfaehige Teile), entlang der Rollbahn unaufhaltsam vor, um die Verfolgung des in ostw. Richtung zurueckgehenden Feindes entlang der Strasse Widomla – Pruzana aufzunehmen. Dabei entwickelt sich mit fdl. Panzerkraeften, die sich zum Kampfe stellen, im Gegend von

Peliczcze eine Panzerschlacht, in deren Verlauf **36 Feindpanzer** bei - - - [text is blank here] eigenen Verlusten abgeschossen werden. . .

17.30: Gegen **17.30** sind oben angegebene Feindpanzer vernichtet. Die restlichen Teile ziehen sich zurueck. Kampffliegerverbaende haben dabei mehrmals mit Erfolg in die Kaempfe eingegriffen.

. . . Der Brueckenschlag noerdl. Legi kann nicht so fruehzeitig beendet werden, dass der Pz.-Bde die nicht wafachigen Teile u. die **Pz.Abt. (F) 100**, der Schuetzen-Bde aber die Transportfahrzeuge noch am Tage haetten zugefuehrt werden koennen. Der unprogrammgesaesserte zeitliche Verzug im Brueckenbau u. fuer das Uebergehen selbst war bedingt durch die sandigen Uferverhaeltnisse, den ausserordentlich versandeten Abfahrtsweg, der zu einem grossen Teil mit Stahlstrasse ausgelegt werden musste, u. durch den Bruch einer Stosstange fuer die Verbindung der Pontons untereinander, wodurch den bereits angelaufene Uebersetzverkehr auf mehrere Stunden unterbrochen werden musste.

Es gelingt nicht einmal bis zum Abend die notwendigsten Teile wie Betriebstoff, Munition u. Leerfahrzeuge fuer die Schuetzen trotz groesster Bemuehungen nachzuschicken. Selbst fuer die Fuehrungstaffel des Div.-Stabes u. Teile der Nachr.-Abteilung muss der bereits gefasste Entschluss fuer einen schnellen Gefechtsstand-Wechsel ueber den Bug hinueber nach Erkundung der Strassenbelegung aufgegeben werden. Die beabsichtigte enge Verbindung zum *vorausgeeilten Div.-Kdr* zu halten, gelingt damit nicht. . .

(*KTB, RH 27-18/20*)

1.6.8: Case Study 1: 18 IR (6 ID)—Bunkers at Akmenynai / Dr. Heinrich Haape's Baptism of Fire

--Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

--After taking part in the French campaign, **6 ID** had first been stationed along the demarcation line with Vichy France around Poitiers. In September 1940 it was moved to the Cotentin Peninsula in idyllic Normandy, where it secured the coastline against any eventual British landing attempt and participated in the abortive preparations for Operation "Sealion."^{dxcii} Despite the apparent lull in the war after the victory over France, the officers, NCOs and men of the division underwent tenacious and thorough training in the ensuing months, helping to make possible the division's often brilliant achievements in Russia in 1941. The area of Normandy, rich in cultural and historical tradition, offered many charming diversions, among them an inspection of the famous Bayeux tapestry by the division commander and a group of his officers. Relations with the local civilians were proper,^{dxciiii} at times even cordial, and romances were not uncommon.

The pleasant period in Normandy ended abruptly on 19 March 1941, when the division began to entrain for transfer to the east. The loading was to take several days and require 71 trains. Wilhelm Buddenbohm, a soldier in the division's 37 Infantry Regiment, described the frenetic pace of the journey, as well as his dismay over the precipitous plunge in temperature as the

division left the warm spring weather of Normandy and arrived in the much colder climes of East Prussia: . . .

From 6-9 April 1941, 6 Infantry Division was suddenly uprooted from its quarters in East Prussia and dispatched further to the east – right up to the demarcation line with Russia in the area known as the Suwalki triangle. The triangle lay east of the Masurian Lakes and beyond the historic boundaries of East Prussia; it had been made a part of Lithuania in a treaty between Lithuania and the Soviet Union in July 1920, only to see Poland grab it in defiance of that treaty. The Russo-German Secret Additional Protocol of 28 September 1939 had ceded the triangle to Germany and, in a rare act of self-restraint, the Russians made no attempt to occupy it when they seized Lithuania in June 1940. Shortly thereafter, the German government reaffirmed its intention to maintain German rights to the Suwalki triangle, refusing a Russian offer to purchase it; “if the Russians had taken decisive action earlier, they would have deprived the Germans of a vital pivot for [Operation] *Barbarossa*.”³⁵⁸

(*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Chapter 2)

--22.6.41: Cdr of 3rd Btn., IR 18 (**6 ID**)³⁵⁸ shaken by Russian combat methods on *first day of war*. Also angered by activities of Russian snipers (*franc tireur*). Signified a new, and ruthless type of warfare (*Moscow Tram Stop*, pp 19-20, 37-8).³⁵⁹

--22.6.41: For harrowing account of horrors of first day of *Barbarossa*, see *Tagebuch Stabarzt Lierow*, IR 37 / **6 ID**. For example, bitter Russian defense of a concrete bunker. Also: “Spaeter erlebe ich eine grausigste Szene. Ausser zu vielen Verwundeten am Wege werde ich dorthin gerufen, wo eins der Flugzeuge abgestuert war. Es zerschmetterte am Boden, uebergoss mit brennendem Benzin Ass.Arzt Dr Berkus, I./AR 6 seinen Kon-Dienstgrad u. drei Mann. Sie kommen mir mit schmerzaufgerissenen Augen, mit schwarzverbrannten Geischtern u. nacktem Oberkoerper bruellend vor Schmerz entgegen.“ (*Tagebuch Lierow*)

--22.6.41 (**18 IR/6 ID**): Auftrag der **6 ID** war es, ein Loch in die Grenzbefestigungen zu schlagen u. sich bis zum **23.6.** in den Besitz des Uebergangs ueber den Njemen bei Prienai zu setzen, der von der Grenze **70 km Luftlinie** entfernt lag. „Das **IR 18**, als Schwerpunkt-Rgt. in der Div., hat die Aufgabe, die Hoehen beiderseits Galbanowka zu gewinnen, um von dort aus nach erneuter Bereitstellung die ausgebaute feindl. Widerstandslinie zwischen Akmenynai u. Punkt **248** zu durchbrechen. Beobachtungen lassen darauf schliessen, dass die Linie Akmenynai – Budvietis mit betonten Kampfstaenden versehen ist. . . Fieberhafte feindliche Schanzarbeiten auf Hoehe **220** u. suedl davon. Alle Anzeichen sprechen dafuer, dass der Russe *sehr unruhig geworden ist*.“³⁶⁰ . . .

Am **22 Jun 41** notiert der Rgt.-Adjutant im Tagebuch:

Um **1.30** Uhr machen wir uns auf dem Gefechtsstand fertig, um zur B-Stelle zu gehen, wo der Kdr. – im Zelt – auf uns wartet. – Eine Totenruhe liegt ueber dem

³⁵⁸ Note: Men of III./**IR 18** all from *Rhineland* and *Westphalia*. (*Moscow Tram Stop*, 299). **6 ID** would eventually receive recognition as *one of the three best divisions on the entire Eastern Front* (so Haape, 381).

³⁵⁹ Note: From following diary entries, etc., addressing first days of *Barbarossa*, it becomes clear that the Germans were fighting a much different kind of war from that in the West—brutality, mercilessness, underhanded combat methods of Russians became part of German soldier’s *Alltag*. Crux: Despite rapid German advance, initial days were a time of *nasty surprises*.

³⁶⁰ Note: Here Rhein is quoting from the **KTB IR 18**.

Grenzgebiet. Unauffaellig schiebt sich neben uns u. unmittelbar vor uns alles leise nach vorne, an die Grenze. – Das Telefon rasselt: die Einheiten melden die beendete Bereitstellung. Ein Spaehtrupp wird aus Richtung Hoehe **220** mit Gewehrfeuer beschossen, ohne Verluste. – Gegen **2.15** Uhr wird es daemmrig; der Himmel roetet sich im Osten u. kuendigt einen klaren Tag an. Y-Zeit: **3.05** Uhr, der „Grenzsprung“ beginnt. Kein Schuss faellt zunaechst. Am Scherenfernrohr verfolgen wir das Vorgehen der beiden vorderen Bataillone. . . **3.40** Uhr sind beide Hoehen, **208** u. **220**, genommen. Die **3.Kp.** links hat einige Verluste. . . . Die Btl.-Gefechtsstaende schwingen nach vorn. Der „Grenzsprung“ ist gelungen.

[**Note: II./18** skirts Lubavas and by **7.00** has reached Galbanowka. Elements of regiment encounter fierce enemy resistance. Within an hour's time, the **2./18** sustains **24** casualties. **II./18** soon pinned down before enemy bunkers at Akmenynai. German assault troops take on the bunkers. Lt. von Schrader, **7./18**, ist badly wounded directly in front of a Russian „Kampfstand.“ Following an enemy foray, he is „auf bestialische Weise ermordet. . . Er konnte von dem durch Lt. Mintrop gefuehrten Stosstrupp nur noch als Leiche geborgen werden.“]

(E.M. Rhein, *Das 18. Inf.-Rgt.*, 45-47)

--General Grossmann's divisional history:

Die Division im Raum Szeszupa Bach – Wiluzany – Skombobolo – Rowele – Rutka erhielt einen Beobachtungstreifen an der Grenze, **30** km noerdl. Suwalki, von gut 10 km Breite zwischen der in Richtung Kalvaria fließenden Szeszupa u. dem Waldgelaende von Sudawskie zugewiesen. Rechts von der **6 ID**, etwa rittlings der Strasse Szypliszki-Kalvaria hatte das **39 PzK**, links von der **6 ID** die **26 ID** die gleiche Aufgabe.

Die Beobachtung, ergaenzt durch die Beobachtungssabteilung u. durch Fliegeraufnahmen, ergab: Vor der Mitte unseres Streifens befanden sich zweifellos in einigen Kilometern Breite fertige, betonierte Staende. Vor dem rechten Drittel konnten ebensowenig wie vor dem linken Drittel Befestigungen festgestellt werden. . . Das Gelaende jenseits der Grenze war schwach gewellt u. enthielt rechts wenige kleinere, links groessere Waldstuecke.

Russische Besetzung konnte ueberall unschwer festgestellt werden; ueber die Staerke war nichts bekannt, auch nicht, ob Grenzschutz oder Kampftruppen uns gegenueberstand. . .

Am **18.6.[41]** wurde durch Stichwort als Angriffstag der **22.6.1941** befohlen. . . Nach dem Angriffsbefehl hatte die Div. am 22.6. um 3.05 Uhr antretend, mit dem rechten Fluegel an der Szeszupa ueber Liudvinavas (7 km suedl. Mariampole) vorgehend, sich bis 23.6. in den Besitz des Njemen-Ueberganges bei Prienai zu setzen. Er war von der Grenze **70** km Luftlinie entfernt, dem entsprechend nach alten Erfahrungen mindestens **90** km Marsch. . .

Fuer die Div. kam es darauf an, sich nicht vor Befestigungen in breiter Front festzurennen, sondern unter Abschluss der Befestigungen moeglichst durch unbefestigtes Gelaende vorzustossen u. ihre Wegnahme besonderen Teilen zu ueberlassen.

Auf Grund der oben geschilderten Feind- u. Gelaendeverhaeltnisse entschloss sich die Div. alle drei Inf.-Rgter. mit sehr tiefer Staffelung anzusetzen, um die schwachste Stelle der feindl. Stellung abzutasten u. in der Lage zu sein, den Schwerpunkt des Durchbruchs verlegen zu koennen.

Rechts sollte **IR 37**, in der Mitte **IR 18** u. links **IR 58** vorgehen. [See text for more details.] **IR 18** fiel der Auftrag zu, nach handstreichartiger Wegnahme der Hoehen **208 u. 220**, die *ausgebaute feindl. Widerstandslinie zwischen Akemenynai u. Hoehe 248 zu durchbrechen.*

Das **6 AK** hatte aus der Masse des **AA 6** mit ihrem Fuehrer Obst.Lt. Hirsch u. Teilen der **26 ID** eine „*Vorausabteilungen 6 AK*“ gebildet, die an der Grenze bereitstand. Auf Befehl des Korps sollte sie ueber die **6 ID** vorstossen, sobald das Loch geschlagen war, u. sich beschleunigt in den Besitz des Njemen-Ueberganges bei Prienai setzen. Die Div. behielt als *Aufklaerungsabteilung* nur die Reiterschwadron mit einigen Zuteilungen unter Rittmeister Frhr. v. Boeselager zur Verfuegung.

In der Nacht vom 20./21.6. erreichten die Truppen ihre *Bereitstellungsraeume*. Sie lagen zum grossen Teil in dem oben erwaehten **3-4 km** breiten Tal, das von den Russen, von der genannten Hoehe **192** vor unserem rechten Fluegel, einzu- sehen war. Das *streng befohlene Tarnung* wurde gut durchgefuehrt. Keine Menschenseele war zu sehen, ausser einigen Bauern in der Heuernte, denen aus- druecklich befohlen war, ihre Arbeiten fortzusetzen, damit sich das Bild fuer den Russen nicht aenderte. . .

Planmaessig ueberflogen deutsche Bomberverbanede am 22.6.1941 kurz vor 3.05 Uhr die vorderste Linie u. griffen den Ort Kalvaria an, in dem einen feindl. Stab liegen sollte. Die Detonationen der Bomben vereinigten sich mit dem zusammen- gefassten Vernichtungsfeuerschlag auf ein russ. Lager suedl. der beobachteten Baustellen. Die ueberwaeltigende Feuerwirkung stand unter der vorbereiteten u. einheitlichen Feuerleitung der Div.-Artl., verstaerkt durch **II./AR 57** (10 cm) u. *Heeres-Art.-Abt. 848* (s.F.H.)

Dichte Nebel behinderten zu Angriffsbeginn die Sicht. Die vordersten Teile durchbrachen lautlos das feindl. Drahtverhau. Waehrend beim rechten Nachbarn Gefechtslaerm zu hoeren war, kam die Div. bei *unerheblichem Widerstand* gut vorwaerts. **IR 37** (Obst.Lt. Hennicke) nahm die beherrschende Hoehe **192** u. Jurgezeriai. **IR 18** lag vor der *Bunkerlinie bei Akmenynai* fest. Hier leitete Oberst Becker den Angriff gegen etwa 5 Betonstaende, gegen die Lt. Mintrop immer wieder neue Stosstrupps fuehrte. Oblt. Grote erledigte 2 russ. Panzer- spahwagen.

Etwa **6.00** Uhr erhielt die Div. die Meldung, dass **IR 58** (Oberst v. Tresckow) nach Brechung schwaecheren Widerstandes keine Befestigungen vorgefunden habe u. rittlings des erwaehten nach Osten fuehrenden Weges im Vorgehen sei.

IR 37 wurde nun der Befehl gegeben, hinter **IR 18** vorbeizuziehen u. dem **IR 58** zu folgen. . . **IR 18** sollte unter Zuruecklassung eines Bataillons zur Vernichtung der betonierten Kampfstaende dem **IR 37** folgen.

II./IR 18 (Höke) mit dem **9./AR 6**, Teilen des **Pi.B.6** u. einem seit 3.00 Uhr aus der Tiefe im Anmarsch befindlichen Pi.-Bataillons hatte gegen die *sich sehr tapfer wehrenden Besatzungen der Betonstaende* einen sehr schweren Kampf zu bestehen. Es gelang erst am folgenden Tage unter Einsatz von Flak u. **Flammenwerfern 4 Kampfstaende** u. ein sogenanntes **B-Werk**, einen zwei-stoeckigen, mit Abwehrwaffen gut ausgestatteten Betonstand zu nehmen. . . Leider traten *schmerzliche Verluste* ein, darunter auch an Offizieren. Ein Leutnant [Lt. Stock?] fiel bei dem Versuch, Handgranaten in die Schiessscharten zu stecken. . .

IR 58, zu dem der Div.-Kdr. vorfuhr, war im *zuegigen Vorgehen* u. hatte sich bereits in Marschkolonne eingefaedelt. Die **Aufklaerungs-Abt. Boeselager** ueberholte die Div. Die Div. hatte den ersten Teil ihres Auftrages geloest: Die noch im Bau befindlichen Grenzbefestigungen waren durchbrochen. Im offenen Gelaende wich der schwache Feind aus oder schlug sich in die Buesche, um sich als Heckenschuetzen zu betaeligen.

Gegen Mittag wurde die Div. von **20** russ. Flugzeugen angegriffen, die auseinanderstoben, als 5 deutsche Jaeger sie aufs Korn nahm. In 5 Minuten waren 5 Russen abgeschossen, die anderen verschwunden. Leider fiel ein russ. Flugzeug unmittelbar suedl. der Marschkolonne der Div. herunter, *explodierte in einer Benzinfeuerwelle* u. bespritzte einen dort haltenden Art.-Abt.-Stab mit brennenden Benzin. Der Abt.-Arzt u. einige andere Soldaten buessten dabei ihr Leben ein oder wurden verwundet.

Die „**Voraus-Abt. 6 AK**“ stiess nach erheblichen Marschstockungen bei Vw. Pagrauziai auf Feind. Da hierdurch der Vormarschweg versperrt war, griff sie aus eigenem Entschluss an, hatte aber gegen den starken Gegner keinen Erfolg. Sie brach um **19.30** Uhr den Kampf ab u. stand **23.30** Uhr marschbereit auf der Strasse Alexandravas – Kalvaria 2 km NO Alexandravas. Inzwischen hatte die nur auf ihre Pferdebeine angewiesene **Aufkl.Abt. Boeselager** bereits mittags die schwache Besetzung von Liudvinavas geworfen, die Bruecke unversehrt genommen u. war nach ihrer Sicherung zu dem ihr befohlenen Tagesziel etwa 6 km ostw. Liudvinavas weitergeritten.

Um **19.00** Uhr hoerte die Div. folgenden Funkspruch des **6 AK** an die **Aufkl.Abt. Boeselager** mit: „Sofort ueber Liudvinavas auf Prienai antreten. Bruecke in Besitz nehmen. Raum bis Njemen feindfrei.“ Hierdurch wurde die schwache Aufkl.Abt., eine verstaerkte Schwadron, die bereits mehr als **50 km** hinter sich hatte, ohne Rast weiter gut 50 km in die sinkende Nacht, endlose Waelder, Sumpf u. last not least: in den Feind, vorgeschickt. . . Die Schwadron war nach Empfang des Befehls sofort abgeritten. Nach etwa 6-10 km stiess die Schwadron bei Nacht auf Feind. Sie griff, wohl auch im Vertrauen auf den obigen Funkspruch, an, traf auf ueberlegenen, wohl gruppierten Gegner, wurde abgewiesen, hatte *schmerzliche Verluste*, musste sich absetzen u. igelte sich ein.

Gegen **20.30** Uhr war das Tagesziel, die Szeszupa beiderseits Liudvinavas erreicht. Dort ging die Div in, um u. westl. des Ortes zur Ruhe ueber. Die „*Vorausabteilung 6 AK*“ traf in der Nacht bei Liudvinavas ein . . . Bei der Befehlerteilung fuer den naechsten Tag u. auch noch in der Nacht *stoerten russ. Flieger*, die sich damit fuer laengere Zeit, wohl bis Ende Juli, von uns verabschiedeten. . .

(Grossmann, *Geschichte der 6. Inf.-Div.*, 37-42)

--**22.6.41** [KTB IR 18]:³⁶¹

Sunday 22.6.1941.³⁶² Regimental Command Post in Bojary – that evening moved to a farmstead 2 kilometers west of Bukta.

The night passes without either side firing a shot, and there is no discernable change in the enemy situation. Shortly after 0200 hours every man along the entire front is in position, ready to spring, and carry out with machine-like precision all the assigned tasks for the leap across the border.

The day promises to be a lovely one. It is still misty in the early morning hours, and the valley between Hill 224 and Hills 220 and 208 is nestled in a thick covering fog.

Since 0200 hours, the regimental staff is also at the command post on Hill 224, where the commander has spent the night in an isolated house.

At 0305 hours, the lead elements launch their attack according to plan. Silently, they cut their way through the enemy wire obstacles (*Drahtverhau*) along the border. The two assault companies – 7th Company on the right and 3rd Company on the left – are far in front of both attacking battalions.

At 0310 hours, a German *Stuka* wing is over Kalvaria and, in vigorous blows, smashes the rear-area troops of the enemy border garrison who are gathered there.

Although in the sector of our neighboring regiment on the right one can already discern the sounds of heavy fighting, our own forward elements are closing on their initial objectives without a shot having been fired. The enemy is startled by our attack and is unable to fully occupy his defensive positions.

At 0340 hours, 1st Battalion reports that its 3rd Company, encountering only feeble enemy resistance, has seized Hill 220; a short time later, 2nd Battalion reports the capture of Hill 208, which was no longer occupied by the enemy. ----- The division is continuously informed about the progress of the regiment. The regiment on our left is also making good progress against weak enemy resistance.

At 0430 hours, the lead elements of 1st Battalion, attacking rapidly beyond Hill 220, encounter considerable enemy resistance in front of the woods west of Pagrauziai, while 2nd Battalion, skirting the town of Liubavas, continues to advance steadily. The artillery concentrates its fire in support of the battalion on the left [1st Battalion] loosing several barrages on the enemy strongpoint at Pagrauziai.

Starting at 0500 hours, the staff personnel, after struggling with their motor vehicles across cultivated fields and through marshy pastures, also make their way onto Hill 220. The 1st Battalion is still held up there by the splendidly camouflaged enemy position west of Pagrauziai. Elements of the battalion have already by-passed a group of farmsteads and gradually reach the level of 2nd Battalion, which has already advanced beyond Epidemiai.

Locked in a bitter fight for Pagrauziai, the 2nd Company has, within an hour, already lost 24 men. However, by pinning down the enemy in the front, 3rd Company, led by the already

³⁶¹ This battle report gleaned from KTB I.R. 18: “*Der russische Sommerfeldzug mit dem I.R. 18.*” (Staats- und Personenstandsarchiv Detmold. Bestell-Nr.: D 107/56 Nr. 10.)

³⁶² Editor’s Note: All underscores are in the original text.

wounded *Oberleutnant* Sahrhage, succeeds in making a vigorous advance in the direction of Galbanovka. The company is soon followed by the battalion staff and most of the machine-gun company.³⁶³

About 0700 hours, the report of 2nd Battalion comes in, indicating that its lead elements have already reached Galbanovka; as a result, the regimental commander decides to continue the attack at once, with the main effort on the right, especially since the neighboring regiment on the left has continued to advance against weak enemy resistance.

3rd Battalion, so far drawn up behind the 1st Battalion, is ordered to advance via Epidemiai to Galbanovka.

At 0730 hours the regimental CP moves via Epidemiai to Galbanovka. There, at about 1030 hours, the following picture presents itself:

The 1st Battalion (without 2nd Company), on a good road that enabled the heavy weapons and vehicles to be drawn forward rapidly, has by-passed the bunker line at Akmenynai to the north, while 2nd Battalion is tied down before the bunker line. The enemy there is fighting with bitter determination, which makes any advance across the bunker line impossible without artillery support. Since these enemy positions are capable of keeping all access roads to Akmenynai under fire, the regimental commander decides the bunkers must be taken.

For this purpose, 2nd Battalion is assigned an additional light anti-tank platoon and a 5cm anti-tank gun. After a change of position, III./A.R. 6 concentrates its fire on the bunker positions with several sudden barrages, yet without discernable effect, while the repeated assaults of the 2nd Battalion against the splendidly ensconced enemy are simply too weak to dislodge him from his strong positions. The thought of committing the regiment's 3rd Battalion to the attack was briefly considered, but quickly rejected, for under no circumstances can the mass of the regiment get bogged down by this pocket of resistance, which is well short of the day's assigned objective.

During the fighting for Akmenynai, which broke down into a series of disconnected individual actions, *Oberleutnant* Grote, Chief of 6th Company, and *Leutnant* Mintrop, a platoon leader in 7th Company, distinguished themselves through their special gallantry. In close combat, Grote knocked out two enemy armored scout cars with hand grenades, while *Leutnant* Mintrop time and again led new assault detachments against the enemy bunkers. During these assaults *Leutnant* Stock, of 6th Company,³⁶⁴ died a hero's death. *Leutnant* von Schrader, of 7th Company, was badly wounded close to an enemy gun position; after the enemy sallied forth to attack, he was murdered in the most beastly manner. His body was recovered by an assault detachment led by *Leutnant* Mintrop.

At 1315 hours, the enemy, advancing from the northwest, launched a counterattack with about 70 men against the northern flank of 2nd Battalion. It was due to *Hauptmann* Höke that this attack was quickly stifled and 60 prisoners taken. The 3rd Battalion, which advanced from Galbanovka to repulse the counterattack, did not even make contact with the enemy. Meanwhile, the reinforced 11th Company supported the attacks of the 2nd Battalion, to which it had been subordinated the day before.

Because the repeated assaults of the 2nd Battalion had still failed, by 1400 hours, to achieve a breakthrough, the regimental commander decided to leave the task of neutralizing the enemy bunker position to 2nd Battalion alone (along with 7th Battery), while 3rd Battalion and the mass of the artillery were to follow the attack of 1st Battalion (with elements of 2nd Battalion), which was making good progress towards Mikalajavas.

³⁶³ Editor's Note: The actual text reads: "*die Masse der M.G.K*"—most likely a reference to the Machine Gun Company, which would be the 4th Company in the Battalion.

³⁶⁴ Editor's Note: The diarist is in error here—*Leutnant* Stock was assigned to 11th Company of 3rd Battalion, and Dr. Haape describes his death and burial in some detail in Chapter 1. As noted in this diary, for the attack on 22 June, 11th Company was subordinated to the regiment's 2nd Battalion and took part in the costly attacks on the Soviet bunker positions outside Akmenynai.

This decision was confirmed by the report that, L/37 with II./A.R. 6 (subordinated to the regiment since 1100 hours), whose task was to cover the southern flank, had already captured Jurgezeriai without encountering enemy resistance and was already advancing through the marshy narrows north of the town.

At 1500 hours, 3rd Battalion struck out towards the north—while seeking to screen its movements against Akmenynai—in order to reach the Liubavas-Mikalajavas road by the shortest possible route. During its advance, the battalion was repeatedly fired upon by enemy groupings from farm houses and cornfields; only by delaying the *Vormarsch* could these enemy groupings be eliminated.

The reinforced 2nd Company, without bothering further with the costly attempt to pin the enemy down before Pagrauziai, had joined the assault of the 1st Battalion. Thus, this enemy force was also bypassed on both sides, in the reasonable hope that he would give himself up to the following Infantry Regiment 37. Later reports proved otherwise. The cunningly concealed enemy succeeded on several occasions in taking by surprise isolated supply columns of the regiment and the division; not until the following day, through the use of Flak-artillery, were these enemy nests cleaned out.

At 1400 hours, 1st Battalion, continuing its swift attack, reached Mikalajavas, which Advance Detachment von Boeselager [*Voraus-Abteilung* v. Boeselager] had cleared of the enemy hours before.

The regimental staff arrives in Mikalajavas at 1900 hours, where it receives verbal orders from the division commander for the continuation of the attack: the day's final objective is the Szeszupe [River].

After being briefed on the course of the battle and, above all, the tenacious enemy resistance facing 2nd Battalion, the division commander assigns the destruction of the enemy at Akmenynai to Combat Engineer Battalion 742, to which the 2nd Battalion is subordinated for infantry support.

While receiving instructions at the division CP, in air battles above Mikalajavas 7 out of 12 Russian bombers are shot down by our fighters.

At 2100 hours, the regimental CP is now in a farmstead 2 kilometers northwest of Bukta, due west of the Szeszupe.

The 1st Battalion, which with hurriedly assembled elements of the 2nd Battalion had arrived at the Szeszupe a half hour before, is at once personally directed by the division commander to establish a bridgehead across the river, which the battalion must defend alone until the arrival of the 3rd Battalion. L./Pi.6 is instructed, during the night, to build a bridge across the Szeszupe at Balaikiai to establish a direct connection to the main road leading from Liudvinavas to the east (the intended route of advance for the next day), in addition to a direct connection to our combat outposts on the eastern bank. About 2300 hours, the 3rd Battalion and the remainder of the regiment (with the exception of 2nd Battalion) arrive at the bridge position and are placed in the line to the right of 1st Battalion. ----- The enemy does not pose a direct threat to the regiment, since Advance Detachment von Boeselager has succeeded in driving its bridgehead to a point 8 kilometers east of Bukta.

An overview of the achievements of the regiment on this first day of the war made clear that every man, through the complete commitment of his energies, had done his duty; and that the regiment, despite many difficulties, was able to reach its objective. Our casualties (2 officers and 29 NCOs and men KIA; 54 officers, NCOs and men wounded) offer a clear picture of the costly operations of the regiment; [the casualties] were the result of the tenacious resistance put up by the enemy border garrisons, as well as the cunning [*hinterlistig*]³⁶⁵ method of fighting exhibited by the many snipers and partisans.

³⁶⁵ Editor's Note: The German word "*hinterlistig*" can also be translated as "wily, "underhanded," "deceitful," "perfidious," etc.

--Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

9.4.1: Disregard of the Red Cross & Attacks on German Medical Personnel / Experiences of Dr Heinrich Haape

Assistenzarzt (2nd Lt., Medical) Heinrich Haape was born in 1910 in the Ruhr Valley, the son of a Lutheran minister. A man of impressive intellect, Haape studied at the universities of Bonn, Dusseldorf, and Kiel, obtaining doctorate degrees in medicine and philosophy and a diploma in psychology. In July 1939, while working as a doctor at Duisburg hospital, he was drafted into the military and transferred to the *Wehrmacht* medical corps.^{dxcv}

On the Russian front, Haape would become one of the most decorated doctors in the Army, garnering the German Cross in Gold, the Iron Cross (First and Second Class), the Infantry Assault Badge, the Wounded Badge, and a decoration for personally destroying two Russian tanks in close combat. As a doctor, “he never abandoned a single wounded man to the Russians [and] once went without sleep for 14 days.”^{dxcevi} Among the official documents of 6 Infantry Division, found in Haape’s private papers, is one outlining his extraordinary achievements during the winter battles of 1941/42, and in the heavy fighting outside Rzhev in the summer of 1942: In December 1941, near Kalinin, Haape tended to 160 wounded men on a single day, often while under heavy enemy mortar fire; over a 20-day period in August 1942, working in the most primitive conditions, and often subjected to Russian artillery, tank, or infantry fire, he single-handedly cared for 521 wounded men. At times, Haape took an active role in the fighting, either to defend his dressing station or to prevent or seal off enemy breakthroughs.^{dxcevi}

All of that, however, was in the not too distant and bloody future on 22 June 1941, when Haape, like thousands of other German soldiers, underwent his baptism of fire in Hitler’s war of annihilation against the Soviet Union. It was a “strange war for a doctor, a war that was played without benefit of Geneva Convention rules, a war in which a front-line doctor very often operated with a scalpel in his hand and an automatic slung over his shoulders.”^{dxcevi} This was Haape’s war – a war in which a Red Cross flag or armband, or a Red Cross symbol emblazoned on the side of an ambulance vehicle, offered no protection to German doctors or their medical staffs. Because Haape’s experiences were typical, this section begins by recounting in detail the doctor’s movements and activities on the first day of Operation *Barbarossa*.^{dxceix}

At 3:45 a.m., 40 minutes after the start of the opening bombardment, Haape’s battalion (III./18 IR) received the order to advance; after hours of agonizing tension, the order came as a relief:

We fall into position and move forward. . . I sit astride my horse with a tense grip on the reins. Lump [his horse] behaves restlessly and I try to relax. . . I wonder how I will acquit myself; and I have a dreadful fear that nervousness will rob my hand of its precision. I feel behind for my medical outfit, it is hanging from the saddle; everything is in order. Petermann, my groom, rides beside me, carrying two first-aid outfits. The motor ambulance is a few hundred yards in the rear with my medical team – Dehorn, Mueller, Wegener and a driver.

Almost immediately Haape and his medical team encountered their first wounded soldier – a superficial bullet wound in the arm. Haape removed the rubber tourniquet and the emergency bandage applied by a stretcher-bearer at the front; in their place he fixed a pressure bandage and

put the arm in a sling. Haape then remounted Lump and galloped to the front of the column, where he met up with his battalion commander, Neuhoff, and the latter's adjutant, Hillemanns. Pointedly questioned by Neuhoff, Haape explained – to his superior's satisfaction – the measures he has put in place for evacuation and care of the wounded.

Shortly thereafter, Haape came upon the first dead officer of his battalion – it was the 21-year-old *Leutnant* Stock,³⁶⁶ who, like many German soldiers killed on this day, fell prey to a Russian sniper:

His body was lying in a trampled cornfield. Two men from Kramer's 11th Company, to which Stock had belonged, were digging a grave in the soft earth. Watching them were four Russian soldiers, blood seeping through their fresh bandages. My lively little orderly, Dehorn, was giving one of them a drink from his water-bottle. But two Russians had not received medical attention, although one of them had a gaping leg wound. My medical N.C.O. Wegener was covering them with an automatic – evidently the one Stock had been carrying. My third medical orderly, *Gefreiter* Mueller, was watching them closely; he wore a puzzled frown.

Wegener saluted, without lowering his automatic, and said: "We've treated these four men, Herr *Assistenzarzt*, but what shall we do with these two? They ambushed Herr *Leutnant* Stock from behind this rye. Our men got them with a grenade. Do we have to give them first-aid, too?"

"We're not the judges, Wegener," I said sharply. "Our job is to help the wounded – Germans and Russians alike, even if they have shot down one of our officers. Put that gun down."

Haape and his team had now passed beyond the burning customs house at the frontier and crossed into Lithuania, leaving behind the network of wire entanglements which snaked menacingly across meadows and cornfields. Civilians emerged from their hiding places, looking "helpless and confused," but Haape had no time to help them, or offer advice. Throughout the morning, as they advanced, they observed squadron after squadron of the *Luftwaffe* – bombers, fighters and *Stukas* – as they winged past in perfect order, on their way to distant objectives. They witnessed an attack by obsolete Russian dive bombers – "they flew directly over our heads – we were not the target" – and gazed curiously at the first Russian prisoners.

From a farmhouse, came a shout for first-aid. With Dehorn and Wegener, Haape entered the house and found several civilians and wounded Russian soldiers. He quickly provided first-aid, and moved on. Galloping through the cornfields along side the road, he overtook the marching column of troops and again joined up with Battalion Commander Neuhoff. Suddenly, shots rang out barely 50 feet in front from a field of rye. Both Neuhoff and Haape dismounted as a burst of enemy fire arced directly over their heads. Hillemanns, the adjutant, and several other men darted into the cornfield, firing their rifles and automatic weapons; a "mêlée" ensued in the tall corn, "a confusion of revolver shots, upraised rifle butts and screams.

A tall infantryman from the H.Q. company brushed his way back through the rye. With his hands still gripping the barrel of his rifle, he shrugged and said:

³⁶⁶ **Note:** Lt. Stock (**II./IR 18**) had been assigned to **II./IR 18** along with rest of his company; they became involved in attack on Red Army bunkers at Akmenynai. Lt Stock, I believe, was killed while taking part in these attacks. See, KTB, I.R. 18!

“Finished!” I noticed the butt of his rifle was splashed with blood. Neuhoff and I strode into the corn. A commissar and four Russian soldiers were lying on the trampled earth, their skulls battered into the soil, which had been freshly dug and thrown up into a mound for their suicidal ambush. The commissar’s hands were still grasping uprooted cornstocks. Our casualties were negligible – one man with a bayonet wound in the arm, another man with a grazed calf. A little iodine, gauze and a couple of strips of adhesive plaster and they were ready to march on with the rest of us. Neuhoff, Hillemanns and I rode on together at the head of the column.

“I didn’t expect that,” said Neuhoff, rather shakily. “Sheer suicide, to attack a battalion at close quarters with five men.” We were to learn that these small groups of Russians would constitute the greatest danger. The corn was high and made ideal cover for the small guerilla bands, which stayed behind as the main body of the Russian forces rolled back. As a rule they were fanatically led by Soviet commissars and we never knew when we should come under their fire. . .

The sun climbed and the day grew hot. The men marched on through the yellow dust, which clung to their uniforms, rifles, faces and hands; both men and vehicles “assumed ghostly outlines in the dust-laden air.” At noon, they rested in a small wood, and looked on as a flight of eight Russian bombers – they “came toward us from the east, [and] circled to make sure of their target” – was methodically decimated by a clutch of Bf 109s. One of the downed bombers, however, had crashed into an artillery column, causing serious casualties. Haape galloped over to their aid, finding 15 of the artillerymen already dead and others seriously burned.^{dc} He did what he could to help, and sent a dispatch rider for an ambulance.

Having lost touch with his battalion, Haape, with his groom Petermann following, moved off to find it. Soon, he reached the road to Kalvaria, the immediate objective of his division. A steady stream of soldiers, vehicles and guns was drifting east along the road, and with it a baggage unit from Haape’s battalion. Making his way past throngs of Russian prisoners heading to the rear, he came upon the commander of 10th Company, the “bull-like, genial” Stolze:

“Hey Doktor!” he shouted. “Work for you. See that farmhouse?” His horse jostled mine as his huge hand pointed out the place, about half a mile away across the fields. “There are some wounded men there. . .”

“Yours?”

“No, thank God. But they need a doctor – there’s only a stretcher-bearer with them at the moment.”

“Thanks, Stolze – I’ll go over there.”

Taking along a couple of Stolze’s men for protection, Haape set out for the farmhouse. For several hours now he had been out of contact with his medical team and ambulance; as a result, he sent back for another ambulance, which was soon rumbling down the dusty road toward the farmhouse, hooting its horn and scattering marching infantry as it went. Reaching the farmhouse with Petermann, Haape discovered five soldiers lying on the living-room floor; two of them were dead, their bodies still warm. The stretcher-bearer, “a quietly-spoken middle-aged man,” who was clearly overwhelmed by his responsibility, reported: “It is terrible. For the first time in my life

I've been really desperate, Herr *Assistenzarzt*. The theory – I know that. But real wounds knock the theory out of your head.” He looked at Haape with “pleading eyes.” “I hope it’s not my fault the two men died. I tried –”

Haape offered reassuring words, insisting that the two dead soldiers would have died anyway, and that he, the stretcher-bearer, had done a fine job of attending to the three wounded men. Haape first turned his attention to the soldier with a stomach wound. The man’s face was “ashen and drawn with pain and cold beads of sweat were on his forehead;” but he had a clean wound through the abdomen and Haape assured him that he would survive:

As his pain-racked face relaxed into a faint smile I closed both entry and exit holes of the wound with a plastic bandage, applied a covering of *Zellstoff* and with my scissors removed bits of blood-stained clothing. The stretcher-bearer helped me to tie the man’s knees up under his chin to ease the stomach. I gave him a sedative and an anti-tetanus injection, and had him wrapped warmly in a blanket and carried to the *Sankawagen* [ambulance], where a casualty-card was completed and hung round his neck. . .

Dr Haape attended to the two other badly wounded *Landser* – one, unconscious with a head wound (“I cleaned and bandaged the wound and he joined the stomach case in the ambulance”); the other, with a clean bullet wound through the upper thigh which, as it turned out, had not punctured the main artery (“otherwise there would have been little hope of saving his leg”). As Haape conversed with the latter wounded soldier, the stretcher-bearer interrupted: “Herr *Assistenzarzt*, the peasant woman here has made you a big can of coffee.” He took the coffee gratefully, and glanced down at his watch – it was 3.15 in the afternoon: “We had been at war with Russia just 12 hours, but it was 18 hours since I had last eaten, or drunk anything but water. I had no appetite, but a great thirst.”

Suddenly, there was a “crash of glass” in the back room. “That’s been going on all day,” remarked the old peasant woman. “Those Russians in the wood over there.” On Haape’s orders, one of the men from Stolze’s company set up his light machine gun facing the wood. But before he could fire, “a bullet ripped through the roof of the ambulance.” Haape told the driver to move his vehicle to a sheltered position behind the farmhouse; then he administered an anti-tetanus shot to the soldier with the leg wound and had him carried out to the ambulance on a stretcher. The ambulance then sped away, drawing a “hail of bullets” from the Russians in the wood. “I could only stand and watch with impotent rage,” wrote Haape. “The prominent red cross was plainly visible in the bright afternoon sun. If a bullet found the engine and put the ambulance out of action, the stomach case would die – that was certain.” Fortunately, “determined” machine gun fire from the front of the farmhouse now poured into the wood, temporarily quieting the Russian sniper fire.

At this point, the stretcher-bearer informed Dr Haape that six more bodies – one of them a doctor – were lying in a hollow about 100 yards from the farmhouse. Covered by the machine gun, and moving through a ditch which offered some concealment, Haape and the stretcher-bearer made a successful dash to the hollow, where a grisly discovery awaited them:

Six bodies lay sprawled in the hollow. A stretcher-bearer lay on his back, arms flung wide, and four other soldiers lay close by just as they had fallen. And there was the doctor, lying face downward, Red Cross band on his sleeve, a bold Red Cross on the flag by his side. The contents of his medical pack were strewn around him.

As if afraid of being overheard, the [stretcher-bearer] whispered: “A 100 yards from here – see there, behind those gorse bushes, the Russians were lying. The doctor had brought the wounded men into the hollow and was attending to them when the Russians started firing. I was watching from the farmhouse but could do nothing. The doctor stood up and waved his Red Cross flag, but they kept on firing at him. He fell, and they fired and fired until nothing more moved in the hollow. It was horrible . . . cold-blooded murder. . .” His voice broke and tears were in his eyes.

Haape and the stretcher-bearer crawled over to the doctor, gently rolling him over on to his back. The doctor’s blond hair fell back from his brow, and Haape peered with horror into the lifeless eyes of his dear friend, Fritz:

Without a word and without clearly realizing what I was doing I hoisted Fritz’s body across my shoulders and trod heavily out of the hollow. There was silence now, both from the wood and from the house. The [stretcher-bearer] followed me.

I laid Fritz’s body down in the orchard at the back of the farmhouse, and the two machine gunners and Petermann joined us. I opened the tunic and shirt. Both were red with Fritz’s blood and torn by the savage volley of bullets that had smacked into him at close range. I broke his identity disc, and then emptied his pockets of pay book, photographs, matches and cigarette case. I wrapped them all in his handkerchief and handed the bundle to Petermann. “We’ll send them back,” I told him as we walked back to the house.

In a corner in the kitchen, they stacked the weapons of the dead and wounded. Shaken by his friend’s death, Haape grasped an automatic weapon with a full magazine, and stuffed two extra magazines into his pockets; in his top tunic pockets he placed two light grenades. He then gave a rifle to Petermann, while the stretcher-bearer also picked up a rifle and flung it over his shoulder. Meanwhile, Haape became aware that one of Stolze’s men had been watching him:

An amused smile played round the corners of [his] mouth and I noticed he was looking at my Red Cross arm band, which was soaked with Fritz’s blood. “You’re right.” I answered his unspoken question. Deliberately I slipped it off my sleeve, folded it carefully and put it into my pocket. “That doesn’t go with guns. And in any case it means nothing to the Russians. There’s no Geneva Convention here. I’m telling you . . . I’m a soldier like the rest of you now.”

A short time later, Haape was told that three of his regiment’s stretcher-bearers had been “brutally shot down” while caring for wounded during fighting close by a concrete bunker on the frontier. “My heart hardened further toward the enemy,” he later observed. In his diary, on the evening of 22 June 1941, he wrote: “Of the six doctors in the regiment [18 IR] one is dead (head shot) and one is wounded. In addition, four stretcher-bearers have been killed. . . I’ve had much to do, often dressing wounded comrades under heavy machine gun fire.”^{dc1}

From the outset, all across the eastern front, many incidents were recorded of Red Army units disregarding Red Cross markings and attacking German doctors, medical orderlies, other medical personnel, and wounded German troops under their protection. On 28 June 1941, Soviet soldiers

in the Minsk region ambushed Motor Ambulance Platoon 127, which was clearly marked with Red Cross symbols, slaughtering most of the wounded and accompanying medical personnel.^{dcii} In late June 1941, north of Minsk, Soviet stragglers repeatedly ambushed columns of 7 Panzer Division transporting wounded to the rear.^{dciii} According to the diary of *Oberleutnant* Kurt Kummer, on 14 July 1941, the field hospital of 18 Panzer Division in Dobryn was attacked by Russian troops, resulting in heavy losses in men and materiel; this was followed three days later (17 July) by repeated low-level attacks by Soviet aircraft on a main dressing station (*Hauptverbandplatz*).^{dciv} The diary of *Leutnant* Georg Kreuter (17 July) records that 18 Panzer's 2 Medical Company was ambushed and totally annihilated, while many German wounded were also killed.^{dcv}

Several of the German eastern front veterans with whom this author corresponded also related stories of the murder and abuse of German medical personnel, including the rape (and, in some cases, mutilation) of Red Cross nurses.^{dcvi} Recalled Hans Schillke, a soldier with 8 Panzer Division (Army Group North): "From the beginning of the attack on Russia, our medical orderlies, although clearly recognizable by their white arm bands with the Red Cross symbol, were immediately shot dead when they attempted to care for the wounded."^{dcvii} While such personal stories could not be verified, the *Wehrmacht* War Crimes Bureau assembled indisputable case evidence of dozens of attacks on German field hospitals, dressing stations, field ambulances, doctors and other medical personnel, and wounded German soldiers.^{dcviii}

Because these attacks began in the very first hours of the German invasion, they cannot be construed as simply a response to the often ruthless behavior of the *Wehrmacht*.^{dcix} Argues Franz W. Seidler:

In the Second World War, all warring parties were guilty of transgressing against the [Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armies in the Field] of 1929. The sign of the Red Cross was abused and ignored. German wounded, in particular, who fell into the hands of the Red Army, were at the mercy of the enemy's caprice. Members of the Red Army were not bound by any obligations of international law. . . It was left to the personal morality of the individual to decide how he treated wounded enemies. Soldiers with religious convictions may, in individual cases, have recognized their brother in Christ in the helpless individual, but the majority of soldiers hewed to the propaganda slogans of the Party, which saw a canaille in every German.

When the war began, the Soviet command ignored the sign of the Red Cross. Groups of German wounded and forward main dressing stations, which were marked with clearly visible Red Cross flags, attracted a particularly high degree of enemy artillery fire, until finally the flags were abandoned, as they provided no protection. Since the German field medics, who wore a Red Cross armband and were unarmed, were also being murdered along with the wounded if they were taken prisoner, they received a Pistol 38 to protect the wounded. Wearing the Red Cross armband was forbidden, in order to protect them from snipers, for whom they provided a clearly visible target.^{dcx}

As Professor Seidler accurately submits, Soviet wartime propaganda, virtually unparalleled in its savagery – and including many stories of putative German atrocities (*Greuelpropaganda*) – played an integral part in encouraging all manner of war crimes by Red Army soldiers.^{dcxi} In addition, a generation of Soviet indoctrination in the principles of class hatred had instilled a deep antipathy in large segments of the Soviet population for Westerners and, in particular, for

Germans. It was a toxic brew, and it is not too much to maintain, particularly in light of the Soviet Union's dismal human rights record (chillingly detailed in the *Black Book of Communism*)^{dexii} that such crimes of war belonged to the very essence of the Soviet system.

(Postscript: The extrajudicial killing of German medical personnel and wounded German soldiers would continue unabated throughout the war. One of the most horrific examples took place in late June 1944, only days after the beginning of Operation "Bagration," the gigantic Soviet offensive which finally destroyed Army Group Center, obliterating 28 of its divisions (out of 37 total) with 350,000 men in about three weeks.^{dexiii} On 27 June 1944, Soviet troops stormed the "fortress" city of Bobruisk, on the Berezina. When German forces encircled there attempted to break out, they left behind more than 5000 badly wounded men scattered about the city's hospitals. These helpless soldiers were savagely butchered – not by partisans, but by regular troops of the Red Army. According to historian and eastern front veteran Rolf Hinze, only two survivors of this massacre were ever found.^{dexiv} Despite the monstrous nature of this crime, it has been largely ignored by western military historians.)

(Barbarossa Unleashed)

1.6.9: Case Study 2: Carange within the Walls of Fortress Brest-Litovsk (45 ID)

--**10.3.41 (45 ID Inventory of Weapons):** OKW records show that on **10 Mar 41** the **45 ID** possessed following weapons:

- **4411** Pistols
- **857** Machine pistols
- **11,918** 98K rifles
- **96** anti-tank rifles (**PzBu 38**)
- **435** le.MG
- **112** s.MG
- **84** 50mm mortars (**le.Gr.W. 36**)
- **54** 80mm mortars (**s.Gr.W. 34**)
- **20** 75mm **le.I.G. 18**
- **6** 150mm **s.I.G. 33**
- **75** 37mm Pak 36
- **36** 105mm I.F.H. 18³⁶⁷
- **12** 150mm s.F.H. 18

(G.F. Nafziger, *The German Order of Battle Infantry*, 92)

Note: For background on **45 ID**, which had lost **462** men KIA in French campaign of 1940, its training, advance from Warsaw to its *Barbarossa* assembly area, etc., see, (R. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 31; also, G. Nafziger, *German Order of Battle*,³⁶⁸ for organization/weapons of the division)³⁶⁹

³⁶⁷ **Note:** Nafziger does not list the division's nine artillery batteries = total of **48** guns (**36** I.F.H. / **12** s.F.H.).

³⁶⁸ **Note:** Nafziger provides complete inventory of **45 ID** weapons as of **10 Mar 41!**

Note: The fortress of Brest had been built in 1842.³⁷⁰ It consisted of four partly natural and partly artificial islands situated at the confluence of the Bug and Muchaviec rivers. In the center was the Citadel Island, surrounded concentrically by three others: the western Terespol Island (West Island), the northern Kobrin Island (North Island) and the Cholmsker Island (South Island). The central “keep” or citadel was ringed by a massive two-storey wall, easily defensible w/ 500 casemate and cellar positions, which doubled as troop accommodations. These positions were also connected by underground passages. Inside the walls were numerous other buildings including the “white house” officers’ mess and the garrison church. The thick outer walls provided good protection against modern artillery. The West, North and South islands provided an outer defense belt, which supplemented the citadel, w/ 10m high earthwalls. These were studded w/ bastions or old casement forts complete w/ towers, such as the Nordfort (North Fort) and the Ostfort (East Fort) on the North Island. In all, some 6km of defense works ringed the fortress. [See text for more details] (R. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 29)

--20./21.6.41: On the 20th and 21st I visited the forward units of my corps to make sure that all preparations for the attack were satisfactorily completed. Detailed study of the behaviour of the Russians convinced me that they knew nothing of our intentions. We had observation of the courtyard of Brest-Litovsk citadel and could see them drilling by platoons to the music of a military band. The strong points along their bank of the Bug were unoccupied. They had made scarcely any noticeable progress in strengthening their fortified positions during the past few weeks. So the prospects of our attack achieving surprise were good. . . (Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, 153)

--21.6.41 (Red Army & German forces): It is likely that on the night of **21 Jun 41**, there were about 7 battalions from the **6** and **42 RDs** in Brest in addition to regimental training units, special units and some divisional artillery rgts. They would be directly faced by 9 German infantry battalions w/ a further 18 operating on their flanks. **12 AK**, under command of GFM v. Kluge’s **Fourth Army**,³⁷¹ had been tasked to surround [?] the fortress and clear a path for the vanguards of **2 PzGr**. The inner flanks of the two panzer corps forming it [there were actually three panzer corps, **24, 46, 47 PzK**] were to be protected as they passed either side of the fortress. . . (R. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 29-30)

--21.6.41 (German plan of attack): The primary tasks of **45 ID** were to capture the citadel, the four-span railway bridge over the Bug, 5 other bridges crossing the Muchaviec south of the town of Brest and secure the high ground 7-8 km east of the town. This would open the **Panzer Rollbahn** [**Panzerstrasse 1**] identified for **2 PzGr** to march eastward towards Kobrin. The division attack plan was based on two primary attack axes: north and south. The northern prong of a pitchfork thrust was to attack across the West Island to the citadel, then through North Island to the eastern side of the town of Brest. Two battalions from **IR 135**, supported by armored train platoons, were earmarked for this task. Meanwhile, the southern prong would assault south of the Muchaviec across the South Island w/ **IR 130**. The five Muchaviec bridges were to be taken by an assault-pioneer *coup de main* force mounted w/ 9 assault boats. One battalion was held as divisional reserve, and the three battalions of **IR 133** were to be held back as corps reserve. Nine

³⁶⁹ **Note:** Kershaw: “As they left Warsaw for the 180km approach march to the assembly area, the band of **IR 133** played. An initial downpour of rain soaked everyone . . . The march was demanding but carefully managed in 40km stages, w/ bathing opportunities in the lakes en route. It ended 27 km from the border, where the regiments were billeted in cosy village quarters . . . (31)

³⁷⁰ **Note:** This date no exactly accurate; check Aliev’s account!

³⁷¹ **Note:** For attack on **22.6.1941**, **12 AK** was directly subordinated to Guderian’s Panzer Group, which was subordinated to Kluge’s **AOK 4**.

light and three hvy [sic] batteries³⁷² of the division's artillery, supported by a group of **9 hvy mortars** [i.e., 120mm "Mörser"] and two **60cm siege guns** would provide a pulverizing **5-minute** preparatory bombardment, before switching to nominated targets. The two flanking divisions (**34** and **31 ID**) would contribute to the initial barrage. A specialized, and until now secret, unit *Nebelwerfer* **Rgt. 4 (ZbV Nr 4)** was to support the attack w/ newly developed *Nebelwerfer* multiple-barrelled rocket launchers. "*Hardly a mouse would survive the opening bombardment,*" was the assurance given to the assault groups. . . (R. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 30)³⁷³

--**21./22.6.41 (Fortress of Brest-Litovsk):**

On Saturday, **21 Jun 41**, German reconnaissance troops and spies had reported that the fortress-citadel of Brest-Litovsk was *not expecting an attack*. Zhukov and Timoshenko's early-morning order had *reached the garrison*, however, and although the Germans stormed across the Bug w/ *complete surprise*, they were halted in front of the citadel. The German **45 ID** had been ordered to capture the city and the fortress at its core.

Brest was a classic 19th Century fortress, which formed *four islands* using the waters of the Western Bug and Mukhavets rivers. It was surrounded by earthworks (in fact, sand) nearly **10** meters high and even the barracks, which could hold up to **12,000** troops, had walls a meter-and-one-half thick and could therefore withstand all but the heaviest artillery shells. . .

After a heavy artillery and rocket bombardment of the fortress, the **45 ID** stormed toward the citadel, but the fire had little effect on the fortifications and they were beaten back by small-arms fire from *every window, loophole and embrasure*. Holding the fortress were seven battalions of the **6th Orël Red Banner** and **42 RDs** of the Red Army and elements of the **17th NKVD Border Guards Detachment** and the **132nd Independent NKVD Battalion**—a total of about **3500 men**. The presence of the NKVD was probably crucial to the decision to stand and fight, and the ability to hold. Not only were they better-disciplined, elite troops, but they could also provide an element of political initiative which was often lacking in the Red Army.

(C. Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 184-85)

--**21.6.41 [River Bug / Brest-Litovsk]:** Gerd Habedanck, a war correspondent, moved forward w/ the **45 ID**. Its objective would be the fortress of *Brest-Litovsk*:

We came from Warsaw through heat, dust and jam-packed roads to the Bug. We passed tracts of woodland bristling w/ vehicle parks, artillery batteries in villages and radio relay stations and HQ staffs under tall fir trees.

Silently, absolutely silently we crept up to the edge of the Bug. *Sand had been strewn across the roads so that our hob-nailed boots made no sound*. Assault sections already grouped moved along the road edges in mute rows. Outlines of

³⁷² **Note:** These three "heavy" batteries were actually three medium batteries of 150mm field howitzers (**s.F.H. 18**); each battery w/ **4** guns.

³⁷³ **Note:** Compare Kershaw's account to what I've written in *Barbarossa Unleashed*, as well as to Rostislav Aliev's account.

rubber dinghies were discernible as they shuttled along, raised up against the light of the northern sky.

Joining the btn HQ in an old bunker, part of the original western defenses alongside the Bug, Habedanck looked across the river, where, **100m** away, Russians sat in similar casemates. (*Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 29)

--**21.6.41**: Lt Hermann Witzemann, a **26**-yr.-old platoon cdr, sat in a tented camp amongst his men, concealed in the forests beside the River Bug near the Soviet fortress of Brest-Litovsk. A beautiful summer day was drawing to a close. *Scotch pines* began to wave in the freshening evening wind. The sun's rays penetrated the branches. „The blue sky was stretched over them like a tent,“ he observed. „We stood on the eve of momentous events,“ he confided in his letter, „of which I would also play a part.“ The unknown was unsettling. „None of us knew whether he would survive what was coming.“ War appeared inevitable. Lt Witzemann steeled himself for the coming conflict. His letters reveal an idealistic yet religious man:

God the Father grant me strength, faith and courage beneath whining bullets, under the impact of artillery and bombs, vulnerable in the face of enemy tank attack and the horror of creeping gas. Thanks be for love. Thy will be done.

He was not to survive the first **24** hours. He was killed during the assault on Brest-Litovsk. (*Ltr, 21.6.41*, quoted in: *Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 9 [original letter in: *Baehr, et al., Kriegsbriefe Gefallener Studenten*, 35])

--**22.6.41** [Brest-Litovsk]: Puenktlich um **3.15** Uhr oeffnete sich der Schlund der Hoelle. Die Luft vibrierte durch die vielen Flugbahnen, die ueber uns hinweggingen. Ein Mordsgetoese, kein Wort war zu verstehen. Die Einschlaege in der Zitadelle waren deutlich zu erkennen. Die Bruecke blieb heil. Also im Handstreich war sie nun doch genommen worden. . . Nach dem ersten Feuerschlag erschienen Stukas in sehr grosser Anzahl, heulten jetzt im Sturzflug auf die Zitadelle u. brachten ihre Bombe ins Ziel. Die Zitadelle selbst war in eine dicke Rauchwolke gehuellt. Wir hatten laengst aufgehoeert zu schiessen. Von drueben fiel kein Schuss auf uns. Wir eilten mit unseren Geschuetzen zum Bugufer auf die Schlauchboote los. Es klappte alles wir am Schnuerchen. (*Dr Bunke, 31. ID, Der Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, 218)³⁷⁴ _

--**22.6.41** [*Opening bombardment*]: Gerd Habedanck observed the preliminary barrage secure w/in the btn HQ bunker of one of the **45 ID**'s assaulting units. They heard a single artillery report break the stillness, then:

We had barely heard it when the earth shook, boomed and rolled. Strong *draughts of air* blew into our faces. . . I risked a quick look outside the casement. The sky over us was *lit up bright red*. An infernal whistling, droning and crackle of explosions filled the air. Young *willows were bent over* as if in a storm. . . It is still not yet quite light and thick clouds of smoke darken the sky.

Habedanck's btn began the assault river crossing of the *Bug*. His subsequent correspondent's account atmospherically re-created the scene:

³⁷⁴ About this first day, during bitter fighting for fortress of Brest-Litovsk, Dr Bunke writes: "Wir waren ganz schoen verbluefft u. erschrocken ueber diese Hartnaeckigkeit u. Tapferkeit der russischen Soldaten." (223-24)

One boat after the other slid into the water. There were excited cries, splashing and howling of assault boat engines. Not a shot from the other bank as *blood red flames* dance in the water. We jump on shore and press forward.

(Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 47)

--**22.6.41**: Wir gehen ueber die Bruecke. Georgij Karbuk³⁷⁵ erzaehlt ueber die Festung.³⁷⁶

Die Festung liegt am Zusammenfluss von Muchawiec u. Westlichem Bug u. besteht aus vier Inseln. Vier Anlagen zusammengebaut zu einem gewaltigen Bollwerk. Eine Flaeche von insgesamt vier Quadratkilometer. Umgeben von einem sechs Kilometer langen u. 10 Meter hohen Erdwall. Im Aussenring die Verteidigungsanlagen. Innerhalb der Mauern die Kasernen, Kasematten, Magazine, Krankenhaeuser, Schulen, Wohngebaeude fuer die Familienangehoerigen. **8000** Soldaten waren ueblicherweise als Garnison stationiert. Zur Zeit des Angriffs aber, an einem Sonntagmorgen, befand sich nur ein Teil davon in der Festung. Etwa **3500** Soldaten. Der andere Teil hatte Urlaub oder war woanders eingesetzt.

Der Ueberfall begann am **22 Jun 41** um **3.15** Uhr. Es begann gerade zu daemmern. **500** Geschuetze waren auf die Festung Brest gerichtet. In den ersten Stunden sorgten Geschuetze, Bomber u. M.G. fuer **5000** Einschlaege pro Minute. Bis **12** Uhr mittags sollte die Festung – laut plan – eingenommen sein. Die Wehrmacht war davon ueberzeugt, die Grenzwachen innerhalb von einer halben Stunde zu liquidieren. Sie versuchte von drei Seiten, in die Festung einzudringen: vom Westen auf die Westinsel; vom Norden, wo die Wohnhaeuser der Angehoerigen der stationierten Soldaten standen; u. vom Sueden, auf die Suedinsel, wo sich die Hospitaeler befanden. **In 8 Stunden sollte die Festung erobert sein**. Womit die Deutschen aber nicht rechneten: Es dauerte **28 Tage**, bis die Festung fiel. . . Nach dem **30 Jun 41** konnten die deutschen Truppen einzeln in das Gelaende eindringen, wurden aber *immer wieder hinausgestossen*. Waehrend die Wehrmacht bereits weit in das Land eingedrungen, schon bis hinter Smolensk vorgestossen war, dauerten die Kaempfe um die Brester Festung immer noch an. Bis zum **20 Jul 41**. Dann musste sich der kleine noch lebende Rest der sowj. Garnison ergeben. Er hatte keine Munition mehr.

(P. Kohl, “*Ich wundere mich, dass ich noch lebe*,” 28)

--Georgij Karbuk erzaehlt:

Die Deutschen haben Flammenwerfer eingesetzt. Sie haben die Flammenwerfer einfach in die Kellerfenster hineingehalten. Sie wagten nicht, selbst in den Kellerraum einzudringen. So haben sie einfach die Flammenwerfer hineingehalten. Da verbrannte alles. Sogar die Ziegelsteine schmolzen. Andere warfen Granaten in die Kellerraume, wo sich die Familien versteckt hielten. . . Von den **3500 Mann** in der Festung haben **17** ueberlebt.

³⁷⁵ **Note:** G.M. Karbuk was **18** years old on **22.6.41** (27). He is one of Kohl’s eyewitnesses. He states: “Ich bin hier in Brest geboren. Ich habe den Krieg hier miterlebt . . . Vor dem Krieg arbeitete ich als Musik-lehrer.” (32)

³⁷⁶ **Note:** Excellent map of fortress and lines of German assault on p. 29.

(P. Kohl, "Ich wundere mich, dass ich noch lebe," 31)

--Frau Arschinowa Anastasia Antonowna erzaehlt:

Ich war Frau eines Kommandeurs der Festung. Ich hatte drei kleine Kinder. Der Aeltere war 5, meine Tochter 3 Jahre. Wir lebten zusammen mit anderen Familien in der Festung. Im Ost-Fort. Als die Fascisten uns ueberfielen, beschossen sie die Festung derart, dass wir *voellig verwirrt waren. Alle rannten hin u. her, die Maenner, die Frauen, die Kinder*. Alle rannten umher. Wir wussten nicht was wir als erstes tun sollen. Die Fascisten haben mich als Frau eines Kommandeurs u. meine Kinder aus der Festung herausgezerrt u. ***uns unter die Geschuetze, die die Festung beschossen***. Das waren grosse Kanonen. Die Fascisten haben uns als Geiseln unter die Geschuetze gelegt, damit mein Mann u. die anderen Verteidiger kapitulieren sollten.

Was sollte ich da tun? Es war entsetzlich. Bei jedem Schuss war mir, ***als wuerde mein Gehirn aus dem Kopf herausquellen. Den Kindern kam das Blut aus den Ohren u. aus dem Mund. Meine Tochter starb. Mein Sohn ist seitdem taub***. Er war damals 5 Jahre alt. . .

(P. Kohl, "Ich wundere mich, dass ich noch lebe," 26)

--Katschowa Braskowa Lesnewna (Krankenschwester in der chirurgischen Abteilung des Hospitals auf der Suedinsel) erzaehlt:

In der Festung lebten etwa **300** Familien der hier stationierten Soldaten, Frauen, Kinder. Dazu die Krankenschwestern, Aerzte u. Aerztinnen der Hospitaeler. ***Gleich beim ersten Bombardement*** u. dem Beschuss durch die Kanonen gingen die Gebaeude der Chirurgischen Klinik in Flammen auf. Auch die anderen Gebaeude brannten. Das gesamte Hospital bestand aus **36** Bauten. Wir dachten, die Fascisten wuerden die Krankenhaeuser verschonen. Auf den Daechern waren doch gross die rote Kreuz gemahlt. Gleich beim ersten Beschuss gab es viele Verwundete u. Tote.

Ich erinnere mich noch genau. Wir hatten den Befehl, sofort alle Ueberlebenden in die Kasematten des Erdwalls zu transportieren. Waehrend der Beschiessung. Ueberall lagen die Toten u. Verwundeten auf der Erde. In den Kasematten haben wir dann notduerftig die Verwundeten gepflegt. Die verletzten Kinder, die Soldaten, die Frauen. Doch dann hatten wir ***kein Verbandzeug mehr. Keine Medikamente mehr, kein Wasser***. Die Hauptgebaeude brannten. Wir waren in den Kasematten. Es fehlte an allem Vor allem Wasser. Wir konnten kein Wasser vom Fluss holen. Aber wir brauchten doch Wasser fuer die Verwundete!

Ich habe es selbst erlebt, *wie eine Krankenschwester aus unserer Abteilung am Wiesenufer erschossen wurde*, weil sie Wasser holen wollte. Ich habe es mit eigenen Augen gesehen. . . [see text]

(P. Kohl, "Ich wundere mich, dass ich noch lebe," 30-31)

--Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed* (Chapter 6):

Of all the operations along the front of 2 Panzer Group this day – indeed, along the entire eastern front – none was more savage, and more costly, than the attempt to capture the Soviet fortress of Brest-Litovsk. The Germans had hoped to seize the fortress in a *coup de main* – as one author put it, Field Marshal von Kluge “hoped to capture the fortress before dinner”^{dexv} – but would be bitterly disappointed by the outcome of the day’s fighting. In fact, Soviet resistance within the fortress’s many strong points would continue for days and, in the words of the late professor and Red Army expert, John Erickson, “became a ghastly but epic illustration of how Russian infantrymen could fight in traditionally ferocious style.”^{dexvi}

Built by Russian engineers after the War of 1812, the fortress of Brest-Litovsk sat at the confluence of the Bug and Muchaviec rivers, whose waters had been used to form four partly natural and partly artificial islands. The center island (Citadel Island), the smallest of the four, was the heart of the fortress, and was ringed by the three other islands to the south, west and north; together, they formed the four fortified blocks which made up the massive citadel. It was surrounded on all sides by earthworks almost 10 meters high and stretching for eight kilometers, while deep moats filled with water posed another daunting obstacle. The four islands themselves bristled with strong points of all kinds – massive underground casemates, armored cupolas, and dug in tanks, among others, all concealed among thick undergrowth and clumps of tall trees. Even the barracks, which could hold 12,000 troops, were reinforced with walls 1½ meters thick which could withstand fire from all but the heaviest caliber artillery.^{dexvii}

The Soviet garrison, however, was far from full strength. Some of its troops, artillery and tank forces were off at camps in the surrounding countryside, taking part in summer training activities. On 22 June, only seven undermanned battalions of infantry, belonging to **6** and **42 Rifle Divisions**, augmented by an NKVD border guard detachment and an independent NKVD battalion, were inside the fortress – in all, about 3500 men out of a possible 8000. Some of the troops did not even have weapons and many officers, spending the weekend at home, were also absent.^{dexviii}

As we have seen, Guderian’s two panzer corps launched their attacks on either side of the citadel, whose two rivers and water-filled ditches made it, in the panzer commander’s view, “immune to tank attack.”^{dexix} As a result, an infantry corps, the 12th, was placed under his command and assigned the task of assaulting the fortress and protecting the inner flanks of the panzer corps as they crossed the frontier. The mission of capturing the fortress fell to 12 Army Corps’ 45 Infantry Division, commanded by Maj.-Gen. Fritz Schlieper. In addition to seizing the citadel, the mostly Austrian division was to capture the four-span railway bridge over the Bug (at a point directly northwest of the fortress) and the five bridges spanning the Muchaviec south of the town of Brest, while securing the high ground immediately beyond the town. If successful, this would clear the way for the advance of Guderian’s armor along Panzer Route 1, the route toward Kobrin assigned to 24 Panzer Corps.^{dexx}

With German *Wochenschau* newsreel cameramen on hand to record the spectacle, the assault began precisely at 0315 hours. Opening up on the citadel in a five-minute preparatory barrage were the nine light and three medium batteries of 45 ID, along with nine heavy 210mm howitzers, two mighty 600mm “*Karl*” siege guns, and the 4 Rocket Projector Regiment, whose nine batteries dropped 2880 missiles on the fortress in rapid succession. Artillery of the neighboring 34 and 31 Infantry Divisions (12 Army Corps) also contributed to the fire plan.^{dexxi} Rudolf Geschoepf, a chaplain in 45 ID, later compared the bombardment to a “hurricane,” which “broke loose and roared over our heads, the likes of which we had never experienced before and never would again.”^{dexxii} To *Leutnant* Erich Bunke, observing in awe in the sector of the adjoining

31 ID, it was as if the “jaws of hell” (*Schlund der Hoelle*) had opened, while the thousands of shells arcing across the dawn sky made the “air vibrate.”^{dexxiii}

After the initial *Feuerschlag* had ceased, swarms of *Stuka* dive bombers appeared over the fortress, lunging earthward and loosing their bombs. German combat engineers and infantry emerged from the thickets lining the Bug, crossed the river in rubber dinghies and assault boats, and began their attack on the citadel. A group of nine assault boats, a mixed force of combat engineers and infantry, was assigned the task of seizing several of the bridges over the Muchaviec; four of the boats, however, were immediately put out of action: After barely reaching the water they were struck by “friendly” artillery falling short, leaving 20 men dead and wounded. The survivors reorganized and motored up the river, but soon lost two more boats to enemy fire. Pressing on with the remaining three boats, they secured the first two bridges by 0355 hours, with support from other infantry forces; at 0510, the assault group captured the third “Wulka” bridge, its final objective. Attempting to raise a swastika battle flag over the bridge, the elated commander of the assault party was cut down by a sniper’s bullet. With troops from 130 Infantry Regiment attacking south of the fortress and town of Brest-Litovsk, all five of the still intact bridges over the Muchaviec were soon in German hands. The Russians counterattacked with armor but were rapidly repulsed, 130 IR destroying 12 Russian tanks in the course of these attacks.^{dexxiv}

On the northern axis of the attack, assault troops belonging to 135 Infantry Regiment secured the vital railway bridge in less than 15 minutes. German armored cars began to roll across immediately; by 0415 hours, assault guns of the neighboring 31 Infantry Division were also rumbling over the bridge. Initial progress against the citadel itself also appeared to be good, with the attacking battalions forcing their way deep into the fortress in some locations. Both 12 Army Corps and 45 ID were encouraged by the early results, with the latter reporting at 0625 hours that “the division believes it will soon have the citadel firmly in hand.”^{dexxv}

Then the “worm began to turn.” By 0730, 45 ID was reporting, for the first time, that strong elements of the garrison were now firing from behind on the forward assault parties. Moreover, the attacking Germans, ensconced among the bushes, trees, buildings and ruins of the fortress, were now so intermingled with the citadel’s defenders that artillery support could no longer be provided. Russian sharpshooters, hidden in trees or firing from roof top outlets, began to take a heavy toll, particularly of German officers and NCOs. Others shot at the Germans from buildings, cellars or sewers; even while hidden in garbage cans or behind piles of rags. Among the officers of 45 ID to perish this day were three battalion commanders – two belonging to 135 Infantry Regiment and one to 1st Battalion, 99 Artillery Regiment.^{dexxvi}

Confidence among the attackers soon began to fade, giving way to a growing pessimism. In an effort to stem the tide, reserves were committed to battle by early afternoon. Infantry guns, anti-tank guns, and light field howitzers were brought forward to engage strong points in direct fire, while a battery of assault guns passing by was commandeered by the commander of 135 IR and thrown into the fight – all with little impact on the impervious fortifications of the citadel. Some of the assault parties had also become cut off, with one group of 70 men pinned down in the very heart of the fortress, in the church in the center island.^{dexxvii}

At 1350 hours, General Schlieper, observing the faltering attack from the vantage point of the northern island, finally reached the only conclusion possible: The citadel of Brest-Litovsk was not to be taken by infantry close combat alone. Field Marshal von Bock, who had visited the command post of 12 Army Corps less than an hour before, reached the same conclusion. Thus, at 1430 hours, Schlieper decided that he would withdraw the infantry from the citadel under cover

of darkness. The fortress was to be tightly encircled and subjected to withering and unremitting artillery fire to wear down and destroy the defenders. Early that evening, Field Marshal von Kluge arrived at the CP of 45 Infantry Division. He strongly supported Schlieper's decision, indicating that the fighting for the fortress was now of little more than local significance, for the key bridges had all been captured and traffic across the railway and along Panzer Route 1 was now possible. As a result, unnecessary losses were to be avoided; instead, Kluge said, the enemy was to be starved into submission.^{dexxviii}

In a publication released by the German Armed Forces High Command (OKW) in 1943, a participant in the fighting at Brest-Litovsk recorded his initial impressions of the Red Army:

The battles on the islands extremely difficult. Complex terrain: groups of houses, clusters of trees, bushes, narrow strips of water, plus the ruins, and the enemy is everywhere. His snipers are excellently camouflaged in the trees. Camouflage suits made of gauze with leaves attached to them. Superb snipers! Shooting from hatches in the ground, basement windows, sewage pipes. . .

First impression: the Bolshevik fights to his very last breath. Perhaps because of the threat of the commissars: those who fall into German captivity are shot. (According to statements by the first prisoners.) At any rate: no slackening of fighting power, even though resistance futile since citadel is surrounded.

Silent night. We dig the first graves.^{dexxix}

Under cover of darkness, the German assault troops were withdrawn from the citadel and organized in the encirclement ring, with the exception of the exhausted and, in some cases, wounded men trapped inside the citadel church.^{dexxx} The abandoned positions were immediately reoccupied by the surviving Russian defenders. The bitter, and unexpected, fighting on this day had cost 45 Infantry Division **311** dead – **21** officers and **290** NCOs and enlisted men.^{dexxxi} Organized Russian resistance inside the fortress would not be broken until the end of the month, by which time **45 ID** had lost about as many men as it had during the entire French campaign of 1940. (*Barbarossa Unleashed*)³⁷⁷

--**24.6.41**: On this day, *Gefreiter Teuschler* and about **70** other soldiers cut off in the vicinity of the church were rescued by a foray from **I/IR 133**, covered by a concentrated artillery bombardment. (R. Kershaw, *War w/o Garlands*, 60)

--**25.6.41**: (GFM von Bock's war diary):

Only now has the citadel at Brest fallen after very heavy fighting.³⁷⁸

(K. Gerbet (ed.), *GFM v. Bock, The War Diary*, 226)

--**26.6.41**: (GFM von Bock's war diary):

³⁷⁷ **Note:** I can simply rework this section for the new book; adding in some new material from Rostislav Aliev's terrific account (*Siege of Brest, 1941*), archival sources, and eye-witness accounts from soldiers or civilians, etc.

³⁷⁸ **Note:** From GFM v. Bock's diary entries, beginning **22.6.41**, it is evident that the situation at Brest-Litovsk was very much of secondary importance to him. I may want to read his diary entries more closely, but that's my initial impression.

All parts of the citadel at Brest have still not fallen. The report of the 25th [June] was incorrect. Unfortunately, casualties are high. The enemy is also holding out in other, smaller groups of fortifications *far behind the front*.

(K. Gerbet (ed.), *GFM v. Bock, The War Diary*, 229)

--27.6.41: (GFM von Bock's war diary):

. . . in the afternoon [came] *General der Artillery* Brand of the Army High Command [**OKH**], who described to me details of the attack on the citadel at Brest . . .

(K. Gerbet (ed.), *GFM v. Bock, The War Diary*, 229)

1.6.9.1: *The Siege of Brest, 1941* (R. Aliev):³⁷⁹

--Translator's Note: . . . Aliev analyzes the combat operations of the German **45 ID** (formerly the Austrian **4 ID**) as it tackled the bastion at Brest . . . Encountering unexpectedly tough resistance, combat operations *continued for a week*, by which point the **45 ID** had lost heavily in officers and men, and now stood far behind its neighboring divisions of General Schroth's 12 AK. *Tormented by thirst, the heroic defenders literally fought until the final round of ammunition in many instances*. Even after the capitulation of the *last defending fortification*, the East Fort, on **29 Jun 41**, the Germans spent the month of **Jul 41** dealing w/ individual and small groups of defenders who continued to lurk in the ruins of the Citadel. . . The fighting, especially on **22 Jun 41**, swirled around *numerous bridges, gates, buildings, mess halls and sections of barracks* . . . (xv-xvi)

Chapter 1

The Fortress:³⁸⁰

Situated at the confluence of the Bug and Muchavec Rivers, the Brest-Litovsk Fortress was founded in **1833**. Its construction developed on the territory of medieval Brest, which was demolished to make way for the fortress. Using branches of the Muchavec and canals that were dug to link with the river, the designers planned for the fortress to *consist of four for-tified island areas*—a central, northern, southern and western—that would be created by the rivers and canals. The fortress was surrounded by an undulating plain that varied in elevation by no more than **15** meters. It was cut by river branches and streams, often w/ boggy bottomlands, which to the SE merged w/ the swampy Polesia Forest. The soil in the area, as a rule, is a mixture of *sand and clay*, but predominantly sandy. . . The entire fortress is surrounded by *several belts of forested tracts*, which in swampy areas are replaced by patches of alder. The Bug River bisects the fortress, flowing generally from east to west; to the north it is joined by the Lesna River. In the center, the Citadel stands on the Central Island, which is skirted by a ring of two-story brick barracks . . . approximately **11** meters high and w/ a perimeter of **1.8** km. The thickness of the

³⁷⁹ **Note**: Writes the author: “The holdings of the German Federal Military Archive in Freiburg provided a heretofore unseen evidential foundation confirmed by documents. More than **3000 pages** of the most diverse documentation enabled at last the creation of a study that has been *maximally purged of myth-making*.” [**Note**: Author also made liberal use of the records of the Russian Federation's Central Archives of the Ministry of Defense.]

³⁸⁰ **Note**: For the history of German operations against the fortress (**1915, 1939**) see, pp 2-3.

outer walls, which contain embrasures, reached **2 meters**, while the window-lined inner walls were up to **1.5 meters** thick. The Ring Barracks consist of **500** casemates, w/ embrasures for guns and small-arms fire. . .

The entire Ring Barracks (as well as all the buildings w/in the Citadel) had cellars, which were used as storage areas. . .

The approaches to the walls of the fortress were guarded by branches of the Muchavec River, as well as by four semi-towers, which provided the opportunity for flanking fire. Access to the grounds of the Citadel was given via four gates [see text for details]. . . A bridge of the same name led across the branches of the Muchavec River to the corresponding island and gateway. . . It is important to note that by **1941**, a portion of the Ring Barracks on the eastern side of the Citadel, where the Muchavec River forks, had been destroyed, creating a *gap which both the defenders and attackers sought to use*. . .

There were other buildings in the Citadel, some of which (as in the case of other portions of the fortress) had as their basis *buildings of medieval Brest*. . . Altogether according to German estimates, the Citadel could accommodate **12,000-15,000** soldiers together w/ their ammunition and provisions. (3-5)

North Island: Which actually lies to the east of the Citadel on the Central Island, had the housing for the families of the officers and career sergeants, as well as a post office, shops, a stadium and the powder depots. There were two two-story barracks on its western side. A road ran from the Trekharoch Gate across North Island to its Northern Gate. On the opposite sides of this road were the Western and Eastern Casemate Redoubts. Entering history as the *West and East Forts*, they were earthen lunettes, each of which contained a smaller, but taller crescent-shaped embankment. Within the earthworks, as was practically the case everywhere else in the fortress, were fortified chambers that could shelter defenders. . . The approach to the Trekharoch Gate from the direction of North Island was also guarded by bulwarks, w/ gorge barracks concealed w/in them that offered shelter to defending troops and served as reduits (inner redoubts built w/in enclosed fortifications for combat w/in the latter and for strengthening the inner defenses in case the outer walls were breached).

No less strong were the fortifications on the West and South Islands, which faced to the west, since that was the direction from which the architects anticipated an enemy attack would come. All four fortified areas, covering a *total area of 4 sq.km.*, were enclosed by a strong **10-meter**-high wall (which henceforth will be called the Main Wall), w/in which there were more fortified barracks designed as reduits. In front of the Main Wall was a moat (henceforth referred to as the Forward Moat), which is often referred to as the Bypass Canal. The Main Wall, which had a thickness of up to **8.5** meters, had four entrances—the Northwestern, Northern, Eastern and Southern Gates. Narrow paved embankments led across the Forward Moat to each of them.

At the end of the **1860s**, the Warsaw-Moscow railroad was laid down north of the fortress. The railroad embankment partially blocked fire from North Island, creating a dead zone that enemy troops could exploit. As a result, Fort "Graf Berg" was built on the opposite side of the railroad embankment, **850** meters from the Main Wall, and in front of this fort was an earthwork for artillery. . . From this moment it would be more correct to call the Brest Fortress the "Central Bastion," which became surrounded by a string of forts, the construction of which took place in the years **1878-87**. At a radius of **3-4** km from the Central Bastion, **9** brick-and-earth forts were constructed, which created a planned inner auxiliary ring, and in **1910**, Fort X was built in order

to guard a new railroad track. In **1913** work began on an outer auxiliary ring, which lay **4-5** km beyond the inner ring of forts. [See text for more details.] (5)

The Array of Forces:

--It is still unknown who, how or when the *planning for the capture of Brest-Litovsk and its Citadel in 1941 was done*, whether in army hq., army group hq., or even higher, in the hq. of **OKH**. One thing is clear—from the moment when the decision was taken for Operation *Barbarossa*, the *city lay in the direct path of the main attack*. . .

--On **10 Feb 41**, German **4 Army** Chief of Staff, Günther Blumentritt, asked the chief of staff of **34 AK** Colonel Sicht to give a short, detailed outline of a proposal on the subject “*The Assault on Brest-Litovsk*” for working out details of the tactical assignment. Sicht’s hq. faced the task of determining the quickest way of seizing the fortress, in order to open the important highway leading to Kobrin. . . The objective was the Central Bastion. In particular, it was necessary to calculate the minimum number of supplemental artillery and combat engineering units required to take the objective, as well as the *Luftwaffe* support that would be needed. . . The troops selected for this mission had to have experience in quickly and successfully crossing a river, breaking through a line of concrete fortifications, and making rapid marches. . .

--Who could accomplish all this? Likely the answer was found in **Mar 41** in the divisions of Maj.-Gen. Hans Behlendorff (**34 ID**) and Maj.-Gen. Gerhard Körner (**45 ID**), which both had previous experience as participants in the forced crossing of the Aisne River in **Jun 40** in France. . . . The final choice fell upon General of Infantry Walther Schroth’s **12 AK**,³⁸¹ in no small part because he was *one of the Wehrmacht’s most experienced corps commanders*. Schroth had been commanding **12 AK** back on **1 Sep 39** and had led it through the campaign in Poland, then (**Apr 40**) having turned command of **12 AK** over for a short time to General Gotthard Heinrici, Schroth resumed command of **12 AK** and concluded the campaign in France in charge of it. Schroth ultimately decided to give the task of seizing Brest to Körner’s **45 ID**. . . Why was it the **45 ID** that was given this role? [See text for details.] . . . The fact that the correspondents of all the *Wehrmacht*’s main journals—*Die Wehrmacht* and *Signal*, as well as operators of the *Reich*’s newsreel journal *Deutsche Wochenschau*—were assigned to the **45 ID** during its assault also emphasizes the *propaganda significance* attached to the operation. . . (7)

When preparing to assault the fortress, **45 ID** command began to gather information on Brest-Litovsk in its role as a constituent element of the Russians’ border fortifications. Despite the fact that in **1939** the fortress was in the Germans’ hands for several days, they of course had no anticipation of the need to assault it again. *No close inspection of survey of the defenses was conducted*. As a result, by **1941** the visualization of the Brest fortifications was based on an *outdated 1916 study* of them, Polish plans that were seized in **1939**, and aerial reconnaissance. On **13 Apr 41**, a reconnaissance team of *Pi.Rgt. 507* made an extremely detailed study of the shore line and surface flows of this section of the Bug River (which based on the experience of the Aisne, seemed to be a *much more serious obstacle to the attackers than the fortress*). The sections of the river confronting all three of **12 AK** divisions (**31, 34, 45 ID**) were studied. (8)

A rather extensive report on the fortified structures of the Brest area was prepared, based on a study of the fortifications. . . [See text for more details] . . .

The report stressed:

³⁸¹ **Note:** Also check “*Lexikon-der-Wehrmacht*” for background on General Schroth.

In general, it must be said that the *fortifications don't present any sort of special obstacle for us*; however, in the dry season an attack is easier, since in the muddy season the well-known Russian swamps are passable only w/ the help of sufficient engineering equipment, thus presenting a definite obstacle.

However, when discussing the Citadel, the study's author cautiously, but significantly noted: "Even today the defensive fortifications in the bridgehead give the possibility to an energetic defender to *hold up an aggressor w/ insignificant forces and means*." Indeed, someone (probably in the hq. of **45 ID**) prudently underlined these words. . . (8-9)

Summing up, the report concluded that:

"the greater portion of the new fortifications surrounding the old permanent fortifications still consist of half-finished works. Thus, their present combat significance is nominal," however, "on the whole, when viewing this sector it must be said that the Bug and the fortifications give the defender the possibility at the very least of *significantly delaying the vitally important crossing in this sector and the capture of the 3 important highways (leading to Kovel', Kobrin and Pruzhany)*."

It is understandable that the troops attacking Brest were required not only to take the fortifications, but they also had an *incommensurately more important task* on the scale of the **Fourth Army's** sector. That was to secure a crossing for the motorized and panzer units and to enable their subsequent advance along the highways leading into the Soviet interior. (9)

Chapter 2

King Tiger:

On **27 Apr 41**, General Körner was killed in an automobile accident near Hannover, Germany. . . However, just a day later, the first echelons of **45 ID** began to load aboard trains: the division was heading to Poland, leaving behind **462** of its soldiers and officers in graves in Corbigny – Saint-Quentin – Ardres (just outside Calais). In the new billeting area of Warsaw and its environs, the construction of barracks and roads was proceeding at full speed. [As a measure of concealment, **45 ID** given code-name of "*King Tiger*".] (10)

By the beginning of **May 41**, supply and communications were being organized. The first training exercises specified by higher command were designed around the tasks the troops would face in Russia. Among the exercises were small unit assaults against fortified strongpoints, and also to handle the poor road conditions and the *lack of adequate maps*.³⁸² Countermeasures against chemical warfare acquired a particular significance . . .

9 May 41: The new commander arrived at the division—the **48**-year-old Maj.-Gen. Fritz Schlieper. [See text for his military career.]³⁸³ On **1 May 41**, Fritz Schlieper was appointed C-in-C of **45 ID**. He *lacked the experience of division command, and had no experience w/ operations to force a crossing of a river or to take a major city*.

³⁸² **Note:** An endemic problem for the entire German army in the east!

³⁸³ **Note:** Also check "*Lexikon-der-Wehrmacht*."

To prepare the division for the tasks it would face, General Schroth ordered the division to organize practical training of the infantry and combat engineers for the rapid crossing of rivers and moats (sometimes w/ a subsequent assault against a fortress wall) while under enemy fire. There was also training to prepare for the assault against the previously-mentioned ***bunkers and casemates of the Brest-Litovsk Citadel*** on a duly handy training ground—the fortifications of the Warsaw Citadel.³⁸⁴ [See text for more details.] The training was planned to be *as realistic as possible*. . . (11)

45 ID was given temporary command of the hq. of ***Nebelwerfer Rgt. 4 (NbwRgts.Stab z.b.V. 4)***, located in Gultowy; ***Nebelwerfer Battalion 8 (Nbw.Abt. 8)*** in Rozalin; and the ***105 Decontamination Battalion (Entg.Abt. 105)*** in Posen. In the month of **May 41** . . . training was in full swing (including practice assaults against fortified strongpoints), as were engineering work and camouflage measures. The division was assessed by its hq. as a ***fully combat-effective formation*** . . . (11)

20 May 41: C-in-C of the **Fourth Army** GFM von Kluge held a meeting with the subordinate corps and division cdrs at his hq. in Warsaw. Simultaneously, the army's chief of staff Blumentritt conducted a meeting w/ all the corps' chiefs of staff and the operations chiefs of the corps and divisions. At the meetings, all the main problems of preparing for the operation were discussed . . . [see text]. In particular, mention was made of bringing up supplementary artillery (including captured guns), such as **210mm** howitzers (for the attack against the Brest Citadel) and one heavy long-range **283mm railroad cannon**, the ***Krupp K5***. It is noteworthy that here, *for the first time at the army level* . . . there was talk about attaching hvy artillery to **45 ID**—a recognition that the seizure of the Brest Citadel ***posed a particular challenge***, distinct from the tasks given to other divisions while breaking through the line of border fortifications. Prior to this meeting, there had only been talk of giving **45 ID** rocket-launchers and heavy **600mm Karl siege mortars**. (12)

[**Note:** Author offers some humorous anecdotal material about how the “exercises” sometimes lapsed into “**holidays at the beach**, w/ lots of merry splashing and clowning around w/ races w/ rubber boats! 12]

28 May 41: Fourth Army hq. ordered increased patrolling and reinforcement of the combat outposts on the Russian border. . . A day before, the ***division had begun to move out to its assembly area prior to the invasion***. . . Gerd Habedanck, a correspondent w/ *Die Wehrmacht* who'd been assigned to **45 ID** accompanied **IR 135** on its march from Warsaw “through heat, dust and jam-packed roads to the Bug. We passed tracts of woodland bristling w/ vehicle parks, artillery batteries in villages and radio relay stations and headquarter staffs under tall fir trees. . . (13)

In order to establish cooperation between the arms, Hauptmann Hans Meesmann, the commander of a battery of hvy artillery of the **OKH** reserve, reported to Maj.-Gen. Schlieper. Thus the second means of reinforcement after the ***Nebelwerfers*** had arrived, though standing first by measure of its impact: the 2nd Battery of **833 s.Art.Abt.**—two **600mm Karl self-propelled siege mortars**.

The question about involving hvy artillery in the assault on the Brest fortifications had already been discussed weeks before. . . [see text] However, they decided to settle upon the **600mm Karl**

³⁸⁴ **Note:** This must be why division was stationed in Warsaw area—so it could train against the Warsaw Citadel.

siege mortars (Gerät 040), which in the *Wehrmacht* was second in power only to the *800mm Dora heavy guns*. (13)

3 Jun 41: The order comes down about transferring 45 ID from **35 AK** at **00.00** hours on **4 Jun 41** to **12 AK**. On this same day, the last units of the division were completing their march. Michael Wechtler writes:

The regiments were billeted in comfortable village homes, 27 kilometers from the border. With pleasure we drank up the last of the captured French champagne. The last letters were written home. . . In the well-hidden forest bivouacs, the final group photographs were taken before the campaign. Everyone recognized that few of them would ever gather again in their full complement of men.

10 Jun 41: By this date, a draft order w/ the invasion plan was ready and was sent to **12 AC** Hq. Even though the order was dated **16 Jun 41**, judging from all the evidence there were no substantial changes to the plan after **10 Jun 41**. The essence of the plan was as follows: in consideration of the major Russian forces that were positioned behind the Bug River (esp. in Brest-Litovsk), **45 ID** would attack w/ **IR 130** on the right and **IR 135** on the left, w/ **IR 133** held back as corps reserve. The division's own reserve would consist of **II./IR 135**. [See text for details of attack plan.]³⁸⁵ (14)

The strength of the defenders wasn't known. With the aim of neutralizing possible surprises, the division cdr ordered the regiment [**IR 135**] to keep a significant reserve. Judging that the reserve consisted of **II./135**, it was precisely in **IR 135's** sector that surprises were anticipated.

Through a rapid envelopment of the fortress [see text for precise details], the Germans were to block the retreat of the Russian units from it and the evacuation of equipment and supplies. The Russians would be *caught in a pincer* . . . Considering that the *strength of the enemy grouping in the fortress was not known*, this was a rather risky decision. The Germans planned that the *element of surprise and their superior firepower* would be the decisive factors. [Note: Author discusses in some detail the plans of attack for both **IR 135** and **IR 130**. See text for all the details.]

[Note: One Soviet unit in area that could cause a problem for the attackers was the **22 TD**, w/ **148** T-26 regular tanks, **81** T-26 tanks equipped w/ radios, **6** twin-turreted T-26 tanks, **16** flame-throwing T-26 tanks, and **5** light T-37A/38 tanks, for a total of 256 AFVs.] (16)

Judging from the division's combat assignments, its *first order of business was to seize and hold the bridges on the Muchavec*. Col. Helmut Hipp, Cdr, **IR 130** was the most experienced of the **45 ID** regimental cdrs; for this reason he had been given this primary responsibility—seizure of the bridges on the Muchavec and the envelopment of Brest from the south. (16-17)

14 Jun 41: Schroth conducted a staff exercise w/ the command staff (including the cdrs of the rgts. and separate btns.)—it focused primarily on the planned actions when crossing the Bug. That evening, Schlieper held a meeting w/ the rgt. cdrs. and *shared the date and time of the invasion*

³⁸⁵ Note: Author provides complete strength figures for **IR 135**, as well as its complete complement of weapons. (14)

with them: 22 Jun 41, 0330 (which was subsequently altered to **0315**). An order arrived from **12 AK** hq. about moving up into the jumping-off areas. (17)

Schlieper reported to corps hq. that the *final preparations for the attack had been completed* . . . The **2nd Battery of Hvy Art. Rgt. 833** had still not yet shown up; however, a provisional report indicated an expected arrival date of **18 Jun 41**. . . The **45 ID's** additional attached mortar batteries³⁸⁶ (**682, 683** and **684** – “*Galle's mortar battalion*”) were fully staffed and combat ready. (17-18)

Chapter 3

The Brest Fortress:

[Discussion of main tasks of Western Special Military District . . . Maj.-Gen. A.A. Korobkov's **4 Army** (its length of front; OOB, etc.)] (19-20)

[Discusses building of fortifications in Brest Fortified District. Emphasized that much of the work was not completed by **22.6.1941**.] (21-22)

By **Jun 41**, Soviet **4 Army** was covering **150 km** of the USSR national border on the Brest – Minsk axis. It consisted of: [see text for army's OOB]. (19)

The construction of defensive works in the **4 Army's** first (and main) line of defense—pillboxes and additional field-type positions in the Brest Fortified District—began back in **1940** at the beginning of the summer. Its forward line (and by **Jun 41** only it had been completed; work in depth had not even begun), ran along the eastern bank of the Bug River. Only on West Island were pillboxes positioned directly at the water's edge. North of Brest they stood back from the Bug, for example, along the Lesnaia River. However, there has been no explanation for the *unsatisfactory placement of the pillboxes* in such exposed, forward positions on West Island. . . (21)

Altogether by **21 Jun 41**, **128 concrete pillboxes** had been built in the Brest Fortified District. . . However, only **23** of the pillboxes were combat-ready.³⁸⁷ . . . Eight (**8**) of these were in the Brest area, primarily w/in the fortress. . . The main shortcoming of the pillboxes was their positioning—they were *plainly visible from the German observation posts* and were vulnerable to destruction w/ the very first artillery barrage. Meanwhile, the lighter weapons mounted w/in them lacked the range to fight back. (22)

Work on the District's fortifications progressed slowly and could not be completed by **1941**. The positioning of the units assigned to man them . . . *discounted the possibility of a surprise attack*. (23)

The moving up of all four divisions³⁸⁸ of **4 Army** was dictated not only by the availability of space for accommodations [see text for discussion of this issue], but also the desire to cover all **150 km** of its sector. Thus, the forces of **4 Army** were *positioned in a single line, w/ no second echelon or any reserves*. (24)

³⁸⁶ **Note:** These were **210mm** “Mörser” batteries. See also, German OOB in Kurt Mehner's, *Geheime Tagesberichte*. From Mehner, it appears Galle's battalion was **II./190 (mot.)**.

³⁸⁷ **Note:** See text for description of the pillboxes, their outfitting w/ weapons, crews, etc.

³⁸⁸ **Note:** Here the author is referring to the four **RDs** controlled by the army's **28 RC**. The army also controlled the **14 MC**. (19)

The *deployment of personnel in the Brest fortress was as follows*: [see text for details, broken out by island].³⁸⁹ (24-33)

Summing up, a grand total of ca. **9000** Red Army officers and soldiers were on the ground of the Brest Fortress (the Central Bastion) when the Germans attacked. . . The total numerical strength of **6** and **42 RDs** increased by **3126 men** between **1-22 Jun 41**. (33)

The mood of many of the soldiers and NCOs, who sensed the *menacing atmosphere of June*, was unhappy. The chief of the **28 RC's** operations department Major E.M. Sinkovsky recalled:

Soon after the TASS announcement [of **14.6.41**], I was in the fortress w/ the **333 Rifle Regiment**. Together w/ the regiment commander D.I. Matveev, I spent time among the units. One of the soldiers asked, "Tell me, Comrade Colonel, *when will they pull us out of this mousetrap?*" Matveev vaguely answered, referring to the TASS announcement, but it was perceptible that the *soldiers weren't satisfied w/ the response*.

V.P. Vavilov (a private and clerk in a MG-coy of **44 Rifle Rgt.**) wrote to his family:

I'm reporting to you that at the given time I am serving in a new place in the border city of Brest, ever closer to our amicable neighbor Germany. History finds us separated by just several dozen meters. All the same, we'll soon likely have to clash w/ them. . . (**15 Apr 41**)

Sultan Bauchiev, a clerk of a battery of **45mm** guns w/ the **455 Rifle Rgt.** wrote:

I'm now convinced that I won't be seeing my native land: it is necessary to thrash someone . . . I have no son! This, however, is a major life blunder! It is important to leave someone behind, who would be proud that his (or her) father died a modest death in a war for his Fatherland. . . (**2 May 41**)³⁹⁰

D.P. Kireev (a lieutenant and cdr of a MG platoon in the **455 Rifle Rgt.**'s regimental school): "*A threat hangs in the air, and likely the threat will be worse than the Finnish (one)* . . . (**May 41**)

N.G. Mishchenko (a soldier in **333 Rifle Rgt.**):

I'm living well thus far, but within a hair's breath of something. Meanwhile we have a lot of news, but I won't be writing. The entire country should learn about our news, but to this point nobody knows it. I ask you to write letters more often, *while you still have someone to write*. If you're interested . . . I ask that you keep your mouth shut. . . (**1 Jun 41**)

The Red Army enlisted men had forebodings, but the country and their commanders were trying to prepare . . . (34)

³⁸⁹ **Note:** Map #1 of the Brest Fortress (at very start of book) also lists all the forces w/in the fortress broken out by island.

³⁹⁰ **Note:** At least the letters adumbrated here have very much a *fatalistic tone* to them.

Chapter 4

“Dortmund:”

On **16 Jun 41** the invasion order was sent to German **45 ID**, its neighbors, and the **12 AK** Hq. That the situation along the border was more than tense is confirmed by the **12 AK** hq.’s order, authorizing the destruction of Russian acft that openly crossed the border by AA artillery . . . The hq. was also notified of the pending arrival on **18 Jun 41** of the two attached **Karl SP 600mm mortars of 833 Hvy Art. Btl.** . . (39)

The **45 ID** hq. issued the orders to *initiate the movement into the final jumping-off positions* within its divisional boundaries on **18 Jun 41**. . . It was planned to complete the occupation of the start line before midnight, **22 Jun 41**,³⁹¹ at which point the division hq. would be informed of the event by **0015** on **22 Jun 41** w/ the code word “*Kyffhäuser*.” Beginning at **1400** on **21 Jun 41**, all unit cdrs were to be present at their CPs. (41)

[Note: Interesting discussion of the German artillery firing plan. Artillery under control of Maj.-Gen. Friedrich Krischer (under the hq. of **Arko 27**.) The plan of artillery fire targeting the Central Island that was conceived by **Arko 27** and approved by Krischer called for a creeping concentration of artillery fire that would be advanced at five-minute intervals (which was likely determined by the *Karl siege mortars’ rate of fire*). The progressive stages of the concentrated artillery fire were given the *names of flowers*—“*Anemone*,” “*Narcissus*” and “*Tulip*.” The Soviet positions along the Bug River, Soviet troop concentrations, and the exits from the fortress were to be subjected to particularly hvy artillery fire. (42-43)

Later that evening [**19.6.41?**], a train arrived carrying the *600mm siege mortars for the two batteries of the 833 Hvy Art. Btl.* Since these were new wpns that hadn’t yet been fully tested, the battalion cdr Obstlt. Schmidt didn’t manage to bring them into their firing positions: while moving the second hvy mortar into position, the *crane broke down* (the gear reduction system malfunctioned and a chain snapped). This news was immediately reported to army headquarters. (43)

20 Jun 41: On this morning, the first successfully unloaded *Karl siege mortar* was emplaced in its firing position. . . In addition, a still-absent column transporting *spin-stabilized rocket projectiles for the Nebelwerfers* arrived that day. The delivery of ammunition continued that night. (45)

Meanwhile, von Krischer continued to give the artillery its tasks, which would regulate the *preparatory artillery barrage* until the expiration of the fire plan (**X+29** min.) on **22 Jun 41**. [See text for more details].

21 Jun 41: This morning, the command group of the **45 ID** headquarters moved into a CP (an old casemate in the Terespol Cemetery). The hq. of **Arko 27**, the **65 Signals Btl.** (with the radio communications center and the telephone exchanges), and **IR 135** were also located here. The commander of an MG squad w/ the **12th MG Coy** of **IR 135** (**12./IR 135**) Leo Lozert started his combat diary, thinking back to this day:

³⁹¹ Note: Writes the author: “The moving up of the main forces could be conducted only on the night of the invasion (the shortest night of the year). All of this was necessary to preserve the element of surprise right up to the moment of attack. . .” (41)

Saturday. The summer solstice. In the morning we set up camp in our final bivouac. Several days ago our commander drew up the plan of our positions on the Bug. However, neither I nor anyone else was informed of the situation. Being in an infantry company, though, I had the opportunity to study aerial reconnaissance photographs and a map of the fortress, which later proved quite valuable for me. In the afternoon, Leutnant Schultz took me to the position of our platoon on the Bug.

[See text for more details.]

The division's forward Hq. – those officers not part of the command group – was also moving up to the area of the start line.

21 Jun 41 (1430 hours): The schedule of reporting was now on a wartime footing. The first “daily reports” were arriving: *Galle's mortar battalion* was ready to open fire from a position 1 km to the north of Kobylian. He had been at his CP since **0700**, having set up the telephone and radio communications. Batteries of the *45 Pz.Jg.Abt.* were beginning to come up. **IR 135** was implementing its final measures . . . At **1400** the CPs of individual combat units were occupied. The **45 ID's Ic** (Chief Intelligence Officer) *Oblt. von Rühling* issued the *Fuehrer order* to the soldiers on the Eastern Front. At **1500**, *Leutnant Meyer* received the code word from **12 AC Hq.**: “*Dortmund!*” That meant the invasion was on for the next day. That evening the chief of operations Major Dettmer signaled the code word to the division's units. (47)

21 Jun 41 (1900 hours): Around this time, General Korobkov (C-in-C, Soviet **4 Army**) in a telephone conversation w/ Klimovsky, the chief of staff of the Western Special Military District, requested permission to move at least the divisions of the Brest garrison out of their billets in the fortress and into their combat sectors. His request was denied: he was only permitted to postpone the field exercise that had been scheduled for **22 Jun 41** until Monday or Tuesday.

Trying to get their minds off their work, Sandalov and Korobkov went to see a performance of the operetta, *The Gypsy Baron* at a Belorussian theater. At the same time, Shlykov and the head of the Department of Political Propaganda drove into Brest to attend a concert being put on by a troupe of performing artists from Moscow. [**Note:** But General Korobkov was nervous; he had absolutely no interest in the play, and returned early to his Hq.] (49)

In these hours, units of **45 ID** were beginning to form up in their jumping-off areas. The *Fuehrer's* order had been read out to the troops. It dispelled the remaining doubts—oddly, right up to the final moment, *many of the soldiers had believed that there would be no war w/ the USSR*. Walther Loos, an officer in **I./IR 130**:

On the evening of **21 Jun [41]** we received an order: with the onset of darkness, we were to begin moving into our carefully reconnoitered and laid out jumping-off areas, and to complete the process by midnight. . . The *Fueher* order was read aloud by the commanders to their men . . . Now no more doubts remained! This meant war against the Soviet Union. (50)

Joseph Wimmer, a signaler w/ **4./IR 130**: “*We were stunned*—everyone believed that here we were only *waiting permission from the Russian leadership for passage rights to Egypt*.” [See text.] (51)

[Optimism of German attackers!]:

The soldiers and officers of **45 ID** *had no doubt in the success of the upcoming operation*. Leutnant Michael Wechtler, cdr of **5./IR 133**, which had been placed in reserve, estimated that it would be “easy,” noting that the line to be reached by the end of the first day was **5 km** to the east of Brest. By this time, those who had viewed the fortifications from a distance held the common opinion that “*they were more like ordinary barracks than a fortress*.” This optimism is reflected in fact that only two of the nine infantry battalions, or **22%** of the infantry strength, *would be committed in the initial assault*. . . Likely, not everyone shared the optimism of Wechtler and his comrades. . . [See text.] (51)

But now, in these final hours? They had received enough *boats and flame-throwers*, the *hvy artillery*—including that of their neighbors—were in their firing positions, and they had the *Karl hvy mortars*, which were capable of destroying any target in the barrage zone. [Yet] the Russian side of the river seemed almost too quiet. (51-52)

Units were now making their final preparations for the invasion. Assault groups were being formed and ammunition being issued. . . With the aim of preserving secrecy, the units’ assault groups were organized and given their objectives *only several hours before the attack*. This adversely affected the effectiveness of their actions. It was getting dark . . . With the setting of the sun, the first wave of the attacking units, striving to keep as *silent as possible*, moved into their jumping-off lines, which in some places were *right on the western bank of the Bug River*. The activated movement began quietly and under strictest discipline.

Leo Lozert [**12./135**] writes:

At **2100** we set off towards the Bug in order to take up our positions. The entire company of hvy machine guns, as well as the hvy wpns of the **133 IR** had been activated. Everyone was hauling the mass of ammunition cases and became terribly sweaty. (52)

The colossal *Karl heavy mortars* were also moving into position. Lozert continues:

In complete darkness of the night, I saw the wonder-gun “*Thor*” [the No. 3 mortar “*Odin*” and No. 4 mortar “*Thor*” were both in the **2nd Btr.**] move into its heavily-guarded position. When I wanted to examine this tall marvel, a private stopped me at gunpoint, despite the fact that I was a Feldwebel. (52)

21 Jun 41 (22.00 hours): The *dances in the park* were in full swin, but some of the attendees were already leaving—some arm-in-arm w/ young women, others to return to the fortress, hoping to get a little sleep before heading out to the training grounds the next morning. . . Lt. Makhnach³⁹² was in no hurry to leave, not now, when in the gathering darkness things were becoming *particularly romantic in the park*. [See text for more details.] (53-54)

21 Jun 41 (22.55 hours): The German regiments were behind schedule in moving into their jumping-off positions. The *available space was congested and cramped*. Nevertheless, despite logistical problems, the delivery of ammunition for the rocket-launchers [*Nebelwerfer*] had been completed. (54)

³⁹² **Note:** On pg. 59 the author writes: “In Brest, the park closed. The last couples were drifting away. Makhnach was walking along the nighttime streets toward the fortress, together w/ other young commanders who had received a leave until **0200**.”

22 Jun 41 (0030 hours): At **45 ID** Hq. in Terespol, there was a sense of relief—prior to **0030**, all subordinate regiments had transmitted the code word “*Kyffhäuser*,” indicating that they were now *assembled in their jumping-off positions*. . . At **0045** . . . the completion of the **45 IDs** assembly on its jumping-off line was reported to **12 AK** Hq. . . Everything was *quiet on the Russian side: only the usual sounds of work on fortifications and the maneuvering of the steam engines at the Brest train station were audible*. (56)

22 Jun 41 (0100 hours): Every hour on the hour, the **4 Army** command was contacting the Hq. of the Brest Border Detachment and the subordinate divisions. They were all reporting that German forces had moved up to the line of the Bug. However, the Hq. of the Western Special Military District *didn't issue any orders* whatsoever in response to this information. Korobkov had the authority to *raise one division on combat alert*. However, now genuinely alarmed, before alerting **42 RD**, he nevertheless decided first to seek Pavlov's approval of this decision. Pavlov overruled him. (56-57)

Reports were coming in from Brest that the *lights were out in several areas of the city, and the water supply system had stopped working*.³⁹³ Electric cooking appliances were cooling down in the barracks of the northern compound, and the cooks were *swearing up and down*, not understanding what had happened.

22 Jun 41 (0110 hours): Everything was going according to plan. The units [of **45 ID**] now stood *motionless in shelters, behind the embankment, in trenches, and in the stands of willows*. Walter Loss (IR 130) later wrote:

The movement into the jumping-off position passed w/o incidents. The Bug, at only a moderate water level, was flowing lazily by, the moonlight reflecting off its dark waves. The hands of the clock were moving slowly. The assault groups were lying very densely on the bank, ready to spring forward w/ their inflatable rafts. Behind them were the assault companies, closely packed together in the trenches that had been dug over the preceding weeks, right up to the day before, by specially selected groups of workers. Interspersed among them, sometimes in direct physical contact, were command posts, the firing positions of the heavy infantry weapons, reserves, more command posts and reserves, and the firing positions of the artillery and the rocket-launchers, which were much more primitive in design than today. Behind these were jumping-off areas of the panzers and the airfields of various *Luftwaffe* fighter squadrons—extending for many kilometers into the deep German rear, everything was ready to lunge at the foe at the designated time. The individual senses a special and hard-to-describe feeling among such a highly compressed but precisely designed mechanism. (57-58)

22 Jun 41 (0230 hours): In the fortress not everyone was sleeping—in some places they were *playing chess*, in others men were whiling away both time and shifts in numerous alert detachments . . . and kitchen details were cooking food for the morning. (60)

Chapter 5

Like a Knife through Butter:³⁹⁴

³⁹³ **Note:** No doubt, the work of the *Brandenburgers*, or local saboteurs.

0315: “Anemone:”

It started! The earth shook . . . Along the entire front, the German artillery opened fire. The **10th Coy** and the CP of **III./IR 135**, which were situated in old fortress shelters about **30 meters** from the Bug, were not far away from the wall of explosions on West Island (though only the inf. guns of **IR 133** and two batteries of **II./AR 98** were targeting the area). Gefreiter Hans Teuschler, a squad leader in the **10th Coy**'s first platoon, confessed after the war that he had *never experienced such a powerful artillery barrage elsewhere during the entire Second World War*. “The sky was filled w/ bursting shells of every caliber. It was an awful roaring, exploding, crackling and howling *as if hell was actually about to come to earth*.” He and his comrades were gripped by an “uncanny feeling.” (64)

The opening of the artillery barrage was no less stunning to Gerd Habedanck, who was located in a neighboring bunker: [see text for details].³⁹⁵

A little bit to the south, among the soldiers of **I./IR 130**, was Walther Loos: [see text for his graphic account!] (64-65)

In Terespol at the CP of **45 ID**, its command staff was exchanging their impressions of the first minutes. The concentrated fire on the Brest Citadel in the division's sector was clearly visible. . . Several tall columns of fire on the enemy territory indicated the *destruction of fuel or ammunition dumps; enemy resistance was nil*. (66)

0319: Over these four minutes since the artillery barrage had begun, the Citadel had turned into a *sea of fire*. There, wherever the **600mm shells from the Karl mortars** struck, there were no surviving witnesses. Or more accurately, at the **45 ID** CP to the west of the Bug River, *it seemed that had to be the case*. Along the western bank of West Island, the listening posts had been wiped out, and several buildings were in flames. The NE of West Island particularly suffered—the *Nebelwerfers* and the *Karl siege mortars* were both working over that part of the island. The latter were striking at the pillboxes . . . However, the explosions of the *Nebelwerfer and Karl shells*, which seemed so picturesque to the German observers, *weren't having the anticipated effect*. There was no one in the pillboxes or in the fieldworks. . . Neither the *Nebelwerfers* nor the guns of **98 AR** were able to penetrate the *massive walls of the Citadel*. (66-67)

The main victims of the first minutes of the war were the Border Guardsmen who had gathered for the *cavalry and sports' courses*—their building collapsed, burying many of those who were inside it beneath the ruins. Fire became the main problem for those who survived the collapse—the heat and smoke didn't allow them to breathe. Nevertheless, the Border Guardsmen, the soldiers of the transport company and the cadets of the District's driving school, having instantly dressed and grabbed a weapon, emerged at a run out of the burning buildings to *take up a defense or to attempt to take cover from the incoming fire in the unfinished pillboxes* . . . [see text for more details]. (67)

Targeting South Island, two **150mm** guns of **130 AR** were pounding the riverbank; the guns of **I./AR 98** were shelling the area of the Southern Gate, while two batteries of *Galle's mortar battalion* focused their fire on the hospital. *Nebelwerfers* were also rocketing the hospital . . . it

³⁹⁴ **Note:** In a photograph, author writes: “A *Luftwaffe* aerial photograph taken in **May 41** of the central portion of the Brest fortress (the North and Central Islands). Subsequently, these places saw the *heaviest combat* in **Jun 41**.”

³⁹⁵ **Note:** This quote, no doubt, taken from Robert J. Kershaw's *War without Garlands*. I believe I used it in *Barbarossa Unleashed*. If not, it should be in my Notebook **No. 4**.

was their shells that inflicted the most terrible damage—the hospital *erupted in flames*. Patients and medical personnel that escaped the building took cover in underground casemates and cellars. But many of the ca. **80** patients in the surgery ward were bedridden. [See text for more detail.] (67)

There were practically no troops on South Island, and likely the Border Guardsmen manning the listening posts were all killed during the artillery barrage on the sector of the riverbank. [See text.]

On North Island, the first minutes of the war were filled w/ the explosions of hvy artillery shells and rocket shells. [See text for details.] . . . This first wave of North Island refugees, who *fled their homes virtually w/in a moment after the start of the barrage, often only in night robes and having had the time only to grab their children, was the “luckiest,” suffering the fewest losses*. They found shelter primarily in the casemates along the embankment of the Muchavec River, and in the former magazines and rear security barracks of the East and West Forts and of the Main Wall . . . (68-69)

It was precisely the Citadel which received most of the *Nebelwerfers’ fire*. The rocket shells were *unable to penetrate the walls*, but those buildings w/ windows that faced the SW were set aflame by the *incendiary shells*.³⁹⁶ The entire roof of the Ring Barracks began to burn, as did the vehicles . . . After the rocket-launchers’ strike, there was *virtually no one left alive in the Citadel’s interior courtyard*, though in the wee morning hours of this Sunday, there were not many people there; only sentries and those men of the designated personnel in several of their tents. . . The only eyewitnesses left to talk about the *Nebelwerfer* attack and its effects were the Germans employing them. Helmuth Böttcher, an assault group sapper, recalled their effect after the war:

We used rockets . . . They didn’t fly far, but their effect was horrifying. I believe that then there was nothing worse . . . Everyone within a perimeter of approximately **3.5** meters of the explosion perished, killed by the resulting vacuum that destroyed the lungs of both people and animals. It was terrible. In general everyone saw people simply sitting there, motionless, frozen like puppets. Ja! Many had wounds, but some were just sitting there on chairs and benches. Death was guaranteed and came very quickly . . . It was terrible! (70)

[**Note:** Author mentions that German fire against the Citadel was also being conducted by 1st and 2nd Batteries of the neighboring **34 ID’s** *Nebelwerfer battalion*. (70-71)

0319 – 0325: “Vinca”

Having fired off most of their ammunition, the *Nebelwerfers* in their firing positions were beginning to fall silent. Enormous clouds of smoke were blanketing the sky above West Island across the positions of **III/135**. It still hadn’t grown light: cinders, columns of smoke and ashes were *blocking the early morning sun’s rays*. . . Now it was up to the infantry. Leaping from their bunkers, in several bounds **10th Coy’s** first wave reached the bank of the Bug and slid their dinghies down into the water. . . Habedanck describes the scene:

One boat after another slid down into the water. There were excited cries, splashing and howling of assault boat engines. Not a shot from the other

³⁹⁶ **Note:** Author notes that the *Nebelwerfers* were firing a mixture of high-explosive and incendiary shells. (68)

bank as blood-red flames dance in the water. We jump on shore and press forward.

The same picture was repeated up and down **12 AK** sector. [Here the author describes the initial assaults of the infantry.](71, ff.)

(**Note:** Author describes the first actions of Lt. Kremers' assault group, composed of volunteers (**IR 130**). They had the most dangerous task—to paddle up the Muchavec along the Russian-held Central Island in their **9 assault boats** and seize the bridges over the river: Yet suddenly there were explosions in the very midst of them, resulting in the *deaths of the first men of 45 ID to be killed the battle*. The Russians? Kremers was stunned . . . **4** of the **9** boats had been destroyed, and **20** soldiers of **3./IR 130** were dead or wounded. . . This was the work of *friendly fire*—their own *Nebelwerfers*. There was a reason why all the German troops crouched in their jumping-off positions had been apprehensive, observing the *rockets' wild flights*. (71-72))³⁹⁷

Josef Gusenbauer of **IR 133's** platoon of combat engineers recalled: [see his graphic account of the destruction of Lt. Kremers' boats!]

0326 – 0335: “Crocus” and “Lilly:”

On West Island, two more shells from the *Karl siege mortars* dropped in the same locations. . . In addition to the Karls, the mortars of one of *Galle's batteries*³⁹⁸ were pounding the northern portion of the island. Shellfire was subsiding in the center of the island . . . On South Island, the Red Army men were still in no position to resist; German hvy artillery was ranging over it and the buildings and hospital were burning. There, in the smoke the bedridden patients in the surgery ward were waiting for their own agonizing deaths. . . (73-94)

On North Island, soldiers of units in the East Fort were leaving its shelter at a run. Fragments of the exploding shells fired by the **34 ID's Nebelwerfer battalion** wounded many of them. Nevertheless, the men kept heading to their guns. . . Mortars of **31 ID** were firing on the West Fort. Its walls were shaking, but the *shells were failing to penetrate them*. However, several shells dropped directly on the homes of the command staff located in front of the fort. Those cdrs and their wives . . . [see text, including graphic and tragic account by a wife of one of the Red Army soldiers.] (73)

At **0320**, having fired off their final shells designated for the support of the **45 ID**, the neighboring *Nebelwerfer battalions* began to fire in support of their own divisions, which were attacking left and right of the fortress. During “*Vinca*,” the Citadel had been left untouched. Now within several minutes, it would catch the brunt of the artillery fire under “*Crocus*.” In the **12 AK's** entire sector, approximately **200** inflatable boats were now approaching the Russian-held bank—and *not a single shot was being fired at them*. (74)

0327: The first of **45 ID's** boats, ferrying the **10./135** and **11./135**, reached the Russian-held bank, and then immediately turned around to pick up the second wave. The assault groups, leaping from the boats onto Soviet soil, *spread out to defend the small beachhead*. The machine-gunners resumed firing at the island's interior. . .

³⁹⁷ **Note:** Compare this to my account of this action in *Barbarossa Unleashed*.

³⁹⁸ **Note:** These must be **210mm** “Mörser” batteries.

0327: A report from **IR 135** arrived at **45 ID** headquarters that the [railroad bridge] had been seized intact. An incredulous Schlieper mentioned the need for a thorough check of the bridge for possible demolition charges and ordered a second search to be conducted. . . Only at **0330** did the **12 AK** headquarters now confidently record: “the intact railroad bridge is in our hands.” (75)

The primary objective of the “*Crocus*” fire mission was to strike two targets on Central Island. . . [See text.] The third shell fired by one of the *Karl siege mortars* shook the Border Guards’ building, landing directly on the wing where the families were living. Two batteries of *Galle’s mortar battalion* were firing w/o stop . . . Junior Sergeant Sergei Bobrenok ran out into the courtyard of the Border Guards’ wrecked building. Later he wrote: [see text of his graphic account] (75)³⁹⁹

(**Note:** For continued account of the “*epopee*” of *Group Kremer*—moving up the Muchavec w/ its **4** surviving assault boats, see pp 76-77.)

0328: The inflatable boats of **I** and **II./130** grounded close to the opposite bank. The squads immediately disembarked and rushed forward. Josef Gusenbauer: [see text for details of his account]. (77)

(**Note:** Correspondent Gerd Habedanck was w/ **10./IR 135**.)

The second wave of **IR 130** was also jumping into their boats; part of this wave consisted of the *Panzerjaegers* of **14./130** . . . [see text]. Meanwhile the forward elements of **III./130** were already across the river. Walther Loos jumped ashore. Here came the first Russians—clustered in groups, *stunned by the horror of the artillery barrage*, or hiding one by one. They had *faces pale w/ fear*; many, it seemed, had *lost the ability to speak and were surrendering in a daze*. . . The main thing to notice here is that **III./130’s** river crossing *went w/o a single shot being fired from the eastern bank*. (78)

Karl siege mortars: The brass band around the fourth shell from “*Thor*” was too thick, poorly finished or warped, and the shell *jammed in the breach*. . . Attempts to extract the shell were unsuccessful. . . But then the crew of “*Odin*” also began working frantically around their hvy mortar, which was prepared to fire on West Fort: they faced the very same problem—a shell stuck in the breach. . . The problem put *both siege mortars out of action for the next several hours*. (79)

The **98 AR** was walking its fire eastwards . . . At the same time (**0355**) the first *Luftwaffe* ground-attack acft were crossing the Bug River at low altitude. (79)

0336 – 0340: “Narcissus:”

At **0337**, meeting no enemy opposition, the first wave of **34 ID** was crossing the Bug. . . *Arko 27* was shifting its artillery barrage further to the east. All the islands except North Island were *now excluded from the barrage zone*—the mortar battalion was firing on the West and East Forts and the area between them. . . (79-80)

³⁹⁹ **Note:** Many of the women and children were “blown to pieces by the *Karl mortar shells*, or were wounded by fragments. . . The Border Guards Alsatian dogs were howling desperately in their enclosures.” (75)

0340 – 0345: “Tulip:”

At 0340 a *white signal rocket* was spotted in the sky 900 meters east of the bridge . . . [Note: Key point here is that, whenever Germans had secured a position, they would fire these white signal rockets. . .] (82)

0342: The third wave of IR 135 began crossing the Bug. The main forces of IR 130 were already across the river and pushing across South Island. By 0343 there was *still no enemy artillery fire whatsoever, and resistance was negligible*. . . The fire of *Arko 27* was shifting further to the east. [Author discusses the new firing assignments of the German artillery.] The main success during these minutes was the emergence of Naber’s I./IR 130 on the banks of the Muchavec—at 0345 *Leutnant Lohr’s* group took Bridge “*Hipp*” and the Kholm railroad bridge, which according to plan had been *Group Kremers’ mission*. But where Kremers was at this moment wasn’t known. [See text.]⁴⁰⁰ (83)

I./135 attacking from the north, its coys meeting no resistance, had entered the Northwestern Gate and seized a large section of the Main Wall! . . . Now onward, rounding up bewildered Russians and tossing grenades into the numerous buildings and underground barracks, wasting no time to mop them up. The objective was the road spanning North Island from north to south. (83-84)

The *final phases of 45 ID’s artillery barrage* focused precisely on the NW area of North Island . . . (84)

Meanwhile, on Central Island . . . *chaos was at its peak*. Junior Sergeant K.I. Zharmedov of the *75th Separate Reconnaissance Btl.* relates:

As we w/ great difficulty began to approach our tanks, suddenly we were *hit w/ bursts of machine-gun fire from our own tanks*. So those who remained alive, and there proved to be few of them, fell back to the barracks. There were no commanders among us. (86)

0345: The dust of the final explosions around the eastern walls was settling. The 45 ID artillery had *fulfilled their task*. . .⁴⁰¹ [Note: Author discusses horrific scene on South Island as the men of III/130 move in, seize the hospital, etc.) (87-88)

0400:

The soldiers of the first waves of the 9th, 10th and 11th Coys [IR 135] were advancing quickly toward Central Island. . . (88)

0403: At the Hq. of 45 ID, the Ia Major Dettmer was sending a preliminary report to 12 AK—the attack was *going as planned* and the main forces of the attacking units had crossed successfully and had *breached the Citadel*. . . (89)

⁴⁰⁰ Note: “Now the third boat riddled w/ bullets of the 84 Rifle Rgt. was sinking at the fork of the Muchavec. . . The remaining two boats hurried onward . . .” (83)

⁴⁰¹ Note: Caption to one of the photographs reads: “The hvy barrage had its effects. At first only isolated Soviet soldiers, then small groups and finally large throngs of Soviet soldiers emerged from their positions w/ upraised hands and were searched for weapons.”

[**Note:** At this point, the German advance begins to run into some serious opposition. See text for details, 92, ff.]

0415:

At the CP of **45 ID**, there was the *belief that the advance was going well*—the assault guns of the neighboring division were crossing the railroad bridge. The CPs of the attacking regiments, of **AR 98** and of the **81 Pi.Btl.** were being moved across the Bug. This conviction was summed up in a report to **12 AK Hq.**: “*Thus far, still no resistance.*” (95)

On South Island, the situation was unchanged. Ulrich’s battalion [**I./130**] was exchanging fire w/ the Russians in the Ring Barracks, and would likely soon begin mopping up the island—in its patches of woods, it seems, there were still more than a few Red Army soldiers. However, on North Island, the *situation was serious*. Although [Major] Oeltze’s soldiers [**I./IR 135**] had w/o difficulty breached the Main Wall, which had been mangled by artillery, and had advanced deep into the island . . . defensive fire had forced a halt to the advance. . . Now the enemy was even trying to counterattack! The fighting had become confused. The German attack had *broken down into several local firefights*. . . The battalion was now engaged in a serious battle. . . (95-96)

Meanwhile, the main thing had already been accomplished—the *outer defenses had been overrun and the Citadel itself had been breached*. No, it is impossible to call the assault a failure. However, in these minutes, something occurred that in the Russian language is expressed elliptically, but concisely—“*The scythe struck a stone.*”

Berlin time was **0417**.

Chapter 6

Like a Scythe around a Stone:

[**Note:** Author notes that some of the first German prisoners captured w/in the fortress were summarily shot. Yet in the chaos of the first hours of combat, the Russians may not have really had any other choice. 98]

0445: The presense of the battalion cdr didn’t save the situation at the Trekharoch Bridge [at north or south end of Citadel, see, Map 5]. The remnants of **12./135** fell back across the bridge . . . [while some] continued to retreat toward the Terespol Gate. At **0445**, a bullet fired by a Red Army soldier struck one of those retreating across the Citadel’s grounds—it was the cdr of **III./IR 135**, Hauptmann Praxa. His death became known at the **45 ID** CP at **0745**. (103)

0447:⁴⁰² By this time, the impression forming in **45 ID** CP in Terespol was that because of the complete surprise, only those enemy units that hadn’t come under the actual and psychological effects of the *opening artillery barrage* were offering resistance. Reports from the neighboring divisions, which were encountering hardly any resistance, didn’t give any cause to suppose that the enemy was preparing was preparing *even a half-hearted defense*. A signals officer w/ **12 AK** Hq. reported that the prevailing point of view of the command staff was that *the corps had struck empty space*. The C-in-C of German **Fourth Army**, GFM v. Kluge, arrived at the division CP.

⁴⁰² **Note:** At this point (**0447**), headquarters of **45 ID** still believes attack is going quite well; unaware of serious pockets of resistance Red Army now putting up.

Having received a briefing on the situation, von Kluge immediately contacted the cdr of **IR 135** Friedrich John by telephone. Then he advised the command staff of **45 ID** on the situation. From his comments one can draw the conclusion that *surprise had been complete in every sector of Fourth Army's offensive*. . . (103-04)

The main thing going on at this time w/in the Citadel and on North Island was the *organization of defensive strongpoints and the procurement of ammunition by their defenders*.⁴⁰³ Praxa's units (III./135) had been routed and Oeltze's infantry was pinned down. . . several isolated defensive strongpoints were biw coalescing w/in the Citadel and on North Island. . . A portion of **125 Rifle Rgt.** was continuing to hold out in western half of North Island. (104-06)

[**Note:** The *Church of St. Nikolai* was smack in the middle of the Citadel on the Central Island. I believe a number of German troops were surrounded here for several days; check my account in *Barbarossa Unleashed*.]

Despite the fact that the *majority of men in the fortress were trying to escape it*, the remaining men were continuing to struggle. . . (107)

0510 (& Kremers death): Meanwhile, after mopping up the space between the Kholm Railroad Bridge and Bridge "Wilka" of straggling groups of Red Army soldiers . . . and advancing along the eastern bank of the Muchavec, at **0510** the groups of *Leutnants Kremers, Lohr and Kleine* (who was leading the *Brandenburg commandos*) took Bridge "Wilka" by storm. In the assault they took **80** prisoners. *Kremers*, likely under enormous stress after the loss of almost his entire detachment, decided to *crown the operation w/ some dramatic gesture*, which might possibly compensate for the casualties. What could be more suitable than *raising a flag over the captured objective?* Grabbing a flag bearing a swastika, which had been used to mark the front line for the *Luftwaffe*, *Kremers* headed toward the bridge's railings . . . Lohr, sensing disaster, *persistently urged him not to expose himself*, but *Kremers*, caught up in the moment, could not be stopped—he began to raise the flag and probably didn't hear the *single shot fired by some sniper*. The others ran up to him, but it was already too late—*Kremers died, clutching the Reich flag, fatally wounded in the head*. *Kremers*, together w/ Zümpe, was mentioned in the *Wehrmacht communi-qué*, but his operation, which had cost so many lives, had been *proven to be pointless*—not a single one of the bridges had been seized by *Kremers'* group independently, as had been planned. Lohr himself had taken Bridge "Kholm" and Bridge "Hipp," while *Kremers* took "Wilka" only together w/ Lohr and Kleine. *Kremers'* death didn't detail Lohr and Kleine for long—almost immediately they captured the railroad bridge "Kovel," the last one designated to be taken by the 45 ID.⁴⁰⁴

0530: **12 AK** commander, General Walther Schroth, arrived at **45 ID** CP in Terespol. He received a briefing on the situation. Despite the fact that the *offensive was going as planned*, nests of Russian resistance were noted, especially in sector of **IR 135's** attack. . . The regiment was *persistently requesting reinforcements to carry out its mission*. Schroth was not opposed to this and ordered the corps reserve (IR 133) to be moved up closer to the combat zone. At **0555**, Schlieper, after a discussion w/ John (Cdr / **IR 135**) decided to commit the **45 ID's** reserve. [See text for more details.] (108)

⁴⁰³ **Note:** So, at key points w/in the fortress, Red Army has recovered from initial shock and is beginning to fight back, sometimes effectively—taking up defensive positions and stockpiling (as best they can under the circumstances) ammunition.

⁴⁰⁴ **Note:** Thus, by **0600**, or so, **45 ID** had captured all its assigned bridges!

On North Island, Major Oeltze (**IR 135**) is killed. So was 4th Coy cdr, Leutnant Kimberger at his side. . . The 2nd Coy lost all its officers—its cdr Oblt. Bols and platoon cdr Leutnant Hafner were both wounded. . . In any event, **I./135** had failed to make a decisive breakthrough. Heavy, *attritional fighting* continued, despite commitment of reserves. Paul Orbach, cdr of 8th MG Coy that had been committed into the fortress at this time recalls: [See text for his graphic account of impact of Russian snipers, etc.]⁴⁰⁵ (109)

The **22 TD**, as anticipated, attempted to attack **IR 130's** exposed battalions.⁴⁰⁶ The cdr of **I./AR 98** Obstlt. Windmann, whose 2nd **Batr.** of light field howitzers [I.F.H. 18] was attached to **IR 130**, provided an account of the first encounter w/ Red tanks: [See text for details of the battle w/ Soviet **T-26** tanks.] Altogether, by **0620**, **22 TD** had lost **9 tanks** to the fire of MGs, AT rifles, AT guns of **14./IR 130** and the artillery of **2./AR 98**. (110-11)

0715: By this time, fighting on South Island was intensifying. . .

0730:⁴⁰⁷ By this time, two battalions commanders were dead; one of the battalions had simply *disintegrated inside the Citadel*, while the second had already been struggling for 3½ hours for **200** meters of land on North Island. The commitment of the division's reserve had yielded almost nothing. The hvy artillery couldn't be used because of the risk of hitting German troops . . . [see text] (111)

0730: On the basis of incoming reports, for the first time the impression was forming in the CP of **45 ID** that *stronger than anticipated units of the Russian garrison of the defensive fortifications were making a stand in the rear of the division's forward units*. [And] now artillery support for the troops in the Citadel was impossible, because the German and Red Army positions were *too close together*. . . The cdr of **IR 130** acknowledged that the Citadel was occupied by a rather *strong and courageous defending garrison*, Schlieper informed Hipp that **IR 133** (the corps reserve) would be committed to **IR 130's** sector. Factually, this was the *first sign that Schlieper was halting the assault on the fortress itself*. He couldn't have failed to notice that introduction of Parak's II./135 on North Island had achieved practically nothing. . . (112-13)

0810: More news about **III./135** arrived, this time from the artillery observers that were attached to it. An officer of **I./AR 98** was reporting that the soldiers of **III./135** had stopped and were lodged in front of the fortifications of the Central Citadel, having lost ca. **35%** of its men. At **0830**, the battalions of Hauptmann Kaehne (Oeltze's replacement) and Major Parak again went on the attack. This time, despite bitter Russian resistance, they managed to reach their goal—the road spanning North Island from north to south, and gained access to the Trekharoch Bridge. . . The cdr of **14./IR 135**, Oblt. Wessig, was killed during this attack. (113)

The remnants of the forces that *were fleeing from the fortress* and the Northern Military Encampment assembled N and NE of Brest. Often the soldiers were arriving individually in a half-clad state. . . The Red Army men striving to escape Brest often were unarmed and were offering practically no resistance. (113-14)

0900: The **12 AK** ops chief got in touch w/ the **45 ID** CP w/ some long-awaited news—the corps reserve (**IR 133**) was being given back to the division. By this time, *two battalion cdrs and one*

⁴⁰⁵ **Note**: By now, Russian snipers in action picking off German soldiers.

⁴⁰⁶ **Note**: **I./130** and **II./130** were now holding the bridges over the Muchavec, and their positions were indeed exposed! (see, Map 1)

⁴⁰⁷ **Note**: By **0700**, then, the “worm” had clearly turned. I believe this was conclusion I came to as well in *Barbarossa Unleashed*. Confirm!

company cdr in 45 ID had been killed, and one regiment cdr wounded. Precisely at **0900**, the Brest-Litovsk railroad station was taken by an assault detachment [of an engineering regiment]. (114-15)

0915: A new phase of fighting on North Island begins. . . Now the main task for the cdr of **IR 135** became to alter the situation in the Citadel, which had resulted in the *destruction of Praxa's 3rd Battalion*. John (**IR 135**) was intending to break into the Citadel from North Island by concentrating his key force (Parak's II./135) against the Trekharoch Bridge. However, just at this moment the Russians launched a counterattack on North Island, which resulted in the recapture of several points that the Germans had gained w/ such difficulty. [See text for more details.] (115)

0930: Oblt. von Fumetti (I./AR 98) reported that his forward observers on West Island had been encircled by hostile forces. Almost immediately there followed the news that the encircled men had been killed. They proved to be Hauptmann Kraus, the cdr of **I./AR 98**, and two officers of **AR 98** that had accompanied him.⁴⁰⁸

0950: Despite Kraus's death, John asserted that his regiment (**IR 135**) now held West Island and the western half of North Island, but he added, “the regiment is trying to *rescue the men of the III. Btn. who are encircled in fortifications of the Central Citadel*, and who are attempting to break out across the Trekharoch Bridge.”⁴⁰⁹ This comment is noteworthy—over the last **30 minutes** or so, the task of the attack had *changed from seizing the Citadel to “tidying-up” and “rescuing the encircled:”* a significant difference! Judging from everything, John now realized that taking the fortress would be a lengthy job, one that could *not be completed on 22 Jun 41*, and now the main goal was to rescue men. It is apparent that the *45 ID was running out of steam . . . and was shocked by the casualties over these first hours.* (116)

(**Note:** Author notes more German officers killed or wounded: Leutnant Zennek of **III./AR 98**, the commander of a signals group attached to the infantry, was killed. In **II. Btn.** [which regiment?] Leutnants Orbach (cdr **8 Coy**) and Hatterbauer (cdr **6 Coy**) were both wounded. . . (116-17)

Exploiting the collapse of Parak's attack and the stabilization of the situation at the Terespol Gate and Kholm Gate, at this time the Red Army forces inside the Citadel began to try to *wrest the initiative away from the Germans*. The first order of business was to *drive the Germans out of the church* . . . Soldiers of **455 Rifle Rgt.** initiated the attack. . . [later supported by **84 Rifle Rgt.**'s assault on the church. . . (117)

1050: By this time, it had become clear—the Citadel would not be seized on **22 Jun 41** w/ the forces at hand. So now efforts were focused on freeing encircled groups in the fortress and taking the most advantageous positions for the forthcoming attacks. Of course, everything wasn't so dire for either **12 AK** (its **31** and **34 ID** were advancing against almost no resistance) or for **45 ID**: *the bridges had been taken, thus clearing the way for Guderian's panzers*; the Russians were trapped inside the Citadel; and at any time now the Russian groups on the other islands would be finished off. . . (117)

The exhausted officers of the **45 ID** CP, dispirited by the death of two of the three battalion cdrs, John's fruitless attacks, and Parak's stalemate at the Trekharoch Gate that they could see through

⁴⁰⁸ **Note:** Might be useful to make a list of all the German officers KIA on this day—it was many.

⁴⁰⁹ **Note:** Are these encircled men those in the Church of St. Nikolai?

their binoculars, all came to the same understanding. The *encircled Germans in the Church of Saint Nikolai could not hold out for long*. (118)⁴¹⁰

Chapter 7

[**Note:** As author describes, late morning, the *45 ID conducted its last serious attack of the day*. See text below!.]

The Church of Saint Nikolai:

1050: The smoke was signaling Parak's new attack at **1050**. Having laid down a smokescreen, probably employing **81mm** mortars, a company of **II./135** managed to dash across the Trekharoch Bridge from North Island. A portion of it burst through the Trekharoch Gate and into the Citadel, while the rest of the company began tossing grenades into the windows of **455 Rifle Rgt.'s** and **33 Engineering Rgt.'s** sectors of the Ring Barracks that overlooked the bridge . . . As a culminating stroke, two additional assault groups, having suddenly crossed the Muchavec River over the Brigidki Bridge,⁴¹¹ broke into the Citadel through the Brigidki Gate on the opposite side of Central Island . . . It seemed that these events at last signaled **II./135's** long-awaited success. . . The situation was *hanging by a thread* . . .

The situation was saved by a *desperate counterattack* led by Lt. Vinogradov—chief of the **455 Rifle Rgt.'s** chemical services. Seeing the German breakthrough, in a matter of minutes Vinogradov was able to assemble not more than **50 men**—there was little time, and the bunch hastily gathered by him immediately set off toward the Trekharoch Gate. In the smoke, they *collided in hand-to-hand fighting w/ the Germans*—there was no other option. The fury of the Red Army men overcame the Austrians' desperation—the troops of **45 ID** *broke and fled back across the Trekharoch Bridge*. . . [See text for more details.] (119)

Having suffered failure in every sector, Parak's II./135 was *finally played out*—this was the only instance when the Germans managed to cross the Trekharoch Bridge, but in fact it was also *their last serious attack of the day*. The cupola of the *Church of Saint Nikolai*, a constant reminder of their objective,⁴¹² was visible to them through the smoke of the burning uniform and equipment warehouse and the smokescreen at the Trekharoch Gate, but was out of reach to the **11. Batallion** . . . (119-21)

Inside the Citadel, the defenders were preparing to *launch another attack toward the Church of Saint Nikolai*. This time, the main assault force would come from combat groups of **84 Rifle Rgt.**, **33 Eng. Rgt.**, and a Border Guards unit. . . Ivan Dolotov recalls: “Our attack began somewhere around noon . . .” Immediately, the first wave of Red Army men rushed the church, followed by a second. . . They managed to *break into the church*, but the Germans, having fallen back from the windows, were crouched behind columns at the altar and were keeping the entrance under fire. More were located up in the choir balconies perched above the entrance. . . Some of the Germans (primarily the wounded) were located in the church's large basement—the so-called “lower tabernacle.” (123)

⁴¹⁰ **Note:** Apparently, it was Praxa's and Kremers' men who became isolated in the church; they had a radio, and w/ no thought to conceal their presence in the church, they had already began radioing for help. (118)

⁴¹¹ **Note:** According to Map No. 2, the Brigidki Bridge was on west (left) side of Citadel, connecting it w/ North Island.

⁴¹² **Note:** They were trying to relieve the Germans trapped in the church.

Dolotov, dashing into the church, at first couldn't even understand what was going on:

It was dark inside the church and in the first moments not even people were visible; after the daylight outside it was *so dark that you could only see reddish flashes of automatic weapons' fire* and hear the din of gunfire, intensified by the high vaulted ceiling. The Germans were up in their choir balconies, while our guys were down below. Soon our eyes adjusted to the darkness and things became more visible, and it seemed to me that there weren't many Germans up there, just five or six submachine-gunners firing down at us. (123)

Maybe they ran out of ammunition, or maybe their nerves gave way—but the Germans lodged in the altar suddenly jumped up and darted for the windows facing in the direction of the Engineering Directorate:

[**Note:** Dolotov continues w/ his graphic account, 124]

The attack by the Red Army soldiers led to only partial control of the [church.] . . . It was impossible to move into the church, because its interior was being swept by fire from the balconies. The attackers were only able to occupy a small pigeonhole below the balconies, just inside the church's entrance, that was outside the field of fire from the enemy in the balconies. [Yet] even though this was insignificant and incomplete, it was still a success. However, there was a cost to be paid for it—of the ca. 90 men of **33 Eng. Rgt.** that attacked the church, not less than 60% fell dead or wounded. . . The casualties of **84 Rifle Rgt.** and the Border Guardsmen were probably roughly similar. (124)

1200: . . . Bitter fighting was going on inside the Citadel—there were many KIAs, especially among the [German] officers. Walther Schroth [**12 AK**] ordered for *no more units to be committed into the Citadel*, thereby setting aside its capture for the time being, proposing instead to besiege, to extract the German units encircled inside it, and then to hammer the adversary w/ hvy artillery. . . Schlieper tried to obtain from Schroth some means in order to breach the “*damned Trekharaoh Gate*” and extract the encircled Germans. (124-25)

1240: The CP of **IR 130** (together w/ the CP of **AR 98**) was relocated from South Island to Fort III. The South Island had been *almost completely mopped up*. . . The city [of Brest], it seemed, was calm, although serious resistance was being put up in the vicinities of the train station and the oblast military commission, where a well-armed group of soldiers and commanders was defending. Walther Loos:

Fire was coming at us from *cellars, windows, attics, upper stories, and from construction sites, trees and bunkers*. Several of our soldiers were *hit and dropped to the ground*. In the dense smoke, fumes and dust, w/ the exploding shells and burning buildings, it was very hard for me to spot the enemy riflemen. (125)

Elements of **13.** and **14./IR 130**, as well as the *1st and 10th Coys*, swept through the southern part of Brest along its main avenue and linked up at a viaduct on its east side w/ elements of *2nd Coy*, which had been pushing through along the southern outskirts to support the attack against Hill 140. *This development was decisive—the Red Army elements w/in the Citadel were thereby cut off from the city*. (125)

1300: German **12 AK** cdr called **45 ID** CP . . . Schroth was demanding the *settling of the situation in the Citadel that same day: he was prepared to offer flamethrowers and assault guns to accomplish this*. If Brest itself was clear of the enemy, then **IR 130** should take the Citadel from the east. . . Finally, Schroth expressed the desire that Schlieper himself ascertain the situation inside the Citadel by going there. [See text.] (125-26)

1300: Officers of a battery of **201 Assault Gun Battalion**, which was attached to **34 ID**, arrived at Friedrich John's CP. The battery included six *Sturmgeschuetz [StuG] III* assault guns armed w/ **75mm** main guns. . . The essence of the plan . . . was to break in to the Citadel across the Trekharoch Bridge and, developing the attack in conjunction w/ a coy from **II./135**, to link up w/ the assault groups and units of **III./135** at Terespul Gate. (126)

1350: General Schlieper also arrived at John's CP. Everything was ready for the assault guns' attack and it was set in motion. The battery entered North Island through the NW Gate and headed in the direction of the Trekharoch Gate. [See text for details of the assault plan and of the actual assault.] (126-27)

The 2nd Platoon of Stugs reached the Trekharoch Gate . . . I.A. Alekseev was a witness to the assault guns' attack. [See text for his account.] (126-27)

The Stugs's shells couldn't penetrate the thick walls of the Ring Barracks, but penetrating the embrasures and windows (from a range of just several meters, it was hard to miss), *they inflicted terrible casualties*, filling entire casemates, which were jammed w/ Red Army troops seeking shelter from the raging fires, w/ *killed and wounded*. . . Next, with [the support of a Stug], Parak's infantry was to rush across the Trekharoch Bridge. . . [Note: Once again, however, the infantry attack falters in face of furious resistance. See text.] (127)

[Note: One of the assault guns continued on across the bridge and through the Trekharoch Gate, w/o any supporting infantry; crew of another Stug is wiped out. 127-28]

1610: Maj.-Gen. Schlieper again informed Schroth of his proposals for the next day: an early morning powerful artillery barrage on the Citadel, followed by an attack by **IR 133**. The task of **IR 135** for the morrow was to hold their positions they'd achieved w/ the assistance of the *two remaining Stugs*. (129)

Even before noon, von Pannwitz's **45 Recon Btl.** had received an assignment to mop up the city of Brest-Litovsk . . . (129)

[Note: At about **1700**, the Germans send out Soviet prisoners and local residences as truce parties (with flags of truce) to try to compel the Russians still holding out in parts of the fortress to surrender. As **45 ID** war diary notes: "*There was little success, and some of the flag-of-truce bearers were killed.*" 129]

1830: GFM v. Kluge arrived at the division CP together w/ a small escort group. He held a brief conference. In principle, there was *nothing really to discuss—the situation was clear*. Having received a briefing, the impetuous Kluge ordered for "*no useless blood to be spilled in fighting around the Citadel.*"⁴¹³ The battle was only of local significance.⁴¹⁴ Instead, "*the enemy was to be starved out.*" His order for the night was for the Citadel to be entirely encircled (**IR 133** from the

⁴¹³ Note: Check my account in *Barbarossa Unleashed*.

⁴¹⁴ Note: Because by this point the bridges & roads around the fortress had been secured, and Guderian's tanks could move freely.

west, south, and east, and **III./135** from the north), and to thwart any enemy attempts to break out. **IR 130** received the order to bring about order in Brest. (130)

However, the idea of “starving out” [the enemy] didn’t take into account all aspects of the situation. In that case, what would happen to those German troops waiting for help in the Church of Saint Nikolai? Thus, the *decision was amended*—on the morning of **23 Jun 41**, the fortifications of the Central Citadel were to be taken after a **90-minute** artillery barrage between **0300 – 0430**. . . . however [first] another break out attempt [from the church] had to be made. . . [this attempt takes place] but men forced to fall back to relative safety of the church. [See text for more details.] (130-31)

1900: 45 ID begins to pull back its units to positions to cordon off the Citadel . . . [see text for details.] (131)

Now the German infantry elements at the Terespol Gate had to be withdrawn—and the cdr of the **10th Coy** did this w/ utmost reluctance, as Lozert confirms: *comrades of the battalion were still holding out literally just 100 meters away in the Church of Saint Nikolai*.⁴¹⁵ Only *solitary white flares* that sometimes soared above the damaged cupola testified to the fact that they were still alive. . . . But an order is an order, and **10th Coy** began to fall back across the bridge. . . they couldn’t be seen from the Border Guards posts or the **333 Rifle Rgt.**’s basement, but those in the [church] had a much better field of view. Probably conserving the radio set’s batteries, the Germans encircled in the church *launched a full cluster of white flares* . . . The Red Army defenders in the Citadel perfectly understood the *desperate implication of the flares*. I.A. Alekseev recalled, “the enemy located in the church, seeing their own looming deaths, were launching illumination flares in greater numbers . . . calling for help.” (131)

However, many could no longer count upon assistance, only on mercy: numerous *wounded Germans remained where they had fallen*. One of those forgotten unfortunates, who was lying among the corpses around the position of the AA gun at the East Fort [i.e., on North Island], began to stir—Hans Teuschler,⁴¹⁶ who had finally regained consciousness. Having spent hours in a state of unconsciousness, *a terrible scene opened before him*, one which Teuschler could long recall in detail:

On the forward edge of the FlaK [sic] position was the half-constructed tripod of a heavy machine gun. Behind it lay its gunner, mortally wounded, gasping w/ a severe gunshot wound to the lung. His eyes were glazed over and he groaned w/ pain and thirst. “Have you anything to drink, *Kamerad*?” he asked me. I passed him my canteen w/ difficulty. To my right a machine-gunner sat bolt upright, unmoving. There was no response when I spoke to him. In the immediate vicinity a sad concert of cries from the helpless wounded could be heard from all sides. “Medic, medic, God in Heaven, help me!” The sniper had been particularly effective in his work. (131-32)

In reality, it hadn’t been a sniper, but riflemen firing from the East Fort . . . Teuschler continues: [see text for rest of his graphic account] (132)⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁵ **Note:** Thus, those Germans trapped in church must have belonged to **III./IR 135**. Confirm!

⁴¹⁶ **Note:** *Gefreiter* Hans Teuschler (**10./IR 135**).

⁴¹⁷ **Note:** According to author, source for Teuschler’s recollections is: Gschöpf, R., *Mein Weg mit der 45. Infanterie-Division*. I looked in book and did not find Teuschler’s account.

2100: At this time, von Krischer presented a plan to **45 ID** command for the next day's preparatory artillery barrage. The planned artillery fire would begin at **0300** and end at **0430**—three times longer than it had been on **22 Jun 41**. [See text for details of the German firing plan; artillery units involved, etc.] (138)

At **45 ID** CP, the evening summary reports were arriving from the regiments. Schlieper, who had *thrown all his reserves into the fighting on the first day*, still was unable to determine the full magnitude of his losses. . . . Altogether, according to the data of Rudolph Gschöpf, probably obtained by him after the battle for Brest ended, the losses of 45 ID on **22 Jun 41** in killed alone amounted to 21 officers and 290 NCOs and men. In comparison, the **12 AK's 31 ID** lost **12** killed and **72** wounded [on **22.6.41**]. This division had no losses in officers. (140)

The Officers' House

[**Note:** Discussion in this chapter of German “mopping-up” operations. Terrible, costly combat continues; Officers' House is in the Citadel.]

By this time (**25 Jun 41**),⁴¹⁸ the results of **45 ID** operations were being summarized even in Berlin, at OKH Hq. At a morning conference w/ the OKH commander [ref. to GFM v. Brauchitsch?], Major v. Below, who was a signals officer w/ **2 PzGr**, gave his impressions of the group's operations. Von Below's report confirmed Halder's impressions that 45 ID had suffered hvy casualties in the area of Brest-Litovsk apparently for no purpose. It was decided to instruct General of the Artillery Brand first to assess the effectiveness of the *Karl mortar's fire* upon the Brest area, and second—to investigate the operations of **45 ID** there. (188)

Meanwhile, Fritz Schlieper, who had personally travelled to corps hq. at noon, was already seeing the situation differently than he had that morning. At the discussions that took place there, it became clear that the division *would not be ready for a march prior to the evening of 26 Jun 41*: “Mopping up has still not been completed (in the morning, several sectors were being swept and preparations were made for the *final mopping-up of North Island*).” However, such a situation couldn't continue for long—the **12 AK** had already advanced far ahead to the east and was confronting major tasks. (189)

However, fighting continued; w/ the emergence of the reconnaissance battalion [von Pannwitz] at the wall of Point 145, sniper duels had introduced a variety of problems in the sector. [See text for details.] (189)

1500 [25.6.41?]: General Schlieper issued an order to **IR 135** regarding the mopping-up of North Island. . . . John initiated his attack immediately after receiving the order. Later in his memoirs he would write: “For the attack against the East Fort we were given assault groups, equipped w/ *flame throwers* . . . [see text, 191-92)

25 Jun 41: GFM v. Bock, C-in-C Army Group Center wrote in his diary: “Only now has the Citadel at Brest fallen after very hvy fighting.” . . . However Dettmer (Ia 45 ID) reported on the *continuing mopping-up of the fortress, which was entailing losses (esp. officers)*. Between **1630 – 1645** on **25 Jun 41**, after the initiation of actions to mop up the fortress, **IR 133** and **IR 135** . . . almost simultaneously reported that the *still-persisting pockets of resistance* couldn't be

⁴¹⁸ **Note:** Confirm date!

approached by the infantry. Most likely, he had in mind Point 145 and the East Fort.⁴¹⁹ Both cdrs urgently requested *tanks and flame throwers*. (192)

The daily report from John's regiment at 2050 on **25 Jun 41** reports: "Fighting continues against a *cunning, diabolical and stubborn foe*." . . . The day of **25 Jun 41** yielded **IR 135** few results. Its daily summary continues:

Especially hvy fighting at the eastern fortification on North Island. Losses rather significant. After the enemy, as in the center of the fortress, again rallied, even the fight for the fortification No. **145** became somewhat harder, the capture of which the reconnaissance had also reported. It was established that w/ the assistance of contemporary means, a fortification can be taken. For this a tank, a large flame-thrower⁴²⁰ and many demolition charges are necessary. (192)

For all practical purposes, **IR 135** had made no progress and continued to be struck in its previously occupied positions. The remaining elements of "**Group John**" were enveloping the *remaining pockets of resistance*. The plans for **26 Jun 41** were to continue mopping up the Citadel and to assault East Fort after the arrival of special wpns designed to reduce the fortification.

[**Note:** The Red Army's Officers' House continued to hold out on **25 Jun 41**, but the "conditions of the defenders inside it were nightmarish"—i.e., horribly wounded men, corpses laying around, thirst (now there was no water at all). . . They tried to chew the damp sand, but often lacked the saliva in order to spit it back out. They were drinking *urine and even their own blood*. Men were losing their minds from thirst and stench, but continued to meet any careless German movement w/ fire.] (193)

26 Jun 41: Final attack on the Officers' House began on this day. Both Officers' House and Point 145 finally fall to the Germans. [See text for details.] (197-98)

The East Fort

The loss of the Officers' House signified the *end of the organized defense w/in the Citadel*. The shots that still rang out on the Central, South and West Islands primarily spoke more of the search for those Red Army officers and soldiers hiding in shelters than of combat operations. Only in East Fort did hundreds of soldiers continue to resist. (200)

26 Jun 41: GFM v. Bock had to find out that the **45 ID** was still assaulting positions in the Citadel. He noted w/ some irritation in his diary entry for this day: "*All parts of the Citadel at Brest have still not fallen. The report of the 25th [June] was incorrect. Unfortunatly, casualties there are high.*" (210)⁴²¹

[**Note:** Author notes that **IR 135** was blockading the East Fort. . . 203)

⁴¹⁹ **Note:** Appears most all organized resistance had ceased, except at these two locations by this time.

⁴²⁰ **Note:** Writes the author: "The report is referring to the *Flammenwerfer 34* flame-thrower. It had a maximum range of **25-30** meters. With its larger tank, it provided **45** seconds of uninterrupted work, enough on average for **35 discharges**. The request for the *Flammenwerfer 34* (w/ its greater maximum range than the *Flammenwerfer 40*) speaks of the great difficulty of approaching the defensive positions." (192)

⁴²¹ See also, GFM v. Bock's war diary (K. Gerbet (ed.)).

27 Jun 41: At **1000**, two tanks (one a captured French tank and the other a captured Russian tank) arrived on North Island, as well as another captured Russian tank w/ an engine that kept failing. After noon, as Schlieper watched, the tanks began to **hammer East Fort at point blank range** . . . Return fire continued to come from w/in the fort. [But the actions of the tanks do not achieve desired results.] Mopping up the rest of the Citadel of the isolated, concealed Russians that were **firing from the most inconceivable hiding places, like trash cans and piles of rags**, was continuing. (204)

27 June 41: By this day, **45 ID** losses were **28** officers and **251** NCOs and soldiers killed; **31** officers and **619** NCOs and soldiers wounded; and a rather large number of missing-in-action (the majority of which were KIAs which still hadn't been found), **2** officers and **206** NCOs and soldiers. As a result, the **45 ID's total irrecoverable losses** (killed and MIA) thus far were **30** officers and **457** NCOs and soldiers. (205)

28 Jun 41: On this morning, an assault gun now joined the tanks that were shooting up the East Fort. An **88mm** AA gun—the largest caliber that the artillery could not contribute—was also employed against the fort. However, it seems that the *additional wpns weren't bringing about the desired result*, so *Oberst* John drove off to the airfield at Terespol in order to **seek air support**. The former chief-of-staff of *II Fliegerkorps*, Paul Deutschman (a colonel in **1941**) recalled: [see text for details]. 205

John was able to reach agreement w/ a bomber unit (according to some sources *6 Staffel [flight] / KG 3*, which was equipped w/ **Ju-88 bombers**) staging from the Terespol airfield, to bomb East Fort that evening. (206)

The renewed firing on the East Fort by tanks and the assault gun **failed to bring results**. . . Everything was now ready for the bombing of East Fort . . . however, hvy cloud cover forced a cancellation of the mission. (206)

29 Jun 41: The weather promised to be fine, and by **0800**, the drone of acft engines approached from the west. A white signal flare soared into the sky, and **5 Ju-88s** dove on the target w/ a howl, releasing **high explosive fragmentation SD-500 bombs**. Six direct hits were obtained; two missed the target, and two bombs failed to explode . . . The casemates didn't suffer . . . [and] the defenders were [still fighting] not contemplating surrender. (206-07)

John obtained agreement for **another bombing mission that afternoon**. The *II Fliegerkorps* command opted again to use medium bombers, one of which would be flown by a select crew, which was to drop **the single, 1800 kg bomb (SC-1800) available at the airfield on the fort**. (207)

[**Note:** Apparently some Russians were beginning to surrender in the fort even before this final bombing mission. See text! 207.]

1730: **7 Ju-88** bombers appeared overhead: one was carrying the **SC-1800** bomb; the others, **SC-500** general-purpose bombs. . . There was a *crowd of [German] observers, many w/ cameras, atop the walls and casemates and even in the several intact patches of woods*. There was a film crew from the *Deutsche Wochenschau*, the official newsreel production company. [See text for dramatic account of this final aerial assault on East Fort and the eventual surrender of the surviving Russians.] (208-09)

The news of the *capitulation of the last fortification of Brest-Litovsk* instantly flew around the entire **45 ID** . . . (209)⁴²²

1 Jul 41: As of **0000**, **45 ID** again became subordinate to the hq. of **53 AK**. At **0600** its forward detachments marched out of Brest. (210)

Epilogue

1 Jul 41: A ceremony took place at the South (*Semenov*) Church in Brest-Litovsk at the new, just-completed cemetery for the fallen men of **45 ID**. Almost **400** of the division's dead were commemorated. This is the number as reported by the division's quartermaster that can be found in its war diary. However, Dr. Gschöpf wrote that **482** (**32** of them officers) were buried in the division's cemetery, which was the *first German war cemetery in the Soviet Union*. . . Dr. Gschöpf's data are close to General of the Infantry von Greiffenberg's data for **27 Jun 41**—**487** killed and MIA. Possibly, Dr. Gschöpf made a mistake—later he writes about more than **1000 wounded**, which is a figure almost twice that given by **45 ID**.⁴²³ (211)

It was decided to give the name “**45th Infantry Division**” to one of the city's streets. Every unit of the division sent representatives to the burial ceremony. . . The number of KIA in the division's very first battle in Russia . . . was comparable to the number killed in the division's entire campaign in France in 1940. The Austrians *could only hope that the fate of the eastern campaign had already been decided*—news from the front allowed them to assume so. The only troubling fact was that there were *still quite a few Russians hiding in the Citadel that had no intention of surrendering*. (211)

The **45 ID** spent two more days in Brest . . . [On **6 Jul 41**] the **45 ID**'s last trucks pulled out of Brest—the motorized column and horse-drawn carts headed to the east through Kobrin – Antopol'.

30 Jul 41: General of Infantry Walther von Unruh arrived in Brest-Litovsk as its new cdr. Brest was in ruins. However, von Unruh was struck by the fact that more than a month after the conclusion of the assault, the city's Citadel still remained a *source of danger*:

It was totally demolished by gunfire and shells, and only the gates remained standing. In general, it is constituted of desolate piles of rubble, smoking and malodorous, which are still sources of small-arms fire and machine-gun fire from the remaining Soviet soldiers.

In order to reestablish road traffic through Brest, it was *necessary to mop up the fortress once again*. [!] Von Unruh began this process right away, and already w/in several days, at the beginning of **Aug 41**, the *last Soviet soldiers in the Citadel were captured*—a small group led by some *unknown commander*. . . [See text for details.] POW I.V. Ivanov writes that as a sign of respect, the *Germans took off their helmets in front of them*. He continues:

⁴²² **Note:** Of course, as author points out, if organized resistance had come to an end in the fortress, solitary men and small groups were still roaming the emptied barracks—some would continue to fight for several weeks.

⁴²³ **Note:** Actually, the figure of **1000** wounded (given nearly **500** KIA/MIA) makes much more sense—it makes for a ratio of **2:1** wounded to dead, while the figures on wounded given by **45 ID** would make for a highly unrealistic ratio of **1:1**.

The appearance of the prisoners was horrifying. They were all in rags, w/ bloodied, filthy bandages, emaciated and grizzled. All the time they were coughing and wiping their eyes—apparently the effects of tear gas. They were so weakened that they could hardly stand on their feet and were supporting each other. (214)

However, several Russian soldiers were still continuing to sit in a “fort to the south of Brest that was encircled by a water-filled moat.” The author is certain that this comment is a reference to Fort V—this fort having refused to surrender in **Jun 41**. (214)

Only at the end of **Aug 41** did the commandant of Brest-Litovsk, Walther von Unruh, announce to the army commander that Brest and the deep rear had been pacified. “*There is no firing anywhere*. Once again happy faces are seen. There are no more partisans. One can move around unarmed. Order and security have been established.” (214)

Between **22 Jun – 30 Jun 41**, 524 officers and 8362 NCOs and soldiers had been killed on the eastern front. This meant a daily average of 927 men KIA. Considering that according to Rudolph Gschöpf’s data on the irrecoverable losses of **45 ID** for **22 Jun 41** (21 officers and 290 NCOs and soldiers, for a total of 311), it turns out that *more than 30% of the Wehrmacht’s total irrecoverable losses for the first day of the campaign in the east were in fact those of the 45 ID from Lintz, Austria*. (215)

This division’s history ended in **Jun 44** in the cauldron of Minsk . . . (215)

1.6.10: Case Study 3: Start of Operations on the Minsk-Smolensk Axis (17 & 18 PD (47 PzK))

--16.-21.6.41 (S.R. 40/17 PD):

16.6.41: Am Nachmittag dieses Tages geht es weiter in den vorläufigen Bereitstellungsraum nach Siedlce – Konstantinow. Der Regiments-Stab ist bereits mit Kraftwagen nach Wisniew vorausgefahren. . . Aufmarsch u. Bereitstellung zum Angriff vollziehen sich reibungslos. Die Russen merken kaum etwas von unseren Angriffsabsichten.

Am **16.6.** trifft der Div.-Befehl zum Einruecken des Rgts. in die Bereitstellung bei Derlo – **15** km noerdlich Brest-Litovsk – ein. Teile der **3. Kp.** uebernehmen Beobachtung u. Sicherung am Bug, nachdem schon vorher Maenner unseres Rgts. getarnt in Zoll-uniformen Erkundungen u. Lotungen am Bug vorgenommen haben. Feuer- u. B-Stellen der schweren Waffen sind festgelegt. . .

21.6.41: Bis zum Abend dieses Tages ruecken die restlichen Teile des Rgts. in den Bereitstellungsraum ein. . . Der Angriff ist gruendlich vorbereitet. . . Die Beobachtung des Feindufers hat ein klares Feindbild ergeben. Die Gunst des Gelaendes erlaubt ein gedecktes Einruecken in die Bereitstellung. . . Mehrfach schwimmen die Offiziere Bapst u. Steiner ueber den Bug u. zapfen russ. Fernsprechleitungen an. Der Truppe wird noch der Befehl des Fuehrers bekanntgegeben.

(Oberstlt. J. Dingreiter, *Die Vierziger*, 38-39)

--21.6.41 (General Lemelsen):

Saturday, 21.6.41 (B-1 Day)

The days have passed quickly; on Wednesday we changed position to [B.] and moved into a really charming little chateau which doesn't really fit with Poland at all. . .

It really is a strange state of affairs: the *Panje*-horses are still running around everywhere here right up to the Bug and they haven't been evacuated, but no doubt it is to preserve the element of surprise as much as possible. Even so, we are certain that the Russians have known for some time about what is going on here. They are working further forward, but it seems as if they have left only the weaker forces up front in order to fight with the bulk of the army further back. That would not be very pleasant for us. At this time tomorrow we shall know more. . .

It is profoundly peaceful everywhere, the cows and horses are in the field and the *Panje*-horses are raking the potatoes, and what will it look like tomorrow morning? The bombs and shells will explode everywhere and the houses will burn, the residents flee. The contrast is too unreal.

Tonight we will move our command post from the chateau, which would naturally only fall victim to enemy fire, out to a wood, and in the early morning at 0200 hours, I will set off to witness the start of the great new campaign at the front line with the attacking troops.^{dexxxii}

(See, *Barbarossa Unleashed*)

--22.6.41: "At exactly **0310** on 22 June 1941 we were ready to fire. . . At **0315** a lightning bolt of gigantic dimensions tore through the night. Thousands of artillery pieces shattered the silence. I will never forget those seconds." (*Leutnant* Heinz Doell, **18 PD**, cited in: W. Kempowski (Hg.), *Das Echolot*, 23)

--22.6.41 (General Lemelsen):

Es war schon ein ganz großes Erleben dieser Angriffsbeginn. Ich fuhr schon früh los u. [----]scherte mit meinem Begleit Offz. Oberlt. Blum, bis an den Bug u. beobachtete dort die Bereitstellung der Schützen u. Pioniere.

Schlag 3¹⁵ Uhr = Y-Zeit – ging das Höllen-Konzert der Artillerie los u. gleichzeitig stürzten die Schützen mit Floßsäcken ans Wasser u. setzten damit u. mit Sturmbooten über. Die Gegenwirkung war wider Erwarten äußerst gering; sodaß mit dem Brückenbau sehr bald begonnen werden konnte; erstaunlicherweise schoß weder fdl. Artillerie noch warfen Flieger Bomben. *Die ganzen in wochenlanger Erkundung festgestellten Bunker waren unfertig und unbesetzt.* Die größten Schwierigkeiten bot das sehr nasse Gelände jenseits des Bug bevor man auf einen festen Weg kam. Ich ließ mich in meinem Pz.Befehlswagen sehr bald übersetzen u. begleitete die vordersten Teile der **18 Pz.Div.** Dann gings

unaufhaltsam vorwärts entlang des Bug zunächst scharf nach Osten – damit hatte der Feind nicht gerechnet – u. dann nach Nordosten über die Leszna. Alle Brücken waren unversehrt – unsere größte Sorge – ein Zeichen daß der Russe völlig überrascht worden ist.

(Tagebuch Lemelsen, 25.6.41)

--22.6.41 [10 PD / Artl.-Feuerschlag]:⁴²⁴

Um **3.00** Uhr sind die Feuerkommandos letztmals berichtet, es gibt fuer die Rechentrupps nichts mehr zu tun. Die Geschuetze sind gerichtet u. geladen, die Btr.-Offz. haben den Hoerer eines Feldtelefons am Ohr, sie blicken auf ihre Uhr. Der Artl.-Kdr. hat sich die Feuereroeffnung persoenlich vorbehalten. Drueben am Horizont wird ganz schwach eine fahle Helligkeit, ein schmaler Streifen nur erkennbar. Ein leises Froesteln, eher ein Erschauern erfasst die Soldaten, die in der Nacht stehen. Der Btr.-Offz. wiederholt die Worte, die aus dem Fernsprecher kommen: „Noch **10** Minuten.“ – „Noch **5** Minuten.“ – „Noch **1** Minute.“ – Noch **30** Sekunden.“ – „Noch **15** Sekunden, - noch **10** Sekunden, - **8,7.6.5.,4** – Batterie . . . –, Er hebt den Arm u. schlaegt ihn nach unter, das Kom-mando „Feuer!“ reisst ihm ein Blitz u. Donner vom Mund, - ueber den ganzen Himmel zuckt ein einziger Blitz, ein ohrenbetauebender Knall zerreisst die Stille. Und dann jagt Schuss auf Schuss hinueber ueber den Bug, zum Trommelfeuer vervielfacht durch die zahlreichen Batterien, die links u. rechts stehen. . .

Traege erhebt sich drueben eine Wand von Qualm u. Staub, die den fahlen Streifen am Horizont verdunkelt, dann greifen ploetzlich deutsche Werferbatterien in den Kampf ein: Heulend u. jaulend fegen ganze Serien von Raketen mit langem Feuer- u. Rauchschweif hinuerber in das Inferno. Die ersten Sonnenstrahlen lassen die Raender der Wolken u. der Rauchwand blutig rot aufleuchten. Und mit dem ersten Licht kommen die Stukas, suchen sich ihre Ziele, setzten sich in Reihe, kreisen u. stuerzen sich hinab, werfen ihre Bomben u. ziehen wieder hoch. . .

Als es Tag geworden ist u. die Feuerwalze mit der Reichweite der Geschuetze endet, als die Kanoniere des **AR 90** die leeren Kartuschen u. Geschosskoerbe aufsammeln u. der Gefechtslaerm der vorrueckenden Front wie ein abziehendes Gewitter grummelt, da erschienen ploetzlich russische Flieger ueber den deutschen Stellungen, wie im Manoever ziehen sie in korrekten Staffeln heran. Sofort aber jagen auch vom Feldflugplatz Biala Podlaska her deutsche **Me 109**-Ketten ihnen entgegen, unterfliegen sie, ziehen in steiler Kurve hoch u. setzen sich hinter sie. Die Feuerstoesse der deutschen Jaeger prasseln in die fdl. Flugzeuge, das erste brennt u. stuerzt mit langer Rauchfahne ab, dort beginnt ein anderes zu trudeln u. bricht noch in der Luft auseinander, keines kommt durch. **15** bis **20** Abschuesse beobachten die Artilleristen ueber ihren Stellungen an diesem ersten Feldzugtag. Und dabei war in den letzten Tagen immer wieder vor feindlicher Luftueberlegenheit gewarnt worden. . .

(A. Schick, *10. Pz.-Div.*, 270-71)

⁴²⁴ **Note:** While **10 PD** was “Gruppenreserve” (**2 PzGr**), its artillery regiment was supporting the attack of **18 PD** across the Bug.

--22.6.41: From Guderian's memoirs:

On the fateful day of **22 Jun 41**, I went at **02.10** hrs. to my Group CP which was located in an observation tower south of Bohukaly, **9** miles NW of Brest-Litovsk. It was still dark when I arrived there at **03.10** hrs. At **03.15** hrs. our artillery opened up. At **03.40** hours the first dive-bomber attack went in. At **04.15** hrs. advance units of the **17** and **18 PD** began to cross the Bug. At **04.45** hrs., the leading tanks of the **18 PD** forded the river. For this they were equipped w/ the waterproofing that had been tested for Operation „*Sea Lion*,“ which enabled them to move thru **13** feet of water.

At **06.50** hrs. I crossed the Bug in an assault boat in the neighborhood of Kolodno. My command staff, consisting of **2** armored wireless trucks, a number of cross-country vehicles and some motorcyclists, followed at **08.30** hrs. I began by following the tank tracks of 18 PD and soon reached the bridge over the Lesna, whose capture was important for the advance of **XLVII Pz.Kps.** . . At **10.25** hrs. the leading tank coy reached the Lesna and crossed the bridge. Next to arrive was the division cdr, General Nehring. I accompanied the **18 PD** in their advance until mid-afternoon. At **16.30** hrs. I returned to the bridgehead at Kolodno and from there I went at **18.30** hrs. to my CP. We had managed to take the enemy by surprise along the entire Panzer Group front. To the south of Brest-Litovsk, the **XXIV Pz.K.** had captured the bridges over the Bug intact.

(*Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 153-54)

--22.6.41 (17 & 18 PD cross the Bug / Tauchpanzer!):

At Pratulin, where **17** and **18 PD** were to cross the Bug, there was no bridge. At **0415** hours the advance detachments leaped into their rubber dinghies and assault boats, and swiftly crossed to the other side. The infantrymen and motor-cycle troops had with them light AT guns and hvy MGs. The Russian pickets by the river opened up w/ automatic rifles and light MGs. They were quickly silenced. Units of the motor-cycle battalion dug in. Then everything that could be pumped into the bridgehead was ferried across. The sappers at once got down to building a pontoon bridge.

But what would happen if the Russians attacked the bridgehead w/ armor? How would the Germans oppose them? Tanks and hvy equipment could have been brought across only w/ the greatest difficulty in barges or over emergency bridges.

That was why an *interesting new secret weapon* was employed here for the first time—*underwater tanks*, also known as diving tanks. They were to cross the river under water, just like submarines. Then, on the far bank, they were to go into action as ordinary tanks, smashing enemy positions along the river and intercepting any counter-attacks.

It was an amazing plan. In fact, it was over a year old and had originally been intended for a different purpose—Operation Sealion. . . [See text for more details.]

In **Jul 40** four diving tank sections were formed from eight experienced panzer regiments, and posted to Putlos on the German Baltic coast for special training. It was a strange course for tank crews. In their Pz III and Pz IV tanks they virtually turned into U-boat men.

The operational task required maneuverability in water of **25-30** feet. [See text for how technical difficulties were overcome] . . . After cancellation of Sealion, three of the special tank detachments were united into a plain tank regiment, **18 Pz Rgt.**

In the sector of **18 PD**, 50 batteries of all calibers opened fire at **0315** hours in order to clear the way to the other bank for the diving tanks. General Nehring has since described this as a “*magnificent spectacle*, but rather pointless since the Russians had been clever enough to *withdraw their troops* from the border area, leaving behind only weak frontier detachments, which subsequently fought very bravely.”

At **0445** hours Sergeant Wierschin advanced to the Bug w/ *diving tank No. 1*. The infantrymen watched him in amazement. [see text] . . . Tank after tank—the whole of **I./Pz.Rgt. 18**, under the battalion commander, Manfred Graf Strachwitz—dived into the river. . . [see text]

80 tanks crossed the frontier river under water. Eighty tanks were now moving into action. Their presence was more than welcome in the bridgehead. Enemy armored scout cars were approaching. At once came the firing orders from the leading tanks . . . The monsters fired. Several armored scout cars were burning. The rest retreated hurriedly. . .

(P. Carell, *Hitler Moves East*, 23-25)

--Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

--**22.6.41**: Northwest of Brest-Litovsk, Lemelsen's 47 Panzer Corps (two panzer, one motorized infantry, one regular infantry division) also made its way swiftly across the Bug. By 0355 hours, the riflemen of both 17 and 18 Panzer Divisions were on the eastern bank, having encountered little resistance and no enemy artillery fire. Less than an hour later (0443), the 80 “submarine” tanks (Pz IIIs and Pz IVs) of I./PzRgt 18 (18 PD) began to ford the Bug by wading directly through the river.^{dexxxiii} The special tanks, originally intended for Operation “Sealion” (invasion of Britain), had all openings sealed and were outfitted with air intakes and exhaust snorkel pipes. The specter of “swimming” tanks caused something of a sensation and, in one instance at least, more than a little skepticism: “The artillerymen told me about an unbelievable experience,” wrote an officer in 18 Panzer. “At our crossing point, they said, tanks dived into the Bug like U-boats and then reappeared on the east bank. Must be pretty strong tobacco they're smoking, I thought to myself, but it was true.”^{dexxxiv}

His tanks having made military history by wading across the Bug, General Walther K. Nehring, Commander, 18 Panzer Division, climbed into one of the assault boats of his combat engineers

and crossed the river. After the vehicles of his tactical headquarters^{dexxxv} were sent over on pontoon ferries, Nehring joined his tanks as they rolled into Soviet territory, accompanied by several of his staff and the commander of the tank battalion, Major Graf Manfred von Strachwitz. Commencing their “panzer raid” into Russia, they made for Pruzhany, racing far beyond the wheeled elements of the division. As soon as his command car and two radio communications vehicles were ferried across the river, Guderian also struck out for Nehring’s tanks.^{dexxxvi}

Along the front of 2 Panzer Group, nine bridges were in use by midday, three of them newly constructed by engineers.^{dexxxvii} In his diary, General Lemelsen (47 Panzer Corps) registered his satisfaction with the opening act of the campaign:

It was certainly a pretty grand experience, that start to the attack. . . . At 0315 hours precisely . . . the hellish concert of the artillery let rip and, at the same time, the riflemen plunged into the water with pneumatic boats and made the crossing with those and assault boats. Contrary to expectations, the reaction of the enemy was extremely limited, which meant that construction of the bridge could start very quickly; astonishingly, neither did enemy artillery open up nor did their planes drop bombs. All the bunkers that had been located through weeks of observation were incomplete and unmanned. The greatest difficulties were caused by the very wet terrain on the other side of the Bug before you could get to a solid pathway. I soon crossed over the river in my command tank and accompanied the forward elements of 18 Panzer Division. Then we went inexorably onward along the Bug, at first straight to the east – the enemy had not thought of that – and then to the northeast across the Lesna. All the bridges were intact – our greatest concern – a sign that the Russians had been taken completely be surprise.^{dexxxviii}

Like his panzer general colleagues, Lemelsen also led from the front, which could – and often did – result in sudden and unpleasant contact with the enemy. His account continues as follows:

I got into a really sticky situation during the afternoon: I was standing with my armored command vehicle at a crossroads, completely on my own . . . when suddenly there were loud bangs from all directions. We subsequently apprehended 14 Russians who had been hiding in the cornfields; they had leapt up, fired their pistols, and fled again into the cornfield; they were all shot while trying to escape. And then suddenly there were shots from a sewage pipe beneath the road. Shooting and throwing hand grenades into the opening had no effect; it was only after the second hand grenade was thrown in that four Bolsheviks, all wounded, emerged with raised hands. The Russian soldier is a spirited and wily fighter; he has doubtless been told that he would be slaughtered if he fell into German hands, this is the only way to explain their dogged all-or-nothing defense. . . .^{dexxxix}

The armored vanguard of 18 Panzer Division reached the Lesna River, just beyond the Bug, later that morning, and crossed over on the still intact bridge. Nehring’s tanks rumbled on along the *Panzerstrasse* (Panzer Route 2) toward Pruzhany, continuing their pursuit of the still shaken enemy without regard to their flanks, or the fact that the main body of the division’s armor was still to the rear.^{dexl} 18 Panzer encountered its first serious opposition that afternoon, when it was counterattacked by Soviet 14 Mechanized Corps, the armored reserve of 4 Army. In the ensuing three-hour *Panzerschlacht*, 36 enemy tanks were destroyed; within 48 hours, the Soviet

mechanized corps had lost half of its 500 tanks, while battling in vain against the superbly trained and experienced panzer troops.^{dexli}

(Barbarossa Unleashed, Section 6.2.1)

* * * *

1.7: Army Group North

1.7.1: Opposing Forces & Battle Plans

GFM Ritter von Leeb:

Bei Ausbruch des 2. Weltkrieges wurde er zum Oberbefehlshaber der Heeresgruppe C im Westen ernannt. Am 1. November 1939 wurde er offiziell zum Generaloberst befördert. Beim Westfeldzug durchbrach er mit der Heeresgruppe C die Maginotlinie und schloss dabei die französische Heeresgruppe 2 ein. Dabei machte er über 700.000 Gefangene. Für diese Leistung wurde ihm am 24. Juni 1940 mit dem Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes ausgezeichnet. Am 19. Juli 1940 wurde er zum Generalfeldmarschall befördert. Danach führte er bei Beginn des Ostfeldzuges die Heeresgruppe Nord beim Angriff aus Nordrussland. . . Weil er gegen die Belagerung von Leningrad war, bat er schriftlich um die Entbindung von seinem Kommando. Nachdem dieses zurückgeschickt wurde, erreichte er seine Absetzung in einem persönlichen Gespräch bei Adolf Hitler Mitte Januar 1942. Am 16. Januar 1942 wurde er offiziell von seinem Kommando entbunden. Er wurde nicht wieder im aktiven Dienst eingesetzt. 1944 wollte er in Bayern Landbesitz im Wert von 638.000 Reichsmark erwerben. Er erhielt das Land aber als Geschenk von Hitler. Am 2. Mai 1945 wurde durch die Alliierten in die Kriegsgefangenschaft genommen. Er wurde dann im so bezeichneten Prozess gegen das Oberkommando der Wehrmacht zu 3 Jahren Haft verurteilt. Diese waren durch die Kriegsgefangenschaft bereits verbüßt. So wurde er noch 1948 wieder freigelassen. Einer seiner Söhne ist im Osten gefallen, der älteste nach Rückkehr aus 5 1/2 Jahren russischer Kriegsgefangenschaft tödlich verunglückt. 1954 wurde er zum Großkanzler des Max-Joseph-Orden ernannt. Am 29. April 1956 ist er in Füssen gestorben. 4 Tage später wurde er in München beerdigt. (*Lexikon der Wehrmacht*)⁴²⁵

--The Northern Sector (terrain features):

. . . The Baltic region, across which von Leeb was to lead his forces, had only a few good roads upon which the German units could move, many of the off-road areas being swampy and thickly forested. The deeper one pressed into the region the thicker the forests became and the larger the areas of swamp. The culmination of the German northern attack would lead AGN to the region of the Valdai Hills between Moscow and Leningrad and on to Archangel. This whole area was extensively forested, marshy and *entirely unsuitable for armored warfare*. In addition to these terrain features, the German units also had to deal w/ a number of river obstacles blocking their line of advance. . .

(Brian Taylor, *Barbarossa to Berlin. A Chronology*... 13-14)

(**Note:** To the north of the main battlefield, Finnish Marshal Carl Mannerheim deployed **14** divisions (**500,000** men) in the Finnish sector. In **Jul 41**, he also was to begin an offensive on both sides of Lake Lagoda in conjunction w/ Leeb's efforts to take Leningrad. Finland, however, was to enter the war as a *co-belligerent*, and not as a German ally; its orders came from Mannerheim, not from Berlin.

⁴²⁵ **Note:** See "Lexikon" for his early career.

North of Mannerheim's divisions lay the Far North sector, where Nikolaus Falkenhorst's Army of Norway deployed **4** German divisions in two corps (about **67,000** men) in northern Norway and northern Finland. It also controlled a Finnish corps. The objective of the Army of Norway was to capture the Soviet port of Murmansk. It was supported by Luftwaffe Command Kirkenes (of Stumpff's 5 Air Fleet), which had only 70 acft.) (See, S.W. Mitcham, Jr., *Men of Barbarossa*, 49-50)

(**Note:** Von Leeb's frontage of attack was comparatively narrow and fell on the *entire Soviet 8 Army* but only on part of **11 Army**, the southern wing of **11 Army** having been included in the assault boundaries of the neighboring Army Group Center. . . The tactical grouping of [Leeb's] forces was not ideal. (For details see, Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 101-02)

--**22.4.41:** Das H.Gr.Kdo. Nord traf bereits am **22 Apr 41** in Ostpreussen ein u. richtete das erste Hauptquartier in Elbing ein. (W. Haupt, *Die 8. Panzer-Division im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 135)

--The strategic objective of AGN was Leningrad and the naval base of Kronstadt. The tactical prerequisite was the destruction of the Soviet forces in the Baltic States. Ultimately, the army group was to establish a junction w/ the Finnish forces astride Lake Ladoga. Leeb's sector measured only about **100 miles**, extending from the Suwalki triangle along the Neman River to the Baltic Sea. **OKH** had assigned **29** divisions to AGN. Another **2** divisions were held in **OKH reserve**. (For the mission of GFM Ritter v. Leeb's forces see, *Luttichau Manuscript*, "Road to Moscow," IV: 16-19)

--Advance of Army Group North followed the coast of the Baltic, through territory *Germanized* by the *Teutonic knights* and *Hanseatic traders* for **500** years; from it came many of the families which had officered the Prussian and German armies throughout history. *Manstein* and *Guderian* descended from landowners of those parts. (Keegan, *Second World War*, 182)

--AGN totaled 21 infantry, 3 panzer, 3 motorized divisions and 3 security divisions w/ another 2 divisions in OKH reserve. (Glantz, *Barbarossa 1941*, 216, f.n. 20; see also, *Schematische Kriegsgliederung*)

--GFM v. Leeb had been given the task of destroying the enemy in the Baltic States and of joining up w/ the Finns, and its final objective was Leningrad **500** miles away. (Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 101)

--Unlike Moscow, capturing Leningrad did figure prominently in *Barbarossa's* planning. Taking the USSR's second city would deprive the Soviets of a *huge industrial center*, a *massive naval base* and *control of the Baltic Sea*, while also giving Hitler a solid connection to Finland and possession of *Bolshevism's birthplace*. (Kirchubel, *Hitler's Panzer Armies*, 132)

--One of Leeb's advantages over Bock and Rundstedt was that he was *starting from long-held German territory, East Prussia, which had good military bases and an efficient transport system*. Meanwhile, unlike Pavlov and Kirponos, Kuznetsov was based *entirely on the "foreign" territory of the former Baltic States, w/ an unfriendly population*. It cannot have helped that the NKVD had begun a *mass deportation of "hostile elements"* from there on **14 Jun 41**. (Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 81)

--Operationsraum der H.Gr.Sued lag suedl. der unzugänglichen Pripjetsuempfe u. umschliesst die Stromgebiete des Dnjester – Bug⁴²⁶ – Dnjepr. Die Operationsziel der H.Gr. ist, mit Schwerpunkt auf linkem Fluegel, aus dem Raum Lublin in die tiefe Flanke u. den Ruecken des Feindes vor-gehen u. die russ. Kraefte entlang des Dnjepr aufrollen. Die H.Gr. eroberte Anfang **Jul 41** Galizien u. die Westukraine. (H. Steets, *Gebirgsjaeger bei Uman*, 11)

--GFM v. Leeb, 65, had to concern himself, at least at start of campaign, w/ a *relatively narrow front of about 175 miles along the Neman River*. AGN had limited resources, just one panzer group and two infantry armies. Gen. Fedor Kuznetsov, commander of Soviet Baltic Military District (renamed Northwest Front upon *outbreak of war*), was a *well-educated and experience commander* who had taught at the Military Academy and successfully commanded a corps in the Winter War w/ Finland. In 1941 he had three armies including, *near the frontier*, two mechanized corps w/ 500 tanks. On paper, Kuznetsov's defensive task *should have been easier than that of Pavlov or Kirponos*. His initial front was narrow, he did not have exposed salients like those at Belostok and L'voy, and his right flank was *covered by the Baltic*. The region offered several natural lines of defense. (Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 81)

--The *tactical grouping* of the German formations [of AGN] was *not ideal*. **4 PzGr** had only two panzer corps and both were forward side by side w/ *nothing in reserve* . . .⁴²⁷ The two infantry armies were to be fully committed side-by-side [i.e., in no depth] . . . It was, as the Chief of Staff of **4 PzGr** was to say, *the solution of a poor man*. Of the two infantry armies on the right and left of **4 PzGr**, one was to *clear the coastal area* while the other took Kaunas (Kovno) and then moved up to Daugavpils. (Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 102)

--In addition to the advantage of surprise the Germans had secured a *devastating superiority of numbers and firepower at the points selected for their armored penetrations* . . . In the north three Panzer divisions (over **600** tanks) and two infantry divisions had an attack frontage of less than 25 miles. Opposite them stood one weak Russian unit, the **125 RD**. (A. Clark, *Barbarossa. The Russian-German Conflict 1941-45*, 47-48)

--Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa (31.1.41):⁴²⁸ Fuer den Nordabschnitt der Ostfront war das bisherige H.Gr.Kdo. C (O.B. GFM Ritter v. Leeb) vorgesehen, das in der Aufmarschanweisung folgenden Auftrag erhielt:

4. Auftraege an die Heeresgruppen u. Armeen: . . .

c) *H.Gr.Nord* hat die Aufgabe, die im Baltikum kaempfenden feindlichen Kraefte zu vernichten u. durch Besetzen der baltischen Haefen, anschliessend durch Besetzung von Leningrad u. Kronstadt, der russischen Flotte ihre Stuetzpunkte zu entziehen. Zusammenwirken mit starken, von H.Gr.Mitte auf Smolensk vorzuetreibenden schnellen Kraeften wird vom **OKH** zeitgerecht veranlasst werden.

⁴²⁶ **Note:** What “Bug” River is meant here? Author writes: “Das **49 Geb.K.** durchbricht am **15 Jul 41** die Stalin-Linie bei Bar u. gewinnt am **18 Jul 41** den Brueckenkopf Winniza am Bug.” (11)

⁴²⁷ **Note:** According to OOB in *GSWW*, **4 PzGr** had **SS “T”** in reserve. Sixteenth Army had **253 ID** in reserve (Eighteenth Army had no reserves); while the army group itself had **3** divisions in reserve (**206, 251, 254 ID**). The OKH reserve by AGN embraced **86 ID** and *Polizei Div*. Finally, the “*Befehlshaber rueckw. Heeresgebiet 101*” comprised **3** security divisions.

⁴²⁸ **Note:** Here I've carved out the portion of the Army's Deployment Directive specifically addressing role of Army Group North.

Im Rahmen dieser Aufgabe durchbricht H.Gr.Nord die feindl. Front, Schwerpunkt in Richtung Dünaburg, u. treibt ihren starken rechten Fluegel – schnelle Truppen ueber die Duena hinaus – baldmoeglichst in den Bereich NO Opotschka vor mit dem Zweck, den Abmarsch kampfkraeftiger russ. Kraefte aus dem Baltikum nach Osten zu verhindern u. die Voraussetzung fuer weiteres rasches Vorgehen in Richtung Leningrad zu schaffen. . .

(Halder, Franz. *Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. II. Appendix 2, 467)

--Bei H.Gr.Nord war neben **20** Inf.Div. die **4 PzGr** (mit **3** Pz.Div. u. **3** mot.Div.) eingesetzt. Der Auftrag der Hr.Gr. lautet: Vernichtung der im Baltikum kaempfenden Feindkraefte, Besetzung der baltischen Haefen u. Eroberung von Leningrad u. Kronstadt. Dazu sollte die Pz.Gr. – der Infanterie vorausseilend – „raschest“ den Duena-Abschnitt Duenaburg – Jakobstadt gewinnen u. „dort zunaechst Brueckenkoefe bilden.“ „Das weitere Vorwaertsdraengen“ wuerde die Hr.Gr. spaeter befehlen, deren Auftrag aber „rasches Vordringen auf Leningrad“ war. Das war also ein Widerspruch in sich u. keine „Fahrkarte bis zur Endstation.“

Im Gegensatz zu der Feindlage vor den beiden anderen H.Gr. war hier nicht mit starken russ. Kraeften im Grenzgebiet zu rechnen, wohl aber mit hartem Widerstand hinter der Flusshindernis der Duena, sofern der Gegner hierzu noch Zeit fand. Es kam also darauf an, die Entfernung von etwa **300** km bis zur Duena schnell zu ueberwinden, um die Chance der Ueberraschung wahrzunehmen. Gen.Obst. Hoepner hielt das Ziel Duenaburg mit Recht fuer *so entscheidend wichtig*, dass selbst ein taktisches Risiko in Kauf zu nehmen war, wie sein damaliger Gen.St. Chef Chales de Beaulieu bezeugt. (Nehring, *Geschichte der Panzerwaffe*, 220-21)

--On the basis of its enemy estimate and the largely known fortifications and terrain, the Army High Command had calculated that the German forces in the attack sector of AGN would enjoy a *superiority over the Soviet forces facing them*. In the Baltic Special Military District, **29** Soviet infantry divisions, **4** cavalry divisions, **4** armored divisions, and **7** armored bdes had been identified, of which **18** infantry divisions, **1** armored division, and **4** armored bdes would oppose AGN; the rest would face AGC. . . It was assumed that the population in the countries to be freed from Soviet rule would be friendly. It was *uncertain whether the Baltic states would be defended at all*. Intelligence indicated that the strong frontier defense forces had been pulled back. It was thus all the more important to engage the bulk of the enemy forces rapidly while *still west of the Dvina River*. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV, 537)

--Leeb's mission was to advance along the Leningrad axis, destroy Soviet forces in the Baltic region, capture Lenin's namesake city and linkup w/ Finnish forces near Lake Lagoda. His army group consisted of Eighteenth and Sixteenth Armies and 4 Panzer Group with a total of **six army and two motorized corps**, backed up by three security divisions and an army corps in reserve. Col-Gen Eric Hoepner's panzer group . . . was to spearhead the army group's advance, while the two infantry armies, each w/ three army corps, were to advance on the flanks and in the wake of the advancing panzers. Leeb retained **23 AK** in army group reserve . . . (Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 42-43)

-- Mission H.Gr.Nord: Der Schwerpunkt dieser H.Gr. liegt bei der **4 PzGr** mit zwei A.K. (mot.), dem **41 PzK** u. dem **56 PzK**. Die rechte Flanke wird von der **16 Armee** gedeckt, die ueber Kowno auf Dünaburg angesetzt ist, u. die linke von der **18 Armee**, die ueber Mitau auf Riga marschiert. Die **4 PzGr** soll schnell gegen die Duena bei u. unterhalb Dünaburg vorgehen, um die Duenauebergaenge fuer ein weiteres Vorgehen in Richtung Opotschka in die Hand zu bekommen. Sie soll den Rueckzug kampffahiger Truppen in die Weite des russ. Raumes verhindern u.

so die Voraussetzungen fuer ein weiteres Vorgdringen in Richtung Leningrad schaffen. (Reinhardt, 122) (G. Dieckhoff, 3. *Infanterie-Division*, 91)

--The **65**-year-old GFM Wilhelm Ritter v. Leeb led the German attack in the north. He had to concern himself, at least at the start of the campaign, w/ a realatively narrow front of about **175** miles along the Neman River. . . Army Group North had limited resources – just one panzer group and two infantry armies. . . Leeb was faced by General Fedor Kuznetsov, who commanded the forces of the Soviet Baltic Military District, renamed the Northwestern Army Group [Front] on outbreak of war. Kuznetsov was a well-educated and experienced cdr who had taught at the Military Academy and successfully commanded a corps in the Winter War w/ Finland. In 1941, he had three [**3**] armies including, near the frontier, two [**2**] mech. corps w/ **500** tanks. On paper, Kuznetsov’s defensive task should have been easier than that of Pavlov or Kirponos. His initial front was narrow, he did not have exposed salients like those at Belostok and L’vov, and his right flank was covered by the Baltic. The region offered several natural lines of defense. The Neman River and its tributaries lay along the border or just behind it. Some **150** miles further back was the Dvina River, where the Tsarist armies had held out for two [**2**] years in 1915-17. A further **150** miles to the east was Lake Chud (Lake Peipus) and the Narva and Velikaia Rivers, on the line of the old border between the USSR and Estonia and Latvia. (E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 81)

--**Versorgung der H.Gr. Nord**: Doch genau wie zur See⁴²⁹ waren auf dem Lande die “Wuerfel gefallen.” Das ostpreussische Land wurde in diesen Naechten vom Geraeusch der Panzermotore, vom Stampfen der Hufe u. vom Tappen vieler Soldatenstiefel erfuellt. Die H.Gr. Nord vollendete am **18.6.41** ihren Aufmarsch. Die Divisionen schlossen enger an die Grenze heran. **50** Kraftwagenkolonnen u. **10** mot. Nachschubkompanien schafften in diesen Naechten Munition, Lebensmittel u. Geraet nach vorn. Die Versorgung fuer die Heeresgruppe war in zwei grossen Abschnitten aufgeteilt, die jeweils von einem dem Generalquartiermeister unterstelltem Nachschubfuehrer geleitet wurden.

Der Versorgungsraum Nord (Tilsit) verfuegte ueber:

14.949 to. Munition
18.435 to. Verpflegung
19.671 cmb. Betriebsstoff

Der Versorgungsraum Sued (Gumbinnen) hatte zur Verfuegung:

12.854 to. Munition
26.223 to. Verpflegung
20.228 cbm. Betriebsstoff

Ferner gehoerten zu jedem Versorgungsbezirk Pionier-, Infanterie-, Artillerie-, Nachrichten- u. Geraeteparks. Sanitaets- u. Veterinaerbasen waren in Königsberg eingerichtet. Die Grosstransportraeume fuer Munition, Verpflegung u. Betriebsstoff lagen in den Raeumen westl. Königsberg – Elbing – Mohrunen.

(W. Haupt, *Heeresgruppe Nord*, 20-22)

--Army Group North: This army group, on the left wing of assembled German forces and the smallest of the three, was commanded by 65-year-old Field Marshal Ritter von Leeb. It comprised 20 infantry, three panzer, and three motorized divisions – 26 in all, organized into two

⁴²⁹ **Note:** This section of Haupt’s book begins w/ a rather detailed—and interesting—discussion of the activities of both sides in the Baltic Sea (mining & mine-sweeping activities, movements of submarines, etc.). Rarely see this kind of information.

armies (16 and 18) and the 4 Panzer Group^{dexlii} – deployed in East Prussia along a narrow, ca. 300 kilometer front. Commanded by Panzer General Erich Hoepner, 4 Panzer Group had approximately 600 tanks^{dexliii} divided among its three armored divisions. The mission (*Auftrag*) of Army Group North, as laid out in the final, definitive version of the OKH deployment directive, dated 8 June 1941,^{dexliv} was to eliminate enemy forces in the Baltic region, occupy the Baltic ports and, ultimately, to deprive Soviet naval forces of their key bases by seizing Kronstadt and Leningrad. To support the mission of Leeb's army group, mobile forces were eventually to be brought up from Army Group Center. Providing air support for Army Group North was the relatively tiny 1 Air Fleet, with only 211 operational bombers and 167 combat-ready fighters.^{dexlv} As John Keegan has pointed out, this army group's axis of advance was to take it through territory which had been Germanized by the Teutonic knights and the Hanseatic traders for 500 years; moreover, from the Baltic region had come many of the families which had "officered the Prussian and German armies throughout their history. Manstein and Guderian, who were to win Hitler his greatest eastern victories, descended from landowners of those parts."^{dexlvi} (*Barbarossa Unleashed*, 178-79)

--Luttichau's observations:

The *strategic objective* of AGN was Leningrad and the naval base of Kronshtadt [sp?]. The tactical prerequisite was the destruction of Soviet forces in the Baltic states. Ultimately, the army group, commanded by GFM Wilhelm Ritter von Leeb, 64, was to establish a junction w/ the Finnish forces astride Lake Ladoga. Leeb's sector measured only about **100** miles, extending from the Suwalki triangle along the Nemen River to the Baltic Sea. . .

In his final operational directive, Leeb ordered his forces to break through the opposing Soviet armies and, w/ the panzer group in the van, force the Dvina River between Daugavpils (Dvinsk) and the Rembate area, some 35 miles west of Riga. Next, the army group, again spearheading its drive w/ the panzer group, was to press on rapidly toward the NE, the main body circling Lake Peipus on the south to prevent a withdrawal of Soviet combat units from the Baltic, and exploit toward Leningrad.

(*Road to Moscow*, IV:16-17)

--Baltic Special Military District forces: Leeb's strong and experienced force faced Col-Gen F.I. Kuznetsov's Baltic Special Military District, which became Northwestern Front at outbreak of war, w/ responsibility for defending the NW strategic axis and the approaches to Leningrad. Kuznetsov's *front*, the *weakest of the three deployed along the western border*, consisted of three armies and two mechanized corps. Lieu-tenant-Generals P.P. Sobennikov's **8 Army** and V.I. Morozov's **11 Army**, supported by Major-Generals A.V. Kurkin's and N.M. Shestopalov's **3** and **12 Mechanized Corps**, formed Kuznetsov's first echelon, and Major-General M.E. Berzarin's **27 Army** was in the *front's second echelon*. Powerful on paper, Kuznetsov's forces suffered from the same debilitating deficiencies that plagued the entire Red Army on the eve of war and were only *partially reorganized, trained and equipped*. . . (Glantz, *Barbarossa 1941*, 43)

--Northwest Front: Col.-Gen. F.I. Kuznetsov's Baltic Military District had **370,000** men w/ **7,019** guns and mortars, **1549** tanks (**1274** operational) and **1344** acft (**1150** operational).⁴³⁰ However, many of the men of the front were recently inducted reserves and *press-ganged units* of the

⁴³⁰ **Note:** See also, Glantz, *Barbarossa 1941*, 216.

former Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian armies. . . . In all, Kuznetsov had at his disposal **19** rifle, **4** tank, and **2** mechanized divisions. These units were deployed forward against the frontier and had only *light fortifications facing the German border*. No reserves were available to speak of close to the battle zone. (Brian Taylor, *Barbarossa to Berlin. A Chronology...* 16-17; Glantz, *Barbarossa 1941*, 216, f.n. 23)

--F.I. Kuznetsov, cdr of Baltic Special Military District, only had two armies, the 8 and 11 Armies. They were correctly estimated by the Germans to have a strength of about **20** divisions and **2** mechanized corps, but this total included a number of divisions of the old Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian Armies which had been incorporated into the Red Army a year earlier. These, the Germans believed, *would be unlikely to give a good account of themselves*. (Seaton, *Russo-German War* 101)

--Deployment of Northwestern Front:

As for Kuznetsov (the ground general rather than the naval admiral), I have seen *no attempts by him to re-deploy his troops rearward secretly, since most of his divisions were already laagered in the rear, with one or several battalions forward in accordance with his military district's defense plan*. See Appendix B in *Stumbling Colossus* for the Baltic Military District's defense plan. The other defense plans were published in *VIZh* [Military-historical journal] back in the 1990s (together with other mobilization documents).⁴³¹

(Email, D. Glantz to C. Luther, 10 July 2017)

--The *forward Red Army dispositions were known to the Germans*. [See text for details of German intelligence on Kuznetsov's *front*.] Von Leeb's frontage of attack was *comparatively narrow* and fell on the entire 8 Army but only on part of Soviet **11 Army**, the southern wing of **11 Army** having been included in the assault boundaries of AGC. Von Leeb intended that **4 PzGr** should make the main attack along the center line of the German army group, w/ Eighteenth Army on its left and Sixteenth Army on its right following along behind. **4 PzGr's right** was formed by von Manstein's **56 PzK**, which, attacking on a *very narrow front*, had only *one fair road for its three divisions*. Von Manstein had to move **200** miles direct to the Dvina at Daugavpils (Dünaburg). Reinhardt's **41 PzK**, which had two panzer divisions as against von Manstein's one, was to move on the left on a *much broader front* ready to engage Soviet **3** and **12 Mech Corps** which were believed to be on the left flank, before advancing on the Dvina near Krustpils⁴³² (Jacobstadt). (Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 101)

--Kuznetsov Attempts to Enhance Force Readiness:

On **15 Jun 41** district cdrs received permission from the NKO and General Staff to *shift forces from deep in the district to positions further forward IAW existing defense plans*. Some deployed by rail, but most did so on foot and at night in

⁴³¹ **Note:** In some of the German war diary accounts (**22 Jun 41**) for sector of Army Group North, speculation that bulk of Red Army forces in Baltic Special Military District—starting about **18 Jun 41**—had been quietly pulled from the frontier to locations inside the interior; and this was why most of the fighting appeared to have involved Soviet border guards and/or rearguards, but not the main Red Army forces. Glantz throws a big bucket of *cold water* on this idea! See also the defense plans for the Baltic Special Military District (directly below), which make clear that Kuznetsov's forces were to vigorously defend along the line of the state borders.

⁴³² **Note:** This town cited as **Jekabpils** on map in *GSWW*.

order to maintain secrecy. During this movement the NKO categorically *prohibited military district cdrs from redeploying first echelon forces or improving their forward defenses*.

At least one brave military district cdr *violated these instructions*. On **15 Jun 41**, General F.I. Kuznetsov, Baltic Special Military District cdr, alarmed by intelligence reports that described a threatening enemy buildup along the border, issued a lengthy order *increasing force readiness along the border*. Without specifically mentioning the German offensive preparations, Kuznetsov criticized specific division cdrs for laxness and sloppiness in maintaining combat readiness: "Today, as never before, we must be fully combat ready. Many commanders do not understand this. But all must firmly and clearly understand that at any moment we must be ready to fulfill any combat mission." Kuznetsov then ordered cdrs to implement specific passive measures [?] to improve combat readiness and defenses. . . [See text]

Finally, on **18 Jun 41**, after receipt on [the day before] of a lengthy, detailed, and threatening intelligence summary, Kuznetsov ordered his forces to *full military readiness*. The order . . . specifically mandated full combat readiness on the part of district air defense, signal, and ground transport systems, instructed **8** and **11** Army cdrs to prepare engineer bridging and minelaying, and provided instructions to all other force cdrs to make appropriate defensive preparations. Despite these courageous actions on Kuznetsov's part, there is no evidence that the additional preparations made any difference in district combat performance when war began.

(D. Glantz, *Stumbling Colossus*, 105)

--Soviet Dispositions vs. German Intelligence: Glantz discusses what the Germans knew versus actual Red Army dispositions in Baltic Military District. German intelligence determined that the approaches into the Baltic Military District were defended by two Soviet armies, the **8th** and the **11th**. German intelligence, however, *failed to detect the rifle corps within those armies*, but did determine the identity of the rifle divisions deployed along the border and in the depth. They also detected Soviet armored units, including three tank bdes near Salantai, and a tank division located at Kedenai. . . Whereas German intelligence had determined that upwards of **9** Soviet rifle divisions were deployed in the BMD, in fact, there were *roughly half that number* present on **22 Jun 41**. [Glantz speaks of a German *intelligence gap*.] . . . In general terms, German intelligence did not pick up the existence of **12 MC's** two tank divisions. They did, however, detect existence of the **3 MC's 2** and **5 TD** located further south.

The rifle divisions of the BMD averaged roughly **8700** men each, when mobilized. In other words, they began operations in **Jun 41** at about **60%** strength. Most of the divisions had their full complement of artillery, but the majority were short on trucks; most of these trucks and vehicles had been used to create mechanized corps and for other purposes. The general deployment of rifle forces was a single echelon configuration. The two rifle corps, **10th** and **11th**, were positioned *side-by-side*. The **10 RC** had its two divisions deployed forward, although the bulk of the troops of those divisions were in lagers, or camps, on the morning of **22 Jun 41**. The **10 RD** had all its rgt. in camps on line across the front at a depth of about **10-15** km, w/ scattered elements from

coy to btl. strength actually deployed along the border. This amounted to roughly an **80-km front** for the division.⁴³³ (Glantz, ed., *Initial Period of the War*, 79-85)

--The *main Soviet defenses* along the border were manned by **10 border guards detachments**, whose positions ran the entire length of the border. Apparently, there were no *ukreplennyi rayon* (fortified regions) present [i.e., along the *Siauliai axis*]. . . The **90 RD** and **125 RD** deployed w/ elements of two rgts. forward and one rgt. in the rear.⁴³⁴ On night of **21/22 Jun 41**, several hours before German attack, General Sobennikov [8 Army] ordered his **11 RC** commander to move the **48 RD**, which had been located north of Siauliai, southward into positions behind **125 RD**. That movement was in progress at time of German attack. . . [See text for more details.] (Glantz, ed., *Initial Period of the War*, 85)

--**27 Army**. Commanded by Maj.-Gen. N. Berzarin. Not a covering army. Understrength. Advanced to the Dvina. (J. Erickson, *The Soviet High Command*, 589)

--**12 Mech Corps**. This corps [two tank divisions and one mechanized division] viewed by both the *front* and army cdrs as the *principal front counterattack force*. Glantz describes its forces in detail, noting that the corps “totally lacked KVs and T34 tanks.” [See text.] (Glantz, ed., *Initial Period of the War*, 85)

--**3 Mech Corps**. Hq. was further south near Kaunas. This corps had to split its attention in two directions—looking westward toward Raseinai and southward toward Alytus on the Neman River. It also had two tank and one mechanized division. This corps appears to have had a fair number of KVs and T34s. [See text for more details.] (Glantz, ed., *Initial Period of the War*, 85)

--Correlation of Armor / BMD vs. AGN: 631 German to 1393 (109)⁴³⁵ Soviet tanks = **1:2.2**. (Glantz, ed., *Initial Period of the War*, 86)

--Baltic Special Military District / Defense Plans: On 14 May 41, Kuznetsov, Cdr. Baltic Special Military District received following order signed by Timoshenko and Zhukov: “*People’s Commissariat of Defense Planning Directive*, 14 May 1941. Top Secret: Special Importance. . . To the Commander of Baltic Special Military District Forces . . .

With the aim of covering the mobilization, concentration, and deployment of Baltic Special Military District forces, by 30 May 1941, *you* personally, w/ the chief of staff and chief of the Operational Directorate of the district staff, will work out (a) a detailed plan for the defense of the state borders of the Latvian SSR from Palanga to excl. [exclusive] Kapchiamiestis and a plan for the anti-amphibious defense of the Baltic Sea coast southward from the Matsalu Gulf and the Islands of Dago and Ezel’; and (b) a detailed plan for antiaircraft defense.

I. DEFENSIVE MISSIONS

⁴³³ **Note:** Soviet **10 RC (10 and 90 RD)** would face German Eighteen Army and Reinhardt’s **41 PzK**. Soviet **11 RC (125 and 48 RD)** would face Sixteenth Army and Manstein’s **48 PzK**. See, map on p. 82 for overview.

⁴³⁴ **Note:** From maps on pp. 82, 84, 88-89, it appears both Reinhardt’s & Manstein’s attacks hit full force on **125 RD** of **11 RC**.

⁴³⁵ **Note:** **109** = KV and T34s.

1. Do not permit violation of district territory, by either an air or land enemy.
2. Firmly cover the mobilization, concentration, and deployment of district forces by *obstinate defense of fortifications along the line of the frontier*. . .

II. ORGANIZE DEFENSE OF THE STATE BORDERS, WHILE GUIDED BY THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Establish as the basis of the defense a *stubborn defense of existing **fortified regions and field fortifications** along the line of the frontiers* w/ the use of all forces and capabilities . . .

The defense must be active in nature. Quickly liquidate any enemy attempts to penetrate the defense by counterattacks w/ corps and Army reserves.

2. Devote special attention to antitank defense. . .

3. Consider the following axes as especially crucial: (a) Memel', Tel'shiai; (b) Til'zit, Shiauliai; (c) Gumbinen, Kaunas; and (d) Suvalki, Olita. . .

IV. HAVE [CREATE] THREE COVERING REGIONS TO FULFILL [YOUR] ASSIGNED MISSION

Covering Region No. 1—**27th Army** [see text for details]

Covering Region No. 2—**8th Army** [same]

Covering Region No 3—**11th Army** [same]

[Note: See text for rest of this six page order.]

In response, Kuznetsov's Baltic Special Military District had, by **2 Jun 41**, promulgated a district "covering plan," which embraced following:⁴³⁶

Baltic Special Military District Covering Plan, 2 June 1941

TOP SECRET: SPECIAL IMPORTANCE. Copy No. 1.

"I approve:" People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR, Marshal of the Soviet Union S. Timoshenko, June 1941.

Plan for Covering the Territory of the Baltic Special Military District During the Period of Mobilization, Concentration, and Deployment of District Forces (Map 1:500.000 scale)

I. CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT ENEMY CAPABILITIES

. . . The most probable operational axes for the enemy will be (a) Til'zit – Shiauliai – Riga (or Shiauliai – Daugavpils) w/ a secondary axis to Memel' and Tel'shiai or Memel' and Shiaulia for subsequent operations. . . [See text for more details.]

II. COVERING MISSIONS

⁴³⁶ **Note:** In reading through this "covering plan," one is struck by how much was do be done, but how little, in many cases, was actually done before 22 June 1941.

1. Do not permit violation of Baltic Special Military District territory by either enemy land or naval forces.

2. Repel the enemy offensive by stubborn defense *along the line of the frontier in the positions of existing **fortified regions***, and protect mobilization, concentration, and deployment of district forces. . .

5. Gain air superiority and destroy and retard concentration and deployment of enemy forces by strikes against railroad junctions, bridges, staging yards, and force groupings. . .

IV. THE ORDER FOR COVERING THE BORDER SECTOR . . .

Organize Army covering regions (RP) to cover the district border (coastal) sector.

COVERING REGION No. 1—27th Army [See text for details.]

COVERING REGION No. 2—8th Army

Defense of the state border along the front from Palanga to the Nemen River. Boundaries . . . [see text for details]

The chief of the **RP** is the **8th Army** commander. The RP headquarters is in Bubiai (15 km SW of Shiauliai) . . .

Missions:

a. Firmly cover the Memel' – Tel'shiai – Til'zit – Taurage – Shiauliai axes by defensive field fortifications along the line of the state border and the existing ***Tel'shiai and Shiauliai Fortified Regions***.

b. Prepare for a counterattack by **12th Mechanized Corps** . . . and four rifle divisions along the axes: Shiauliai – Memel'; Shiauliai – Til'zit' and Shiauliai – Sredniki – Pil'vishkiai. . .

RP 2 consists of two covering sectors.

COVERING SECTOR 1. [10 Rifle Corps]

Covering missions:

a. Organize the sector's defense based upon the permanent fortifications of the ***Tel'shiai Fortified Region*** . . .

COVERING SECTOR 2. [11 Rifle Corps]

Missions:

a. Organize the defense of the sector based on the permanent fortifications of the ***Shiauliai Fortified Region*** and the forward defensive positions by forward units; prevent an enemy penetration on Shiauliai or along the Nemen River to the east.

b. Finish outfitting and fortify a defensive belt in the border sector; especially firmly fortify and create a strong antitank defense along the Til'zit – Shiauliai road.

c. Mass artillery fire on the Taurage axis and unite command and control on the Pauris – Saltyniki – Taurage – Til'zit axes in the hands of the Army chief of artillery. . .

Occupy positions in the entire Army sector from the first day. . .

COVERING REGION No. 3—11th Army

Defense of the border from the Neman River to Kapchiamiestis. Boundaries are:
[see text for details]

The chief of **RP 3** is the **11th Army** commander. The headquarters is in Kaunas.

Missions:

a. Organize a defense of field fortifications along the line of the state border and the existing ***Kovno and Olita Fortified Regions*** and firmly cover the Gumbinen – Kaunas and Kaunas – Suvalki – Alitus axes.

b. In the event of an incursion by a large enemy force, prepare a counterstroke w/ the forces of the **3rd Mechanized Corps** . . . and four or five rifle divisions and aviation in the direction of Shiauliai, from Kaunas to Mariampol’ and Simno, and to the south along the right back of the Nemen River to destroy the penetrating enemy . . .

Until the arrival of **29th Rifle Corps** headquarters, **RP 3** will consist of three covering sectors. . .

COVERING SECTOR 1. The sector chief is the **16th Rifle Corps** commander. The Hq. is at Iura. The sector boundaries are . . . [see text]

Missions:

a. Organize a defense along the front of the existing sector of the ***Kovno Fortified Region***, having concentrated the main strength along the front Naumiėtis – Vyshtynets and while firmly holding on to the Shaki region.

b. Mass artillery fire in the direction of Shirvind and prepare concentrated fire of not fewer than 150 guns on the front . . . [see text]

COVERING SECTOR 2. The sector chief is the **126th Rifle Division** commander. The sector Hq. is in Kalvarija. The boundaries are . . .

Missions:

a. Organize a defense along the front of the existing ***Olita Fortified Region*** and prevent enemy incursion from the Suvalki region in the direction of Mariampol’ – Kaunas.

b. Prepare the sector to repel attacks by large masses of enemy tanks, having created antitank obstacles extensively exploiting the swampy terrain.

c. Have the main mass of artillery in the right flank sector and in the center.

COVERING SECTOR 3. The sector chief is the **128th Rifle Division** commander. . .

Missions:

a. Organize a defense along the front of the existing ***Olita Fortified Region*** and protect the Olita axis. . .

[Note: See text for rest of this very long and detailed order.]

Commander of Baltic Special Military District forces, Col.-Gen. Kuznetsov
Member of the Baltic Special Military District Council Corps, Commissar
Dibrova
Chief of Staff of the Baltic Special Military District, Lt.-Gen. Klenov.

No 0030, **2 Jun4 1941**. Prepared by Maj.-Gen. Trukhin in two copies. . .

(For more details see, D. Glantz, *Stumbling Colossus*, Appendix B, “Red Army Defense Plans,” 270-88)

1.7.2: General Information / Overview of Events

--In the first days, AGN w/ three armies struck into the Baltic States, overrunning Lithuania in a few days, crossing the river Dvina at several places, and controlling most of Latvia by the end of the first week of **Jul 41**. (Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, 265)

--The army group advanced out of East Prussia along a narrow front. . . Leeb's forces ripped apart partially-manned Soviet defenses and plunged deep into Soviet territory, pre-empting Soviet defense plans and generating chaos in the Red Army's ranks. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 43)

--Manstein, leading **56 PzK**, would advance 320 km from 22-26 Jun 41. (*Oxford Companion to WWII*, 560)

--Deepest advance of the day made by Manstein's corps, which had crossed the East Prussian frontier at dawn and captured the bridge at Airogola, over the Dubisa gorge, before sundown – a forward leap of over 50 miles. (*A. Clark, Barbarossa*, 49)

--Army Group North struck into the Baltic States, overrunning *Lithuania* in a few days, crossing the *Dvina* at several places, and controlling most of *Latvia* by the end of the first week of July. (*G. Weinberg, Global History of WWII*, 265)

--**17.-21.6.41** (Tagebuch GFM Ritter von Leeb):

17.6.41:

[K]⁴³⁷ Allenstein 4 PzGr Gen.Obst. Hoepner, **41 PzK** Reinhardt, Bartenstein; **16 Armee** (Busch), **28 AK** (Wiktorin) **23 [AK]** Schubert.

19.6.41:

[K] Nachmittags in Danzig mit Griessenbeck.⁴³⁸

[In footnote: „Ritter v. Leeb besichtigte in Danzig den Hafen, das Zeughaus, die Marienkirche u. das Rathaus.“]

21.6.41:

[K] Nach Moorbad Waldfrieden, **14 km** noerdl. Insterburg.

[In footnote: „Vermerk Frhr. v. Griessenbeck: ‚**8.00** Uhr Abfahrt mit OB von Elbing ueber Danzig – Insterburg nach ‚*Walküre*‘ – Dort Ankunft **11.00** Uhr. – Einrichten des Buero etc. Um **16.00** Uhr erfuhr ich, dass es morgens **3.05** Uhr ‚feierlich‘ wird. – Ab **20.00** Uhr kein Aufschub mehr moeglich!“ – Fall XII, NOKW-1653⁴³⁹ (KTB Abschnittsstab Ostpreussen, Eintragung zum **21 Jun 41**):

⁴³⁷ **Note:** I don't possess beginning of Leeb's diary, so not sure what this means. I believe it signifies that any text following a "[K]" was prepared by someone other than Leeb.

⁴³⁸ **Note:** "Griessenbeck" must have been on GFM v. Leeb's staff; perhaps ordnance officer?

⁴³⁹ **Note:** This document appears to be from a legal case at the Nuremburg trials.

„Vorm. Fuehrungsabteilung trifft auf dem **Gef.Std. Waldfrieden** (*‚Walküre‘*) ein. **11.05** Uhr Eingang des Stichwortes *‚Dortmund.‘* **12.00** Uhr OB trifft auf dem Gef.Std. ein.“

(W. Ritter v. Leeb & G. Meyer, *Generalfeldmarschall Wilhelm Ritter von Leeb: Tagebuchaufzeichnungen u. Lagebeurteilungen*, 274)

--**21.6.41**: Die Funk- u. Fernsprechstellen der H.Gr. hoerten am **21 Jun 41** gegen **13.00** Uhr das Stichwort *‚Düsseldorf.‘* Kommandeure, Adjutanten u. Ordonnanzoffiziere sahen sich sekundenlang an, dann hoben sie die Hand an den Stahlhelm. Befehle wurden gegeben, Wachoffiziere nahmen die Hoerer der Feldfernsprecher auf, die Kraeder der Meldefahrer sprangen an, die Ordonnanzen stoben mit ihren Pferden davon. Der Befehl war da! Der Befehl, der alle Unruhe der letzten Tage u. Wochen mit einem Schlage ausloeschte. Der Befehl, der die Gewissheit brachte: Krieg mit der Sowjetunion! [See text for rest of this dramatic account.] (W. Haupt, *Heeresgruppe Nord*, 22)

--**22./23.6.41** (Tagebuch GFM Ritter v. Leeb):

22.6.41:

Beginn des Angriffs. Alle Vorbereitungen sind planmaessig verlaufen.

3.05 auf ganzer H.Gr. Front Grenze ueberschritten.

8.00 Vormittags. Truppen sind zunaechst nicht auf ernsthaften Widerstand gestossen. Gegner verteidigt Grenze nicht unmittelbar. Vormittags zu **4 PzGr**. Gen.Obst. Hoepner, Pogegen: **56 PzK** hat Gegend Jubarkas u. noerdl. erreicht, ungewiss, ob weiter ostw. staerkerer Feindwiderstand. **41 PzK** hat mit **6 PD** Szeszuwa ueberschritten, mit **1 PD** an Tauroggen heran, rechnet mit staerkerem Feindwiderstand am Wald NO Tauroggen.

Dann zum **1 AK Both** ostw. Koadjuthen; hat mit drei Div. Jura erreicht; ob an der Jura starker Widerstand ist fraglich, baut sich zum Angriff auf. Unterwegs [den] OB [der] **18 Armee**, v. Kuechler, getroffen, bedauert, dass Gegner anscheinend ausweicht.

13.00 wieder in Waldfrieden: rechter Fluegel **16 Armee** (**2 AK**) etwa **12** km vorwaertsgekommen. Flieger melden bei Mariampole u. Pilviskiaj rueckgaengige Bewegungen. **56 PzK** hat mit **8 PD** bei Skirsnemune nach Norden abgedreht. **291 ID** naehert sich Darbenai.

18.30 **16 Armee** rechter Fluegel vor Mariampole. **4 PzGr** hat Dubysa bei Seredzius u. Ariogala [sic] erreicht. Bruecken unversehrt. **18 Armee** rechter Fluegel ueber Jura, **291 ID** naehert sich mit V.A. Skuodas.

[. . .]

Beurteilung der Lage durch OB:

Der Gegner stand auf der gesamten Front der H.Gr. in Grenznaehe nicht mit starken Kraeften, sondern offensichtlich nur mit Nachhuten. Ueber den Verbleib der Masse seiner Truppen besteht keine Klarheit.⁴⁴⁰

Dementsprechend sind die eigenen Armeen, unter Ueberwindung feindl. Widerstandes u. von Gelaendeschwierigkeiten (Wegeverhaeltnisse), weit voraus. Im grossen scheint der Gegner nicht ueberrascht gewesen zu sein, weil er die Masse seiner Truppen offensichtlich zurueckgenommen hat. Dagegen ist er wohl oertlich da u. dort durch die fruehe Zeit des Angriffs ueberrascht worden. Besonders bedeutungsvoll ist es, dass es der **4 PzGr** gelungen ist, trotz hartnaeckigen Widerstandes der Russen bei Taugoggen heute schon bis an die Jura vorzustossen u. die Bruecken ueber die Dubysa bei Seredzius u. Ariogala unversehrt in die Hand zu bekommen, so dass mit weiterem raschen Vorwaertskommen in ostw. Richtung am morgigen Tage gerechnet werden darf. . .

23.6.41:

Zweiter Tag. Nach den bis **7.00** Uhr morgens eingelaufenen Meldungen ist H.Gr. weiter vorwaertsgekommen. Bei **16 Armee** Mariampole genommen . . . **1 AK** ueber Jura, **291 ID** Skuodas.

Zu **AOK 16** Trakehnen, an **9.30**: Strasse Mariampole – Kowno – Jonava mit zurueckmarschierender Kolonne bedeckt.⁴⁴¹ Flieger werden angesetzt. . .

Weiterfahrt ueber Ebenrode – Schirwindt – Lindenhof [?]⁴⁴² zu Gen.Kdo. **28 AK** General Wiktorin. Unterwegs Luftkampf. Mehrere russ. Flieger stuerzen brennend ab (zu Hause erfahre ich, **16**). General Wiktorin: *gestrige Kaempfe zaeh, 10 Offiziere tot*, ausser einer feindl. Inf.Div. auch Kav.Div. vor der Front. Will in das Waldgelaende vorstossen, um festzustellen, ob starker Feind dort.

H.Gr. laesst mir melden, dass starke Panzerbewegungen von Jonava auf Kedainiai (**380!**), von Norden auf Rossienie u. gegen die Front des **1 AK** im Gange. Flieger bei Luftflotte 1 angefordert u. zugesagt. . .

Feindl. Panzerbewegungen scheinen *nicht so heftig zu sein, als es zunaechst aussah*. . .⁴⁴³

Abendmeldung:

⁴⁴⁰ **Note:** Tagesmeldung H.Gr. Nord Ia Nr. 3754/41 geh. vom 22. Juni, Ziffer 1: "Auf Grund von Gefangenaussagen, Aussagen von Landeseinwohnern u. vorgefundenem Briefmaterial muss angenommen werden, dass der Feind *vor etwa vier Tagen die starken Grenzverteidigungskraefte unter Zuruecklassen von Nachhuten zurueckgezogen hat*. Wo sich die Masse dieser Kraefte befinden, ist z.Zt. noch unklar. . ." [See text for more details.]

⁴⁴¹ **Note:** Appears to be more confirmation of fact that Russians pulling back before Army Group North, vice accepting battle at the frontier. However, at same time (see final paragraph of this entry) massive Red Army tank forces moving up to engage!

⁴⁴² **Note:** Question mark in brackets in original text.

⁴⁴³ **Note:** Major tank battle began the next day (**24.6.41**). GFM v. Leeb: "**16.00** erfahre ich mitgehorte Funkspruch der **6 PD**: Panzerschlacht im Gange. . . Feindl. Panzer, vermutlich der **2 [TD]** u. weitere Kraefte, stiessen gegen unsere **6 PD** vor. . ." (278-79)

16 Armee: V.A. naehert sich Kowno . . .
4 PzGr: vor Kedainiai, im Besitz von Rossienie – Kelme.
18 Armee: Silale – Rietavas. Aufklaerung naehert sich Libau.

Gesamteindruck: Kampf mit Nachhuten. Nicht unwahrscheinlich, dass Gegner Kampf um Zeitgewinn fuehrt u. hinter der Duena sich erneut aufbaut. Auch rueckgaengige Bewegungen von Wilna nach NO deuten darauf.

Beurteilung der Lage durch OB:

Das Bild von gestern hat sich bestaetigt, naemlich, dass der Gegner sich auch heute nicht zum Kampf gestellt hat. . . Im Gegensatz zu diesem Bild sind aber vor der Front der Pz.Gr. u. dem rechten Fluegel der **18 Armee** starke Panzerkraefte aufgetreten, die er aus der Gegend von Jonava ueber Kedainiai u. aus der Gegend um Schaulen herangezogen hat. Es koenne dies die **2** u. **5** [TD] u. die eine oder andere mot.-mech. Brigade sein. . .

Vielleicht ist sein Zweck nur, unseren Vormarsch, besonders den der Pz.Gr., zu verzoegern. . .

Eigene Lage:

Besonders markant: Die Bildung eines Brueckenkopfes bei Vilkija ueber den Njemen durch das **10 AK** u. das Herankommen der Vorausabtlg. der **16 Armee**.

(W. Ritter v. Leeb & G. Meyer, *Generalfeldmarschall Wilhelm Ritter von Leeb: Tagebuchaufzeichnungen u. Lagebeurteilungen*, 275-78)

--22.6.41: Barbarossa faengt an!

Noch wallte Fruehdunst ueber die Waelder, Wiesen u. Taeler, als am **22 Jun 41, 3.05 Uhr**, die deutschen Geschuetze ihre Feuerschluende oeffneten, um Eisen u. Tod nach Russland hineinzutragen. Der Feuerschlag an der **120 km breiten Front**⁴⁴⁴ der Heeresgruppe dauerte nur wenige Minuten. Dann erhoben sich die Infanteristen u. Pioniere aus ihren Deckungen u. stuermten ueber die Grenze einem unbekannten Feind entgegen.

Gleichzeitig war die Luft erfuellt vom Gedroehne deutscher Flugzeuge, die ihren Weg nach Osten nahmen. Die Luftflotte 1 startete mit **270** Kampf- u. **110** Jaegerflugzeugen.⁴⁴⁵ Ihre Aufgaben waren die Vernichtung sowjet. Stuetzpunkte, Flugzeuge u. Verkehrswege zwischen Memel u. Düna. Das **JG 54** hatte folgende Auftrag: 1. Freikaempfen des Luftraumes, 2. Begleitschutz fuer die Kampfstaffeln, 3. Freie Jagd, 4. Tiefangriff auf Kolonnen u. spaeter Bekaempfung des Schiffsverkehrs.

Die H.Gr. trat mit **18 Divisionen** auf ganzer Front an. Der Schwerpunkt lag . . . bei der **4 PzGr** u. hier besonders beim **41 PzK**. Die Pz.Gr. war u.a. durch **5** Art.

⁴⁴⁴ **Note:** In English translation of Haupt's book it notes the "first strike on the **230 km** wide front!" (26)

⁴⁴⁵ **Note:** Compare these figures to those in *KTB H.Gr. Nord* (below).

Abt., je 3 Pz.Jaeg.- u. Flak-Abt., 3 Pi.-Btl. verstaerkt.⁴⁴⁶ Doch bevor die mot. Kraefte zum Einsatz gelangten, mussten die Infanterie-Divisionen den Weg freikaempfen.

Die sowj. Grenzposten wurden fast ueberall geworfen u. die Grenze ohne Gegenwehr ueberschritten. Nur dort, wo entschlossene Offiziere u. Kommissare befehligten, kam es zu teilweise erbittertem Widerstand. Die 7./IR 501 traf noerdl. der Memel auf eine sowj. Feldwache, der sich hart verteidigt. Lt. Weinrowski fiel in der ersten Minute des Feldzuges als erster Soldat der H.Gr! . . .

Der Lagebericht der H.Gr. verzeichnete **6.00** Uhr:

16 Armee:

12 ID: etwa 7.5 km ostw. Schlossberg;
32 ID: ist im Wald 5 km ostw. Vistytis eingedrungen;
121 ID: hart westl. Wirballen, Haeuserkampf in Kybartei;
122 u. 123 ID: in Linie 3 km ostw. Naumiestis – 8 km NW Sintautai;
126 ID: 12 km W/SW Sakiai;
30 ID: 3 km SW Jurbarkas.

4 PzGr:

8 PD: hat Jurbarkas genommen;
290 ID: im Uebergehen ueber Mitwa 12 km NW Jurbarkas;
269 ID: 12 km noerdl. Wischwill;
6 PD: 4 km suedl. Tauroggen;
1 PD: hart westl. Tauroggen.

18 Armee:

11 ID: hat Naumiestis genommen;
61 ID: Bruecke bei Gargzdai genommen;
291 ID: im Ortskampf in Kretinga.

Die H.Gr. besass drei Stunden nach Angriffsbeginn Meldungen von der Masse ihrer Divisionen. Lediglich die **18 Armee** hatte erst die Lage von drei Divisionen berichtet. Hier sah das Bild so aus:

Die **21 ID** – Schwerpunkt-Div. der Armee, verstaerkt durch eine Art.Abt.(mot.), ein Heeres-Fla-Btl. u. eine Stug-Abt. – kaempfte sich auf 8 km Frontbreite auf Tauroggen vor u. musste *erheblichen Widerstand niederringen*. Die links benachbarte **1 ID** traf dagegen genau auf die Naht der **90** u. **125 RD** u. kam zuegig voran. Die Verbindung zwischen **1 AK** u. **26 AK** war durch das **IR 374 (207 Sich.Div.)** gewaehrleistet. Das Rgt. ging mit sechs starken Stosstrupps ueber die Grenze, um die Schwerpunktbildung zu verschleiern.

[CruX: Die Masse der angreifenden Divisionen [der **18 Armee**] waren bis **6.00** Uhr im Durchschnitt 12 km auf russ. Territorium vorgedrungen!] . . . Die Flug-

⁴⁴⁶ **Note:** Compare w/ details in K. Mehner, *Die Geheimen Tagesberichte*.

zeuge der Roten Luftwaffen barsten in den ersten Stunden unter den Bomben deutscher Kampfmaschinen. Die Sowjets verloren am Vormittag des **22.6.** nahezu **100** Maschinen!

Es war den tapferen Feindpiloten nur zweimal gelungen, deutsches Gebiet zu erreichen. Acht [8] Flugzeuge griffen **5.45** Uhr die Bruecke bei Wischwill u. den Bahnhof von Eydtkau an, ohne jeweils Schaden zu verursachen. Das sowj. [8 Armee] erteilte **7.15** Uhr einen Befehl an seine Luftstreitkraefte: „. . . Die Luftangriffe sind in die Tiefe des deutschen Territoriums bis zu **100-150** km zu richten. Königsberg u. Memel sind durch Bomben zu zerstören.“ [See text for rest of this order].

Dazu kam es nicht mehr, denn der deutsche Vormarsch rollte! Die sowjetische Abwehr versteifte sich zwar stellenweise *von Stunde zu Stunde*, doch konnten nirgendwo Panzer u. Infanteristen aufgehalten werden. Gegen Mittag wurde ueberall der Grenzwiderstand gebrochen. Die Divisionen streben auf ihre Tagesziele an.

Der Angriff entwickelte sich bei *trockenem u. heiterem Wetter* besonders beim **56 PzK** (Gen.d.Inf. von Manstein) ausserordentlich guenstig. Die **8 PD** (Gen. Brandenberger) gelangte im Laufe des Nachmittags an die Dubysa u. bildete abwaerts Ariogala den ersten Brueckenkopf. Damit stand die Div. am Abend dieses Tages **80 km** in Feindesland.

Die Mitte der H.Gr. war am weitesten nach vorn gedrunge. Doch genau so rasant wie hier entwickelte sich am aeussersten linken Fluegel der Vormarsch. Die erheblich verst. **291 ID** (Gtl. Herzog), die direkt dem **AOK 18** unterstand, ueberwand unweit der Kueste schnell den Widerstand der Grenztruppen. Das **IR 505** (Ob. Lohmeyer) durchbrach am Vormittag die Linien der sowj. **67 RD**⁴⁴⁷ u. stuermtte unbekuemmert um seine Flanke nach Norden. Das Rgt. erreichte bereits mittags sein Tagesziel, besetzte Skuodas u. ueberschritt als erste Einheit der H.Gr. die lettische Grenze.⁴⁴⁸ Die ostpreussischen Infanteristen hatten an einem Tag **65 km** kaempfend zurueckgelegt. . .

[Note: Discussion about results of German aerial reconnaissance; see text for the details.]

Aufklaerungsflugzeuge entdeckten noerdl. der Duena keine Truppenbewegungen. Suedl. des Flusses wurden Lkw-Kolonnen SW Schaulen, NW Telche u. Kedainiai sowie suedl. Riga festgestellt. Sofort angesetzte Bombenangriffe zerstorten bei Schaulen **40** Lkw u. zerschlugen die hier marschierende **48 RD**, die dadurch als erste sowj. Div. fast aufgerieben wurde!

Das sowj. Oberkommando gab am Abend des **22 Jun 41** den beiden AOKs **8** u. **11** den Befehl, den Vormarsch des Gegners aufzuhalten. Gen.Ob. Kusnecov [sp!], OB des Baltischen Besonderen Militaerbezirks, erkannte die Gefahr, die mit dem

⁴⁴⁷ **Note:** Check of Glantz' map volume reveals that it was the Soviet **10 RD** which was directly on border opposite **291 ID**; however, Soviet **67 RD** was not far behind **10 RD**. Yet it appears Lohmeyer's regiment actually broke thru **10 RD**.

⁴⁴⁸ **Note:** Elements of **291 ID** push through Lithuania and cross the Latvian border on the first day of war!

Durchbruch des **56 PzK** zur Dubysa gegeben war. Hier hatte die **8 PD** genau die Naht der beiden Armeen getroffen! . . .

Das [sowj.] Oberkommando in Riga hatte inzwischen seine erste Ueberraschung ueberwunden. Es befahl, die deutschen Panzerspitze in den Flanken anzugreifen u. zu vernichten. Das **12 MC** sollte dabei aus dem Raum Schaulen nach SO vorstossen, waehrend das **III MC** von Kedainiai aus NW anzugreifen hatte. Als der Befehl an die Korps hinausging, wusste man in Riga nicht, dass das **12 MC** bereits von deutschen Kampfflugzeugen so weit angeschlagen war, dass es sich nicht fuer den geplanten Angriff bereitstellen konnte!

Das H.Gr.Nord war sich am Abend des ersten Schlachttages *weder ueber die eigenen noch ueber die gegnerischen Absichten klar*. Es liess sich vorlaeufig nur uebersehen, dass die feindl. Kraefte vor der **16 Armee** in fortlaufender Linie kaempften. Dagegen schienen die Sowjets vor **4 PzGr** u. **18 Armee** zersplittert. Das H.Gr.Kdo. gab deshalb folgenden Befehl:

H.Gr. greift in bisheriger Gliederung an, um den vor ihr ausweichenden Feind noch ***vorwaerts der Duena*** zu stellen u. zu vernichten.

[23.-25.6.41]:

Die Nacht war zu kurz. Der Kampflaerm kam nirgendwo zum Erliegen. Als der Morgen des **23.6.** graute, befanden sich die Aufklaerungsmaschinen laengst ueber dem feindl. Raum. Die Piloten meldeten das Ausweichen der sowj. Kraefte an der gesamten Front. Zwar berichteten sie auch von mot.Kolonnen auf der Strasse Jonava – Kedainiai u. von Schaulen nach Norden. Eine genaue Staerke dieser Kolonnen konnte allerdings nicht festgestellt werden, so dass ***die H.Gr. zu einer falschen Lagebeurteilung kam***, die sich **24** Stunden spaeter unliebsam bemerkbar machte. Die dt. Fuehrungsstellen nahmen an, dass es sich um Pz.-Verbaende handelte, die auf dem Rueckzug waren.

Inzwischen ging der Vormarsch in ganzer Breite weiter . . . Es kam an vielen Stellen zu hinhaltenden Gefechten. Doch gelang es, die Verteidiger zu werfen. Der dt. Angriff rollte. Das **41 PzK**, das durch die Kaempfe um Tauroggen u. am Jura-Abschnitt etwas aufgehalten worden war, fand nach einem **100 km** raumgewinnenden Marsch den Anschluss an das vorgeprellte **56 PzK**. Die Infanteristen hielten trotz Wege- u. Gelaendeschwierigkeiten noch Schritt mit den mot. Abteilungen.

„Die Litauer riefen uns ihren Gruss „***Sweiks gyos***“,“ entgegen u. reichten uns Blumen. Vor den Haeusern luden Tische mit Milch, Kaffee, Eiern, Butterbrot u. Kuchen zum Imbiss ein. Und der Landser griff zu, hatte auch Brocken der einheimischen Sprache gelernt u. sagte dankend: „***Sweiks gyos, Marijana!***“⁴⁴⁹

Der Ostfeldzug so glaubten anfangs viele der deutschen Landser, schien wiederum ein „***Blumenkrieg***“ zu werden. Der russ. Soldat belehrte ihn bald eines Besseren. Energische Offz. u. Kommissare scharten die Maenner um sich u.

⁴⁴⁹ **Note:** W. Haupt gleaned this paragraph from: “290. *Infanterie-Division. 1940-1945.*” [Auslfg.] Bad Nauheim: Podzun 1960, 428 S.

kaempften teilweise bis zur letzten Patrone. Es gab wenig Gefangene! Groessere Verbaende zogen sich abseits der Strassen ordnungsgemaess zurueck.⁴⁵⁰

So wich das [sowj.] **16 RC** mit der **5 u. 33 RD** geschickt vor dem nachdraengenden **2 AK** (Gen.d.Inf. Graf von Brockdorff-Ahlenfeldt) am aeussersten rechten Fluegel der H.Gr. aus. Das Korps hatte nach der Eroberung von Marjampol eine V.A. unter Ob. Holm gebildet. Diese sollte so schnell wie moeglich nach Kowno durchstossen. Doch hier *versteifte sich zusehends der sowj. Widerstand.* Die Infanteristen, Panzerjaeger u. Radfahrer blieben **18 km** vor der Stadt liegen.

Die litauische Bevoelkerung begann gegen die sowj. Besatzungstruppen aufzumucken. Es kam zu turbulenten Szenen. Einige Zivilisten gingen mit Waffen gegen die Rotarmisten u. Verwaltungsbeamten vor. [See text for more details about this.]

Die sowj. Verbaende zogen sich am Mittag des naechsten Tages [i.e., **24.6.41**] weiter zurueck. Ein Stosstrupp der **AA 123** unter Lt. Floret war bereits am Morgen durch die feindl. Linien nach Kowno vorgedrungen. Hier konnte die Verbindung mit den litauischen Freischaerlern aufgenommen werden. . . Die **VA Ob. Holm** gelangte **17.15 Uhr** nach Kowno, von der Bevoelkerung freundlich begruesst.

Kurz darauf rueckten **IR 89** u. **IR 405** sowie die **AA 121** in die einstige litauische Hauptstadt ein. . . Die **16 Armee** hatte somit am dritten Kriegstage ein Loch in die feindl. Front gebrochen. Ihr **2 AK** u. **28 AK** ueberschritten beiderseits Kowno den Njemen u. stellten sich zum weiteren Vormarsch nach NO auf.

[24.-25.6.41: Panzerschlacht bei Raseiniai]:

Genau wie hier am rechten Fluegel kam die dt. Offensive in der Mitte der Front vorwaerts. Doch jetzt *raechte sich die falsche Lagebeurteilung.* Das **41 PzK** (Gen.d.Pz.Tr. Reinhardt) hatte soeben die sowj. **125 RD** geworfen, als ploetzlich feindl. Panzer anrollten. Das **3 MC** (Gm. Kurkin) griff befehls-gemaess mit **2 Pz-Bde** u. **48 RD** die Flanke des dt. Panzerkeils an. Es war am **24.6., 15.00 Uhr**, als ostw. Raseiniai die staehlernden Kolosse anrollten.

Die hier auftauchenden **Kw-1** u. **II, 46-t-Panzer**, waren tolle Brocken. Auf etwas **800 m** eroeffneten unsere Kompanien das Feuer; es blieb wirkungslos . . . [see text for details]⁴⁵¹

Die erste Panzerschlacht im Abschnitt der H.Gr.Nord hatte begonnen! Es war die erste Panzerschlacht des Ostfeldzuges! Es war gleichzeitig die einzige Panzerschlacht, die zwischen starken Panzerverbaenden von Freund u. Feind im Nordabschnitt der Ostfront ausgetragen wurde!

⁴⁵⁰ **Note:** Another indication of how the situation on both wings (AGN / AGS) developed so differently compared to the results achieved by AGC. Fact that army groups on the wings each had only one panzer group was a prime cause of this.

⁴⁵¹ **Note:** This quotation gleaned from : Rolf O. Stoves, "1. Panzer-Division, 1939-1945." Bad Nauheim: Podzun 1962. 882 S.

Die Sowjets hatten am **24 Jun 41** einen gewaltigen Vorteil. Ihre Panzer waren viel schwerer, als ueberhaupt von dt. Seite angenommen wurde. Es war unmoeglich, diesen Stahlkolossen mit den vorhandenen Pz.-Abwehr-Waffen Schaden zuzufuegen. . . Nur dort, wo die **8.8-cm-Flakgeschuetze** rasch genug abprotzen konnten oder wo eigene Pz III u. Pz IV sich den Sowjets entgegenstellten, blieben die ueberschweren Kolosse brennend liegen. . .

Die Kaempfe wogten am **25.6.** hin u. her. Doch langsam gewannen die Deutschen die Oberhand. . . Die Panzer der **1 u. 6 PD** trafen **8.38** Uhr bei Sokajciai aufeinander. Der Ring war geschlossen!

Der erste Panzerschlacht des Ostfeldzuges endete mit einer Niederlage der Sowjets. Sie mussten **186 Panzer** – darunter **29** vom Typ **Kv-1** – , **77** Geschuetze, **23** Pak u. etwa **600** Kfz als Wracks zuruecklassen. Der Sieg hatte aber ein Janusgesicht. Das **41 PzK** wurde durch das **3 MC** fuer zwei Tage an Ort u. Stelle gebunden. Damit war der Anschluss an **56 PzK** verlorengegangen.

(W. Haupt, *Heeresgruppe Nord*, 25-31)

– **22.6.41**: Kuznetsov attempted to rally his forces throughout the day, but German air superiority prevented any effective measures at the border. The HQ of his BSMD (now renamed Northwestern Front) at Subach, together w/ many Soviet command and communications facilities, came under ferocious *Luftwaffe* attack. (Taylor, *Barbarossa to Berlin*, 33)

--**22.6.41**: By end of first day of combat, Germans had correctly identified **90** and **125 RDs**, which by end of the day had already been smashed by the initial attack. (Glantz, ed., *Initial Period of the War*, 87)

--**22.6.41**: As Manstein motored along the road to Airogola, Kuznetsov ordered **3** and **12 MC** to concentrate for a counterattack aimed at halting the Germans thrusting toward Siauliai. Subordinating both corps to **8 Army**, Kuznetsov ordered an attack at [for?] midday on the 23rd. (See, Taylor, *Barbarossa to Berlin*, 34)

--**22.6.41**: The Lithuanians greeted the Germans enthusiastically, with *flowers and, probably more welcome to hard-fighting combat troops, coffee, milk, eggs, bread and butter laid out on tables in front of their houses*. The Germans appear to have been unprepared to exploit the unexpected support they received. (C. Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 195)

--**22.6.41**: In the area of AGN concentrated artillery fire preceded the attack on *only a few sectors*. For the most part the first wave of infantry, together w/ assault sappers, rose *silently from their dugouts among the crops along the frontier* of Soviet-occupied Lithuania shortly after **0300**. Shrouded in the *morning mist*, like phantoms, the tanks moved forward out of the woods. (P. Carell, *Hitler Moves East*, 28)

--**22.6.41**: As on other sectors of the front, the start of the German offensive on 22 June surprised the enemy forces opposite AGN. This is *all the more astonishing* as it had been *quite impossible to conceal the masses of German troops crossing the lower course of the Neman to reach their assembly areas*, not to mention the *conspicuous bridge-building activity*. The armored spearheads were able to cross the Neman, the Dubisa and the Venta, which would have constituted serious and time-consuming obstacles had the bridges there been destroyed. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV, 537)

--22.6.41: There was a *considerable amount of confusion* in the Northwestern Front (formerly BMD) Hq. after attack began. . . Generally the confusion could be characterized first, by disbelief; and second, by conflicting reports from the border areas; and finally, by conflicting orders from higher Hq. Along the border, units suffered *heavy initial losses* and issued desperate cries for help, while confusion reigned at army and *front* level as cdrs sought in vain to obtain guidance from Moscow. Generally, the guidance from Moscow at this state was to “***do nothing, and do not provoke the Germans.***” By late evening, the “do not provoke” orders changes into orders “***to launch counterattacks and expel the Germans.***” Of course, at this point, these orders were virtually futile. (Glantz, ed., *Initial Period of the War*, 87)

--22.6.41 (LAF in Lithuania): The attack of Leeb’s AGN met slightly different conditions [than those faced by AGC]. The people of the Baltic States, which the Soviet Union had occupied about a year before, *welcomed the Germans w/ their own national flags, open arms, and by firing on withdrawing Red Army troops*. . . Preparations for armed revolt against the Soviet authorities in all the Baltic States had begun as soon as Soviet occupation forces arrived in **1940**. Although plans for a revolt were headed by the *Lietuviu aktyvistu frontas* (Lithuanian Activist Front, or LAF) in Berlin, which envisaged cooperation w/ the Germans, the German forces moving thru Lithuania on **22 Jun 41** do not appear to have been aware of its existence. On the night of **13/14 Jun 41**, the Soviet authorities had begun deporting civilians from the Baltic States. Some **18,000**, including **5000** children, were deported from Lithuania.

On **22 Jun 41**, therefore, the moment the Germans attacked, the LAF *immediately sprang into action*. A number of government buildings were occupied in Kaunas (Kovno), which was still the capital (Vilnius, the modern capital, had been transferred from Poland only in **1939**). The first was the radio station, and Leonas Prapuolenis, the LAF representative, announced the *restoration of an independent Lithuanian state* and the formation of a provisional government. From **23-25 Jun 41** a series of partisan groups went into action in Kaunas, although the attacks appear to have been largely spontaneous and opportunistic. (For more details see, C. Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 193-94)

--22.6.41: Leeb’s forces advanced on **22 Jun 41**, ripped apart partially manned Soviet defenses, and plunged deep into Soviet territory, pre-empting Soviet defense plans and generating chaos in the Red Army’s ranks. Kuznetsov tried to implement his defense plan but, given the precipitous and violent German attack, did so in *wooden and haphazard fashion*. As Leeb’s massed panzers and infantry advanced across the Neman River into Lithuania early on **22 Jun 41**, they caught Soviet border guards and Red Army troops who manned the fortified regions and forward rifle division positions along the border *totally by surprise*. The advancing German forces ripped apart the only *partially manned Soviet defenses* and plunged deep into Soviet territory, pre-empting Soviet defense plans and producing total chaos and disorder among the defending Red Army forces.⁴⁵²

Although his forces were incapable of effective organized resistance, Kuznetsov tried to implement his defense plan . . . but did so in *wooden and haphazard fashion*. The forward rifle divisions of Sobennikov’s **8** and Morozov’s **11 Armies** manned the border defenses w/ only a regiment each, w/ the divisions’ remaining regiments situated in *peacetime garrisons to the rear*. German forces first overwhelmed these forward regiments and the troops of the border guards detachments and fortified regions and then defeated the divisions’ remaining regiments as they frantically tried to deploy forward.

⁴⁵² **Note:** Strange text, as Glantz simply repeats himself!

In utter disregard for the actual situation, on the evening of **22 Jun 41**, the NKO dispatched Kuznetsov the now famous Directive No. 3, which ordered his forces:

While firmly holding on to the coast of the Baltic Sea, deliver a powerful blow from the Kaunas region into the flank and rear of the enemy Suvalki grouping [Hoepner's **4 PzGr**], destroy it in cooperation w/ the Western Front, and capture the Suvalki region by day's end on 24 June.

(D. Glantz, *Atlas and Operational Summary. The Border Battles*, 18-19)

--**22.6.41**: Heeresgruppe Nord (*Tagesmeldung*):

16 Armee: hat gegen schwachen Feindwiderstand bis **06.00** Uhr Grenze um **4** bis **5** km ueberschritten.

Pz.Gr. 4: hat **06.00** Uhr Jurbarkas genommen, mit weiteren Teilen im Angriff auf Sokalyne u. im Vordringen auf Tauroggen.

18 Armee: **1 AK** hat Namjestis genommen. Angriff gewinnt ueberall an Boden.

(K. Mehner, *Geheime Tagesberichte*, 150)

--**23.6.41**: Heeresgruppe Nord (*Tagesmeldung*):⁴⁵³

16 Armee suedl. der Memel u.

18 Armee noerdl. davon befinden sich in planmaessigem Angriff u. haben bis **12.00** Uhr gegen schwachen Feindwiderstand auf ganzer Frontbreite **8-10** km Boden gewonnen.

4 Pz.Gr. zwischen **16** u. **18 Armee**, hat mit **8 PD** im fluessigen Vorgehen Seredzink (**35** km NW Kowno) erreicht u. befindet sich mit Masse im Vorgehen auf Erzvilkas. **1 PD** kaempft mit staerkerem Feind im Waldgelaende NO Tauroggen.

(K. Mehner, *Geheime Tagesberichte*, 151)

--**22.6.41** (Ia KTB H.Gr.Nord):

0300 Uhr. Im Bereich der H.Gr.Nord ueberfliegen die Verbaende des **I. Fliegerkorps** mit **76** Kampf- u. **90** Jagdflugzeuge die sowjetruss. Grenze zum Einsatz gegen **7** Flugplaetze.

Fliegerfuehrer Ostsee legt Minensperren auf Reede [sp?] Kronstadt; Verminderung des Seekanals Leningrad – Kronstadt.

⁴⁵³ **Note:** Although these are entries for **23.6.41**, they clearly appear to address combat activities on the previous day!

0305: Verbaende der H.Gr.Nord treten planmaessig zum Kampf gegen die Rote Armee an.

0432: Meldung (Hptm. Ewald) an OKH (Major Philippi): Nach ersten Teilmeldungen nur geringer oder kein feindl. Widerstand. . .

0545: Feindl. Luftangriff auf Bahnhof Eydtkau, vereinzelt Schienenbeschadigungen.

0900: O.B. faehrt zu **4 PzGr** u. Gen.Kdo. **1 AK** auf der Rueckfahrt spricht er O.B. 18 Armee.

0920: Chef AOK 18 meldet: Feind hat sich entgegen der Erwartung in der Grenzstellung nicht gestellt.⁴⁵⁴ Es ist zweifelhaft, ob er sich hinter der Jura stellen wird.

10.00: Darbenai u. Polangen von **291 ID** genommen. In Polangen 10 unzerstoerte Flugzeuge erbeutet.

10.15: Chef AOK 16 meldet: Der Feind weicht ohne Widerstandu aus. Bisher sind saemtliche Bruecken unzerstoert. Die angelegten Feldbefestigungen werden nicht verteidigt. *Wenig oder keine Artillerie*. . .

11.40: Chef AOK 18 hat den Eindruck, dass der Feind bereits in den letzten Tagen eine Rueckwaertsbewegung angetreten hat.

14.05: Chef der **4 PzGr** meldet: **10.30** Uhr hat **8 PD Seredzius** genommen. Eine Marshgruppe auf Ariogala angesetzt. . .

18.19: Chef 4 PzGr meldet O.B. der H.Gr., dass die Pz.Gr. noch heute Rossienie zu erreichen hofft.

O.B. bittet um Nachfuehrung der **290 ID**, um moeglichst bald mit Inf.Div. die Dubysa zu ueberschreiten.

18.45: [Note: Call from Heusinger (OKH) – expressing concerns of Halder – to be alert re: Soviet armored concentration south of Riga. See text.]

8 PD hat bei Seredzius u. Ariogala die Dubysa ueberschritten.

Gen.-Obst. Hoepner hofft, noch heute mit **6 PD Rossienie** zu erreichen.(Damit scheint er das Interesse an Schaulen etwas verloren zu haben.)

19.15: Beurteilung der Lage durch O.B.:

Der Gegner stand auf der ganzen Front der H.Gr. in Grenznaehe nicht mit starken Kraeften, sondern offensichtlich nur mit Nachhuten. Ueber dem Verbleib der Masse seiner Truppen besteht keine Klarheit.

Dem entsprechend sind die eigenen Armeen, unter Ueberwindung feindlichen Widerstandes u. von Gelaendeschwierigkeiten (Wegeverhaeltnisse), weit voraus.

⁴⁵⁴ **Note:** Strategy pursued by Red Army in north was very different from that in south—where Kirponos’s troops often defended their border positions vigorously and effectively.

Im grossen scheint der Gegner nicht ueberrascht gewesen zu sein, weil er die Masse seiner Truppen offensichtlich zurueckgenommen hat. Dagegen ist er wohl oertlich da u. dort durch die fruehe Zeit des Angriffs ueberrascht worden. Besonders bedeutungsvoll ist es, dass es der **4 PzGr** gelungen ist, trotz hartnaeckigen Widerstandes der Russen bei Tauroggen heute schon bis an die Jura vorzustossen u. die Bruecken ueber die Dubysa bei Seredzius u. Ariogala unversehrt in die Hand zu bekommen, sodass mit weiterem raschem Vorwaertskommen in ostw. Richtung am morgigen Tage gerechnet werden darf. [See text for more details.]

19.45: . . . da die Flanken laenger werden u. damit eine Bedrohung von NO moeglich wird, muessen die Inf.Div. mit allen Mitteln moeglichst schnell herangefuehrt werden. Der Raum Schaulen – Bausk [sp?] ist aufzuklaeren, weil die dort angenommene mot.russische Gruppe u.U. in diesem Raum vorgebrochen ist.

21.00: Die beiden grossen Minensperren am Westausgang des Finnischen Meerbusens planmaessig gelegt. Russ. Flotte hat [----- unclear] im Finnischen Golf.

23.40: Chef Luftflotte 1, General v. Wühlisch unterrichtet Chef d.Genst.: Im Laufe des **22.6.** im Bereich der H.Gr.Nord **45** fdl. Flugzeugen abgeschossen, **140** am Boden vernichtet. . . **15.50** Uhr griffen Teile der Luftflotte 1 Panzerkraefte westl. u. SW Schaulen an. Von etwa **100** Panzern **40** zerstoert.

23.6.41:

07.50: Chef 4 PzGr meldet Chef d.Genst.: Die *schlechten Wegeverhaeltnisse* u. die *zerstoerte Bruecke bei Tauroggen* haben den *Vormarsch der Pz.Gr. aufgehalten*. Aus den gleichen Gruenden drohen *Versorgungsschwierigkeiten*; es wird gebeten, den Nachschub durch Eisenbahn u. Schiff memelaufwaerts fuehren zu duerfen.

(T-311, Roll 53, *KTB H.Gr.Nord*)

--22.6.41 (H.Gr.Nord berichtet):

H.Gr. Nord ist nach planmaessig beendeter Bereitstellung um **3.05** Uhr zum Angriff ueber die deutsch-sowjet. Grenze im Abschnitt Vistytis – Ostsee angetreten. An der Grenze nur geringer Widerstand. Feind scheint ueber-
rascht.

BILD DER LAGE bis etwa **6.00** Uhr:

16 Armee:

[see text for location of each division]

Saemtliche Grenzbruecken (einschl. Eisenbahnbruecke Kybartai) im Bereich der Armee sind unversehrt in eigene Hand genommen.

4 PzGr:

8 PD hat Jurbarkas genommen. . .

Der **6 PD** ist Bruecke ueber Szeszuwa **4 km** suedl. Tauroggen unversehrt in die Hand gefallen.

1 PD hart westl. Tauroggen, Bruecken westl. Tauroggen unversehrt.

18 Armee:

11 ID hat Naumiestis genommen.

Der **61 ID** ist Brueck bei Gargzdai unversehrt in die Hand gefallen.

291 ID im Ortskampf in Kretinga.

LAGE AM ABEND:

Die H.Gr. ist nach Durchbrechen der in Grenznaehe befindlichen Stellungen auf der gesamten Front durchschnittlich 20 km ueber die Grenze, im Bereich der **4 PzGr** mit Teilen eines Korps bis ueber die Dubysa vorgedrungen. Dieser Durchbruch gelang, weil die ausgebauten grenznahen Feindstellungen z.T. nur schwach, z.T. garnicht verteidigt waren. Gegen Abend wurden im Raum SW Schaulen von rund **150-200** Panzer u. Lkw. durch Tiefangriff 40 vernichtet – Nach Aussagen von Gefangenen u. Landeseinwohnern, sowie auf Grund vorgefundenen Briefmaterials muss angenommen werden, dass der Feind vor etwa **4** Tagen die starken Grenzverteidigungskraefte unter Belassung von Nachhuten zurueckgezogen hat. Wo sich die Masse seiner Kraefte befindet, ist z.Zt. noch unklar. Es kommt deshalb darauf an, durch scharfes Nachstossen bald Fuehlung mit der Masse der feindl. Kraefte zu erhalten, um den Gegner noch vorwaerts der Duena zum Kampf zu stellen u. zu vernichten.

--Ob der Feind in der Dubysa-Windau (Venta) Linie nachhaltigen Widerstand leisten will, ist noch unklar. Durch das **56 PzK** ist diese Linie bereits erreicht u. ohne nennenswerten Widerstand bei Seredzius u. Ariogala ueberschritten worden. . .

Zusammenfassend kann gesagt werden, dass der Feind operativ auf den deutschen Angriff vorbereitet war, seine zurueckgelassenen Nachhuten taktisch ueberrascht wurden. Bisher war Fuehlung mit **6** feindl. Schuetz.Diven. vorhanden.

Der Angriff der LUFTFLOTTE 1 gegen Luftstuetzpunkte zwischen Reichsgrenze u. Duena hat zum Erfolg gefuehrt. Von den run **750** in diesem Bereich angenommenen Feindflugzeugen wurden etwa **185** vernichtet. Angriffe der feindl. Luftwaffe erfolgten nur vereinzelt u. ohne Erfolg (**5.45** Uhr **6-8** Flugzeuge ueber Bruecke bei Wischwill – **2** abgeschossen – **5.45** Uhr Angriff auf Bahnhof Eydtkau).

ABSICHT: Heeresgruppe greift in bisheriger Gliederung an, um den vor ihr ausweichenden Feind noch vorwaerts der Duena zu stellen u. zu vernichten.

OBERST LOHMEYER, Kdr. **IR 505** ist an der Spitze seines Rgts. in rastloser Verfolgung nach Durchbrechen einer verteidigten, befestigten Feldstellung innerhalb 16 Stunden 65 km weit vorgestossen, hat Darbenai erkaempft u. anschliessend einen Brueckenkopf noerdl. Skuodas gewonnen.

WETTER: Trocken, heiter, mittags schwuel.

23.6.41:

Waehrend der Nacht nur geringe Gefechtsberuehrung. Feind hat sich weiter abgesetzt . . .

LAGE AM ABEND: Feind hat sich am heutigen Tag vor ganzer Front nir-gends zum Kampf gestellt. Er weicht unter dem Schutz von mehr oder weniger starken Nachhuten in NO Richtung aus. Ueber seine beabsichtigte Operationsfuehrung besteht noch keine Klarheit . . .

(T-311, Roll 132, Ia, *Geschichte Feldzug Russland*)

--22.6.41: In a report oozing w/ frustration, a Northwestern Front headquarters document on this day stated:

Our agents and enemy deserters have pointed out the fact that the German attack against us should have been expected. Almost the exact date of the beginning of the offensive was disclosed—June 20-22, 1941.

Thus, as the war was becoming a fact, the events demanded that *urgen measures should have been undertaken concerning operational deployment of units of all combat arms and their concentration under the existing mobilization plan.*

In the last days before the war the Northwestern Front command had the chance to *immediately relocate some units closer to the border.* But the momentum of concentration and deployment . . . was extremely slow. The low capacity of the Baltic railroad was to be taken into account as well as the troops *being scattered over a large territory* and most of them being a long distance from the state border.

Along w/ that there was an opportunity under the pretext of field maneuvers to *secretly concentrate our main forces near the state border.* It would also have been possible to reinforce and improve the fortifications. At the time of the attack only the **90th, 188th and 5th Rifle Divisions** were fully deployed, but they also were busy w/ construction work in the field camps and also w/ training exercises.

(Fugate & Dvorestky, *Thunder on the Dnepr*, 142-43)

--22.6.41: *Hr.Gr.Nord:*

H.Gr.Nord hat am 22.6. die in Grenznaehe befindlichen Feindstellungen durchbrochen u. ist auf der gesamten Front durchschnittlich **20 km** in Feindesland eingedrungen, im Bereich der Pz.Gr. mit einem Korps ueber die Dubysa. Bisher war Fuehlung mit 6 russ. Schuetzen-Div. vorhanden. Der Angriff der **Luftflotte 1** auf die russ. Luftstuetzpunkte zwischen Reichsgrenze u. Duena hat zu einem Erfolg gefuehrt. Von den rund **750** in diesem Bereich angenommenen Flug-

zeugen wurden etwa **175** vernichtet. Angriffe der feindl. Luftwaffe erfolgten nur vereinzelt u. ohne Erfolg. Gegen Abend wurden im Raum SW Schaulen von rund **150-200** Panzern u. Lkw durch Tieffliegerangriff **40** vernichtet.

Es haben erreicht: . . .

*Pz.Gr.4: **56 PzK: 8 PD** Seredzius u. Ariogala. **41 PzK: Erzvilkas – Laparvis – Puliniske** . . .*

[See text for more details.]

(Tagesmeldungen der O.-Abteilung des GenStdH, in: KTB OKW, 490)

--**22.6.41**: Leeb's forces ripped apart partially-manned Soviet defenses and plunged deep into Soviet territory, pre-empting Soviet defense plans and generating chaos in the Red Army's ranks. Kuznetsov tried to implement his defense plan but, given the precipitous and violent German attack, did so in *wooden and haphazard fashion*. (Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 43)

--**22.6.41**: Late on 22nd, Kuznetsov ordered Sobennikov to move his **12 MC** forward. That movement began late on **22 Jun 41**. . . Given the *logistical state* of those divisions [**23** and **28 TD**], it was indeed miraculous that they were able to move at all. But in fact they did hit the road. The general plan was to move those two divisions southward into concentration areas SW and SE of Telsche to strike at the left flank of advancing German forces.

At the same time, late on **22 Jun 41**, Kuznetsov ordered **3 MC** to move its **2 TD** westward toward Skauville by way of Raseinai to participate in what they hoped would be a joint attack against the flanks of the German advance, which seemed to be along the Taurage – Kelme – Siauliai axis. Those Soviet armored movements began early on **23 Jun 41**, although in general terms the *armored forces deployed forward in piecemeal fashion*. A major problem for the moving Soviet forces was *total dominance of the air by the Germans*. This not only made armored movement very hazardous and costly, it quite often *drove Soviet armored units off the road and hence, the many stories which later circulated about divisions driving into swamps and bogs*. The most severe impact however, was on logistics, because the soft-skinned ammunition and fuel vehicles simply could not make it forward w/ the mechanized corps through the *gauntlet of fire*. . . Late on **23 Jun 41** the Soviet armored counterattacks began to materialize. (Glantz, ed., *Initial Period of the War*, 87-90)

--**22.6.41**: Olga Freudenberg 1880-1955 (Leningrad):⁴⁵⁵

Am 22. Juni, einem schoenen Sommertag, rief ich aus einer Laune heraus einen Bekannten an. Es war Sonntag, um die Mittagszeit. Ich wunderte mich, als eine Frauenstimme erklarte, Bobowitsch, den ich sprechen wollte, koenne jetzt nicht zum Telephon kommen. „Er hoert Radio.“

Ich wunderte mich noch mehr. Nach einer kurzen Pause fuegte die Frau hinzu: „*Es ist Krieg. Die Deutschen haben uns ueberfallen u. die Grenze ueberschritten.*“

Das kam furchtbar ueberraschend, klang fast unglaubwuerdig, obwohl es klar voraussehen war. . . Ein stiller Sommertag, die Fenster weit offen, ein

⁴⁵⁵ **Note:** Professorin fuer Klassische Philologie an der Universitaet Leningrad. (710)

schoener, geruhsamer Sonntag, *die Seele in Einklang mit dem Leben* . . . u. auf einmal: Krieg! Mann konnte es nicht glauben, wollte es nicht.

(Kempowski, *Das Echolot*, 40)

--22.6.41: Lidija Ochapkina 1912 (Leningrad):⁴⁵⁶

An jenem Sommersonntag hatte ich vor, schon am fruhen Morgen mit meinen beiden Kindern zu unserem Landhaus in einem Vorort von Leningrad zu fahren. Mein Mann war dienstlich verreist, deshalb waren mein Neffe sowie ein Verwandter von meinem Mann . . . zu mir gekommen, um mich mit den Kindern zum Bahnhof zu bringen.

Ich hatte alles gepackt u. stillte gerade meine Tochter, die erst fuenf Monate alt war. Da hoerte ich ploetzlich im Radia: „Achtung! Achtung!“ Und Molotov sprach seine bekannte Rede. Ich beschloss sofort, zu Hause zu bleiben. Ich musste erst auf meinen Mann warten. *Ich hatte keine Angst. Ich erinnerte mich an den Krieg gegen Finnland, der fuer mich u. fuer die Leningrader nicht so fuerchterlich gewesen war.*

(Kempowski, *Das Echolot*, 40)

--23.6.41 (Halder KTB):

Die Morgenmeldungen 23.6. u. abschliessenden Tagesmeldungen des 22.6., die waehrend der Nacht einlaufen, ergeben das Bild, dass mit dem Versuch des Feindes gerechnet werden muss, sich abzusetzen. H.Gr.Nord nimmt sogar an, dass der Entschluss hierzu beim Feind schon vor 4 Tagen gefallen sei. . .

(F. Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. III, 7)

--26.6.-1.7.41: Auch im litauisch-lettischen Kampfraum der *Heeresgruppe Nord* durchkreuzte die *zerreissende Wirkung* der rasch auf die Duena durchbrechenden 4 **PzGr** die Absicht der russ. Fuehrung, sich an der Grenze ebenso wie in der Tiefe zu verteidigen. Zum entscheidenden Erfolg kam es, als das eine schnelle Korps nach kuehnem Raid am **26 Jun 41** Dünaburg u. die dortige Bruecke nahm u. dem anderen 3 Tage spaeter [29.6.41] nach schweren Panzerkaempfen die Bildung von Brueckenkoepfen bei Jakobstadt gelang. Die Inf.-Diven. der **16 Armee** folgten im Durchbruchsraum der mot. Verbaende, mit ueberholten Feindgruppen kaempfend; sie naeherten sich in Eilmaerschen bereits am **1 Jul 41** der Duena. Die **18 Armee** stiess auf Riga vor, dam am **29 Jun 41** genommen wurde, u. saeberte das Gebiet an der Kueste.

12-15 Feinddivisionen waren westl. der Duena zersprengt; zur Einschliessung staerkerer russ. Kraefte war es nicht gekommen; rueckgaengige Bewegungen auf Bahn u. Strassen nach NO liessen vielmehr erkennen, dass die *russ. Fuehrung einen Teil der angeschlagenen Kraefte zu retten vermochte*; sie schien auch auf die Verteidigung der Duena zu verzichten. Innerhalb von **10 Tagen** war also der Sprung an diese Strombarriere u. das Bilden von Brueckenkoepfen gelungen, aus denen zum naechsten Stoss in den Raum NO Opotschka augeholt werden sollte. (Philippi & Heim, *Feldzug gegen Sowjetrussland*, 57)

⁴⁵⁶ **Note:** No details on her background provided by Kempowski.

1.7.3: Sixteenth Army

--On the southern flank of the army group was Col.-Gen. Busch's 16th Army. Its main task was to support the southern flank of the panzer group and maintain the junction of AGN w/ AGC. This meant that as the armies advanced, 16th Army experienced a *considerable lengthening of its front line*. 16th Army comprised **165,000** men between Brockdorff-Ahlenfeldt's **2 AK (12, 32, 121 IDs & 600 Stug-Bde)**, Hansen's **10 AK (30, 126 IDs)**, and Wiktorin's **28 AK (122, 123 IDs)** and **253 ID** in reserve. (Brian Taylor, *Barbarossa to Berlin. A Chronology...* 14)⁴⁵⁷

--Under command of Col-Gen Ernst Busch, Sixteenth Army on the right wing was to break through the enemy positions toward Kaunas, cross the Neman, and secure a crossing-point as early as possible south of Daugavpils. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV, 538)

--Sixteenth Army (**3** corps of **8** divisions) was to break through the Soviet border defenses between Lake Vishtyness (Wysztyter See) and the Memel River. The main effort was to be directed toward Kovno, where the army was to cross the Nemen and follow in the wake of Hoepner's panzer group to the Dvina, taking the eastern bank at and below Daugavpils. (Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, IV: 17-18)

--Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa (31.1.41):⁴⁵⁸

4. *Auftraege an die Heeresgruppen u. Armeen: . . .*

16 Armee durchbricht im Zusammenwirken mit **4 PzGr** den ihr gegenueberstehenden Feind mit Schwerpunkt beiderseits der Strasse Ebenrode – Kowno u. erreicht unter scharfem Vortreiben ihres starken rechten Fluegels hinter dem Panzerkorps moeglichst fruehzeitig das noerdl. Duenaufer bei u. unterhalb Düna-burg.

Weitere Aufgabe der Armee wird es sein, hinter **4 PzGr** folgend, baldig die Gegend Opotschka zu erreichen.

(Halder, Franz. *Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. II. Appendix 2, 467)

--Mai-Jun 41 (126 ID):

Die Ausbildung galt in dieser Zeit dem bevorstehenden Einsatz. So viel wie moeglich wurde in groesseren Verbaenden geubt. Eine besondere Bewahrungsprobe war die Verlegung an die Grenze Mitte Mai 41, die sich in mehreren Nachtmarschen vollzog. Hier erhielt die Div. im Raume Haselberg eine erste Einsatzaufgabe. Sie musste ab **18.5.** suedlich der Memel in etwa **25 km** Breite die Grenzsicherung uebernehmen. Eingesetzt wurden **IR 424** mit der **II./AR 126**. Im noerdl. Teil des Abschnitts wurde die Grenze durch die Strasse Waldheide – Haselberg, suedl. davon durch den Ostfluss bestimmt.

⁴⁵⁷ **Note:** According to the official OOB in K. Mehner (*Die Geheimen Tagesberichte*), **16 AOK** controlled **5 Stug** batteries.

⁴⁵⁸ **Note:** Here I've carved out the portion of the Army's Deployment Directive specifically addressing role of Sixteenth Army.

Da den Russen, die hier offensichtlich nur schwache Grenztruppen eingesetzt hatten, Staerke u. Absicht verschleiert werden sollten, wurde viel Muehe u. Zeit darauf verwendet, alle Stellungen u. Bewegungen zu tarnen. Die Staebe waren indessen damit beschaef-tigt, den kommenden Feldzug zu planen u. vorzubereiten.

Die Div. unterstand fue die Grenzsicherung dem Gen.Kdo. II (General d. Inf. Graf Brockdorff-Ahlefeld), jedoch wurden die Weisungen fuer den Kampfeinsatz vom Gen.Kdo. X (Gen. d. Art. Hansen) erteilt, dem die Div. unterstellt werden sollte.

Der erste schriftliche Korpsbefehl fuer den Angriff ueber die Grenze wurde Mitte **Mai 41** ausgehaendigt (*Studie Barbarossa*). Schon zu diesem Zeitpunkt stand der **22.6.** als Angriffstermin fest.⁴⁵⁹ Die Unterrichtung der Rgt.Kdren erfolgte am **30 Mai**. Sie wurden damit in die Lage versetzt, die Bereitstellungsraeume u. das der Sicht zugaengliche Gelaende jenseits der Grenze in Ruhe zu erkunden. Die Truppe selbst musste bis zum letzten Augenblick im Unklaren gelassen werden. Jedoch liessen Geruechte ueber einen von den Russen genehmigten Durchmarsch nach Indien die Phantasie reichlich schiessen.

(G. Lohse, *Geschichte der 126. Inf.-Div.*, 10)

--**20./21.6.41 (121 ID)**: Der von der Div. vorbereitete Befehl fuer den Angriff am B-Tag (22 Jun 41) wurde immer wieder auf Grund der letzten Planspiele abgeaendert u. dem neuesten Stand der Erkenntnis angepasst, bis am **20 Jun 41** auch die auf **3.05** Uhr festgesetzte y-Zeit durchgegeben wurde, die freilich erst nach Eintreffen des Stichworts „Dortmund“ an die Truppenteile weitergegeben werden durfte. Dies geschah bei einer Kdr.Besprechung am **21 Jun 41** vormittags. (s. Karte „Verteidigung der Grenzstellung der 121 ID u. Versammlung fuer den Angriff am 22.6.41.“)

Gegen **16.00** Uhr wurden vor der zum Appell angetretenen Truppe Hitlers Aufruf an die Soldaten der Ostfront u. der Tagesbefehl des Div.Kdrs. verlesen. Es ist heute schwer zu beschreiben, welche Gefuehle den einzelnen Soldaten, ob Offz., Uffz. oder Mann, beseelten. Von Begeisterung war keine Spur. Zuversicht mischte sich mit der bangen Frage, was der unendlich weite vor uns stehende Raum, der Kampf mit einem so gut wie unbekanntem Gegner u. die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Bolschewismus, der uns zumeist nur aus der – freilich Jahre zurueckliegenden – Propaganda bekannt war, fuer schicksalshafte Folgen haben wuerden: fuer unser Vaterland, fuer unsere Familien, fuer unsere unmittelbare soldatische Gemeinschaft u. fuer uns persoendlich. Wer wird je diese spannungsgeladene Stunde vergessen, die dem Beginn des Angriffs – am **22 Jun 41, 3.05** Uhr – voranging! (*Geschichte der 121. ostpreussischen Inf.-Div. 1940-1945*, 16)

--**22.6.41**: Bei 16. u. 18. Armee gewinnt der Angriff gegen zunaechst schwachen Feindwiderstand an Raum. (*KTB OKW*, 417)

--**22.6.41 (30 ID)**: On **22 Jun 41**, Kurt v. Tippelskirch's Schleswig-Holstein **30 ID** assembled south of Memel and attacked. . . [See text for background on Tippelskirch.] Despite the fact that it had no water obstacles to its front, **30 ID**⁴⁶⁰ had a difficult time on 22 June. Initially, the advance was rapid and several of the newly-constructed Soviet bunkers were not even manned. Soon,

⁴⁵⁹ **Note:** Is that an accurate statement?

however, they ran into at least a battalion of Mongolian construction workers, who fought bravely and well. They hid in the crops and ambushed German columns all day long. Long before it dawned on most of the *Wehrmacht*, the men from Schleswig and Holstein realized that the war w/ Russia was going to be much tougher than almost anyone in the Nazi leadership had even dreamed. (S.W. Mitcham, Jr., *Men of Barbarossa*, 59-60)⁴⁶¹

--21./22.6.41 (Ia KTBAOK 16):

Inhalt des ersten Bandes:

Grenzkaempfe u. Kaempfe um Njemen-Uebergaenge. Einnahme von Kowno **24./25.6.[41]**.

Armeehauptquartiere:

21.-24.6. vorm.: Trakehnen (Hauptgestüt)

Schlacht- u. Gefechtsbezeichnungen fuer den Ostfeldzug . . .

16. Armeec.

1.) Grenzkaempfe in Litauen

22.6.-29.6.41.

a) Durchbruch durch die Grenzstellungen

22.6.-25.6.41

b) Vorstoss ueber den Njemen u. Einnahme von Kowno

22.6.-26.6.41

21.6.41:

11.57: Kommt von H.Gr.Nord das Stichwort „***Dortmund***.“

12.12 – 14.40: Das Stichwort wird an die Gen.Kdos. u. an **253 ID** weitergegeben.⁴⁶²

12.30: Fernspruch von **11.57** wird der H.Gr.Nord von der Armeec. bestaetigt.

14.00:

a) Abteilungsleiter, Gruppenleiter u. Ord.-Offz. werden vom **Ia** ueber den Eingang des Stichwort „***Dortmund***“ orientiert. Der Stab traegt ab sofort die Bezeichnung **AOK 16**. Das Stichwort ist entsprechend den ergangenen Befehlen an unterstellte Einheiten weitergegeben.

b) Letzte Fragen des **Ia** an die Abteilungsleiter werden geklaert.

⁴⁶⁰ **Note:** Writes Gerhard Lohse, “Das Gen.Kdo. fuehrte zwar noch in der Nacht [22./23.6.] einen Teil der bisher der **30 ID** unterstellten Heerestruppen, vor allem die Sturmabteilungen 665 u. 667, der [126 ID] zu, jedoch war ihr Einsatz nicht mehr noetig.“ Lohse also states that the corps’ Angriffsschwerpunkt was in sector of **30 ID**, “weil hier das natuerliche Hindernis des Ostflusses fehlt.“ (*Geschichte der 126. Inf.-Div.*, 12.)

⁴⁶¹ **Note:** Mitcham has cribbed all or most of this from Carell!

⁴⁶² **Note:** The **253 ID** was Sixteenth Army’s reserve division; it was outfitted with French Pak and Kfz. (“Das materielle Ausstattung des dt. Ostheeres am 22. Juni 1941,” in *GSWW*.)

22.6.41:

3.05: Planmaessiger Beginn des Angriffs.

4.00 – 4.45: Die ersten Meldungen des Korps laufen ein, aus denen der allgemeinen Eindruck gewonnen werden muss, dass der Feind *keine besondere Gegenwehr leistet*.

Besondere Einzelheiten:

a) Die Bruecken von Schirwindt – Naumiestis – Eydtkau kommen unversehrt in unsere Hand.

b) In Kyrbatai [sic]⁴⁶³ entwickelt sich Kampf gegen Bunker u. Keller, der am spaeten Nachmittag noch nicht beendet war. (Spaeterer Zusatz: am **23.6.** ergaben sich die letzten Reste der Besatzung.) . . .

5.50: Ergebnis der Luftaufklaerung:

a) Rueckl. Bewegungen nach Sakiai u von dort nach Osten.

b) **8 PD** vor Jurbarkas, Teile **41 AK** [**mot.**] Richtung Schaulen, dort zurueckgehende fdl. Inf.-Marschkolonnen auf Strassen.

5.45: Fliiegerangriff auf Bahnhof Eydtkau, etwa **20** Bomben. Nach Meldung Kodeis [**6.00** Uhr] einige Treffer in Gleisanlagen u. Ausfall einer Breitspurlok eines Pz.Zueges.⁴⁶⁴

7.15: Etwa **6.00** Uhr⁴⁶⁵ erreichte Linie 1. Morgenmeldung an H.Gr.Nord.

8.30: **2 AK** orientiert:

a) Luftaufklaerung meldet noch immer rueckl. Bewegungen in ostw. Richtung.

b) Lage bei Kybartai – Wirballen noch ungeklaert. In Kybartai haelt sich der Gegner noch in Kellern u. Bunkern.

c) **32 ID** hat **8.00** Wald bei Skardupiai durchschritten. **12 ID** Kunigiskiai erreicht. **121 ID** nach Luftaufklaerung vorderste Teile ostw. Alvita. Chef ordnet an, dass die Schnelle Abteilung (Holm) der **253 ID** sofort in Marsch gesetzt wird nach Göritten zur Verfueg. der Armee. . .

9.30: **2 AK** meldet, dass **121 ID** Alvitas durchschritten hat u. gegen Vilkaviski [sp?] vorgeht. Die schnelle Abt. (Holm) soll ueber Pilviski nach Mariampole stossen. **Ia** regt an, diese Abt[eilung] artilleristisch besonders gut auszustatten.

9.35: **10 AK** gibt Orientierung. Gegner setzt sich anscheinend planmaessig ab. . .

10.10: **Ia** orientiert H.Gr.Nord:

a) Feind hat die vorbereiteten grenznahen Stellungen nicht verteidigt.

b) Ansatz der schnellen Abt. (Holm).

c) Nachfuehrung der **206, 251, 253 ID**.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶³ **Note:** Should be “Kybartai.”

⁴⁶⁴ **Note:** “Pz.Zug”—in this context must be an armored train.

⁴⁶⁵ **Note:** Numbers difficult to read, but this would be the normal time for such a report.

⁴⁶⁶ **Note:** **206** and **251 ID** belonged to the Army Group North reserve.

d) Die Armee ist *zur Verfolgung uebergegangen*, mit dem Ziel, den Njemen moeglichst schnell zu erreichen.

14.30: a) Die Umsetzung des *Panzerzuges* auf Breitspur bereitet Schwierigkeiten, weil Geraet unbrauchbar.⁴⁶⁷ . . .

16.00: Chef **28 AK** meldet:

a) Uebergaenge bei [Olita]⁴⁶⁸ fest in der Hand der **3 PzGr**.

b) Es entsteht der Eindruck, dass sich der feindl. Widerstand vor dem Abschnitt des Korps verstaerkt.

16.55: **2 AK** meldet Absicht fuer den **23.6.:** Vorfuehren der **3** Diven. in gleicher Hoehe bis Linie Mozniskiai [sp?] – Petkeliskiai – Voiveriai [sp?] – Pazerai. *Schnelle Abt. (Holm)* soll noch heute bis Gudeliai vorstossen.

18.25: H.Gr.Nord ist mit der geplanten *Vorfuehrung der rueckw. Divisionen einverstanden*.

18.32: Chef **9 Armee** orientiert ueber eigene Lage. Linker Fluegel **26 ID [6 AK]** bei Mariampole. **3 PzGr** bei Olita u. Markine Njemen ueberquert. Bruecken unzerstoert.

19.25: **10 AK** meldet erneuten fdl. Widerstand vor **126 ID**, die Feuer aus l.Flanke erhaelt. **30 ID** geht am Suedufer Njemen entlang vor. **8 PD** hat Brueckenkopf ueber die Dubissa gebildet, kein Feindwiderstand.

Vorausabteilungen der beiden Div. sind bestrebt noch heute den Njemen zu gewinnen.

19.45: [New orders go out to **28 AK** in what appears to be attempt to reign it in a bit by having it concentrate on destroying Russian forces still west of the Nemen; see text for details.]

20.08: Chef laesst sich vom **28 AK** noch einmal ueber Lage informieren: Schlechtes Vorwaertskommen des rechten Fluegels, stiess auf ueberlegenen Gegner, ist bei Voveriai nicht ueber die Novos heruebergekommen. Korps schliesst [auf?] in Linie Janukiskiai – Zypliai, um gegen den Waldkomplex vorzugehen. . .

23.6.41:

8.20: **Ia** bespricht mit Chef **10 AK** die Absichten fuer den **23.6.** u. macht noch einmal auf die *Gefahr von Flankenangriffen, sowie auf Unternehmungen kleinerer Feindgruppen im Ruecken u. auf rueckw. Verbindungen aufmerksam*. Auch die Artillerie muss jederzeit auf fdl. Kavallerie – u. Panzerangriffe gefasst werden.

⁴⁶⁷ **Note:** So the withdrawing Russians had the time to damage or destroy some vital railroad equipment / infrastructure?

⁴⁶⁸ **Note:** Almost looks like “Olifa,” but must be “Olita.”

8.45: 2 AK orientiert u. erhaelt Anweisung: energische Massnahme gegen *kleinere Feindgruppen im bereits durchschrittenen Gelaende* zu ergreifen.⁴⁶⁹

...

9.20: H.Gr.Nord wird orientiert. **30 ID** hat noch am Abend des **22.6.** mit V.A. einen Brueckenkopf ueber den Njemen bei Panemine [sp?] erkaempft u. erfolgreich gegen russ. Panzerangriff verteidigt. . .

9.30: GFM v. Leeb bespricht mit O.B. persoendlich die Lage. Wichtige Punkte:

- a) Vorgehen des **2 AK**. Verhalten **28 AK** vor d. grossen Waldgebiet. (In *keine verlustreichen Waldkaempfe einlassen*.)
- b) Uebergang von Teilen der **30 ID** ueber den Njemen bei Serezius kann in Frage kommen.
- c) Gesamtbild der Lage bei **AOK 18** ist das gleiche wie bei **AOK 16** (mit Ausnahme heftiger Kaempfe bei Tauroggen). . .

10.20: Ia bespricht mit Kodeis die Lage an der Bahnstrecke Eydtkau – Pilwiszki. Panzerzug ist ab **12.00** einsatzbereit u. wird zunaechst bis Pilwiszki vorgefuehrt.

10.55: 2 AK orientiert:

- a) Schw.Art.Abt. 625 wird auf Kowno angesetzt.
- b) Panzerzug wird zur Unterstuetzung der Saeuberung des Waldgebietes westl. Kowno dem Korps unterstellt.

11.30: 2 AK meldet, dass zwischen **12.00 – 13.00** Uhr die *schnelle Abteilung des Korps (Oberst Holm)* ab Mariampole Richtung Kowno antritt.

11.40: 28 AK orientiert.

Einzelne Feindgruppen kaempfen zusammenhanglos im Gelaende; eigene Verluste infolge *dieser ungewohnten Kampfesart schwer*.⁴⁷⁰ . . .

Tagesuebersicht:

Gegner weicht nach Osten zurueck. Durch die Ueberraschung des gestrigen Angriffs ist anscheinend *eine einheitliche Fuehrung verloren gegangen*. Kleinere Feindgruppen kaempfen selbstaendig; einzelne Versprengte schiessen auf rueckw. Teile der durchmarschierten Truppen.

16 Armee ist ueberraschend gut vorwaertsgekommen.

(T-312, Roll 543, Ia KTB Nr. 5, Teil 2, Bd. I: 21.6.-31.7.41)

–**22.6.41:** General Busch led his infantry forward on the right wing of Army Group North, pressing east from the East Prussian border towards the Niemen River. These units struck the

⁴⁶⁹ **Note:** Appears Sixteenth Army was having same problems everyone else was—trying to root out Soviet stragglers hiding behind the front lines and ambushing small groups of Germans, motorcycle messengers, supply columns, etc. This must be reason for this order.

⁴⁷⁰ **Note:** Germans quickly grasping up and down the line how different this war with Russian is going to be from past experience!

right wing of Soviet 8 Army and the northern wing of 11 Army. Badly shaken, Kuznetsov's armies began to separate. (Taylor, *Barbarossa to Berlin*, 34)

--22.-25.6.41 (121 ID):

Von Eydtkau bis Michailow Pogost.

Chronik des ersten Tages („Schicksalstag des deutschen Volkes“)

3.05: 1./Pz.Jg.Abt. 121 gibt 1. Schuss als Zeichen zum Angriff ab. Pak-Feuer auf erkannte Widerstandsnester u. Kybarty.

3.44: faellt der erste Schuss der eigenen Artillerie.⁴⁷¹

3.45: treffen sich linker Fluegel **IR 407** u. Teile des **IR 405**, die Kybarty noerdl. umgangen haben, an der Rollbahn ostw. Kybarty.

3.47: nimmt **IR 408** Bajuray.

3.50: IR 407 nimmt Eisenbahn- u. Strassenbruecke Kybarty unversehrt in eigene Hand. In der Kommandantur⁴⁷² von Kybarty u. in einzelnen Bunkern noch heftiger Widerstand.

Gen.Maj. Lancelle, Kdr der **121 ID**, faehrt zum **IR 407** u. zum **IR 405** u. leitet den Kampf des **II./IR 405** gegen die *immer wieder aufflackernden Widerstandsnester in Kybarty*.

4.00: 16-to-Bruecke bei Sterken durch **4./Brueckenbau-Btl. 674** fertiggestellt, kurz darauf auch die Bruecken bei Kinderhausen u. Grenzkrug.

I./IR 405 erreicht hart noerdl. Kybarty vorstossend, die Bahnlinie Eydtkau – Kowno.

4.10: IR 407 erreicht Waldecke suedl. Wirballen.

4.12: AA 121 erhaelt den Auftrag, in der linken Flanke der Div. aufzuklaeren auf Boblaukis – Auduskiai – Sukliai – Keturkaimis.

4.55: Beginn der ersten feindl. Art.Feuers (auf Bahnhof Wirballen).

4.56: Umgehungsbruecke Eydtkau (24 to) fertiggestellt.

5.00: Oberst Dr. Franek, Kdr. **IR 405**, zieht **III./405** mit dem Auftrag vor, Wirballen zu nehmen u. auf Rakauzizna vorzustossen.

5.15: 8-to-Bruecke bei Sandau fertig.

5.45: russ. Fliegerangriff auf Eydtkau.

5.50: IR 407 nimmt Hoehle 114 u. NO-Ecke Wald **4** km suedl. Wirballen.

⁴⁷¹ **Note:** So, no preliminary barrage in this sector?

⁴⁷² **Note:** Perhaps best translated as “garrison hq.”

Auf Grund der Meldung des **IR 407**, dass feindliche Panzer im Anrollen auf Hoehe 114 seien, wird **Pz.Jg.Abt. 121** nach Kinderhausen u. spaeter nach Daukelaikini vorgezogen.

6.00: II./IR 405 liegt noch immer in Kybarty fest.

III./405 nimmt ohne Feindwiderstand Wirballen.

I./405 erreicht Linie Wirballen – Karalinavas.

6.15: Erste feindl. Aufklaerer [Flugzeuge] erscheinen ueber **IR 407**.

6.20: Maj.Gen. Lancelle kehrt zum Div.Gef.Std. zurueck.

6.30: Vordere Linie der Div. Erzbolowskije (2 km suedl. Wirballen) – Ostrand Wirballen – Ostankino. . .

8.00: Eigene Infanterie bis etwa 3 km ostw. Wirballen vorgestossen.
Div. befiehlt: [see text for details]

8.23: Eigene Infanterie erreicht die Linie Penkiniai – Rakanzizna – Versnupiai.

10.00: II./405 nach Ueberwindung des Feindwiderstandes in Kybarty im zuegigen Vorgehen bis ueber Kaukakaimis vorgestossen, nimmt dort Anschluss an **IR 407**.

10.50: I./405 erreicht Wegeknicke hart SW Wylkowyszky. Dort flackert der Haeuserkampf immer wieder auf. Mit Stosstrupps, Pak u. IG wird der Widerstand an der Kaserne gebrochen.

11.00: Radfahr.Kp./IR 405, verstaerkt durch einen Pak-Zug, erreicht Wylkowyszky, setzt in der Stadt einige Panzer ausser Gefecht u. stoest bis zum Ostrand des Ortes durch.

IR 407 erreicht den Sirwinta-Durchbruch [?] bei Vaiklaukis.

12.55: VA Holm wird zunaechst der **121 ID** unterstellt u. erhaelt den Auftrag, Pilvisky in Besitz zu nehmen.

15.00: Nach zweistueudiger Pause tritt **IR 405** auf der Hauptstrasse NO Wylkowyszky an, um nach Erreichen der Sesupe-Brueckenkoepfe bis Bahnhof Pilvisky vorzuschieben. Zugleich tritt **IR 407** in Richtung Pilvisky ueber Budwieziai – Jurgeliai an.

16.15: AA 121, nach kurzem Gefecht bei Konstantinava im Kampf mit sich in Feldbefestigungen bei Ciciunai zah verteidigendem Feind liegend, bittet um Unterstuetzung. Div. befiehlt daher Angriff **IR 408** (verstaerkt durch **III./AR 121** u. zwei Stugs) auf Viskiakaimis ueber Ciziunai.⁴⁷³

16.20: Oblt. Gehrt (**AA 121**) meldet, dass russ. Offz.- u. Mannsch.-Uniformen im Gelaende herumliegen u. der Verdacht besteht, dass diese *mit Zivilbekleidung vertauscht worden sind*.

⁴⁷³ **Note:** “Ciciunai” or “Ciziunai?”

18.40: IR 407 steht hart SW Masikvietiskiai, IR 405 bei Majoriskiai.

19.20: Vorderste Teile IR 407 erreichen Vekerotiskiai, IR 405 Uzbaliai. . . [see text for more details]

22.00: Div. erreicht nach harten Kaempfen Gegend 4 km SW Pilvisky.
500 Gefangene wurden eingebracht, Geschuetze, Panzer u. Waffen aller Art erbeutet.

23.00: Vorderste Teile in der Linie Budvieciai – Jausballiai.
Wylkowyszky wurde vor der Einnahme durch deutsche Artillerie, spaeter durch russ. Artillerie in Brand geschossen.

Am **23 Jun 41** sollte die **121 ID** in breiter Front durch das Waldgebiet Kazlai Ruda vorgehen u. die Gegend beiderseits Paezeriai erreichen. . . Um **10.00** Uhr marschiert **I./IR 405** . . . in Pilvisky ein. Indessen rauecherte **Pi.Btn. 121** noch zwei Bunker in Kybarty aus. . .

Tiefsandige Wege u. starke Hitze forderten von Menschen, Pferden u. Motoren hoechste Anstrengungen. . . Je naeher die Truppe an Kazlai Ruda herankam, um so mehr *verstaerkt sich der feindl. Widerstand*. Als die Spitze des **IR 405** um **19.30** Uhr Kazlai Ruda erreichte, *verteidigte sich der Russe verbissen*. . . Waehrend ein grosses russ. Muni-Depot unter fortwaehrenden Explosionen in die Luft flog, wurde der Feind in die Waelder ostw. Kazlai Ruda zurueckgedrueckt. . . [see text for more details]

Am **24 Jun 41** erhielt die Div. Auftrag, die Westfront der Festung Kowno anzugreifen. . . **IR 405** u. **IR 408** begannen eine Stunde spaeter [**5.30** Uhr] ihren Vormarsch. Im *unuebersichtlichen Waldgelaende* gerieten **II.** u. **III./405** infolge der *schlechten Karten* auf die Vormarschstrasse des **IR 408**, ohne indessen den Marsch dieses Rgts. zu stoeren. . .

[**25 Jun 41**] Trotz erheblicher Verzoegerungen an der Kriegsbruecke marschierte die Masse der Div. im Laufe des Tages in Kowno ein. . . [see text for more details]

(Geschichte der 121. ostpreussischen Inf.-Div. 1940-1945, 16-18)

--**22.6.41 (126 ID):**

Am **22.6.41** durchbrach die Div. . . die sowj. Stellungen an der ostpreussisch-litauischen Grenze. Sie unterstand damit dem Oberkommando der H.Gr.Nord, dem sie bis zu ihrer Aufloesung im **Mai 45** verbunden blieb. Die Bereitstellung hatte sich in schwierigen Nachtmaerschen vollzogen, deren Ablauf wegen der kurzen Dunkelheit bis in die letzten Einzelheiten vorbereitet werden musste. Dabei konzentrierte sich die Div. links neben der **122 ID (2 AK)** auf den rechten Teil ihres bisherigen Sicherheitsabschnitts, waehrend links von ihr die **30 ID** (Gen.Lt. Tippelskirch) eingeschoben wurde. Dorthin legte das Gen.Kdo. X den Angriffsschwerpunkt, weil hier das natuerliche Hindernis des Ostflusses fehlte.

Dieses bedeutete allerdings den Infanteristen u. Pionieren der **126 ID** nicht viel.

Als am **22.6.** kurz nach **3.00** Uhr die Stille des strahlenden Sommersonntags von den singenden Geraeuschen eines in grosser Hoehe gefuehrten Luftkampfes durchbrochen wurde, setzten schon die ersten Flosssaecke ueber den Fluss. Die **1./Pi.Btl. 126** war fuer diese Aktion dem **IR 422** u. die **2./Pi.Btl. 126** dem **IR 426** unterstellt, das anstelle von Obst. Herbst jetzt von Obstlt. Hemmann gefuehrt wurde.

Die russ. Grenzposten wurden ueberrascht u. nach kurzem Widerstand ueberwaeltigt. Erst das weitere Vorgehen fand den Gegner abwehrbereit. Immerhin konnte sofort nach dem gelungenen Flussuebergang Obst.Lt. Neumann als Div. Pionierfuehrer den Bau von Befehlsbruecken anordnen, die ihren Betrieb schon um **3.40** Uhr aufnahmen. Um **4.45** Uhr waren alle drei Inf.Rgter. (wenn auch ohne die Reservebataillon) auf dem Ostufer des Ostflusses.⁴⁷⁴ Eine Reihe der Div. unterstellter Pioniereinheiten (**Pi.Btl. 657**, **Brueckenbaubl. 566**, u. Teile des **Baubtl. 98**) konzentrierten ihre Taetigkeit auf den Bau von Bruecken, von denen die erste bei Lugeck bereits um **5.15** Uhr, die naechste bei Gutpetern um **7.00** Uhr fertig war. Eine weitere kleine Bruecke bei Gutpetern (im Abschnitt der **IR 422**) war erhalten geblieben. Das **Brueckenbaubl. 566** erstellte bei Grenz-hoehe eine **16-t-Bruecke**, die um **13.00** Uhr stand.

Ueber sie verlegte mit dem Div.Stab auch die Artillerie nach Osten, soweit nicht einzelne Batterien den Fluss schon in einer Furt ueberschritten hatten. Die bespannten u. mot. Teile der uebrigen Kampftruppen folgten.

Der *erste Blick in das Land jenseits der Grenze war unvergesslich*. Der Unterschied zwischen Ostpreussen mit seinen gepflegten Strassen, Doerfern u. Staedten u. Litauen mit unergruendlichen Sandwegen u. aermlichen Katen zeigte, dass *hier eine andere Welt begann*.

Inzwischen hatte sich in den fruehen Nachmittagsstunden der Russe *zu heftigen Widerstand gefunden*. Vor allem **IR 422** musste sich muhsam vorwaertskaempfen. Dabei machte das Rgt. auch die erste Bekanntschaft mit Kampfmethoden, die auf westl. Kriegsschauplaetzen nicht ueblich waren. Aus einem Kornfeld heraus, weit hinter der vorderen Linie, richteten Teile eines [russ.] M.G.-Bataillons einen unerwarteten Angriff gegen das **II./422**, das als Reserve vorgezogen wurde. Das Btl.-Kdr. (Hptm. Lohmar) fiel, sein Adjutant (Lt. Wardien) wurde schwer verwundet. Hierdurch entstand voruebergehend eine allgemeine Verwirrung, die der K.Gr., vor allem aber den Fuehrungsstaeben zu schaffen machten. Erst als um **17** Uhr Teile der **13./IR 424** (Ob.Lt. Bruch) das unbesetzte Sakiai erreichten, wurde klar, dass die Div. den ersten Kampftag erfolgreich bestanden hatte. Der Feind – mehrere Bataillone Grenz- u. Bautruppen – war zersprengt. Gefangene bestaetigten, dass *keine groesseren Verbaende in unmittelbaren Naehe zu erwarten waren*. Das Gen.Kdo. fuehrte zwar noch in der Nacht einen Teil der bisher der **30 ID** unterstellten Heerestruppen,

⁴⁷⁴ **Note:** This (the “Ostfluss”) must be a river line just beyond the border; the Nemen was at least **20** km beyond the border from **126 ID**.

vor allem die *Sturmabteilungen 665 u. 667*, der Div. zu, jedoch war ihr Einsatz nicht mehr noetig.

Da die **30 ID** bereits am Morgen des **23.6.** bei Vilkija einen Brueckenkopf ueber die Memel gebildet hatte, konnte sich die eigene Div. zum Vormarsch gliedern, der ohne Feindberuehrung bis zum **10.7.** dauerte. Die Spitze uebernahm eine V.A. aus **AA 126, Radf.-Kp. IR 426, 3./Pi.Btl. 126** u. einem Zug **Pz.Jg.Abt. 126**. Am **24.6.** wurde ab **22.00** Uhr die bei Vilkija errichtete Pontonbruecke ueberschritten.⁴⁷⁵

(G. Lohse, *Geschichte der 126. Inf.-Div.*, 11-12)

--**22.6.41 (30 ID (10 AK))** begins its assault:

The men of **30 ID**, from Schleswig-Holstein, were in position south of the Memel. They had no water obstacles to overcome on their first day. The sapper platoon of their advanced [sic] detachment, under 1Lt. Weiss, crept up to the barbed wire. For days they had been observing every detail. The Russians patrolled the wire only intermittently. Their defenses were farther back, along some high ground.

Softly. Softly . . . The wire-cutters clicked. A post rattled. Quiet-listen. But there was no movement on the other side. Faster. Now the passages were clear. And already the men of **6th Coy** were coming up on the double, ducking as they ran. Not a shot was fired. The two Soviet sentries stared terrified down the carbine-barrels and raised their hands.

Keep going.

The observation towers on Hills 71 and 67 stood out black against the sky. There the Russians were established in strong positions. The German troops were aware of it. And so were the gunners of the hvy group of **30 Art.Rgt.** waiting in the frontier wood behind them. The Russian MGs opened up from the tower on Hill 71. These were the *first shots fired* between Memel and Dubysa. Immediately the reply came from the well-camouflaged hvy field howitzers of **II./A.R. 47**, in position behind the regiments of **30 ID** on the road from Trappenen to Waldheide. Where their mortar-bombs burst there would be no grass growing for a long time.

Assault guns forward! Ducking behind the steel monsters, Weiss's advance detachment was storming the high ground. Already they were inside the Soviet positions. The Russians were *taken by surprise*. Most of them were *not even manning their newly built, though only partly finished, defenses*. They were still in their bivouacs. These were the *Mongolian construction battalions*, employed here on building frontier defenses. Wherever they were encountered, in groups or platoon strength, manning those defenses, they fought *stubbornly and fanatically*.

The German troops were *beginning to realize that this was not an opponent to be trifled with*. These men were not only brave but also full of guile. They were

⁴⁷⁵ **Note:** So it appears the **126 ID** crossed the Nemen on **24.6.41**.

masters of camouflage and ambush. They were first-rate riflemen. Fighting from an ambush had always been the great strength of the Russian infantry. Forward pickets, overrun and wounded, would wait for the first German wave to pass over them. Then they would resume fighting. Snipers would remain in their foxholes w/ their *excellent automatic rifles w/ telescopic sights*, waiting for their quarry. They would pick off the drivers of supply vehicles, officers, and orderlies on motor-cycles.

(P. Carell, *Hitler Moves East*, 28-29)

--22.6.41 (126 ID (10 AK)) begins its assault:

The **126 ID**, from Rhine-Westphalia, fighting alongside the men from Schleswig-Holstein, also learned a bitter lesson from the tough Soviet frontier troops. The **II./I.R. 422**, suffered hvy losses. Parts of a Soviet MG picket had hidden themselves in a cornfield and allowed the first wave of the attack to pass by. In the afternoon, when Capt. Lohmar unsuspectingly led his battalion from reserve positions to the front, the Russians in the crops suddenly opened up. Among those killed was the battalion commander, among those seriously wounded was his adjutant. It took an entire coy three hours to flush the four Russians out of the field. They were still firing when the Germans had got within **10** feet of them, and had to be silenced w/ hand-grenades.

(P. Carell, *Hitler Moves East*, 29)

1.7.4: 4 Panzer Group

--Gen.Obst. Erich Hoepner:

1937 erfolgte die Ernennung zum Generalmajor. Erich Hoepner wurde im Herbst 1937 zum Kommandeur der **1. leichte Division** in Wuppertal ernannt. Schon am 30. Januar 1938 folgte mit Patent vom 1. August 1937 die Beförderung zum Generalleutnant. Er übernahm im Herbst 1938 das **XVI. Armeekorps** als Kommandierender General. 1938 war Hoepner auch an Plänen für einen möglichen Militärputsch gegen Hitler beteiligt, der aber durch das Münchener Abkommen nicht zur Durchführung kam. Am 1. April 1939 wurde er zum General der Kavallerie befördert. Als solcher führte er das **XVI. Armeekorps** im Polenfeldzug. Für die Leistungen in diesem Feldzug erhielt er am 27. Oktober 1939 das Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes. Auch im Westfeldzug kommandierte er weiter das **XVI. Armeekorps**. Am 19. Juli 1940 wurde er zum Generaloberst befördert. Er behielt die Führung über seinen Stab, als dieser zur **Panzergruppe 4** umbenannt wurde. [Beteiligt an Russlandkrieg] Auch bei der weiteren Umbenennung am 1. Januar 1942 in **4. Panzerarmee** kommandierte Hoepner diesen Stab. Am 8. Januar 1942 wurde Hoepner aber auf Befehl Hitlers abgelöst und anschließend auch unehrenhaft aus der Wehrmacht entlassen. Er hatte während der sowjetischen Winteroffensive einen Durchhaltebefehl ignoriert und die eigenen Truppen auf vorbereitete Stellungen zurückgenommen. Er zog sich dann in Berlin in das Privatleben zurück und fand aber 1943 Anschluss an den militärischen Widerstand. Am 20. Juli 1944 befand er sich im Bendlerblock in Berlin, wo er in der Nacht verhaftet wurde. Im ersten Prozess gegen die Attentäter des 20. Juli 1944 wurde er am 8. August 1944 zum Tode verurteilt.

Er wurde noch am gleichen Tag in Berlin-Plötzensee erhängt. Ritterkreuz (27. Oktober 1939) (*lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de*)

– Opponent of Hitler (anti-Nazi) and Russian campaign. For great anecdote, see his remarks shortly before start of campaign. (Buecheler, *Hoepner*, 130-31)

– Hoepner's Character: 8 Jan 42 waere bei strikter Befolgung von Hitlers Haltebefehl ein der **4 PzGr** unterstelltes Korps im Front-bogen von Borowsk eingeschossen u. vernichtet worden. Zum Glueck fuer diese Truppe war ein mil. Fuehrer vom Range Erich Hoepner's aufgerufen, die Verantwortung fuer die ihm anvertrauten Soldaten hoeher zu stellen als formalen Gehorsam u. die von Hitler geforderte Subordination. Der Diktator witterte sofort, dass da **einer war, der sich von ihm nicht blenden liess**, der seine geistige Unabhaengigkeit behauptete, der, in der pruess-ischen Tradition der v.d. Marwitz, Seydlitz, u. Yorck [handelte]. . . “Als Mann des militaerischen Widerstands von der ersten bis zum letzten Stunde hatte er wie nur ganz wenige einen Blick fuer die zerstoererische, der preussischen Art u. Tradition fremden Natur Hitlers . . . (Buecheler, *Hoepner*, 12-13)

--General Hoepner's **4 PzGr** numbered **680** panzers and **165,000** men. The group had two panzer corps under its command: Reinhardt's **41 PzK** (**1 PD** w/ **145** tanks, **6 PD** w/ **245** tanks, and **36 ID (mot.)**; Manstein's **56 PzK** (**8 PD** w/ **212** tanks and **3 ID (mot.)**). In reserve the panzer corps had the **3 SS ID (mot.) Totenkopf**. (Brian Taylor, *Barbarossa to Berlin. A Chronology...* 14-16)

--4 PzGr tank strength:

1 PD: 43 Pz II, 71 Pz III (5), 20 Pz IV, 11 PzBef. (**Pz.Rgt. 1**)

6 PD: 47 Pz II, 155 Pz 35t, 30 Pz IV, 5 PzBef 35t, 8 PzBef. (**Pz.Rgt. 11**)

8 PD: 49 Pz II, 118 Pz 38t, 30 Pz IV, 7 PzBef 38t, 8 PzBef. (**Pz.Rgt. 10**)

(T.L. Jentz, *Panzertruppen*, 190-91)

--Beim bevorstehenden Kampf in der grossen Tiefe wuerde sich ein Nachteil sehr bald bemerkbar machen, **das Fehlen schneller Reserven in der Hand der Pz.Gr!** . . . Nur SS “T” in Reserve. (see, de Beaulieu, *Generaloberst Hoepner*, 135)

--Soviet Forces along the Line of Advance of 4 PzGr:

a) **4 PzGr: 1, 6, 8 PDs, 290 ID, 269 ID** (first echelon).

b) Frontage in kilometers = **40**.

c) **125 RD** (Soviet formation on frontier in area of **4 PzGr** offensive)

(J. Erickson, *The Soviet High Command*, 592)

– Mission:

Die Erwaegungen u. Absichten des GFM v. Leeb fanden in der “**Aufmarsch- u. Kampfanweisung Barbarossa**,” der H.Gr.Nord vom **5.5.1941** ihren Niederschlag in folgender Form-ulierung [see text for details]. Hier ist das ueber **800 km** entfernt liegende Operationsziel Leningrad bereits erwachnt. Bis zum genannten ersten Zwischenziel, der Duena, betrug die Ent-fernung auch bereits **300 km**, was entfernungsmaessig immerhin dem 1. Operationsziel des Frankreichfeldzuges,

der Kanalkueste, entspricht. Diese weitraeumige Zielweisung der H.Gr. - das zweite Zwischenziel, die Suedspitze des Peipus-Sees bei Pleskau in **550 km** Entfernung ist der Pz.Gr. Ebenfalls schon gewiesen! - unterstricht deutlich, wie *zuversichtlich* ihr O.B. die Kampfaussichten gedanklich beurteilte.

Die Auftragsziffer fuer die **4 PzGr** lautete in der (bereits erwachten) ***Aufmarschanweisung der H.Gr.:***

“**4 PzGr** durchbricht im Zusammenwirken mit 16. u. 18. Armeen unter scharfer Zusammenfassung ihrer Kraefte u. Einsatz der beiden unterstellten Inf.Divn. Zwischen dem Njemen u. der Strasse Tilsit, Riga (einschl.) die feindliche Grenzzone . . .

[See text for more details, de Beaulieu, *Generaloberst Hoepner*, 132-33.

--**56 PzK Deployment & Mission:** Hoepner setzte fuer den Angriff ueber die Grenze rechts das **56** u. links das **41 PzK** ein. Der Stoss des **56 PzK** hatte sich aus dem engen Aufmarschraum noerdlich der Memel nach Osten zu entwickeln u. ueber den Knotenpunkt Kedainiai die Hauptstrasse Kowno – Duenaburg zu gewinnen. Ausser der zum Grenzschutz bereits eingesetzten **290 ID** war es nur moeglich, eine schnelle Div. (**8 PD**) noerdlich der Memel aufmarschieren zu lassen; alle andere musste suedlich des breiten Flusses verbleiben. Nur ca. **5 km** Grenzbreite standen der Div. [**8 PD?**] fuer ihre Entwicklung zur Verfuegung, u. dies in Waldungen diesseits u. jenseits/Tarnung u. damit auch Ueberraschung waren dafuer wahrscheinlich gewaehrleistet . . . Die **3 ID (mot.)** konnte zunaechst nur hinter der **8 PD** nachgezogen werden. Erst jenseits der Dubissa wurde eine breitere Entfaltung des Korps moeglich. (de Beaulieu, *Generaloberst Hoepner*, 134)

--**41 PzK Deployment & Mission:** Das **41 PzK** trat in breiterer Front ueber die Grenze an. Bei ihm waren neben **269 ID** (auf dem Ostfluegel) **6** u. **1 PD** in Front eingesetzt, letztere beiderseits der Hauptstrasse Tilsit – Schaulen – Riga. Diese Korps hatte zunaechst nach Norden Tiefe zu gewinnen, um erst dann in die Angriffsrichtung NO, zur Duena, einschwenken zu koennen. Der Grenzgegner vor ihm war staerker zu bewerten. Auf russ. Seite waren Schanzarbeiten nicht nur an der grossen Strasse, sondern auch suedlich u. SO Tauroggen beobachtet. Die Res.-Div. (**36 ID (mot.)**), musste auch hier suedlich der Memel bereitgehalten werden. (de Beaulieu, *Generaloberst Hoepner*, 134)

--Hoepner Violates OHK Orders: Nicht nur die **4 PzGr**, auch die vorgesetzte H.Gr.Nord war von vornherein der Ansicht, dass ihre Kraefte fuer *alle* gestellten Auftraege nicht reichten. . . [Problem of finding a *Schwerpunkt* for the attack.] Obwohl vom OKH “*Schwerpunkt rechts*” angeordnet worden war, machte die H.Gr. das links eingesetzte **41 PzK** (Reinhardt) staerker als das rechte **56 PzK** (Manstein). Entgegen der OKH-Weisung war also das rechte Korps um eine Pz.Div. Schwaecher als das linke. Der Chef der Ops.Abt. erinnert sich: [See text for details and anecdote involving Heusinger and Brauchitsch!/] (Buecheler, *Hoepner*, 130-31)

– Am Nachmittag des 23 Jun 41 zeigte sich deutlicher, wie richtig es war, “dass im ***Streit der Meinungen*** die **4 PzGr** gegen das Draengen des **56 PzK** daran festhielt, dass der *Schwerpunkt* . . . nicht rechts zum **56 PzK** gelegt wurde, sondern bei dem **41 PzK** blieb.” (Buecheler, *Hoepner*, 133)

– Das schnelle Erreichen der Duena u. ihr sofortiges Ueberwinden auf intakten Uebergaengen wurden damit *wichtigster Gesichtspunkt fuer alle zu treffenden Massnahmen*. Da Brueckensprengungen seitens des Feindes, z.B. der beiden Bruecken in Duenaburg . . . [see text] Zeitverlust von mindestens 3 Tagen bedeutete, . . . [see text]. (de Beaulieu, *Generaloberst Hoepner*, 133)

--Die Grenzkaempfe durften nicht aufhalten. Wo es ging, musste sofort weiter in die Tiefe gestossen werden. Der ca. **75 km** von der Grenze entfernt liegende, nach seiner Gelaendegestaltung zur Abwehr sehr geeignete **Dubissa-Abschnitt** sollte am ersten Kampftag nicht nur erreicht, sondern fuer das Weiterstossen durch gewonnene Brueckenkoepfe gesichert sein. (See, de Beaulieu, *Generaloberst Hoepner*, 133)

– Roll of Infantry: . . . war der Gegner anfaenglich wahrscheinlich schwach, so dass auch mit zunaechst geringerer Stosskraft Erfolge zu erzielen waren. In jedem Fall durften die Pz.-Kraefte *sich nirgends festbeissen, notfalls umholen u. durchstossen*. Fuer das Beseitigen staerkerer Widerstandes u. Ausraeumen des Schlacht-feldes waren bei beiden Pz.Kps. die ihnen unterstellten Inf.-Diven. Vorgesehen. (de Beaulieu, *Generaloberst Hoepner*, 133)

--**Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa (31.1.41):**⁴⁷⁶

4. *Auftraege an die Heeresgruppen u. Armeen*: . . .

4 Pz.Gr. durchbricht, zwischen Wystiter See u. Strasse Tilsit – Schaulen vordringend, in Verbindung mit **16** u. **18 Armee** die feindl. Front, stoest gegen die Duena bei u. unterhalb Dünaburg vor u. schafft sich Brueckenkoepfe ueber die Duena. Weiterhin wird es fuer **4 PzGr** darauf ankommen, so rasch wie moeglich die Gegend nordostw. Opotschka zu erreichen, um von hier aus je nach Lage in nordostw. oder noerdl. Richtung vorgefuehrt werden zu koennen.

(Halder, Franz. *Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. II. Appendix 2, 467)

--The organization of AGN and the orders to its units were intended to secure under all circumstances the *fastest possible free movement of the armored divisions*. For this reason, *unlike the other army groups*, 4 Panzer Group under Col-Gen Hoepner was *not placed under an infantry army*. Sixteenth Army on the right, and Eighteenth Army on the left, had to adjust their respective wings to the movements of the rapidly advancing armored group, cover its flanks, and “round up” remnants of overrun enemy forces.

The armored group had only two corps: **56 PzK** under General von Manstein, and **41 PzK** under General Georg-Hans Reinhardt. Manstein’s corps had only one armored, one motorized, and one normal infantry division. **41 PzK**, in whose attack sector *strong opposition was to be expected* and which was able to deploy and advance on a broad front, had two armored divisions, one motorized, and one normal infantry division. As a reserve the armored group had only one motorized division (**SS Totenkopf: ‘Death Head’**). The armored group advanced toward the Dvina with one corps in each of two spearheads, Manstein on the right toward Daugavpils (Dünaburg, Drinsk) and Reinhardt on the left toward Jekabpils (Jakobstadt). After establishing bridgeheads the two were to reach the area of Opochka rapidly and from there turn north or NE. (*GSSW*, Vol. IV, 538-39)

⁴⁷⁶ **Note:** Here I’ve carved out the portion of the Army’s Deployment Directive specifically addressing role of 4 Panzer Group.

--The cutting edge of AGN's sword was Hoepner's **4 PzGr**. Hoepner was to concentrate his armor sharply between the Nemen River and the Tilsit (Sovetsk) – Riga road and in cooperation w/ the Sixteenth Army on the right and Eighteenth Army on the left, thrust toward the Dvina between Daugavpils – Jekabpils, and capture bridgeheads in both places. Hoepner's main effort was to be on the right and the bridgehead of decisive import the one at Daugavpils. . . (Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, IV: 17)

--AGN published its campaign orders on **29 May 41**. Col.-Gen. Hoepner's mission was to attack to Dünaburg and Jekabpils to gain crossings over the Dvina River, push on to the Pskov – Opotshka Line and from there toward the southern approaches of Leningrad. Along w/ the Dnepr in the south, both sides believed the Dvina held the key to success. Speed, mainly getting to the bridges as quickly as possible, was of the essence. Accordingly, GFM von Leeb did not tie Hoepner to an infantry army as had been the case w/ the other three panzer groups. As intended, this meant that **4 PzGr** would *not have to wait for the marching Landser to catch up*. It was difficult to conceal the tremendous build-up of German troops in the congested Memelland, especially Hoepner's, but his men *disguised themselves as Lithuanian farmers and reconnoitered the frontier*. The panzer group had other limitations as well. It belonged to the smallest army group, which had the smallest complement of Luftwaffe support. The terrain was an *infamous mixture of woods and marshes*, once across the Dvina it turned into a "*thick green jungle*." Many of the panzer group's wheeled vehicles were *commercial and French made*, and **42%** of Hoepner's panzers were of Czech manufacture. For example, **6 PDs 155 PzKw 35(t)s** were among the *oldest panzers in the Wehrmacht inventory*. Their 37mm main gun had been rendered obsolete by newer armor, and along w/ other problems, its pneumatic steering made the vehicle nearly useless in freezing weather. As soon as Germany captured the Czechoslovak arsenal in **1938/39**, they declared the **35(t)** "*no longer suitable for combat*." (Kirchubel, *Hitler's Panzer Armies*, 132)

--**22.6.41: Pz.Gr. 4** stoesst erfolgreich noerdl. des Njemen bis Seredzius vor. (*KTB OKW*, 417)

--**22.6.41:** At the border on the Northwestern Front, **4 PzGr** struck at the junction of Soviet **8** and **11 Armies**. (J. Erickson, *The Soviet High Command*, 595)

--**22.6.41:** Bereits am ersten Tage lag der Angriff der **4 PzGr** vor hartem Widerstand an den Flusslaeuften fest.⁴⁷⁷ Das Ueberraschungsverfahren war diesmal nicht geglueckt. (Philippi & Heim, *Feldzug gegen Sowjetrussland*, 56)

--**22.6.41 Summary of Events:**

Am Morgen 22 Jun 41 trat die **4 PzGr** um **3.05** Uhr zum Vorstoss ueber die Grenze an. Der Befehlshaber befand sich beim **41 PzK**, wo, besonders im Raum von Tauroggen, mit Feindwiderstand gerechnet wurde. Das war auch der Fall.⁴⁷⁸ Jedoch wurde er auch hier im Lauf des Vormittags ueberwunden; das Korps befand sich in gutem Vorkommen nach Norden. **Tageseindruck:** Die beabsichtigte Ueberraschung des Feindes war geglueckt; bisher waren nirgends russische Gegenmassnahme groesseren Umfangs, sei es offensiver Art, oder Ruecknahmebewegungen feststellbar. In der *wichtigsten Stossrichtung*, nach Osten, hatte das **56 PzK** fruehzeitig die nur schwache Feind-Gegenwehr

⁴⁷⁷ **Note:** This seems to be a rather odd interpretation of first day's activities of **4 PzGr**.

⁴⁷⁸ **Note:** Soviet **125 RD** was defending virtually entire front hit by **4 PzGr**. Confirm!

ueberwunden u. war zur Dubissa durchgestossen. Am Abend befanden sich an den wichtigsten Uebergaenge auch Brueckenkoepfe in eigener Hand, die Bruecken selbst waren intakt.

(de Beaulieu, *Generaloberst Hoepner*, 136)

--**22.6.41**: **4 PzGr** was launched from Eighteenth Army area in the narrow strip of land between the lower Meme⁴⁷⁹ and the frontier, the panzer divisions entering the bridgehead on the night of 21 June by the Tilsit roadbridge and by two pontoon bridges which were put in place after dusk. Infantry formations had been allotted from Eighteenth Army to assist the two panzer corps through the *heavily wooded area on the frontier*, and at **3.05** a.m. infantry and tanks, supported by fire of about **600 guns**, crossed the frontier and plunged down the forest tracks. Resistance was almost negligible but this increased later in the day, particularly in the forested areas, although the *fighting was sporadic* and the action in small groups rather than that of a coordinated defense. The weather was fine and dry, yet bad routes and *narrow sandy tracks* winding through the forested ravines and gullies limited the rate of German progress. On the Soviet side, some **80,000** Soviet citizens of non-Baltic origin, soldiers' families, airfield and port construction workers, police and administrators who had been engaged in *sovietizing and russifying* the new territories, *flooded the few roads back to the Soviet Union, impeding the movement of Red Army reserves*. These would-be colonizers suffered many casualties from German air attack and were sped on their way by the *incursions of armed Lithuanians and Latvians*. (Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 102-03)

--**22.6.41**: In the northwest, what had begun badly continued to deteriorate. From his operational CP at Suboch (SE of Shauliya), Kuznetsov hustled his forces to the frontier. At **09.30** hours he ordered **3 MC** and **12 MC** (Maj.-Gen. N.M. Shestopalov) to take up their counter-attack positions, though both would operate under **8 Army** command. Berzarin's **27 Army**, which had one division (**67 RD**) deployed between Windau and Libau on the coast and a bde (**3rd Independent**) located on the islands of Osel and Dago, was also alerted. Strung out along the frontier from Libau to Grodno, Kuznetsov had **8** rifle divisions from two armies (the **8** and **11 Armies**): **10, 90, 125, 5, 33, 188, 126, 128 RDs**). Maj.-Gen. P.P. Bogabgun's **125 RD** covered the Tauroggen – Shauliya axis.

AGN *hit it w/ a massive armored fist*, **3** tank and **2** infantry divisions, plus the second echelon motorized forces of **4 PzGr**. By noon the **125 RD**, trying to stem this armored tide w/ *three guns to the kilometer*, began to fall back from Tauroggen. The German columns then swung against Rasienai, where Kuznetsov was concentrating his own armor for the morrow, and where Maj.-Gen. Bogdanov's **48 RD**, already battered by air attack, swung into action off the march. By the evening, the Soviet formations had fallen back to the river Dubissa; NE of Kaunas, at **19.00** hrs., **8 PD's** forward elements reached the Dubissa and seized the vital Airogola road viaduct across it. Without this crossing, German tanks might have been *trapped in what was a giant natural tank ditch*. A dash to Dvinsk would have been *wholly ruled out*. Now, as armor, motorized forces and the speedy infantry of **290 ID** raced across, that spurt was on. (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 128)

--**22.6.41**: After moving into their attack positions north of the Neman River during the *shortest night of the year*, *Barbarossa* began for the men of **4 PzGr** at **0305** hours w/ an artillery preparation fire that for some divisions lasted **3 hours**.⁴⁸⁰ The **56 PzK** fired **550** tubes of artillery, *Nebel-*

⁴⁷⁹ **Note**: Believe this is referred to today as the lower Neman River. Confirm!

⁴⁸⁰ **Note**: Three hours, really? Is this accurate?

werfer and railway guns at the defenders. The Germans attacked through a *thick morning fog* and immediately hit swampy ground. All of the *Panzertruppen* knew their commander's motto: "*Surprise, then forward, forward, forward!*" The Sixteenth Army on Leeb's right reported some resistance, but initially the enemy opposite Hoepner's men appeared disjointed. The **8 PD** broke free of the Soviet defenses, covered **80 km** that day and crossed the Dubyussa River at Ariogala. Manstein's **56 PzK** had avoided all Red Army units sent to intercept him and was in the open country deep in the enemy rear. Unfortunately for Reinhardt, his lead division, **6 PD**, encountered stiffer defenses. The heavy combat meant logistics support could not safely get forward. On the *very first day* the *division ran out of ammunition*. It failed to accomplish its daily mission, securing a bridgehead across the steep valley of the Dubyussa. Such are the fortunes of war, however. While Manstein made *spectacular advances* thanks to splitting the **8** and **11 Armies**, **41 PzK** was stymied despite destroying 186 tanks in the *war's first armored battle*. (Kirchubel, *Hitler's Panzer Armies*, 132-33)

--Most serious was the *breakdown in communications*; thus, the Military Soviet of Northwest Front, Kuznetsov, Dibrov and Klenov (Chief of Staff), drew up its *counterattack plans* on the evening of the 22nd in *fearful ignorance of what had actually happened*. Kuznetsov decided to prevent German breakthroughs to Shauliya – Kaunas – Vilno; the rifle formations of **8** and **11 Armies** would be assigned to this, while **12** and **3 MC** would attack the German concentrations which had broken through to the Dubissa, and which were operating on the Tilsit – Shauliya axis. [See text for many more details!]

While Kuznetsov planned to block or to chop off the German spearheads, he either *did not know or failed to grasp that the bottom of his front was in some danger of falling out*. AGC's success against Kuznetsov's **11 Army**, which had brought it across the Nemen bridges, simultaneously threatened Pavlov's right flank **3 Army** (of what was now Western Front) w/ a *deep outflanking movement*. The junction of the Northwestern Front w/ the Western Front had *already begun to sway ominously*. (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 128-29)

--**22.6.41**: There was very rapid German progress, in particular by the armored elements. Lead elements of **8 PD** [**56 PzK**] were already disappearing from the map by end of the first day of the offensive. You can clearly see **1** and **6 PD** [**41 PzK**] beginning their dash northward to Raseinai. (Glantz, ed., *Initial Period of the War*, 87)

--By the morning of **23.6.41**, the infantry of Eighteenth Army on the left flank near the Baltic coast, although suffering from the heat, had already marched more than 40 miles through Lithuania and had entered Latvia. Nearer the right flank, Manstein's **56 PzK** had moved forward boldly and cut the main Daugavpils – Kaunas highway about 80 miles to the south of the Dvina . . . (Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 103)

--**22.6.41** [Hoepner Brief]: Im Morgengrauen des 22 Juni 1941 trat die **4 PzGr** ueber die ostpreuss.-lit. Grenze zum Angriff an. Unweit von Tauroggen, das in der Geschichte zum Symbol preuss.-russ. Freundschaft geworden war, welcher A.H. jetzt den Todesstoss versetzte, ueberwachte Hoepner den Angriff des **41 PzK**. Tags darauf berichtete er darueber in seinem ersten Brief aus dem Ostfeldzug nach Hause:

Heute ist nun schon der zweite Operationstag. Der gestrige ist *nicht ganz nach Wunsch verlaufen*. Die Kaempfe um Tauroggen waren recht schwer. Trotzdem wir ein *Riesen-Feuerwerk* aufgezogen hatten, dass ich mir persoendlich aus der Naehе ansah, leistete der Russe zaehen Widerstand. Es waren Kaukasier . . . [see text for rest of this terrific quotation!]

(Buecheler, *Hoepner*, 132-33)

--22.6.41 (**Ia KTB 4 PzGr**):⁴⁸¹

2.50 Uhr melden Gen.Kdo. **41 PzK** u. Gen.Kdo. **56 PzK**, dass die Bereitstellung planmaessig geendet ist. Damit haben die Reste der **8, 6** u. **1 PD** ihre Ausgangsstellungen erreicht. . .

Um **3.05** Uhr bei klarem schoensten Wetter beginnt der Angriff gegen die UdSSR. Der **4 PzGr** war der Auftrag gegeben, am 1.B.-Tag die Grenze ueberschreitend, die russ. Grenzschutzstellungen Jurbarkas – Taugoggen zu durchbrechen u. bis ueber die Duena beiderseits Dünaburg durchzustossen. Sie hat als erstes Ziel die Linie Kedainiai – Schaulen gegeben. Die an der Grenze aufmarschierten Feindkraefte sind zu zerschlagen, ehe sie bewegt werden koennen, u. fruehzeitig ist die Dubysa zu ueberschreiten. Als weiter gestecktes zweites Ziel wird das Ostufer der Duena mit dem Schwerpunkt bei Dünaburg befohlen. Bei Dünaburg u. Jakobstadt sollen Brueckenkoepfe fuer die H.Gr. geschaffen werden.

Waehrend das **56 PzK** den Auftrag hat, mit Schwerpunkt rechts ueber Jurbarkas vorzustossen, schnell den Dubysa-Uebergang u. Kedainiai zu gewinnen u. fuer ein weiteres Vorgehen auf Dünaburg die Strasse Kowno – Dünaburg moeglichst bald zu erreichen, greift das **41 PzK** mit Schwerpunkt bei Taugoggen an, soll dann in breiter Front die Dubysa ueberschreiten u. nach Schadow [?] durchbrechen. Das **41 PzK** hat den Auftrag, die grosse Strasse Taugoggen – Schaulen zu beschleunigter Bewegung auszunutzen u. Schaulen im Handstreich zu nehmen.

Die zur **4 PzGr** als Reserve zur Verfueg. stehende **SS „T“-Div.** hat in der Nacht zum **22.6.** so aufgeschlossen, dass saemtliche Teile noerdl. der Pregel [sp?] stehen.

Der Angriff wird mit einem kurzen wirkungsvollen Artl.Schlag auf Taugoggen eingeleitet. **30**⁴⁸² Batterien mit **120** Geschuetzen sind daran beteiligt. Die beabsichtigte Schockwirkung dieses Artillerieueberfalles bleibt nicht aus. Bereits um **4.00** Uhr kommt eine Koluftmeldung, wonach **30-40** Lkw, mit Infanterie in wilder Fahrt, dazwischen auch Infanterie in regelloser Flucht auf Strasse Taugoggen – Schaulen nach NO gesehen wird (scheinbar Raemungsverkehr).

Von beiden Korps wird anfangs ueberall nur schwacher Feindwiderstand gemeldet.

Verhaeltnissmaessig zeitig gehen gegen **4.30** Uhr die ersten Meldungen ueber die erreichten Ziele ein. Das *unertraegliche Warten auf die ersten Erfolge* hat damit ein Ende.

⁴⁸¹ **Note:** Much of this text was not easy to read, so I'm making my best guesses on the proper spellings of a number of towns!

⁴⁸² **Note:** Number is difficult to decipher, but quite sure it's a **30**—makes sense, too, in that 30 batteries should have 120 guns.

Der **Ia** u. weitere Herren der Fuehrungsabteilung beobachten vom Turm der Kaserne, in der die Fuehrungsabt. untergebracht ist, den Feuerschlag auf Tauroggen. Der Befehlshaber ist auf Hoehe **500** m SW Bahnhof Gröszpeken [sp?] vorgefahren, um persoendlich den Angriff zu beobachten.

Der erste Orientierung der beiden Korps gegen **4.30** Uhr ergibt folgendes Bild: Beide Angriffsgruppen des **56 Pz** kommen recht gut vorwaerts. Schwaecherer Feind, der sich gegen Jurbarkas verstaerkt. Beim **41 PzK** wird der Widerstand westl. Tauroggen anscheinend mit staerkeren Kraeften durchgefuehrt.

Gegen **4.40** Uhr kann der **Ia** der **4 PzGr** die erste Orientierung ueber den bisherigen Stand des Angriffs an H.Gr.Nord geben. . .

[**Note**: Request from panzer group that Luftflotte 1 attack the enemy columns on the road to Schaulen ist denied—role of air fleet on this day is only to strike enemy ground organizations. See text.]

Gegen **5.40** Uhr ueberfliegen **9** russ. Bomber den Pz.Gr.Gef.Std. in Richtung Tilsit. Man kann beobachten, wie sie durch gut liegendes Flakfeuer zum Abdrehen gezwungen werden. Wie spaeter bekannt wurde, wurden von den **9** [russ.] Bombern **7** abgeschossen; auch richteten die abgeworfenen Bomben in Tilsit keinen nennenswerten Schaden an.

Nach fernmuendl. Ruecksprache mit dem rechten u. linken Nachbarn ergibt sich auch hier derselbe Eindruck wie bei der **4 PzGr**, dass vor der gesamten Front schwacher Feind, gut getarnt, z.T. in Bunkern, ***sich zaeh u. geschickht verteidigt***.

Um **6.00** Uhr kann das **56 PzK** melden, dass mit rechter Gefechtsgruppe der **8 PD** Jurbarkas mit unversehrter Mituva-Bruecke genommen ist, waehrend die linke Gefechtsgruppe der **8 PD** **5.45** Uhr im Vorgehen auf Luksiai ist u. **290 ID** **5.00** Uhr die Mituva bei Mantviliai ueberschritten hat u. im Vorgehen auf Zindaiciai ist. Das **41 PzK** ist mit **269 ID** im Angriff auf Sakalyne u. hat mit **6 PD** **6.30** Uhr die Seauvis [sp?]-Bruecke Kongajly unversehrt genommen. Die rechte Gefechtsgruppe der **1 PD** hat gegen **6.15** Uhr Tauroggen erreicht, die Eisenbahnbruecke westl. Tauroggen unversehrt genommen. Die linke Gefechtsgruppe der **1 PD** ist seit **5.00** Uhr im Vorgehen ueber die Jeziurupe-Bruecke suedl. Laikiske [sp?].

Im Allgemeinen kann um **7.00** Uhr bereits festgestellt werden, dass die fuer das weitere Vorgehen der **4 PzGr** im grenznahen Raum wichtigen Bruecken unversehrt in eigene Hand gefallen sind. Dieser Erfolg ist hauptsaechlich dem *Moment der gelungenen Ueberraschung zuzuschreiben*.

Nach einer Orientierung **7.45** Uhr durch den Chef des Stabes **41 PzK** ist **6 PD** ueber Bruecke Kongaly [sp?] im Vorgehen. . . **8.15** Uhr hat die **1 PD** mit einer K.Gr. Tauroggen durchschritten, in Tauroggen selbst wird noch ge-kaempft.

Die **4 PzGr** hat um **8.00** Uhr den Eindruck, dass der Feindwiderstand unmittelbar an der Grenze auf ganzer Front der Pz.Gr. nur gering ist. Waehrend es auf beiden Fluegeln der Pz.Gr. weiterhin *unvermutet schnell vorwaerts geht*, wird vom Geg-

ner in der Mitte, im Waldgebiet beiderseits Salkaline, lebhaft, anscheinend in vorbereiteter Stellung, gekaempft. **269 ID** ist hier nach neuer Bereitstellung im Angriff; desgleichen hat rechter Fluegel der **6 PD** harte Kaempfe. . .

Gegen **11.00** Uhr orientiert der Chef des Gen.St. der **4 PzGr** den Chef der H.Gr. Nord fernmuendl. ueber die Lage. Nach Auffassung der **4 PzGr** scheint es sich bei der russ. Grenzverteidigung trotz z.T. staerkeren Widerstandes in der Mitte (Waldgebiet um Salkaline) doch *nur um schwachere Kraefte zu handeln*. Ostwaerts Jurbarkas scheint die im Ausbau gemeldete Stellung kaum oder nur schwach besetzt u. von **8 PD** schon durchgestossen. Nach einer Fliegermeldung sind eigene Panzer bereits **5 km** NO Skirsnemune [sp?] in Fahrtrichtung Rossienie. Auch der rechte Nachbar des **56 PzK**, die **30 ID**,⁴⁸³ kommt wohl durch das Vorkommen der **8 PD** beguenstigt, flott nach Osten vorwaerts.

12.00: Bei einem Besuch des Befehlshabers auf dem Gef.Std. des **56 PzK** in Wischwill wird die Frage . . . [discussion of pulling up new units to support attack; see text for details] . . .

Der Befehlshaber ist zu der **8 PD** vorgefahren u. stellt fest, dass **8 PD 13.00** [?] Uhr Bruecke Seretsius [sp?] heil bekommen hat u. Ariogala mit unversehrter Autobahnbruecke fest in der Hand hat. Ein beachtlicher Erfolg der **8 PD**, der durch baldiges Nachziehen weiterer Kraefte ausgenutzt werden muss.

Gegen **18.00** Uhr stellt sich die Lage vor der Front der Pz.Gr. wie folgt dar:

Gegenueber schwaecheren, gut getarnt, insbesondere vor **41 PzK** *zahe u. verbissen kaempfenden Gegner* ist der ***Durchbruch durch die Grenzverteidigungszone auf ganzer Gruppenfront gelungen.***

Gegner ist seit den Mittagsstunden vor **41 PzK** im Zurueckweichen nach Nordosten. Es ist damit zu rechnen, dass er noch westl. der Dubysa Widerstand leisten wird. . .

Die Gruppenreserve (Nebelw.Rgt. 52 o.1. Abt.,⁴⁸⁴ Moerser-Abt. 615) ist durch Kdr. Nebelw.Rgt. 52 nach Abschluss der Kaempfe um Taruoggen⁴⁸⁵ westl. der Strasse Laugszargen – Tauroggen nach Weisung **41 PzK** zur Verfueg. der Pz.Gr. zu versammeln. . .

Auf Grund in den Abendstunden eingegangener Luftaufklaerungsmeldungen sind Bewegungen von mot.Fahrzeugen im Raum Kelme – Bubiai – Uzventis, dabei *zahlreiche Panzer u. Artl.* erkannt. Mann muss damit rechnen, dass *morgen der erste Zusammenstoss mit einer mot. (mech.) Bde erfolgt.*

23.40: . . . Fuer den Fall des Kampfes mit Panzergegner wird der **1 PD** die Pz.Jg.Abt. 616, bisher Gruppenreserve, unterstellt. **1 PD** kaempft z.Zt. noch im Waldge-laende.

⁴⁸³ **Note:** **30 ID**—on far left flank of Sixteenth Army.

⁴⁸⁴ **Note:** “o.1.Abt.” ???

⁴⁸⁵ **Note:** This Nebelwerfer unit and 210mm hvy howitzer unit must have taken part in bombardment of Tauroggen.

Abschliessend kann zu dem heutigen ersten Angriffstage gesagt werden, dass die **4 PzGr** mit leider hohen Verlusten sehr erfolgreich gekaempft hat.

Am Abschluss des Tages steht **56 PzK** mit **8 PD** um Seredzius u. Ariogala auf dem Ostufer der Dubysa, **290 ID** im Raum suedl. Kneziai.

Das **41 PzK** steht mit Anfaengen der **269 ID** nach schweren Kaempfen im Waldgelaende suedl. Palsaltuonis.

6 PD hat **22.30** Uhr Erzvilkas genommen. Das Nachziehen weiterer Teile der Div. ueber Konajajai wird besonders durch die schlechten Waldwege sehr erschwert.

1 PD mit Angriffsspitzen Linie Lapurvis – Pidikiske.

Das Loch in die feindl. Grenzverteidigung ist geschlagen.

23.6.41:

[**Note:** Begins w/ discussion of movements of enemy motorized units.]

Weicht der Gegner aus? Wann wird er versuchen, mit seinen starken mot. Kraeften den Stoss der Pz.Gr. aufzufangen? Will er noch damit warten, bis er unsere Stossrichtung einwandfrei erkannt hat?

(T-313, Roll 330, *Ia KTB Nr. 5, 22.6.-19.9.41*)

23.6.41: At the border on the Northwestern Front, **4 PzGr** had struck at the junction of the Soviet **8** and **11 Armies**. To restore the situation, the Front command ordered a counterattack w/ three tank divisions operating from the SW of Shauljai and from the east of Rossieni. The attack failed. Soviet troops were forced to retire in a NE direction toward the Western Dvina, uncovering the approach to Dvinsk. The attempt to build up an organized defense from the second echelon of the covering armies on the right bank of the Dvina, between Liwani and Kraslawia, and to use the troops retiring northeastwards to organize a defense from the mouth of the Dvina to Liwani, met w/ little success. German troops forced a crossing of the Dvina, and the retirement of the Red Army opened up the Ostrov – Pskov –Luga – Leningrad passages. The right wing of the Northwestern Front fell back to cover the Riga – Narva – Leningrad line. Almost by the hour the situation deteriorated. (J. Erickson, *The Soviet High Command*, 595)

1.7.5: Eighteenth Army⁴⁸⁶

--Under the command of Col-Gen von Kuehler, Eighteenth Army was ordered to concentrate its efforts on the right wing to capture Jekabpils – Saungeljava, force a crossing, and cut off the enemy troops remaining west of the Dvina. The ports of Liepaja (Libau) and Ventspils (Windau) were to be taken with minimum forces and, after the crossing of the Dvina, forces were to be made available for an attack on Riga. Estonia, because of its large size, was at first excluded from this order. *Air support* was to be provided by ***Air Fleet 1***, which, for naval targets, included an

⁴⁸⁶ **Note:** See also above, Section **1.7.2**, “Overview of Events” for Army Group North for many more useful details on Eighteenth Army.

“*Air Leader Baltic.*” . . . After the Dvina line had been reached, Finnish troops were to move in from the north to complete the encirclement of Leningrad and link up with the German army group east of the city. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV, 538-39)

--Eighteenth Army (3 corps of 7 divisions) was deployed on the army group's left, resting its left flank on the Baltic shore. With strength concentrated on his right, Kuchler's army – in cooperation w/ Hoepner's armor – was to advance to the Dvina between Jekabpils – Jaungelgava (Friedrichsstadt) and cut off the Soviet forces in western Lithuania and southern Latvia. With minimum force, the army was also to launch raids on the harbor towns of Liepaja (Libau) and Ventspils (Windau). Riga, the Latvian capital, was to be captured in a flanking maneuver, from the east side of the Dvina. (Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, IV: 18)

--To overcome Soviet forces in the Baltic region von Leeb had at his disposal two infantry armies and one panzer group. Kuchler's 18th Army consisted of **145,000** men between Both's **1 AK (1, 11, 21 IDs & 185 Stug-Bde)**, Wodrig's **26 AK (61, 217 IDs)** and Chappius' **38 AK (58 ID) w/ 291 ID** in reserve,⁴⁸⁷ whose task was to clear the Baltic states of Soviet forces and support the left wing of the panzers as they marched along the more direct route to Leningrad. . . (Brian Taylor, *Barbarossa to Berlin. A Chronology*...13-14)

--**Aufmarschanweisung Barbarossa (31.1.41):**⁴⁸⁸

4. *Auftraege an die Heeresgruppen u. Armeen:* . . .

18 Armee durchbricht die vor ihr stehenden Feindkraefte mit Schwerpunkt an u. ostw. der Strasse Tilsit – Riga, schneidet die suedwestl. Riga stehenden Teile des Feindes durch rasches Vortreiben der Masse ihrer Kraefte ueber die Duena bei u. unterhalb Stockmannshof ab u. vernichtet sie. Weiterhin wird es ihre Aufgabe sein, durch rasches Vordringen gegen die Linie Ostrow – Pskow ein Entkommen russischer Kraefte suedl. des Peipus-Sees zu verhindern u. nach Weisung der H.Gr.Nord – gegebenenfalls im Zusammenwirken mit schnellen Kraeften noerdl. des Peipus-Sees – Estland vom Feinde zu saeuern. Fuer die Besetzung der baltischen Inseln Ösel – Dagö – Moon sind alle Vorbereitungen so zu treffen, dass, sobald die Lage es erlaubt, ueberraschende Durchfuehrung moeglich ist.

(Halder, Franz. *Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. II. Appendix 2, 467-68)

--Eisenbahngeschuetzen: According to the “*Kriegsgliederung Barbarossa*“ in K. Mehner's *Die Geheimen Tagesberichte*, two “E-Bttr.” were assigned to **AOK 18: 696** (to **1 ID / 1 AK**), and **690** (to **291 ID / 26 AK**). In addition, two battalions of Army coastal artillery (**H.Küst.Art.Abt.**) were assigned to **291 ID (531, 910)**.

--Mar-Jun 41 (21 ID / Ausbildung fuer Russlandfeldzug / Marsch in den zugewiesenen Grenzabschitt, Feindbild / Terrain, usw.):

Aus den Winterquartieren im Bereich ihrer west- u. ostpreussischen Friedensgarnisonen wurde die **21 ID** im **Mar 41** zur Verbandsausbildung im Raume Pr. Eylau – Stablack zusammengezogen. In der nun einsetzenden, *sehr intensiven*

⁴⁸⁷ **Note:** Confirm these details; may be partially inaccurate!

⁴⁸⁸ **Note:** Here I've carved out the portion of the Army's Deployment Directive specifically addressing role of Eighteenth Army.

Ausbildungsperiode wurde sowohl die Einzel Ausbildung durch Lehrgaenge u. Wettbewerbe weiter vertieft, als auch das Gefecht im groesseren Verbaende unter den fuer den Osten geltenden Bedingungen, d.h. Marsch abseits gebahnter Wege, Waldkampf, Gefecht bei Nacht, Schiessen ohne Karte usw. geuebt. Den Offizieren war das Erlernen der cyrillischen Schrift zur Pflicht gemacht worden. . .

Nach einer verhaeltnismaessig ruhigen Zeit, die freilich von den Truppenkommandeuren bereits zur Erkundung in dem der Div. zugewiesenen Grenzabschnitt SW von Tauroggen verwendet wurde, trat die Div. am **9 Jun 41** den Marsch in den Grenzraum an. Nach knapp **10**-taegigen, aus Tarnungsgruenden nur bei Nacht durchgefuehrten Maerschen erreichte sie ueber Wehlau – Insterburg – Tilsit am **18 Jun 41** den ihr zugewiesenen Grenzabschnitt im Raume von Nattkischken, wo sie, zunaechst abgesetzt von der Grenze, eine Verteidigungsstellung bezog. Noch lief alles unter der Devise „Grenzsicherung“, „Ausbau des Ostwalles.“ Ueber die „Lage im Grosse“ war bei den unteren Fuehrungsstaeben u. bei der Truppe selbst wenig bekannt.

Der Aufmarsch der H.Gr. Nord, in deren ungefaehr geographischer Mitte die **21 ID** als rechte Fluegeldivision des **I AK** u. damit der **18 Armee** eingesetzt war, vereinigte **3 Pz.Diven.**, **3 ID (mot.)**, **20 ID** u. **3** Sicherungs-Diven. auf einem verhaeltnismaessig engen Raum. . . Von hier aus sollte die H.Gr. gemaess der Aufmarschanweisung des **OKH** die im Baltikum kaempfenden feindl. Kraefte vernichten . . .“ Der **18 Armee** . . . fiel in diesem Rahmen die Aufgabe zu, „die vor ihr stehenden Feindkraefte mit Schwerpunkt an u. ostw. der Strasse Tilsit – Riga zu durchbrechen, die SW Riga stehenden Teile des Feindes durch rasches Vortreiben der Masse ihrer Kraefte ueber die Duena bei u. unterhalb Stockmannshof⁴⁸⁹ abzuschneiden u. zu vernichten.“

Von diesen Feindkraeften war bekannt, dass vor der Front der H.Gr. in Grenznaehe die russ. **11** u. **8 Armeen** aufmarschiert waren, wobei deren innere Armeegrenze etwas ostw. der **21 ID**, etwa vor der **4 PzGr**, verlaufen sein duerfte. In der Tiefe des Raumes aber . . . standen bis in die Hoehe von Reval weitere Schztz.-Verbaende ziemlich gleichmaessig verteilt, waehrend sich bei Pleskau (Pskow) eine operative Reservegruppe, in der Hauptsache aus dem russ. **1 PzK** bestehend, abzeichnete.

Das Feindbild vor dem **1 AK** u. damit auch vor der **21 ID** war hingegen weit weniger klar. Man hatte zwar durch Bildaufklaerung u. Agentenmeldungen ein ungefaehres Bild ueber den Verlauf der feindl. Grenzstellungen u. ueber das Stadium ihres Ausbaues.

Im Bereich des **I AK** ragten am linken Fluegel noch die Auslaeufer des Feldbefestigungen von Tauroggen (Taurage) in den Abschnitt der **21 ID**, von denen angenommen wurde, dass sie ihre Fortsetzung in einem feldmaessigen Ausbau des Jeziurupa – Abschnittes faenden. Dieser Bach verlief im Abschnitt der Div. in einer Entfernung von durchschnittlich **8** km parallel zur Grenze. Dahinter lag, im gleichen Streifen, der etwa **9** km tiefe Sumpfwald des Bagno Plenoje u. dahinter

⁴⁸⁹ **Note:** The town of Stockmannshof located on the Duena just downstream from Jakobstadt (Jekabpils).

der tief eingeschnittene Flusslauf der Jura, an dessen feindseitigem Ufer der Bau zahlreicher Kampfanlagen festgestellt worden war.

Der Jura-Abschnitt u. seine Befestigungen verliefen quer zu den Angriffsstreifen fast des gesamten Korps. Hier wurde von deutscher Seite mit energischem Widerstand gerechnet, waehrend im Vorfeld dieser Stellung nur schwaechere Feindkraefte angenommen wurden, ueber deren Staerke, Verteilung u. Absichten allerdings *so gut wie nichts bekannt war*.

(J.C. Allmayer-Beck & F. Becker, *21. Infanterie-Division. Russlandfeldzug 1941*, 1-2)

--**21.6.41 (21 ID)**: Two very interesting documents are among records of **21 ID**, which was part of Eighteenth Army. One is entitled, "*Sonderkommandos im Armeegebiet*," and talks about use of **SD**, *Sicherheitspolizei*, and so forth; the other is entitled "*Sabotagemassnahmen u. Aktivisten-gruppen*," and addresses the use of anti-Russian minorities in the Baltic States for sabotage and attacks on the Russians: "*Die Sabotageakten werden sich besonders auf feindl. Nachrichten-anlagen u. Eisenbahnstraenge beziehen*." For more details see, T-315, Roll 755, *Ia, Ib Anlagen zum KTB: 1.6.-2.8.41*)

--**21.6.41 (21 ID / Aufgabe / Angriffsgliederung / Kraeftezuteilung)**:

Der **21 ID**, die infolge der gestellten Auftraege nicht nur Schwerpunktsdivision des **1 AK**, sondern auch der **18 Armee** geworden war, kam nun die Aufgabe zu, in Anlehnung an die **4 PzGr**, im ersten Anlauf die angenommene Jeziorupa-Stellung zu durchbrechen, den Jura-Abschnitt zu gewinnen u. dann durch das Waldgelaende NO der Jura durchstossend, sich in den Besitz des Hoehenge-laendes noerdl. u. NW von Upynas zu setzen. So war es bereits Ende **Mai 41** festgelegt worden.

Um diesen Aufgaben gewachsen zu sein, waren der Div. an Verstaerkungen zugefuehrt worden: der **AR Stab z.b.V. 110** (Obstlt. V. Ondarza), die **II./AR 37 (mot.)**, das **Heeres-Fla-Btl. 605** u. die **3./Stug.-Abt. 185**.

Die Div. beabsichtigte mit **2 Rgtern.** in der Front (**IR 45** rechts, **IR 24** links) mit Schwerpunkt links anzugreifen, wobei das **IR 45** auf Prismantai, **IR 24** auf Zygaiciai vorzustossen hatten.

Gleichzeitig hatte ein V.A. der Div. unter Befehl von Obstlt. Matussik (**AA 21**, Tle. **Pz.Abw.Abt. 21**, **4./AR 37**) im Abschnitt der **4 PzGr** unmittelbar hinter den Angriffsspitzen der **1 PD** vorzugehen, um nach Ueberschreiten der Jura nach Westen eindrehend vor der eigenen angreifenden Div. die Jura-Bruecke bei u. suedl. von Pagramantis offen zu halten.

Das **IR 3** hatte als Division-Reserve vorerst hinter dem **IR 24** zu folgen.

Die Artillerie gliedert sich unter dem Artilleriefuehrer 21 (Stab **AR 21**) in eine Gruppe unter dem Befehl von **Rgt.St. z.b.V. 110** mit **I.** u. **II./AR 21** u. **I./AR 57** (zusammen **6** le. u. **3** s. Batterien), die auf Zusammenarbeit mit **IR 24** angewiesen waren u. von denen die **I./AR 21** u. **I./AR 57** bei Angriffsbeginn in Feuerstellung, die **II./AR 21** aber aufgeprotzt marschbereit stehen sollte, ferner in die **III./AR 21**, die mit dem **IR 45** zusammenzuwirken hatte. Die **II./AR 37**

(mot.) ohne 4.Batterie stand als Schwerpunktgruppe dem **Art.Fue. 21** zur Verfügung.

Die **3./Stug.Abt. 185** (ohne 1 Zug) war zusammen mit der **1./Pi. 21** dem **IR 24**, 1 Zug Sturmgeschuetze u. 1 Zug der **2./Pi. 21** dem **IR 45** unterstellt.

Die diesbezüglichen Befehle waren alle bis zum **21 Jun 41** bereits an die Truppe hinausgegangen . . .

(J.C. Allmayer-Beck & F. Becker, *21. Infanterie-Division. Russlandfeldzug 1941*, 2-3)

--**22.6.41 (291 ID)**: After GFM v. Leeb redeployed his forces to Memelland and East Prussia, the Masurian **291 ID** was on his far left (Baltic Sea) flank. It was commanded by Lt.-Gen. Kurt Herzog [see text for background on Herzog.] . . . On **22 Jun 41** the division attacked from the Memel area [Neman area] and quickly overwhelmed the surprised Soviet frontier troops. It then **advanced 44 miles in 34 hours**, an incredible pace for a non-motorized division. It pushed on to Liepaja, a major Soviet naval base, which it captured after a bitter struggle on **29 Jun 41**. The **Elk division** continued its rapid advance and soon loosely surrounded Riga. . . (S.W. Mitcham, Jr., *Men of Barbarossa*, 57-59)

--**22.6.41 (291 ID (26 AK))** begins its attack:

On the northern flank, immediately on the Baltic coast, in the small corner of Memel territory, was General Herzog's Masurian **291 ID**. Its tactical sign was an elk's head—in token of the division's Masurian home. . . Colonel Lohmeyer, w/ an advance detachment of **505 IR**, pushed through the forward pillbox-line of an utterly surprised Soviet frontier position. Under cover of the morning mist the Russians withdrew quickly. But Lohmeyer gave them no respite: he pressed on hard, and by nightfall of the first day he had reached the **Latvian-Lithuanian frontier**. On the following morning, the **505 IR** took Priekule. After **34 hours** Lohmeyer and his regiment were 44 miles deep in enemy territory.

(P. Carell, *Hitler Moves East*, 29)

--**22.6.41 (21 ID)**:

Stellenbesetzung:

Kdr.: Gen.Maj. Sponheimer.

Ia (1.Gen.St.Offz.): Maj. i.G. v.d. Chevallerie.

Ib (2.Gen.St.Offz.): Maj. i.G. v. Prittwitz u. Gaffron.

Ic: Hptm. d.R. Skowronski.

IR 3: Oberst Becker.

IR 24: Oberst Heinrichs.

IR 45: Oberst Chili.

Der schicksalsschwere Befehl traf in den fruehen Nachmittagsstunden des **21 Jun 41** ein u. lautete: „1. B-Tag ist der **22.6.1941**, X-Zeit **3.05** Uhr.“ Nun begann das Praezisionswerk anzulaufen u. mit der einfallenden Daemmerung erhob

sich ab **22.30** Uhr die Div. aus ihrem bisherigen Sicherungsabschnitt, um nach vorn in den Bereitstellungsraum an der Grenze einzuruecken.

Etwa gegen **2.00** Uhr morgens war die Gefechtsbereitschaft der Div. hergestellt. Und puenktlich um **3.05** Uhr verkuendete ein dumpfes Grollen aus Richtung Taugoggen, dass die Kampfhandlungen begonnen hatten.

Die Div. selbst war *ohne planmaessiges Art.-Vorbereitung* ausgetreten u. ihre Bataillone ueberschritten auf einer Front von **8 km Breite** die Reichsgrenze ohne auf uebermaessigen Widerstand zu stossen. Schon nach wenigen Stunden war das erste Angriffsziel erreicht u. die Strasse Aukstupiai – Zygaiciai nach Norden ueberschritten. Doch dann verlangsamte sich das Tempo des Vormarsches zusehends, als die Rgter. in das *urwaldartige Dickicht der Sumpfwaelder des Bagno Plenoje* eindrangten.

Immerhin erreichten noch in den spaeten Vormittags-stunden die Spitzen den Jura-Abschnitt, an dem tatsaechlich erstmals staerkerer Feindwiderstand spuerbar wurde. Wohl war, wie der spaetere Augenschein bewies, der Ausbau der teilweise sogar betonierten Kampfstaende noch keineswegs abgeschlossen u. zeigte der Gegner auch nicht im groesseren Masse schwere Waffen, doch stellte der teilweise tief eingeschnittene u. zur Verteidigung ausser-ordentlich guenstige Abschnitt an sich schon ein beachtliches Hindernis dar u. zudem verhinderte die durchschrittene Waldzone das Vorbringen der eigenen schweren Waffen.

Die Schtz.-Kpen. allein vermochten sich in dieser Lage nicht durchzusetzen, der zaehe Feindwiderstand im Raum von Taugoggen hatte jedoch das beabsichtigte Vorwerfen der V.A. der Div. zur Aufriegelung der Uebergaenge verzoegert, die *Div. lag fest*.

Da kam die guenstige Entwicklung der Lage beim linken Nachbarn (**1 ID**) zur Hifle. Durch Gelaendeschwierigkeiten weniger behindert war das rechte Fluegelregiment der **1 ID**, das **IR 22**, zuegig ueber die Jura vorgestossen. Diesen Zustand machte sich nun die **21 ID** an Nutze, indem sie ihre Reserve (IR 3) zusammen mit einer schnell gebildeten Art.Gruppe (**I./AR 21** u. **II./AR 37** ohne 4.Battr.) im Abschnitt der **1 ID** an die Jura heranfuehrte, um diese Kampfgruppe ueber den Fluss hinweg zu einem Flankenstoss vor die Front des **IR 24** anzusetzen.

Der Gegner, hier erstmalig aktive Truppe, liess es jedoch, wohl durch den Erfolg der **1 ID** beeindruckt, auf keine Entscheidung ankommen, sondern *gab die Uebergaenge frei*, so dass das **IR 3** ohne die Feuerbereitschaft der Artillerie abzuwarten bis zum Einbruch der Dunkelheit ohne Feindwiderstand einen ca. **2 km tiefen Brueckenkopf bei Didkiemis** bilden konnte. Auch vor **IR 24** u. **45** baute der Feind ab, so dass am Abend des ersten Kampftages die Jura im gesamten Angriffsstreifen der Div. ueberschritten war.

[**23.6.41**]:

Obzwar die Div. den Angriff mit allen Teilen schon um **2.50** Uhr fortsetzen wollte (Div.Befehl Nr. **9** vom **23.6.41, 0.40** Uhr), wurde es doch immerhin **6.00** Uhr, bis sie mit allen **3** Rgtern. in der Front in allgemeiner NO Richtung antreten

konnte. Nur durch Gelaendeschwierigkeiten an den verschiedenen Bachlaeufer aufgehalten, erreichte sie bis zum **23.6. abends** das ihr befohlene Angriffsziel, den Suedrand des Hoehengelaendes von Upynas.

[**Note:** By **25.6.41**, **21 ID** was in action largely against enemy rear guards as it advanced towards town of Kelme. Write the authors:

Der Kdr. dieses Rgts. . . . trat aus eigenem Entschluss zur Verfolgung in Richtung Kelme an. Die durch die eigene Luftwaffe u. die Panzerkaempfe start zerstoeerte Stadt wurde von den Spitzen der Div. im Laufe des Vormittags erreicht u. nach Norden hin durchschritten.⁴⁹⁰

Der Gegner hatte, wohl unter dem Eindruck der allgemeinen Lage, nicht mehr versucht, sich vor der Stadt neuerlich zu stellen, hingegen wurden die Marschgruppen der Div. im Laufe des Vormittags *wiederholt von feindl. Kampffliegerketten angegriffen*, wobei ein Bombervolltreffer im II./IR 3 empfangliche Verluste hervorrief. . .

(J.C. Allmayer-Beck & F. Becker, *21. Infanterie-Division. Russlandfeldzug 1941*, 3-5)

--**22.6.41 (AOK 18 / Ia KTB):**

Matzicken.

3.05: Die Armee nach planmaessiger Bereitstellung angetreten.

3.30-3.50: Die ersten Meldungen der beiden Korps u. der **291 ID** melden gleichmaessig schwachen Inf.-Widerstand. Geringer Artl.-Widerstand nur vor **1 AK**, vor linkem Fluegel der **21 ID** u. vor rechtem Fluegel der **11 ID**.

26 AK kaempft in Gargzdai.

Bei **291 ID** foerdert Nebel das Vorwaertskommen.

4.50: Oberst v. Reuss (**26 AK**) meldet fernmuendlich: Bruecke Gargzdai unversehrt genommen. Ein Spaehtrupp stoest bei Jarniai auf staerkeren Widerstand.

Erst noch kein Eindruck vorhanden, ob Feind sich stellt.

4.50: 291 ID meldet Durchschreiten von Krottingen.

5.20: I AK meldet: Etwa **3-4 km Vormarsch**; Naumiestis genommen; **1** Gefangener; keine Feindfliegertaetigkeit; ueber Silale Flakabwehr; Jurabruecken unversehrt.

5.45: In einem Gespraech des **Id** mit **O1** der H.Gr. wird uebereinstimmend der Eindruck geringen feindl. Widerstandes bestaetigt, auch bei H.Gr.Mitte. Der Feind scheint ueberrascht worden zu sein.

⁴⁹⁰ **Note:** “Kelme, das bereits am **23.6.** von der **1 PD** kaempfernd durchschritten worden war . . . “ (5)

5.50: Meldung **Ic**: *Schweres feindl. Art.-Feuer*⁴⁹¹ aus Gegend Kudaiciai bei **291 ID**.

6.10: Ic meldet Ergebnis Gefangenen-Vernehmung:

-- russische Ordnungspolizei

- 1.) Russen haben Angriff **22.6.** erwartet,
- 2.) Truppen aus Krottingen ausser schwachen Kraeften am **18.6.** abmarschiert,⁴⁹²
- 3.) **20** kleine Panzerwagen von Gut Krottingen abmarschiert.

5.20-5.55: Morgenmeldungen der Korps u. der **291 ID** . . .

6.40: Morgenmeldung an H.Gr.Nord.

6.50: Koluft meldet: Bombenabwuerfe (**8-10** Stueck) auf Tilsit. Bruecken nicht zerstoert.

7.20: Anruf Oberst v. Kries: [He provides latest details on positions reached by **1**, **21** and **11 ID**. See text for details.]

8.25: **291 ID** meldet: Krottingen genommen; Div. naehert sich Darbenai; Polangen noch feindbesetzt.

8.30: Ferngesprach mit **26 AK**: [Gives latest details on positions reached by **IR 374**, **217 ID** and **61 ID**. See text fro details.]

8.45: **I AK** (Oberst v.Kries) ruft an:

21 ID hat **8.20** Uhr mit vordersten Teilen die Jura bei Didkiemis erreicht;

1 ID hat **7.45 – 8.25** Uhr Starklaukis u. Lapkasiai erreicht.

Von **11 ID** kein klares Bild, seit Naumiestis 5.20 u. Gardaniai 4.50 Uhr genommen gemeldet war.

Gesamteindruck, dass Feind sich nicht gestellt hat.

9.00: Gesamteindruck:

Rechter Fluegel Jura erreicht; Vainutas wahrscheinlich genommen; Mitte **26 AK** etwa **8 km** vorwaerts gekommen. **291 ID** hat Darbenai erreicht.

Der Feind hat sich nicht gestellt.

4 PzGr: Taugogen genommen; Eisenbahnbruecke unversehrt, Strassenbruecke zerstoert. . .

9.20: Anruf Major v. Kleist an Chef:

Gesamteindruck: Feind hat sich nicht gestellt; es ist wahrscheinlich, dass er sich in Jura – Minija-Stellung stellt. . .

10.30: Chef verweist Koluft auf die Bedeutung der Fernaufklaerung an Dubysa – Venta – Duena.

10.45: Anruf Oberst v. Reuss:

⁴⁹¹ **Note:** One of the few reports this day in any of the war diaries about heavy Russian artillery activity.

⁴⁹² **Note:** Supports perspective that Red Army forces along the border in the Baltic Special Military District had mostly pulled back from the border in days prior to **22.6.41**.

Kampf um Vezaieiai [sp?] wird durch umfassenden Angriff gefuehrt, da 1 Btl. nicht genuegt. **IR 389** im Vorgehen auf Vevirzenai, jedoch Aisenai noch nicht voellig bereinigt.

Gefangenenaussage: Bei Voveraiciai NO Krottingen 150 le.Panzer.

10.50: 291 ID (Major Roeder) meldet: Darbenai genommen. Chef verweist Div. auf die bei Voveraiciai gemeldeten Panzer.

10.55: I AK (Oberst v. Kries) wird orientiert, dass das **38 AK** so vorgezogen werden soll, dass es am Abend die Reichsgrenze erreicht.⁴⁹³ [See text for details.] Gleichzeitig Orientierung durch Obst. v. Kries, dass Feindwiderstand an der Jura sich verstaerkt.

11.00: Meldung **291 ID** (Major Roeder):
Flugplatz Polangen genommen, **10** Flugzeuge sichergestellt. . .

11.35: Orientierung der H.Gr. durch Chef zu Chef ueber Lage bei Armee unter Betonung, dass die Armee noch keinen endgueltigen Eindruck ueber den Widerstand an der Jura hat.

Gesamteindruck der Hr.Gr.: Gegner doch ueberrascht,⁴⁹⁴ Ausweichbewegungen sind zu einem Teil aus der Not entstanden. Diesen Eindruck *teilt Chef/18 nicht*, zumindest fuer die hohe Fuehrung: *aktive Truppen abgerueckt*. Chef/18 glaubt, dass sie da waren, aber *im letzten Moment abgerueckt sind*. . . Chef/H.Gr. betont, dass durch das Nichtzerstoeren der Bruecken eine Ueberraschung anzunehmen sei.⁴⁹⁵ Bei H.Gr.B aehnlicher Eindruck. Wirrwarr in der russ. Fuehrung geht aus Funkspruechen hervor.

12.00: Ic meldet, dass Oeffnung von Post in Krottingen ergeben hat, dass *deutscher Angriff seit Tagen erwartet*. . . .

12.20: I AK (Major Weber) meldet:

10.30 Uhr 1 Rgt. der **11 ID** bei Zwingiai ueber Jura; Bruecken zerstoert.

13.10: Anruf **Ia/4 PzGr** bei **Ia**:

Taugen erst um **12.00** Uhr genommen nach schweren Kampf; nach Fliegermeldung sind Panzer in Gegend Rossenie.⁴⁹⁶ . . .

13.40: Anruf **Ia 291 ID**:

Absicht: Mit V.A. auf Skuodas vorgehend, Brueckenkopf nehmen. In rechter Flanke Bunkerlinie Kurmaiciai – Jokubavas von Einzelkraeften besetzt. Luftaufklaerung hinter Bunkerlinie hat keinen Feind festgestellt.

⁴⁹³ **Note**: Appears Eighteenth Army attacked with only two of its three corps (**1** and **26 AK**), while **38 AK** was in reserve. **38 AK** only controlled one division (**58 ID**).

⁴⁹⁴ **Note**: Did Chef AOK 18 imply or state that the Russians weren't caught by surprise by the German attack?

⁴⁹⁵ **Note**: Yet Russian doctrine called for an immediate counteroffensive to counter any German attack—to carry the war onto Reich territory. In such a scenario, the Russians would have needed to preserve the bridges to facilitate movement of forces! Hence, it is hardly surprising that so many bridges were captured intact by the Germans.

⁴⁹⁶ **Note**: Appears that German aerial reconnaissance devoted much of its activity to trying to locate Russian tank forces.

15.10: Ic meldet Ergebnis bisherige Gefangenenvernehmung:

1.) Der Kampf im unmittelbaren, grenznahen Gebiet ist anscheinend mit Grenztruppen gefuehrt worden.

2.) Es ist zu vermuten, dass der Armee gegenueber schwache Teile stehen.

15.10: Gespraech 01 mot **01/291 ID**:

291 ID hat mit M.G.Btl. Sriaupai erreicht.

1 AK beginnt mit Uebergang ueber Jura. Eindruck vom Feind: Es handelt sich um Nachhuten. . .

15.30: Anruf Ia bei Chef/**1 AK**:

Bruecke bei Pajuris gesprengt.

3 Div. Uferwechsel ueber Jura gegen starke Nachhuten.

15.40: Anruf Id bei **Ia/4 PzGr**:

Widerstand Tauroggen gebrochen.

16.20: Anruf Chef bei **Ia/H.Gr.**:

Er weist daraufhin, dass s.E. kein Zweifel darueber bestehen kann, dass *der Russe sich rechtzeitig zurueckgezogen hat u. eine Ueberraschung nur die Nachhuten getroffen hat*. . .

16.30 – 1710: Aussprache Chef, **Ia, Id** gibt einheitliche Auffassung . . . [see text for details] . . . Chef erinnert darueber hinaus daran, dass *Gegner noch voellig ungeschlagen zurueckgegangen ist* u. die Truppe deshalb nicht abgehetzt an ihn kommen darf. . .

17.30: Oberst v. Kries (1 AK) an **Ia**:

21 ID Uebergang ueber Jura nicht gelungen, stellt sich bereit zum Angriff mit **3 Rgt.**;

1 ID Linie Kupuskiai – Spraudaiciai erreicht, Gegner fuehrt auf Lkw. Verstaerkungen von NO heran.

11 ID Brueckenkopf Zvingiai soweit erweitert, dass SO Pajuris bei Pajuris selbst Brueckenschlag moeglich.

18.10: Trotz dieser Anzeichen einer Versteifung kommt der Chef zum Ergebnis, dass der Russe nicht mehr mit starken Kraeften Jura u. Minija halten wird, u. meldet entsprechend fernmuendl. dem Chef der H.Gr.

H.Gr. betont, dass der O.B. der H.Gr. entschieden hat, das morgen scharf nachzudraengen ist, um dem Gegner *keine Zeit zu lassen*.

Mit Vorziehen 38 AK einverstanden; **254 ID** nicht vor **15.00** Uhr bewegen;

207 [Sich.] Div. soll hinter Masse der rueckwaertigen Dienste nachgefuehrt werden.

18.20: Anruf Chef 1 AK an **Ia**:

Bitte um Weiterbelassung der *unterstellten Art.-Abt.* der **58** u. **254 ID**.⁴⁹⁷

18.35: entscheidet dies der O.B. bejahend . . .

⁴⁹⁷ **Note:** **1 AK** it appears was given control of artillery belonging to **58** and **254 ID** to support its initial attack.

18.40: **26 AK** (Oberst v. Reuss) meldet Angriff aus Richtung Medsedziai auf Gargzdai.

18.40: Mitgehoerter Funkspruch, dass **8 PD** Autobahnbruecke bei Ariogala unversehrt in die Hand genommen hat.

18.40: Der Kom.Gen. des **26 AK** hat dem O.B. die *Gefahren der Lage des Korps* vorgetragen, da es ohne Anlehnung ist u. im Ruecken noch Feindwiderstand besteht. Er befuerchtet ein Eindringen in die Luecke zwischen **1** u. **26 AK** insbesondere im Hinblick auf das *gemeldete Anrollen von Panzern* auf der Strasse Schaulen – Tauroggen.

Mit Ruecksicht darauf, dass in dieser Lage durch das Eindringen des Feindes die *Voraussetzungen zu einem groesseren Erfolg geschaffen werden*, entscheidet der O.B., dass bei der bisherigen Absicht bleiben soll . . .

18.50: **1 AK** meldet:

11 ID, **IR 23** erreicht Linie Panemglis – Barbarowo ostw. Pajuris, **IR 2** liegt noch vor Pajuris.

20.00: **26 AK** meldet Abweisung des Angriffs aus Richtung Medsedziai auf Gargzdai . .

20.30: Meldung **291 ID**:

Skuodas durch verst. **IR 505** genommen. Div. will scharf nach Libau durchdraengen; Chef betont, dass nicht zu scharf durchgestossen wird, bevor Lage in Flanke geklaert; dies soll nicht bedeuten, dass die Div. anhaltet, sie soll nur das Tempo maessigen. . .

22.45: Chef H.Gr. (Gen. Brennecke) ruft **Ia** an:

Es kommt im Rahmen der Gesamtentwicklung besonders darauf an, dass die **21 ID** vorwaertskommt, um den *festgefahrelenen Panzern an der Strasse nach Schaulen vorzuhelfen*.

23.00: Der O.B. ruft **I AK** (Oberst v. Kries) an:

21 ID kam zuerst nicht ueber Jura; konnte erst hinueber, als . . . 3.Rgt. der Div. vorgezogen u. eingesetzt war;

1 ID naehert sich der Akmena;

11 ID erwartet Fall von Pajuris.

Befehl des O.B.:

Wie schon mittags dem Gen. v. Both gesagt, muss Ziel sein, mit moeglichst starkem rechten Fluegel an die rechte Grenze des Gefechtsstreifens noerdl. Punkt 167 an der Strasse nach Schaulen sobald wie moeglich heranzugehen.

Die Art. muss sehr nach vorn gezogen u. zum Einsatz gebracht werden.

23.20: O.B. ruft **26 AK** (Oberst v. Reuss) an:

Meldung des **26 AK**: Masse des Korps um Endriejavas [sp?]. Teile vielleicht schon Richtung Rietavas.

Vor Radf.Batl. u. vor **IR 374** Feindberuehrung; *hartnaeckiger Widerstand u. Bildung von Widerstandsnestern hinter der Front*, die erst wieder beseitigt werden mussten.

Befehl des O.B.: Vorgehen in Richtung Rietavas – Zarenai mit Schwerpunktbildung rechts.

23.15: Befehl der H.Gr.:

Der Feind hat sich in Grenznae nicht zum entscheidenden Kampf gestellt. Es kommt nun darauf an, durch schaarftes Nachdraengen einen planmaessigen Aufbau des Feindes zur Abwehr in einer rueckw. Linie zu verhindern.

254 ID⁴⁹⁸ ist bis **23.6.** frueh, in dem Raum suedl. Sartininkai vorzufuehren.

207 Sich.Div. ist hinter der Res.-Div. dichtauf nachzufuehren.

23.35: Anruf O.B. an **291 ID** (Gen. Herzog):

Meldung **291 ID**: Vorgehen ueber Prekuln vorgesehen; Die Div. schliesst mehr auf mit Sicherung besonders gegen Osten.

Befehl des O.B.: *Es ist nicht wichtig, dass **zu schnell vorgegangen wird**, wichtig ist, dass gesichert wird.*⁴⁹⁹

23.40: Meldung von Koluft:

Saemtliche Bruecken ueber Duena zwischen Rembate u. Duenamuende nicht zerstuert. .

(T-312, Roll 781, *Ia KTB 4a, Bd. I, A.O.K. 18: 21.6.-16.8.41*)

--**22./23.6.41 (AOK 18 / Ia KTB / Zusammenfassung):**

Zusammenfassung

22.6.1941

Kurz nach dem Antreten entsteht bereits der Eindruck, dass der Feind wider Erwarten in unmittelbarer Grenznae allgemein nur mit schwachen Kraefte Widerstand leistet, dass aber diese Feindkraefte durch den Angriff ueberrascht wurden. Im Laufe des Tages klaert sich das Feindbild insoweit, als das A.O.K. zu der Auffassung kommt, dass die bisherigen Kaempfe nur gegen Nachhuten gefuehrt werden. Wo die Masse des Feindes geblieben ist (-- nach Gefangenen- u. Einwohneraussgane [sic]⁵⁰⁰ ab **18.6.** zurueckgenommen –) konnte auch die bis zur Dubysa – Venta – Linie geflogene Luftaufklaerung nicht einwandfrei klaeren.⁵⁰¹

Allgemein scheint der Feindwiderstand beiderseits der Strasse Tilsit – Schaulen besonders stark gewesen zu sein (**1 PD**), durch den auch der rechte Fluegel der Armee (**21 ID**) besonders beruehrt wurde. Eine staerkere Feindgruppe (Panzer) noerdl. Kelme wurde durch Luftflotte 1 zwischen **17.00 – 18.00** Uhr mit Erfolg angegriffen.

⁴⁹⁸ **Note:** 254 ID was a reserve division of H.Gr.Nord.

⁴⁹⁹ **Note:** *Generaloberst* v. Kuehler counseling caution!

⁵⁰⁰ **Note:** Word badly misspelled, but must be “Einwohneraussagen.”

⁵⁰¹ **Note:** From several official German accounts it appears that, as 22 June 1941 wore on, the Germans realized that, for the most part, they had not encountered major Soviet forces along or just beyond the German-Russian frontier. And that they didn’t know where these primary Red Army formations were located. Must have elicited some consternation among concerned German staffs!

Vor der Front des **1 AK** verdichtete sich der Widerstand am Jura-Fluss, der im Laufe des Nachmittags u. abends von der **1** u. **11 ID** ueberschritten werden konnte, waehrend der **21 ID** der Uebergang erst nach Bereitstellung der **3** Rgter. u. darauffolgenden Angriff gegen **20.00** Uhr gelang.

26 AK hatte bei Gargzdai, wo die Minijsa [sp?] – Bruecke durch Handstreich unversehrt genommen worden war, zeitraubende Kaempfe mit sich sehr zaeh wehrendem Feind. Im uebrigen war der Feindwiderstand vor der Front der scharf zusammengefasst vorgehenden Divn. schwach. Dort, wo der Feind in Grenznaehe nicht angegriffen wurde, blieb er stehen. Nachdem jedoch bis zum Abend das Korps die Gegend Endriejavas – Zadeikiai erreicht hatte, loest sich der Feind im Laufe der Nacht auch von der Grenze u. wich nach Osten aus.

291 ID traf bei Krottingen u. Polangen auf staerkeren Widerstand, nahm Krottingen u. Polangen u. stiess unter Zuruecklassung von Sicherungen gegen die feindl. Bunkerlinie ostw. des Okmiana [sp?] - Abschnittes in zuegigem Vorgehen mit verst. **IR 505** bei Skuodas vor.

Die Absicht der Armee bleibt fuer den **23.6.** unveraendert. Dem **1 AK** wird Fortsetzung des Angriffs mit starkem rechten Fluegel befohlen; im besonderen kommt es darauf an, dass die Strasse Tilsit – Schaulen zur Entlastung der **1 PD** fruehzeitig erreicht wird. **26 AK** soll zusammengefasst den Vormarsch ueber Rietavas fortsetzen. **291 ID** wird auf die Sicherung nach Osten hingewiesen, die Div. soll nicht zu schnell nach Norden vorgehen, um sich nicht in ungeklaerter Lage Angriffen in ihrer Flanke auszusetzen.

Zusammenfassung **23.6.1941**

Die Kampfweise des Feindes blieb auch heute ebenso wie gestern hinhaltender Kampf. Dabei verteidigte sich der Russe an einzelnen Stellen in Anlehnung an Ortschaften (Pajurelis – Rietavas) zaeh u. geschickt. . .

Der Eindruck, dass es sich beim Feind um Nachhuten handelte, blieb waehrend des ganzen Tages bestehen. Rueckw. Bewegungen groesseren Ausmasses in Richtung Duena konnten durch die Luftaufklaerung jedoch nicht festgestellt werden. Es ist deshobl anzunehmen, dass der Russe sich tagsueber geschickt getarnt in den Waeldern haelt u. nur bei Nacht marschiert. Ebenso moeglich ist es aber, dass er mit seinen Hauptkraeften in der Venta – Dubysa – Stellung steht. In jedem Falle gewinnt der Ansatz der Nachtluftaufklaerung besonders Bedeutung.

1 u. **26 AK** hatten bei ***Staub u. grosser Hitze*** mit schweren Strassen- u. Gelaendeverhaeltnisse zu kaempfen. Dabei fuehrte der Ansatz der durch zahlreiche Heerestruppen verstaerkten Korps auf engem Raum zu ***erheblichen Strassenverstopfungen***. Trotzdem erreichten bis zum Abend:

1 AK: die Strasse **167** – Kaltinenai.
26 AK: Linie Rietavas – Sendvariai.

In die entstandene Luecke zwischen **1 u. 26 AK** wurde **58 ID** bis Tenenai vorgefuehrt mit dem Auftrag, Sicherungen bis an den Jura-Fluss bei Pajurelis vorzutreiben. . .

Bei **291 ID** war nur schwaecherer Feind in der Front aufgetreten, so dass die Masse der Div. bis zum Abend den Raum Prekultn – Skuodas erreichte. Vorausabteilungen werden noch am Abend von Prekultn u. Barta aus gegen Grobin angesetzt. Die ueber 60 km lange Ostflanke der Div. macht eine starke Sicherung u. Aufklaerung nach Osten notwendig, wenn nicht die Div. von ihren rueckw. Verbindungen abgeschnitten werden soll.

Fuer den **24.6.** kommt es der Armee darauf an, dass der Feind vor der Front *schnell u. tief durchbrochen wird*; **1 u. 26 AK** sollen deshalb so frueh wie moeglich zum Angriff antreten.

291 ID beabsichtigt Libau anzugreifen u. zu nehmen.

(T-312, Roll 783, Ia KTB 4a A.O.K. 18: 22.6.-31.12.41: “Zusammenfassung“)

1.7.6: Divisional War Diaries (Army Group North)

--20./21.6.41 (1 PD / Ia KTB):

20.6.41:

17.45: beziehen die *Kampfgruppen Krüger u. Westhoven* ihre jeweiligen Gefechtsstaende.

20.00: beginnen erneut die Marschbewegungen.

21.6.41:

[Helle, fast wolkenlose Nacht, geringer Morgennebel, am Tage sonnig, heiter.]

0.30 – 5.30: Die einzelnen Marschgruppen melden ihr Eintreffen:

AR 36
Nebel-Rgt. 52
B.Abt. 2
Schtz.Rgt. 1
Schtz.Rgt. 113
AR 73
PzRgt 1

treffen in den Bereitstellungsraeumen ein. . .

4.00: . . . Am Vormittag besteht bei der Div. die Ansicht, dass *der Gegner die Bewegung erkannt haben muss oder doch wenigstens einen Angriff unmittelbar*

erwartet. B.-Stellen sind als besetzt erkannt; der Russe ist feldmarschmaessig ausgeruestet u. traegt Stahlhelm.

Ein russ. Angriff wurde aber jetzt schon zu spaet kommen.

Die Schtz.-Rgter. haben ihre Bereitstellungsraeume bezogen, die Artillerie ist in die Feuerstellungen eingerueckt, die Marschbewegungen sind so gut wie abgeschlossen.

Neue Feindmeldungen lassen eine Besetzung Tauroggens mit **2 russ. Schtz.-Rgtern.** vermuten. Eine staerkere Art.-Kraeftegruppe soll in den Waeldern ostw. Tauroggens beiderseits der Strasse stehen. Die Waldraender scheinen zu einer zweiten Widerstandslinie ausgebaut zu sein. Auch von dort werden Gelaende-verstaerkungen, Panzergraeben u. Geschuetzstellungen gemeldet. . .

10.00: Der Befehlshaber der **4 PzGr**, Gen.Obst. Hoepner, erscheint auf dem Div. Gef.Std.

11.40: trifft der Komm.Gen. des **41 PzK**, General Reinhardt, mit dem Chef des Stabes ein.

11.15: meldet sich *Trupp 3/46* der „*Wachkompanie*“ **Regiment z.b.V. 800**, der Div. unterstellt.

12.41: Aufruf von Gen.Kdo.: „*Dortmund 22.3.65*“⁵⁰²
Damit ist das Stichwort fuer den Einsatz gefallen.

Im Laufe des Abends rollen die letzten Verbaende in die Bereitstellungsraeume. Die Art.-Gruppe „Holste“ bezieht die Feuerstellung.

(T-315, Roll 16, *Ia KTB Nr: 6, 6.6.-19.6.41*)

--**22.6.41** (1 PD / **Ia KTB**):

[Sonnig; warm.]

0.19: bei Cullmen-Jennen gehen die Eisenbahngeschuetze in Stellung.⁵⁰³

3.05: mit einem gewaltigen Feuerschlag aus allen Rohren beginnt der Angriff. Der Himmel droehnt von den Abschuessen. Unter der Wirkung dieser massierten Artillerie treten die Bataillone zum Angriff an.

Zunaechst ist keine artilleristische Gegenwehr des Russen festzustellen. Die Ueberraschung scheint voellig u. ganz gelungen, der Grenzuebertritt verlaeuft bei allen **3 K.Gr.** planmaessig.

3.25: hat **IR 489** [**269 ID**] die Jura mit Angriffsspitzen ueberschritten. Die Anfaenge naehern sich der Ortschaft Pojurze. Leichtes feind. Artl.Feuer liegt in Gegend Hoehe 40, **1.5** km ostw. Laugszargen.

⁵⁰² **Note:** Must be some kind of code number.

⁵⁰³ **Note:** According to the “*Kriegsgliederung Barbarossa*“ in K. Mehner’s *Die Geheimen Tagesberichte*, two “*E-Bttr.*” were assigned to **AOK 18: 696** (to **1 ID / 1 AK**), and **690** (to **291 ID / 26 AK**). In addition, two battalions of Army coastal artillery (**H.Küst.Art.Abt.**) were assigned to **291 ID (531, 910)**. The **1 ID** was in position to **1 PD**’s left.

Die **Kampfgruppe Westhoven** ist in das Gut Plikiszki eingedrungen. Bei Pozoruny werden **3 Bunker vernichtet**.

3.58: Auch bei der **Kampfgruppe Krüger** gewinnt der Angriff der vorn eingesetzten **Stossgruppe Knopff (Pz.Pi.Btl. 37)** gut Boden. Das erste Panzerhindernis bei Giryniki wird ueberschritten u. weiter auf die Jeziurupa vorgegangen. Der Flieger erkennt zurueckgehende Feindkolonnen aus Tauroggen in Richtung Kelme.

Infolge dieses anfaenglichen geringen Widerstandes besteht bei der Div. der Eindruck, dass *der Feind den Angriff auf die Jeziurupa nicht angenommen hat*.

4.40: stehen die Anfaenge des **IR 489** bei Gut Tauroggen, **5.10** naehern sie sich dem Suedrand der Stadt.

Der **K.Gr. Westhoven** gelingt es, die Jesiorupa-Bruecke unversehrt in die Hand zu bekommen.

Bei der **K.Gr. Krüger** wird ein Uebergang ueber die Jeziurupa gefunden.

Das **I./SR 113** trifft an der Jura auf heftigen Feindwiderstand.

Das **1 PzRgt** durchfuhrt die Jura u. gewinnt auf dem jenseitigen Ufer gegen starken Feindwiderstand im Angriff langsam Boden.

6.00: ueber dem Div.Gef.Std. spielen sich die ersten Luftkaempfe ab; der Gef. Std. des **Arko 30** wird bombardiert.

6.10: Die Eisenbahnbruecke ueber die Jura wird genommen. Gegen staerker werdenden Feindwiderstand greifen die suedl. eingesetzten Kampfgruppen auf die Stadt Tauroggen an.

6.30: wird die Jura-Bruecke westl. Tauroggen als vom Gegner gesprengt gemeldet. Die Stadt wird vom Gegner zaeh verteidigt. Das feindl. Art.Feuer nimmt an Staerke zu.⁵⁰⁴

8.20: hat das **1 PzRgt** bei Dapkiskiai die Jura durchfuhrt. Die **K.Gr. Krüger** wird durch Artl.Feuer aus NO Richtung behindert. Ein Brueckenschlag ueber die Jura ist notwendig.

In Tauroggen wird in hartnaeckigen Haeuserkampf gekaempft. Die Kampfweise des Gegners ist zaeh u. hinterlistig. Heckenschuetzen treten auf. Die Zivilbevoelkerung beteiligt sich an Kampf.

In diesem Zeitpunkt kann die Div. noch nicht entscheiden, ob sie der **K.Gr. Krüger** das Stichwort „Ziethen“, das den Durchstoss auf Skaudivile vorsieht, geben soll. *An der ganzen Front verteidigt der Feind das Ostufer der Jura mit staerkeren Kraeften*.⁵⁰⁵ Hier hat er in einer zweiten ausgebauten Stellung den Angriff angenommen. Feindl. Artillerie wirkt hauptsaechlich aus den westl. Waldraendern ostw. von Tauroggen. Sie wird von der Artillerie des **Arko 30** bekaempft. Eine Neuheranfuehrung feindl. Kraefte ist nirgends festzustellen, wohl aber treten in der linken Flanke Feindpanzer auf u. eine staerkere feindl. Mot.-Artl.-Kolonne, im Vormarsch nach Westen gemeldet, zwingt zur Sicherung der linken Flanke.

⁵⁰⁴ **Note:** One of few instances on this day when Germans reported being on receiving end of serious artillery fire!

⁵⁰⁵ **Note:** Seems clear from reading just the first few hours into this war diary for 22 June 1941, that **1 PD** had a much tougher time of it than Manstein's **56 PzK**. Confirm!

11.30: Dem schwer kaempfenden **II./SR 1** wird eine Entlastung durch das von SW angreifende **IR 489** zuteil.

Beiden Kampfgruppen gelingt es, nach schwerem Haeuserkampf den Ostrand von Taugoggen zu erreichen. Der Widerstand des Feindes scheint nachzu lassen.

12.00: meldet der Flieger das Abbauen feindl. Batterien in Richtung Batakiai. Die Div. glaubt, dass die Saeuberung Taugoggens dem **IR 489** allein gelingt. Unter dem Eindruck des Nachlassens des Feindwiderstandes gibt sie das Stichwort „Ziethen.“

14.45: tritt die **K.Gr. Westhoven** auf Batakiai an.

16.00: Taugoggen wird feindfrei gemeldet.

Das **AR 36** scheidet aus dem Unterstellungsverhaeltnis aus.

Beide Kampfgruppen gewinnen im Vorgehen auf die Agluna gut Boden. Nach Werfen erneuten Widerstandes an Agluna-Abschnitt wird weiter auf Batakiai u. Skauvile angetreten.

16.45: werden **40 feindl. Panzer** im Marsch nach SW auf der Strasse Schaulen – Skauvile gemeldet. Diese Panzer u. das Auftreten anderer mot. Kraefte deuten auf die Moeglichkeit hin, dass die Div. eine feindl. mot.mech.Brigade vor sich hat.

17.15:⁵⁰⁶ naehern sich die Angriffsspitzen der **K.Gr. Westhoven** Batakiai u. ueberschreitet die **K.Gr. Krüger** Minksipauciai [sp?].

[Abgang: AR 36, s.Art.Abt. 615]

Bis in die spaeten Abendstunden wird der Angriff fortgesetzt.

21.15: ueberschreitet der Div.Gef.Std. die Grenze.

Neuer Div.Gef.Std., Wald 4 km NO Taugoggen, an der Strasse Taugoggen - Schaulen.

Abschlusslage:

Am ersten Angriffstag gelang es der Div., in hartem u. schweren Kampf die Jura-Stellung zu durchbrechen, Taugoggen einzunehmen u. den Ancia-Abschnitt zu erreichen.⁵⁰⁷ Der Feind hatte den deutschen Angriff erst an der Jura angenommen. Diese Stellung hatte er mit allen Mitteln zu halten versucht. Die starke feindl. Artillerie ostw. von Taugoggen verzoegerte das Ueberschreiten der Jura u. den Einbruch in die Stadt. Ab **13.30** Uhr war der Widerstand des Feindes, der zaeh, verbissen u. hartnaeckig kaempfte, gebrochen. Die ruecklaeufigen Bewegungen des Feindes scheinen planmaessig vor sich zu gehen. Anscheinend setzt sich der Gegner unter Belassung starker Nachhuten auf die Dubysa-Stellung ab.

Vor der Div. wurde die **125 [RD]** mit dem **Schtz.Rgt. 466** festgestellt. Die Artillerie dieser Div. kann als aufgegeben. **9** Batterien wurden im Kampf, **5** Bat-

⁵⁰⁶ **Note:** First two numbers completely blacked out; my guess is **17.15** hours.

⁵⁰⁷ **Note:** Word appears to be “Ancia,” but no mention of this area before.

terien durch Panzer vernichtet. In den Waldungen NO von Tauroggen wird groessere Beute an Fahrzeugen u. Geschuetzen gemacht.

Die Div. beabsichtigt, im scharfen Nachdraengen auf die Dubysa-Stellung vorzugehen.

Luftlage: bei wirksamem eigenen Jagdschutz vereinzelte planlose Bombenwuerfe des Russen.

23.6.41:

Von beiden Kampfgruppen wird in Befolgung des Div.Befehls Nr. 2 der Vormarsch auf die Dubysa im scharfen Nachdraengen fortgesetzt.

2.00: hat die ***K.Gr. Westhoven*** bei Batakiai einen Brueckenkopf ueber die Ancia gebildet. . .

(T-315, Roll 16, *Ia KTB Nr: 6, 6.6.-19.6.41*)

--19.-21.6.41 (6 PD / Ia KTB):

19.6.41:

Groessere Verzoegerungen werden vermieden, weil der vorausfahrende **Ia** durch Verschachteln der Marschgruppe **K 6** u. **S.R. 114** u. durch Organisation der Marschkreuzung mit den vorrueckenden [?] Truppen das fluessige Ablaufen in den Unterkunftsraum. Die letzten Truppen erreichen um **7.00** Uhr ihren Unterkunftsraum.

Die Maersche werden von der Truppe als *gutes Training* empfunden. Die Marschdisziplin ist gut. Bei den Kraedern stellt sich als Folgeerscheinung der langen Winterruhe eine starke Ermuedung⁵⁰⁸ der Bereifung (Schlaeuche) heraus. Sie fallen serienweise wegen Reifendefekt aus.

Ein Offz. u. **15** Mann – Flivo op. der Division zur Zusammenarbeit mit Kampf-fliegern unterstellt.

Grenzsicherung durch *Arbeitsstab Butler*.

Das im linken Abschnitt eingesetzte **I./469** u. **II./269 ID** [?] wird aus der Grenzsicherung herausgezogen u. in der Mitte des Abschnittes als Eingreifgruppe bereitgestellt.

Die Beobachtungen an der Grenze zeigen den normalen Verlauf des russischen Grenzdienstes u. weiter keine auffallenden Truppenbewegungen oder Aehnliches.

Neuunterstellung – Flivo op.

20.6.41:

⁵⁰⁸ **Note:** Difficult to decipher, but this seems to fit the context.

Die Marschbewegung verlaeuft weiterhin wie vorgesehen. Die Kriegsbruecke darf nur mit [hand-written , illegible] Truppen je **20** Fahrzeuge ueberschritten werden. Kleine Verzoegerungen treten ein. Im uebrigen wirkt sich die Aufteilung der Marschbewegung in zahlreiche Marschgruppen u. die verstaerkte Anordnung ueber Marschueberwachung guenstig aus. Die Truppe empfindet u. betont eine wesentliche Verbesserung gegeneuber den fruheren Aufmaerschen.

Die im linken Abschnitt eingesetzte Kompanie des **IR 489** wird durch Nachschub in der Nacht abgeloeost.

Durch *Arbeitsstab Butler* wird das Div.Stabs.-Quartier im Suedteil Szugken [sp?] vorbereitet.

21.6.41:

Marschbewegung entsprechend Befehl. Geringe Verzoegerung beim Brueckenuebergang.

Eingang des Stichwortes *Dortmund* [?] = **3.05** Uhr.

21.00 Uhr Bekanntgabe des Fuehrererlasses an die Truppe.

Wetter: Aufheiternd, strichweise bedeckt.

Temperatur: **24** Grad.

(T-315, Roll 323, *Ia KTB, 17.6.-15.9.41*)

--22./23.6.41 (6 PD / *Ia KTB*):

22.6.41:

In der Nacht vom **21.-22.6.** Bereitstellung eingenommen, ausser **SR 4**.

3.04 Uhr Beginn des Artl.Feuers.

Bis **3.30** Uhr Meldung **SR 114** [?]⁵⁰⁹ Erhalten kein Inf.-Feuer, eingie Schrapnele.

Meldung **K 6** nichts von Widerstand zu melden.

Gef.Std. bis zur Grenze vorverlegt.

4.00 Uhr meldung **S.R. 114**: Die Stellung noerdl. Szylinie scheint vorhanden zu sein. Dort tritt Widerstand auf.

Um **4.05** Uhr, waehrend die Rgter. im Vorgehen noerdl. der russ. Grenze sind, gibt der russ. Rundfunk in seinen Fruehnachrichten den deutschen Wehrmachtbericht vom **21.6.** im Originaltext.

4.30 Uhr **269 ID** bei Ww [?], **SR 114** Rojstynie, **K 6** Petkajcie. . .

4.40 Uhr Telefongespraech mit **1 PD**. Feindl. Kolonnen.⁵¹⁰

3.30 Uhr zurueckgehende feindl. Kolonnen zu Fuss u. bespannt fluchtartig aus Tauroggen in NO Richtung. Tauroggen brennt. **2** feindl. Batterien beiderseits der Strasse Tauroggen – Skantvile [sp?] bei Sainekiskai u. Suanai.⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁹ **Note:** Can only read last number, which is a “4.” However, that number appears to be preceded by another number of two.

⁵¹⁰ **Note:** What follows appears to be the report from **1 PD**.

⁵¹¹ **Note:** This text also difficult to read, so spellings of towns may not always be accurate!

Eindruck: Feind weicht Kampf an der Grenze aus.

Kampf **II./SR 114** an querlaufender Stellung. Linke Kol. 3.Schneise. Rest **I./SR 114** zieht abgesessen dort nach.

Meldung Korps: Bruecke Gaure gesprengt.

5.30 Uhr: Linke Kol. **SR 114 Dunsy** erreicht.

5.45 Uhr: Willaiiki feindfrei.

Hauptweg wegen starker Sperren unpassierbar.

Obst.Lt. von Seckendorf geht auf linken Weg vor.

5.50: beide Rgt. der **269 ID** stellen sich bereit zum Angriff auf Sakalyne-Stellung.

5.25 Uhr: linke Gruppe **SR 114 Dunsy** [sp?] ge [- - -] [genommen?]

6.05 Uhr: Fliegermeldung: Eigene Linie vor der Bruecke Kongajly. Bruecke in Ordnung.

6.00 Uhr ist vor Div.Gef.Std. ein Luftkampf beobachtet. Abschuss [zwei?] Flieger durch einen Jaeger.

6.40 Uhr: Meldung bei [illegible] (bei **SR 114**) Bruecke Kongajly unversehrt in deutscher Hand.

7.00 Uhr: Kdr. **SR 114** meldet die Lage:

Rechte II.Btl. an den Sperren vorbei im Vorgehen im Nordteil des Waldes. Linke I.Btl. vorgekommen in der [Gegend] NO Dunsy. Bruecke Kongajly unversehrt.

Im Walde hinter rechter Kol., dem Vormarschweg der Div., starke Sperren u. Feindwiderstand, zu dessen Brechen das Rgt. *keine Kraefte mehr hat*.

Entschluss der Division:

Kein Einsatz von Schuetzen hinter Rgt. Seckendorf.⁵¹²

[Vor - - -?] der Aufkl.Abteilung auf Weg **K 6**.

Einsatz der **Kampfgruppe Raus** (**11 PzRgt, I./SR 4, 1./Pz.Jg., 1/Pi., 1/Fl., II./AR 76** u. noch spaeter **K 6**) auf dem Wege hinter **K 6** ueber Bruecke Kongajly auf Stegvilai. Befehlsausgabe beendet **7.00** Uhr. Einsatz einer Kp. **SR 4** zum Niederkaempfen des Feindes bei Foersterei Szylinge.

Zusammenstellung einer Marschgruppe⁵¹³ (**SR 4** ohne I.Btl., zwei Kp. Pi., eine Kp. Pz.Jaeg., eine Fla-Batterie).

8.00 Uhr: Besuch General Reinhardt vom Korps Gef.Std. Billigt den Entschluss.

Das Antreten der **Gruppe Raus** in dem Walde verzoegert sich stark, da der Weg schwer u. [illegible] befahrbar ist. Bis **11.15** hat die **Gruppe Raus** den Wald erreicht.

⁵¹² **Note**: Believe that is proper spelling, but this text is tough to read.

⁵¹³ **Note**: There is a word typed in above "Marschgruppe;" I believe it is "Waldenfels." Reference below to a **Marschgruppe Waldenfels**.

9.30: **K 6** ist im Vorgehen noerdl. der Bruecke. **9.30** Uhr Bimbeliny, **10.20** Uhr am Strassengabel $2\frac{1}{2}$ km westl. Anieliske [sp?], von wo es sich gegen starken Feindwiderstand vorwaerts kaempft.

SR 114 hat den Wald gesaeubert u. die Sperren am Wege beseitigt, so dass Nachziehen der Fahrzeuge moeglich ist.

12.30: Der Vormarsch der **Gruppe Raus** ist bis **12.30** Uhr auf Grund des Sumpfgelaendes nur sehr [underscore in original] langsam vorwaerts gegangen.

[Note: Well over a dozen lines of very tiny, scribbled hand-written text follow, which are absolutely illegible.]

Der Marsch durch das Waldgelaende bietet *unvorhergesehene Schwierigkeiten*. Die links im ehemaligen Abschnittstreifen **K 6** vorgehende **Kampfgruppe Raus** *bleibt auf dem Wege stehen*.

Der vorauseilende General befiehlt von Kongajly aus: Vorziehen von Pz. Schuetzen. Daraufhin wird die **Marschgruppe Waldenfels** auf dem direkten Wege in Marsch gesetzt. Sie bleibt hinter den Fahrzeugen des **SR 114** haengen. Beide Marschgruppen kommt zum [Ruhen?], da die Moeglichkeit eines Abfliessens nach vorne zunaechst fehlt.

Vorne ist eine Kampfgruppe bestehend aus: **K 6**, **AA 57**, **SR 114** u. **I./PzRgt 11** im Vorruecken auf Anielake [sp!]. Der Ort wird nach Kampf um **13.00** Uhr genommen. Naechster Feindwiderstand bei Stegwilai.

22.00 Uhr: fernmuendl. Korpsbefehl.

Divisionsfuehrungsabteilung seit mittags in Marsch, bleibt eingeklemmt in der rechten Marschkolonne der Div. Sie kommt bis Mitternacht bis Kongajly.

Zugang:

II./AR 59

II./Flak 411

Brücke 611

Str.Bau-Btl.

Trupp z.b.V. 800

Tot: 20

Verw. 92

Verm. 2

Wetter: Warm, klare Sicht

Temperatur: **26 G.**⁵¹⁴

23.6.41:

⁵¹⁴ **Note:** Does this number signify the high temperature for the day? If so, it was barely **80 F!**

1.00 Uhr nachts erreicht die **A.A. 57** den Ostrand Erzvilk.

Gef.Std. der Div. verbleibt in Kongajly. . .

Die Vorwaertsbewegungen bei einem Teil der Truppen der Div. kommen waehrend der ganzen Nacht nicht zur Ruhe.

Die **Kampfgruppe Seckendorf** tritt um [- - -] auf der rechten Vormarschstrasse erneut an.

Die **Kampfgruppe Raus** verlaesst mit der Spitze erst um **7.00** Uhr Erzvilk auf der noerdl. Vormarschstrasse. . .

Erneute Schwierigkeiten treten dadurch ein, dass die **269 ID** von Sueden nach Norden durch die Marschbewegung der Div. hindurchgezogen wird.

Die **Kampfgruppe Seckendorf** kommt am schnellsten vorwaerts. Sie hat Kampfberuehrung mit einem hinhaltenden Feind vor Bebewai [sp?] in (Hoehe 114).

Die **Kampfgruppe Raus** hat ebenfalls Feindberuehrung in den Waeldern hinter Paupie [sp?].

Es tritt Muni-Mangel ein. Die Trosse kommen nicht vor zu den Einheiten, insbesondere die Feldkueche fehlen.

Kampfgruppe Seckendorf stellt sich um **11.30** Uhr gegen das feindbesetzte Rossenie bereit u. nimmt den Ort mit seinem Suedteil u. der beherrschenden Hoehe des Kasernenparkes um **1405** Uhr.⁵¹⁵

Die **Kampfgruppe Raus** beteiligt sich nach noerdl. umfassend an Kampf um Rossenie ab **13.00** Uhr. . .

Die **3./K 6** hatte auf einen Umweg durch den Wald die Dubysa-Bruecke erreicht, den dort gerade eingetroffenen Feind zurueckgeworfen – etwa **40** Lkw fluechten zurueck – u. die Bruecke gegen Feindangriffe verteidigt. Die inzwischen wieder von Osten herangekommenen mot.-Panzerkraefte fassen diese Brueckenkopfstellung mit zunehmendem Druck von 2 Seiten (je **5** Panzer von beiden Ufern). Die Kp. musste wegen restlosem Muni-Verbrach um **19.00** Uhr unter starken Verlusten die Bruecke aufgeben. Die zur Verstaerkung angesetzten Panzer waren nicht zur Bruecke gelangt. Sie waren zusammen mit der **6./114** an einer Furt unterhalb der Bruecke gekommen, hatten dort die Dubysa ueberschritten, Verbindung zur Bruecke aber nicht hergestellt.

In Verlauf des Abends u. der Nacht *Schiessereien in den Wael*dern des gesamten Divisionsbereiches.

Tot: 11

Verw. 25

Verm. ---

(T-315, Roll 323, *Ia KTB*, 17.6.-15.9.41)

--22.6.41 (6 Schtz.-Bde / 6 PD):

Die ersten Schuesse sind gefallen.

Es war uns *eigenartig feierlich zumute*, als gegen **3.05** Uhr das gewaltige Krachen der dt. Artillerie die morgentliche Stille durchriss, als dt. Jaeger u. Bom-

⁵¹⁵ **Note:** The time (“1405”) is hand-written, but that appears to be accurate.

ber Welle auf Welle in dem *duennen Nebelschleier* jenseits der Grenze verschwanden.

Einseitig schien dieses Beginnen, denn von drueben verirrte sich nur ein Schuss in unsere Naeh, u. auch die russ. Bomber, die in der Naeh der Jurabruecke ihre Bombenlast abladen ohne zu treffen oder jemand zu verletzen, sah man bald als brennende Fackeln, Opfer unserer Jaeger u. Flak, herabstuerzen.

Wir brauchten uns vorerst *kaum Sorge zu machen*. Der Einsatz war bis ins kleinste befohlen.

Auftrag der Division war: rittlings des Weges F.Ssylinie – Kongajly die Waldzone zu durchbrechen . . . [see text for more details] . . . Weiter sollte die Div. beiderseits der Szaltona ueber Erzwilk die Hoehen um Rossienie erreichen (**2. Angriffsziel**) u. als Tagesziel Brueckenkoepfe ueber die Dubysa NO Rossienie im Zuge der Strassen nach Grinkiskis – Siluva bilden. Die Erreichung dieses Tagesziels war mit den Worten des Div.-Befehls „*von entscheidender Bedeutung*.“

Zur Durchfuehrung dieses Auftrags hatte die Div. folgende Gliederung getroffen: **KG Seckendorff** sollte . . . [see text] . . . Die **KG Rauss** hatte sich bereitzuhalten . . .

Bei Beginn des Kriegszustandes traten **K 6** u. **KG Seckendorff** sofort zum Angriff an. Wenn der Russe auch schon, wie wir spaeter durch Gefangenenausagen erfuehren, einen breiten Streifen von Truppen zum groessten Teil geraeumt hatte, so leistete die wenigen Zurueckgebliebenen doch *erheblichen Widerstand*. *Geschickt im Gelaende eingekistet, hielten sie ihre Stellung bis zum letzten Mann* u. mussten foermlich in ihren Loechern erschlagen werden. Ein rasches Durchstossen wurde dadurch schon erschwert; vereitelt wurde es durch die *Wege- u. Gelaendeschwierigkeiten*. *Unueberwindbare Sumpfstellen* u. *unbefahr-bare Sandstrecken* wechselten in staendiger Reihenfolge.

Das Antreten der **KG Rauss** verschob sich von Stunde zu Stunde. Erst als die Meldung kam, dass sich die der **KG Seckendorff** folgende A.A. festgefahren habe, der Weg fuer weitere Truppen unmoeglich sei, bekam die Kampfgruppe den Auftrag, hinter **K 6** anzutreten.

Um **10.00** Uhr setzte sie sich in Bewegung in der Reihenfolge: [see text for list of units] . . .

Nach Ueberwindung *groesster Wegeschwierigkeiten* (neue Wege wurden erkundet u. durch den Wald geschlagen, Bau von Knueppeldaemmen) erreichte die Spitze der Kampfgruppe endlich, **K 6** dichtauf folgend, gegen **19.00** Uhr Kongajly. . .

Auf einer eben ertraeglichen Marschstrasse draengte sich nun die ganze Div. Die **KG Rauss** zog der Gruppe Seckendorff nach u. erreichte bis **23.00** Uhr, ohne zum Einsatz gekommen zu sein, Kiukiske, **1** km NO Anieliske. Das Heranziehen der Versorgungsfahrzeuge wurde angeordnet, da noch ein Vorziehen bis Erzwilk beabsichtigt war. Die Durchfuehrung dieser Absicht war jedoch von vornherein

sehr zweifelhaft, da das Aufholen der *Betriebsstoff-Fahrzeuge u. Feldkuechen* wegen der schlechten Wege zeitlich nicht abzusehen war.

(T-315, Roll 322, *KTB Nr. 3, 21.6.- 22.11.41*)

--**18.-21.6.41 (8 PD / Ia KTB):**

Kriegsranliste:

Stab der 8 PD (Stichtag: 31.12.41)⁵¹⁶

1. Div.Kdr.: Gen.Maj. Erich Brandenberger (**15.7.4 Ritterkreuz** verliehen)
2. Div.-Arzt: Ob.Feld-Arzt Dr. Hermann Schmidt
4. **Ia**: Maj. i.G. Friedrich Berendsen
5. **Ib**: Maj. i.G. Jobst Brand
11. **Ic**: Hptm. d.R. Dr. Rolf Müller

18.6.41:

. . . Bei der Div. bestand der Eindruck, dass besondere Vorbereitungen auf der russ. Seite auch am letzten Tage fuer die Abwehr des deutschen Angriffs *nicht getroffen wurden*.

Immerhin wurde damit gerechnet, dass das Gelaende bis zu der erwarteten 1. Angriffslinie an der Mitava durch Sprengungen unter Umstaenden auch **Gas u. Minen**, vorbereitet war. Entsprechende Gegenmassnahmen waren getroffen. Die Div. sah den kommenden Angriffen voll Zuversicht entgegen.

Ferner wurde besprochen die *Behandlung der roten Funktionaere u. Soldaten usw.* Anschliessend Besprechung der Fuehrer der Vorausabteilung mit einem Offizier des **Rgts.z.b.V. Brandenburg 800**.

17.40: sind saemtliche Truppenteile ausgeladen u. befinden sich um **22.00** in Unterkunftsraum. . .

20.00: beginnt die Marschbewegung der Div. aus den Unterkunftsraum in den Aufmarschraum. Die Maersche gehen reibungslos von statten. Mit Beginn der Helligkeit des folgenden Tages befinden sich die Truppenteile im Aufmarschraum.

Die 8 PD ist dem 56 PzK unterstellt.

Kdr.: General der Infanterie v. Manstein

Chef: ObstLt. V. Elverfeldt.

Wetter: unveraendert warm u. sonnig.

19./20.6.41

In den Naechten vom **19.** zum **20.** bis **21.** zum **22.6.[41]** [i.e., over a period of three nights] erfolgt die Verlegung der Div. vom Aufmarschraum in den Bereitstellungsraum. Die Maersche gehen ueber die Schiffsbruecke von Trappen rei-

⁵¹⁶ **Note:** While it was unclear, I believe most of these folks were in there positions on **22.6.41**.

bungslos von statten. Die Bewegungen laufen bei Dunkelheit an und enden bei Hellwerden. Am Tage ruhen die Truppenteile unter Vermeidung jedes Verkehrs auf den Strassen. Es gelingt dadurch, die Bereitstellung der Div. *voellig geheim zu halten*. . .

21.6.41:

11.00: Besprechung aller Kampfgruppenfuehrer einschliessl. **Arko 125**, Kdr. **IR 503** [sp?], Div.Nachsch.Fuehrer u. **Ib** beim Div.Kdr. Der Div.Kdr. gibt den Fuehrer-erlass betreffs Gerichtswesen im Gebiet Barbarossa bekannt. . .

12.30: Stichwort "**Dortmund**" wird vom Chef des Stabes durchgegeben. Dies bedeutet: Angriff findet statt am **22.6.**, **3.05** Uhr. Das Stichwort wurde vom **Ia** durchgegeben um **13.00** Uhr an Oberst Scheller, Kdr. der **K.Gr. B**, um **13.07** Uhr an **K.Gr. A**, Obst.Lt. Crisolli persoendlich, um **13.20** Uhr an Fuehrer der **K.Gr. C**, Obst.Lt. v. Bodenhausen persoendlich . . . [see text] . . .

16.20: berichtet Pi.Kdr. dem **Ia** ueber die Brueckenverhaeltnisse im Div.-Abschnitt.

16.30: begibt sich Lt. Henke nochmals zur **290 ID**. Zweck: Austausch der gegenseitigen Angriffsabsichten fuer den naechsten Tag u. Feindlage. Bericht an **Ia**.

17.30: A.K. teilt mit, dass am **22.6.** zwischen **3.15 – 3.30** Uhr 2 Kampffliegerketten den Ostteil von Jurbarkas (ostw. der Imstra [sp?]) angreifen werden. Mit Fliegerkorps I ist vereinbart, dass der Angriff **30** Minuten nach der fuer das Ueberschreiten der Grenze befohlenen Zeit beendet sein muss.

17.30: gibt **Ic** den Aufruf des Fuehrers „*Soldaten der Ostfrnot!*“ an die Befehlsempfangenden Offiziere aus mit der Weisung, die geschlossenen Pakete am **18.00** Uhr zu oeffnen u. an die Truppe auszugeben.

22.00: verlaesst die Fuehrungsstaffel den bisherigen Div.Gef.Std. Forsthaus Wolfspass [sp?] u. ist **23.00** [Uhr] arbeitsbereit im Gehoeft an der Strasse von Schmalleningken zu den Schiessstaenden (gegenueber Ziegelei), **2.5** km⁵¹⁷ NW Antschwenten.

(T-315, Roll 483, *Ia KTB, Bd. I: 13.6.- 20.7.41*)

--**22.6.41 (8 PD / Ia KTB)**:⁵¹⁸

3.05: Beginn des Angriffs.

3.25: meldet Obst.Lt. Crisolli, dass der Handstreich auf die Bruecke von Pasvensiv gelungen, die Bruecke fahrbereit ist. Die eigenen Pi.-Fahrzeuge laufen z.Zt. nach vorn. Rechts bei **30 ID** starkes M.G.-Feuer.

3.30: sind **3** Aufklaerungsflugzeuge der **3./Pz.41** gestartet . . .

⁵¹⁷ **Note:** Might be **2.3** km; hard to tell.

⁵¹⁸ **Note:** This divisional war diary is well over 10 pages in length!

3.55: meldet der Flieger bereits, dass Bruecken ueber die Mitava unzerstoert; eigene Spitze im fluessigen Vormarsch auf Strasse Schmalleningken – Jurbarkas; keine Abwehr. . .

Zu gleicher Zeit meldet Obst.Lt. Crisolli: Rechts geht es gut vorwaerts in zuegigem Angriff; kein Widerstand.

4.00: [Note: Discussion of advances by **30 ID** and **126 ID** of **16 Army**—on right flank of **56 PzK** . . .]

Div. schickt Verb.Offz. zur **290 ID** mit hiesiger Lage: Panzer sind im Vorrollen; an der Mitava schwacher Feindwiderstand; kein Art.Feuer.

4.25: meldet I./Pz.Rgt. 10: feindl. Panzerkampfwagen zerstoert (Angabe des Ortes u. der Zahl fehlt).⁵¹⁹

4.55: unterrichtet der Ia den A.K. fernmuendl. ueber die Lage: Mitava erreicht suedl. Saukaiai [sp?] im Zuge der Hauptstrasse. Rechts geht es gut vorwaerts, links langsamer, weil die An- u. Abfahrtwege ostw. Antschwenten grundlos geworden sind. . .

4.40: bei Bunkerlinie nach Osten zurueckgehende pferdebespannte Kolonne, Befestigungslinie zum grossten Teil im Bau, keine Besetzung festgestellt.

4.40: eigene Panzerspitze 2 km NW Jurbarkas;

4.40: Nachbardivision in zuegigem Vorgehen suedl. der Memel auf Pervazniakai [sp?]; Bruecke bei Jurbarkas unzerstoert.

5.00: wurde die Morgenmeldung an das A.K. durchgegeben:

Um **3.10** Uhr ueberschritt **8 PD** mit Gruppe Crisolli bei Pasvenciv [sp?], mit Gruppe Scheller westl. Antschwenten die Grenze. Rechts glueckte der Handstreich auf die Bruecke bei Pasvenciv u. das Zollhaus. Eigene Panzer stiessen auf dem Waldweg nach Susmuk vor u. erreichten den Waldrand um **4.45** Uhr.

1 feindl. Panzer dort in Brand geschossen.⁵²⁰ **4.30** Uhr wurde die Mitava osts. Susmuk [sp?] erreicht, **4.50** Uhr die Gegend **500** m westl. Jurbarkas. Links Gruppe Scheller hatte bis **4.00** Uhr 2 Bruecken ueber den Grenzbach. Das Vorgehen wurde durch schwierige Wegeverhaeltnisse verzoeiert. **4.50** Uhr wurde Wegegabel **1 km SO Kord** erreicht. Schwacher Feind (Baumschuetzen) haelt sich im Waldgelaende zwischen Grenze u. Mitava.⁵²¹ Feindeindruck: Der Feind war wachsam u. hat wahrscheinlich mit einem Angriff gerechnet. Eigene Verluste gering: rechts **2** Tote, **12** Verwundete.

6.00: meldet Ia dem AK: **5.40** Uhr eigene Panzer im Eindringen nach Jurbarkas. Noch nicht gemeldet ist, ob Bruecke in eigener Hand, oder ob Uebergang durch Furt erzwungen. . .

6.10: . . . Arko 125 aufgeloeset.

6.20: Meldung an A.K.: **6.00** Uhr Ortsausgang Jurbarkas mit Panzern erreicht. Beide Bruecke unzerstoert in eigener Hand.

6.50: Lage: Feindwiderstand gebrochen, nur noch hinhaltender Kampf; es muss zu einem schnellen Vorgehen auf die Dubissa kommen. K.Gr. Crisolli soll vorgehen; Div.Gef.Std. wird nachziehen. . .

⁵¹⁹ **Note:** Some Red Army tanks destroyed this early in the morning?!!?

⁵²⁰ **Note:** Recall that Soviet rifle divisions, at full strength, had something like **16** light tanks as part of their OOB. (See, *Barbarossa Unleashed*, Chapter 4.)

⁵²¹ **Note:** Here it appears to be spelled: “Mituva.”

6.55: Fliegermeldung: **6.37** Uhr etwa **20 feindl Panzer** in schneller Fahrt auf Strasse Ariogala – Rossienie. Anfang etwa **10** km SO Rossienie.

7.20: kommt Komm.Gen. zum Div.Gef.Std, schildert die Lage, ist mit den Massnahmen der Div. einverstanden. . .

7.40: Div.Kdr. begibt sich zur **K.Gr. Crisolli**.

7.45: Div. steht mit Anfang 7.00 Uhr **3** km ostw. Kirche Skirsnemune [sp?]. . .

7.50: meldet **Schuetzenbrigade 8**,⁵²² dass Brueckenstellung [which one?] in eigener Hand.

7.55: . . . Truppen sind im schnellen Vorgehen nach Osten. Die Div. hat den Eindruck, dass sie mit regulaeren Truppen des Feindes noch nicht in Beruehrung gekommen ist. Es geht auf beiden Strassen gut vorwaerts.

8.15: berichtet der Flieger durch eine Abwurfmeldung, dass **7.05** Uhr die Bruecke **2** km NO Jurbarkas in Ordnung befunden wurde. Eigene vordere Teile der rechten Marschgruppe sind **7.35** Uhr **1.5** km westl. Skirsnemune [sp?] festgestellt worden. **7.45** Uhr befand sich **Marchgruppe B** mit Spitze **1.5** km noerdl. Dainiai [sp?] nach Sueden in fluessigem Vorgehen. Die Luftbilder der Bruecken von Ariogala u. Seredzius [sp?] wurden an **Marschgruppe Crisolli**, sowie an V.A. gesandt.

8.20: wird von **KGr Scheller** die Mituva erreicht.⁵²³

8.40: meldet die V.A., dass sie **8.20** Uhr mit Anfang die Linie Greiciai [sp?] – Zirniskiai erreicht hat.

8.55: teilt Div.Kdr. durch Funk mit, dass **Vorausabteilung Kütt** auf Seredzius, **Masse A** auf Ariogala angesetzt ist.

10.15: hat V.A. mit kampfkraeftigen Teilen die Mituva ueberschritten, Furt schlecht passierbar.

10.40: ist der Div.Gef.Std. nach Stellungswechsel Ostausgang Jurbarkas einsatzbereit.

Lage: rechts geht es gut voerwaerts, fluessiger Vormarsch. Anfang der Div. naehert sich (**KGr. Crisolli**) Kleonorava [sp?]. Links ist die Infanterie mit beiden Batl. ueber die Mituva u. in fluessigem Vorgehen nach Osten, **4-5** km ostw. der Mituva. **Kein aktiver Feind**. Gefangene sind zumeist Leute von Baubataillon, die an den Feldbefestigungen gearbeitet haben. V.A. hat Luksiai [sp?] durchschritten. . . Absicht der Div.: mit allen Teilen Ariogala zu erreichen ausser **K8**, das auf besondere Weisung des Div.Kdrs. nach Seredzius abgedehrt wurde. Div.Gef.Std. bleibt vorlaeufig ostw. Jurbarkas u. folgt in etwa **1** Stunde der rechten K.Gr.

11.00: Pi.Kdr. meldet:

[**Note:** See text for discussion of replacing the ford near Luksiai mit a **16** ton bridge. . .]

11.20: meldet V.A.: Feldstellungen u. Betonbunker suedl. Girdziai besetzt. Nach Saeuberung durch **II./Pz. 10** erfolgt Weitermarsch.

11.30: kommt O.B. der **4 PzGr** Gen.Obst. Hoepner zum Div.Gef.Std.

⁵²² **Note:** Number partly obscured, but must be **Schzt.Bde 8**.

⁵²³ **Note:** Again, “Mituva” or “Mitava?”

11.45: meldet Aufklaerungsflieger: feindl. mot. Kolonne u. Panzerkolonne auf der Strasse Skirenemune [sp?] – Rossienie im Zurueckgehen. Anfang **2 km** suedl. Rossienie, Laenge 12 km. [!]⁵²⁴

11.45: [Discussion of movements of **30 ID**, far left wing division of Sixteenth Army.] Der Verbindungsoffizier hat **30 ID** mitgeteilt, dass es Absicht der **8 PD** ist, die Memel bei Seredzius zu erreichen mit der V.A. Kütt, mit der Masse aber auf Airogala zu gehen.

12.20: hat Div. mit Anfang Seredzius erreicht. Feindl. mot.Kolonne von etwa **50** Fahrzeuge verlaesst zu gleicher Zeit den Ort in oestl. Richtung. Leichte Strassensperre.⁵²⁵

15.15: haben eigene vordere Spitzen Bruecke Seredzius u. Furt Airogala ueberschritten.

Flieger melden zu gleicher Zeit Erdarbeiten bei Kilowa erkannt zu haben, in der Bunkerlinie ostw. Mituva laesst sich keine Truppenbewegung feststellen.

15.30: erfolgt Meldung an A.K., dass die Truppe der Div. **13.00** Uhr Bruecke Seredzius heil in die Hand genommen, 14.30 Uhr mit Anfang **7 km** suedwestl. Ariogala stehen. Bunkerstellung bei Girziai durchbrochen.⁵²⁶ Div. setzt Vormarsch auch auf linker Vormarschstrasse fort.

Entwicklung der Lage (bis etwa **14.30** Uhr)

Der mit Schwerpunkt links angesetzte Angriff der Div. ging von der Feindbeurteilung aus: [see text for details]⁵²⁷

Bei der Gunst der Wetterlage, wochenlanger Trockenheit, glaubt die Div. es verantworten zu koennen, eine mot. Truppe durch Waldwege u. die Mituva-Furt, danach auf Feldwegen zum Angriff auf Ariogala ansetzen zu koennen. Da mithin alles dafuer sprach, **im linken Abschnitt den geringsten Widerstand zu finden**, wurde hierhin der Schwerpunkt gelegt.

Diese Feindbeurteilung erwies sich schon bald nach Angriffsbeginn als unzutreffend. Waehrend es im rechten Abschnitt gelang, durch Handstreich die Grenzbruecke unversehrt in die Hand zu bekommen u. die hier stehenden schwachen Kraefte schnell im entschlossenen Zupacken zu beseitigen, bedurfte es im linken Abschnitt laenger Kaempfe, bis es gelang, die Grenzverteidigung – Baumschuetzen – zu durchstossen, eine Bruecke ueber die als gangbar bezeichnete Grenzbachfurt zu schlagen u. so einen Weg durch den Wald bis zur Mituva zu bahnen.

Im rechten Abschnitt, entlang der Hauptstrasse, wurde nicht eine einzige Sperre angetroffen. Im linken Abschnitt, entlang der voellig bedeutungslosen Neben- u. Waldwege, musste eine **100** m tief verdrahtete Baumsperre genommen u. beseitigt werden.

Alle diese Momente ergaben die unerwarteten Bild, dass die im rechten Abschnitt angesetzte **K.Gr. Crisolti** ueberraschend schnell an die Mituva

⁵²⁴ **Note:** German aerial reconnaissance appears to have spent much of the day trying to locate, then track, movements of Soviet mechanized formations. No doubt, for obvious reasons, awareness of movements of these mechanized units of vital importance to Germans!

⁵²⁵ **Note:** Three hour “jump” in the war diary.

⁵²⁶ **Note:** All of this underscore in original text.

⁵²⁷ **Note:** Thus, it appears due to a misreading of the enemy situation, **8 PD** had launched its main attack on its left wing (*Schwerpunkt links*).

gelangte, die Bruecke bei Jurbarkas voellig unerwartet heil in die Hand bekam u. die etwa **5-6** km ostwaerts Jurbarkas angenommene Bunkerstellung im rechten Abschnitt der Div. erst im Entstehen begriffen u. *nicht verteidigungsfahig war*.

Im linken Abschnitt kam es zu den erwahnten Schwierigkeiten noch hinzu, dass hier die Bunkerstellung ausgebaut, mit M.G., Zwilling-M.G. u. Pak verteidigt war, so dass das hier angreifende **IR 503** unter Fuehrung des Kdrs. der **Schtz.Bde 8** bis **14.30** Uhr diese Linie nicht durchstossen konnte.

So sass die *mit grossen Hoffnungen gestartete V.A. vor dieser Bunkerlinie fest*, waehrend zu gleicher Zeit die rechte vormarschierende **K.Gr. Crisolli** gegen geringen Feindwiderstand mit dem verst. **K8 13.00** Uhr die Dubissa-Bruecke bei Seredzius unversehrt in die Hand bekommen u. das Gros der Abteilung 14.30 Uhr sich bis **7** km Ariogala genaehert hatte.⁵²⁸

Der um die Mittagszeit beim Div.Gef.Std. eintreffende O.B. der **4 PzGr** . . . befahl als Tagesziel Gewinn der Dubissa, Uebergang bei Ariogala u. Aufschliessen der gesamten Div.

16.20: kommt der Komm.Gen. zum Div.Gef.Std. zum **Ia**. Ergebnis der Besprechung der Befehl: die Div. erreicht noch heute mit allen fechtenden Teilen das Ostufer der Dubissa bei Ariogala. Vorgeworfene Teile voraus nach Kedainiai. Offenhalten Seredzius bleibt.

16.20: wird durch Fliegerabwurf gemeldet: westl. der Mituva **16.10** Uhr feindl. Kolonne im Rueckzug nach Osten.

16.45: Ariogala in eigenem Besitz.

16.50: meldet Kampfgruppe Scheller, dass sie mit Anfang unter dem a [?] von Girdziai . . . steht u. den Vormarsch forsetzt. Feind hat sich in Swantoje in den Morgenstunden mit nur schwachen Kraeften, aber *zaeh u. heimtueckisch verteidigt*. In den Waeldern zwischen Swantoje – u. Mituva mussten Wegesperren beseitigt werden. Der Weitermarsch ist durch Schwierigkeiten beim Ueberschreiten der Mituva *erheblich aufgehalten worden*. Die V.A. ist suedl. Girdziai auf eine besetzte Bunkerlinie gestossen u. ist nach Angriff durchgestossen.

Verlauf des Vormarsches im einzelnen:

Die **K.Gr. Scheller** war **3.00** Uhr, den Swantoje-Abschnitt ueberschreitend, ueber die Mituva auf Ariogala vorgestossen u. stiess im Verlauf des Tages wiederholt auf zaehen Widerstand.

1) beim Grenzuebertritt leisteten die Grenzposten *hartnaeckigen Widerstand*, wobei **II./IR 503 6** Tote u. **I./IR 503 1** Toten u. **3** Verwundete hatten;⁵²⁹

2) nach dem Durchstoss des **IR 503** wurde durch einzelne feindl. Schuetzen der Brueckenschlag ueber die Swantoje *erheblich gestoert*. Die **2./Pi.Batl. 59** [?]⁵³⁰ hatte dabei **1** Toten u. **6** Verwundete;

3) zwischen Swantoje u. Mituva war kein weiterer Feindwiderstand. Es mussten lediglich **2** Baumsperrn ueberwunden werden, deren Beseitigung je **1** Stunde dauerte;

4) das Durchschreiten der Mituva-Furt nahm bei Kraedern des hohen Wasserspiegels wegen geraeume Zeit in Anspruch. Nachdem die Bruecke **12.30** Uhr fertiggestellt war, ging der Vormarsch fluessig weiter.

⁵²⁸ **Note:** Again, complete underscore in original text.

⁵²⁹ **Note:** **IR 501, 502, 503** all belong to **290 ID!**

⁵³⁰ **Note:** Last number impossible to decipher; however **Pi.Btl. 59** was component of **8 PD**. On next page of diary is reference to: **Pz.Pi.Kp. 59** [sic!].

5) Suedl. Girdziai traf die V.A. **14.30** Uhr auf eine besetzte Bunkerlinie, die erst um **16.00** Uhr nach 1½ stuendigen schweren Kampf durchstossen werden konnte. Der *Feind kaempfte erbittert u. war bis zum letzten entschlossen*. Beim Durchstoss durch die Bunkerlinie setzte er sich trotz Handgranatenwurfs noch aus unmittelbarer Naeh mit der Pistole zur Wehr. Auch Schwerverwundete nahmen weiter am Kampf teil. Der Feind schoss *gut u. sicher* aus dem Hinterhalt.⁵³¹

Die *feindl. Luftwaffe* griff im Bereich der Kampfgruppe nicht in Erdkaempfe ein, dagegen erfolgten Einzelangriffe feindl. Aufklaerungsflieger mit M.G. gegen die Marschkolonne. Bruecken waren, soweit vorhanden, unzerstoert in den Besitz der K.Gr. gekommen. Die Strassen waren meist sandig, aber fuer alle Fahrzeuge befahrbar.

Im Verbande der Kampfgruppe A hatte **K8** entlang der Vormarschstrasse *Ort um Ort erkaempfen muessen*. Feindwiderstand wurde ueberall gebrochen. Besonders hartnaeckig gestaltete sich der Kampf um Seredzius u. den Uebergang ueber die Dubissa. Nach Auffassung der K.Gr. lag kein organisierter Widerstand vor; der Einzelkaempfer war *hartnaeckig u. gut ausgebildet*; viel Baumschuetzen. Eigene Luftueberlegenheit. Strassen meist Feldwege (2-3 m breit) mit festem Untergrund. Uebergaenge ueber kleine Baeche meist durch Panzer bald zerfahren. Bruecke (Uebergang ueber die Dubissa) in sehr gutem Zustand. Batl. Gef.Std. **1 km** ostw. Strassengabel ostw. Seredzius.

17.00: Feind flieht aus Bunkerstellung nach Osten.

17.25: Autobahnbruecke bei Ariogala genommen. Die Autobahnbruecke war stark besetzt u. wurde von Schtz.Bde 8, Panzern u. Artillerie von rueckwaerts angegriffen.

Div.-Stab geht nach Ariogala. Ariogala wird im Laufe der Nacht erreicht.

Dem kurz nach Angriffsbeginn zur rechten Kampfgruppe A vorgefahrenen Div.Kdr. bot sich am Grenzbach bei Pasvenciv [sp?] das Bild, dass die beabsichtigte Ueberrumpelung der Grenzsicherungen nach kurzem, aber hartem Kampf . . . vollauf gelungen u. die Bruecke ueber den Grenzbach unversehrt in eigene Hand gelangt war. Die V.A. der Gruppe A, das verst. Kradschtz.Btl. 8 (Obst.Lt. Kütt), war dort in vollem Vormarsch. Die Marschbewegung wurde lediglich durch versprengte Schuetzen zeitweise behindert.

Ganz anders war das Bild am Grenzbach bei der K.Gr. Scheller.⁵³² Auch dort war das Vorstoss ueber dem Grenzbach gelungen. Dagegen bot die Schaffung eines Ueberganges ueber den *an beiden Ufern start angesumpten Grenzbach* erhebliche Schwierigkeiten. Eine Bruecke des angesetzten Bau-Batl. war zwar im Bau, ihre Fertigstellung jedoch erst im Laufe des Vormittags zu erwarten, da sie unerhoert fest gebaut werden sollte. Weil so lange nicht gewartet werden konnte, hatte die Gruppe B mit ihren Mitteln eine kleine schnell fertig gestellte Bruecke geschaffen, die fuer alle Fahrzeuge der Div. brauchbar war; sie konnte jedoch nicht erreichen, dass das beiderseits angesumpfte Gelaende gleichfalls schnell brauchbar gemacht werden konnte. Jeder einzelne Wagen musste durch Mannschaftszug ueber diese Stelle hinweg gebracht werden. Dagegen war es gelungen, die zugeteilte I./PzRgt. 10 durch eine Furt auf die andere Seite zu bringen. Es war vorauszusehen, dass die Marschgruppe B mit ihrem 50 km Marschlaenge [!] erhebliche Verzoegerungen erleiden wuerde. Es wurde deshalb erwogen, die

⁵³¹ **Note:** Just one of many examples of often fanatical resistance encountered by **8 PD** on *Barbarossatag*.

⁵³² **Note:** K.Gr. Schneller = K.Gr. B? K.Gr. Crisolli = K.Gr. A? Must confirm! Clear that Crisolli's group attacked on the right; Schneller must have been on the left.

Marschgruppe B nach der **Marschgruppe A** ueber die Bruecke Jurbarkas anzu-
setzten u. sie erst spaeter wieder nach Norden bei 5 km ostw. Skirsnemune [sp?]
auf die noerdl. Marschstrasse abzdrehen.

Inzwischen ging der Vormarsch der **Marschgruppe A** vorwaerts, wurde jedoch an
zahlreichen Ortschaften an der Memeluferstrasse durch den Widerstand
schwachen Feindes aufgehalten, der jedesmal zu einer kurzen Entwicklung u. zur
Vertreibung des Feindes zwang.

Bedauerlicherweise war auch durch die V.A. Kütt auf Grund der vor Angriffs-
beginn uebermittelten Wegeverhaeltnisse von Wittkehmen [sp?] bis Jurbarkas ein
noerdlicher Umgebungsweg gewaehlt worden, dessen Zustand *ausserordentlich*
schlecht war u. dessen schwache Bruecken nach kurzer Zeit brachen, so dass die
Div. hierdurch eine unerwuenschte Verzoegerung, auch der **Marschgruppe A**,
erlitt.

Immerhin gelang es, die V.A. Kütt verhaeltnismaessig schnell nach Seredzius zu
bringen u. die dortige Bruecke unversehrt in die Hand zu bekommen. Feindl.
schwacher Widerstand ergab sich auffallenderweise erst auf den jenseitigen
Hoehen der Dubissa u. konnte von der V.A. in bis zum Abend dauerndem
Kampfe gebrochen werden.

Der Masse der **Gruppe A** war es inzwischen gelungen, ohne weiteren Kampf bis
an den Abschnitt von Ariogala heranzukommen, dessen jenseitige Hoehen vom
Feind besetzt waren. Die Bruecke von Ariogala selbst war fuer Fahrzeuge un-
brauchbar; dagegen wurde in unmittelbarer Verlaengerung der Strasse eine fuer
alle Fahrzeuge brauchbare Furt mit festem Untergrund gefunden, ueber die in
schnellem Ansatz die Panzer, hinter ihnen die M.T.W.-Kompanien auf die Hoehe
von Ariogala angesetzt wurden.

Es gelang diesem fuer den Feind mit Sicherheit unerwartet schnellen Vorstoss,
den feindl. Widerstand, auch seiner Pz.Spach-Wagen, zu brechen u. die Hoehe
jenseits der Furt in eigene Hand zu bekommen.

Ebenso gelang der vom Div.Kdr. sofort angeordnete Vorstoss auf die Autobahn-
bruecke von Ariogala, die gleichfalls nach einem kurzen, von eigener Artillerie u.
der Panzer-Abtlg. unterstuetzten Angriff von hinten her geoeffnet wurde u.
unversehrt um 17.23 [?]⁵³³ Uhr in eigene Hand geriet. . .

[Note: Discussion of how poor roadways and detours are causing more and more
delays in movement. See text.]

Es wurde jedoch sofort die am jenseitigen Ufer hoch gelegende Ortschaft
Ariogala besetzt, die Autobahnbruecke, 3 km noerdl. Ariogala, stark von Panzern
– Kradschuetzen – Artillerie gesichert, Sicherungen an den Ortsausgang nach
Kodainiai [sp?] vorgetrieben u. Aufklaerung in Richtung Kodainiai angesetzt.
Der bald danach in Ariogala eintreffende Komm.Gen. gab dem gleichfalls dort
befindlichen Div.Kdr. Weisung, noch heute auf Kodainiai weiter vorzustossen. . .
Inzwischen war der Anstieg von der Furt nach der hochgelegenen Ortschaft Ario-
gala so schlecht geworden, dass alle Fahrzeuge ueber 3 to den Anstieg nicht
mehr bewaeltigten u. einzeln im Mannschaftszug ueber die zerfahrene Stelle gezogen
werden mussten. [Note: Combat engineers have to be brought to conduct repairs,
which are not completed until evening.]

Unter diesen Umstaenden erhielt die **K.Gr. A** den Auftrag, mit den uebergang-
enen Teilen bis an den naechsten Abschnitt Giniava vorzugehen u. diesen fuer
den weiteren Vormarsch der Div. offen zu halten. Die Spitzen dieser Teile trafen
jedoch schon nach wenigen Kilometern in der Gegend von Zasinai auf starken

⁵³³ Note: Last two numbers difficult to read.

feindl. Widerstand, der durch mot. Schuetzen, Artillerie, Panzerwagen, Pak geleistet wurde. Es gelang weder den Panzern, in den Wald einzudringen, noch der Artillerie, den Feind im Wald zu zerschlagen. . .

Der weitere Vorstoss der **4 PzGr** blieb somit gegen **23.00** Uhr in die Gegend von Zasinai liegen. Alle Massnahmen wurden getroffen, um die restlichen Teile der **K.Gr. A** schnell heranzubringen, u. am **23.[6.]** mit verstaerkter Kraft in Richtung auf Kodainiai [sp?] vorzustossen.

Inzwischen war vom Div.Kdr. sehnsuechtig das Eintreffen der noerdl. Vorstossgruppe, V.A. u. **K.Gr. B.**, bei Ariogala erwartet worden, weil mit ihrer Hilfe der weitere Vorstoss auf Kodainiai noch am **23.[6.]** haette erzwungen werden koennen. Dies trat jedoch nicht ein. Sie hatte nicht nur die bereits erwaehnten Schwierigkeiten am Grenzbach zu ueberwinden gehabt, u. aehnliche Schwierigkeiten an der Mituva gefunden, sondern waren noch auf die im noerdlichen Teile besetzte Bunkerlinie in der Linie von Kuturiai – Girdziai gestossen. Da es dem **IR 503** mit seinen Mitteln nicht gelungen war, diese Bunkerlinie zu durchbrechen, hatte die V.A., Fuehrer Hptm. Frhr. v. Wolff, seine eigenen Kraefte, insbesondere die **3./Pz.Pi.Kp. 59**, mit ihren Wurfladungen dagegen angesetzt.

Es war der V.A. daraufhin in verhaeltnismaessig kurzer Zeit gelungen, die stark besetzte Bunkerlinie zu durchbrechen u. weiter vo zu stossen.

Aber auch auf ihrem weiteren Wege hatte sich die Aufklaerungsabteilung mit erheblichen Gelaendeschwierigkeiten durchzukaempfen, so dass ihre zeitgerechtes Eintreffen an der Dubissa bei Ariogala nicht moeglich war. [See text for more details.]

Die Auffassung der Div., dass die *ganze Bunkerlinie unbesetzt sei, hatte sich demnach als nicht in allen Teilen zutreffend erwiesen.*

Waehrend auffaelligerweise der suedl. Teil dieser Linie *voellig unbesetzt war* u. der **K.Gr. A** keinerlei Schwierigkeiten bereitete, wurde der Nordteil *so stark verteidigt*, dass es dem **IR 503** aus eigenen Mitteln nicht gelungen war, sie zu durchbrechen.

Das Gesamtergebnis des 22.[6.] war fuer die Div. ueberaus befriedigend. Es war der V.A. Kuitt gelungen, die Dubissa-Bruecke bei Seredzius unversehrt in die Hand zu bekommen, die vordersten Teile der **K.Gr. A** hatten die Dubissa ueberschritten u. bereits die Ausgangsstellungen fuer den weiteren Vorstoss am **23.[6.]** in Richtung Kadainiai geschaffen. Die Masse der **K.Gr.A**, wie der V.A. u. der **K.Gr. B** waren so nahe an die Dubissa herangerueckt, dass damit gerechnet werden konnte, sie am naechsten Tage voll zur Verfuegung zu haben, der Durchbruch durch die feindl. Grenzstellung war **somit am ersten Tage in einer Tiefe von 100 km erfolgt**. Die Anschauung der Div., dass der Durchbruch durch den Gegner mit den Kraeften der beiden Kampfgruppen gelingen wuerde, war bestaetigt. Ueberraschend war, dass der Feind sich in kleinen Gruppen u. mit einzelnen Schuetzen *zaeh verteidigte u. den Kampf auch dann nicht aufgab, wenn seine Lage voellig hoffnungslos schien.* Einzelne Teile *lebten immer wieder auf*, nachdem der Angriff ueber sie hinweggegangen war u. verursachten durch ihre Einzelschuesse unangenehme Verzoegerungen des Vormarsches der langen Marschkolonne.

Die Zahl der Gefangene war gering, **200 – 300** Mann, da es beinahe an allen Stellen **ein Kampf bis zur letzten Entscheidung** gewesen war.

K8 erbeutete ein Waffen- u. Muni-Lager in der Kaserne Seredzius, **1500** Gewehre, mehrere Tausend Schuss Muniton u. optisches Geraet, sowie eine Wetterdienststelle mit modernen Geraet.

Der Fuehrer u. Oberste Befehlshaber der Wehrmacht hat dem Kp.-Chef der **I./Pz.Pi.Batl. 59**, Hptm. Hallauer das Ritterkreuz des Eisernen Kreuzes verliehen.

Hptm. Hallauer ist am **24.6.** seiner schweren Verwundung erlegen u. hat die hohe Auszeichnung des Fuehrers nicht mehr erlebt.

Hptm. Hallauer ist es in heldenhaftem u. selbstlosem Einsatz mit seiner Pi.Kp. geglueckt, bei Pasvenciv die Bruecke ueber den Grenzbach im Handstreich im Besitz zu nehmen. *Er hat dadurch der ganzen Div. den Weg in Feindesland gebahnt. . .*

Zusammenfassung:

56 PzK hat im Durchstoss durch die Luecke der Feindstellung ostw. Jurbarkas u. nach Brechen z.T. zaehen Feindwiderstandes, so insbesondere in der Bunkerlinie Kuturiai – Girdziai in ungestuemen Vorwaertsdrang mit **8 PD** die Bruecke bei Seredzius unversehrt in Besitz genommen, mit vordersten Teilen dieser Div. noch am Nachmittag das Ostufer der Dubissa bei Ariogala u. mit **290 ID** die Gegend Paalsis u. Knečiai erreicht.

Absicht:

8 PD stellt sich mit allen fechtenden Teilen auf dem Ostfuer der Dubissa so bereit, dass sie am **23.6.** frueh entlang der grossen Strasse Ariogala – Josvainiai – Kedainiai ihr Vorgehen auf Wilkomierz fortsetzen kann. Durch V.A. sind fruehzeitig Uebergaenge ueber die Nevezis bei Kedainiai in die Hand zu nehmen. Die Div. sorgt fuer schnelles u. fluessiges Vorziehen ihrer noch rueckwaertigen Kampfgruppen u. Versorgungsgruppen, um die Strasse . . . [see text for list of towns] fuer **3 ID (mot.)** frei zu machen.

[See text for more details.] _

(T-315, Roll 483, *Ia KTB, Bd. I: 13.6.- 20.7.41*)

--**21.6.41** (**21 ID** / Order of the Day):⁵³⁴

21. Infanterie-Division

Kommandeur

Soldaten:

Wie in vergangenen Jahren wird auch heute die Div. an *entscheidender Stelle* zum Angriff antreten.

In Gedanken an die grossen Leistungen der Div. in Ost u. West sehe ich vertrauensvoll auf Euch . . .

⁵³⁴ **Note:** This is division commander's "Aufruf" to his troops on eve of *Barbarossa*.

Der Krieg gegen Russland ist ein *gleicher Kampf wie gegen Polen u. Frankreich*. Er muss gefuehrt werden, um den Endsieg zu erringen in den ***uns von England aufgezwungenen Krieg***. Er ist aber auch notwendig, u. die ***juedischen u. bolschewistischen Kriegshetzer u. Brandstifter*** auch im Osten endgueltig zu vernichten.

In diesem Sinne fuer die Zukunft unserer Heimat u. fuer das Dasein unseres Volkes.

Vorwaerts!

Heil Hitler!

[signed]

Generalmajor u. Div.-Kdr. [Sponheimer]

(T-315, Roll 755, *Ia, Ib Anlagen zum KTB: 1.6.-2.8.41*)

--**21.6.41** (21 ID / Order of the Day (1 AK)):

Der Kommandierende General
des **I. Armeekorps**

Soldaten des I. Armeekorps!

Der Fuehrer u. Oberste Befehlshaber der *Wehrmacht* hat den Kampf gegen das bolschewistische Russland befohlen.

Nachdem Russland gegen den Willen des Fuehrers bereits Teile von Finnland u. Rumaenien an sich gerissen u. die baltischen Staaten unterjocht hat, ist seine gesamte Wehrmacht an unseren Landesgrenzen aufmarschiert. Russland ist zu einer gegenwaertigen u. dauernden Bedrohung des deutschen Lebensraumes geworden.⁵³⁵

[See text for rest of his Order of the Day.]

[signed]

General der Infanterie [v. Both]⁵³⁶

(T-315, Roll 755, *Ia, Ib Anlagen zum KTB: 1.6.-2.8.41*)

--**22.6.41** (21 ID / Abt. Ia / Div.-Befehl):

21 ID
Abt. Ia

Div.Gef.Std. Zygaiciai, den **22.6.1941**
Uhr [no time given]

Divisionsbefehl Nr. 9

Fuer die Durchfuehrung des Angriffs am **23.6.41**.

⁵³⁵ **Note:** Implication being, of course, that Russian “*Ueberfall*” on the Reich may be imminent (or could occur at any time).

⁵³⁶ **Note:** Buth von Both’s order of the day did not conclude with “Heil Hitler!”

- 1.) Feind hat am **22.6.41** erst an der Jura mit staerkeren Kraeften Widerstand geleistet. Die Div. steht nunmehr nach Ueberwindung der Grenzschutztruppen aktiven Truppen gegenueber. Mit Verstaerkung des Feindwiderstandes am naechsten Tag ist zu rechnen, insbesondere nach dem Austritt aus dem Wald Gegend Upinas.
- 2.) Abschlusslage der Div.: Mit Teilen aller Rgter Jura ueberschritten, vordere Linie etwa Gut Ringai – Kuturai – Lylawnai – Tamosaiciai [sp?] [-]erviski (alle Orte einschl.).
3. **21 ID** greift um **2.50** Uhr beginnend mit allen Teilen in den zugewiesenen Gefechtsstreifen in NO Richtung an, durchstoessst das Waldgebiet beiderseits der Okmiana . . .
- 5.) Nach Durchschreiten der Waelder wird voraussichtlich eines der Rgter. aus der Front herausgenommen werden.
- 6.) Zuteilung der Artillerie: Es bleiben den Rgtern. unterstellt. [see text for details]⁵³⁷ . . .
- 9.) **3./Sturm-Gesch.Abt. 185** sammelt noch am Abend des **22.6.** [see text for details] . . .
- 16.) Div.Gef.Std. am **22.6.** abends Zygaiciai. mit Tagesanbruch **23.6.** Balskai.

(T-315, Roll 755, *Ia, Ib Anlagen zum KTB: 1.6.-2.8.41*)

--9.-22.6.41 (61 ID / Ia KTB):

Beginn des Feldzuges gegen Sowjet-Russland

Trotz des bestehenden Nichtangriffspaktes mit Sowjet-Russland ist das deutsch-sowj. Verhaeltnis unklar u. in der letzten Zeit *immer bedrohlicher geworden*. England hat es verstanden, Sowjet-Russland in seine Plaene einzuspannen, um in verraeterischer Weise im guenstigen Augenblick *ueber Deutschland herzufallen*.⁵³⁸

Von deutscher Seite ist die Gefahr rechtzeitig erkannt u. alle Massnahmen getroffen worden, um den Gegner im Osten niederzuwerfen.

Der Aufmarsch der Div. an der Deutschen Ostgrenze hat sich planmaessig vollzogen.

26 AK hat den Auftrag, mit **217 ID** rechts, **61 ID** links auf dem Nordfluegel der **18 Armee** die russ. Grenzstellung zwischen Aisenai – Liewern zu durchbrechen u. in weiterem Vorstoss auf Riga die Nordflanke der Armee zu schuetzen.

Hierzu durchbricht **61 ID** mit unterstelltem **Bau-Btl. 100** u. **Bruecko T 195** am 1.B-Tag x Uhr die russ. Grenzstellung zwischen Schnaugsten (einschl.) u. Liewern mit Schwerpunkt rechts.

⁵³⁷ **Note:** Looks like **21 ID** was fairly well outfitted w/ artillery; elements of its own and two other artillery rgts. noted here.

⁵³⁸ **Note:** Again, as I've read in several of these war diaries, justification for attack on Russia based on putative threat of imminent or impending attack posed by UdSSR.

9./16.6.41:

Der Div.-Befehl zum Angriff ueber die Grenze ergeht bereits am **9.6.[41]**.⁵³⁹ Und am **16.6.** Div.-Befehl fuer Einruecken in die Bereitstellung zum Angriff. (Anlage 2)

20.6.41:

„Ergaenzender Befehl fuer Einruecken in die Bereitstellung u. Angriff“ aendert auf Grund des Korps-Befehls teilweise die bereits erlassenen Anordnungen. (Anlage 3)

Ausserdem werden Stichworte fuer den Anlauf der Operation befohlen.

20.-22.6.41:

In dieser Nacht [**20./21.6.**] schliesst die Division planmaessig in die befohlenen Aufschliessraeume auf u. in der folgenden Nacht [**21./22.6.**] bezieht die Division die Bereitstellungsraeume zum Angriff.

21.6.41:

20.00: Div.-Stabs-Quartier wird von Memel nach Gedminnen verlegt.

(T-315, Roll 1013, *Ia KTB Nr. 5, Bd. I: 22.6.-17.9.41*)

--22.6.41 (61 ID / Ia KTB):

Die Bewegungen verlaufen planmaessig.

0200: Um **2.00** Uhr melden Rgt., selbst.Abt., unterst. **Bau-Btl. 100** u. **Bruecke T 195** die erfolgte Bereitstellung.

Meldung der Div. an das Gen.Kdo.: „*Division zum Angriff ueber die Grenze bereitgestellt.*“

0305: Mit Angriffsbeginn werden der Div. das **Landes-Schztz.Btl. 306** unterstellt u. **Radf.Btl. 402** – Korpsreserve – zur Durchfuehrung eines Sicherungsauftrages voruebergehend unterstellt.

Der Angriff beginnt planmaessig.

0315: **IR 151** ist nach Erreichen von Gudavas (Ostausgang) in zuegigem Vorgehen. Auch die **K.Gr. v. Bülow** kommt gut vorwaerts (**0405**). Der Handstreich auf Gargzdai ist gelungen u. die Minge-Bruecke unversehrt in unserer Hand. Trotzdem haelt Feind immer noch zaeh im Nordteil Gargzdai u. bedroht die linke Flanke (**0555**) des **II./IR 176**.

0555: Um [dieser Zeit] erteilt Div.Kdr. den Befehl: **IR 176**, dem das **II.Btl. (K.Gr. v. Bülow)** wieder unterstellt wird, setzt sich in den Besitz von Gargzdai

⁵³⁹ **Note: 9.6.41?** That seems awfully early for such an order to be given.

u. stoesset auf Vezaiciai durch. Art.-Abt. u. Pi.Komp. bleiben dazu unterstellt.

0558: Das rasche Vorgehen des **IR 151**, das Rgt. hat mit Spitze bereits die Strasse Girinkai – Vezaiciai erreicht, veranlasst **6.05** Uhr den Div.Kdr. die **AA 161** ueber [see text for list of half dozen towns!] . . . zur Aufklaerung in Richtung Kuliai vorzuziehen.

0620: Um **6.20** Uhr erhaelt **IR 162** die Anweisung, nach Schnaugsten vorzuziehen, wenn der Ort von der Aufkl.Abt. geraeumt ist. **Landes-Schzt.Btl. 306** hat befehlgemaess die Grenze – ohne Feindwiderstand – ueberschritten, meldet **6.10** Uhr Kvietiniai feindfrei.

0614: Radf.Btl. 402 ist im Vorgehen ueber die Grenze mit einem russ. Spaehtrupp zusammengestossen u. meldet Gribziniai feindfrei. Vereinzelte feindl. Artl.-Einschlaege von 1-2 Btr. (**0620**) in der Naehel des Div.Gef.St. lassen erst-malig russische Artillerie in Erscheinung treten. . .⁵⁴⁰

0640: Waehrend **IR 151** ohne Feindberuehrung weiter vorgeht, um **6.40** Uhr wurde Pkt 77 (2 km NO Girininkai) erreicht, ist die Lage beim **IR 176** noch ungeklaert.

0730: Hier liegt II.Btl. unmittelbar vor stark besetzten Vezaiciai fest u. bittet um Unterstuetzung. III.Btl. befindet sich noch im Angriff gegen Gehoefte noerdl. Gargzdai, die Feind noch immer zaeh verteidigt (**0810**). I.Btl. wird durch die Minge-Furt suedl. Gargzdai auf Vezaiciai zur Unterstuetzung des II.Btl. herangefuehrt.

0815: Div.Kdr. befiehlt nun **IR 151** bei Pkt. 151 (suedl. Jokuliai) anzuhalten. Rgt. setzt eine eigene V.A. auf Pkt. 80 [am?] Judupis-Uebergang an, um **8.25** Uhr ergeht Befehl an **IR 162** ueber Schnaugsten Suedteil [Kz?]aiciai zu erreichen u. sich dort u. SW des Ortes so bereit zu halten, dass es entweder in noerdl. Richtung (Vezaiciai) oder nach NO weiter vorstossen kann. . .⁵⁴¹

0835: hat **AA 161** Ververiskiai ohne Feindberuehrung erreicht u. um **9.00** Uhr haben die vordersten Teile **IR 151** die Jodupis erreicht. Waehrend **II./IR 176** weiter auf Strasse nach Tilvikai vorgeht (**1042**), der Feind hat hier abgebaut, u. I.Btl. **12.30** Vezaiciai erreicht hat, sind bei III.Btl. um **12.25** Uhr immer noch erbitterte Kaempfe im Gange. *Jedes Haus ist zum Bunker ausgebaut u. muss in Einzelkampf genommen werden.*

1330: Erst um **13.30** Uhr ist Gargzdai genommen. . .

1230: Lds.Schzt.Btl. 306 hat Ostufer des Minia [sp?] besetzt. Um **13.30** Uhr befiehlt Gen.Kdo. die Abloesung des **Rdf.Btl. 402** durch **Lds.Schzt.Btl. 306** bis **20.00** Uhr. Radf.Btl. zur Verfueg. des Korps nach Schlappschill.

⁵⁴⁰ **Note:** This is another major theme for **22.6.1941**: Almost total absence of Red Army artillery in action against German invaders.

⁵⁴¹ **Note:** Much of this paragraph was *very difficult to decipher*, as the bottom five lines were fairly well blacked out on my paper copy; however, by magnifying the text on my computer, I was able to make out most of it.

Die Div. ist *auf der ganzen Front durch die feindl. Grenzstellungen durchgebrochen*. Der Angriff zum Erreichen des Tagesziels wird fortgesetzt. . .

1600: Zwischenmeldung an Gen.Kdo. (Anl. 12)

1630: Rgt. u. selbst.Abt. treten gem. Div.Befehl erneut zum Angriff auf Tagesziel an. Um **16.50** Uhr ergeht vom **26 AK Befehl** zur Bildung einer V.A. mit dem Auftrag, unverzueglich in Richtung Mitznikai [sp?] vorzugehen u. dortiges Hoehengelaende zu besetzen. Vorausabteilung wird unter Fuehrung von Major Dr. Vogelsang gebildet. . .

1745: Das Vorgehen der Div. vollzieht sich *ohne bes. Zwischenfaelle*.

1710: AA **161** stoest auf Strasse Vezaiciai – Kuliai noerdl. des **W W 85** auf staerkeren Feind u. bleibt dort liegen. **IR 151** erreicht ohne Feindberuehrung Tagesziel **Hoeh** **147**.

1800: Div.Gef.Std. macht Stellungswechsel nach Antkoptis. Wegen *ausserordentlich schlechter Wegeverhaeltnisse* trifft Fuehrungsstaffel erst um **19.30** dort ein.

2100: meldet **IR 162** das Erreichen des befohlenen Tageszieles **Hoehen** nordwestlich Zadeikiai. Saemtliche Rgt. u. selbst.Abt. haben die Tagesziele erreicht.

2200: befiehlt Div. an **IR 151** u. **162** Inbesitznahme u. Sicherung der Zwalsia-Bahnuebergaenge u. um **23.00** Uhr ergehen die muendl. Vorbefehle fuer den Angriff am **23.6**.

Wenn die Divisiion auch die befohlenen Tagesziele erreicht hat, so gaben die *schweren Kaempfe des ersten Tages* doch einen Vorgeschmack den Kommanden.

23.6.41:

(**Note:** On this day, **61 ID** experiences more combat w/ a tenacious enemy and thoroughly difficult problems w/ the poor roadways, etc.)

(T-315, Roll 1013, *Ia KTB Nr. 5, Bd. I: 22.6.-17.9.41*)

1.7.7: Case Study 1: Start of Operations on the Siauliai Axis (8 PD (56 PzK))

General Brandenberger:

He “was a cool and controlled commander who radiated calm everywhere he went. Although he was totally w/o charisma, and looked like a slightly stuffy university professor, he was, in fact,

tactically brilliant. He almost never made a mistake and took advantage of every opportunity. The senior German officers came to recognize this, even at Fuehrer hq. . .” (For more details see, Mitcham, Jr., *Men of Barbarossa*, 84-85)

--**8 PD**: The 8th Panzer Division was formed at Cottbus in 1939 as the 3rd Light Division. It was made up of the 67th Panzer Battalion and Mechanized Cavalry Regiments 8 and 9. It was engaged in the campaign against Poland in 1939. In the winter of 1939-1940 it was converted into the 8th Panzer Division. In May of 1940 it took part in the campaign in the West. In April 1941 the Division was transferred to Yugoslavia. From June to the winter of 1941 it was heavily engaged on the Eastern front, northern sector. In the autumn of 1942 it was in the central sector of the Eastern front and in the summer of 1943 it was transferred to the southern sector after the Orel offensive. It suffered heavy losses during the withdrawal from Kiev in the autumn of 1943. (UG / RGFC)

--Stellungbesetzung 8 PD:

- Div. Kdr. (Bgen Brandenberger)
- Operations Officer (Ia) (Major i.G. Friedrich Berendsen)
- **10 PzRgt** (Lt.Col. Fronhoefer)
- **8 Mot.Rifle Bde (S.B. 8)** (Col Scheller)
- **8 Mot.Rifle Rgt (S.R. 8)** (Lt.Col. Crisolli)
- **28 Mot.Rifle Rgt (S.R. 28)** (Lt.Col. Bodenhausen)
- **8 Motorcycle Btl (K 8)** (Lt.Col. Kuett)⁵⁴²
- **80 Pz.A.R. (A.R. 80)**
- **59 Pz.Recon.Btl (Pz.A.A. 80)**
- **43 AT Detachment (Pz.Jg. 43)**
- **92 Light Flak Btl (I.Flak 92 or Ie.Flak 92)**
- **59 Panzer Supply Btl (Pz.D. 59)**

(R.H.S. Stolfi, *German Panzers on the Offensive*, 154)

--**Note**: The **OKH** set the city of Leningrad as the strategic target for its Baltic army group. . . The single operational success that would result in the quick seizure of Leningrad would be the immediate crossing of the middle reaches of the Western Dvina (Daugava) River and the resultant breaking up of the *strongest natural defensive line between East Prussia and Leningrad*. As the only panzer division in **56 PzK**, whose zone of operations led through Duenaburg, **8 PD** was selected as the operational instrument to *seize the rail and highway bridges there* on the main route to Leningrad. . . The Baltic region presented special difficulties for the movement of **8 PD** . . . that tended to reduce the impact of tanks and increase the importance of motorized infantry. . .⁵⁴³ The division faced **38** significant streams to be crossed by its **5000** motor vehicles during movement along *sandy lanes and unpaved roads*. . . (R.H.S. Stolfi, *German Panzers on the Offensive*, 147-48)

--**Note**: Hq. **56 PzK** controlling **8 PD** set the city of Duenaburg, Latvia, and the highway & railway bridges there as the *operational target* for the corps. Manstein selected his strongest and most mobile division, **8 PD**, to lead the advance directly at Duenaburg. The city and its bridges represented a distant target – **295 km** straight line increments along the road system – classically suited for panzer divisions. Quick seizure of the city would dismantle Soviet defenses along the

⁵⁴² **Note**: I believe both “Fronhoefer” and “Kuett” should be spelled w/ Umlauts (e.g., “Kütt” vice “Kuett”).

⁵⁴³ **Note**: See, section on “Terrain—Army Group North,” for details.

greatest single obstacle [i.e., the Dvina River] to the German advance on Leningrad. If such a coup could be pulled off by **8 PD**, the Soviets would be forced into delaying actions for a vast distance back to the only other and last, distinct barrier line between the Germans and Leningrad – the Mshaga and Luga River system. (R.H.S. Stolfi, *German Panzers on the Offensive*, 151-52)

--**Mission 56 PzK**: Das **56 PzK**, zu dem wir gehoeren, ist das rechte Korps der P.Gr. Es soll aus dem Waldgebiet noerdl. der Memel nach Osten vorbrechen, NO Kowno die grosse Strasse gewinnen u. so schnell wie moeglich Dünaburg u. die dortigen Duena-Uebergaenge in Besitz nehmen. (Reinhardt, 122). Das linke Korps [**41 PzK**] . . . ist gegen Jakobstadt angesetzt. Pz.Gr.-Reserve ist die SS „T.“, die dem Korps zugefuehrt wird, das als erstes die Duena erreicht. Das **56 PzK** setzt in vorderer Linie die **8 PD** beiderseits der Strasse noerdl. der Memel an u. links davon auf Nebenwegen die **290 ID**. Unsere Div. [**3 ID (mot.)**] bleibt das zweite Treffen u. wird, bis die Grenzbefestigungen durchbrochen sind, suedl. der Memel zurueckgehalten. (G. Dieckhoff, *3. Infanterie-Division*, 91-92)

--**16.6.41** (Manstein's Memoirs):

I arrived in **56 PzK** assembly area on **16 Jun 41**. Col.-Gen. Hoepner had issued the following orders for the advance of **4 PzGr**:

56 PzK (8 PD, 3 ID (mot.), 290 ID) was to break out in an easterly direction from the forest area north of the Memel [Nemen] and east of Tilsit and to gain the big road to Dvinsk NE of Kovno. To its left **41 PzK (1, 6 PD, 36 ID (mot.)** and **269 ID**) was to advance towards the Dvina crossing at Jakobstadt. The SS Death's Head Div., also belonging to the panzer group, would initially follow along behind w/ a view to being sent in behind the corps making the fastest progress.

For the purpose both of cutting off all enemy forces forward of the Dvina and of forging ahead w/ AGN's operation, it was of decisive importance that the Dvina bridges should be captured intact, since this mighty river presented a formidable obstacle. [See text for more details.]

(Manstein, *Lost Victories*, 178)

--**16.6.41** (Memoiren Mansteins):

Das **56 PzK** sollte im Rahmen der **4 PzGr** der H.Gr.Nord aus Ostpreussen zum Angriff antreten. Der *H.Gr.Nord* war die Aufgabe zugewiesen, aus Ostpreussen vorstossend, die im Baltikum stehenden Feindkraefte zu vernichten, um alsdann auf Leningrad vorzugehen.

In ihrem Rahmen fiel der **4 PzGr** (Gen.Obst. Hoepner) die Aufgabe zu, schnell gegen die Duena bei u. unterhalb Dünaburg vorzustossen, um die Duena-Uebergaenge fuer das weitere Vorgehen in Richtung Opotschka in die Hand zu bekommen.

Rechts von ihr hatte die **16 Armee** (Gen.Obst Busch) ueber Kowno [Kaunas] vorzugehen, um der **4 PzGr** schnell zu folgen, waehrend links der **4 PzGr** der

18 Armee (Gen. v. Küchler) die allgemeine Richtung auf Riga zugewiesen war.

Am **16 Jun 41** traf ich, nachdem ich bereits vorher schon einmal in Ostpreussen gewesen war, im Aufmarschgebiet des **56 PzK** ein. Gen.Obst. Hoepner hatte das Vorgehen der **4 PzGr** wie folgt angeordnet:

Das **56 PzK (8 PD, 3 ID (mot.), 290 ID)** sollte, aus dem Waldgebiet noerdl. der Memel [Nemen] ostw. Tilsit nach Osten vorbrechend, nordostw. Kowno die grosse Strasse nach Dünaburg gewinnen. Links von ihm sollte das **41 PzK** (Gen. Reinhardt) (**1 PD, 6 PD, 36 ID (mot.), 269 ID**) in Richtung auf den Duena-Uebergang von Jakobstadt vorgehen. Die weiterhin zur Pz.Gr. gehoerende **SS „T“-Div.** sollte zunaechst in zweiter Linie folgen, um dem Korps nachgefuehrt zu werden, das am schnellsten vorwaerts kaeme.

Sowohl im Hinblick auf das Abschneiden aller vorwaerts der Duena stehenden Feindkraefte wie auf die schnelle Fortfuehrung der Operation der H.Gr.Nord war die *Inbesitznahme unzerstoerter Duenabruecken von ausschlaggebender Bedeutung*. Stellte doch der gewaltige Strom ein *starkes Hindernis* dar. Es wuerde sich also beim Vorgehn der **4 PzGr** um einen Wettlauf der beiden Pz.Korps handeln, welches zuerst an der Duena eintraefe. Das **56 PzK** war entschlossen, dies Rennen zu gewinnen. Es befand sich dabei insofern im Vorteil, als es nach der feindl. Kraefteverteilung, *soweit dies bekannt war*, voraussichtlich im rueckwaertigen Feindgebiet zunaechst auf *geringere Feindkraefte stossen wuerde, als das 41 PzK*. Aus diesem Grunde war letzteres von der Fuehrung der Pz.Gr. *um eine Pz.-Div. staerker gemacht worden* als unser Korps.

(Manstein, *Verlorene Siege*, 175)⁵⁴⁴

--**16.-20.6.41**: The **OKH** stationed **8 PD** in the area around Prague in the Protectorate of Bohemia (present Czech Republic), where it would have been difficult for the Soviets to believe that it would be shortly before an attack against the Soviet Union. With impressive nerves, **OKH** did not begin to move the division to the vicinity of the Lithuanian border until “**1357** on **16.6.[41]** according to plan.” The division transport commandant moved the entire force from Prague into a new billeting area (*Unterkunftsraum*) immediately south of the Memel (Neman) River on the Lithuanian border in only 51 hours. . . At **2000, 18 Jun 41**, the division began to move into its battle concentration area (*Aufmarschraum*) on the south bank of the Nemen River. Then, during the brief hours of darkness on the evenings of **19/20 Jun 41**, the division moved forces across the river into the attack assembly areas (*Bereitstellungsraum*) in an *extremely restricted space* north of the Neman and against the Lithuanian border. (R.H.S. Stolfi, *German Panzers on the Offensive*, 148-49)

--**18.-21.6.41** (Verlegung an die Grenze):

Waehrend der Div.-Stab in Altenkirch bei Breitenstein unterzog [nach Verlegung der Div. aus Gegend Prag], fuehren die verschiedenden Einheiten in das befohlene Gebiet NO von Insterburg u. bezog erst Unterkunft in Neustede –

⁵⁴⁴ **Note:** In his memoir, Manstein continues w/ a discussion of the “*Kommissarbefehl*,” and his decision on moral grounds *not to carry it out*. (176-77)

Trappen – Schmallenigken, wo die Soldaten von der *baeuerlichen Bevoelkerung* herzlich begruesst u. bewirtet wurden.

Doch bereits am **18 Jun 41** verliessen die Kpen., Schwadronen u. Batterien ihre bisherigen Quartiere. Die Marschbewegungen aus dem Unterkunfts- in den grenznahen Bereitstellungsraum begannen gegen **20.00** Uhr u. waren mit Beginn der Helligkeit am **19 Jun 41** ohne Zwischenfaelle beendet. . .

Die Verlegung der Div. naeher an die Grenze zwischen der Memel (rechts) u. den Waeldern noerdl. von Schmallenigken (links) erfolge in den naechsten beiden Naechten. Die Maersche gingen ueber die Schiffsbruecke von Trappen reibungslos vonstatten. Alle Bewegungen liefen nur bei Dunkelheit, da mit Beginn des Hellwerdens die Truppe von der Strasse musste u. zur Ruhe uebergang. Es durfte sich auf Strassen u. Wegen kein Militaerfahrzeug mehr sehen lassen. So konnten alle Kampfteile der Div. bis zum Morgen des **22 Jun 41** ihre Bereitstellungsraeume erreichen.

Der Div.-Stab zog am **21 Jun 41** morgens in das Forsthaus Wolfspass u. verlegte am Abend in die Schiesstaende nahe der Ziegelei von Schmallenigken. Verbindung zur rechts benachbarten **30 ID** (linke Fluegeldivision der **16 Armee**) u. zur links benachbarten **290 ID** war hergestellt.

(W. Haupt, *Die 8. Panzerdivision im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 136)

--**20.6.41**: Die Tage bis zur Kriegserklaerung verbringt die **3 ID (mot.)** in dem riesigen Trappener Forst, **35** km ostw. Tilsit suedl. der Memel. In ihm hat der Arbeitsdienst Schneisen geschlagen u. Wege befestigt, so dass die Kfz. gut getarnt unterziehen koennen. Ueber die Memel ist zwischen Trappen – Wischwill eine Pontonbruecke gebaut worden. In den Forsten noerdl. des Flusses liegen beiderseits der Strasse Wischwill – Schmallenigken die **8 PD** u. noerdl. davon die **290 ID**, die mit uns dem **56 PzK** gehoeren. . . (G. Dieckhoff, *3. Infanterie-Division*, 90-91)

--**8 PD** – Organization for & Plan of Attack:

For the assault at **0305** . . . the division commander . . . organized the division into four battle groups. Characteristically for the *German style of fighting*, *Gen.Maj.* Brandenberger set up the following ad hoc (i.e., for a particular purpose) units for battle:

1. Advanced Detachment⁵⁴⁵ under Cdr., **I./28 Schtz.Rgt.**⁵⁴⁶
2. Kampfgruppe Crisolli under Cdr., **8 Schtz.Rgt.** (Lt.Col. Crisolli).
3. Kampfgruppe Scheller under Cdr., **8 Schtz.Bde.** (Col Scheller)
4. Kampfgruppe Bodenhausen under Cdr., **28 Schtz.Rgt.** (Lt.Col. Bodenhausen)

The division cdr and his ops officer⁵⁴⁷ organized these battle forces as *combined arms teams* w/ each having attached *artillery*, *AT gun (Pak)*, and *pioneer units*. Each battle group held one panzer battalion of the division's **10 PzRgt**—a situation reflecting the necessity to break through border defenses and lingering con-

⁵⁴⁵ **Note:** English translation should be “Advance Detachment” for the German term “*Vorausabteilung*.”

⁵⁴⁶ **Note:** In English = 1st Battalion, 28th Motorized Rifle Regiment, etc.

⁵⁴⁷ **Note:** As Stolfi correctly points out, German divisions in WW2 had no *chief of staff* or *assistant division commanders*, 214, f.n. 5.

cern about Brandenberger's *decision to place the **Schwerpunkt** (point of main effort) of the attack in the north.* The two strongest battle groups, Scheller and Crisolli, also included AA (Flak) units that the Germans intended especially to defend bridge crossing sites.

The division cdr planned to launch the attack across the border using **IR 503** of his northern neighbor (**290 ID**), employing the German infantry to make the first move against anticipated field fortifications. The foot marching inf.rgt. would *occupy the entire front of the division for the initial attack* and be followed by **K.Gr. Crisolli** in the southern sector along the north bank of the Nemen River. The division Advanced Detachment [V.A.] lay north of Crisolli where the division expected most success. **K.Gr. Scheller**, the *strongest of the battle forces* also lay in the north immediately behind the Advanced Detachment, showing that Brandenberger senses the breakthrough would be there followed by an advance NE to the first day's target – the big bridge over the gorge of the Dubysa River near the city of Ariogala. . . **K.Gr. Bodenhausen** and the Division Trains (**59 Pz. Supply Btl.** arranged in various truck columns) and parts of the medical battalion lay rearward.

(R.H.S. Stolfi, *German Panzers on the Offensive*, 149)

--21.6.41 (Manstein's Memoirs):

At **1300** hours on **21 Jun 41** our HQ was notified that the offensive would begin at **0300** the following morning. *The die was cast.*

Because of the restricted space allotted to my corps in the forest area north of the Memel it was only possible to use **8 PD** and **290 ID** in the assault on the enemy frontier positions, which had been found to be occupied. For the time being, **3 ID (mot.)** was kept south of the river.

(Manstein, *Lost Victories*, 180)

--21.6.41 (Memoiren Mansteins):

Die letzten Tage vor Beginn der Offensive verbrachten wir auf dem schon nahe der Grenze liegenden Rittergut Lenken, das durch sein Gestuet einen guten Namen in Ostpreussen hatte. Der Besitzer, Herr v. Sperber, stand bereits als Rittmeister d.R. im Felde. Lenken lag in einem *herrlichen Wald*, u. schon als wir ankamen, sahen wir eine Koppel mit Vollbluetern. Es war ein Erdenflechkchen *voll Schoenheit u. Harmonie*. Sein Anblick schien uns ein gutes Omen zu sein. Wie schoen war doch gerade diese aeusserste Ecke unseres Vaterlandes, unser letztes Quartier auf deutschem Boden! (See text for more details of this anecdote.)⁵⁴⁸

Am **21 Jun 41**, **13.00** Uhr, ging beim Gen.Kdo. der Befehl ein, dass die Offensive am naechsten Morgen **3.00** Uhr vormittags zu beginnen habe. Die Wuerfel waren gefallen!

⁵⁴⁸ **Note:** This section appears to have been expurgated from the English version of his memoirs.

Der geringe Raum, der dem Korps im Waldgelaende noerdl. der Memel [Neman] zur Verfuegung stand, ermoeeglichte es zunaechst nur, fuer den Angriff auf die feindl. Grenzstellungen, die als besetzt bekannt waren, die **8 PD** u. die **290 ID** einzusetzen. Die **3 ID (mot.)** wurde vorerst noch suedl. der Memel zurueckgehalten.

(Manstein, *Verlorene Siege*, 177-78)

--**22.6.41**: Das sowj. Oberkommando gab am Abend des **22 Jun 41** den beiden AOKs **8** u. **11** den Befehl, den Vormarsch des Gegners aufzuhalten. Gen.Ob. Kusnecov [sp!], OB des Baltischen Besonderen Militaerbezirks, erkannte die Gefahr, die mit dem Durchbruch des **56 PzK** zur Dubyssa gegeben war. Hier hatte die **8 PD** genau die Naht der beiden Armeen getroffen! (W. Haupt, *Heeresgruppe Nord*, 28)

--**22.6.41**: In der Fruehe des **22 Jun 41** ist drei Stunden lang starkes Artilleriefeuer zu hoeren. Deutsche Bombengeschwader ziehen ueber uns nach Osten. Um **5.00** Uhr tauchen bereits an der Kriegsbruecke Wishwill sechs Martinbomber auf, von denen einer abgeschossen wird. Der Angriff auf die Bruecke bleibt erfolglos. Bald wird der Unterkunftsraum des **II./IR 8 (mot.)** von neuen Bombern angegriffen; das Btl. hat keine Verluste. Unser Vormarschraum wird von dem uns aus Frankreich bekannten Pic-As-Geschwader ueberwacht. Am Mittag durchstoest die **8 PD** eine Bunkerlinie laengs der Memelstrasse; bis zum Abend kommt ihre V.A. **80** km vor u. nimmt den Strassenviadukt ueber die Dubyssa bei Aigorola; damit ist der fluessige Vormarsch des Korps auf Duenaburg gesichert. (G. Dieckhoff, *3. Infanterie-Division*, 92)

--**22.6.41** (Summary of Day's Action for 8 PD): As Stolfi makes clear, Div.Cdr. Brandenberger had placed the *Schwerpunkt* of his advance on northern wing of his division (K.Gr. Scheller); however, this force quickly ran into trouble, including tough Russian resistance. Within hours, Brandenberger shifted weight of advance to K.Gr. Crisolli in the south, who was moving much more fluidly while encountering fewer natural obstacles or Russian resistance. Concludes Stolfi: "Battle Group Crisolli was little delayed by the Soviets, cross country terrain, river, road, or other similar factors on 22 June. In contrast, the other half of **8 PD** in terms of the deployment for the advance over the border – the Advanced Detachment and Battle Group Scheller – was slowed and then blocked by Soviet resistance in a system of obstacles, field fortifications, and concrete bunkers. Battle Group Scheller did not subdue the Soviets in these defenses until after a *difficult battle lasting 13 hours*. At that moment, it lay approximately half a day behind Battle Group Crisolli, which was now reinforced by most of the tanks of the division and had become the strongest battle force. Scheller would not effectively come abreast of the new *Schwerpunkt* force led by Crisolli until 23 June in the Ariogala bridgehead. . . By approximately **07.40** Battle Group Crisolli had become, in effect, **8 PD** being simultaneously the leading and the *Schwerpunkt* force for the advance on Duenaburg. (R.H.S. Stolfi, *German Panzers on the Offensive*, 154-55)

--**22.6.41**:⁵⁴⁹ Als die Uhren auf **3.05** zeigten, eroeffnete an der gesamten Ostfront [sic] die deutschen Batterien ihr Feuer auf die russ. Grenzstellungen . . .

Das **AR 80** (Obst.Lt. Schick) feuerte mit allen drei Abteilungen auf die in den Waeldern erkannten russ. Bunker u. auf das jenseitige Ufer des Grenzbaches. Nur

⁵⁴⁹ **Note:** This account by W. Haupt is one of the best for clearly explaining the actions of **8 PD** on this first day of the war.

kurz dauerte dieser starke Feuerschlag, dann griffen die Schuetzen, Panzer, Pioniere, Kradschuetzen u. Aufklaerer an.

Die Div. hatte fuer den ersten Tag zwei Kampfgruppen gebildet, die an zwei Stellen den Grenzfluss ueberschreiten sollten, um dann im raschen Vorwaertsstuermen in Richtung zur Dubysa Raum nach Osten zu gewinnen.

Die **K.Gr. A** (Obst.Lt. Crisolli) stand im rechten Abschnitt. Hier sollten Masse SR 8, verst. **K 8** (Obst.Lt. Kütt), **II./PzRgt 10** (Major Rohrbach), **1./Pz.Pi.Btl. 59** (Hptm. Hallauer) handstreichartig die Bruecken ueber die Mituva nehmen. Die K.Gr. ging noch unter den heulenden Granaten mit Pionier- u. Schuetzenstoss-trupps ueber die Grenze.

Dabei gelang es dem vorderen Stosstrupp unter Fuehrung von Hptm. Hallauer, der seinen Pionieren weit voraus war, trotz *erheblichen Abwehrfeuers* russischer Grenzposten, die Bruecke von Pasvenciv im Handstreich zu nehmen. Der Hptm. riss seine Maenner sofort weiter vor, um mit ihnen die einzige Strasse nach Minen zu untersuchen u. diese im feindlichen Feuer zu raeumen. So konnten schon wenige Minuten spaeter die Spitzenzuege der Kradschuetzen u. Panzer antreten.

Bei diesem ersten Einsatz wurden Hptm. Hallauer u. einige seiner Leute verwundet, der Hptm. so schwer, dass er nur mit Muehe zurueckgebracht werden konnte. Er hatte aber mit seinen Pionieren der **K.Gr. Crisolli** den Weg freige-macht. Fuer diese hervorragende Leistung in den ersten Minuten des Ostfeld-zuges wurde Hptm. Hallauer als ***erster Soldat in diesem Feldzug ueberhaupt mit dem Ritterkreuz ausgezeichnet!*** Leider konnte der tapfere Offizier diesen Ordnen nicht mehr tragen, denn bereits zwei Tage spaeter erlag er seinen schweren Verwundungen.

Die der Div. weiterhin unterstellte **Nahaufklaererstaffel 3.(H)/41** startete bereits **3.30** Uhr mit drei Flugzeugen u. meldete **20** Minuten spaeter:

Bruecken bei Mituva unzerstoert. Eigene Spitze im fluessigen Vor-marsch auf Strasse Schmallenigken – Jurbarkas. Keine Abwehr. Auf Strasse Kowno – Vilkija keine Freindkraefte erkannt.

Die **K.Gr. Crisolli** fuhr nach Osten. Die Kradschuetzen rollen bereits jenseits der Mituva. Nirgendwo war Feind anzutreffen, lediglich eine pferdebespannte Kol-onne floh vor den Soldaten. So ratterten jetzt eigene Panzer nach vorn u. ueber-nahmen die Spitze. Gegen **4.45** Uhr trafen die Spitzenfahrzeuge am Waldrand vor Susmuk ploetzlich auf einen leichten „**T-26**“, der mit wenigen Schuessen zusammengeschossen wurde.

Der Zug Lt. Melzer (**2./PzRgt 10**) drang **5.40** Uhr in Jurbarkas ein u. konnte beide Bruecken unversehrt in Besitz nehmen. Bereits **6.50** Uhr erhielt Obst.Lt. Crisolli Befehl zum schnellen Vorgehen auf die Dubysa. Kradschuetzen u. Panzer rollten weiter, die Kompanien des **SR 8** uebernahmen vorerst den Schutz der Bruecken in Jurbarkas.

Die linke Kampfgruppe B der Div. unter Fuehrung von Oberst Scheller – Masse **SR 28, I./PzRgt 10**, verst. V.A. Hptm. Freiherr v. Wolff, **2./Pz.Pi.Btl. 59** u. weitere zugeteilte Kompanien – ueberschritt bei Antschwenten die Grenze. Doch hier zeigte sich, dass nicht der Feind, sondern dass die schlechten Wegeverhaeltnisse das groesste Hindernis waren. Zwar konnte der Grenzbach ueberwunden werden, doch ein Uebergang fuer die schweren Fahrzeugen war nicht zu schaffen. Das Korps hatte ein Baupionierbataillon zugefuehrt, dem es aber vor Nachmittag infolge des versumpten Gelaendes nicht gelang, eine tragbare Behelfsbruecke zu bauen. Lediglich einige Panzer konnten durch eine Furt den Grenzbach ueberwunden.

Gegen **4.00** Uhr war schliesslich die erste Behelfsbruecke fertig, so dass das waldreiche Gelaende mit seinen Suempfen zwischen Grenzbach u. Mituva trotz vereinzelter Widerstands sowj. Baumschuetzen bis **5.00** Uhr ueberwunden wurde. Danach erhielt die Kampfgruppe Scheller Befehl, nach Jurbarkas einzuschwenken, um hinter der Kampfgruppe Crisolli den Vormarsch fortzusetzen.

Das KTB der Div. berichtete **7.55** Uhr:

Truppen sind im schnellen Vorgehen nach Osten. Die Div. hat den Eindruck, dass sie mit regularen Truppen des Feindes noch nicht in Beruehrung gekommen ist.

Der Vormarsch der linken K.Gr. Scheller ging nur unter Kaempfen u. deshalb zeitraubender vor sich. Das Oberst Scheller unterstellte **IR 503** der benachbarten **290 ID** musste sich durch eine von Pak- u. M.G.-Stellungen verstaerkte Bunkerlinie kaempfen, so dass die V.A. Hptm. Freiherr von Wolff liegenblieb u. stundenlang aufgehalten wurde.

Die K.Gr. Crisolli naehert sich gegen **11.00** Uhr Elecnorova u. stiess hier erstmals auf aktiven Gegner, der allerdings mit Masse aus Soldaten von Baubataillonen bestand. Der Feind wurde schnell geworfen u. ueber eine Furt bei Luksiai die Mituva ueberwunden. Ein Zug der 2.Pi.Kp. half beim Uebersetzen, da die Furt unter der Belastung der Fahrzeuge ziemlich zerfahren wurden. Hptm. Menningen leitete selbst den Bau einer **16-t-Spurtafelbruecke**, so dass dann auch bald die **II./PzRgt 10** mit den ersten Kampfwagen uebersetzen konnte u. auf eine Betonbunkerstellung bei Girdziai vorging.

Das **K 8** (Obst.Lt. Kütt) befand sich seit **8.55** Uhr auf Befehl der Div. im Marsch auf Seredzius, um hier die Dubysa zu gewinnen u. einen Brueckenkopf zu bilden.

Gen.Maj. Brandenberger hatte sich selbst zum rechten Div.-Fluegel begeben, da hier der Vormarsch fast reibungslos verlief.

Gen.Obst. Hoepner (**4 PzGr**) traf **11.30** Uhr bei der Div. ein u. liess sich ueber die Lage orientieren, wobei er seine Anerkennung fuer die bisherigen Leistungen aussprach.

Die Kradschuetzen trafen etwa gegen **15.00** Uhr vor Seredzius ein. Der hier stehende Gegner hatte zwar Strassensperren errichtet, diese wurden nicht verteidigt, so dass bis **13.00** Uhr die Dubysa-Bruecke unzerstoert gewonnen wurde. Zur gleichen Zeit hatte die **II./PzRgt. 10** endgueltig die Bunkerstellung bei Girdziai durchbrochen u. befand sich auf rascher Fahrt nach Ariogala.

Gen. d. Inf. von Manstein traf gleichfalls am fruhen Nachmittag bei der Div. ein u. befahl, noch bis zum Abend einen Brueckenkopf bei Ariogala zu gewinnen u. hier die Div. aufschliessen zu lassen.⁵⁵⁰

Die **K.Gr. Crisolli** hatte inzwischen „freie Fahrt“ in Richtung Ariogala, waehrend das **K 8** bei Seredzius in leichte Kampf verwickelt wurde u. die **K.Gr. Scheller** nun ueber die Bunkerlinie bei Girdziai – noch unter schweren Kaempfen – den Anschluss an die rechte K.Gr. gefunden hatte.

[Note: What follows is a long passage from the divisional war diary, which I've already quoted from; passage ends w/ the capture of the Autobahnbruecke at Ariogala by **17.25**. Author also notes that “M.T.W.”-Kompanien = *Gepanzerte Mannschaftstransportwagen*.]

General Manstein traf kurz danach selbst in Ariogala ein u. befahl den sofortigen Weitermarsch in Richtung Kedainiai. Die Kpen. der **II./PzRgt 10** – soweit sie noch Betriebsstoff hatten – ratterten sofort los, waehrend die Kpen. des **SR 8** vorerst zur Sicherung u. Saeuberung des gewonnenen Brueckenkopfes zurueckgehalten wurden. Dann stellte es sich heraus, dass die Furt nur von Fahrzeugen unter **3 t** Gewicht zu passieren war. Eine Ausbesserung durch die nach vorn geholte 2.Pi.Kp. stellte sich als schwierig heraus, so dass die Masse der **Kampfgruppe A** vor der Dubysa liegenblieb.

Die auf Kedainiai angesetzten Pz.Kpen. trafen schon wenige Kilometer in der Gegend von Zasinai auf starken feindl. Widerstand der sowj. **5 TD**, die hier mot.Schuetzen, Artillerie, Pak u. sogar leichte Panzerwagen einsetzte. Es gelang nicht mehr, den Waldrand zu erreichen, so dass die **Kampfgruppe A** gegen **23.00** Uhr jeden weiteren Angriff einstellte. Die von General Brandenberger mit Sehnsucht erwartete **K.Gr. Scheller** fehlte, um entsprechende Verstaerkung zu geben. Die Masse der K.Gr. lag immer noch an der Bunkerlinie zwischen Kuturuai – Girdziai fest, u. das **IR 503** kam nicht weiter. Die zur Unterstuetzung angesetzte V.A. Hptm. Wolff war aufgeschlossen u. setzte die 3.Pi.Kp. (Oblt. Schneider) an. Es gelang den Pionieren, mit ihren Wurfladungen in kurzer Zeit die Bunkerlinie niederzukaempfen, um den Weg fuer die V.A. freizumachen.

Die **3./Pz.Pi.Btl. 59** war die Kp., die auf gepanzerten Mannschaftstransportwagen fuhr. Die Wagen waren mit einem beiderseitig angehaengten Wurfgestell fuer Wurfkoerper ausgeruestet. Diese Gestelle – je drei an jeder Seite – schossen die **28 cm-Wurfgranaten** ab, die von den Soldaten auch „*Stuka zu Fuss*“ genannt wurden u. die durch ihr *heulendes Abschussgeraesch* auch eine moralische Wirkung beim Gegner hervorriefen u. selbstverstaendlich auch einer „taktischen Wunderwaffe“ am Beginn des Ostfeldzuges glichen.⁵⁵¹

⁵⁵⁰ Note: **8 PD** by this time, it appears, was badly strung out from the frontier to the point of its spearheads.

⁵⁵¹ Note: For more details on the “*Stuka zu Fuss*” rocket weapons see, Section **1.3.7**, “Weapons of War (*Wehrmacht*)” above.

Die Spitze der V.A. Hptm Frhr. v. Wolff traf am spaeten Abend in Ariogala ein, so dass bis zum fruehen Morgen das Heranschliessen der gesamten **K.Gr. Scheller** erwartet wurde.

Die **8 PD** erhielt in der Nacht den Befehl auf Kedainiai durchzustossen, da nun die **3 ID (mot.)** (Gen.Lt. Jahn) der Div. bis zur Dubyssa nachgefuehrt wurde u. den vom **K 8** gewonnenen Brueckenkopf bei Seredzius zugewiesen bekam. Doch bevor der Angriff selbst begann u. die Abloesung der Kradschuetzen erfolgte, traf die Meldung ein, dass ein **starker russ. Panzerverband von Osten her auf Ariogala rollte**.

Daraufhin wurde jeder Angriff eingestellt u. die Brueckenkopfbildung durch die inzwischen an der Dubyssa eingetroffenen weiteren Div.-Teile verstaerkt. Die noch weit westlich zurueckstehenden Bataillone u. Abteilungen wurden beschleunigt an Ariogala herangezogen.

Da stellte es sich am fruehen Vormittag heraus, dass die **starken feindl. Panzerkraefte** – es handelte sich hierbei um das **12 MC** – von Kedainiai aus ploetzlich nach NW in Richtung Rossienie abschwanken u. dabei auf die dort stehende **6 PD** des **41 PzK** stiessen.

Hier kam es zur ersten Panzerschlacht des Ostfeldzuges, die **fast drei Tage dauern sollte** u. schliesslich mit einem deutschen Sieg endete. Die **8 PD** war nicht daran beteiligt.

Durch das Abdrehen des russ. Korps auf Rossienie kam es am zweiten Kriegstag **nicht zu Kampfhandlungen im Abschnitt der Div.** Diese fand Zeit, bis zum Nachmittag alle kampfkraeftigen Teile im Brueckenkopf Ariogala zu versammeln. Hier erfolgte **17.00** Uhr [**23.6.41**] der Befehl zum weiteren Vormarsch laengs der Strasse Ariogala – Jankuniai – Josvainiai – Kedainiai – Seta – Wilkomierz. Zu dieser Zeit waren alle Batterien des **AR 80** feuerbereit, u. das **10 PzRgt** stand geschlossen auf dem Ostufer der Dubyssa.

Lediglich die **AA 59** trat mit ihren Panzerspachwagen noch vor Einbruch der Dunkelheit [**23.6.41**] an u. stiess vor Josvainiai auf den Feind, der bis Mitternacht geworfen wurde, so dass Kedainiai schon **3.40** Uhr am Morgen des **24 Jun 41** mit der unzerstoerten Bruecke genommen wurde.

(W. Haupt, *Die 8. Panzerdivision im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 136-45)

--**22.6.41** (Manstein's Memoirs):

In the immediate vicinity of the frontier we initially met w/ only weak resistance, probably from forward defended localities. Very soon, however, a hold-up was caused by a well-prepared pill-box system that was overcome only after **8 PD** had broken through the enemy fortifications north of the Memel around noon.

On this very first day the Soviet Command showed its true face. Our troops came across a German patrol which had been cut off by the enemy early on. All its

members were *dead and gruesomely mutilated*. My A.D.C. and I, who often had to pass through sectors of the front that had not been cleared of the enemy, agreed that we would *never let an adversary like this capture us alive*. Later on there were more than enough cases where Soviet soldiers, after throwing up their hands as if to surrender, *reached for their arms as soon as our infantry came near enough*, or where Soviet wounded *feigned death and then fired on our troops when their backs were turned*. . .

If the corps were to fulfill its task of seizing the Dvinsk crossings intact, it had to concentrate on two things. On the very first day it had to thrust 50 miles into enemy territory in order to capture the crossing over the Dubissa at Airogola. I knew the Dubissa sector from World War I. What we should find there was a deep, ravined valley whose slopes no tank could negotiate. In the First War our railway engineers had labored there from months on end to span the gap w/ a masterly construction of timber. If the enemy now succeeded in blowing up the big road viaduct at Airogola, the corps would be *hopelessly stuck* and the enemy would have time on the steep far bank of the river to organize a defense which would in any case be extremely difficult to penetrate. That we could therefore no longer expect to make a surprise descent on the Dvinsk bridges was perfectly obvious. The Airogola crossing was indispensable to us as a spring-board.

Excessive though Corps H.Q. requirements may appear to have been, **8 PD** (General Brandenberger), *w/ which I spent most of the day*, still fulfilled its task. After breaking through the frontier positions and over-running all enemy resistance further back, it seized the Airologa [sic] crossings w/ a *reconnaissance in force* by the evening of 22 Jun 41. **290 ID** followed, marching at record speed; and **3 ID (mot.)**, which had started moving over the Memel at noon, was directed toward a crossing south of Airogola.

The first step had succeeded.

The second condition for success at Dvinsk was that the corps should push straight through to that town regardless of whether the formations on the flanks kept abreast or not. The capture of those precious bridges depended entirely on our being able to take the enemy there *completely by surprise*. Naturally we were fully aware that this course of action involved *considerable risks*.

As it turned out – and as we had hoped – the corps had the *good fortune to strike a weak patch in the enemy's defenses*. Despite repeated counter-attacks, some of which entailed hard fighting, the divisions were able to break this resistance relatively quickly.

While on our left **41 PzK** was temporarily held up by a strong enemy grouping dug in around Siauliai (Schaulen), and on our right and left wing Sixteenth Army was fighting for Kovno, **56 PzK** actually reached the Dvinsk highway by **24 Jun 41** in the area of Wilkomierz. Already 105 miles deep into enemy territory, it had not only outdistanced the German formations on either flank, but had also left the Soviet forces in the frontier zone far behind it. Now there were a bare 80 miles to go to reach the coveted bridges at Dvinsk.

(Manstein, *Lost Victories*, 180-83)

--22.6.41 (Initial attack of 56 PzK):

In the area of Manstein's **56 PzK**, in the *wooded country* north of the Memel, there was not much room for large-scale operations. That was why only the **8 PD** and **290 ID** were earmarked for the first thrust across the frontier. The forward line of pillboxes had to be pierced. And it had to be *pierced quickly*. The corps was scheduled to drive 50 miles right through the enemy on the first day, without stopping, w/o regard to anything else, w/ the object of capturing intact by a surprise stroke the big road viaduct across the Dubysa valley at Ariogala. If they failed in this the corps would be *stuck in a deep and narrow river valley*, and the enemy would have time to reform. But most important of all, any idea of a surprise stroke against the important center of Daugavpils (Dvinsk) would have to be dropped.

The coys of **290 ID** *suffered heavy casualties* even while crossing the frontier stream—above all in officers. 2Lt. Weinrowski of 7./I.R. 501, was probably the *first soldier killed by the bullets of the Soviet frontier guards* up in the north during the first minute of the war. The burst came from a pillbox camouflaged as a farm cart. But the Russian frontier troops were unable to halt the German attack. 11./501 led the assault ahead of the spearheads of **8 PD**, clearing tree-truck obstacles under Russian fire, sweeping through the wood, past a small village. 1Lt. Hinkmann, the coy cdr, was killed. 2Lt. Silzer ran forward. "The coy will take orders from me!" They reached the Mituva, a small river. They captured the bridge and, as instructed, established a bridgehead.

Presently, General Brandenberger's **8 PD** drove up. General von Manstein, the GOC, was accompanying the division in his command tank. "Keep going!" he urged them. "Keep going!" Never mind about your flanks. Never mind about cover. The Ariogala viaduct must be captured. And Daugavpils must be taken by surprise.

Manstein, a *bold but coolly calculating strategist*, knew very well that this gamble of a war called Operation *Barbarossa* could be won only if the Germans succeeded in knocking the Russians out during the very first weeks of the attack. He knew what Clausewitz knew before him: this vast country could *not be conquered and occupied*. At best it might be possible, by risky surprise strokes, by swift and hard blows at the military and political heart of the country, to *overthrow the regime*, to deprive the country of its leadership, and thus to paralyze its vast military potential. That was the only way in which it might be done—perhaps. Otherwise the war would be lost that very summer.

But unless it was to be lost during the *very first eight weeks* of the **1941** campaign, Leningrad had to fall quickly, Moscow had to fall quickly, and the bulk of the Russian forces in the Baltic and in Belorussia had to be outmaneuvered, smashed, and captured. And so that this could be done, the panzer corps had to *drive on regardless of everything*, aiming their blows straight at the great nerve centers.

And that, in the area of this particular army group, meant that Leningrad must fall. But to get to Leningrad the Daugava [i.e., Western Dvina] had to be crossed first, and it was against that river that Manstein's **56 PzK** and, to the left of it, Reinhardt's **41 PzK** were pressing forward. And in order to get across this mighty river w/o a dangerous delay, the bridges across it at Daugavpils (Dvinsk) and Jekabpils had to be captured intact. But these bridges lay **220 miles** behind the frontier. That was the situation.

At **1900** a signal was received at **8 PD** Hq. from its advance units: "Ariogala viaduct taken." Manstein nodded. All he said was: "Keep going."

The tanks were moving forward. The grenadiers were riding through *clouds of hot dust*. Keep going. Manstein was *executing an armored thrust such as no military tactician would have thought possible*. Would his corps succeed in taking Daugavpils by surprise? Would he be able to drive straight through strongly held enemy territory for a distance of **230 miles** and yet take the bridges across the [Dvina] by a surprise stroke?

(P. Carell, *Hitler Moves East*, 29-31)

-- **22.6.41** (Memoiren Mansteins):

Unser Angriff traf unmittelbar an der Grenze zunaechst auf *schwachen Widerstand*, wahrscheinlich feindl. Grenzvorposten. Er erhielt jedoch sehr bald vor einer *ausgebauten Bunkerstellung* einen Stopp der erst ueberwunden wurde, als gegen Mittag die **8 PD** noerdl. der Memel die feindl. Stellung durchbrochen hatte.

Bereits an diesem ersten Tage *zeigte die sowj. Kampffuehrung ihr wahres Gesicht*. Einer unserer Spaehtrupps, der durch den Feind abgeschnitten worden war, wurde spaeter von unseren Truppen *tot u. grauenhaft verstuemelt aufgefunden*. Mein Ordonnanzoffizier u. ich, die wir oft auf unseren Frontfahrten durch Gelaendeabschnitten kamen, in denen noch Feindteile sein konnten, waren uns einig darueber, dass *wir nicht lebend in die Haende des Gegners fallen wollten*. Es kam spaeterhin auch oft genug vor, dass sowj. Soldaten die Haende hochhoben, um sich anscheinend zu ergeben, um dann, sobald unsere Grenadiere nah heran gekommen waren, *wieder zur Waffen zu greifen*. Oder das Verwundete *sich tot stellten*, um von rueckwaerts auf unsere Soldaten zu schiessen.

Der Gesamteindruck vom Gegner war, dass er zwar im vorderen Frontbereich durch unseren Angriff *keineswegs ueberrascht wurde*, dass aber die sowj. Fuehrung wohl nicht – oder noch nicht – mit einem solchen gerechnet hatte u. somit *nicht zum einheitlichen Einsatz ihrer starken zurueckgehaltenen Kraefte kam*.

Es ist viel darueber gestritten worden, ob der sowj. Aufmarsch defensiver oder offensiver Nature gewesen sei. Nach der Zahl der in den Westgebieten der Sowjet Union versammelten Kraefte . . . konnte man sehr wohl – wie es jedenfalls Hitler zur Begrueundung seines Losschlagens tat – mit einem *frueheren oder spaeteren Offensivwerden der Sowjetunion rechnen*. Andererseits, sprach am

22 Jun 41 die *Gliederung der sowj. Kraefte nicht fuer unmittelbare⁵⁵² Angriffsabsichten.*

(Manstein, *Verlorene Siege*, 178-79)

--22.6.41 (Memoiren Mansteins):

Die H.Gr. Woroschilow,⁵⁵³ die unserer H.Gr.Nord gegenueber stand, hatte in der Grenzsicherung nur 7 Diven. eingesetzt, waehrend bei einer Gesamtstaerke von 29 Schuetz.-Diven., 2 Pz.-Diven. u. 6 mech bdes (nach v. Tippelskirch) die uebrigen Kraefte weiter rueckwaerts bei Schaulen – Kowno – Wilna, z.T. sogar noch im Gebiet Pleskau – Opotschka (also in der Stalin-Linie) standen. . . Am **22 Jun 41** waren die sowj. Kraefte *fraglos noch so tief gegliedert*, dass sie in ihrer derzeitigen Aufstellung *nur zur Fuehrung einer Defensive bereit sein konnten*. . . Die Rote Armee haette . . . innerhalb einer noch sehr begrenzten Zeit so aufschliessen koennen, dass sie zum Antreten zum Angriff befahigt gewesen waere. *Tatsaechlich stellte der sowj. Aufmarsch – mochte er bis zum 22. Juni auch die Form eines Defensivaufmarsches beibehalten haben – eine latente Drohung dar.* . . Es handelte sich eben um einen „*Aufmarsch fuer alle Faelle.*“
[See text for more details.]

(Manstein, *Verlorene Siege*, 179-80)

--22.6.41 (8 PD / Account by R.H.S. Stolfi):

[0355]: Almost immediately the div.cdr. confronted a picture *different from that developed during the weeks of planning for the attack*. In the division CP at **0355**, the operations officer (**Ia**) received a message from **K.Gr. Crisolli** in the anticipated difficult sector: “*advancing easily in continuous attack; hardly any resistance*” along the road to the Mituva River. The river was the most important obstacle to the advance toward Ariogala and lay **12** km from the border. By **0540**, the tanks of **K.Gr. Crisolli** had arrived close to Jurbarkas and the two bridges across the Mituva but neither the division nor next high hq. knew the bridge situation. The river was **30m** wide at Jubarkas and would be almost *impossible to ford*. In the event that the structures were not seized intact, the German advance would be halted for several hours, a devastating blow to the division w/ its sights set on Ariogala approx. **80 km** distant and the first day’s target. At **0600**, however, **K.Gr. Crissoli** signaled by radio that it had taken both bridges intact. By **0650**, the group had broken through Soviet resistance on the east bank in the city and was ready to move on. Only *four hours into the war*, the division cdr. faced the situation that the planned breakthrough in the north was unrealistic in the face of Crisolli’s success in the south.⁵⁵⁴

During the same period farther north, the Advanced Detachment of the division had moved through **IR 503** and come up against tough (*zaeh*) resistance from Russians fighting in field fortifications in difficult terrain w/ a less well developed road system than farther south. **K.Gr. Scheller** advancing behind the Ad-

⁵⁵² **Note:** This word in italics in original text!

⁵⁵³ **Note:** Manstein is incorrect here; the commander of Baltic Military District was Kuznetzov.

⁵⁵⁴ **Note:** Stolfi’s account is terrific, but check it closely with the **8 PD** war diary!

vanced Detachment would run into the same difficult conditions and by **1100** the two battle forces would report combat against Russian concrete bunkers. In his analysis of the situation as it had developed by **1430**, the **Ia** made the candid point in the division war diary that the command estimate of the enemy had been false (*unzutreffend*).

Gen.Maj. Brandenberger reacted vigorously to the new reality. Originally moving w/ the Advanced Detachment of the division for the first several hours of the attack, he informed the **Ia** at **0734** that he was *changing position to ride w/ K.Gr. Crisolli*.⁵⁵⁵ The **Ia** noted further in the war diary that the Russians had *not placed a single obstacle along the southern route through Jurbarkas*, but had created a **100** meter-wide barrier of felled, intertwined trees across the northern sector.

Brandenberger and Crisolli pressed forward along the *new Schwerpunkt* achieving an astounding leap forward that included entering Seredzius at the confluence of the Dubysa – Nemen Rivers at **12.20**, and crossing the big ford on the Dubysa River at the SW edge of Ariogala at **15.15**.⁵⁵⁶ In these advances, **K.Gr. Crisolli** covered **54** and **80** km by road respectively and reached the optimistic first day's target for the advance by mid-afternoon. . . After the div.cdr.'s almost immediate shift away from the faulty main attack, the former *Schwerpunkt* force did not break through Soviet bunker line near Girdziai, still only **13 km** from the border, until **16.00** hours.⁵⁵⁷

At **1620**, *General der Infanterie* (three stars) Manstein appeared in the div. CP. German command style stood sharply etched there. [See text for details.] As the outcome of his visit to the div. CP, Manstein gave the order to the **Ia** face-to-face for **8 PD** still on **22 Jun 41** to reach the east bank of the Dubysa River at Ariogala w/ all its combat units. He also ordered the division to throw advanced elements toward Kedainiai and keep the Seredzius crossings at the mouth of the Dubysa open. . .

The div.cdr. located w/ the mass of **K.Gr. Crisolli** at the ford over the Dubysa near Ariogala at approx. **1530**, ordered the tank battalion w/ Crisolli and one mot. inf. coy. in armored, three-quarter-tracked vehicles across the ford immediately to seize the eastern heights above the river and the city. With this attack accomplished, the div.cdr. ordered an immediate push to take the highway bridge over

⁵⁵⁵ **Note:** In other words, the *Schwerpunkt* of **8 PD** attack was being rapidly shifted to Crisolli's group in the south.

⁵⁵⁶ **Note:** Writes Stolfi: "Operational level maps for the Baltic area show **18 watercourses** crossing the route of *Kampfgruppe Crisolli* from the border at Smalininkia to Ariogala that between **0350** and **1515** had been negotiated by the mass of the group. The division put together special detachments ahead of time to seize the border bridge near Smalininkia and the two bridges over the Mituva River at Jurbarkas enroute to Ariogala. Corps hq., therefore, attached two large pontoon bridge columns (B-Columns) to the division to begin pioneer bridge construction quickly in event of failure of intact bridge seizures over the Mituva and Dubysa. On **22 Jun 41**, along the route of advance of *K.Gr. Crisolli*, **8 PD captured intact every bridge along the route of advance to Ariogala by mid afternoon**." (152)

⁵⁵⁷ **Note:** Stolfi: "*Kampfgruppe Scheller* would be able to disengage from the fortified positions on the border only at **1650**, still lying **77 km** by road west of Crisolli in Ariogala. In summary, Brandenberger lay w/ the advanced battle group [i.e., Crisolli] of the division in the day's target of Ariogala far ahead of schedule at **1650** while the second strongest of the three battle groups of the division lay **77 km** to the west." (153)

the Dubysa Gorge lying **2.5** km NW of Ariogala. Elements of **K.Gr. Crisolli** seized intact the big bridge on the unpaved but well-constructed *Autobahn* (main highway) running through the city.

Shortly after this successful coup de main, at approx. **1800**, the corps cdr., now **80** road kilometers forward of the German border, stood in Ariogala discussing continuation of the attack w/ the div.cdr. Manstein directed Brandenberger still on **22 Jun 41**, to advance toward Kedainiai, the next big city on the road to Duenaburg and location of a large military airfield. The div.cdr., in turn, directed Lt.Col. Crisolli to move out w/ the available elements of his battle group. Twelve [**12**] kilometers east of Ariogala in the vicinity of two bridges over large streams crossing the highway, the battle group met strong resistance – almost always presented by the Germans as a sizeable infantry force supported by tanks and artillery – and was ordered to halt. At this moment, **2300** on **22 Jun 41**, **8 PD** stood 92 km by road from where it began the attack at **0305** on the same day.

[**Note:** On pg. 169, R.H.S. Stolfi lists **8 PD** casualties for **22.6.1941: 20** (KIA), **65** (WIA), **0** (MIA).

(R.H.S. Stolfi, *German Panzers on the Offensive*, 149-51, 169)

--**22.-26.6.41** (Memoiren Mansteins):

Wenn das Korps den ihm gestellten Auftrag, die Uebergaenge von Dünaburg unzerstoert in Besitz zu nehmen, erfuellen wollte, so kam es nach Durchbrechen der Grenzstellungen auf zweierlei an:

Das Korps musste noch am ersten Angriffstag **80** km weit in den Feind hineinstossen, um den Uebergang ueber die Dubissa bei Airogola in die Hand zu bekommen. *Ich kannte den Dubissa-Abschnitt aus dem Ersten Weltkrieg*. Es handelte sich um ein *tief eingeschnittenes Flusstal mit steilen, fuer Panzer nicht gangbaren Haengen*. Im Ersten Weltkrieg hatten unsere Eisenbahnpieniere in *monatlanger Arbeit* dieses Tal durch eine meisterhafte Holzkonstruktion ueberbrueckt. Gelang es jetzt dem Gegner, den grossen Strassenviadukt bei Airogola zu sprengen, so musste das Korps vor dem Abschnitt festliegen. Der Feind wuerde Zeit gewinnen, auf den steilen Uferhoeehen jenseits des Flusses eine Verteidigung zu organisieren, die in jedem Fall schwer zu durchbrechen sein wuerde. Dass dann mit einem ueberraschenden Handstreich auf die Bruecke bei Dünaburg nicht mehr gerechnet werden konnte, lag auf der Hand. Der Uebergang bei Airogola bildete das *unerlaessliche Sprungbrett*.

So hoch gespannt diese vom Gen.Kdo. gestellte Forderung auch war, die **8 PD** (General Brandenberger), bei der ich mich an diesem Tage vorwiegend aufhielt, erfuelle sie. Nach Durchbrechen der Grenzstellung jeden feindl. Widerstand weiter rueckwaerts ueberennend, brachte sie bis zum Abend des **22 Jun 41** den Uebergang bei Airogola mit einer Voraus-Abteilung in ihre Hand. Die **290 ID** folgte mit hoher Marschleistung, die **3 ID (mot.)**, bereits mittags beginnend ueber die Memel vorgezogen, wurde auf einen Uebergang suedl. Airogola angesetzt.

Der erste Schritt war gelungen!

Die zweite Voraussetzung fuer einen Erfolg bei Dünaburg war, dass das Korps ohne Ruecksicht darauf, ob seine Nachbarn mit ihm Schritt hielten, in einem Zuge bis Dünaburg vorstieß. Nur ein den Gegner voellig ueberraschendes Auftreten dort, konnte die wertvollen Bruecken in unseren Besitz bringen. Das ein solches Vorgehen ein grosses Risiko in sich schoss,⁵⁵⁸ war allerdings selbstaendlich.

Tatsaechlich hatte das Korps – wie gehofft – das Glueck, bei seinem Vorstoss *eine schwache Stelle des Gegners zu erwischen*. Es traf zwar immer wieder auf Feindkraefte, die ihm entgegenworfen wurden. Seine Divisionen konnten jedoch stets den feindl Widerstand, wenn auch z.T. in harten Kaempfen, *verhaeltnismaessig schnell brechen*.

Waehrend links von uns das **41 PzK** zunaechst mit einer starken um Schaulen bereit gehaltenen Feindgruppe abzurechnen hatte u. deshalb weit abhing u. rechts von uns der linke Fluegel der **16 Armee** um Kowno [Kaunas] kaempfte, gewann das **56 PzK** schon am **24 Jun 41** in Gegend Wilkomierz die grosse Strasse nach Dünaburg. **170 km** tief in das Feindgebiet vorgestossen, hatte das Korps nicht nur seine Nachbarn, sondern auch die Feindkraefte, die im Grenzgebiet gestanden hatten, *weit hinter sich gelassen*. Nur noch **130 km** trennten es von dem ersehnten Ziel, den Dünabrücken!⁵⁵⁹

Am **26 Jun 41** Dünaburg stand die **8 PD** vor Dünaburg. Um **8.00 Uhr** morgens hatte ich bei ihrem Stab die Meldung in der Hand, dass der Handstreich auf die beiden grossen Dünabrücken geglueckt sei. . .

Vor Beginn der Offensive war mir die Frage vorgelegt worden, ob u. in welcher Zeit wir daechten, Dünaburg zu erreichen. Die Antwort war gewesen, dass, wenn es nicht innerhalb von vier Tagen gelaenge, wir wohl kaum mehr darauf rechnen koennten, die Uebergaenge intakt in unsere Hand zu bekommen. Nun hatten wir es in genau vier Tagen plus **5** Stunden vom Zeitpunkt des Antretens an geschafft, **300 km** (in der Luftlinie) durch den Feind hindurch in einem ununterbrochenen Raid zurueckzulegen. . .

Das **41 PzK** u. der linke Fluegel der **16 Armee** standen noch zwischen **100-150 km** weit zurueck. . .

(Manstein, *Verlorene Siege*, 181-83)

--**23.6.41 (8 PD Immobilized)**: In an extraordinary scene on **23 Jun 41**, **8 PD die not move forward during almost the entire day**. This fact makes the accomplishment of the division in reaching Duenaburg **4** days, **3** hours, and **30** minutes into the campaign all the more remarkable because the division was in motion for only **3 days**. In terms of average rates of advance the difference is striking: the division reached Duenaburg at an average rate of advance of ca. **74 km/day**; the division when actually in motion during the three days of movement would advance at an

⁵⁵⁸ **Note:** “*In sich schloss?*”

⁵⁵⁹ **Note:** Thus, appears distance from Manstein’s start line to his first strategic objective, the Dvina bridges at Dünaburg, was about **300 km**.

average rate of almost **100 km/day**. [Note: See text for detailed discussion of why **8 PD** did not move on **23.6.41**—need to concentrate the division, strung out all the way from the border to area **12 km** east of Ariogala; need to rest lead elements; *substantial frictions* involving the march of **8 PD** battle groups and supply columns along the main road on north bank of the Nemen; movement of strong Soviet tanks forces from the east toward Ariogala, which “froze **8 PD** in place,”⁵⁶⁰ etc. (See, R.H.S. Stolfi, *German Panzers on the Offensive*, 156)

23.-25.6.41 (Vormarsch 56 PzK): Die **4 PzGr** hatte ihren beiden Korps schon am zweiten Feldzugtag befohlen, so schnell wie moeglich nach Dünaburg Raum zu gewinnen. Da das **41 PzK** vom Gegner zum Kampf gestellt wurde, konnte nur General von Mansteins schnelle Truppen weiterrollen. Sie vollbrachten einen „*Husarenritt*,“ der an die alten Kavallerieattacken erinnerte.

Die Spitzen des Korps erreichten am **24.6.** die Gegend um Wilkomierz. Die V.A. der **8 PD** gewann nach Zurueckschlagung schwaecherer feindl. Gegenangriffe die Strasse nach Dünaburg. Die Sowjets zogen sich ueberrascht nach Norden u. Osten zurueck. Deshalb konnten die Rgter. der **3 ID (mot.)** (Glt. Jahn) den Panzern dichtauf folgen. **8 PD** u. **3 ID (mot.)** gelangten am **25.6.** nach Ukmerge u. darueber hinaus!

Dünaburg lag greifbar vor den deutschen Soldaten.

Eine Sondergruppe der **8./Lehr-Rgt. „Brandenburg“** (Regiment der deutschen Abwehr) unter Oblt. Knaak meldete sich in der Nacht bei Gm. Brandenberger. Dieser setzte die kleine Gruppe verwegener Maenner, die in *russische Uniformen gekleidet waren*, am naechsten Morgen in zwei Beute-Lkw in Marsch. Der *waghalsige Vorstoss gelang!* Oblt. Knaak fuhr mit seinen Leuten mitten durch die sowj. Kolonnen, erreichte die beiden grossen Duenabruecken. Hier sprangen die Landser von der Lkw, stuerzten sich auf die russ. Brueckenwachen u. gingen in Stellung.

Sie hielten aus, bis gegen **5.00** Uhr die Spitze der V.A. **8 PD** . . . eintraf. . . Als die Masse der **8 PD** gegen Mittag anrollte, konnten Panzer, SPW, Zugmaschinen u. Kraeder ungehindert ueber die Duena. Die Spitze des Korps Manstein stand **300 km** von der Reichsgrenze entfernt. Der erste Brueckenkopf an der Duena war gebildet [**26.6.41**].

(W. Haupt, *Heeresgruppe Nord*, 31-32)

1.7.8: Case Study 2: Start of Operations on the Siauliai Axis (1 & 6 PD (41 PzK))

--General der Pz.Truppen Reinhardt: He had become commander of **4 PD** in **Nov 38**; he led it in Poland, where it suffered hvy casual-ties on the initial (unsuccessful) assault on Warsaw. Reinhardt still promoted to lieutenant general⁵⁶¹ on **1 Oct 39**. On **15 Feb 40**, he was named commander of the **41 PzK**, which he led in Belgium and France. He was promoted to *general of*

⁵⁶⁰ **Note:** However, later that morning (**23.6.41**), it becomes clear from aerial reconnaissance that the large Soviet tank force (estimated at **300-400** tanks) seemed to be moving NW toward Raseinia. This reevaluation soon confirmed, for **6 PD** soon in combat w/ Soviet tanks near Raseinia.

⁵⁶¹ **Note:** According to *Lexikon-der-Wehrmacht*, Reinhardt promoted on this day to *Generalleutnant* (i.e., major general). Other details appear accurate.

panzer troops on 1 Jun 40, and placed in charge of the 3 PzGr on 5 Oct 40. (S.W. Mitcham, Jr., Men of Barbarossa, 79)

24.-25.6.41 (Panzerschlacht bei Raseiniai):

Genau wie hier am rechten Fluegel kam die dt. Offensive in der Mitte der Front vorwaerts. Doch jetzt ***raechte sich die falsche Lagebeurteilung***. Das **41 PzK** (Gen.d.Pz.Tr. Reinhardt) hatte soeben die sowj. **125 RD** geworfen, als ploetzlich feindl. Panzer anrollten. Das **3 MC** (Gm. Kurkin) griff befehlsmaess mit **2 Pz-Bde** u. **48 RD** die Flanke des dt. Panzerkeils an. Es war am **24.6., 15.00** Uhr, als ostw. Raseiniai die staehlernden Kolosse anrollten.

Die hier auftauchenden **Kw-1** u. **II, 46-t-Panzer**, waren tolle Brocken. Auf etwas **800 m** eroeffneten unsere Kompanien das Feuer; es bleib wirkungslos . . . [see text for details]⁵⁶²

Die erste Panzerschlacht im Abschnitt der H.Gr.Nord hatte begonnen! Es war die erste Panzerschlacht des Ostfeldzuges! Es war gleichzeitig die einzige Panzerschlacht, die zwischen starken Panzerverbaenden von Freund u. Feind im Nordabschnitt der Ostfront ausgetragen wurde!

Die Sowjets hatten am **24 Jun 41** einen gewaltigen Vorteil. Ihre Panzer waren viel schwerer, als ueberhaupt von dt. Seite angenommen wurde. Es war unmoeglich, diesen Stahlkolossen mit den vorhandenen Pz.-Abwehr-Waffen Schaden zuzufuegen. . . Nur dort, wo die **8.8-cm-Flakgeschuetze** rasch genug abprotzen konnten oder wo eigene Pz III u. Pz IV sich den Sowjets entgegenstellten, blieben die ueberschweren Kolosse brennend liegen. . .

Die Kaempfe wogten am **25.6.** hin u. her. Doch langsam gewannen die Deutschen die Oberhand. . . Die Panzer der **1 u. 6 PD** trafen **8.38** Uhr bei Sokaičiai aufeinander. Der Ring war geschlossen!

Der erste Panzerschlacht des Ostfeldzuges endete mit einer Niederlage der Sowjets. Sie mussten **186 Panzer** – darunter **29** vom Typ **Kv-1** – , **77** Geschuetze, **23** Pak u. etwa **600** Kfz als Wracks zuruecklassen. Der Sieg hatte aber ein Janusgesicht. Das **41 PzK** wurde durch das **3 MC** fuer zwei Tage an Ort u. Stelle gebunden. Damit war der Anschluss an **56 PzK** verlorengegangen.

(W. Haupt, *Heeresgruppe Nord*, 30-31)

1.7.8.1: 6 PD Operations:

--**6 PD**: The 6th Panzer Division was formed during the period 1936-37 at Wuppertal as the 1st Light Infantry Division. It fought in the campaign in Poland in September 1939, and after conversion to the 6th Panzer Division in the winter of 1939-40, it participated in the campaign in the West in May 1940. In June 1941 the Division was transferred to the Eastern front where it saw action first in the northern and later in the central sector. It suffered heavy losses and was shipped to France in May 1942 for rest and refitting. In December 1942 the Division returned to the

⁵⁶² **Note:** This quotation gleaned from: Rolf O. Stoves, “1. Panzer-Division, 1939-1945.” Bad Nauheim: Podzun 1962. 882 S.

Eastern front where it was engaged in the southern sector. In the summer of 1943 it took part in the Belgorod offensive and in the winter of 1943-44 it was continuously engaged during the Soviet counteroffensive. The withdrawal across the northern Ukraine in March 1944 caused heavy losses. The Division was then reformed and transferred to the central sector of the Eastern front where it was engaged in defensive actions during the Soviet summer offensive. (UG / RGFC)

--6 PD (Observations on Eve of Campaign by General Erhard Raus,⁵⁶³ including Assembly of Division for the Attack):

C-in-C: Maj.-Gen. Franz Landgraf
Ops Officer: Major Joachim A.G. Graf v. Kielmansegg

The most noteworthy characteristic of **6 PD** at outset of Russian campaign was fact that the entire division contained the equivalent of only a *single hvy panzer coy*. **11 PzRgt** consisted of three battalions of four coys each. The predominant panzer model was the like **PzKw 35t**, an older vehicle of Czech manufacture that was *no longer in production* and whose frontal armor had a maximum thickness of only **25mm**. Only the 4th coy of each battalion was provided w/ some Pz IVs and a few Pz IIIs. By contrast, **1 PD** boasted an entire battalion of heavy panzers. The higher numerical strength of **11 PzRgt** could not compensate for its *technical deficiencies*. From the outset, his awareness of this weakness all but forced Maj.-Gen. Landgraf to forbid the commitment of all panzers en masse and instead to *employ them in conjunction w/ our infantry battalions*. Alone our **PzKW 35ts** would have been *grossly inferior* even to the Russian tanks and AT wpns about which we were already aware. . . **6 PD** was the only one in the German army still equipped w/ those obsolete tanks. . . By contrast, it should be admitted that the **PzKw 35t** did possess certain advantages for operating in Russian terrain, including light weight, good maneuverability, and the ability to cross bridges w/ a load capacity of only **8.5** tons.

Our AT wpns were also generally inferior. In **Pz.Jaeg.Btl. 41**, only one platoon in each of the three coys had been issued **50mm** AT guns. The other platoons, as well as the AT elements of our motorized infantry regiments, were equipped only w/ towed, **37mm** AT guns. The division did have one **20mm** flak battery and one AT rifle coy. For the *initial attack of the campaign*, **41 PzK** had also attached **II./A.R. 59** (150mm howitzers), and **II./Luftwaffe Flak-Rgt. 411** (20mm and **88mm** flak). . .

Our knowledge of the Red Army in our sector was confined to reports from higher Hqs. General Landgraf ordered reconnaissance by eye-witnesses and agents during the last four days of our assembly, which revealed Russian fortifications in our sector and discovered enemy forces of unknown strength on both sides of the Siline – Kangailai road. We also discovered that the terrain in the Taugoggen area was *extremely unsuitable for the attack of a panzer division*. The *dense, swampy forest* offered only one practical road. This meant that full deployment of the division could not be contemplated before reaching Ervilkas, **35** km east of the border.

⁵⁶³ **Note:** According to appendix at back of memoir, Raus appointed commander **6 Mot. Bde (6. Schuetzen Brigade)**, **6 ID**, on **1.5.41**. He was a colonel in **Jun 41**. (351)

Just prior to the beginning of Operation Barbarossa, **6 PD**, which had originally occupied the area around Deutsch Eylau – Torun, assembled in the area around Osterode – Riesenburg – Deutsch Eylau. From this point the buildup for the attack proceeded in a *succession of four night marches*. The assembly movements proved *very difficult* because of the sheer mass of troops in AGN that were approaching the border and their *often-conflicting routes of march*. Crossing the Memel River turned out to be *particularly difficult*. Our lighter vehicles crossed at Schreitlauken on an auxiliary bridge over which a test run had only been driven at the last moment. Tanks and heavier vehicles moved across the Memel bridge at Tilsit, which also had to be used by **1 PD**, so that two parallel columns converged on a single point. Nevertheless, the entire assembly succeeded w/o any major stoppages, w/ all movements restricted to *hours of darkness* and never allowed to extend into daytime.

(E. Raus, *Panzer Operations*, 10-12)

--**6 PD** (General Erhard Raus re: Mission & Tactical Organization of **6 ID**):

The division had to organize a double-echeloned order of battle for the final buildup and approach to the Lithuanian border. Advance elements took up defensive positions through **21 Jun 41**. We were permitted [i.e., the bulk of the division] to occupy the actual positions for the attack only during the night of **21/22 Jun 41**. Because of these factors, General Landgraf organized the lead elements of the division into two *Kampfgruppen* of different strength. On the right, the weaker of the two—*Kampfgruppe von Seckendorff*—received the mission of leading the assault and opening the road to Kangailai. The more powerful *Kampfgruppe Raus* on the left was to attack later, breaking through the Russian border fortifications as quickly as possible and proceeding then as ordered by the division. In the evening of **21 Jun 41**, division Hq. located itself at Szugken.

The initial tactical organization of **6 PD** for the attack on **22 Jun 41** was as follows:

- Kampfgruppe von Seckendorff* (S.R. 114)⁵⁶⁴
- Kampfgruppe Raus* (Bde 6 / incl. 11 PzRgt)
- Division Main Body
- Attached units

(E. Raus, *Panzer Operations*, 12-13)

--**22.6.41** (Zusammenfassung / Verluste der 6 PD):

Die damalige Feindkarte wies im voraussichtlichen Operationsraum der **6 PD** zwei zur russ. **8 Armee** gehörende Armeekorps auf, von denen eines ein Panzerkorps war (**12 MC**, mit **23 u. 28 PzBde**, **202 Schtz.Div.**). Nach kurzen, aber mühevollen Grenzgefechten, die *nicht ganz deutschen Vorstellungen vom Feind entsprachen* (die Grenztruppen wehrten sich erbittert, z.T. liessen sie die

⁵⁶⁴ **Note:** See text for actual composition of these battle groups.

Angriffsspitzen durch u. hielten dann das Gross auf), bildete die Div. einen Brueckenkopf ueber den Sesuviz bei **36** Grad Celcius im Schatten. Die den ersten Keil bildende ***Kampfgruppe von Seckendorff*** (SR 114 u. **Kradschtz.-Btl. 6**) – ***Kampfgruppe Raus*** (SR 4) blieb Div.-Reserve – erreichte noch am Abend des **22 Jun 41** Erzvilkas. Damit war das Sumpfgelaende ueberwunden. Das **SR 114** verlor an diesem ersten Tag des neuen Feldzuges **25** Gefallene (**3** Offz.) u. die gleiche Zahl Verwundete.

Nur schwache feindl. Kraefte verteidigten die erste litauische Stadt Rossienie, die mittags **13.30** Uhr am **23 Jun 41** nach planmaessig vorgefuehrtem Angriff von den ***Kampfgruppen von Seckendorff*** u. – zeitlich etwas spaeter – **Raus** genommen wurde. Bei den Kaempfen fiel der Kdr. des **K 6**, Major Schliekmann . . . Beide K.Gr. gingen anschliessend getrennt weiter vor, um am Abend zwei Brueckenkoefpe ueber die Dubysa zu bilden. [Note: What follows is detailed account of the “*Panzerschlacht bei Rossienie*.”]

(W. Paul, *Brennpunkte. Die Geschichte der 6. Panzerdivision*, 106, ff.)

--22.6.41 (General Erhard Raus on Start of Campaign):

Following an artillery preparation that began at **0305**, a Fieseler “Storch” liaison plane saw to it that a wooden MG tower outside of Siline was neutralized, after which **6 PD** crossed the Soviet border south of Tauroggen. *Kampfgruppe v. Seckendorff*, assaulting through the village of Siline, succeeded relatively quickly in clearing the road to Kangailai, though in the woods east of that town two Russian coys ***put up a defense more tenacious than any so far seen in the war***. Our infantry eliminated the last of this resistance toward **1600** after *heavy fighting in the woods*.

This obstacle notwithstanding, *Kampfgruppe Raus* launched and sustained the division’s main attack during the morning hours.⁵⁶⁵ The bridge across the Sesuviz River at Kangailai fell into our hands, and we *rapidly broke isolated resistance in the open terrain around Meskai*. Expected Russian counterattacks from the northern bank of the Sesuviz did not materialize, and my leading units reached Erzvilkas toward evening.⁵⁶⁶

Increasing terrain difficulties *delayed the advance of the division’s main body*, especially holding back *Kampfgruppe v. Seckendorff* on the left wing, which was moving via Kuisiai. By nightfall our troops had been *widely scattered along the Siline – Meskai – Gaure – Erzvilkas road*, but during the night the Russians in the Sakaline area to the south showed little activity. General Landgraf moved his division Hq. up to Meskai.

On the second day of combat after the deep breakthrough at the frontier, both *Kampfgruppen* quickly pushed east in order to prevent the enemy taking up positions along the Raseinai heights and to reach the important Dubysa sector. [See text for more details.]⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶⁵ **Note:** Compare these remarks of Raus to **6 ID** war diary, which says that Raus’s battle group was barely underway by **12.30**, due to terrain, road conditions, etc.

⁵⁶⁶ **Note:** This town was, according to Raus, **35** km beyond the border.

[**Note:** On **24 Jun 41, 6 PD** encountered shock of Soviet KV-1 heavy tanks for first time⁵⁶⁸—*Panzerschlacht von Raseinai*.⁵⁶⁹]

(E. Raus, *Panzer Operations*, 14, 21-25)

-**22.6.41 (6 PD / Gen. Graf v. Kielmansegg)**:⁵⁷⁰

. . . Before the start of the offensive, *we really did not know too much about the enemy*. . . Intelligence . . . was *much worse than in the Polish and French campaigns*. Intelligence was completely incorrect, even down to the details on the maps we had. These were Russian maps and they were *deliberately wrong and misleading*. We knew, however, or at least believed that the Soviet border forces were not too strong in contrast to Soviet forces in front of our Army Groups Center and South. . .

This poor picture of the enemy that we had in AGN was the main reason why the army group planned a *very quick breakthrough and subsequent deep penetration in the form of a wedge* (a *Keil* in German) in the middle of the sector. And it was a *very different plan* from that of the other army groups. . . It is interesting to note that the first order to [from?] the army group already gave, as a final objective, Leningrad, 800 km distant. . . The *first objectives* were bridgeheads over the Dvina River 300 km away, and the *second objective* was the line Narva – Lake Peipus, 550 km away. A motto . . . was hammered into the minds of all soldiers of the panzer group from private to general. This motto was “*Surprise and then forward, forward, forward.*” . . .

The **41 PzK (1 & 6 PD, 36 ID (mot.), 269 ID)** mission was to break through the border positions north of Tilset and to reach the Dvina River between Dunaburg – Jacobstadt.

(General Graf v. Kielmansegg, “*Overview of 6 PD Operations*,” in: D.M. Glantz (ed.), *Initial Period of the War*, 101-07)

--**22.6.41 (6 PD / Col. Helmut Ritgen)**:⁵⁷¹

. . . The bulk of the division’s tanks were **105 Czech tanks (35T) w/ a 37mm gun**. These tanks became *useless below freezing-point*, since their power and steering

⁵⁶⁷ **Note:** **6 PD** experiences serious skirmish on **23.6.41**. Division’s efforts on this day were complicated by *shortages of artillery ammunition*. (16-17)

⁵⁶⁸ **Note:** According to David Glantz, **6 PD** had a “surprise encounter w/ the Soviet **2 TD** near Raseinai.” (Email, D. Glantz to C. Luther, 6 Jul 17.)

⁵⁶⁹ **Note:** For a graphic account of this first great tank battle in sector of AGN see, P. Carell, *Hitler Moves East*, 31-32. Writes Carell: “On 24th June, at 1330 hours, Reinhardt arrived at the CP of **1 PD** w/ the news that **6 PD** had encountered very strong enemy armor on its way to the [Dvina], at a point east of Raseinai on the Dubysa, and was involved in heavy fighting. Over **100** super-heavy Soviet tanks had come from the east to meet **41 PzK**, and had clashed first of all w/ General Landgraf’s **6 PD**. . . It marked the first great crisis on the German northern front, a long way behind the spearhead of Manstein’s panzer corps. **1 PD** therefore moved to relieve **6 PD**. . . The Soviet tanks which made this astonishing appearance were the as yet unknown types of the Klim Voroshilov series, the KV-1 and the KV-2, of **43** and **52** tons respectively.”

⁵⁷⁰ **Note:** Kielmansegg was the *senior general staff officer* in **6 PD** at the time.

⁵⁷¹ **Note:** At time, Ritgen was adjutant of **II./Pz.Rgt. 11 (6 PD)**.

controls were pneumatic. They had been out of production since **1938** and, although *extremely reliable*, were at the *edge of their system-life* and had been declared “***no longer suitable for combat*** some months before. However, owing to *low tank production in Germany*, no replacement tanks were available. . . **6 PD** was the only division in the German Army which had such equipment. That compelled us, from the very beginning, to ***fight only in mixed combat groups***. That was the rule at this time. . .

In retrospect the ***armament and vehicles of 6 PD were really poor***. It was a *miracle* the division reached the outskirts of Leningrad and Moscow . . . This achievement was the result of *supreme leadership combined w/ excellent morale and training*. . .

[**Anecdote**]: At school, I had been regarded as a good mathematician. So I tried to compute the *duration of our campaign* by the duration of the past campaigns in Poland and France in relation to the strength of the opposing forces, distances, and other factors. My conclusion was that ***the war would be over at the end of July***. Thus I set my wedding-day for **2 Aug [41]**. Unfortunately . . . my fiancée had to wait two more years!

The only special training we received for Russia were lessons in the Cyrillic alphabet to enable us to read Russian maps and road signs.

Gen. v. Kielmannsegg: I would add that on the division staff we were *not as hopeful as Colonel Ritgen*. . . We saw . . . a little more clearly the *danger of a two-front war for Germany and the danger of space and time in endless Russia*.

Col. Ritgen: **6 PD**, commanded by Gen.Maj. Landgraf, had the mission of breaking through the border positions in the forest zone south of Tauroggen and advancing via Kongayly – Stegvilai to Rossinie in order to gain bridgeheads across the Dubyssa River. This was the ***objective of the first day***. Thereafter, it was imperative to cross the Dvina River as soon as possible to prevent the enemy organizing a strong defense line there. Our right flank neighbor was **269 ID**, reinforced by a tank coy of my battalion, and our left flank neighbor was **1 PD**.⁵⁷²

The enemy: It was believed the border position, as assessed by air reconnaissance and marked on this map, was defended only by weak enemy forces. The east bank of the Dvina could however, offer a *strong line of resistance*. An early crossing of this river was essential to prevent enemy fortification of this position. The existence of enemy mechanized corps in the area was known, but we had ***no knowledge of the new enemy hvy tanks***.

The terrain: The border zone was ***heavily wooded*** and ***partly swampy***. East of the border there were sandy plains up to the Saltuona River valley. East of it, the deeper-cut Dubyssa River valley could be used by the enemy as an obstacle. Movement and supplies would be ***severely impeded by the total lack of roads***

⁵⁷² **Note**: See, terrific map of **4 PzGr** deployments on p. 111.

and highways, all the more since the division's supply trucks were *commercial ones* unable to travel cross-country.

Weather: The operation would depend heavily on dry weather, since marching **300 km** to the Dvina River along sandy or swampy tracks would be a problem. . .

Gen. v. Kielmansegg: [Notes that KV-1 and KV-2 tanks came as a "complete surprise."] . . . The terrain . . . was *woody and swampy*. We had to *overcome this terrain all the way up to Leningrad* w/ the exception of **41 PzK** between Duna – Ostrag. I can only say you should have seen this terrain which was **thick green jungle**. We could see only a short distance ahead. The *lack of roads* was equally bad.

Col. Ritgen: This is how the operations unfolded. On **22 Jun 41**, to achieve surprise, the division crossed the Neman River on engineer bridges during the last night before the attack and proceeded to attack *from the march* at **0300**. An artillery preparation of **5 minutes** on known targets proceeded [sic] the infantry attack. **Enemy resistance in our sector was much stronger than anticipated**. Up to six AT ditches in a series had been dug and these were stubbornly held by riflemen supported by snipers in trees. Fortunately, no enemy AT guns or mines were in position. Since nobody surrendered, almost *no prisoners were taken*. Our tanks, however, were soon *out of ammunition*, a case which had *never happened before* in either Poland or France. Resupply depended on the arrival of supply trucks which were *unable to overtake us* as they tried to cope w/ the traffic jams on the narrow track.

On a motorbike I tried to assemble the ammunition trucks. Driving was exciting because of the **presence of snipers**, which could not be located. Their victims were hit primarily by *gun-shots in the head*. A few hours later I witnessed an incident which **characterizes the fanaticism of the Soviet soldier**. Beyond the forest we were waiting for resupply for at least two hours near a cornfield. Suddenly, two Russians *jumped out of the field w/ their hands raised*. A sergeant waved to them to come to us. At that moment they dodged, while one threw a hand-grenade and the other fired a pistol at the sergeant, who was wounded. The Russians must have hidden motionless in this field for three or more hours.

By noon the *forest had been cleared*. From now on progress was hindered more by the *deep sandy track* and the *lack of supplies* than by enemy action. No bridges had been blown up but their *low load capacity* forced tanks and hvy trucks to ford the streams. At night we crossed the Saltuona River but owing to the delays in the forest we did **not reach our objective for the day, the Dubyssa River**. During the day we captured only a few prisoners and almost no weapons.

That night *everybody felt that this campaign was quite different from previous campaigns*. The air had been quiet but for a few reconnaissance planes and two Soviet bombers, which soon fell victim to our flak. . .

On **23 Jun 41** we continued our attack toward the Dubysa w/ two battle groups abreast: . . .

(Ritgen, Col., “6th Panzer Division Operations,” in: D.M. Glantz (ed.), *Initial Period of the War*, 108-13)

--**25.6.41**: (Betr: Ueberschwere russischen Panzer bei 6 PD! Aus dem Tagebuch / GFM Ritter v. Leeb):

Fahrt zur **4 PzGr Pogegen**, Chef des Stabes [Oberst Walter] Chales de Beaulieu: Glaubte, dass Einschliessung der Feind vor **41 PzK** gelingen wird, hat um Hilfe gefunkt. *Russische schwere Panzer werden nicht durchgeschlagen* . . .

[**Note**: Above text followed by detailed footnote, which includes following: “Bei den auftretenden schweren russ. Panzern handelte es sich vermutlich um die Typen **KV-1A** u. **T-34**, vgl. Halder-KTB [24./25.6.41]. Frhr. v. Griessenbeck, bei dem Gespräch bei **4 PzGr** zugegen, bestaetigt das russ. Hilfersuchen per Funk u. die Wirkungslosigkeit der deutschen Pak u. notiert zum **28 Jun 41**: „Heute wurde Hitler in seinem Feldhauptquartier im Osten ein russ. ‘Uebertank’ vorgefuehrt mit **7.5** cm starker Panzerung – ein Koloss. Der Fuehrer war *wutend auf unser Waffenamt*, weil es nicht auch so grosse Tanks bauen liess. Wenn es die Russen koennten, muesste es fuer uns eine Leichtigkeit sein; er liess einen ungluecklichen Obst.Lt. des Waffenamtes, der den russ. Tank vorfuehren musste, ueberhaupt nicht zu Wort kommen, sondern tobte.“ . . . – In einer Aufzeichnung ‘Besprochen am **25.6.** muendlich’ (in: Nachlass Ritter v. Leeb) heisst es zum gleichen Problem: ‘*Die russ. schweren Panzer wurden teilweise auch von sFH 18 [?]*⁵⁷³ *nicht durchgeschlagen*. Panzerung **80-370** (auch **600?** mm).’ Hierzu vermerkte Ritter v. Leeb handschriftlich: ‘Weitergeben! *Geballte Ladung!*’ . . . – . . . **24 Jun 41: 1600** Uhr Anruf Oberst Beaulieu bei H.Gr.Nord: ‘Gegen den schweren russ. Panzer *fehlen wirksame Waffen* . . . Ein schwerer Panzer ist von der **6 PD** durch Treffer unmittelbar unterhalb des Geschuetzrohres ausser Gefecht gesetzt worden. Sonst wird . . . eine *schwere Flak-Battr.* fuer **6 PD** vorgezogen. Bekaempfung durch **15** cm Haubitzen hat sich ebenfalls als erforderlich erwiesen.’”

(W. Ritter v. Leeb & G. Meyer, *Generalfeldmarschall Wilhelm Ritter von Leeb: Tagebuchaufzeichnungen u. Lagebeurteilungen*, 279; 279, f.n. 56)

1.7.8.2: 1 PD Operations:

--**1 PD**: The 1st Panzer Division was formed at Weimar in 1935-1936, It took part in the campaign in Poland in September 1939 and in the campaign in the West in May 1940. In late 1940 it supplied Panzer Regiment 2 and cadres for forming the 16th Panzer Division and received Panzer Grenadier Regiment 113 as a replacement. The Division was transferred to the northern sector of the eastern front in June 1941 and was subsequently transferred to the central sector. In January 1943 it was sent to France and in the late spring of the same year to Greece. In August 1943 it was returned to the eastern front, southern sector. During November and December 1943 it took part in the German counteroffensive west of Kiev. In October 1944 it was transferred from

⁵⁷³ **Note**: Bracketed question mark in original text; don’t know what it signifies.

the Vistula area to Hungary and was cited for distinguished action during the German counter-attack at Debrecen. (UG / RGFC)

--**1 PD** (Transfer from France to East Prussia):⁵⁷⁴

- **Rifle Rgt. 1** on its way from France to East Prussia in **Aug 40**.
- **PzRgt 1** is loaded for transport to East Prussia on **5 Sep 40**.
- Barracks of the Pz.Rgt. in Zinten, East Prussia (**Oct 40**).
- Tank of **PzRgt 1** at the Arys Troop Training Camp (**Nov 40**).
- SPW of the **11./S.R. 113** at Arys Troop Training Camp (winter **1941/42**)
- **6./Pz.Rgt. 1** at Arys Troop Training Camp, testing *gas masks* in spring of **1941**.

(H. Reibenstahl, *The 1st Panzer Division . . . A Pictorial History*, 68-70, 73)

--**16.-21.6.41** (**1 PD** / Lt.-Col. Rolf O.G. Stoves):

. . . From **Nov 40** thru **Mar 41**, **1 PD** had been *thoroughly reorganized*. [See text for details.] When we prepared for the Russian campaign our strength was as follows:

125 APCs

75 Pz III (50mm)

28 Pz IV (75mm)

45 Pz II tanks

Some **15** Pz I tanks w/ MGs given to *Armored Engineer Battalion 37*. . .

Command structure of 1 PD:

Cdr, **1 PD**: Lt.-Gen. Friedrich Kirchner

CS: Lt.-Col. (GS) Walther Wenck

G-4: Major (GS) Anton Detlev v. Plato

Cdr. **1st Rifle Bde**: Maj.-Gen. Walter Krüger

Cdr. **1st Rifle Rgt**: Col. Franz Westhoven

Cdr. **113th Rifle Rgt**: Col. G. v. Heydebrand u. der Lasa

Cdr. **1st Motorcyle Btl**: Lt.-Col. Wend v. Wietersheim

Cdr. **1st PzRgt**: Lt.-Col. Arthur Kopp

Cdr. **73rd ArtRgt**: Col. Rudolf Holste (p 136)

It was the task of **41 PzK** to pierce and smash the Soviet border fortifications around and east of Tauroggen (Taurage). After that was accomplished it was to thrust as fast as possible against the Dvina River in the Daugave sector and gain bridgeheads on the eastern banks of that river around Jakobstadt (Jakavpils). **1 PD** (Lt.-Gen. Kirchner) was ordered to assault and thrust NE across the River Jura, crossing in sectors on both sides of Tauroggen (Taurage). **1 PD** was to gain the big highway NE of Tauroggen, head toward Schaulen and then continue the advance immediately via Skaudivila – Kelme against the city of Ponjevits, which was the first objective of the assault. . .

⁵⁷⁴ **Note:** “Bullets” are the brief picture captions, which provide a few insights into activities of division pre-*Barbarossa*.

The forward detachments of **1 PD** marched from **16 Jun 41** into Eighteenth Army assembly area W and NW of Tilsit along the Memel River (in Lithuania called the Njemen River). **1 PzRgt** w/ ca. **160 tanks** left its garrison at Zinthen, **50 km** west of Königsberg, on **17 Jun 41**. All armored units were ordered to *march only during the night*. Officer reconnaissance teams, *clad like civilian hunters or farmers*, were dispatched into the countryside to take a short look at the area E and SE of Tilsit and W of Tauroggen. However, the area three miles W of the former German/Lithuanian border remained strickly “off limits!” A few selected advance assault teams moved into the frontier section during the night of **21/22 Jun 41**. No armored movements were permitted after the initial assembly of the division. There we waited calmly for the final orders to arrive.

Hq., **1 PD**, covered by a deep forest, was located near the small village of Kullmen. . .

On **21 Jun 41**, at about noon, Hq. **1 PD** received the final attack order by special liaison officer: “D-Day **22 June 1941**. Start of the assault Zero-Five minutes past 3 o’clock, a.m.” . . .

(Lt.-Gen. A.D. v. Plato & Lt.-Col. R.O. Stoves, “*1st Panzer Division Operations*,” in: D.M. Glantz (ed.), *Initial Period of the War*, 126-30, 136)

-- **17.6.41**: Tanks moved up under the cover of darkness. The forward elements of **1 PD** departed their garrison at Zinthen, near Königsberg, on **17 Jun 41**. They were ordered to march only at night. Officer reconnaissance teams dressed as civilian hunters and farmers went forward to inspect the former German-Lithuanian border closely. Once the division was complete in its assembly areas, further movement by armored vehicles was forbidden. (*Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 10; see also, *Glantz, The Initial Period of the War*, 30)

--**22.-26.6.41 (1 PD)**: Under leadership of **41 PzK** the division moves out of the Memelland east of Tilsit and across the Baltic area toward Leningrad. **23.-26.6.41**: Tank battle on the Dubyssa. (H. Reibenstahl, *The 1st Panzer Division . . . A Pictorial History*, 71)

--**22.6.41 (1 PD / Kampfgruppe Westhoven / Lt.-Col. Rolf O.G. Stoves)**:

Phase One: Breaking through Border Fortifications near Tauroggen and Capture of Tauroggen by 41 PzK on 22 Jun 41:

On **22 Jun 41**, **1 PD** advanced into the assault w/ *three mixed combat groups* [*Kampfgruppen*], across the old Lithuanian/German border E and NE of Tilsit. While the enemy situation was *more or less uncertain*, the first assault was organized as follows: [see text for details] . . .

During the early hours of **22 Jun 41**, *Motorized Combat Group Westhoven* [i.e., *Kampfgruppe*] attacked by surprise w/ the reinforced **2nd Btl., Rifle Rgt. 1 (II./S.R. 1)** in the vanguard and advanced against hvy enemy mortar and artillery fire. After strong, severe and stubborn fighting against Soviet infantry it reached the Jura River sector along and around the border town of Tauroggen. Fourteen APCs of **I./S.R. 1**, supported by mixed *Tank Coy Fromme* of **1 PzRgt** crossed

the steep river banks in this sector at about **1300** and forced their way into the city. Thus, the reinforced **APC Btl. Krieg (I.(gp.)/S.R. 1)** w/ APCs and **18 Pz II** and **Pz III/IV** tanks under Lt. Fromme of **1 PzRgt**, after seven hours of swift assault and hard fighting, seized two of the three most important Jura River bridges.

Later in the afternoon strong, stubborn and cunning Russian infantry, fighting w/ AT guns and light tanks, were thrown back. They defended from *house to house and road block to road block*, until German assault troops using **flame throwers and demolition charges**, cleared the passage. By midnight the Russians were thrown back NE beyond the NE ridges of Tauroggen. Tauroggen and its vicinity were cleared of the *last enemy troops* by the motorized **2nd Btl. of Rifle Rgt. 1 (II./S.R. 1)**.

A partly damaged road-bridge across the Jura River at Tauroggen was soon captured and quickly repaired by engineer platoons of **S.R. 1** and **Motorcycle Btl. K-1** supported by army engineer units. These arrived soon on the explicit orders of General Reinhardt, who followed closely the attack of his old **1st Rifle Bde**. From midnight on, that important Jura River crossing was available again for all transports and other vehicles, including hvy tanks.

Shortly after midnight, **motorized Combat Group Westhoven** reached the area around Lapurvis (6 miles NE of Tauroggen). Here the soldiers took a *well-deserved rest of four hours*, ordered by Lt.-Gen. Kirchner, who followed the assault in his command APC, along w/ Col. Westhoven's armored Forward HQ (six APCs and four **Flak-20mm(SP)**). Shortly after, forward logistical teams, which were transported by a few APCs, appeared for resupply of gasoline and ammunition. By **0100**, our master-sergeants showed up w/ **food, cigarettes and repair teams**.

(Lt.-Gen. A.D. v. Plato & Lt.-Col. R.O. Stoves, “*1st Panzer Division Operations*,” in: D.M. Glantz (ed.), *Initial Period of the War*, 130-32)

--22.6.41 (1 PD / **Kampfgruppe Kruger**⁵⁷⁵ / Lt.-Col. Rolf O.G. Stoves):

Armored Combat Group Kruger [Kampfgruppe Kruger] advanced toward the Jura River w/ two assault groups organized as follows: reinforced **Rifle Rgt. 113**; and reinforced **1 PzRgt** w/ reinforced **1st Btl., Rifle Rgt. 113** (Major Dr. Eckinger) ahead.

Maj.-Gen. Kruger w/ the bulk of **1st Rifle Bde** and **PzRgt 1** attacked across the Lithuanian border at about **0400**. Their vanguard, the reinforced **3rd Coy of S.R. 113** w/ **16** APCs, two AA-Flak guns (20mm SP), **10** Pz III and two Pz IV tanks, and one light 105mm field howitzer battery (I.F.H.) had already crossed the border at about **0300** and reached the Jura River after a short march and forced the steep river by means of a newly discovered ford. They *opened the way* for the follow-on armored combat group of **1 PD**.

⁵⁷⁵ **Note:** According to the war diary of **1 PD**, it should be “Krüger.”

Armored Combat Group Kruger advanced toward the river, thrust by surprise against unprepared enemy border guards and gained the Jura River north of Tauroggen by **1200** against *slowly stiffening resistance*. The APC battalion of Dr. Eckinger (**I./S.R. 113**) forced that steep river sector after removing *masses of Soviet mines* (achieved by their own regimental sappers among the first assault wave). Then they quickly smashed through wire obstacles in front of a row of *concrete pillboxes* along the first line of border fortifications around Tauroggen. Capt. “Schorsch” Feig’s reinforced **3rd (APC) Coy/S.R. 113**, reinforced by **30** medium tanks of **I./Pz.Rgt. 1**, then stormed ahead.

Behind them the first border defense line was cleared of stubbornly defending enemy infantry by the advancing motorized elements of **II./S.R. 113**, reinforced by several coys of *Motorcycle Btl. 1 (K-1)*. *Motorized Cbt.Grp.Kr.* w/ APC-Bn-Eckinger (**I./113**) operating far ahead, advanced across the big road running from Tauroggen via Skaudivila to Siauliai (Schaulen), giving the defeated and dispersed enemy no chance to reorganize their defenses.

On **22 Jun 41**, **1 PD** had successfully broken through the Soviet border defense lines around Tauroggen, but only after hard fought skirmishes using all types of weapons. On **23 Jun 41**, the division continued its advance in a NE direction. At about **0400** its two combat groups stormed ahead in pursuit of Russian forces, which by midnight had been thrown out of Tauroggen. . .

When the **G-4** of **1 PD** arrived later that night [**24.6.41**] at Saukotas to clear up urgent questions or resupplying forward elements, Wenck and von Plato discussed w/ Lt.-Gen. Krichner the *experience of the first three days of the attack*. They concluded:

“The Soviet soldier fought *bravely and stubbornly* . . . The defense in the sector of our division appeared “*disorganized*.” Their infantry defended their positions until the last, often very skillfully using all the advantages of the rolling terrain.

As far as our German Combat Groups were concerned, fighting *during the nights, or late evening hours*, which went on during this period w/o much interruption, was mainly done by our infantry and rifle units because our tanks were *severely handicapped at that time*, and because fighting in darkness, our drivers and gunners could not see much. The lenses of the tank rangefinder equipment of most of our armored vehicles only permitted us *very poor visibility between 2100 – 0500*. . .” [See text for more details.]

[**Note: 41 PzK** fight its first major tank battle (*Panzerschlacht*) around Rossienie, **23./-25.6.41**.]

(Lt.-Gen. A.D. v. Plato & Lt.-Col. R.O. Stoves, “*Ist Panzer Division Operations*,” in: D.M. Glantz (ed.), *Initial Period of the War*, 130-33, 143)

--Reflections on 41 PzK Operations / Lt.-Gen. v. Plato:

I wish to underline a few points of Colonel Stoves, which dealt with the northern wing of Reinhardt’s **41 PzK**.

1. The importance of those *air reconnaissance squadrons* (GAF). Nine (9) air reconnaissance acft were *attached to each panzer division* w/ the task of watching developments along our open flanks, as well as all movements of enemy tank formations . . .

2. Difficulty in the first deployment of the two armored corps during the night of **21/22 Jun 41**. The Memel River (Njemen in Lithuania) divided the area into two parts. The part north of the Memel River [Nemen] was *very small*; only three armored divisions (**1, 6, 8 PD**) could move into the northern part of the assembly area behind the infantry divisions already on line. The three motorized divisions (**3, 36, SS "T"**) had to remain south of the Memel River during daylight before the day of assault. . .

3. Inadequate picture of the enemy. We knew, in general, of the presence and positions of the three Soviet mechanized corps (**I MC** was at Pleskau-Ostrow, **12 MC** at Schaulen, and **3 MC** at Kowno). However, we did not know the definite number of enemy infantry divisions available on the other side. More or less, *we were convinced that the Soviet High Command planned a surprise attack*. Only the time and date of such an attack was uncertain to most of us. The interrogation of POWs revealed later that the *bulk of Russian troops deployed along the frontier opposing 4 PzGr and Eighteenth Army had been withdrawn a few days before*.⁵⁷⁶

4. The *consumption of fuel* was much higher than was provided for in advance of those first six days of attack. *Bad roads, sandy, dusty roads or field lanes, and moory, marshy sections of countryside in the northern part of 41 PzK's axis of advance* [i.e., in sector of **1 PD**] . . . led to the consumption of more POL than anticipated. On several occasions during those first days of attack the consumption rate was at least *three times higher than was provided for* . . .

(Lt.-Gen. A.D. v. Plato, "Reflections on 41st Panzer Corps Operations," in: D.M. Glantz, *Initial Period of the War*, 152-53)

--**24.6.41 (Panzerschlacht von Raseiniai)**:⁵⁷⁷ For the Germans, the first *unpleasant surprise of the campaign* came on the night of **23 Jun 41**, in the zone of Georg-Hans Reinhardt's **41 PzK**. . . East of the Lithuanian village of Rossizny (Raseiniai), the **1** and **6 PD** came under hvy attack from Soviet **3 TC**, which was equipped mainly w/ the Klim Voroshilov series tanks, the KV-1 and KV-2, which weighed **43** and **52** tons, respectively. The KV-2, in fact, weighed *twice as much as the heaviest German tank*: "all armored-piercing shells simply bounced off them," the **1 PD** reported One KV-2 was hit more than 70 times by German AT fire, but *not a single round pierced the armor*. The AT gunners soon took to aiming at their tracks, hoping to immobilize them, and then to finish them off w/ artillery or AA guns, or blow them up at close range w/ high explosives. Fortunately, the Soviets showed *no tactical skill or understanding of combined-arms methods*, and merely launched repeated frontal assaults. Meanwhile, Reinhardt was reinforced by Lt.Gen. Otto-Ernst Ottenbacher's 36 ID (mot.) and Maj.Gen. Ernst von Leyser's 269 ID. . . Ottenbacher (like Leyser) rushed to Rossizny when Reinhardt came under attack. The battle was

⁵⁷⁶ **Note:** Is this so? For what purpose?

⁵⁷⁷ **Note:** Mitcham states Soviet counterattack began on evening of **23.6.41**, but the proper date is **24.6.41**. (See, for example, *KTB OKW*, **24.6.41**).

not decided until **26 Jun 41**, when the more experienced Germans launched a flank attack, drove the Soviets into a swamp, and smashed Soviet **3 TC**. The Reds lost **200 tanks** in this battle. (S.W. Mitcham, Jr., *Men of Barbarossa*, 79, 81; see also, Carell, *Hitler Moves East*, 23-24))

--**28.6.-5.7.41 (1 PD)**: The Dūna is crossed (**28.6.41**). Combat along the Stalin Line near Ostrov (**5.7.41**) (H. Reibenstahl, *The 1st Panzer Division . . . A Pictorial History*, 71)

1.7.9: Case Study 3: Eighteenth Army Advances into Lithuania (21 & 61 ID)

--**21 ID**: The 21. Infanterie-Division (I. Welle) was formed in 1934-35 by expansion of Infanterie-Regiment 3 (Deutsch Eylau) of the old Reichswehr. In September 1939 the division was engaged in the campaign in Poland, in October 1939 it was transferred to the Eifel region, and in May 1940 it participated in the western campaign. From July to September 1940 the division performed occupation duty along the demarcation line and the Swiss border, and in September 1940 it was transferred to Wehrkreis I. On June 21, 1941 [sic], the division invaded Lithuania near Tilsit and advanced to the Chudovo area via Radviliskis, Jekabpils, Ostrov, Dno, Shimsk, and Novgorod. From August to November 1941 it defended the Chudovo area and the Volkhov area until January 1942. The division participated in position defense in the Kirishi area from January to August, the Tigoda River sector from September 1942 to January 1943, the Mga area from January to April, and the Kolpino area from May to August 1943. Although there are no records of the division available dated later than September 24, 1943, the situation maps of Heeresgruppe Nord show that the division took part in the defense of the Chudovo area from September 1943 to January 1944. By the end of 1944 it had withdrawn to East Prussia via Pleskau, Ostrov, Aluksne, and Tilsit. (UG / RGFC)

--**61 ID**: The 61. Infanterie-Division was activated on August 16, 1939, from reservists in East Prussia. It participated in the campaign against Poland in September and October 1939, and during November 1939 was transferred to the Belgian-German border for training and preparation for the western campaign. On May 10, 1940, the division took part in the surprise attack on Fort Eben-Emael [sp?], advanced through Belgium and northern France, and participated in the battle of Dunkirk. After the cessation of hostilities it performed occupation duties on the coast of Brittany between Lorient and Quimper. During February 1941 the division was transferred to East Prussia for training and preparation for the campaign against Russia, in which it fought through the Baltic States and northern sector of the eastern front to Narva, Mga, Kirishi, and Tikhvin on the Tikhvinka River. The division withdrew to the Volkhov River during December 1941 and January 1942, and was continuously engaged in position defense on the Leningrad-Volkhov front south of Lake Ladoga, from January 1942 until December 1943 with a few days of recuperation and changing of positions between battles. Although there are no records of the division available dated later than January 12, 1944, the situation maps of Heeresgruppen Nord and Weichsel show that the division withdrew in January 1944 from the Leningrad area to Narva and through the Baltic States to East Prussia where it opposed the Soviet winter offensive from January to March 1945 at which time it was encircled and captured. (UG / RGFC)

--**Feb-Jun 41 (Darstellung W. Hubatsch (61 ID))**:

Feb-Jun 41:

In den ersten Februartagen des Jahres **1941** rollten Transportzuege aus dem Westen nach Osten, brachten die **61 ID** aus der Bretagne nach Ostpreussen. Die Witterung war winterlich u. rauh, die Umstellung fiel nicht leicht. Aber das freudige Bewusstsein, nach anderthalb Kriegsjahren wieder in der Heimat zu sein, ueberwog; das alte soldatenfrohe Ordensland nahm sich gastlich seiner Rgter. an. Die Div. wurde im Raum ostw. Königsberg ausgeladen. Trotz strenger Kaelte begann sogleich die Ausbildung; Maersche, Uebungen u. Gefechts-schiessen hielten die Truppe einsatzbereit.

Im **Apr 41** wurde die Div. in das noerdl. Ostpreussen verlegt, der Stab quartierte sich in Tilsit ein, aber lange war des Bleibens in den engen Unterkuenften nicht, es ging weiter nach Norden. Am **20 Apr 41** rueckte die Div. in langer Marschkolonnie ueber die Luisenbruecke in das Memelland. Es ging ueber den grossen Strom; manch einer hat den Weg ueber das dunkle Wasser der Memel nicht wieder zurueckgenommen.

Memelland⁵⁷⁸

Schlammperiode u. Zeit der Wegelosigkeit hielten an u. beeintraechtigten die Ausbildung. Die Div. hielt sich vom **21 Apr** bis **13 Mai** im oestl. Memelland bereit, auf das Stichwort „**Achtung Berta**“ eine Sperrlinie zu besetzen u. zu halten. Da Rochadestrasse [?] u. Gelaende weit einzusehen waren, wurde aus halbhoehen Fichten eine Tarnwand gezogen. Am **13 Mai 41** wurde die Div. durch die **217 ID** abgeloeet u. marschiert in Nachtmaerschen in den Raum noerdl. Heydekrug. Am **12 Jun 41** wurde die Div. weiter nach Norden verlegt, nach einem Zwischenquartier bezog sie einen engen Unterkunftsraum u. Sicherungsberich um Schernen am Minge-Uebergang **14 km SO Memel**. Russland schien sich ruhig zu verhalten . . . Lediglich die in kurzen Abstaenden neu aufgefuehrten hoelzernen Beobachtungstuerme deuteten auf eine starke militaerische Bewachung der litauischen Grenze hin.

Der Balkanfeldzug war zu Ende, Kreta erobert, die dortigen Kraefte waren zu anderer Verwendung frei geworden. *Jeder fuehlte, dass eine Entscheidung bevorstand.* . .

Der beruechtigte **Kommissarbefehl** ist vom Div.Kdo. aus disziplinaeren Gruenden der Truppe nicht bekanntgegeben worden.

17.-21.6.41:

Der **20 Jun 41** verging mit Vorbereitungen; durch Einsatz von Panzerabwehrgeschuetzen sollten im Angriffsfall die russ. Beobachtungstuerme ausgeschaltet werden. Am **21 Jun 41** mittags **13.15** Uhr setzte das Stichwort „**Düsseldorf**“ den Plan zum Angriff ueber die Reichsgrenze nach Osten in Kraft. Die **61 ID** unterstand dem **26 AK**. Der bereits am **17 Jun 41** herausgegebene Angriffsbefehl der Div. lautete u.a.:

⁵⁷⁸ **Note:** This must have been the idiomatic German term for this area around the Nemen (Memel) River close to border w/ Lithuania.

Die Div., rechts an **217 ID (IR 131)** angelehnt, durchbricht am **22.6.** X Uhr antretend russ. Grenzstellung zwischen Picktassen u. Liewern u. stoest u. stoest zwischen Seengelaende um Varniai u. Plinsker See nach NO in Richtung Telsche vor. Hauptstossrichtung der Div. ueber Girininkai auf Hoehengelaende Punkt **147 – 105 – 124** (ostw. u. NO Zadeikiai). „Mit scharf nach rechts zusammengefassten Kraefte hat **IR 151** die feindl. Grenzstellung zu durchstossen, der Masse der Div. den Weg zu bahnen u. nach Erreichen der Hoehen um Girininkai die **Vorausabteilung Clausen** (1 verst. Radf.Kp./**IR 151**) zur Aufklaerung u. Brueckensicherung vorauszuwerfen. Links davon sollte **IR 176** den Uebergang ueber den Mingefluss handstreichartig in Besitz nehmen u. den Grenzort Gargzdai besetzen. Mit dem Schutz der linken Flanke der Div. wurde die **A.A. 161** beauftragt.⁵⁷⁹

(W. Hubatsch, *61. Infanterie-Division*, 53-55)

--**22.6.41** (Darstellung W. Hubatsch (**61 ID**)):

Am **22 Jun 41** um **3.15** Uhr,⁵⁸⁰ zur befohlenen X-Zeit, trat die **61 ID** aus ihrem Bereitstellungsraum beiderseits Schnaugsten zum Angriff ueber die Reichsgrenze an. Der heftige Feuerschlag verstummte bald, in dem dichten Bodennebel war vom Gegner nichts auszumachen. Der Widerstand war gering; als der Nebel gegen **5** Uhr frueh wich, befand sich die vordersten Teile der Div. bereits **3** km ostw. der Grenze. Versprengte Feindeinheiten u. Baumschuetzen mit automatischen Gewehren beunruhigten die Truppe, konnten jedoch das zuegige Vorgehen keineswegs aufhalten.

Um **7.30** Uhr waren die Hoehen ostw. Girininkai erreicht. Unter geringem Feindwiderstand ging es ueber Wald- u. Bruchwiesen vorwaerts. Niedrige Strohkatzen, zerfahrene Moorwege u. grosse Findlingsbloecke⁵⁸¹ auf den Sandfeldern erinnerten an eine Urlandschaft. Neuangelegte Strassenzuege u. im Bau befindliche Betonbunker gaben ein Bild von den mil. Vorbereitungen, die hier im Gang gewesen waren.

Nach Wegnahme der Minge-Bruecke durch die **Kampfgruppe Bülow** drang die Masse des **IR 176** unter schweren Verlusten in das zaeh verteidigte Gargzdai ein. Lt. Dreyer (**I./176**), Lt. Friebe (**9./176**), Lt. Wandelt (**10./176**), Oblt. Eisenblätter (**11./176**), Lt. Hannemann u. Lt. Penner (**6./176**) waren gefallen.⁵⁸²

Da sich nach Meldung der Truppe auch Zivilisten an den Kaempfen in Gargzdai beteiligt hatten⁵⁸³ u. daraufhin eine Polizei-Exekution gegen den Ort erfolgt war, ist dieser Vorfall zum Gegenstand eines Strafprozesses vor dem Landgericht Ulm im Jahre **1958** geworden. Es wurde dabei festgestellt, dass Angehoerige der kaempfenden Truppe an der Exekution keinen Anteil hatten. Im Rahmen der

⁵⁷⁹ **Note:** Unclear if all this text is actual direct quote of divisional order.

⁵⁸⁰ **Note:** Actually, the attack began at **3.05**. See, *KTB AOK 18*.

⁵⁸¹ **Note:** Large outcroppings of rock, or boulders, I believe.

⁵⁸² **Note:** What horrific losses of officers! Town of Gargzdai must have been tenaciously defended by the Russians.

⁵⁸³ **Note:** I assume he means Russian civilians—perhaps family members of the Red Army garrison in the town?

Div.-Geschichte kann auf Vorgaenge ausserhalb des Verantwortungsbereiches des Divisions-Kommandos nicht eingegangen werden, ebenso wenig auf die Taetigkeit rueckw. oder divisionsfremder Einheiten, Einsatz-Kommandos u. dergl.

Das Tagesziel war nach Niederkaempfen des sonst nicht erheblichen Feindwiderstandes schon in den Nachmittagsstunden erreicht worden; an dem raschen Erfolg hatte die **VA Clausen** entscheidenden Anteil. Am Abend des ersten Kampftages hatte die Div. ueberall die gesteckten Ziele ueberschritten.

Der Vormarsch am **23 Jun 41** verzoeagerte sich z.T. erheblich durch Instandsetzung verfallener u. zerstoerter Bruecken sowie durch Hindernisse, die morastige u. kaum befahrbare Wege den Kraftfahrzeugen u. pferdebespannten Wagen bereiteten. Vom Feind war wenig zu sehen; hin u. wieder streute eine wendige russ. Batterie die Vormarschwege ab, gut getarnte Baumschuetzen verschleierten das Feindbild. Der Russe fuehrt einen sehr geordneten Rueckzug seiner Grenzschutzkraefte durch. . .

(W. Hubatsch, *61. Infanterie-Division*, 56-57)⁵⁸⁴

* * * *

⁵⁸⁴ **Note:** I recollect that Hubatsch served on staff of **61 ID**, but have no confirmation of that.

1.8: *Luftwaffe* Operations on “*Barbarossatag*”⁵⁸⁵

--**Note:** For a complete *Luftwaffe order of battle* for 22.6.41 see, Appendix III, *Black Cross Red Star: Air War over the Eastern Front*. Vol. I: *Operation Barbarossa 1941* (Authors: Christer Bergström & Andrey Mikhailov. Pacifica. 2000)⁵⁸⁶

--**Note:** For some great details on *Luftwaffe* operations on first day of the war see also, Robert A. Forczyk, *Tank Warfare on the Eastern Front*.

--**Note:** Due to the devastating, successful air-base raids and the Soviet losses in the air, a few *Luftwaffe* units actually *flew all day w/o sighting any Soviet planes in the air*. (C. Bergström & A. Mikhailov, *Black Cross Red Star*, Vol 1: 42)

--**Note** (Campaign Colors): In his history of the **PzRgt 15**, G.W. Schrodek quotes from the operational order of the Rgt. for 22.6.41:

11. Kenntlichmachung deutscher Flugzeuge

Saemtliche Frontflugzeuge haben neben dem Hoheitszeichen nachstehenden **grellgelben Anstrich**.⁵⁸⁷

a) Unterseite der Tragflaechen erhaelt **grellgelben Anstrich** bis zu einem Drittel von aeuusserem Ende der Tragflaeche an.

b) Rumpf erhaelt einen **grellgelben Ring** von ½ m Breite.

(G.W. Schrodek, *Ihr Glaube galt dem Vaterland*, 120)

--**Note** (German Navy): The German navy [like the *Luftwaffe*] was also heavily engaged against Great Britain, and Raeder, like Göring, *would have preferred not to become engaged elsewhere*. The navy's missions were to take control of the Baltic Sea and to conduct limited operations in the Arctic Ocean and the Black Sea. But Raeder did not believe the navy could carry out any of them until after German air and ground action had eliminated most of the Soviet ships and bases. (Ziemke & Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 6)

--**Note:** The **OKL** attached an air force (*Luftflotte*) to each of the three army groups. The air forces were **operationally independent**, and their *relationship w/ the army groups was confined to cooperation and coordination*. During the first five months of 1941, the *Luftwaffe* had been almost *totally committed against Great Britain* and would have to continue its attacks on a reduced scale during *Barbarossa*. Because a sudden drop in the number of flights over Britain could have *given Barbarossa away*, the *Luftwaffe* also could *not shift its planes east until the last minute*. Moreover, the Balkans campaign (**Apr 41**) and the invasion of Crete (**May 41**) had required unanticipated expenditures of effort. Because of these complications, particularly the *strain that fighting on two widely separated fronts would impose on his resources and organization*, Göring had **talked against attacking the Soviet Union**. (Ziemke & Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 6)

--**Note:** The results of the first phase of operations exceeded the expectations of even the more optimistic *Luftwaffe* planners. . . German propaganda agencies made a great commotion over the

⁵⁸⁵ **Note:** See, Martin van Creveld's *Air Power and Maneuver Warfare* for some good details on *Luftwaffe* operations on 22.6.1941.

⁵⁸⁶ **Note:** Excerpts from this book in my *Luftwaffe files*.

⁵⁸⁷ **Note:** “*grellgelben Anstrich*” might best be translated as: “vivid yellow coat of paint.”

success; the reality comprised a *virtually unqualified victory for the Luftwaffe in the air superiority mission*. The Red Air Force in addition proved as vulnerable in the air as on the ground. The poorly trained and equipped Soviet pilots were *shot down in appalling numbers, entire formations at a time*. Kesseling referred to the destruction of the VVS bomber force as “*sheer infanticide*.” The *Luftwaffe effectively attained air superiority on the first day of the invasion*, a goal that eluded them for all of the months of the Battle of Britain. On **25.6.41**, therefore, the *Luftwaffe* was able to turn to its second task: direct and indirect support of the German Army . . . (Muller, Richard, *German Air War in Russia*, 44-45.)

--**Note**: During air raids, mothers put buckets on their children’s heads to protect them from shrapnel. . . As soon as the *Luftwaffe* came in sight, people covered up girls wearing bright colors w/ coats and jackets, fearing that a red dress would certainly catch the eye of a German pilot. Mothers stuffed birth certificates and home addresses in little bags and tied them around the necks of young children, so they would have some chance of being identified if the mothers were killed – and many were, particularly during the air raids. . . In a macabre twist, many *highways were covered w/ scores of dolls that young girls had snatched up before fleeing and then lost to stampedes and death*. (C. Pleshakov, *Stalin’s Folly*, 135)

--**22.6.41**: In a wider arc, the bombers of the *Luftwaffe* spread out and w/ the approach of dawn Soviet cities, towns and a cluster of select targets were under sustained attack: Kovno – Rovno – Odessa – Sevastopol – Minsk – the Baltic bases, rippling across Russia in great flashes of fire and destruction. (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 114)

--**22.6.41**: Am ersten Kampftag griffen deutsche Kampf- u. Sturzkampfflugzeuge die Raume Kowno – Kiew – Schitomir – Sewastopol – Murmansk – Odessa an. (Kurowski, *Balkenkreuz u. Roter Stern*, 58)

--**22.6.41**: To the personnel on the Soviet air bases, it was as if the *end of the world had come*. *Mladshiy Leytenant* Fyodor Arhipenko of **17 IAP** remembers:

Around **3 o’clock** in the afternoon, the first day of the war, I was able to make a reconnaissance flight, from Brest to the region of L’vov along our border. I could see the entire area on our side was—if one could put it this way—on fire. Everything—the towns, the villages, the settlements—everything was burning.

(Cited in: C. Bergström & A. Mikhailov, *Black Cross Red Star*, Vol 1: 42)

--**22.6.41**: *Luftwaffe* veterans, hardened in the savage battles over France and the English channel, delivered the first strike against the air-base system of the VVS in the early hours of Sunday, 22 June 1941. During the night of **21./22.6.41**, about **150** German bombers—**Do 17s** of **KG 2**, **Ju 88s** of **KG 3**, and **He 111s** of **KG 53**—started crossing the border into the USSR *from the Baltic to the Black Sea*.⁵⁸⁸ This was the scouting force, comprised of crews who were experienced in night flight. Divided into elements of **3** to **5** planes, they headed for all the main Soviet military air bases within the border region. . . At about **0305** hours, the pathfinder force started reaching its targets. In an instant, *incendiary bombs* provided a beacon to **31** Soviet airfields. Minutes later, the *Luftwaffe’s* first attack wave—**870** medium bombers, Stukas, *Zerstörer*, and fighter-bombers—hit their targets. Time timing of the attack could *not have been better chosen*. The

⁵⁸⁸ **Note**: This is inaccurate. All of these bomber wings were assigned to H.Gr.Mitte, thus I believe they all operated in the central sector on **22.6.41**.

Luftwaffe struck just as the reequipment program of the VVS stood at its height. Due to teething problems w/ the *new acft types* entering service, the front-line airfields—**many of them fewer than 10 miles from the border**—were packed w/ acft, both old types on their way out, and the newly received modern types. This was particularly the case in the recently Soviet occupied territories of Lithuania and eastern Poland, where the *airfield construction program* simply had not complied w/ the need to harbor such vast numbers of acft. (C. Bergström & A. Mikhailov, *Black Cross Red Star*, Vol 1:29)

--**22.6.41**: Das **JG 3 [Fliegerkorps V / Luftflotte 4]** flitzte ueber die Flugplaetze hinweg u. zerschlug die unter ihnen *wie zur Parade* aufgestellten Flugzeuge. Hptm. Hans Hahn berichtete darueber:

Wir trauten unseren Augen kaum. Alle Rollfelder [runways] waren dick voller Aufklaerer, Bomber u. Jaeger, wie zur Parade in langen ausgerichteten Bahnen aufgestellt.

(Kurowski, *Balkenkreuz und Roter Stern*. 57; see also, Muller, Richard, *German Air War in Russia*, 44)

--Some events were repeated up and down the front. Most accounts of *Barbarossa* pass *quickly over one of the most extraordinary events of the Second World War*, the destruction of the Red Army Air Force in the first hours and days of the campaign. Nothing else like this occurred between 1939 and 1945. The most recent published sources show that the air units of the Western Military District lost **740** combat acft out of a total of **1540** at the very start of the war; the local air commander, Gen. I.I. Kopets, *shot himself in despair*. The destruction was *even worse in the Baltic Military District*, which lost **920** out of **1080** acft in the first three days. Only the Kiev Military District lost a smaller number, **340** acft (of which **230** were destroyed on the ground) out of a total of **1760**. Compared to this total of about **2000** Russian acft, the Germans lost **330** acft up to the end of Jun 41. **Heads rolled in the Red Army Air Force command**. [See text for details.] (Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 55, 58)

--Many of the Russian acft were destroyed in *Luftwaffe* strafing and bombing attacks in the early morning of **22 Jun 41**. But even *repairable acft had to be abandoned when their forward airfields were overrun or surrounded by German ground forces*. In the air battles of the following days the relatively *inexperienced Russian fighter pilots*, flying their little **I-16** monoplane fighters or even **I-15** and **I-153** biplanes, could hardly catch up w/ the *Luftwaffe's* bombers, let alone shoot them down. **Without radios, without coordination, and without modern tactics**, Russian fighters and bombers fell easy victim to the Messerschmitt **Bf 109** and **Bf 110** fighters of the *Luftwaffe*. The *Luftwaffe* achieved **air superiority**, and within three days was able to *shift over to an army support role*. German control of the skies was an *essential prerequisite* for the disaster which befell the Red Army over the following summer and autumn. Soviet troops were at the mercy of *Luftwaffe* attack acft, Soviet commanders *operated blindly*. The *psychological impact of Luftwaffe* air superiority [even air supremacy] was telling, and the Soviets reckoned “**aeroplane panic**” (**samoletohoiazń**) to be a *major problem among their troops*. (Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 58)

--The *Luftwaffe* received w/ *mixed feelings* the news that Germany was about to invade Russia. Many of its leaders, including *Goering* and his deputy, *Eberhard Milch*, tried to *warn Hitler against waging a two-front war* because of the inevitable dissipation of forces that would follow. Others, however, expressed relief at the anticipated return from independent “strategic” warfare to the more congenial *operativ* form of war to be waged in conjunction with the rest of the

Wehrmacht. “*Finally, a real campaign,*” was the comment of Chief of Staff *Hans Jeschonnek*. Within the general framework of *Directive No. 21*, the *task of the Luftwaffe* was defined as follows:

- knocking out the Soviet air force in order to obtain and maintain air superiority over the theater of ops;
- supporting the operations of Army Group Center and, in a more selective form (*Schwerpunktmaessig*, literally, “by way of forming centers of gravity”), those of the other army groups;
- disrupting the Soviet railway net in order to prevent reinforcement on the one hand and withdrawal on the other; and,
- capturing important transportation bottlenecks such as bridges ahead of friendly forces by using parachutists and gliders.

Only after the end of the mobile phase of operations would attacks on the Soviet armaments industry, chiefly in the Urals, get under way. (*Crevelde, Air Power and Maneuver Warfare*, 65-66)

--**22.6.41:** *Luftwaffe* destroys trains, gasoline and grain warehouses burning on outskirts of Belostok; fuel dumps set on fire; Germans use *incendiary bullets* to destroy railroad cars filled w/ fuel, etc. (Edwin P. Hoyt, *Stalin's War: Tragedy and Triumph, 1941-1945*, pp 28-29)

--**Luftwaffe:** Even w/ just half their normal bomb-load, the medium bombers could only fly **900-1000 km**. Ground-attack, dive bombers and fighter acft could penetrate only **375, 200 and 180 km**, respectively, unless fitted w/ extra fuel tanks. The *Luftwaffe* had long demanded a long-range bomber – the „*Uralbomber*“ – but in **Nov 40** production of the *Heinkel 177* long-range bomber was postponed three months and limited to just a few a month. Not until **Jan 42** did a few more acft start to roll off the production line. The German medium bombers – the Dornier **17** „flying pencil,“ the **Ju 88** and the **He 111** – had all been state-of-the-art in the late **1930s**, but were now approaching *obsolescence*, while the **Ju 87** „*Stuka*“ could only survive when there was no serious air opposition. (Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 173)

-- **Goering stunned by Luftwaffe successes of first 24 hours** (even initially skeptical of reports of Soviet losses). (Note: His new Air Ministry had been completed in **1936**. Extending more than **250** meters along Wilhelmstrasse, in the heart of Berlin's administrative district, its seven [7] storeys, **4000** windows and seven [7] km of corridors made it the *largest office building in Europe*. Its vast scale was only matched by the starkness of its architecture, a curious amalgam of neo-classicism and art deco, which came to be known as “*Luftwaffe modern.*”) (Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 101)

--**22.6.41:** Am Abend des 22. Juni schrieb Gen.-Maj. Hoffman von Waldau, Chef des Generalstabes der *Luftwaffe*, in sein Tagebuch:

Das Timing dieses Luftangriffes gegen die russ. Flugfelder am ersten Tage des Feldzuges war ein *totaler Erfolg*. Diese Angriffe oeffnen den Weg fuer Operationen gegen die gesamte sowj. Luftwaffe.

(Cited in: Kurowski, *Balkenkreuz u. Roter Stern*, 65)

--**22.6.41**: The 29-yr.-old Soviet Air Force cdr, Maj-Gen. *Kopets*, veteran of the Spanish Civil War and promoted from captain to general in three years of purges, cannot bring himself to report news [of Soviet acft losses] to Moscow. He shoots himself that night. (C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 46)

--**22.6.41**: Taking advantage of favorable weather—generally cloudless with moderate ground haze in the morning hours—German bomber, dive-bomber, and fighter formations crossed the German-Soviet frontier after 3.00 a.m. on 22 June—the bombers, to preserve the advantage of surprise, at operating ceiling even ahead of the army's attack. In waves they struck at their targets in high- and low-level attacks. Depending on the distance of their bases from the front, the bombers each flew four to six sorties a day, the dive-bombers seven to eight, and the fighters five to eight. The attacks in the early morning hours of 22 June were directed primarily against **31** airfields and against the supposed quarters of senior staffs, barracks, artillery positions, bunkers, and oil-storage facilities. Initially Soviet fighters showed little desire to engage in combat and turned away at considerable range if fire was opened. Soviet anti-aircraft fire was weak. On the morning of 22 June, the Soviets lost a total of **890** acft, **222** of them in aerial combat or to anti-aircraft fire and **668** on the ground. . . By midnight, Soviet losses had risen to a total of **1811** acft, with **1489** destroyed on the ground and **322** destroyed mostly in the air. . . (GSWW, Vol. IV, 764)

--**22.6.41**: The weather was almost perfect—warm and sunny w/ a slight haze that cleared up later during the day. For reasons that remain inexplicable to this day, the Soviets had made *no preparations to oppose the aggressors*. The German pilots found Red acft by the hundreds lined up *wingtip-to-wingtip* on the aprons, and they reported very little opposition on the ground or in the air. According to whether they consisted of bombers, fighters, or dive bombers, German units **flew as many as four, five, six or even eight missions per day**—astonishing figures attributable to the *simplicity of the machines*, the often short distances that had to be covered, the *excellence of the ground organization* (including a specially developed apparatus that allowed nine acft to be refueled simultaneously), and the unparalleled determination of the crews. The first attack was carried out by **637** bombers (including dive bombers) and **231** fighters. Reportedly it hit **31** airfields, three suspected billets of high-level staffs, two barracks, two artillery positions, a bunker system, and an oil depot. . . (*Creveld, Air Power and Maneuver Warfare*, 69)

--**22.6.41**: The first German surprise air attacks, with half of the *Luftwaffe* units stationed in the east, caught the Soviet air force *unprepared and unprotected* at their airfields, often with flying and technical personnel asleep in their tents. Evidently, Soviet military leaders had not taken any measures to reduce the effectiveness of a concentrated German first strike from the air, although their own reconnaissance as well as the German campaigns in Poland, France, and the Balkans, and finally the political situation, clearly suggested that such an attack was to be expected. Some Soviet aircraft were found *uncamouflaged* and closely parked on the edges of runways at airfields near the frontier. Many bomber units had not been moved further away from the frontier, and the airbases as a rule *lacked anti-aircraft guns*. Soviet historians explain this situation and the resulting heavy losses of acft by the fact that the *telegram* from the People's Commissar of Defense, intended to inform the commanders of military districts of the time of a possible German surprise attack and ordering a combat alert and dispersal of aircraft at the airfields, reached the frontier military districts only four hours before the start of the German attack. It was therefore no longer possible to warn individual units in time. The mobility of many air units was greatly restricted by construction work at the airfields; *camouflage and cover were still inadequate*. Soviet historians also emphasize the *inexperience of Soviet air commanders* in

defense against massed air attacks and the *inferiority of Soviet aircraft* compared with their modern German counterparts. . . The *Luftwaffe* was thus able to fulfill its first task—*achieving air supremacy* or at least superiority by destroying the Soviet air force in surprise strikes —“*within two days.*” Its low opinion of the tactical and operational abilities of Soviet air-force leaders, the level of training of Soviet crews, and the quality of their aircraft in the first months of combat was confirmed. (GSWW, Vol. IV, 765-66)

ab 22.6.41 [German bomber crews]: Baking hot and dusty summers brought dangers of their own, w/ many ground crewmen succumbing to heat stroke. Vast crop fields concealed another altogether unexpected problem: Personnel of **KG 51**, living in tented encampments at Balti in Bessarabia during **1941**, spent much of their time battling a plague of mice. Such infestation carried high risks of disease, w/ droppings left in nibbled food stocks, the undetected gnawing of acft components and equipment, and the startling discovery of unwelcome company in personal kit. The heat also had detrimental effects upon food preservation, w/ the resulting generally poor diet and unsanitary conditions inevitably producing gastroenteritis and dysentery. . .

The demands heaped upon the *Kampfgeschwader* stretched them to, and often beyond, their limits. Crews made **3 to 4 sorties/day**, each between **4-5** hours long, and most units remained operational for at least **6** months (some up to **9** months) *without a single day off since the start of the campaign*. Unsurprisingly, medical officers of several units reported that *extreme nervous exhaustion* was widespread among aircrews. Relentless long-range flights, constant mortal fear and the physiological stresses of dive-bombing severely degraded bodily and mental constitution. Men became fractious, a typical symptom of sleep deprivation, sometimes breaking into unprovoked weeping spasms. Air and ground crews alike were on the verge of a collective nervous breakdown. Some *Geschwaderkommodore* were forced to implement timetables that at last made rest periods possible in rotation. Men seized the opportunity to sleep, sometimes for days at a time. . .

While leave shortages severely undermined morale, perhaps the most distressing and all-pervading of miseries was the lack of contact w/ home. Although every effort was made to convey mail to and from Germany, the demands for ammunition, fuel and medical supplies across the **1000-mile** front simply had to take priority. The desperately over-worked *Transportflieger* did all they could to alleviate the situation, shoehorning mail sacks into their **Ju 52s** wherever possible, but *untold tons of letters were never delivered*. Some units detailed men to undertake epic road journeys, lasting several days, to deliver and collect mail from rear depots themselves. (R. Stedman, *Kampfflieger: Bomber Crewmen of the Luftwaffe*, 31-32)⁵⁸⁹

⁵⁸⁹ **Note:** On pp 42-58, the author describes in fulsome detail a typical mission for a German bomber crew. This is rather fascinating, w/ many German technical terms defined. For example: “A flag, or at night a lamp or green flare, signals the start of the take-off run. Brakes on, half-throttle and then three-quarter-throttle is applied as the acft strains to be released. The Beobachter watches the instrument panel and signals that all is well. The Flugzeugfuehrer releases the brakes and the machine lurches forward. Full-throttle is piled on as they race down the **1500-yd (1400 m)** runway at around **140 mph (220 km/h)**. Judging the precise moment, the pilot winds the trim lever w/ his left hand, pushing down the tail, and hauling back the control column w/ his right hand. The nose and undercarriage begin to lift just as the red lamps, marking the final **600 ft.** of runway, flash by underneath. The barely airborne machine sways thru the backwash of the preceding acft, only seconds ahead, as the pilot retracts the undercarriage in the deperate struggle for aerodynamics. At around **300 ft.**, the giant eventually settles into a steady, laborious climb. Flaps are retracted and w/ an unnerving sink and accelerating lurch, the ungainly metal lump suddenly becomes an aeroplane. Propeller blades are trimmed to a deeper pitch and throttles reduced, as the now stable craft enters a graceful and positive climb. . .” (44)

1.8.1: Aerial Support of Army Group South

--**Note:** In *Black Cross Red Star* there are some fascinating details about operations of the **Romanian Air Force (FARR)** on first day of war. The FARR was equipped w/ some German-made acft (**He 112B** single-engine fighters, rather like the **Bf 109**), fighters of Polish design, British-made Hawker Hurricanes, and bombers of British, French, Polish and Italian origin. (See, C. Bergström & A. Mikhailov, *Black Cross Red Star*, Vol 1: 39-41)

--**Note:** See, entry for **23./24.6.41** below (**57 ID / Ia KTB**) illustrating that Soviet Air Force never completely swept from the skies—even in opening days of the campaign (“conventional wisdom” that it was is a myth).

--Air support of AGS provided by **Luftflotte 4**, commanded by Col-Gen. A. Lohr; it comprised **Fliegerkorps IV** and **Fliegerkorps V**, along with a Rumanian Air Combat Group. (For complete OOB see, Kirchubel, *Operation Barbarossa 1941 (1)*, 27)

-- **Luftflotte 4**, commanded by General Alexander Loehr, embraced two air corps (**Fliegerkorps IV u. V**); its forces consisted of transport and combat acft (**694** operational), plus **239** reconnaissance and liaison machines (**208** operational). (Creveld, *Air Power and Maneuver Warfare*, 66)

--**21.6.41:** At **5.00** in the afternoon on this day, **V Fliegerkorps**, whose Hq were in a *forest camp near Lipsko*, held a situation briefing for unit commanders and informed them of the coming attack. That evening the *Gruppe* held a briefing for the *Staffelkapitaene*. (Prien, Jochen & Gerhard Stemmer, *Jagdgeschwader 3 “Udet” in World War II. II./JG 3 in Action w/ the Messerschmitt Bf 109*, 70)

--Die Aufgabenstellung der **Luftflotte 4** war zur Unterstuetzung der H.Gr.Sued unter GFM Rundstedt folgende:

- Angriff gegen die sowj. Luftstreitkraefte. Erreichen der *Luftueberlegenheit* u. dadurch Verhinderung von Gegenmassnahmen der Roten Luftwaeffe gegen die Verbaende der H.Gr.Sued;
- Leistung von *direkter u. indirekter Hilfe* fuer die H.Gr.Sued mit Konzentrierung auf der linken Flanke, an welcher die **6 Armee** u. **1 PzGr** in Richtung Kiew zum Dnjepr vorruecken sollte, um das Zureuckweichen starker sowj. Kraefte ueber den Fluss zu verhindern;
- Angriffe im Schwarzen Meer zur Vernichtung der sowj. Schwarzmeer-Flotte u. ihrer Haefen;
- Die Verdraengung sowj. Handels- u. Transportschiffe aus dem Schwarzen u. dem Asowschen Meer.

Das **IV Fliegerkorps** unter General der Flieger Pflugbeil war mit den Operationen der rumaenischen Fliegerwaeffe koordiniert worden, um die *lebenswichtigen Erdoelfelder* Rumaniens vor russ. Luftangriffen zu schuetzen. Es unterstuetzte darueber hinaus die Operationen der **11 Armee**

u. der **3** u. **4 rum. Armee**. Ausserdem griff dieses Korps die russ. Marinenbasen run um das Schwarze Meer an.

Das *V Fliegerkorps* unter General der Flieger Ritter von Greim hatte den Auftrag erhalten, aus dem Raume Zamosc – Lublin⁵⁹⁰ gegen sowj. Luftstreitkrafte, besonders Jaeger, zu operieren u. darueber hinaus bereits waehrend der ersten Tage des Flugzeuges die Luftueberlegenheit herzustellen u. zu sichern. Nach dem dritten oder vierten Angriffstag sollten die **1 PzGr** u. die **6 Armee** der H.Gr.Sued in ihrem schnellen Vorstoss in Richtung Kiew unterstuetzt werden. . . Falls erforderlich sollte auch die **17 Armee** noch Luftunterstuetzung erhalten, sobald diese bei ihrem Vorstoss nach Sueden auf Kiew von Feindkrafte gestoppt werden wuerde. (Kurowski, *Balkenkreuz u. Roter Stern*, 68-69)

--22.6.41: Gen.Obst. Alexander Löhr's medium bombers and **Bf 109** strafers of *Luftflotte 4* struck against **29** Soviet airfields over a wide area all the way down to the Black Sea coast. VVS-Kiev Special Military District (**KOVO**) . . . received the full brunt of the attacks by **KG 51**, **KG 54**, **KG 55**, and **JG 3** of *Fliegerkorps V*. (C. Bergström & A. Mikhailov, *Black Cross Red Star*, Vol 1: 32)

--22.6.41: Die *Luftflotte 4* hatte zum Gelingen der Operation wesentlich beigetragen. Ihr Einsatz gegen die rote Luftwaffe der Suedwestfront ergab bereits bis zum Abend des 1. Angriffstages **300 Flugzeugverluste** fuer den Gegner. Im uebrigen griff die *Luftflotte 4* in unmittelbarem Zusammenwirken mit den Heeresverbaenden aeusserst wirkungsvoll in den Erdkampf ein. Sie zerschlug Marsch- u. Eisenbahnbewegungen vor der Front u. in der Tiefe. Die Nah- u. Fernaufklaerung lieferte der Truppenfuehrung Unterlagen fuer Feindbild u. –absichten. Die deutsche *Luftwaffe* hatte sich dem Gegner absolut ueberlegen gezeigt, so dass vorlaeufig eine Beeintraechtigung der Erdoperationen durch die rote Luftwaffe nicht zu befuerchten war. (C. Wagener, *Heeresgruppe Sued*, 50-51)

--22.6.41: Launching **80 Ju 88s** on the first mission of the day, **KG 51** was reported to have destroyed about **100** of KOVO's acft on the ground. "That day I will remember to the end of my life," says Fyodor Arkhipenko, *mladshiy leytenant* and operations duty officer of **17 IAP** in Kovel in NW Ukraine. He recalls:

Beginning at **0425** in the morning, about **50** German planes bombed our field, coming back four times. Only myself and the duty pilot, my squadron leader, Ibragimov, and the guards, the security forces, were there. Because it was Sunday, the rest had been *allowed to go home on leave*.

The airfield was small, two by three kilometers. You can imagine the kinds of horrors that took place at that airfield. Then, by afternoon, the pilots and ground crews started arriving. Many of them, *their hair had turned white*. And some of them had even begun to *stutter from fear* after experiencing that kind of bombing.

(Cited in: C. Bergström & A. Mikhailov, *Black Cross Red Star*, Vol 1: 33)

⁵⁹⁰ **Note:** See, map ("Aufmarsch der deutschen Luftflotten") in *GSWW* map volume for precise deployment locations of *Luftwaffe* units.

--22.6.41: *Starshiy Leytenant* Aron Shapiro of **86 SBAP**, based at Ternopol, about **100** miles farther to the south, still has a vivid memory of the bombings by **KG 51** on this Sunday morning:

Since the commanders of the Polk had left for a staff meeting on Saturday, I was the senior officer on the airfield. The alarm went off at **0400** hours. No one understood what happened. They looked very similar to our SBs. We watched silently as they approached at high speed at an altitude of **300 feet**. Everyone believed that our commanders had ordered these planes to undertake a mock attack in order to test our combat vigilance.

As they buzzed above our heads, we suddenly saw that they didn't carry any red stars—but black crosses—under their wings! And then we heard bomb explosions. We didn't know what to do. The connection to the headquarters was severed. In the control tower there was a radio transmitter. I managed to handle it, and from the very noisy conversations that I heard, I understood that war had broken out. Then we only heard German voices in the radio.

Ten minutes after the first bombing, more alien acft appeared. By that time, we understood that they were German. We opened fire at them w/ everything that could shoot, but since we had no antiaircraft artillery, we could only confront the Germans w/ light arms fire, including rifles. The acft gunners sat in the turrets of the bombers and fired vertically.

One of the German bombers was hit and left a black trail of smoke. I think it was a **Ju 88**. The crew bailed out and landed on our airfield. Everyone rushed to the point of descent and surrounded them. . . [See text for remainder of this graphic account!]

(Cited in: C. Bergström & A. Mikhailov, *Black Cross Red Star*, Vol 1: 33-34)

--22.6.41: **KG 55** incurs serious losses; *one bomber rammed*:

KG 55 “*Greif*” (Griffon) had at least **8 He 111s** shot down by fighters and **5** damaged while attacking airfields of VVS-KOVO. Returning from their bombing mission against Dubno Airdrome at about **0425**, the crews of **I./KG 55** experienced the *determination w/ which many Soviet airmen fought*. The **He 111** of **3./KG 55** piloted by Uffz. Werner Bähringer came under attack from a lone **I-16**. The Soviet fighter pilot, Leytenant Ivan Ivanov of **46 IAP**, had no intention of letting this intruder get away; he simply *crashed his small Ishak fighter right into Uffz. Bähringer’s He 111 in the air 15 miles east of Dubno*. Both planes went down. The bomber burst into flames as it hit the ground. Apart from the gunner, who was probably killed as Ivanov’s **I-16** rammed the bomber, the crew of the Heinkel managed to bail out, but they were all reported missing, probably *captured by the Soviet troops and killed*. Leytenant Ivanov never got out of his fighter; he was later found dead among the dispersed remains of his **I-16**. He was posthumously awarded the Soviet Union’s highest recognition, *Hero of the Soviet Union*. This was the *first successful taran—air-to-air ramming—of the war*. . .

(C. Bergström & A. Mikhailov, *Black Cross Red Star*, Vol 1: 36-37)⁵⁹¹

--22.6.41: **III./KG 51** suffers serious losses:

At Kurovitsa Airdrome, south of L'vov in the NW Ukraine, units of VVS-KOVO had been alerted before the German bombers had reached this target. Nevertheless, the pilots of the ground-attack regiment **66 ShAP** figured it was a *training alarm* and came too late—which resulted in **34** of the regiment's **I-153** Chaykas and **I-15bis** being scrapped by the **Ju 88s** of **KG 51**.

As the bombs fell, the fighter pilots of **164 IAP** were airborne and climbed from Kurovitsa after the enemy in their small **I-16s**. Minutes later, they were followed by the remaining bi-planes of **66 ShAP**. “*Skillful and aggressive attacks by Russian fighter units,*” the chronicle of **KG 51** comments, “*ensured that the struggle for air supremacy was no easy game.*”

Leytenant P.N. Rubstov of **66 ShAP** attacked a formation of German bombers. He sprayed a **Ju 88** w/ MG bullets until it finally *caught fire and crashed* within sight of Kurovitsa Airdrome. Thus Leytenant Rubstov *probably achieved the first aerial victory in the Russo-German war*.

The Polikarpov fighters kept persuing the Junkers bombers of **KG 51** on their return flight to the west. In minutes, *one bomber after another was shot down*. The Germans left a trail of white parachutes and blazing flames in the hazy sky. Of **28 Ju 88s** dispatched by **III./KG 51**, **7** were shot down during this first mission, five of them from **9. Staffel**.

In the middle of all this, the German fighter escort appeared. The fast **Bf 109s** of **JG 3** jumped the Soviets w/ hammering cannons and MGs. The first **I-16** was shot down by Oblt. Robert Oljenik of **I./JG 3**. As it buried itself into the ground, *Oljenik had achieved his sixth of 41 confirmed victories in WWII. His was probably the first German aerial kill in the Russo-German war*. [See text for more details.]

(C. Bergström & A. Mikhailov, *Black Cross Red Star*, Vol 1: 35-36)

--22.6.41 (*Luftflotte IV*): Wie verliefen nun die Einsatze der beiden genannten Fliegerkorps der *Luftflotte IV*? Während der ersten Stunden des 22. Juni griffen Verbaende des **IV Fliegerkorps** jene sowj. Einsatzhaefen an, die sich nach Aufklaerermeldungen im frontnahmen Raum befanden u. besetzt waren. Die Geheimmeldungen u. die Fern-Luftaufklaerung hatten in dem vorgesehenen Angriffssektor der H.Gr.Sued u. vor allem vor dem **IV Fliegerkorps** eine *starke Konzentration sowj. Luftstreitkraefte* erkannt. Diese lag mit Schwerpunkten in den Raeumen Brody – Sutsk – Dubno – Lwow – Stanislaw – Tarnopol u. bei Belaja Tscherkow – Kiew – Shitomir – Berdit-schew. Der **Ic** des **IV Fliegerkorps** gelante zu folgender Beurteilung der Lage, „dass der erste Feindwiderstand aus der Luft durch **448** einmotorige sowj. Jagd- u. Schlachtflugzeuge u. **282** zweimotorige Bomber geleistet werden wuerde, wobei die meisten Jaeger auf Flugfeldern *nahe der Grenze stationert waren*.“ . . .

⁵⁹¹ **Note:** See text for other examples of a “*taran*” victim (i.e., German victim of ramming by Soviet airplane), 37-39.

Am ersten Angriffstag flogen alle Bombereinheiten der **Luftflotte IV** bis zu drei, in einigen Faellen auch vier Einsaetze. Die Jaegereinheiten brachten es auf sechs bis sieben Einsaetze. Den sowj. Fliegerkraefte wurde auch hier ein *entscheidender Schlag* versetzt. So berichtete am **9 Aug 41** das in deutsche Gefangenschaft geratene Generalkommando der sowj. **6 Armee** ueber diesen ersten Schlag: „Unsere Verluste in der Luft in den ersten Tagen waren schrecklich. Davon wird sich unsere Luftwaffe niemals erholen.“ (Kurowski, *Balkenkreuz u. Roter Stern*, 69-70)

--In the process of the *radical change of the AGS operational plan*, the mission of 4 Air Fleet was redefined to support “the advance of the **1 PzGr** to the Dnepr,” to prevent the withdrawal of stronger Soviet forces across the Dnepr, and, “to keep the attack of the army group rolling.” Lohr was to command the **IV Air Corps**, concentrated in Rumania w/ **5** bomber groups – one was intended for mining operations in the Black Sea – and **3** fighter groups. . . The main effort wing of AGS was to get its tactical support from the **V Air Corps** w/ **8** bomber and **3** fighter groups. **Luftflotte 4** also had several long-range reconnaissance squadrons. The army group had its own squadrons for liaison, close range reconnaissance, and artillery observation purposes. Seventeen (**17**) motorized AA-battalions of the *Luftwaffe* were assigned to individual armies and to the panzer group. The latter had the **II Flak Corps** headquarters, assigned for direct support w/ **8** AA battalions. The army group had **4** Army AA-battalions. Close liaison between the *Luftwaffe* and the armies and the panzer group down to the panzer divisions would be ensured, as in the past, by attaching *special Luftwaffe liaison sections to these HQs*. The total strength of **Luftflotte 4** during the opening phase of the offensive was to comprise some 750 planes. (Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, IV: 8-9)

-- AGS’s *air operations* suffered from a number of handicaps: it was not the main German effort and so not fully resourced, it had **no Stukas** and many of its air assets were committed to the defense of the *Rumanian oil fields*. **Luftflotte 4’s** close air support came from two *Gruppen* of Ju-88s and one fighter *Gruppe* fitted w/ ground-attack sights. Seven *Gruppen* of Bf 109s provided fighter cover while the **II Flak Corps** mainly protected 1 Panzer Group spearheads. In April, **V Fliegerkorps** deployed to southeast Poland. It flew in support of Sixth and Seventeenth Armies and von Kleist’s panzers. . . The **IV Fliegerkorps** moved from France to Rumania in May. From there it supported the southern flank, initially against Bessarabia and the Crimea. (Kirchubel, 24)

--**22.6.41:** In early morning hours of 22 June from Baltic to Black Sea, the *Wehrmacht* stormed across the frontier. German aircraft [bombers?], crossing the frontier at high altitudes in order not to alert Soviet defenses, dropped to attack altitude and pulverized Russian airfields. Still unalerted, Soviet air units had their aircraft lined up in neat rows facilitating the *Luftwaffe’s* task. Those few aircraft that managed to scramble soon fell to the guns of the German fighters. The extent of the surprise is shown by **Fliegerkorps IV**, which on the first day reported destroying **142** enemy acft on the ground and only **16** in the air. (Murray, *Strategy for Defeat*, 81)

--**22.6.41:** In AGS’s attack area, the same pattern of heavy bombing attacks, unexpected and punishing artillery fire and the assault on the Soviet frontier positions unfolded in all its fury. Ranging over the Soviet airfields, German bombers inflicted more serious losses: by noon on **22 Jun 41** these amounted to **277** machines. On the frontier airfield at Stanislaw **36** machines were destroyed on the ground and **21** on the forward field at Cernauti . . . From the Soviet frontier as far as Odessa and Sevastopol, the German bombers went in search of their targets. . . In L’vov – the city where the non-Russian population had whispered “*the Germans are coming to get you*” to the Russians – the “uninterrupted bombing created panic” among the civilians; German trained “diversionists,” in addition to blowing up fuel and ammunition dumps, added to the

havoc as much as possible, not least by *signaling the bombers and guiding them to special targets*. The city commandant of L'vov was obliged to call out his military patrols and augment them w/ the few tanks at his disposal, in order to restore order. (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 121)

--**22.6.41: III./JG 3** („*Ein schwarzer Tag*“)⁵⁹²

Der fliegende Verband der **III./JG 3**, der nach seiner Herausziehung aus dem Kanaleinsatz am **9 Juni 1941** in Breslau eingefallen war u. seither dort gelegen hatte, ueberfuehrte am **18 Juli** mit einer kurzen Zwischenlandung in Krakau nach Moderowka, wo in den verbleibenden Tag allein technischer Dienst an den Messerschmitts sowie der notwendigste Flugbetrieb an Werkstattfluegen u. dergleichen stattfand. Dabei erhielten die Maschinen der **7. Staffel** wiederum Bombenaufhaengungen, da die Staffel auch im Osten die Aufgabe der Jabostaffel zu uebernehmen hatte.⁵⁹³

Am fruehen Morgen des **22.6.41** begann der deutsche Ueberfall auf die Sowjetunion; fuer die **III./JG 3** stand der erste Einsatz bereits am Morgen kurz nach **04.00** Uhr an, der Auftrag lautet: Tiefangriffe mit Bomben u. Bordwaffen auf sowj. Flugplaetze in Grenznaehe, darunter die Plaetze Dobromil u. Sandor. Im weiteren Verlaufe des Tages wurden insgesamt noch vier Einsaetze geflogen, unter anderen zum Begleitschutz fuer **17 Ju 88** des **KG 51** bei deren Angriff auf Lemberg sowie nochmals zu Tiefangriffen auf die Flugplaetze Sambor u. Stryj, wobei am Ende insgesamt **12** russ. Maschinen am Boden zerstoeert werden konnten.

In der Luft kam es dagegen nur zu sehr wenigen Begegnungen mit russ. Maschinen, so dass am Ende des Tages lediglich ein Abschuss gemeldet werden konnte.

Waehrend indes die meisten der im mittleren u. noerdl. Abschnitt der Ostfront eingesetzten deutschen Jagdgruppen am Ende dieses Tages eine ausgesprochen vorteilhafte Bilanz unter ihren Einsatz ziehen konnten, war der **22.6.41** fuer die **III./JG 3**, wie das KTB ausdruecklich vermerkt, *ein schwarzer Tag*. Es begann damit, dass beim Beladen der Messerschmitts der **7. Staffel** eine **50 kg** Bombe *explodierte u. vier Warte toetete*, waehrend ein weiterer *schwere verletzt* u. die fragliche Maschine erheblich beschaedigt wurde.

Dann blieb der Staffelkapitaen der **8./JG 3** nach einem Einsatz zu Tiefangriffen im Dnjester-Raum aus, nachdem er wegen eines Flaktreffers etwas **10** km nordoestlich Drohobycz jenseits der Front hatte notlanden muessen, waehrend ein Flugzeug-fuehrer der **9./JG 3** nach Flaktreffern *toedlich abstuerzte*. Zu allem Ueberfluss musste die **III./JG 3** darueber hinaus noch **5** Messerschmitts auf die Verlustliste setzen, die bei Bruchlandungen u. Unfaellen in Moderowka mehr oder weniger stark beschaedit wurden u. dadurch fuer die weiteren Einsaetze ausfielen.

⁵⁹² **Note:** This *Gruppe* deployed southeast of Lublin and very close to German-Russian demarcation line; it was outfitted w/ Messerschmitt **Bf 109F** fighters.

⁵⁹³ **Note:** According to *Black Cross Red Star* (Vol. 1) the “Stab, I., II., III./JG 3—**Bf 109F**” had its HQ in Hostynne (see, Appendix 3, 265). The map in *GSWW* illustrating the “*Aufmarsch*” of *Luftwaffe* units shows **III./JG 3** on an airbase at Hostynne.

(J. Prien, et.al., *Die Jagdfliegerverbände der dt. Luftwaffe*, Teil: 6/1: *Unternehmen Barbarossa*, 123)

--22.6.41: II./JG 3 (Bf 109F):⁵⁹⁴

Nach der Herausziehung aus dem Kanaleinsatz Anfang Juni 1941 traf der fliegende Verband der **II./JG 3** am **9 Juni 1941** in Breslau-Gandau ein u. verblieb zunächst dort, bis er am **18 Juni**, mit einem kurzen Zwischenaufenthalt in Krakau, nach Hostynne überführte; dort lief an den verbleibenden Tagen bis zum Angriffsbeginn nur mehr *technischer Dienst* an den Maschinen ab, darunter die Ausrüstung aller Messerschmitts der **5./JG 3**, die weiterhin als Jabostaffel eingesetzt werden sollte, mit Bombenaufhängungen,⁵⁹⁵ sowie nur die notwendigste Flugbetrieb an Werkstattflügen [i.e., *maintenance test flights*] u. dergleichen.

Am frühen Morgen des **22.6.41** begann auch für die **II./JG 3** der deutsche Überfall auf die Sowjetunion. Für die *Gruppe* standen die ersten Einsätze bereits am Morgen kurz vor **04.00** Uhr an, der Auftrag lautet: *Staffelweise freie Jagd*⁵⁹⁶ u. *Tiefangriffe mit Bomben u. Bordwaffen* [i.e., *with guns and bombs*] auf sowj. Flugplätze im Raume Lemberg; bei einer dieser Einsätze konnte ein Flugzeugführer des Gruppenstabs u. **04.30** Uhr den ersten Abschuss der **II./JG 3** im Osten erzielen. Im Laufe des Tages hatte die Gruppe noch eine Vielzahl von Einsätzen zu fliegen, die in der Mehrheit nach Sueden mit Schwerpunkt über dem Gebiet um Lemberg führten; neben *freier Jagd u. Tiefangriffen* gab es dabei am Nachmittag noch Begleitschutzeinsätze für Kampfverbände, wobei es einige Flugzeugführer auf *bis zu 5 Einsätze* brachten.⁵⁹⁷

Insgesamt meldete die **II./JG 3** im Laufe des **22.6.41 16 Abschnüsse**. Die eigenen Verluste hielten sich demgegenüber in engen Grenzen: Lediglich eine Messerschmitt musste – vermutlich – infolge Feindeinwirkung als Totalverlust abgeschrieben werden . . .⁵⁹⁸

(J. Prien, et.al., *Die Jagdfliegerverbände der dt. Luftwaffe*, Teil: 6/1: *Unternehmen Barbarossa*, 88)

-22.6.41: Beim **KG 51 (Edelweiss)**:⁵⁹⁹

Das **KG 51**, das erst bis zum 20. Juni 1941 von Wiener-Neustadt her mit seinen letzten Staffeln in Lezany bei Krosno eingetroffen war, flog überwiegend **Ju 88**

⁵⁹⁴ **Note:** For an account of this *Gruppe* in English see, J. Prien & G. Stemmer, *Jagdgeschwader 3 "Udet" in World War II*, p 70.

⁵⁹⁵ **Note:** "Bombenaufhängungen" = bomb racks.

⁵⁹⁶ **Note:** "Freie Jagd" = free chases.

⁵⁹⁷ **Note:** According to English translation of Jochen Prien's book, *Jagdgeschwader 3 "Udet" in World War II. II./JG 3 in Action . . .*: "The first missions in the early morning produced little contact w/ Russian acft, however the Russian air force recovered from the initial shock remarkably quickly, and the second group of missions, which began at about **6.30** a.m., resulted in several *fierce air battles*, in which **4. Staffel** claimed **3** victories and the *Gruppenstab 4*." (70)

⁵⁹⁸ **Note:** So **II./JG 3** had a much easier time of it on *Barbarossatag* than did its sister *Gruppe (III./JG 3)*.

⁵⁹⁹ **Note:** **KG 51** belonged to *Fliegerkorps V*.

A-4. Am Abend des 21. Juni wurde die Flugzeuge des Geschwaders mit Bomben beladen. Ab 22.00 Uhr war „erhoehte Alarmbereitschaft“ befohlen u. die fliegende Besatzungen warteten nun auf den Einsatzbefehl.

Um Mitternacht des 22. Juni erfolgte die Einsatzbesprechung u. nach dem Wecken um **02.00** Uhr verlas Hptm. Bauer von der **7. FBK** den *Aufruf Hitlers an die Soldaten der Ostfront*.

Von den insgesamt **105** Flugzeugen des Geschwaders waren **91** einsatzbereit. Um **03.00** Uhr liefen die Motoren warm. Die Besatzungen gingen an die Maschinen u. ueberprueften die Geraete u. Anzeiger, die Bombenschaechte u. die Bordwaffen.

Es war genau **03.30** als die Maschinen in dichter Abfolge starteten. Seit einer Viertelstunde war das deutsche Artl.-Feuer zu vernehmen.

Dieser erste Einsatz des **KG 51** galt den voll belegten Flugplaetzen der Roten Luftwaffe in Stryj-Styrjski, in Buschow II, Tremblowa, Buczacz, Chodorow u. Lisietztsche. **80** Maschinen waren aufgeboden, **11** wurden fuer besondere Einsetze noch zurueckgehalten.

Auf den genannten Flugzeugen wurden im ersten Angriff dieses Geschwaders etwa **100** russ. Flugzeuge vernichtet. Auch hier standen die Feindflugzeuge *wie zur Parade* aufgestellt am Boden.

Drei weitere Grossangriffe des Geschwaders folgten am ersten Tage nach. Von der ersten Welle kehrten **7** Flugzeuge nicht vom Feindflug zurueck. Es waren Maschinen der III. Gruppe. Davon gehoerten **5** der **9. Staffel** an.

Als Obst.Lt. Schulz-Heyn am Abend des ersten Tages im Gef.Std. des Geschwaders auf Schloss Polanka in Krosno die Bilanz zog, musste er **15 Besatzungen mit insgesamt 60 erfahrenen Fliegern abschreiben**.⁶⁰⁰ Von der III. Gruppe waren insgesamt **14** Maschinen ausgefallen; neben Feindeinwirkung vor allem durch Absturz oder Bruchlandungen. Dies entsprach in etwa einem Verlust von **50%** der Kampfkraft dieser Gruppe.

Oblt. Wenchowski, Chef der 5. Staffel fiel.

Die Werkstattzeuge der Flug-Betriebs-Kp. (FBK) arbeiteten ununterbrochen an den angeschlagenen Maschinen, bis gegen Mitternacht die letzte moegliche klar gemeldet werden konnte.

Das Waffenpersonal war fieberhaft damit beschaefigt, Munition zu gurten u. zu trommeln um die Maschinen fuer den naechsten Tag einsatzbereit zu haben.

(Kurowski, *Balkenkreuz u. Roter Stern*, 60-61)

⁶⁰⁰ **Note:** „Abschreiben“ – as in “write off.” But from context it seems clear that not all of these **60** men were lost (killed) on this day.

--23./24.6 41 (57 ID / 1a KTB):⁶⁰¹

23.6.41:

Im suedl. Gefechtsstreifen konnte bald zur Marschkolonnen uebergegangen werden. Die Marschbewegungen, die **wiederholt durch fdl. Flieger angegriffen wurden**, stellten bei grosser Hitze u. tiefversandeten Wege an Mann, Ross u. Maschine grosse Anforderungen. . .

24.6.41:

Die Division ging zunaechst ohne Feinberuehrung, jedoch durch **Bomber u. Tiefflieger wiederhold angegriffen**, in ihren Gefechtsstreifen weiter vor . . .

(T-315, Roll 980, *Ia KTB Nr. 5*)

1.8.2: Aerial Support of Army Group Center

--This vast armada of men and machines on the ground [AGC] was supported by Field Marshal Kesselring's 2 Air Fleet, the largest of the three air fleets earmarked for the eastern campaign:

Operational Aircraft (2 Air Fleet):

222 bombers
323 dive bombers
60 destroyers
284 fighters
69 transport
36 other

994 total aircraft (operational)^{dexlvii}

The 2 Air Fleet was composed of two air corps – 2 Air Corps under Lt.-Gen. Bruno Loerzer in the Warsaw – Brest-Litovsk – Deblin area; and 8 Air Corps under Lt.-Gen. von Richthofen in the Suwalki triangle. Together, they possessed (as noted) 994 combat-ready aircraft; added to these were some 200 operational reconnaissance and liaison aircraft (tactically controlled by the Army). Nearly all of the Ju 87 *Stuka* dive bombers assembled in the east were massed under this air fleet, with the majority of them (5 1/3 *Gruppen*) assigned to 8 Air Corps (versus 3 *Gruppen* in 2 Air Corps). In addition, three bomber, one dive bomber, one destroyer and two fighter *Gruppen* of 8 Air Corps were outfitted with dropping-devices for 2-kg anti-personnel SD-2 fragmentation bombs for close combat. As Bock's army group advanced on Moscow, Loerzer's air corps was to

⁶⁰¹ **Note:** Here a couple of excerpts from the war diary of **57 ID**, which again give lie to the conventional wisdom that VVS was utterly swept from the skies on first few days of war—not to be seen or heard from again for many months. As I made clear in *Barbarossa Unleashed*, the regenerative powers of the VVS were extraordinary, even in face of losses sustained in first **48** hours of the war; thus, VVS remained surprisingly active even in **Jun 41**. This is not to deny, of course, that *Luftwaffe* managed to obtain air superiority (even air supremacy) over most of the theater of war.

support Fourth Army and, more particularly, Guderian's 2 Panzer Group, while Richthofen's air corps cooperated with Ninth Army and the panzer spearheads of Hoth's 3 Panzer Group. Also controlled by Kesselring's air fleet was 1 Flak Corps, which was to cooperate with both armored groups during their penetration of the frontier fortifications and in subsequent operations.^{dexlviii} (*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Chapter 5)

--21.6.41 [**8 Air Corps**]: This was the largest of the two air corps assigned to **Air Fleet 2** and had been heavily engaged in the capture of Crete which, due to the battle concluding in early **Jun 41**, meant that there was little time to accomplish its transfer and make adequate preparations for Barbarossa. Hence, on **21 Jun 41**, **8 Air Corps** was still short some **600** motor vehicles, **40%** of its acft and vital communications equipment – a crucial deficiency on the eve of war. The cdr of **8 Air Corps**, Col.-Gen. Wolfram v. Richthofen, noted on this day: “[w]e are greatly concerned that our units are as yet unready.” As aviation historian Richard Muller noted: “While not every Luftwaffe unit had undergone such extensive recent use, the fact remains that the [GAF] commenced its largest operation of the war w/ a force structure and serviceability at dangerously low levels.” (*D. Stahel, And the World held its Breath*, 88; see also, *R. Muller, German Air War in Russia*, 40)

--22.6.41: Early that morning, German bombers hammered Belostok – Grodno – Lida – Volkovysk – Brest – Kobrin. The staff of Soviet **4 Army** was located at Kobrin. (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 118)

--22.6.41: Dropping **SD-2 fragmentation bombs** on the airfields at Dorubanok, near Vilnius, the **Bf 109s** of **II./JG 27** destroyed some **80** acft on the ground. (C. Bergström & A. Mikhailov, *Black Cross Red Star*, Vol 1: 40)

--22.6.41: At the airfield of Varena, SW of Vilnius in the old Polish-Lithuanian border area, **8./JG 53** shot up seven of the **SB** bombers of **54 SBAP/57 SAD** on the ground. . . At Grodno Airdrome, a few miles from the northern part of the Soviet-German Polish border, a formation of **I-16s** of **122 IAP/11 SAD** attempted to take off as a formation of **Bf 109s** came swooping down. The *fragmentation bombs* fell upon the starting planes, and they were *all destroyed* in a perfect take-off formation at the end of the runway. Mladshiy Leytenant Sergey Dolgushin, one of the Soviet pilots, later described how it looked from the side of the attacked: “At three o’clock, the alarm went off. We all ran towards our airplanes. At **0420**, when the Messerschmitts appeared over the airfield, I had to take off. While I was taking off, during that first dogfight, I was hit six-teen times.” Of the **75 I-16** fighter planes in **122 IAP**, **65** were destroyed. (C. Bergström & A. Mikhailov, *Black Cross Red Star*, Vol 1:31)

--22.6.41: **9 SAD/ZOVO**, based in the Belostok area only a few miles from the attack forces of **3 PzGr**, NE of Warsaw, suffered even worse. This composite aviation division was a crack unit commanded by the *Hero of the Soviet Union* Gen.-Maj. Sergey Chernykh, a veteran from the aerial combats in the Spanish Civil War, where he had shot down three Loyalist planes (including the first **Bf 109** ever to be lost in air combat). According to an inspection shortly before outbreak of the war, Chernykh's command was *one of the best in the entire VVS*. The four fighter rgts. In **9 SAD** were equipped w/ **233** of the modern **MiG-3** fighters and had only **156** obsolete Poli-karpov fighters. The division's bomber rgt., **13 SBAP**, was equipped w/ **51** bombers, including **22** experimental twin-engine **Ar-2** dive bombers (a modified version of the SB “high speed bomber.”

9 SAD had the dubious luck of receiving the attention of both *Fliegerkorps VIII* and *II of Luftflotte 2*, and *suffered heavier losses than any other VVS unit on this fateful Sunday morning*.

All of **9 SAD**'s airfields were targeted. In his diary, Lt. Arnold Döring, an **He 111** pilot in **KG 53** "*Legion Condor*" of *Fliegerkorps II*, described the first raid against the airfield of **126 IAP / 9 SAD** at Dolubovo, south of Belostok:

The ground below is covered w/ haze, but the targets nevertheless are clearly visible. I am surprised that we are not met w/ any counteraction. This will come as some surprise to those below!

The "eggs" are released. Piles of fire and smoke, fountains of earth and dust, mixed w/ wreckage parts of all kinds, are shooting vertically upward. Unfortunately our bomb rows lay to the right side of the ammunition bunkers. But a whole row of bombs goes down across the entire field and plows the runway. The take-off strip receives two hits. As the formation makes a turn I can see **15** of the parked fighters *go up in flames*, plus most of the living quarters. Toni cries: "Antiaircraft fire," but we could only see one single shot more than half a milre behind us.

We are already out of their shooting range. Then there is a fearsome cry over the radio: "Fighters from behind!" Our machine guns rattle. The formation tightens up. Of course, we offer a large target to the Russians, but our defensive fire is most concentrated. Bullet tracers from **27** planes sprinkle against the Russians, who immediately decide to disappear diving.

(Cited in: C. Bergström & A. Mikhailov, *Black Cross Red Star*, Vol 1:32)

--**22.6.41**: General Bruno Loerzer's *Fliegerkorps II*, to which **KG 53** belonged, struck against **9** and **10 SAD** on the right wing of Army Group Center . . . Making six low-level attacks against Pinsk Airdrome in the SW part of the Soviet-occupied Polish territories, *a single Ju 88 piloted by Lt. Ernst-Wilhelm Ihrig, commander of 3./KG 3 Blitz, claimed 60 planes destroyed on the ground*. Here, **39 SBAP / 10 SAD** lost **43** SB bombers and **5 Pe-2s**.

At Brest Airdrome, close to the German-Soviet border, **33 IAP / 10 SAD** had **20** fighters destroyed by **Bf 109** fighter-bombers during the first raid. During another raid against the same target, **9 Bf 109s** pressed home their strafing attacks for nearly **40** minutes and put an additional **21 I-16s** and **5 I-153s** out of action.

One Staffel, **I/SKG 210**, equipped w/ **Bf 110s**, destroyed about **50** of **10 SAD**'s acft at Kobrin, **30** miles farther to the east, where the Hq. of **10 SAD** and the Soviet **4 Army** were located. In all, **10 SAD** lost **180 of 231 planes** on 22 June. Two of **10 SAD**'s air rgts. were *completely wiped out*. **SKG 210** was reported to have destroyed no fewer than **344** planes on the ground and claimed an additional **8** in the air on this day. (C. Bergström & A. Mikhailov, *Black Cross Red Star*, Vol 1:32)

--**22.6.41**: The pilot of the Heinkel **He-111** bomber kept the *control column* pulled backwards as the acft continued climbing. He glanced at the *altimeter*: it wavered, held, then continued to move clockwise past **4500 - 5000m**. The crew were signalled to *don oxygen masks*. At **0300** hours the acft droned across the Soviet frontier at maximum height. Below was a sparsely inhabited region of marsh and forest. **KG 53** had taken-off in darkness south of Warsaw, steadily climbing to maximum height before setting course to airfields between *Bialystok* and *Minsk*. **Dornier Do17-Zs** from **KG 2** were penetrating Soviet airspace to the north toward *Grodno* and *Vilnius*. **KG 3**, having taken-off from *Demblin*, was still climbing between Brest-Litovsk and *Kobrin*. The aircrew scanning the darkened landscape below for navigational clues were *hand-picked*

men, w/ many hours' night-flying experience. *These 20-30 acft formed the vanguard of the air strike. The mission was to fly undetected into Russia and strike fighter bases behind the central front.* Three [3] bombers were allocated to each assigned airfield. They droned on toward their targets. Below, the earth was shrouded in a mist-streaked darkness. Pin-pricks of light indicated inhabited areas. Ahead, and barely discernible, was a pale strip of light emerging above the eastern horizon. There was little cloud. Only 15 minutes remained before H-hour. Behind them, in occupied Poland, scores of airstrips were bustling w/ purposeful activity. Bombs were still being loaded and pilots briefed. Acft engines burst into life, startling birds who flew off screeching into the top branches of trees surrounding *isolated and heavily camouflaged landing strips.*

Over the primary Russian fighter bases immediately behind the newly forming *Ostfront*, trios of acft from **KG 2**, **KG 3** and **KG 53** arrived undetected. It was still dark, but a shimmering strip of light was now floating on the eastern horizon. The independently operating wings began their descent. By **0315** hours, they were roaring in at low level. Hundreds of **SD2 2 kg fragmentation bombs** began to trickle from open bomb bays. They fell among serried ranks of acft, neatly parked wingtip to wingtip w/ personnel tents situated close by. It was peacetime. The Russian acft were neither camouflaged nor dispersed. Last-minute alerts had been of no avail. The small bombs were adjusted to explode either on impact or above ground. Within seconds, crackling multiple explosions began to envelop the line of acft. Each bomblet had a blast radius of up to **12** meters. Airframes were lacerated and slashed by the release of **50-250** particles of shrapnel. A direct hit had the impact of a medium anti-acft shell. Punctured fuel tanks, ignited by subsequent detonations, produced multiple swirling fireballs, jetting dense clouds of boiling black smoke into the night sky. The result was total chaos. Attempts to combat fires by dazed ground crews were inhibited by vicious delayed-action explosions. (*Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 31, 33)

--**22.6.41**: Um gleichzeitig zur Eroeffnung des Russlandfeldzuges durch das deutsche Trommelfeuer ueber dem Feind zu sein u. die feindliche Luftwaffe in ihren Horsten zu vernichten, mussten die *Kampfflugzeugen* an den drei Frontabschnitten, vor allem aber *im Bereich der H.Gr.Mitte*, etwa **40** Minuten vor der Eroeffnung starten. Hierzu wurden *ausgesuchte u. im Nachtflug geschulte Besatzungen* ausgewaehlt. Jeweils **6** Kampfflugzeuge der **KG 2**, **3**, u. **53** starteten von ihren Einsatzhaefen in Polen. In grosser Hoehe ueberflogen sie die Grenze u. befanden sich zu Beginn des Artl.Feuers ueber den wichtigsten sowj. Flugplaetzen. Um **03.15** Uhr fielen gleichzeitig mit dem Aufbruehlen des Artl.-Feuerschlages die ersten Bomben. Neben diesen genannten Flugzeugen waren auch Maschinen des **ZG 26** bereits um **02.50** Uhr jenseits der Grenze. Der russ. Jaegerplatz Alytus war Ziel der **5./ZG 26**. Bomben fielen auf das Flugfeld u. vernichteten die hier aufgestellten Flugzeuge. (Kurowski, *Balkenkreuz und Roter Stern*, 57)

--**22.6.41**: **Stab / JG 51 (Bf 109E) (Mölders)**:

Nach der Herausziehung aus dem Kanaleinsatz waren die fliegenden Teile des Geschwaderstabes am **1 Jun 41** in Krefeld eingefallen, von wo aus es in den folgenden Tagen weiter nach Düsseldorf ging. Waehrend dieser Zeit erfolgte eine *grundlegende Ueberholung* der Maschinen, bevor am **13 Jun 41** die Verlegung nach Osten begann, wo der **Stab/JG 51** zunaechsts in Siedlce Quartier bezog; dort field auch die **II./JG 51**.

Das **JG 51** wurde fuer den bevorstehenden Russlandeinsatz der **II. Fliegerkorps** unterstellt, welches im Verband der *Luftflotte 2* ueber dem Bereich der H.Gr. Mitte zum Einsatz kommen sollte. Der Einsatzraum des **JG 51** sollte ueber dem rechten Fluegel der H.Gr. im Bereich der **2 PzGr** sowie der **4 Armee** liegen,

welche im Norden der ausgedehnten Pripjet-Suempfe den Stoss nach Weiss-russland hinein zu fuehren hatten.

Zu Beginn des Krieges im Osten unterstand dem **Stab/JG 51** die I. bis III. *Gruppe* des Geschwaders, waehrend die **IV./JG 51** einsatzmaessig bis auf weiteres dem rechterhand benachbarten **JG 53** zugeteilt war. Ausgeruestet war der **Stab/JG 51** zu dieser Zeit – wie das ganze Geschwader – mit der **Bf 109 F-2** . . .

Am **22.6.41** hatten der **Stab/JG 51** mit seinen unterstellten *Gruppen* den Auftrag, Kampffliegerbegleitung u. *freie Jagd sowie Tiefangriffe* auf grenznahe Flug-plaetze der sowj. Luftwaffe jenseits des Bug, der bis dahin die Grenze zur Sowjetunion bildete, zu fliegen.

Insgesamt **34** Einsaetze wurden bis zum Ende dieses Tages verzeichnet. Der Stabsschwarm des **JG 51** flog seine Einsaetze zusammen mit der **II./JG 51**; ohne Verluste wurden **5** Abschuesse gemeldet. (206)

Abschuesse des Stabes/JG 51 am 22.6.41:

Maj. Werner Mölders / **I-153** / (69.) / **05.00** Uhr
Maj. Werner Mölders / **SB-2** / (70.) / **12.35** Uhr
Maj. Werner Mölders / **SB-2** / (71.) / **12.36** Uhr
Oblt. Hartmann Grasser / **SB-2** / (8.) / **12.37** Uhr
Maj. Werner Mölders / **SB-2** / (72.) . **12.38** Uhr⁶⁰²
(220)

(J. Prien, et.al., *Die Jagdfliegerverbaende der dt. Luftwaffe*, Teil: 6/1: *Unternehmen Barbarossa*, 206, 220)

--22.6.41: II./JG 51 (Bf 109 F):

Nachdem die **II./JG 51** Anfang Juni 1941 vom Kanal abgezogen u. in die Heimat verlegt worden war, erfolgte dort in Dortmund die Umruestung auf die **Bf 109 F** . . . Der Aufenthalt in Dortmund dauerte bis zum **10 Jun 41**, als die Verlegung nach dem Osten begann, wo die Gruppe zunaechst in Siedlce einfiel, wo der Geschwaderstab bis zum Beginn der Kaempfe im Osten unterkam. Die **II./JG 51** unterstand danach auch weiterhin unveraendert dem **Stab/JG 51**. Vor Beginn des deutschen Angriffs wurden einige Einweisungsfluege unternommen; am **21 Jun 41** war auch die **II./JG 51** zur Grenzueberwachung entlang der Bug eingesetzt.

Am fruehen Morgen des **22.6.41** begann der deutsche Angriff im Osten fuer die **II./JG 51** mit einem Einsatz zur Kampffliegerbegleitung; im Laufe des Tages folgten mehrere weitere Einsaetze zur *freien Jagd u. zu Tiefangriffen* auf russ. Flugplaetze, in deren Verlauf die *Gruppe* zu ersten Auseinandersetzungen mit russ. Kampf- u. Jagdfliegerverbaende kam. Ohne Verluste meldete die

⁶⁰² **Note:** In other words, Kommodore Mölders shot down **3** russ. bombers in **3 minutes!** (**Note:** My assumption is that, by use of term “*Abschuesse*,” these are all acct that were shot out of the sky, not destroyed on the ground?) Mölders would garner his **100/101** kills on **15.7.41**. (220)

Gruppe am Ende **28 Abschuesse** sowie die Zerstoerung von **63** Flugzeugen am Boden. . .

(J. Prien, et.al., *Die Jagdfliegerverbaende der dt. Luftwaffe*, Teil: 6/1: *Unternehmen Barbarossa*, 266)⁶⁰³

--**22.6.41**: Es war der Ofw. Oljenik vom **JG 53**, der den ersten Abschuss im Russlandfeldzug erzielte, als er um **03.40** Uhr eine **I-16** abschoess. Gleich bei einem der ersten Luftduelle rammte der sowj. Unterleutnant D.V. Kokorew seinen deutschen Gegner, als seine Maschinenwaffen versagten. Beide Flugzeuge stuerzten ab.⁶⁰⁴ Die **I./SKG 210** unter Major Storp brachte es am ersten Tage auf **100 Feindfluege**. Einige Besatzungen flogen sechs Angriffe am Eroeffnungstag. Insgesamt flog das Geschwader **13** Angriff auf **14** Flugplaetze u. zerstoerte dabei nach eigenen Meldungen **344** feindl. Flugzeuge am Boden.⁶⁰⁵ Acht Gegner wurden abgeschossen. (Kurowski, *Balkenkreuz und Roter Stern*, 58-59)

--**22.6.41** [*Hans Rudel*]: Flights of *gull-winged Stuka* dive bombers peeled off, sirens wailing into the attack. Junkers **Ju-87B Stukas** were the main providers of close-air support for the Army. Lt Hans Rudel had by evening of the first day „been out over the enemy lines four [**4**] times in the area between *Grodno* and *Volkovysk*.“ His targets were large numbers of tanks together w/ supply columns the Russians were bringing up to the front. „We bomb tanks, Flak artillery and ammunition dumps supplying the tanks and infantry,“ he wrote. . . Lt Rudel commented on the *cumulative physical strain* dive-bombing had upon *Stuka* pilots during the opening weeks of the campaign. Take-off was at **0300** hours in the first few days w/ the final landing often after **2200** hours. „Every spare minute,“ he stated, „we stretch out underneath an aeroplane and instantly fall asleep.“ When scrambled, „we hop to it w/o even knowing where it is from.“ Prolonged stress caused them to go about their business „as though in our dreams.“ (*Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 53; see also, *H. Rudel, Stuka Pilot*, 16-17)

--**AOK 4 (KTB)**:

(**22.6.-28.6.41**). Offers some useful statistics on achievements of **Fliegerkorps II** in first two days of campaign: **716** enemy planes destroyed vs. loss of only **12**. . . General v. Kluge complains about the poor march discipline of Luftwaffe ground units: „*Die Indisziplin der Luftwaffe hindert die ganze Operation.*“ (**RH 20-4/1199**)

-- **JG 51**: Weal, John, *Jagdgeschwader 51 „Moelders*.“⁶⁰⁶ The little book by Osprey Publishing, traces the activities of the fighting wing in Russia, focusing on the activities (kills, medals garnered, fate of, etc.) of its leading aces, beginning w/ Maj Werner Moelders. In the opening days of the campaign, Moelders shot down his **80th acft**, tying the record of Rittmeister Manfred Freiherr von Richthofen, the legendary “Red Baron” of World War I. By mid-**Jul 41**, the squadron had recorded **500 kills** on the Eastern Front; and, on **15 Jul 41**, Moelders bagged his

⁶⁰³ **Note**: The third Gruppe of **JG 51** also had a successful first day of war: “**19** Abschuesse sowie die Zerstoerung von **23** Flugzeugen am Boden lautete am Ende des Tages die Erfolgsbilanz bei der **III./JG 51**. Dagegen ging eine Maschine durch Feindeinwirkung verloren; **4** weitere wurden *erheblich beschaedigt*, eine davon im Luftkampf. . .“ (Prien, et.al., 294.)

⁶⁰⁴ **Note**: Implication is that this incident occurred in sector of *H.Gr.Mitte*, but not definitive. Confirm if possible!

⁶⁰⁵ **Note**: Seriously! **344** acft? Any way to confirm or deny?

⁶⁰⁶ **Note**: As these notes illustrate, some of the author’s data on total kills for the wing is a tad “screwy.” Be careful in using them!

100th acft, becoming the first fighter pilot in history to reach the century mark! The wing reached a tally of **2000** kills (since the beginning of World War II) on **8 Sep 41**. According to author, the *Geschwader* destroyed its **1500th** Soviet acft on **6.10.41**; however, he later avers that the wing destroyed its **1500th** acft of the *war* on **19.11.41**. On **7.4.42**, the fighter wing recorded its **3000th** victory of the war – an achievement that merited another mention for the *Jagdgeschwader* “*Moelders*” in the official **OKW** news communiqué.

ab 22.6.41: The main thrust developed on the central part of the front, where the forces of the **2** and **8 Fliiegerkorps** were subordinated under **Luftflotte 2**. Day fighters and other acft were fitted to drop small **SD 1** and **SD 2** bombs from bomblet dispensers and engaged in low-level attacks on enemy installations everywhere. So called “butterfly bombs,” the SDs were carried in **1 kg** or **2 kg** dispensers which, when dropped, opened in mid air and scattered the bombs over a wide area. SD bombs were at their most effective when used against troop concentrations. . . The rapid advance of the *Wehrmacht* into Russia caused many casualties and weakened the *Luftwaffe* bomber forces, too. The bomber *Gruppen*, such as the **KG 51** “*Edelweiss*,” lost half of its crews during the initial combat missions. . . By the end of **Jul 41**, due to the vast size of the advancing fronts, the German bomber forces had insufficient strength to fulfill all operational duties. (M. Griehl, *German Bombers over Russia*, 5-6)⁶⁰⁷

--Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

6.5: The *Luftwaffe* has a Field Day

At 0315 hours, the first wave of the *Luftwaffe* assault, 30 He 111 and Do 17Z bombers flown by hand-picked crews, began their low level attacks on selected Soviet fighter bases behind the front of Army Group Center, striking them with hundreds of small SD-2 fragmentation bombs. The two kilogram bombs burst among the rows of Soviet aircraft, arranged wingtip to wingtip on their airfields, with personnel tents located nearby. After all, it was peacetime, and the Russian planes were neither camouflaged nor had they been dispersed. Multiple explosions soon engulfed the rows of aircraft; airframes were lacerated and fuel tanks punctured, the latter causing multiple fireballs which tossed columns of dense black smoke into the dawn sky. In the resulting chaos dazed ground crews struggled desperately to combat the fires but were frustrated by delayed-action explosions. With no instructions from superior headquarters, each base coped as best it could.^{dexlix}

As the sun rose, these initial attacks were followed by the main body of the *Luftwaffe*'s strike force, consisting of hundreds of medium bombers, dive bombers, fighters and destroyer aircraft.^{del} The weather was virtually ideal – warm and sunny with hardly a cloud in the sky. On the central front, the aerial assault was conducted by Field Marshal Kesselring's 2 Air Fleet, with its 2 Air Corps operating from the Warsaw – Brest-Litovsk – Deblin area, and 8 Air Corps out of the Suwalki triangle; together they possessed nearly 1000 operational combat aircraft. In a post-war study prepared for the U.S. Air Force, a former chief of staff of 8 Air Corps, *Oberst* Lothar von Heinemann, described the operations in his sector:

The initial start of the attack proceeded without delay. The weather conditions were clear, isolated patches of fog did not hinder any of the units. And it was only a little more misty in lower lying areas. In the initial stages of the attack, towns and villages were encountered lit up as if for peacetime, which made

⁶⁰⁷ **Note:** Yellow bands painted around rear part of fuselage of German bombers showed that the acft were involved in operations in Russia. (17)

locating targets a great deal easier. Work on the [enemy] airfields was being done in part under floodlights. The element of surprise was total. Enemy defensive action barely had any appreciable effect and where it did, then only at a point when the main attacks had already been carried out.^{dcli}

While the *Luftwaffe's* primary objective was the destruction of enemy air forces and the establishment of air superiority across the entire front, many types of targets were struck in the opening assault. Along with at least 31 airfields, these targets included: Trains and railroad cars (the Germans using incendiary bullets to destroy cars filled with fuel), gasoline and grain warehouses, fuel dumps, barracks and bunkers. Suspected locations of senior Red Army staffs were also blasted from the air, including the headquarters of Soviet 4 Army, taken out little more than an hour after the attack began. *Stuka* dive bombers attached to 8 Air Corps made precision attacks on tanks, motor vehicles, bridges, fieldworks, artillery and anti-aircraft sites, while German bombers operating along the central axis dropped their loads on Belostok, Grodno, Lida, Volkovysk, Brest-Litovsk and Kobrin (site of 4 Army headquarters).^{dclii}

Leutnant Heinz Knoke, a Bf 109 fighter pilot in 52 Fighter Wing (52 JG), had flown four missions by noon, dropping SD-2 fragmentation bombs from a rack slung under the belly of his “*Emil*” and strafing enemy positions from as little as six feet above the ground. Knoke and his comrades were enthusiastic about the opportunity to finally destroy the hated Bolshevik enemy, and duly impressed by the sinister designs they attributed to the massed Soviet columns they encountered:

The Chief sees smiling faces all round when the pilots report. At last the spell is broken. We have dreamed for a long time of doing something like this to the Bolsheviks. Our feeling is not exactly one of hatred, so much as utter contempt. It is a genuine satisfaction for us to be able to trample the Bolsheviks in the mud where they belong. . .

New operation orders have arrived. Russian transport columns have been observed by our reconnaissance aircraft retreating eastward along the Grodno – Zytomia – Skidel – Szczuczyn highway, with our tanks in hot pursuit. We are to support them by bombing and strafing the Russians as they retreat.

Take-off at 1007 hours [this was sortie number four for *Leutnant* Knoke], accompanied by *Stukas*. They are to dive-bomb the Russian artillery emplacements in the same area.

We soon reach Grodno. The roads are clogged with Russian armies everywhere. The reason gradually dawns on us why the sudden surprise attack was ordered by our High Command. We begin to appreciate the full extent of the Russian preparations to attack us. We have just forestalled the Russian time-table for an all-out attack against Germany for the mastery of Europe.^{dcliii}

Stuka pilot Hans-Ulrich Rudel, flying with 2 *Stuka* Wing (2 StG), the “*Immelmann*” Wing, was also struck by the “preventive” nature of Operation *Barbarossa*. “On my very first sortie,” he later observed:

I notice the countless fortifications along the frontier. The fieldworks run deep into Russia for many hundreds of miles. They are partly positions still under construction. We fly over half-completed airfields; here a concrete runway is just

being built; there a few aircraft are already standing on an aerodrome. . . Flying in this way over one airfield after another, over one strongpoint after another, one reflects: “It is a good thing we struck.” . . . It looks as if the Soviets meant to build all these preparations up as a base for invasion against us. Whom else in the West could Russia have wanted to attack? If the Russians had completed their preparations there would not have been much hope of halting them anywhere.^{dcliv}

Rudel flew four sorties on this first day of the war, between Grodno and Volkovysk on the central front. He would end the war with more than 2500 operational missions, and credit for destroying 519 Red Army tanks (one-third of a month’s production, according to Foreign Armies East calculations of November 1943) along with the Soviet battleship *Marat* in its harbor outside Leningrad.^{dclv}

Initially, Soviet fighter aircraft evinced little desire to engage in aerial combat, and often turned away at considerable range if fired upon.^{dclvi} Soviet bomber forces, however – at least what was left of them after the first German strikes – often demonstrated remarkable courage in the face of hopeless odds. Many German accounts of this day – and in the days which followed – report streams of VVS bombers heading west, in rigid tactical formations^{dclvii} and without air cover, to attack German positions. Squadron after squadron of these hapless planes was decimated by the packs of Bf 109s which rose to challenge them, or by well-placed anti-aircraft fire. Kesselring, who observed the slaughter first hand, called it “sheer infanticide.”^{dclviii} German soldiers watched in awe and fascination as the Soviet bombers tumbled from the sky. Typical of German accounts is the following from Lt.-Col. Meyer-Detring, chief operations officer (Ia) of Fourth Army’s 137 Infantry Division:

The air wings of German *Luftwaffe* had started off for the east together with the first German infantrymen. The first enemy bomber squadron appeared around midday. It slowly approached the bridge, was intercepted in an instant by our fighters or by all calibers of our Flak guns! No machine escaped its fate, one after another plunged burning to the ground – the first convincing evidence of German superiority.^{dclix}

Observing the German attack on the fortress of Brest-Litovsk, Chaplain Rudolf Gschoepf (45 ID) also witnessed the destruction of a Soviet bomber formation, as well as the fanaticism of an enemy crew member:

It had become lively in the air as well in the early morning hours. Russian planes approached the frontier region in large numbers, but were intercepted by our fighters – which already held complete sway over the air – with such speed that the parachutes of enemy pilots who had been shot down now floated through the blue skies in their dozens. One small incident illustrates the fanaticism with which even the Russian pilots tried to fight. A Russian went down with his parachute approximately 100 meters ahead of the battalion dressing station, where I found myself. Since he did not get up, we assumed that he was wounded. Two of our medics tried to get to our opponent with a stretcher to help him, but as they approached him, they were shot at with a machine pistol and forced to take cover. Holding his weapon in his hand, the Russian pilot had refused our medical services.^{dclx}

By midday, the Germans were claiming the destruction of 890 Soviet aircraft across the front – 222 of them in aerial combat or to AA fire and 668 on the ground – with a loss of only 18 *Luftwaffe* planes.^{delxi} Late that afternoon, the commander of the Western Front’s air forces, Maj.-Gen. Ivan Ivanovich Kopets, overcome by the burgeoning catastrophe, committed suicide. In a telegram dispatched to Moscow, to the Main Office of Political Propaganda, Kopets’ suicide – that is, his “faint-heartedness” – was attributed to “private failure and comparatively heavy losses in aviation.”^{delxii}

Perhaps there is no better illustration of the chaos caused by the German aerial assault on this first day of the war than the harrowing account by journalist Alexander Werth, in his classic study, *Russia at War 1941-1945*, of General I.V. Boldin’s frantic attempts to reach 10 Army headquarters outside Belostok. As mentioned, General Boldin, Pavlov’s deputy at Western Front, had been ordered to fly to army headquarters to help its commander, General Golubev, organize a counterstroke. On the flight there, Boldin’s plane absorbed 20 bullets from a Bf 109, but managed to land safely on an airfield about 30 kilometers east of Belostok. Minutes later, nine German planes were over the airfield and dropping bombs with impunity, for there were no anti-aircraft guns to fire back at them. Several vehicles and Boldin’s plane were destroyed.^{delxiii}

The general commandeered a small truck and, together with some officers and men, got in and drove off – Boldin taking the seat next to the driver. After what must have seemed an eternity, they finally reached the main road to Belestok. Through the windscreen he could see 15 German bombers approaching from the west: “They were flying low,” he recalled, “with provocative insolence, as though our sky belonged to them. On their fuselages I could clearly see the spiders of the Nazi swastika.” Shortly thereafter, he stopped a crowd of workers making off in the opposite direction:

“Where are you going?” I asked.

“To Volkovysk,” they said.

“Who are you?”

“We had been working on fortifications. But the place where we worked is now like a sea of flames,” said an elderly man with an exhausted look on his face.

These people seemed to have lost their heads, not knowing where they were going and why.

Then we met a few cars, led by a Zis-101. The broad leaves of an aspidistra were protruding from one of the windows. It was the car of some local top official. Inside were two women and two children.

“Surely,” I said, “at a time like this you might have more important things to transport than you aspidistra. You might have taken some old people or children.” With their heads bent, the women were silent. The driver, too, turned away, feeling ashamed.^{delxiv}

Then the ubiquitous *Luftwaffe* arrived, pumping several volleys of machine gun fire into Boldin’s truck:

The driver was killed. I managed to survive, as I jumped out just in time. But with the exception of my A.D.C. and a dispatch rider, all were killed. . . . Nearby I noticed the same old Zis-101. I went up to it. The women, the children, the driver were all killed. . . . Only the evergreen leaves of the aspidistra were still sticking out of the window.^{dclxv}

Arriving in Belostok, he encountered a scene reminiscent of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, or some other allegory of hell. The town was in total chaos. At the railway station a train filled with evacuees, women and children, was struck by bombs; hundreds were killed. Toward evening, Boldin reached 10 Army headquarters – two tents, a table and some chairs in a little wood outside of Belostok. General Golubev, Boldin learned, had been unable to reach front headquarters in Minsk, for the telephone lines were all destroyed and radio communications were under constant jamming. The 10 Army commander was profoundly shaken by the events of the day. To prevent being outflanked in the south, he informed Boldin, he had deployed his 13 Mechanized Corps along the Kuretz River: “But as you know Ivan Vasilievich, there are very few tanks in our divisions. And what can you expect from those old T26 tanks – only good enough for firing at sparrows.”^{dclxvi}

Golubev went on to say that both the aircraft and anti-aircraft guns of the army corps were now out of action, smashed by the German aerial onslaught. Moreover, through spies, the Germans had apparently been informed of the locations of the army's fuel dumps, all of which were destroyed during the first hours of the invasion by *Luftwaffe* bombing. Then General Nikitin, Commander, 6 Cavalry Corps, arrived, reporting that his men, after repelling the initial German assaults, had been practically exterminated by air attack, the survivors withdrawing into a patch of forest northeast of Belostok.^{dclxvii}

Finally, communications were restored with front headquarters in Minsk. General Pavlov, Commander, Western Front, spoke with Boldin, peremptorily demanding that the counterstroke proceed that very evening. Boldin demurred, indicating that 10 Army was already all but shattered. For a moment, Pavlov appeared to hesitate, but soon caught himself: “These are my orders. It's for you to carry them out.” The counterstroke did not come off that night.^{dclxviii}

Depending on whether the attacking formations consisted of bombers, dive bombers or fighters, *Luftwaffe* units flew between four to eight missions on this day, an extraordinary operational tempo which German flyers were to maintain in the days and weeks ahead. These were “astonishing figures,” notes Martin van Creveld, “attributable to the simplicity of the machines, the often short distances that had to be covered, the excellence of the ground organization (including a specially developed apparatus that allowed nine aircraft to be refueled simultaneously), and the unparalleled determination of the crews.”^{dclxix} Thus even by conservative estimates, Kesselring's 2 Air Fleet, with nearly 1000 operational aircraft, must have flown a minimum of 4000 sorties alone on 22 June.

The outcome surpassed the *Luftwaffe* leadership's most ardent expectations. Brig.-Gen. Otto Hoffmann von Waldau, Chief, *Luftwaffe* Operations Staff, recorded in his diary that “complete tactical surprise” had been achieved, and that he expected “an outstanding success.”^{dclxx} Indeed, by midnight, the Soviet Air Force (VVS) had lost an astounding 1811 aircraft according to official German estimates. Of these, 322 had been destroyed in the air or by anti-aircraft fire, and 1489 on the ground.^{dclxxi} More than 900 of the VVS losses were attributed to the operations of 2 Air Fleet;^{dclxxii} and, as a result, the *Luftwaffe* succeeded in gaining complete air superiority in the sector of Army Group Center on this first day of the war.^{dclxxiii} By the end of the second day, with

another 800 Soviet aircraft reported destroyed, complete air supremacy, or at least superiority, had been won along the entire 1200+ kilometer eastern front.^{delxxiv}

As historian Williamson Murray correctly observes, whether or not the *Luftwaffe* actually destroyed that many aircraft misses the point – which is that a “defeat of immense proportion had overtaken the Red Air Force – a catastrophe overshadowed only by events on the ground.”^{delxxv} The significance of this brilliant aerial victory was explained by Kesselring in his memoirs:

Thanks to the tactical air planning and to the indefatigable dedication of the air units, it was possible, by virtue of the excellent aerial photographic reconnaissance, to gain “air supremacy” [*Luftherrschaft*] within two days. Reports of aircraft shot down in the air and destroyed on the ground reached approximately 2500 planes, a figure which *Reichsmarschall* Goering at first refused to believe. When, after the area had been secured, he had the figures verified, he had to tell me that the real figures were around 200-300 higher. Without running the risk of coming to the wrong conclusion, I believe I can safely say that, without this prelude, the ground operations [*Heeresoperationen*] would not have proceeded so rapidly or so successfully.^{delxxvi}

Yet the *Luftwaffe*'s unparalleled accomplishments of 22 June – “the greatest numerical success ever achieved in a 24-hour period in the battle between two air forces”^{delxxvii} – had exacted a heavy toll. Historians have traditionally maintained that only 35 or 36 German planes were lost to all causes on this day.^{delxxviii} However, a well-documented study of German fighter units on the eastern front in 1941, published in 2003, offers convincing evidence that the actual number of *Luftwaffe* aircraft lost on 22 June was more than twice that number – 78 to be exact. Citing a detailed internal *Luftwaffe* report,^{delxxix} the authors of the study provide the following breakdown of aircraft lost (i.e., those “written off” with 60 to 100 percent damage):

German Aircraft Losses^{delxxx}

(22 June 1941)

Bf 109	24
Bf 110	7
Ju 88	23
Ju 87	2
He 111	11
Do 17	1
Other	10

78

Of these, 61 planes were lost to enemy action (*Feindeinwirkung*) and 17 to “other causes.” Personnel losses among aircrew were also considerable, including 113 dead or missing, four men taken prisoner, and dozens more wounded. In addition, 89 aircraft sustained levels of damage ranging from 10-59 percent.^{delxxxi} When considering that the eastern air fleets began *Barbarossa* with only 2255 operational machines, the losses of 22 June signified serious attrition. Total losses, in fact, amounted to more than three percent of the combat-ready force; numerically, they represented the greatest single day's loss since the start of the war in September 1939.^{delxxxii} It is remarkable, however, that of 360 operational Ju 87 *Stukas*, which flew multiple sorties – indeed, as many as seven or eight per machine!^{delxxxiii} – only two were lost on 22 June.

(Barbarossa Unleashed)

--Die [sowj.] Fliegerverbaende am Rande von Minsk wurden vom deutschen Luftangriff voellig ueberrascht. Der Eindruck der entsetzlichen Verluste deprimierte den Befehlshaber der Luftstreitkraefte an der Westfront, Gen.-Maj. Iwan Kopez, auf aeusserste. Der General, ein gefeierter Jagdflieger des Spanischen Buergerkrieges, brach unter der Last der Verantwortung zusammen. Anscheinend fuerchtete er, dass man ihn fuer das Desaster zur Rechenschaft ziehen wuerde, u. ***erschoss sich***, noch bevor er Nachricht ueber das volle Ausmass der Verluste erhalten hatte. (Magenheimer, *Moskau 1941*, 37)

--**22.-30.6.41 (JG 51):**

22.6.41: On their cluster of 4 airfields to the east of Warsaw (which they shared w/ elements of **JG 53**), Oberstlt. Werner Moelder's Gruppen were almost in the centre of the **4480**-km long front that stretched all the way from the Barent's Sea in the north to the Black Sea in the south. Their principle task in this new theater of ops was to clear the skies above and ahead ov **2 PzGr**. . .

It is not known how many Soviet acft the *Geschwader* accounted for on the ground, but **2./JG 51**, whose new Friedrichs – like their earlier Emils – had been fitted w/ ventral bomb racks, were alone credited w/ **43** destroyed in four separate *Jabo* sorties during the day.

In the air, Moelder's **4** Gruppen (w/ **IV./JG 51** temporarily attached to **JG 53**) claimed no fewer than **93** enemy machines shot down! The *Kommodore* himself was responsible for **4** of the *Stabsschwarm's* **5** victories. These took his total to **72**, and won him the immediate Swords [to the KC]. Many other pilots achieved multiple successes during these early hours of "Barbarossa." . . .

23.6.41: This day saw the *Geschwader* carry out another round of low-level strikes, but in stark contrast to the day before, it resulted in only **2** aerial victories.

. . .

24.6.41: On this day the fighting wing was credited w/ a further **81** victories. Having recovered from the immediate shock of the first days' savage onslaught, Soviet commanders called up bombers from as-yet untouched rear-area bases and *hurled them in waves against the advancing German ground forces*. With no frontal fighters to protect them, the Soviet bombers suffered horrendous losses.

25.-30.6.41: JG 51 alone shot down **83** Tupolev **SB-2s** on **25.6**. On the final day of the month, Moelders and his *Gruppen* claimed an unprecedented **137** enemy aircraft destroyed! This huge total included several personal and unit landmark scores. The third of the **5** Ilyushin **DB-3** bombers downed by the *Kommodore* took Moelder's score to **80** – level w/ *Rittmeister* Manfred Freiherr v. Richthofen, the legendary "Red Baron," and top-scoring German fighter pilot of World War I.

This day – **30.6.41** – was also the date on which it was announced that **JG 51** had become the first *Jagdgeschwader* to reach **1000** victories.

(J. Weal, *Jagdgeschwader 51 „Moelders“*, 58-61)

1.8.3: Aerial Support of Army Group North

--Providing air support for AGN was the relatively tiny *1 Air Fleet*, with only **211** operational bombers and **167** combat-ready fighters.^{delxxxiv} (*Barbarossa Unleashed*, 179)

--*Luftflotte 1* was commanded by General Alfred Keller. His flying unit, consisting merely of a single air corps, *Fliegerkorps 1*, and a few smaller forces, possessed a total of **592** transport and combat acft (**453** operational), plus **176** reconnaissance and liaison machines (**143** operational. (*Crevelde, Air Power and Maneuver Warfare*, 66)

--*Luftflotte 1* had only the *1 Air Corps*, a single fighter wing and **3** bomber wings plus reconnaissance units, which might be augmented by a bomber wing of the Air Force Commander Baltic Sea. General Keller's *1 Air Fleet* had a total strength of about **500** combat planes. The main effort was to be given to General Hoepner's **4 PzGr.** (Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, IV: 19)

--**Note:** Following account of **21 ID**—another indication that the VVS was not swept from the skies in first **48** hours of the war:

By **25.6.41**, **21 ID** was in action largely against enemy rear guards as it advanced towards town of Kelme. Write the authors:

Der Kdr. dieses Rgts. . . . trat aus eigenem Entschluss zur Verfolgung in Richtung Kelme an. Die durch die eigene *Luftwaffe* u. die Panzerkaempfe start zerstoeerte Stadt wurde von den Spitzen der Div. im Laufe des Vormittags erreicht u. nach Norden hin durchschritten.⁶⁰⁸

Der Gegner hatte, wohl unter dem Eindruck der allgemeinen Lage, nicht mehr versucht, sich vor der Stadt neuerlich zu stellen, hingegen wurden die Marschgruppen der Div. im Laufe des Vormittags **wiederholt von feindl. Kampffliegerketten angegriffen**, wobei ein Bombervolltreffer im II./IR 3 empfindliche Verluste hervorrief. . .

(J.C. Allmayer-Beck & F. Becker, *21. Infanterie-Division. Russlandfeldzug 1941*, 5)

--**22.6.41: Hr.Gr.Nord:**

. . . Der Angriff der *Luftflotte 1* auf die russ. Luftstuetzpunkte zwischen Reichsgrenze u. Duena hat zu einem Erfolg gefuehrt. Von den rund **750** in diesem Bereich angenommenen Flugzeugen wurden etwa **175** vernichtet. Angriffe der feindl. Luftwaffe erfolgten nur vereinzelt u. ohne Erfolg. Gegen Abend wurden im Raum SW Schaulen von rund **150-200** Panzern u. Lkw durch Tieffliegerangriff **40** vernichtet. . .

(*Tagesmeldungen der O.-Abteilung des GenStdH*, in: *KTB OKW*, 490)

⁶⁰⁸ **Note:** "Kelme, das bereits am **23.6.** von der **1 PD** kaempfend durchschritten worden war . . ." (5)

--22.6.41: Gleichzeitig war die Luft erfuellt vom Gedroehne deutscher Flugzeuge, die ihren Weg nach Osten nahmen. Die **Luftflotte 1** startete mit **270** Kampf- u. **110** Jaegerflugzeugen.⁶⁰⁹ Ihre Aufgaben waren die Vernichtung sowjet. Stuetzpunkte, Flugzeuge u. Verkehrswege zwischen Memel u. Düna. Das **JG 54** hatte folgende Auftrag: 1. Freikaempfen des Luftraumes, 2. Begleitschutz fuer die Kampfstaffeln, 3. Freie Jagd, 4. Tiefangriff auf Kolonnen u. spaeter Bekaempfung des Schiffsverkehrs. (W. Haupt, *Heeresgruppe Nord*, 23)

--22.6.41 (VVS / 3 ID (mot.)): In der Fruehe des **22 Jun 41** ist drei Stunden lang starkes Artilleriefeuer zu hoeren. Deutsche Bombengeschwader ziehen ueber uns nach Osten. Um **5.00** Uhr tauchen bereits an der Kriegsbruecke Wishwill sechs Martinbomber auf, von denen einer abgeschossen wird. Der Angriff auf die Bruecke bleibt erfolglos. Bald wird der Unterkunftsraum des **II./IR 8 (mot.)** von neuen Bombern angegriffen; das Btl. hat keine Verluste. . .(G. Dieckhoff, *3. Infanterie-Division*, 92)

--22.6.41: An astonishing sight met the German airmen as they approached their targets. On most Soviet airfields hit by the *Luftwaffe*, the Soviet planes stood ***parked in tight rows, wingtip to wingtip***, and w/ ***no camouflage*** measures whatsoever. To several German airmen, the first raid was *merely a gunnery training exercise*. The units of **Luftflotte 1**, under Gen.Obst. Keller, were directed against the VVS installations in Lithuania. Hptm. Gerhard Baeker, the technical officer of **III./KG 1 "Hindenburg"**, told the authors:

At **0211** we took off on our first mission against the East. It was a clear night and the horizon was bright from the midnight sun in the far north. Our target was the airfield Libau in Lithuania. The base was occupied by a fighter unit, and its so-called Ratas stood parked in nice, tight rows, offering us a good target in the bright night.

The **Ju 88s** of **III./KG 1** unloaded their bombs onto "long rows of *completely uncamouflaged acft* standing in close formation as though on parade along the edges of the Libau (Liepaja) airfield," as stated by another of the participants in the raid, Hptm. Manfred von Cossart. Hptm. Baeker adds, "We landed undramatically at **0351**, before sunrise." (C. Bergström & A. Mikhailov, *Black Cross Red Star*, Vol 1:30)

--22.6.41: Major Hannes Trautloft escorted other **Ju 88s** of **Luftflotte 1** against the Kaunas Air-drome in Lithuania at the head of his **JG 54**. Just as the bombers came in over the large, grass-covered airfield, the sun rose above the horizon and cast its bright rays on the deadly birds. Trautloft watched as the ***fragmentation bombs*** exploded in devastating series among the double lines of neatly parked Soviet acft. Here, dozens of **I-153s** of **13 IAP/8 SAD** were turned into scrap w/in minutes. Only two airborne **I-153s** appeared in front of the attacking acft, but they left as quickly as they came. (C. Bergström & A. Mikhailov, *Black Cross Red Star*, Vol 1:30-31)

* * * *

⁶⁰⁹ **Note:** Compare these figures to those in *KTB H.Gr. Nord* (below).

1.9: German & Russian High Commands

1.9.1: Hitler, OKW / OKH, Berlin & Start of the War

--In the last few days before the commencement of the Russian campaign, Hitler was increasingly nervous and troubled. He was garrulous, walked up and down continuously and seemed to be waiting anxiously for news of something. Not until the early hours of **22 June** did I hear his first observation about the opening of the campaign when he said, "It will be the most difficult battle which our soldiers will have to undergo in this war." (Nicolaus v. Below, *At Hitler's Side*, 103; **III:15**)

--Fuer Hitler war der Angriff auf die Sowjetunion so etwas wie eine Erloesung. "Ich fuehle mich," schrieb er an seinen italienischen Bundesgenossen Benito Mussolini, „innerlich wieder frei.“ Im Nachhinein gab Hitler zu erkennen, dass die Uebereinkunft mit Stalin ihm eigentlich zuwider war. „Es schien mir ein Bruch mit meiner ganzen Herkunft, meinen Auffassungen,“ notierte er in dem Schreiben an Mussolini, das diesem an jenem **22. Jun 41** um drei Uhr morgens ueberbracht wurde, „ich bin gluecklich, dass ich diese Seelenqualen nun los bin.“ (R.-D. Mueller, "Duel im Schnee," in: *Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Stephan Burgdorff (Hg.), 118)

--Der deutsche Diktator, Adolf Hitler, rechtfertigte diesen kriegerischen Ueberfall auf Russland als einen „praeventiven“ **Krieg**. In seinem Anruf an die „Soldaten der Ostfront“ an diesem schicksalshaften Sonntag, behauptete er, unter anderen:

. . . eine Verstaerkung der deutschfeindlichen sowjetrussischen Taetigkeit, Panzerverbaende u. Fallschirmtruppen wurden in immer steigender Zahl in eine bedrohliche Naehue der deutschen Grenze verlegt. Ihr, meine Soldaten, wisst aber selbst, dass sich noch bis vor wenigen Wochen nicht eine dt. Panzer- oder mot. Division an unserer Ostgrenze befand. . .

Heute stehen rund 160 russische Divisionen an unserer Grenze. Seit Wochen finden dauernde Verletzungen dieser Grenze statt, nicht nur bei uns, sondern ebenso im hohen Norden wie in Rumanien. In der Nacht vom 17. zum 18. Juni haben zum ersten Male russische Patrouillen auf deutsches Reichsgebiet vorgefuehlt u. konnten erst nach laengerem Feuergefecht zurueckgetrieben werden. . .

(Dr. E. Bunke, *Der Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, 208-09)⁶¹⁰

-- **22.6.41**: In the morning, Halder records *laconically* in his diary: "Tactical *surprise* of the enemy has apparently been achieved along the entire line." (W. Murray, *War to be Won*, 111; Halder, KTB)

--**22.6.41**: Goebbels tells media representatives the war w/ Russia will be over in eight (**8**) weeks. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 422)

--**22.6.41** [Liszt-Fanfare]: Um **5.30** Uhr erklang die neue Liszt-Fanfare ueber alle deutschen Sender u. leitete die von Goebbels verlesene Proklamation Hitlers ein. Mit sonorer Stimme verkuendete der Propagandaminister, dass sich der „Fuehrer“ entschlossen habe, „das Schicksal

⁶¹⁰ **Note:** This excerpt from my *Bad Wimpfen Vortrag* in 2008.

u. die Zukunft des Deutschen Reiches u. unseres Volkes wieder in die Hand unserer Soldaten zu legen.“ Ueberall in Deutschland, aber auch in den Stellungen an der franzoesischen Atlantik-kueste, in den Offizierskasinos in Belgien u. in Griechenland, in Daenemark u. in Norwegen, wurde das dann im Laufe des Tages Wiederholte *ehrer mit bedruecktem Schweigen als mit Begeisterung aufgenommen*. Hatte denn nicht Hitler selbst gesagt, Deutschland muesse aus der Niederlage im Weltkrieg die Lehre ziehen u. einen Zweifronten-Krieg unter allen Umstaenden vermeiden? . . . (R.G. Reuth, *Goebbels*, 481; **III:19**)

--*Anecdote*: Wie gross diese Zuversicht war, zeigte auch eine Prognose vom Gen.Lt. Paulus, dem Oberquartiermeister I im Generalstab des Heeres, als er nur Stunden nach dem Beginn des Feldzuges auf die Frage des Oberbefehlshabers des Heeres von Brauchitsch nach der vermutlichen Dauer desselben antwortete, man muesse wohl mit sechs bis acht Wochen rechnen. In den ersten Tagen des Russlandkrieges schrieb Gen.-Lt. Heusinger, Chef der Operationsabteilung des Heeres, an seine Frau und schwarmte von den ersten Erfolgen, die „mal wieder maerchenhaft“ waren, fuegte aber hinzu, dass dieser Gegner „zueh und kampfwillig“ war und dem Ostheer „sicher die schwersten Kaempfe“ des Krieges bevorstehen. (G. Meyer, *Heusinger*, 151)⁶¹¹

--**22.6.41**: At 3:00 a.m., a bare half hour before the German troops jumped off, Ambassador von *Bismarck* awakens *Ciano* in Rome to deliver Hitler’s long missive, which the Italian foreign minister then telephoned to Mussolini, who was resting at his summer palace at *Riccione*. It was not the first time the *Duce* had been wakened from his sleep in the middle of the night by a message from his Axis partner, and he resented it. “Not even I disturb my servants at night,” Mussolini fretted to Ciano, “but the Germans make me jump out of bed at any hour w/o the least consideration.” Still, Mussolini gave orders for an immediate declaration of war on the Soviet Union. He was now completely a prisoner of the Germans. He knew it and resented it. “I hope for only one thing,” he told Ciano, “that in this war in the East the Germans lose a lot of feathers.” The Germans would win, he was sure, but he hoped that at least they would get a bloody nose. (*Shirer, Rise and Fall*, 851; *Ciano Diaries*, 372)

--**22.6.41** (OKW KTB):

Osten: Zwischen 3.05 Uhr u. 3.30 Uhr treten die Hr.Gr. Sued (ohne 11. Armee), Mitte u. Nord *planmaessig* zum ueberraschenden Angriff gegen Russland an. Im Laufe des Vormittags verstaerkt sich der Eindruck, dass die *Ueberraschung in allen Abschnitten gelungen ist*. Der Gegner setzt dem Angriff zunaechst nur schwachen Widerstand entgegen. An der ganzen Front gelingt es, schon in den Morgenstunden **4-5 km** tief vorzustossen u. in die fdl. Grenzverteidigung einzubrechen. . .

Die im Laufe des Tages eintreffenden Meldungen ergeben bei OKH den Eindruck, dass die *oertliche Ueberraschung ueberall gelungen ist*, u. der Feind erst beginnt, seinen Widerstand zu organisieren. Groessere feindl. Truppenbewegungen sind noch nicht festzustellen. . .

Da vor der Gesamtfront ruecklaeufige Bewegungen groesseren Ausmasses noch nicht festzustellen sind, besteht die Moeglichkeit, dass der Gegner nach Ueberwindung der ersten Ueberraschung sich – besonders vor H.Gr.Sued – zum Kampf zu stellen beabsichtigt. Ein Urteil hierueber wird sich jedoch frueh-

⁶¹¹ **Note**: Gleaned from my *Bad Wimpfen Vortrag* in 2008.

estens am 23.6. nach Eintreffen genauerer Aufklaerungsergebnisse bilden lassen. . .

(KTB OKW, 417)

--22.6.41 (Halder KTB):

Morgenmeldungen: ergeben, dass saemtliche Armeen (ausser **11.**) planmaessig angetreten sind. Der Feind ist anscheinend auf ganzer Linie taktisch ueber-
rascht.

Die Bug- usw. Bruecken an den nassen Grenzen sind durchweg unversehrt u. unverteidigt in unserer Hand. Die Ueberraschung des Feindes ergibt sich aus der Tatsache, dass Truppen im Quartier ueberrascht werden, Flugzeuge zugedeckt auf den Plaetzen standen, vorne ueberrumpelte Feindteile hinten anfragten, *was sie machen sollen.* . .

13.30 Uhr Op.:

a) *Luftwaffe* meldet **800** feindl. Flugzeuge vernichtet . . . Eigene Verluste bisher **10** Flugzeuge.

b) H.G.Sued meldet, dass eigene Patrouillen zwischen Galatz – Husy – Jassy ueber den Pruth gegangen sind u. keinen Widerstand gefunden haben. Bruecken sind in die Hand genommen. . .

*Italien tritt in den **Kriegszustand** mit Russland ein.*

Das Gesamtbild des ersten Angriffstages ist foldendes:

Der Feind war von dem deutschen Angriff ueberrascht. Er war taktisch nicht zur Abwehr gegliedert. Seine Truppen in der Grenzzone waren in weiten Unterkuenften verteilt. Die Bewachung der Grenze selbst war im allgemeinen schwach.

Die taktische Ueberraschung hatte zur Folge, dass der feindliche Widerstand unmittelbar an der Grenze *schwach u. ungeordnet war*, u. dass es ueberall gelang, die Bruecken ueber die Grenzfluesse in die Hand zu nehmen u. die in Grenznaehe befindlichen Grenzschutzstellungen (Feldbefestigungen) zu durchstossen.

Nach der ersten Schreckwirkung hat der Feind sich zum Kampf gestellt. . . [see text for more details]

Der Angriff unserer Divisionen hat den Feind ueberall, wo angegriffen wurde, zurueckgeworfen, im Durchschnitt **10-12** km unter Kampf! Damit ist den schnellen Verbaenden der Weg geoeffnet worden. . .

Noerdl. von Belostok hat die ***Panzergruppe Hoth*** einen *besonders starken Erfolg zu buchen*. Sie ist durch das Wald- u. seeige Gelaende durchgestossen bis an den Njemen, dessen wichtige Uebergaenge bei Olita u. Merkine unzerstoert in unsere Haende fielen. Die Pz.Gr. hat entgegengeworfene Teile von **8 feindl.**

Divn. zer-sprengt. Ihr gegenueber steht kein organisierter Feind. An dieser Stelle scheint die *operative Bewegungsfreiheit gewonnen zu sein.* . .

(F. Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. III, 3-5)

--22.6.41 (Halder KTB):

The morning reports indicate that all armies (except Eleventh) have started the offensive according to plan [*planmaessig*]. Tactical *surprise* of the enemy has apparently been achieved along the entire line. All bridges across the Bug River, as on the entire river frontier, were undefended and are in our hands intact. That the enemy was taken by surprise is evident from the fact that *troops were caught in their quarters, that planes on the airfields were covered up, and that enemy groups faced w/ the unexpected development at the front inquired at their Hq. in the rear what they should do.*

1330: Op. Sec.:

a. *Luftwaffe* reports **800** enemy acft destroyed (First Air Fleet **100**, Second Air Fleet **300**, Fourth Air Fleet **400**). Leningrad sea approaches mined w/o losses. . .

b. AGp.Center reports wild fight on the Brest-Litovsk – Minsk road. Russian command organization in complete confusion.

c. AGp.South reports that own patrols have crossed the Prut River between Galatz and Husi and Jassy without encountering any resistance. Bridges are in our hands.

Afternoon . . .

Italy declares war against Russia.

The *overall picture* of the first day of the offensive is as follows:

The enemy was surprised by the German attack. His forces were not in tactical disposition for defense. The troops in the border zone were widely scattered in their quarters. The frontier itself was for the most part weakly guarded.

As a result of this tactical surprise, enemy resistance directly on the border was *weak and disorganized*, and we succeeded everywhere in seizing the bridges across the border rivers and in piercing the defense positions (field fortifications) near the frontier.

After the first shock, *the enemy has turned to fight*. There have been instances of tactical withdrawals and no doubt also disorderly retreats, but there are *no indications of an attempted operational disengagement*.

Such a possibility can moreover be discounted. Some enemy Hq. have been put out of action; e.g., Belostok and some sectors are deprived of high-echelon

control. But quite apart from that, the impact of the shock is such that the *Russian High Command could not be expected in the first few days to form a clear enough picture of the situation to make so far-reaching a decision.*⁶¹² On top of everything, the command organization is *too ponderous* to effect swift operational regrouping in reaction to our attack, and so the Russians will have to accept battle in the disposition in which they were deployed.

Our divisions on the entire offensive front have forced back the enemy on an average of 10-12 km. This has *opened the path for our armor*.

In AGp.South, Group Kleist was able to get its northern and central corps *moving in the midday hours*. If, as seems likely, they reach the Styr River still today, they will have to fight it out w/ the enemy motorized group east of the Styr tomorrow and the day after. The outcome will be *decisive for their operational freedom of movement*.

In AGp.Center . . . [see text for details]

North of Bialystok, Armored Group Hoth scored *quite a remarkable success*. It has pushed through the forest and lake country to the Njemen River. The important crossings near Olita and Merkine have fallen into our hands intact. Advance elements of eight divisions thrown against it have been scattered, and there is *no organized enemy resistance in front of it. Full operational freedom of movement appears to have been achieved in this sector*.

In the area of AGp.North, Armored Group Hoepner has battled its way to the Dubissa River and captured two crossings intact. Here the enemy will be able to throw fresh forces against us from his depth in the next few days.

The army groups are pursuing their original objectives. Nor is there any reason for a change. *OKH has no occasion to issue any orders.*⁶¹³

The time is not ripe yet for a decision on how to employ Eleventh Army. Our assault troops have crossed the Prut River at various points and have seized the bridges. But there are no signs that the Russians are yielding the area between the Pruth and the Dniester. . .

(Burdick & Jacobsen, *Halder War Diary*, 410-13)

-- **Response in Germany to Barbarossa: (I:779-80**, for reaction in Berlin; also, *M. Mieth*, "*Rechts zum Friedhof*," 34; *W.S. Shirer, Rise and Fall*, etc. Compare to reactions of Berlin (Germans) in **Aug 1914** and **1 Sep 39**? For latter see, *Roger Moorhouse, Berlin at War*, 13, ff.;⁶¹⁴ for **Aug 14** see material(s) in my "*Berlin*" file.)

⁶¹² **Note:** Halder was "dead on" correct in this observation!

⁶¹³ **Note:** Because all was proceeding so smoothly!

⁶¹⁴ **Note:** For interesting details/anecdotes re: blackout in Berlin see, Moorhouse, 34, ff. For rationing in Berlin see, 74, ff. (Germany had introduced rationing a few days before outbreak of war.) Many Berliners found Sunday, **22 Jun 41**, coming at the end of a period of fine, dry weather, a good excuse for packing a picnic and heading for the parks and lakes of Berlin. The city had plenty of parks – such as the Tiergarten, Humboldthain, Friedrichshain, and Grunewald. The latter with its "pungent smell of pine trees." (28, 69, 110).

(The **public reaction** to start of “*Barbarossa*” was mixed in Berlin. . . Most [I assume] would have learned of the attack by radio,⁶¹⁵ millions listening to their *Volksempfänger*, or “People’s Receiver,” a simple, inexpensive radio sold by the millions. . . Officially, the Berlin public was stoical, demonstrating “complete trust in our *Wehrmacht*. . .” The reality was slightly different. There was a *profound sense of shock*. . . There was also a *sense of liberation*. . . because Germany could at last engage w/ what many of them regarded as their country’s *most dangerous opponent*. . . The American Henry Flannery noted: “The war against Russia was the *first popular campaign* that had been launched. . .” Tellingly, perhaps, the *extra editions* of the newspapers were purchased w/ particular alacrity that morning” – in sharp contrast to earlier points during the war. (See, Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 68-73, 205)

--23.6.41 (Halder KTB):

Die Morgenmeldungen 23.6. u. abschliessenden Tagesmeldungen des 22.6., die waehrend der Nacht einlaufen, ergeben das Bild, dass mit dem Versuch des Feindes gerechnet werden muss, sich abzusetzen. H.Gr.Nord nimmt sogar an, dass der Entschluss hierzu beim Feind schon vor 4 Tagen gefallen sei.

Fuer die Auffassung, dass erhebliche Teile des Feindes sich weiter rueckwaerts befinden als von uns angenommen u. z.T. jetzt noch zurueckgefuehrt werden, spricht die Feststellung, dass unsere Truppen, wenn auch unter Kaempfen, in den Grenzbereich am 1.Tag bis zu **20** km eingedrungen sind, ferner das Fehlen grosser Gefangenzahlen u. das auffallend geringe Auftreten feindlicher Artillerie. . .

(F. Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. III, 7)

--*Excerpt from Barbarossa Unleashed:*

5.6.1: Berlin (An Anxious “Fuehrer”)

By the spring of 1941, Berlin’s roughly 4,000,000 inhabitants were becoming used to the hardships of war. They had been living with rationing and blackouts since the beginning of the war. Rationing, in fact, had been introduced on 27 August 1939, a few days before the attack on Poland; from that point forward, the distribution of most foods, clothing, footwear and coal was strictly controlled.^{delxxxv} The first British air raid over the Reich’s capital, a rather trifling affair, had taken place on 26 August 1940. By the autumn of that year, however, the raids had become a regular occurrence; and, following a brief hiatus in the first months of 1941, had resumed again in March with desultory attacks over the central areas of the city. While the damage from the RAF bomber “offensive” was normally slight at this time, a heavy raid on 10 April caused serious damage to the State Opera House and other key buildings, eliciting outrage from Hitler and a furious argument with Air Marshal Goering.^{delxxxvi}

As the days marched on through May and into June, Berliners began to talk more and more about a possible war with Russia. By mid-June 1941, such talk had exploded into a flood of rumors about what the days ahead held in store for German-Soviet relations. Some deluded themselves with wishful thinking; for example (like Panzer General Hoepner, see above), with the notion that Stalin had agreed to cede the Ukraine to Germany for 99 years, or that Russia was about to adhere

⁶¹⁵ **Note:** Um **5.30** Uhr erklang die neue Liszt-Fanfare ueber alle deutschen Sender u. leitete die von Goebbels verlesene Proklamation Hitlers ein. (**III:19**).

to the Tripartite Pact, or even that the Soviet dictator was headed to Berlin to arrange a deal with Hitler. Yet others – if only a minority, according to reports of the SS Security Service (*Sicherheitsdienst*), which regularly monitored the mood of the German people – were convinced the immense buildup of German forces in the east meant that war with Russia was imminent.^{dclxxxvii}

At the Reich Chancellery in Berlin, Hitler passed the final days before the launch of *Barbarossa* in a condition of growing agitation. As his *Luftwaffe* adjutant observed, the “Fuehrer” seemed “increasingly nervous and troubled. He was garrulous, walked up and down continuously and seemed to be waiting anxiously for news of something.”^{dclxxxviii} According to David Irving:

The old familiar bouts of insomnia began to attack him as the last days before “*Barbarossa*” dragged by. By night he lay awake and asked himself what loopholes in his grand design the British might yet exploit. He believed he had plugged them all. . . Yet Hitler could still only go to sleep with sedatives, even after staying up until three or four each morning discussing Turkey, Russia, war, and warfare with dutiful but weary henchmen like Himmler, Ley, Hewel, Ribbentrop, and Seyss-Inquart.

On June 18, with the newspapers of every country but Germany openly asking when Hitler’s attack on the Soviet Union would begin, the Russians unwittingly caused him his most anxious hours ever when the Soviet ambassador in Berlin, Dekanozov, asked for an interview with Ribbentrop’s state secretary, Baron von Weizsaecker. Hewel, at Hitler’s Chancellery, wrote an agitated note in his diary: “Big problem: Dekanozov has announced he is to see the state secretary. What is he bringing? Is Stalin going to bring off a major coup even now? A big offer to us, etc. etc.? . . . The Fuehrer and foreign minister will have to vanish – so they can’t be reached. . .” The next evening, however . . . Ribbentrop telephoned that Dekanozov had called on his state secretary at 6 P.M., had discussed purely routine affairs, and had left after cracking a few jokes.^{dclxxxix}

If Hitler had dodged a last minute diplomatic bullet, he still had much to be anxious about, had he only known it. As outlined in Chapter 1, German intelligence prior to the start of the Russian campaign was woefully inadequate. Through aerial reconnaissance, analysis of radio traffic and other means, the Germans had acquired a reasonably accurate picture of Red Army concentrations in the frontier regions; however, they still managed to overestimate the number of Russia divisions in the border districts, while remaining oblivious to the second echelon of forces assembling along the Western Dvina and Dnepr river lines. Moreover, the Germans were “totally ignorant” of the Red Army’s gigantic mobilization capabilities.^{dexc} Just how ignorant the Germans were of their opponent is illustrated by a handbook on the Russian military issued by the Army High Command’s Foreign Armies East (FHO) on 1 January 1941, in which it was admitted that little was actually known about the Soviet order of battle.^{dexcii} Even maps prepared for the Russian campaign were far from adequate, particularly when it came to determining which roads and bridges could support tanks and other heavy vehicles.^{dexciii} In general, the overall assessment of the Red Army by FHO can only be described as “incomplete and inaccurate;” hence, it offered “no corrective to the erroneous *Russland-Bild* that informed German military thinking.”^{dexciii} This is hardly surprising, because the agency was headed by Colonel Eberhard Kinzel, a man with no special training in intelligence, who neither spoke Russian nor possessed any special knowledge of the Soviet Union and its armed forces.^{dexciv}

Yet Hitler – a man of superior intellect and keen instincts – must surely, at some level, have been aware of the extraordinarily brittle foundation upon which *Barbarossa* was built. Such an awareness explains – in part at least – his anxious behavior in the days prior to the outbreak of war. During the daily coffee break with his female secretaries, on or about 20 June, Hitler told them that there was something “sinister” (*unheimlich*) about Russia - something which reminded him of the “ghost ship” (*Gespenserschiff*) in *The Flying Dutchman*. When *Fraeulein* Schroeder, “a clever, critical, and often dangerously outspoken” 33-year-old stenographer, asked him why he continually stressed that the decision to attack Russia was his toughest yet, the “Fuehrer” replied: “Because we know virtually nothing about Russia. It could turn out to be a big soap-bubble, or it might be something quite different.”^{dxcv} On 20 June, Walther Hewel, Hitler’s diplomatic liaison officer, wrote in his diary:

A long conversation with the Fuehrer. Expects a lot of the Russian campaign. Wishes he was 10 weeks on from hence. After all there must always be a big element of risk. We are standing outside a locked door. [Will we run into] secret weapons? The tenacity of the fanatic? He now has to take sleeping pills to fall asleep. . . He told me that this morning he again pored over every minute detail, but found no possibility for the enemy to get the better of Germany. He thinks Britain will have to give in – and he hopes it will be before the year is over.^{dxcvi}

Hitler’s activities in the final days before Sunday, 22 June 1941, can now be briefly summarized. On 17 June, he dispatched a telegram to Admiral Horthy, the Regent and head of Hungary, congratulating him on his birthday. The next day (18 June), in another attempt to secure Germany’s southern flank, a treaty of friendship was signed between Germany and Turkey, resulting in an exchange of telegrams between Hitler and the Turkish head of state on the 18th and 19th. On 19 June, Hitler greeted Field Marshal List, fresh off his victories in the Balkans, at the Reich Chancellery.^{dxcvii}

By now, Hitler was busy dictating his proclamation “To the Soldiers of the Eastern Front” (*Tagesbefehl an die Soldaten der Ostfront*), an effusive and self-serving document which sought to justify the attack on the Soviet Union as a pre-emptive measure, while providing a *tour d’horizon* of German foreign policy since September 1939. The proclamation was then printed in the hundreds of thousands and issued secretly to the armed forces.^{dxcviii} On Friday evening, 20 June, on Hitler’s orders, General Jodl released the prearranged code-word, “*Dortmund*,” notifying all service branches that Operation *Barbarossa* was to go forward as planned.^{dxcix}

On Saturday, 21 June, Hitler finally composed a long letter to his chief ally, Benito Mussolini, belatedly explaining his reasons for striking out against Russia to the Italian dictator. (Much to his annoyance, Mussolini did not receive the letter until 3.00 the next morning, just minutes before German troops crossed the border.)^{dcc} That evening, Hitler summoned Goebbels to him in the Reich Chancellery. Although Hitler appeared exhausted, he soon became carried away by his remarks about the war about to break. For three full hours, the two men marched, back and forth, inside the cavernous building. For an hour or so, they tried out the new fanfares to be used for the Russian campaign. Gradually, Hitler began to unwind a little. “The Fuehrer is freed from a nightmare the closer the decision comes. It’s always so with him,” confided Goebbels to his diary. At 2.30 in the morning, with the start of *Barbarossa* less than 40 minutes away, Hitler finally retired to bed.^{dcci}

It was not until an hour later that Goebbels, after returning to his ministry through the blacked-out streets of Berlin, and putting his waiting staff in the picture, withdrew to his room. By then, “the

most destructive and barbaric war in the history of mankind” had begun.^{dcxii} In his diary Goebbels wrote:

Now the artillery is thundering. God bless our weapons! . . . I pace restlessly up and down in my room. I can hear history breathing. Great, wondrous time in which a new *Reich* is being born. In pain, it is true, but it rises upwards to the light.^{dcxiii}

--Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

Hitler had withdrawn to his chambers at 2.30 in the morning on Sunday, 22 June, with the beginning of Operation *Barbarossa*, the war which he – and he alone – had willed into existence, just minutes away. In the days prior to the start of the campaign, the “Fuehrer” had grown increasingly anxious, as if tormented by some dreadful harbinger of what might lay before him and his 1000-year Reich. And yet, like the soldiers at the front, whose conscious fears dissolved into purposeful action as they poured across the frontier into Russia, Hitler’s anxieties seemed to give way now that the die had finally been cast. According to his diplomatic liaison, Walther Hewel, a “tranquil, self-possessed mood” seemed to overcome the Chancellery in Berlin on this “morning of tumultuous events.” According to David Irving:

It was almost like any other Sunday, except that Hitler and Ribbentrop fell fast asleep after lunch. The foreign minister had summoned the Soviet ambassador at 3.30 that morning to break the grim news to him, and then in rapid succession he summoned the representatives of Germany’s allies – Italy, Japan, Hungary, Finland and Romania. At 5.30 Dr Goebbels had spoken, and at 6.00 Ribbentrop had addressed the press, surrounded by his assembled staff. Many of Hitler’s adjutants, wilting under the Central European sun, went swimming.

By the time Hitler awoke late that afternoon, his armies were already many miles inside the Russian frontier, and the first reactions of the world were being monitored. Italy had honored her obligations with notable speed: at 3:00 p.m. Rome had cabled that Italy regarded herself as at war with Russia since 5.30 that morning. Romanian troops had crossed the Prut and were fighting in the provinces invaded by Russia 12 months before. Madrid telephoned that a Spanish volunteer legion was being recruited to join the crusade. An ecstatic Admiral Horthy exulted at the “magnificent” news and told the German ambassador that this was a day of which he had dreamed for 22 years – mankind would thank Hitler for this deed for centuries to come. Hungary dutifully broke off diplomatic relations with Moscow before Hitler retired to bed, but this was as far as it would go. At 6:00 p.m. a disappointed General Jodl telephoned his liaison officer in Budapest to remind the Hungarians of the historic importance of the hour.^{dcxiv}

As was his custom, Hitler sat up late with his staff, monitoring the military reports pouring in from the east. The *Luftwaffe* had struck Kiev, Kovno (Kaunas), Sevastopol, Murmansk, Odessa and other cities in European Russia, while dozens of Soviet forward air bases had been smashed and more than a thousand Red Army aircraft destroyed on the ground and in the air. Good news also arrived from North Africa, where Rommel’s *Afrika Korps* was on the move. Earlier that day, the first of 1418 days of war between Russia and Germany, which would visit untold suffering and death upon so many millions, and bring catastrophe to Europe overall, Hitler had sent a telegram to Lt.-Col. Werner Moelders, Commander, 51 Fighter Wing, congratulating him on his

72nd aerial victory and awarding him the Swords to the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves. A week later, Moelders, while supporting the operations of Guderian's panzer group with his Bf 109s, would become the first fighter pilot of any belligerent nation to record 80 kills during the Second World War, tying him with the total attained by Manfred von Richthofen in the First World War.^{dccv}

Propaganda Minister Goebbels, who had been at Hitler's side in the Reich Chancellery during the final anxious hours before war with Russia began, recorded his impressions of this tumultuous Sunday in his diary:

23 June 1941:

Yesterday: an oppressively hot day. Our troops won't have it easy in battle. Molotov gives a speech: a crazed rant, and an appeal to patriotism, maudlin complaints, the fear can be seen between the lines: "We will prevail," he says. The poor man! . . . All Europe is experiencing a wave of anti-Bolshevism. The *Fuehrer's* decision is the greatest sensation ever imaginable. Our air assault begins in grand style. . . On Russian towns, including Kiev . . . and airfields. . . The Russians are already experiencing very heavy aerial losses. During an attack on Tilsit [now Sovetsk], they lost 22 out of 73 attacking planes.

The operations are going to plan. . . The Russian troop concentrations . . . will suffer the same catastrophe [as the French in 1870]. The Russians are only putting up modest resistance for the time being. But their air force has already suffered terrible losses: 200 shot down, 200 destroyed on the ground, and 200 damaged. Those are pretty serious losses.

We will succeed soon. We simply have to succeed soon. Morale in the population is a bit low. Although the people want peace, they do not want it as a result of defeat; but the initiation of every new theater of war makes them worried and anxious. . .

New reports arrive nearly every minute. Generally very positive. Up to this time 1000 Russian planes destroyed. That's a nasty shock. . . All of the day's objectives are achieved. No complications so far. We rest completely assured. The Soviet regime will go up like tinderwood. . . Once again it has become very late. Sleep has become a luxury for us in recent days.^{dccvi}

If Hitler and Goebbels were ecstatic about the magnificent successes of the opening hours of the campaign,^{dccvii} their generals were no less carried away by the first victories of their armed forces. An event that day at Army High Command (OKH) headquarters in Zossen, south of Berlin, graphically underscores this point: Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations (*Oberquartiermeister I*), Maj.-Gen. Friedrich Paulus, the man who, more than any other, had been responsible for developing and refining operational war plans for Russia, briefed Field Marshal von Brauchitsch, C-in-C of the Army, on the first reports coming in from the front. The reports were auspicious. ***Brauchitsch asked Paulus how long he thought the war against Russia would last.*** Paulus, the consummate general staff officer, and normally sober judge of events, predicted the war would last only six to eight weeks. "Ja, Paulus, you are certainly correct," replied the field marshal. "We will need about eight weeks for Russia."^{dccviii}

At 5.30 that morning, the new Russian fanfare, based on a symphonic theme from Franz von Liszt, had reverberated for the first time over all German radio stations. In sonorous tones, befitting the breathtaking reality of the moment, Dr Goebbels read out Hitler's "Proclamation to the German People" from his office in the Reich Ministry for Propaganda. "It was," writes Roger Moorhouse in his fine history of Berlin during the war years, "a strange document."^{dcxix} "German People! National Socialists!" it began: "Troubled by deep concerns, condemned to months of silence, the hour has arrived in which I may finally speak openly." What followed was a long, meandering attack on Great Britain, which took up fully half of the proclamation. Hitler then turned to Russia, offering a point-by-point refutation of Soviet claims and demands, and justifying the new German front in the east as a preventive measure. The proclamation ended as dramatically as it had begun:

Deutsches Volk! At this very moment a concentration of forces is underway which, in its extent and scope, is the largest the world has ever seen. The fighters of the victor of Narvik at the Arctic Ocean stand allied with our Finnish comrades. . . The formations of the German *Ostfront* extend from East Prussia to the Carpathian Mountains. At the Pruth River, at the lower reaches of the Danube to the shores of the Black Sea, German and Romanian soldiers are united under [Romanian] head of state Antonescu.

The task of this front is thus no longer the protection of individual countries, but the safeguarding of Europe and with that the salvation of all.

I have, therefore, today decided to place the destiny and future of the German *Reich* and our *Volk* in the hands of our soldiers.

May the Lord God aid us in this very struggle!

Berlin, 22 June 1941.

Adolf Hitler^{dcxx}

Public reaction to the sudden outbreak of war with Soviet Russia was mixed. In Berlin, the official public response was stoical, demonstrating "complete trust in our *Wehrmacht*" and "facing the coming events with calmness and martial determination."^{dcxxi} The reality was rather different. Many people, particularly those who had not seen it coming, reacted with a profound sense of shock.^{dcxxii} Marie Vassiltchikov, a young White Russian émigré fortunate enough to have landed a minor position in the German Foreign Office due to her language skills, *had* seen the war coming, but was still "thunderstruck" by the news.^{dcxxiii} Marianne Miethe, a 20-year-old employee in an accountancy firm in Hirschfelde, greeted the start of Operation *Barbarossa* with dread, and a dire prediction from her father-in-law:

How happy we were about the non-aggression pact between the German Reich and the Soviet Union, and we had no inkling that this was merely a clever move on the part of both the dictators, Hitler and Stalin, in particular to carve up Poland and win time before the outbreak of war. We thought that the non-aggression pact between the German Reich and the Soviet Union could pave the way for a peaceful solution to the whole conflict.

The special announcement about the entry into war with the Soviet Union hit us like a bolt from the blue and we thought with dread back to Napoleon's Russian

campaign. The critics, among them my father-in-law, said: “Now we have lost the war.” We hoped that these fears would not come to pass and had no idea of the suffering that lay ahead for humanity.^{dccxiv}

Yet there was also a profound sense of liberation among many ordinary Germans, as the weeks fraught with speculation and rumor were finally over and “Germany could at last engage with what many of them regarded as their country’s most dangerous opponent. Even the less ideologically committed would have absorbed the vehement anti-Soviet rhetoric of the early 1930s and adjusted only with difficulty to the tactical alliance with Moscow which had opened the war.”^{dccxv} The thoughts of Frau “A.N.” on this day were far from atypical:

Well, I had just turned the radio on and heard this: the latest reports from the *Ostfront*, and this brings me straight to the thing that no doubt concerns every German the most today. When I switched on the radio this morning and then, totally unsuspecting, heard the *Fuehrer*’s proclamation, I was totally speechless at first. And yet, I don’t know, I don’t think anybody really took the friendship between the USSR and the German Reich very seriously. We all had our doubts about whether this would go well and we didn’t trust the Russians.

What it must have cost the *Fuehrer* to have to associate with Stalin at all and to go into a friendly relationship with him! Today I came to realize with complete clarity the full extent of his diplomacy. This whole matter has been of great concern to him. You can just sense that. And when you just think about it, you feel really quite humble.

What is our little bit of suffering, our cares, and the tiny sacrifices that have to be made in this wartime economy? But that’s the way we are, really we don’t reflect enough, and then we just get so wrapped up in personal matters, and life just goes by.

At any rate, the struggle will surely be tough, and yet many will breathe a sigh of relief after the long weeks of suspense. For, at the end of the day, a proper soldier longs for battle and victory so that he may again go about his normal tasks.^{dccxvi}

Harry Flannery, an American journalist in Berlin, in his book *Assignment to Berlin*, published in 1942, recorded the mood in the German capital on this clear, bright early summer day:

Within a few hours the first extra editions of the papers were on the streets. As usual, all were single sheets. The *Voelkischer Beobachter* headlines were typical: “War Front from North Cape to Black Sea in Bringing to Reckoning of the Moscow Traitors. Two-faced Jewish Bolshevik Rulers in the Kremlin Lengthen the War for the Benefit of England.”

The people bought the extras almost as fast as they appeared. For the first time since the war began, there was momentary enthusiasm among the German populace. The war against Russia was the first popular campaign that had been launched. None of the Germans had ever been able to understand why a treaty should have been made with the Soviets, after they had been the main object of denunciation since 1933. Now they had a sense of relief, a feeling of final understanding. I listened to their conversations around the newsstands and on the

subways. I talked with a number of them. For the first time they were excited about the war.

“Now,” they said, “we are fighting our real enemy.”^{dcxvii}

That most of the three million *Landser* now advancing the boundaries of the Greater German Reich further to the east also shared such sentiments about Bolshevist Russia is hardly surprising. For what is a modern, mass military organization if not an organic outgrowth of the society which creates it?

(*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Chapter 6)

1.9.2: Stalin, Moscow & the Soviet High Command Respond to German Attack

--**Note:** For an account of Soviet ambassador Dekanozov's meeting w/ Ribbentrop in Berlin at 4 p.m. on **22 Jun 41**; and von Schulenberg's delivery of a *declaration of war* in Moscow, see, J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 116-17)

--**Note:** On **23 Jun 41**, the Main Military Council, reduced from 11 to seven members, became the *Stavka* (“general Hq.”) of the High Command. (For more details see, Ziemke & Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 25)

--**Note (Mobilization & Internal Security Measures):** A state of war and military mobilization were both declared on **22 Jun 41**, the latter to start the next day. IAW Article 49 of the Soviet constitution, a state of war was declared “in individual districts and across the whole of the USSR in order to guarantee social order and state security.” If people thought things were bad in Stalin's Russia, they were about to get worse. One imagines that some members of the NKGB and NKVD were rubbing their hands w/ glee. . . All releases from camps, jails and colonies of “counter-revolutionaries, bandits, recidivists, and other dangerous offenders” were to be stopped. At **07.00** on **22 Jun 41** all operational staff of the Moscow Directorates of the NKGB and NKVD were *confined to barracks* while the plans to secure the capital and surrounding area were put into practice. . . By **17.00** the NKGB and NKVD had arrested 14 people but had lined up another **240** for arrest including **71** German “spies” . . . plus hundreds of other “criminal elements.” The Department for Combating Misappropriation of Socialist Property and Speculation was directed to identify speculators and black marketeers, while **114** defense and state factories and enterprises were placed under special surveillance . . . and **472** checkpoints were set up. The guard on prisons, remand centers and detention camps was to be reinforced. . . [See text for more details.] A force of **492** officers were detailed to patrol rail-way lines and installations. Special military and police guards were placed on **14** key railway and other strategic bridges . . . Finally a force of **1525** police and special constables was to patrol Moscow's streets to maintain public order. . . (C. Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 215-16)

--**22.6.41:** The Soviet High Command fails completely to anticipate the nature of the German attack. After the war, Zhukov will write that neither he, Timoshenko, nor Shaposhnikov “calculated that the enemy would concentrate such a mass of armored and motorized forces and hurl them in compact groups on *all strategic axes* on the first day.” (Kirchubel, *Barbarossa* 1941 (3), *Army Group Center*, 27)

--22.6.41: First word of the German attack, reports of airfields and cities being bombed, reached the Commissariat of Defense at about **0400** on **22 Jun 41**. Four hours later, after consulting w/ Stalin, Timoshenko issued a *second directive*. It ordered the ground forces to “attack and annihilate all enemy forces” that had violated the frontier and the air units to strike **60-90** miles inside German territory and to bomb Koenigsberg & Memel. (Ziemke & Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 23-24)

--22.6.41: Stalin continued his *wishful thinking* even after the Germans had bombed the Black Sea fleet and the cities of Minsk – Kiev – Sevastopol. “*German generals would bomb even their own cities to provoke a conflict. Hitler could know nothing of this . . . urgently contact Berlin.*” When the German ambassador, Count W. von der Schulenberg, sadly told Molotov that a *state of war existed between their two countries*, Molotov could only ask pitifully, “*What have we done to deserve this?*” Stalin was more forthright. Locked in thought, he claimed that “*the enemy will be beaten all along the line.*” (J. Colvin, *Zhukov*, 66-67)

--22.6.41: *NKO Directive No. 2*, signed by Timoshenko, Malenkov and Zhukov, was issued at **07.15**. It carefully avoided labeling what had happened so far as a full-scale attack: [See text for details.] Stalin was still *clinging to the remote possibility of a diplomatic solution*. (C. Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 207-08)

--22.6.41 [Stalin meets w/ his generals at Kremlin]:

The first reports of the German attack started to come into the Commissariat for Defense at **3.30 a.m.** Zhukov rang Stalin right away. [See text for details.] . . . Again there was silence [from Stalin]. Then, finally, “tell Poskrëbyshev to summon the whole Politburo.” Poskrëbyshev, Stalin’s executive assistant, sent out the messages. Stalin was the first to reach the Kremlin, his pockmarked face drawn and haggard. The others arrived soon after.

Timoshenko reported bleakly: “The German attack must be considered an accomplished fact. The enemy has bombed the main airfields, ports, and major arterial junctions.”

Then Stalin began to speak slowly, choosing his words w/ care. Occasionally his *voice broke down*. Even now he tried to argue that the *German attack was a provocation by the German military*. “If it were necessary to organize a provocation, then the German generals would bomb their own cities,” he muttered. “Hitler surely does *not know about it*.” When he finished everybody was silent for some time, and so was he. Then he said, “We must get in touch w/ Berlin again and ring the embassy.”

The German ambassador came to the Foreign Ministry, *barely able to conceal his own distress*, to tell Molotov that the German government had declared war: there was no scope for further negotiation. Molotov returned to Stalin’s office and gave him the news. Stalin said calmly, “*the enemy will be beaten all along the line.*” Then, turning to his generals, he asked, “What do you recommend?” Zhukov replied, “Order the troops on the frontier to attack along the whole front and halt the enemy—he’s gone too far too fast.” Timoshenko said aggressively, “Not halt—destroy.”

So the meeting ordered the frontier armies to attack the enemy and destroy him wherever he had violated the Soviet frontier. They themselves were ***not to cross that frontier unless specially authorized***. The Red Air Force was given more forceful instructions: to destroy German acft on the ground and to bomb German cities, including Koenigsberg, up to 90 miles behind the line. ***This was Cloud Cuckoo Land***. By the time the order was issued, the Soviet air forces at the frontier had ***largely ceased to exist***.

Pacing up and down the office, Stalin asked in furious disbelief, “Surely the German air force didn’t manage to reach every single airfield?” “Unfortunately,” said Timoshenko, “it did.” “How many planes were destroyed?” “Around **700** at a first estimate,” replied Timoshenko. “That’s a monstrous crime,” said Stalin. “Those guilty of it should pay w/ their heads.” He was even more furious when he heard that ***all contact had been lost w/ Pavlov . . . and that the Germans were already threatening Minsk***,⁶¹⁶ the capital of Belorussia. “Your Pavlov needs to be asked some difficult questions,” he snapped. He ordered Shaposhnikov to fly immediately to Pavlov’s Hq. to find out what was going on, and sent Zhukov to Kirponos’ Hq. for the same purpose.

Orders were issued for the ***mobilization of all men born between 1905 and 1918***. The children of the leaders were among the first to respond to the call of duty. [See text for details.]

(R. Braithwaite, *Moscow 1941*, 69-71)

--**22.6.41** [Ordinary people respond to attack]: The news that war had come reached the *ordinary people of Moscow* in several ways. Vladislav Mikosha, the cameraman who had filmed the *destruction of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior*, was one of the ***few to have a short-wave radio***. He was home and suffering from insomnia when he turned it on at about **5 a.m.** that morning. [See text for details.] Ilya Zbarski was the son of the man who had developed the process for keeping Lenin’s corpse in decent order, and worked w/ him in the Mausoleum laboratory. He too had a ***short-wave radio***. [See text for details.] Apart from the leadership, the men already fighting at the front, and those who were suffering from insomnia and had their own radios, *most Soviet people still had no idea that they were at war*. [See text for details of Molotov’s address.] (R. Braithwaite, *Moscow 1941*, 73-74, ff.)⁶¹⁷

--**22.6.41**: Der deutsche Ueberfall auf die Sowjetunion traf die Moskauer Bevoelkerung wie *einen Blitzschlag aus heiterem Himmel*. Mit einem Krieg mit Hitler rechnete der Durchschnittsbuerger seit dem Herbst **1939 nicht**, u. auch die TASS-Meldungen in den letzten Wochen (insbesondere diejenige vom **14 Jun 41**) dienten dazu, die Gemueter der Sowjetbuerger wegen eines Krieges zu beruhigen. Die Nachricht vom deutschen Ueberfall erreichte die Bevoelkerung der Hauptstadt erst am Mittag des 22 Jun 41. . . W.M. Molotow gab diese im Moskauer Rundfunk bekannt. Er sprach sehr ernst u. (fuer sowj. Verhaeltnisse) sehr kurz. . . [see text]

Diese Rede wurde – durch Lautsprecher – in der ganzen Stadt verbreitet u. mehrmals wiederholt. Die Worte Molotows wechselten mit Marschmusik ab. Ueber den deutschen Vormarsch, ueber

⁶¹⁶ **Note**: Threatening Minsk with airpower I assume?

⁶¹⁷ **Note**: Braithwaite paints a nuanced picture of the reaction of Muscovites to start of the war—much patriotism, many volunteering at once to serve in the military, but others w/ no enthusiasm for the war at all, some even hiding so as to avoid receipt of callup papers! Another example of why it is so *dangerous to generalize about human behavior!*

den Stand der Lage an den Fronten, wurde nichts berichtet.⁶¹⁸ So gab es fuer die verschiedensten Geruechte guten Naehrboden. „**Jetzt wird das Ende des Hitler-Faschismus kommen.** Fuer seine Eroberungen in Europa wird Hitler nun die Quittung erhalten.“ – so dachten die Studenten der staatlichen Lomonosow-Universitaet ueber den Krieg u. **schlossen bereits Wetten ab**, wie lange es wohl dauern werde, bis die Rote Armee in Berlin einmarschiere. Diese optimistische Auffassung beruhte auf einer **gewaltigen Propaganda der Sowjetregierung**, die seit **1936** die These vertrat, dass es eine Wiederholung der auslaendischen Intervention 1918 bis 1922 nicht mehr geben wuerde. Wenn die Imperialisten u. Kapitalisten die Sowjetunion eines Tages dennoch angreifen wuerden, wuerde die Rote Armee **sofort zum Gegenangriff uebergehen** u. den Aggressor auf seinem eigenen Boden zerschmettern. „Dieser Gedanke war uns so in *Fleisch u. Blut* uebergegangen, dass wir einen Krieg auf sowjetischem Boden gar nicht mehr in Betracht zogen.“ (P. Gosztony, „Die erste Entscheidungsschlacht des Russlandfeldzuges 1941/42 (II),“ 102)

--22.6.41: On the night that German forces launched the largest and costliest war in history, Stalin had **little more than an hour of sleep**. By the time he was awakened German acft had already attacked the major Soviet air bases behind the frontier and were bombing Minsk – Kiev – Sevastopol. At **0400**, Zhukov already knew that German forces were attacking all along the Soviet western frontier. He was asked by Marshal Timoshenko to telephone their leader at his villa – the so-called nearer *dacha* at **Kuntsevo** – outside Moscow. This was an unenviable task. [See text for details.] Zhukov was ordered to assemble the entire Politburo at the Kremlin. Stalin arrived first, driving thru Sunday morning streets filled w/ **drunken, slumbering Muscovites**. [!]

Stalin was shocked but he was not, as is often suggested, paralysed by the news. For some time, he *persisted in his belief that this was a limited act of provocation*. When Timoshenko objected that bombing Soviet cities could not be regarded as merely a “provocation,” Stalin replied that **“German generals would bomb even their own cities,”** so unscrupulous were they when it came to provoking a conflict. He muttered that Hitler *could know nothing about the attacks and that someone should “urgently contact Berlin.”* As his Politburo companions arrived one by one, Stalin addressed them in a **slow, faltering voice. He was pale and tired.** Molotov was sent off to find out from the German ambassador what German intentions were [see text]. Molotov then hurried back to Stalin’s office. The news was received by Stalin w/ *unusual calmness*. He *“sank into his chair and was locked in deep thought,”* wrote Zhukov. After a long pause he spoke. *“The enemy,”* he assured everyone present, **“will be beaten all along the line.”** (R. Overy, *Russia’s War*, 73-74)

--22.6.41: Molotov arrives at Kremlin. Tells Stalin and gathered generals that Germany has declared war on Soviet Union. By Stalin’s lights, they had done nothing whatsoever to deserve this. On the contrary, for **22** months, since the start of the war in Europe, the Kremlin had been going out of its way to cajole [i.e., appease] Berlin. . . Only a few days earlier, Stalin had shipped **9** tons of strategic raw materials – copper, nickel, tin, molybdenum, and wolfram – to military plants in Germany. He had personally authorized German officers to investigate Soviet border areas, allegedly to find the graves of German soldiers lost during WWI, ignoring the repeated warnings of Zhukov and Timoshenko that these trips were logistical intelligence-gathering missions. (C. Pleshakov, *Stalin’s Folly*, 6-7)

--22.6.41: While Stalin began to graps key issues which would prove crucial to the country’s survival, Molotov could talk to the people. [After all, he had signed the non-aggression pact w/ Germany.] At midday he [Molotov] drove to the Central Telegraph Office on Gor’kiy Street,

⁶¹⁸ **Note:** Of course, Stalin and his high command had no idea what was happening at the front!

where, striving to overcome his stutter, he made the announcement at **12.15**. [See text for details of Molotov's speech to the nation.] He concluded [his speech] w/ those simple but soul-searing words . . . "***Our cause is just. The enemy will be beaten. Victory will be w/ us.***" A few blocks away from the studio, in the *eerily self-contained world of the Kremlin fortress*, Stalin ordered Kaganovich to *evacuate factories and 20 million people from the front-line areas*, while Mikoyan was tasked to *feed and supply the Russian armies*. Stalin was pleased w/ Molotov's radio performance, but, perhaps irrationally, had *already focused on General Pavlov*, who was doomed to lose Belarus, as the *target of his frustration and anger*. (C. Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 209)⁶¹⁹

--**22.6.41**: In Moscow, apparently, most of the day of the 22nd was *consumed trying to get information about what was happening from the fronts*, which, in turn, were trying to do the same w/ their subordinate commands. By evening, "regardless of incomplete reports . . . the situation required an immediate decision to organize further resistance against the enemy." At **2115**, Timoshenko dispatched a *third directive*:

Northwest and Western Fronts were to mount converging thrusts by infantry and armor from Kaunas and Grodno to Suwalki, and *Southwest Front* was to do the same toward Lublin to cut off the Germans on the **60-mile** stretch of frontier between Vladimir-Volynskiy and Krystynopol. Therewith, the frontier forces were ordered to "the offensive in the main directions for the purposes of destroying the enemy's assault groupings and carrying the war to his territory."

(Ziemke & Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 24)

--**22.6.41**: *Crucial decisions* that brought catastrophe to Russia on 22 Jun 41 had been „taken by *Stalin* and no one else.“ His *shock and astonishment* on early morning of 22 June were, then, all the greater, given his earlier self-assurance (that Hitler would not attack). But his spontaneous and unique admission *six days later* – i.e., „Lenin left us a great legacy, but we, his heirs, have f---d it up“ – of grievous mistakes (if attributed collectively and couched in a crude vernacular) amounted to a tacit acceptance that *other policy options had been available* that could have avoided the disaster – choices that were not taken. In retrospect, Stalin's decision that *he knew best* – a decision for inaction – in the face of all the warnings of impending grave danger for his country seems *one of the least comprehensible of entire war*...“History would surely have taken a different course had Stalin made other choices.“ [But] the story of Stalin's fateful choice is *more complicated* than an easy attribution to his arbitrary whim, scarcely credible blindness or stubborn stupidity would permit. (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 243-44)

--**22.6.41**: Auch auf dem Boden glueckte die *taktische Ueberaschung* an vielen Stellen, wenn sich auch manche sowj. Verbaende *taeffer zur Wehr setzten*. . . Wenn man von einer taktischen Ueberraschung an den meisten Frontabschnitten sprechen kann, *so trifft dies auf die mil.-strategische Fuehrungsebene nicht zu*. Der damalige Generalstabschef, Armeegeneral Schukow, raemte im nachhinein ein, dass von einer Ueberraschung, die durch eine ploetzliche Uberschreitung der Staatsgrenze ausgeloeest worden waere, *keine Rede sein kann*. Schukow u. seine Mitarbeiter *wussten seit Wochen um den Aufmarsch deutscher Truppen in Grenznaehe u. wo ihre Schwer-gewichte lagen*. Der Generalstab wurde vielmehr von der hohen Ueberlegenheit

⁶¹⁹ **Note**: For more text of Molotov's statement to Russian people see, A. Werth, *Russia at War*, 159-60. As Werth points out, in his statement, foreign minister Molotov betrays the fact that "in its dealings w/ the Germans, the Soviet government would have been willing to *consider almost any concessions* to put off the evil hour."

in den schmalen taktischen Angriffsabschnitten u. *der Wucht der ersten Stoesse* ueberrascht. Schukow fuehrten an, dass die deutschen Pz.-Verbaende erst in den letzten zwei bis drei Tagen in die Angriffsab-schnitte eingerueckt waeren, so dass die Aufklaerer sie *nicht mehr rechtzeitig haetten erfassen koennen*. Dies mag zutreffen, doch haette er durch eine vorausschauende Aenderung der frontnahen Dislozierung entsprechend reagieren koennen. (Magenheimer, *Moskau 1941*, 37-38)

--22.6.41: "At about **1:00 p.m.**, Stalin telephoned me to say, 'Our front cdrs lack combat experience and evidently they have become somewhat confused. The *Politburo* has decided to send you to the *Southwestern Front* as a representative of the General Headquarters of the Supreme Command. We are also sending *Shaposhnikov* and *Kulik* to the *Western Front*. I have seen them and given them instructions. You must fly to Kiev at once and then proceed to the front headquarters at *Ternopol*.' By the end of the day I was in Kiev." (Zhukov, *War Begins*, in: *Battles Hitler Lost*, 39)

--22.6.41: Unable or unwilling to believe what was happening, Moscow provided no useful orders or guidance to its desperately fighting forces on this "crucial" day. The orders given this day culminated in the evening in a directive which completely unrealistically called for a large series of *counteroffensives* to drive the Germans back. As a result, Soviet armored units were committed to combat in hasty and ill-prepared battles in which heavy losses accomplished little. (G. Weinberg, *Global History of WWII*, 279-80)

--22.6.41: In Moscow, most of 22 June was apparently consumed trying to get information about what was happening at the fronts, which, in turn, were trying to do the same w/ their subordinate commands. . . [By end of day] the frontier forces have been ordered to "the offensive in the main directions for the purposes of destroying the enemy's assault groupings and carrying the war his territory." (Ziemke & Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 24)

--22.6.41: General Georgij Shukow 1896-1974 (Aus seinen *Erinnerungen*):⁶²⁰

Um 03.30 Uhr meldete der Stabschef des Westlichen Militaerbezirks, General W.J. Klimowskich, Angriffe der faschistischen Luftwaffe auf belorussische Staedte. Drei Minuten spaeter berichtete der Stabchef des Kiewer Militaerbezirks, General Purkajew, ueber Luftangriffe auf ukrainische Staedte. Um 3.40 Uhr rief der Oberbefehlshaber des Baltischen Militaerbezirks, General Kusnezow, an: Die faschistische Luftwaffe bombardiert Kaunas u. andere Staedte.

Der Volkskommissar [Timoshenko] befahl mir, Stalin zu informieren. Ich rief an. Niemand meldete sich. Das Telefon laeutete ununterbrochen. Endlich vernahm ich die schlaftrunkene Stimme des Generals vom Dienst.

[See text for details of his „talk“ w/ Stalin!]

(Kempowski, *Das Echolot*, 25-26)

--0715 hours: At this time Stalin issued the *first wartime order*, under Timoshenko's signature. The German air force was to be destroyed and air attacks launched up to **100** miles into German

⁶²⁰ **Note:** Seit Januar 1941 Chef des Generalstabes der Roten Armee.

territory; the army was ordered to “annihilate” invading forces, using any means, *but not to cross the frontier w/ Germany*. (R. Overy, *Russia's War*, 74)

--**07.15** hours: Stalin's *Directive No. 2* goes out at this time. Signed by Zhukov as Chief of the General Staff, the directive stipulated “*active offensive operations . . .*” From the “center” [i.e., Moscow], *confused and ill-informed as it was, unrealistic orders went out across a communications net which had already been seriously impaired*. By this time, no announcement of war or a general mobilization had been made, nor did one come for several hours. Even at this stage, calamitous as it was rapidly becoming, *Stalin thought that he could still stop the war*. (For text of *Directive No. 2* see, Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 124-25.)

--Stalin: Although Stalin found time to encourage his proxy [i.e., Molotov], he had no time for the Red Army leaders. The only general he received between **8:30** a.m. and **1:15** p.m. was the semi-retired cavalryman Klim Voroshilov. . . At **1:15** Stalin decided to see Shaposhnikov. As for Timoshenko and Zhukov, they were in the doghouse. . . It was **2:00 p.m.** by the time the inscrutable Poskrebyshv ushered Timoshenko, Zhukov, and Vatutin into Stalin's study. . . Stalin was pacing the room, holding an unlit pipe in his hand. An unlit pipe always signaled his irritation. He maintained a silence for as long as he possibly could, then finally growled: “All right, what have you got?” Sullenly he read the drafts of the two decrees. He signed the one that *mobilized the reserves*. The next day, males between **23** and **36** were to report to local military authorities. He agreed w/ a proposal to impose martial law on the European part of the country. . . (See text for more details.) (C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 117-18)

--**13.00** hours (Zhukov remembers):

At about **1.00 p.m.** on **22 Jun 41** Stalin telephoned me to say, “Our front commanders lack combat experience and evidently they have become somewhat confused. The Politburo has decided to send you to the Southwestern Front as a representative of the General Headquarters of the Supreme Command. We are also sending Shaposhnikov and Kulik to the Western Front. I have seen them and given them instructions. You must fly to Kiev at once and then proceed to the front headquarters at Ternopol.”

By the end of the day I was in Kiev. It was dangerous to go any farther by air. German airmen were chasing our transport planes. We would have to go by car. Having received the latest news on the situation from Vatutin, I left for Ternopol where Col.-Gen. Kirponos, now commander of the Southwestern Front, had his command post.

We arrived at the [CP] late at night, and I immediately got in touch w/ Vatutin on the telephone.

Here is what he told me:

“By the end of **June 22**, despite vigorous measures, the general staff had *failed to receive accurate information about our forces or the enemy from front, army and air-force headquarters*. Information on the depth of the enemy penetration into our territory is quite contradictory. There are no precise data on losses in aviation and land forces. It is known only that the aviation of the Byelorussian District had sustained very great losses. The general staff cannot get in touch w/ front commanders Kuznetsov and Pavlov, who had gone out to their

troops. The headquarters of these fronts did not know where their commanders were at that moment.”

According to air-reconnaissance data, battles were being fought in the areas of our fortified zones and nearly **10 to 12** miles inside our territory. Attempts by front headquarters to contact the troops had no success, as there was ***neither cable nor radio communications*** w/ most of the armies and some of the corps.

(G.K. Zhukov, et al., *Battles Hitler Lost . . .*, 39-41)

--**12.00** hours: Only at noon did the Soviet government, through the limping phrases and halting tone of Molotov, announce to the Russian people in a radio broadcast that the ***Soviet Union was now at war w/ Germany***. (Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 125)

--**Directive No. 3**: After the many penetrations achieved by the German forces it was *impossible to restore a cohesive front*. . . A situation had thus arisen in which the only salvation of the Soviet troops would have been a strategy of *flexible defense and withdrawals*. Yet the People’s Commissariat for Defense and the Soviet general staff, ***w/ no accurate idea of what was really happening*** and, contrary to the most recent assertions, in a ***state of total confusion***, clung to the doctrine that the ***only task of the Red Army was to go over to counter-attacks and carry the war into the enemy’s territory***. At a time when **PzGr 3** and **4** had already achieved a deep penetration at the boundary between the Northwestern and Western Fronts, when German tanks on the sector of the Western Front were already at Kobrin, **50km** east of Brest, having achieved successes also on the South-western Front, when therefore the danger of a far-reaching envelopment was beginning to take shape, on the evening of **22 Jun 41** the People’s Commissariat for Defense ordered the “fronts” (army groups) and armies to ***mount counter-attacks against the German spearheads and, having annihilated them, to occupy the areas of Suwalki and Lublin***. [Note: This directive would result in over-hasty counter-attacks on all three axes of the German advance through end of **Jun 41**. (See, J. Hoffmann, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: 835)

--**Directive No. 3**:⁶²¹ That evening Stalin held another meeting. Timoshenko had still *not been able to make contact w/ Pavlov*. “Some of these generals have been getting fat. But they’ve learned nothing,” said Stalin.⁶²² He gave the unfortunately Timoshenko 24 hours to get matters under control. Yet another directive – **Directive No. 3** – was sent to the desperate commanders at the front. It admitted that the Germans had “achieved considerable success, while suffering heavy losses.” It ordered the Northern [sic] and Western Fronts to *encircle and destroy two German groups which had broken through the Russian defenses*. It told the Southwestern Front to hold the Germans on the frontier. These instructions bore *no more relation to the state of affairs on the ground than their precedessors*. (R. Braithwaite, *Moscow 1941*, 71)

--**21.15** hours: Timoshenko issued the last of all the blundering directives, **Directive No. 3**, which prescribed nothing less than all three Soviet fronts *taking the offensive*. The object was to hurl the German army back in one massive attack, ending it all in a single blow. . . The front commanders, struggling desperately to maintain the cohesion of their forces, had no option but to prepare the massive offensive operations, envisaged to a ***depth of some 50-75 miles***, which *Directive No. 3*

⁶²¹ **Note**: See, Appendix No. 2 in David Glantz’ book, *Barbarossa*, for the complete text of this directive, issued at **2115** hours on **22 Jun 41**. Actual content of the directive is a little different than Braithwaite describes it here.

⁶²² **Note**: Stalin’s fury at Pavlov—largely unjustified I think—seems to have built up to a fever pitch by end of day!

demanded. [See text for more details, including the *long approach marches* which had to be made by Soviet mechanized corps.] (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 132-33)

--**22.00** hours: The night which brought momentary respite to parts of the frontier commands also brought the *first operational digest (svodka)* from the Soviet General Staff, compiled at **22.00** hours . . . Of the *urgency of the situation it contained not the slightest trace. Blatant w/ complacency and swelled w/ ignorance it read:*

Regular troops of the German Army during the course of 22 June conducted operations against the frontier defense units of the USSR, attaining insignificant success in a number of sectors. During the second half of the day, w/ the arrival of forward elements of the field forces of the Red Army, the attacks by German troops along most of the length of our frontiers were beaten off and losses inflicted on the enemy.

(J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 134)

--During the first days of war there was an immediate reorganization of the Soviet Higher Command and Red Army to bring them on to a war footing. . . Leningrad Military District, under M.M. Popov, became North Front; Baltic Military District under F.I. Kuznetsov took to the field as Northwest Front; West Military District commanded by Pavlov became Western Front; Kiev Military District, commanded by Kirponos, became Southwest Front; Odessa Military District was reformed as **9 Army**, which afterwards became part of the newly formed South Front covering Bessarabia. (Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 99)⁶²³

--**21.6.41**: [That evening] Stalin still had not grasped the proportions of the catastrophe. Firm resistance was not good enough for him. He told Timoshenko to order a massive counterattack. **Directive #3** – issued in the evening – ordered the Northwestern and Western Fronts to “*encircle and destroy*” the enemy and to take Suwalki by the evening of **24 Jun 41**. The Southwestern Front received a similar order to “encircle and destroy” the Germans at Vladimir Volynsky and to take the Polish city of Lublin w/in **48** hours. On the evening of **22 Jun 41**, Stalin clearly still hoped that when he had restored order on the front line, he would be able to *conquer eastern Prussia and Poland*. (C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 128-29)

--On the Soviet side of the frontier the scene was one of the *greatest confusion*. More than **60** airfields in the border districts had been bombed repeatedly and intensively, and before midday the *Luftwaffe* claimed to have destroyed **800** acft against a lost of 10. The Red Army divisions on the frontier were away from any defensive positions and had been engaged in *normal peacetime routine duties*; some commanders were absent, and many divisional artillery regiments and signal battalions had been sent away to firing camps or arms centers to carry out specialized arms training. German acft had almost *undisputed air superiority and made Red Army road movement almost impossible*, while the *control and communication system in the forward areas broke down completely*, paralyzing the Soviet formations there. The Politburo itself, dazed by events and still hoping to stop the war even in the 13th hour, at **7.15** a.m. issued a directive ordering the Red Army to *keep out of Germany and restricting air activity to a limit of 90 miles w/in enemy territory*. Meanwhile, it kept open the radio link w/ the German Foreign Ministry and asked Japan to mediate. By the afternoon the higher Red Army HQs and the Kremlin were *already divorced from the reality of the situation*,⁶²⁴ and for this the *breakdown in signal communications was pri-marily*

⁶²³ **Note:** Believe all the *fronts* came “on-line” on **22.6.41**, immediately after outbreak of war.

⁶²⁴ **Note:** This is indeed a vital point: Throughout these first 21 hours of the war on 22.6.41, Stalin and his high command had not a clue what was going on at the front; and, to exacerbate matters, completely failing

responsible. Commanders lost touch w/ their troops and w/ each other and many formations and units became leaderless. Too often Soviet generals were both unwilling and *afraid to admit to their superiors that the true situation was unknown to them and beyond their control*, so that within hours of the outbreak of the war the military districts and the Ministry of Defense were already in the position where they not only imagined that they understood the true situation, but also believed that the counter-offensives which they had ordered were in fact taking place. By **10 p.m.** that day, the battle position was said to be regarded by the Chief of the General Staff in Moscow as being *relatively favorable*, “the enemy having been thrown back.” Some counter-bombing raids were ordered against Ploesti – Bucharest – Warsaw – Danzig, but since the bombers flew w/o fighter escorts they achieved little at the cost of heavy casualties. (Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 98-99)

--**22.6.41** (Churchill’s historic broadcast): In the midst of the conflicting, reticent and, to all appearances, untrue military communiqués, the Russian people derived what cheer they could from *Churchill’s historic broadcast* on the night of **22 Jun 41**. . . These were the passages that made a particularly strong impression on the Russians. He admitted that: “No one has been a more consistent opponent of communism than I have in the last **25** years. I will unsay no word that I have spoken about it.” But then he went on, as only he could do:

I see the Russian soldiers standing on the threshold of their native land. . . I see them guarding their homes where their mothers and wives pray—ah, yes, for these are times when all pray—for the safety of their loved ones. . . I see the ten thousand villages of Russia where the means of existence is wrung so hardly from the soil, but where there are still primordial joys, where maidens laugh and children play. I see advancing on all this in hideous onslaught the Nazi war machine. . . I see the dull, drilled, docile, brutish masses of the Hun soldiery plodding on like a swarm of crawling locusts. I see the German bombers and fighters in the sky, still smarting from many a British whipping, delighted to find what they believe is an easier and safer pray. . .

And then—the assurance that there would *never be a deal with Hitler*, and the promise that Britain would support Russia . . .

(Cited in: A. Werth, *Russia at War*, 161)

--**23.6.41** (Formation of the Stavka): On this day, the Central Committee announced the formation of the Stavka, a *traditional Russian concept of the high command*, at that time comprising Timoshenko as chairman, Stalin, Zhukov, Molotov, Voroshilov, Kuznetsov (C-in-C Navy), and the Group of Armies Reserve, initially commanded by Budenny. Zhukov’s general staff was subordinated to the Stavka. (J. Colvin, *Zhukov*, 67)

--**Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:**

6.4: Stalin and Soviet Western Front Respond:⁶²⁵

The commander of Pavlov’s 4 Army, Lt.-Gen. A.A. Korobkov, was at a theater in Kobrin, attending a popular operetta, *The Gypsy Baron*. He knew that his superior wanted everyone to

to comprehend the magnitude of their disaster, they attempted to implement pre-war plans by ordering major counterattacks all along the front, with disastrous results!

⁶²⁵ **Note:** See, Section **1.4.4** above for first part of this excerpt.

stay calm, and Korobkov was nothing if not a dutiful officer: If Pavlov went to the theater, he would do so as well. Still, he was distracted and unable to enjoy the entertainment. In the early evening, Korobkov had telephoned Maj.-Gen. Klimovskikh, Chief of Staff, Western Special Military District, and reported that the Germans had moved closer to the border. He asked for permission to order his troops to occupy their battle lines:

Klimovskikh said that that was impossible. To Korobkov's immense relief, he was able to leave the theater early. At about 11.00 o'clock, Klimovskikh called and told him to go to headquarters immediately and remain alert throughout the night. Unlike their carefree and trusting boss [i.e., Pavlov], Klimovskikh had a sharp mind. Having smelled a rat, he was now taking his own quiet precautions.

Still forbidden to communicate anything to his troops, Korobkov sent for his staff officers. In the headquarters, the officers wandered from one room to another, discussing the situation in whispers and trying to determine whether the sudden summons meant war. All divisions stationed at the frontier as well as the border guards kept reporting abnormal activity on the German side of the Bug River.^{decxviii}

At 2.00 in the morning, Lt.-Gen. A.A. Korobkov [C-in-C **4 Army**] received a call from the border city of Brest-Litovsk. The power, it seemed, was out, and there was no running water. Minutes later, the town of Kobrin, site of 4 Army headquarters, also went "dark." Thirty minutes after that, the general became aware that all communications with Pavlov's headquarters and with his troops along the border had been cut.^{decxix}

At 3:30 a.m., the coded telephones at the Ministry of Defense began to jingle, bringing reports of heavy German shelling along the entire frontier. Zhukov immediately telephoned Stalin at his dacha. The *vozhd* said nothing at first. Only his heavy breathing was audible. In spite of Zhukov's remonstrations, Stalin refused to sanction countermeasures. Within an hour, both Zhukov and Timoshenko were on their way to the Kremlin; when they arrived there, they encountered a "very pale" Stalin, "sitting at the table clutching a loaded unlit pipe in both hands."^{decxx} With him were the ubiquitous Molotov, NKVD Chief Beria, and Marshal K.E. Voroshilov, the former People's Commissar of Defense who had made dancing lessons mandatory for officers of the Red Army.^{decxxi} Stalin, while clearly "bewildered," desperately refused to let go of the thought that it all might only be "a provocation of the German officers." He was, writes historian Gabriel Gordetsky,

Little moved by Timoshenko's attempts to bring him down to earth, and ignored the Marshal's insistence that rather than being a local incident this was an all-out offensive along the entire front. Stalin simply dug in his heels, suggesting that "if it were necessary to organize a provocation, then the German generals would bomb their own cities." After some reflection he added, "Hitler surely does not know about this."^{decxxii}

Even after Molotov had met with Schulenburg, who informed the Soviet foreign minister, "with the deepest regret," that his government had felt it necessary to take "military measures" to counter Soviet troop concentrations along the eastern frontier, Stalin refused to exclude the possibility that Germany was simply trying to submit Russia to political blackmail. Not until 7.15 that morning were the Soviet armies in the west directed to "destroy the enemy forces" at once through the execution of "deep operations," in which the Soviet Air Force was to play a decisive role by disrupting German ground and air forces to a depth of 100-150 kilometers beyond the

frontier. But the Soviet Air Force was already undergoing its destruction at the hands of hundreds of German bombers, fighters and destroyer aircraft, operating with surgical precision. Thus the orders (Directive No. 2) were never carried out.^{dccxxiii}

In his fascinating account of the “tragic first ten days” of Operation *Barbarossa* from the Soviet perspective, Russian historian Constantine Pleshakov trenchantly depicts the way the war sounded, looked and felt to the Russian people – civilians and military alike – in its terrible first moments:

The war first reached people in sounds. Up and down the western border, people were woken at dawn by ferocious deafening blasts that went on and on, making the ground and the buildings shake. Some thought it was an earthquake. The mistake was understandable – most men and women hastily putting on their clothes had never experienced an earthquake or, for that matter, war.

Other sounds followed – ones that definitely could not be caused by an earthquake. Buglers’ horns trumpeted; officers yelled, “Alarm! Alarm!” and “Out! Quick!;” and an occasional hysterical voice wailed, “It’s war!”

The soldiers were met with a different kind of sound as soon as they left their barracks or tents and ran outside. The noise was very close, very difficult to describe, but unmistakably deadly: the humming of shrapnel whizzing by. The invisible pieces of steel sounded almost alive, like a swarm of locusts, perhaps. “Something buzzing flew by,” a young lieutenant wrote, “and, having hit the sand, went quiet.”

After the soldiers adjusted to the sounds, they noticed the fires. In the dim light, flames dotted the horizon, leaping, flaring, blinking, and spreading. They looked particularly sinister in the woods, though in the cities they did more damage.

The German planes were faintly visible in the dawn air. Tight black packages – the bombs, or “lead hail,” as many on the ground put it – separated from their fuselages. Boys climbed the trees to see the assaulting aircraft more clearly, but that didn’t make the sight more realistic; it was “like watching a movie,” one recalled.

When the sun rose, it subdued the glare of the fires, and pitch-black plumes of thick smoke dominated the landscape. The sun unveiled the devastation: corpses lying on the ground, buildings turned into smoking piles of rubble, burned-out cars littering the streets, craters bored by bombs. Parents hastily escorting their children out of town shielded their eyes, wanting to protect them from seeing the carnage. Most of the frontier ran near a river, and some people felt as if the water had turned brown with blood, although this might have been just their imagination.

Almost everyone noticed a strange byproduct of the shock: many people were worrying about a trivial loss or an insignificant problem. A border guard who had been showered with German shrapnel as he crossed the Bug River loudly lamented the loss of his service cap. Another soldier, trapped in a fort on the border, suddenly reached for his Komsomol membership card^{dccxxiv} and complained that it had no stamp indicating that he had paid his dues in June.

Often people found themselves absorbed by something totally irrelevant to their own survival, like a flock of rooks circling some felled trees that had once contained their nests.^{decxxv}

At Soviet 4 Army headquarters in Kobrin, the soldiers sent to repair their communications reported that hundreds of feet of telegraph wire were cut. At 3:30 a.m., Korobkov finally made contact with Western Front headquarters in Minsk, receiving instructions to place his troops on combat alert. Huddled with his staff in the headquarters' basement, Korobkov, by the faint light of kerosene lamps, struggled to contact his units to order them to their battle stations. Before he could do so, 42 Rifle Division reported that Brest was under attack. Fifteen minutes later (4:30 a.m.), the commander of an air force division burst into the headquarters, yelling that German bombers were obliterating his airfields. Before he could say more, an explosion rocked the building, followed by the drone of aircraft engines. Officers who had served in Spain at once recognized the sound for what it was – the unmistakable roar of Junkers bombers. After the planes had loosed their bombs, Korobkov ordered the immediate evacuation of the building. But before the headquarters staff had finished extricating the important documents from the safes, the *Luftwaffe* struck again. Seconds later, 4 Army headquarters was enveloped in smoke, fire and dust – the surviving Soviet officers hiding in ditches.^{decxxvi}

Shortly before the destruction of 4 Army headquarters, General Pavlov, in Minsk, received a disconcerting telephone call from Lt.-Gen. V.I. Kuznetsov, the commander of Soviet 3 Army. The Germans, he said, were bombing Grodno, a major city at the northern end of the Belestok salient. The army's communications were destroyed, and Kuznetsov could no longer contact his troops. Pavlov was flummoxed – “I don't understand what's going on,” he replied.^{decxxvii}

And so it was throughout this terrible Sunday, 22 June 1941. Confronted by the overwhelming onslaught of Field Marshal von Bock's Army Group Center, Pavlov's Western Front experienced an almost immediate paralysis of its command and control. The headquarters of Korobkov's 4 Army, destroyed in the opening hours of Operation *Barbarossa*, was never able to establish reliable contact with headquarters above and below it; and even though Kuznetsov's 3 and Golubev's 10 Armies “were in tenuous radio communications with Pavlov's headquarters, they were hardly more functional as command elements.”^{decxxviii} Adding to the problem was the fact that the Soviet officer corps did not trust wireless communications, “which seemed to them too vulnerable in a society obsessed with control.

As a result of that distrust, the military districts were acquiring radios slowly and were hesitant to put them to use. Of course each radio network was to have special operational and reserve airwaves, each radio its own call sign. The wartime airwaves and call signs were different from the ones normally used, and the military staff knew that it would take about a week to introduce them to every army unit down to battalion level. It was decided that, for “security reasons,” the call signs couldn't be communicated to the troops earlier, which meant that on June 22 the Red Army radios were not used.

Cable communications were mistakenly believed to be more reliable. In fact, only the last few miles of cable, in the immediate vicinity of front headquarters, ran underground. Most of the hundreds of miles of telegraph wires hung on poles lining the country's highways and railroads – an obvious and easy target for Hitler's commandos. All a saboteur had to do to disable a division was to cut out 100 feet of cable at the highway nearest its headquarters.

In something approaching criminal negligence, the telegraph lines had been left unprotected on the night of June 21. Neither the army nor the police, Zhukov nor Beria, the local field commanders nor the police chiefs had bothered to take the most obvious precautions.^{dcexxix}

General Pavlov was not a man endowed with strategic vision. He had no idea what Bock's ultimate designs were and "spent the day of June 22 in anguish, shuttling between different units and vainly trying to figure out what was going on."^{dcexxx} But with his communications knocked out by the German attack, he was unable to reach most of his generals. What he did know was that his supporting air forces were all but gone – for the most part obliterated on their airfields in the opening German strikes. In the first hours of the war, Western Front had lost hundreds of aircraft and the *Luftwaffe* now had firm control of the skies.

In an effort to gain some control over his tottering front, Pavlov ordered his deputy, Lt.-Gen. I.V. Boldin, to fly to 10 Army headquarters near Belostok and organize a counterattack. Flying through airspace swarming with German planes, Boldin somehow managed to reach Golubev's headquarters – two tents in a small wood by an airstrip. The 10 Army commander had been struggling to put up resistance despite shattered telephones, constant radio jamming and general chaos resulting from teams of German *Abwehr* (intelligence and counterintelligence) agents active at his rear. Not until 23 June did he try to attack with his mechanized corps in adherence to prewar plans; within days his army would cease to exist, except for stragglers struggling to break out of German encirclements.^{dcexxxi}

If Pavlov knew little about the actual extent of the catastrophe unfolding along his front, in Moscow they knew even less. In fact, the situation was far worse than anyone at the Kremlin or the Ministry of Defense believed, resulting in a series of hopeless orders for counterattacks with formations which no longer existed. At 2115 that evening, Stalin and Timoshenko issued Directive No. 3, calling for a general counterattack along the entire eastern front. Specifically, Northwestern and Western Fronts were to attack, encircle and destroy Army Group North, while Southwestern Front was to execute the same mission against Army Group South. Western Front was also ordered to contain the advance of Bock's Army Group Center along the Warsaw-Minsk axis. "This directive," argues historian Geoffrey Roberts:

was broadly in line with prewar plans for Red Army counter-offensive action in the event of war. It indicates that Stalin and the High Command fully expected the Red Army would be able to cope with the German attack and to carry out its own strategic missions, including mounting an effective counter-invasion of German territory. Indeed, according to the third directive, the Red Army was expected to achieve its initial objectives in East Prussia and southern Poland within two days.^{dcexxxii}

On the evening of 22 June, Pavlov and his chief of staff reported to Moscow that their 3 and 10 Armies had been pushed back, but only negligibly. Fourth Army, they assured their superiors, "is fighting, it is estimated, on the line Mel'nik – Brest-Litovsk – Vlodava." Basically unaware of the situation, having lost control over his armies, Pavlov was now reporting "estimates."^{dcexxxiii}

The night brought temporary respite to elements of the Soviet border commands. It also brought the first operational digest (*svodka*) from the Soviet General Staff, completed by 2200 hours. "Of the urgency of the situation," writes the late John Erickson, "it contained not the slightest trace. Blatant with complacency and swelled with ignorance, it read:

Regular troops of the German Army during the course of 22 June conducted operations against frontier defense units of the USSR, attaining insignificant success in a number of sectors. During the second half of the day, with the arrival of forward elements of the field forces of the Red Army, the attacks by German troops along most of the length of our frontiers were beaten off and losses inflicted on the enemy.^{decxxxiv}

Early that afternoon, Stalin, convinced that his commanders were simply “not up to it” – “our front commanders . . . have evidently become somewhat confused” – had decided that several very senior officers, acting as representatives of the High Command, should be sent to the fronts to find out what was going on and to offer assistance. Late that evening, the men (Zhukov among them) began to set out from Moscow for their separate destinations, where they were to observe first hand just what the Germans’ “insignificant success” had amounted to:

Even the brash and bumptious Kulik^{decxxxv} was aghast at what he found at the battlefield. General Zhukov, however, had few illusions: now with the South-Western Front, having fed on the tea and sandwiches the aircrew scraped up for him during his flight to Kiev, he learned from Vatutin^{decxxxvi} (now placed in charge of the General Staff) on the evening of 22 June that the General Staff lacked “accurate information” about either Soviet or German strengths and movements, that no information was to hand about losses and that there was no contact with Kuznetsov^{decxxxvii} or Pavlov in the Baltic and Western theaters. In spite of this, Stalin was sticking grimly to *Directive No. 3* and ordered that Zhukov’s signature be added to the document even in his absence.^{decxxxviii}

Over the next few days, Stalin and Timoshenko stubbornly insisted that Directive No.3 be carried out,^{decxxxix} although it had long been consigned to irrelevance by a situation shifting much too rapidly for them to grasp. Except on the Southwestern Front, where Zhukov’s skill and experience – as well as his brutality – weighed in the balance, contributing to the initial success of the massive Soviet armored counterthrusts on this front, the outcome was to be “uniformly disastrous.” By 23 June, the dangerous gap between Northwestern and Western Fronts, ripped open by the advancing German armor, had already widened to well over 100 kilometers.^{decxl} The Soviet armies protecting the frontier were being routed, enveloped, and destroyed. Within six days, German tanks would be rumbling into Minsk, more than 250 kilometers beyond the frontier. Of all the disasters which befell the Red Army in the initial days of Operation *Barbarossa*, it was the break up and disintegration of Pavlov’s Western Front which “reduced Stalin to wild, if impotent, fury.”^{decxli} He would soon settle accounts with the men he held responsible for the disaster.

(*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Chapter 6)

1.9.2.1: Notes from General Zhukov’s Memoirs:⁶²⁶

--**21.6.41:** On this day, all personnel of the General Staff and the Defense Commissariat were *ordered to stay on the job overnight*. The directive ordering maximum combat preparedness of frontier troops had to be promptly transmitted to the military districts. The People’s Commissar for Defense [Timoshenko] and I were *conducting incessant telephone conversations w/ the district commanders and their chiefs of staff, who reported hearing increasing noises on the other*

⁶²⁶ **Note:** All page numbers refer to book, *Marshal of Victory*. Vol. 1: *The WWII Memoirs of Soviet General Georgy Zhukov through 1941*, G. Roberts (ed.)

side of the border. They were getting this information from border guards and forward units covering the frontier. (280)

--At about midnight, Kirponos reported over the *high frequency telephone (HF)* from his CP at Ternopol that another German soldier had appeared in our lines besides the turncoat previously mentioned by General Purkayev. He was from **222 IR** of **74 ID**.⁶²⁷ . . . Everything pointed to the German forces moving up to the frontier. At **12.30 a.m.** we notified Stalin of this. Stalin inquired whether his directive had been sent to all districts. I replied in the affirmative. (280)

--At **03.07** hours I was called over the HF by Admiral F.S. Oktyabrsky, C-in-C of the Black Sea Fleet, who said that the fleet's acft warning system had reported the approach from the sea of large numbers of unidentified acft. The fleet was at full alert. The admiral requested instructions. "What have you decided to do?" I asked him. "There is only one thing to do: fire on the planes w/ the fleet's anti-acft batteries." (281)

--At **3.30** hours the Chief of Staff of the Western District, General V.Ye. Klimovskikh, reported a German air raid on towns in Byelorussia. About three minutes later, the Chief of Staff of the Kiev District, General M.A. Purkayev, reported an air strike on Ukrainian towns. At **3.40** the C-in-C of the Baltic Fleet, General F.I. Kuznetsov, called to report enemy air raids on Kaunas and other towns. The Defense Commissar said I should phone Stalin. I started calling. No one answered. I kept calling. Finally, . . . [see text for details] (281-82)

--At **4.10** hours the Western and Baltic Districts reported that the Germans had mounted armed actions on the ground. At **4.30**, Timoshenko and I arrived at the Kremlin. All Politburo members were assembled. The Defense Commissar and I were called in. Stalin, his face white, was sitting at the table *cradling a tobacco-filled pipe in his hand*. He said: "*We must immediately phone the German embassy.*" [See text for details of meeting w/ Stalin.] (282)

--At **07.15** hours the Defense Commissar's Directive No. 2 was communicated to the districts. However, considering the balance of strength and the obtaining situation it proved plainly unrealistic—and was therefore *never carried out*. On returning to the Defense Commissariat, Timoshenko and I learned that just before daybreak cable communication lines had been cut in all the western frontier districts and armies had no way to promptly transmit their instructions. . . As I have already said, *most units in the frontier districts had no radio facilities*. . . The General Staff was unable to obtain credible information from district hqs. and field commands, and this, naturally, *placed the High Command and the General Staff in a very awkward situation*. (282-83)

--By **0800** the General Staff finally *pieced together the following*: [see text for details]. . . At about **0900**, Timoshenko phoned Stalin and asked for permission to come to the Kremlin and present a draft Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet on nationwide mobilization and the establishment of the High Command Stavka, and on several other measures. The short distance from the Defense Commissarita to the Kremlin was covered by the Commissar's car and mine at top speed. I was accompanied by Vatutin, First Deputy Chief of General Staff, who had a map showing the strategic situation.⁶²⁸ [See text for details.] (283)

--At about **13.00** Stalin telephoned me: "Our Front commanders lack combat experience and are evidently a bit confused. The Politbureau has decided to send you to the South-Western Front as

⁶²⁷ **Note:** There was a **75 ID**, but no **74 ID**, in Army Group South's order of battle.

⁶²⁸ **Note:** Lord, what could have possibly been on that map! They knew virtually nothing at this time.

representative of the High Command. We are sending Shaposhnikov and Kulik to the Western Front. . . You are to fly to Kiev at once, and then proceed to Front Headquarters in Ternopol together w/ Khrushchev. . . I phoned my family to tell them not to wait for me, and in **40** minutes I was airborne. (284-85)

--We arrived at the [CP] late at night, and I immediately got in touch w/ Vatutin on the HF. Here is what he told me: [See text for details.] . . . Then General Vatutin told me Stalin had endorsed the Defense Commissar's draft Directive No. 3 and had ordered ***my signature to be affixed to it***. "What directive is that?" I inquired. "The Directive instructs our troops to mount a counter-offensive w/ the task of routing the enemy in all major directions and ***advancing into enemy territory***." [See text.] This directive was received by the C-in-C of South-Western Front sometime around midnight. As I had expected, the Front's Chief of Staff M.A. Purkayev ***objected sharply***. He believed the Front had ***neither manpower nor materiel to carry it out***.

After a detailed discussion at the Military Council of the Front I suggested that Kirponos should for the time being order the mechanized corps to concentrate their forces and strike back at the enemy's major Army Group South [?] which had broken through in the Sokal area. This counter-attack should be supported by the entire aviation at the disposal of the Front and a portion of the High Command's ***long-range bomber acft***. The Command and Staff of the Front swiftly drafted preliminary operational instructions, and communicated them to the armies and corps. Credit is due to the ***brilliant organizational skills and level-headedness*** of the Front Chief of Staff, M.A. Purkayev, and the Chief of Operations, I.Kh. Bagramyan, displayed in the highly strained situation of that first day of war. (285-86)

--By **0900** on the following day, **23 Jun 41**, we arrived at the [CP] of the **8 MC** under Lt.-Gen. D.I. Ryabyshev . . . [see text for details, 286, ff.]

* * * *

1.10: Results of the First Day of Operation *Barbarossa*

--**Note:** Within 24 hours of start of campaign, the War Office in London had concluded, w/ a wealth of technical argument, that “*German armored divisions might reach the line ROSTOV-MOSCOW in three weeks or less*, though allowing for a reasonable resistance by the Russians they would probably take as much as five weeks.” (Cited in: R. Braithwaite, *Moscow 1941*, 87)

1.10.1: The *Ostheer*

--**Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:**

6.6: Midnight, 22 June 1941 – the First 21 Hours

The terrible and murderous forces unleashed across the Russo-German frontier on this Sunday, 22 June 1941, would, in the end, decisively shape world history for decades to come. Yet for the tens of millions of soldiers and civilians suddenly engulfed in the maelstrom of war, concerns were, necessarily, more immediate and parochial. In his personal diary, General Franz Halder, Chief of the German Army General Staff, recorded the results of the day not only with considerable satisfaction, but with real insight as well:

The *overall picture* of the first day of the offensive is as follows:

The enemy was surprised by the German attack. His forces were not in tactical disposition for defense. The troops in the border zone were widely scattered in their quarters. The frontier itself was for the most part weakly guarded.

As a result of this tactical surprise, enemy resistance directly on the border was weak and disorganized, and we succeeded everywhere in seizing the bridges across the border rivers and in piercing the defense positions (field fortifications) near the frontier.

After the first shock, the enemy has turned to fight. There have been instances of tactical withdrawals and no doubt also disorderly retreats, but there are no indications of an attempted operational disengagement.

Such a possibility can moreover be discounted. Some enemy Hq. have been put out of action; e.g., [Belostok]^{dccxlii} and some sectors are deprived of high-echelon control. But quite apart from that, the impact of the shock is such that the Russian High Command could not be expected in the first few days to form a clear enough picture of the situation to make so far-reaching a decision. On top of everything, the command organization is too ponderous to effect swift operational regrouping in reaction to our attack, and so the Russians will have to accept battle in the dispositions in which they were deployed.

Our divisions on the entire offensive front have forced back the enemy on an average of 10 to 12 km. This had opened the path for our armor.^{dccxliii}

In the area of Army Group North, Field Marshal Ritter von Leeb's assault divisions achieved complete tactical surprise. Which was "all the more astonishing" because it had been impossible to conceal the masses of German troops, tanks and vehicles crossing the lower course of the Neman to reach their assembly areas, much less the "conspicuous" bridge-building activity.^{dccxliiv} Advancing on a narrow front with one panzer group and two infantry armies, Leeb's forces ripped through the partially-defended Soviet positions and penetrated deep into enemy territory, frustrating Red Army defensive plans and everywhere spreading chaos. In the van was 56 Panzer Corps, commanded by brilliant *Panzergeneral* Erich von Manstein. Its tanks crossed the East Prussian frontier at dawn and plunged into Lithuania; by late afternoon, northwest of Kaunas, Manstein's 8 Panzer Division had reached the Dubissa River and captured the vital Airogola road viaduct across it – an advance of more than 80 kilometers and the deepest drive made by any German unit on 22 June.^{dccxlv}

On the right wing, in the sector of Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt's Army Group South, the armor of General Ewald von Kleist's 1 Panzer Group rumbled across the Western Bug, rapidly breaking through along the boundary of Soviet 5 and 6 Armies in the direction of Rovno. The fighting in the south, however, was to be tenacious and difficult: Col.-Gen. M. P. Kirponos, Commander, Soviet Southwestern Front, had deployed his armies in depth and in positions bristling with well-camouflaged pillboxes, heavy field artillery and devious obstacles. Because the Soviets had expected the main German attack into the Ukraine – to seize its grain and, eventually, the coal of the Donbas and oil of the Caucasus region – the Southwestern Front order of battle included eight mechanized corps with almost 4300 tanks, among them more than 750 new KV and T-34 models. In the days ahead Kirponos, in an effort to bring off the major counterstroke mandated by Stalin's Directive No. 3, would commit this massive armored armada with some skill against Kleist's panzers, resulting in the greatest tank battle of the Second World War to date.^{dccxlvii}

In the center, the attacking forces of Field Marshal von Bock's Army Group Center had breached the Soviet frontier defenses all along the 500 kilometer front, with mobile advance detachments pushing up to 40 kilometers and, in some cases, even beyond, into Soviet territory. The greatest gains were made on flanks, by 2 Panzer Group on the right wing and 3 Panzer Group on the left wing of the army group. The armored spearheads of both panzer groups advanced rapidly, ignoring the enemy on their flanks and, ably supported by the *Luftwaffe*, inaugurated the envelopment of Soviet Western Front in eastern Poland and Belorussia.^{dccxlviii} By 2200 hours, as darkness descended upon the battlefield, the spearheads of Guderian's 2 Panzer Group, having shattered Soviet 4 Army, were fighting around Maloryta, Kobrin, and Pruzhany.^{dccxlviii} Specifically, the lead tanks of 3 Panzer Division (24 Panzer Corps) were approaching Kobrin, more than 30 kilometers beyond the frontier; on Guderian's left wing, 18 Panzer Division (47 Panzer Corps), chasing down Panzer Route 2, was only 20 kilometers southwest of Pruzhany.^{dccxlix}

On the left flank, Hoth's 3 Panzer Group had, by nightfall, smashed Soviet 11 Army, pried open a dangerous gap north of Grodno between Soviet Northwestern and Western Fronts, and begun the envelopment of the latter's 3 Army. In doing so, Hoth's armor had dashed 40 to 50 kilometers and seized all three bridges over the Neman – two at Olita by midday (7 Panzer Division) and one at Merkinė that afternoon (12 Panzer Division). Moreover, elements of an infantry division of Hoth's 5 Army Corps, advancing between his two armored corps, had, despite tough resistance, crossed the Neman that evening between Merkinė and Olita, while infantry of 8 Army Corps (Ninth Army) forded the river on a broad front north of Grodno.^{dcccl} It was, Halder commented in his diary, "quite a remarkable success. . . Full operational freedom of movement appears to have been achieved in [3 Panzer Group's] sector."^{dcccli}

These successes were all the more remarkable in view of the fact that, across the front, forward movement of both armor and infantry was severely inhibited by multiple terrain factors, including dense, almost primeval forest, marshes, and roadways which rapidly deteriorated under the strain of the thousands of tracked and wheeled vehicles moving across them. Once German units crossed the frontier, they discovered that the roads often turned to primitive sandy tracks in which vehicles became stuck, leading to serious congestion, stalling movement and multiplying fuel consumption. The few bridges leading across the Bug and other river lines became frustrating bottlenecks, a problem often exacerbated by poor march discipline.^{dcclii} In some cases, German units reported that difficult terrain and poor roads had caused them more difficulties than had Soviet resistance.^{dccliii}

Conversely, the impressive accomplishments of Army Group Center – and along the entire eastern front – were greatly facilitated by the lack of Soviet leadership at both the tactical and operational levels, while individually the Russian soldier often fought with laudable courage. Illustrative of the analyses found in German field reports are these observations by 3 Panzer Group:

Enemy aerial attacks did not take place on 22.6. No kind of general, orderly leadership could be discerned. There was resistance only through unconnected groups, the many field fortifications were either unmanned or only poorly manned.

Where the enemy did stand his ground, he fought doggedly and bravely to the death. No position reported any deserters or surrenderers. This made the fight tougher than in Poland and in the western campaign. . .

The teamwork with 8 Air Corps was particularly close and lively. . . Control of the air was almost totally achieved on the first day of the attack. . . Just as in Poland, our air assaults drove the enemy into the forests, from where he successfully harassed our rearward elements and columns. This may also be viewed as a reason for the initially surprisingly low numbers of enemy forces which appeared. . .

Higher level [Russian] leadership did not make an appearance at all during the first days. Lower level leadership was inert, mechanical, and lacked resolve in adapting to the situation as it developed. Orders were found which, despite knowing about German progress in the morning, demanded that a defensive line be occupied in the evening which we had already reached in the afternoon. . . Their methodical training was no match for the huge impact of the surprise.

The individual fighter was tougher than the fighter of the world war, no doubt a result of the Bolshevik concept, but also incited by the political commissars (who, for their part, had carefully taken off their insignia and wore ordinary soldiers' uniforms), and by 20 years of a Soviet rule which had no consideration for human life and was filled with a veritable contempt for life [*Lebensverachtung*].^{dccliv}

Despite Halder's conviction that Russian forces in the frontier regions had offered "no indications of an attempted operational disengagement" – and indeed, were now incapable of such a response – German front commands were much less certain about Soviet intentions. In an early evening conference at Guderian's headquarters, Field Marshal von Kluge expressed the opinion that

Russian forces were conducting a planned withdrawal (*planmaessig ausweicht*) and intended to put up “strong organized resistance” in positions further to the rear. Guderian disagreed, pointing out that the enemy had been badly shaken by the initial German assault and was only capable of offering weak local resistance.^{dcciv} What *was* certain, however, was that German forces, in particular the mobile troops, needed to rapidly and unmercifully exploit the confusion in the enemy’s ranks by building on the day’s successes and thwarting Russian attempts to reestablish a stable front line in the interior. “In the staff of 3 Panzer Group there was no doubt,” recalled Hermann Hoth after the war, “that the advantages gained through surprise needed to be exploited the next day with every means at our disposal. The panzer corps had to advance far to the east.”^{dccv}

(Barbarossa Unleashed)

1.10.2: The Red Army

--The ground war was an even greater disaster [than the air war]. In some areas border guards offered heavy resistance; but where it counted the Germans broke through and the panzers moved rapidly to exploit the ensuing collapse. The STAVKA (Soviet High Command) played into German hands. For the most part it ordered counterattacks in all directions. At the end of the day it issued a reassuring, but false, communiqué indicating that the Germans had made only insignificant gains that morning, and that in the afternoon “attacks by German troops along most of the length of our frontiers were beaten off and losses inflicted on the enemy.” In fact, across the *entire breadth of the front*, the Germans had *achieved surprise*. Already their panzer and motorized divisions had left behind Soviet frontline positions and were advancing deep into the Red Army’s rear. (W. Murray, *A War to be Won*, 121)⁶²⁹

* * * *

⁶²⁹ **Note:** This is the “uncorrected page proof” version of this book!

1.11: *Personal Eye-witness Accounts*⁶³⁰

1.11.1: German (military & civilian)

--21.6.41: Uffz. Kurt Krämer 1912-1945 (im Osten):

Meine liebe Leni, Klaus u. Elke!

Da die Zeit knapp wird, sende ich Dir in ganz grosser Eile recht recht herzliche Gruesse. Verzage nicht, denn ich werde Dich u. unsere Kinder bestimmt wiedersehen. Danken wir unserem Fuehrer u. denken wir an die Groesse unserer Zukunft. Unsere Kinder werden dereinst diese Zeit bewundern.

Es lebe der Fuehrer

Dein Kurt

(Kempowski, *Das Echolot*, 17)

--21.6.41: Assistenzarzt Dr. Hermann Türk 1909-1976 (am Bug):⁶³¹

Die Spannung waechst auf dem Hoehepunkt. Im Radio immer noch nichts. Diese Nacht soll es losgehen! Das Wetter ist prima. Hitlerwetter, sagen wir. Morgens kommt Oblt. Knütel. Er liegt mit seiner Kp. ganz in unserer Naeh.

Das Wald wimmelt von Panzern, Artillerie u. Pferden. Unserem Korps ist naemlich auch die **1. K.D.** unterstellt.

Abends kommt der I B der Division. Um 3.15 Uhr soll der erste Schuss fallen. Brest-Litowsk soll mit Brandoel, mit 330.000 kg beschossen werden. Da koennen unsere *Nebelwerfer* ihren ersten Einsatz zeigen. . .

[See text . . .]

(Kempowski, *Das Echolot*, 10)

--21.6.41: *Leutnant* Heinz Döll 1919 (am Bug) (**18 PD**):⁶³²

Am 21.Juni, fruehmorgens, erhielt ich den Auftrag, eine Stellung oberhalb des Bug-Ufers zu erkunden, um die Ziele auf russ. Seite bekaempfen zu koennen – vorsorglich, hiess es immer noch.

⁶³⁰ **Note:** Some eye-witness accounts can also be found under the primary outline headings, i.e., German Army Groups, *Luftwaffe* operations, German/Russian High Command.

⁶³¹ **Note:** I believe he was with **3 PD**. Confirm!

⁶³² **Note:** I believe Döll was with **18 PD**. On 22.6.41, he notes crossing the Bug “in ein Sturmboot des **Kradschtz.-Batl. 18.**” (23)

Das jedoch wollte ich lieber mit auesserster Vorsicht bewerkstelligen. Ich holte mir einige Kanoniere vom 2-cm Flakzug, vor allem den Entfernungsmesser samt Geraet. Wir verkeideten uns mit Strohhueten, Bauernkitteln u. Heugabeln. Dann durchstreiften wir die Wiesen am Bug, dem Grenzfluss zwischen Deutschland u. Russland. . .

Aber so unauffaellig, wir wir wollten, gelang die Vermessung nicht. Aus einem Gebuesch drueben trat ploetzlich *eine russ. Patrouille* mit drei Soldaten in das hohe Gras u. ging zum Bug-Ufer, als sie ploetzlich stutzen. In ihren Gesichtern konnten wir ihre Ueberraschung ablesen. . . [See text for more fascinating details on this anecdote].

In der Abenddaemmerung dieses heissen Tages, des 21. Juni 1941, wurde die Batterie an die Fahrzeuge. *Die Froesche in den friedlichen Bug-Wiesen gaben noch ihr volltoenendes Konzert.* Da sassen wir auf den Zugmaschinen im Walde, als uns ein *Aufruf des Fuehrers* verlesen wurde: „Soldaten der Ostfront!“ [See text for more details]

(Kempowski, *Das Echolot*, 10)

--22.6.41: Iași [Jassy?], June 22nd:

The war against Soviet Russian began at dawn today. It was the first time for two months that I had heard the guns speak. (The last time was in April, beneath the walls of Belgrade.) Amid these vast expanses of corn, in these *boundless "forests" of sunflowers*, I see the war once again in all its metallic precision, in the glitter of its steel machines, in the continuous, uniform roar of its thousand engines. . . Once again the smell of men and horses gives way to the overpowering reek of petrol. (Yesterday, as I drove north-west along the Soviet border from Galatz to Iași, following the line of the Prut, I came upon groups of stern, impassive *Feldgendarmen* standing at the various crossroads, armed w/ their red-and-white indicators, their brass discs dangling from their necks.

Once I was help up for two hours at a crossroad while a German column went by. It was a mechanized division, preceded by a fleet of heavy tanks.⁶³³ It came from Greece. . . The soldiers rode in open lorries, sitting on benches w/ their backs to the driver. Their *faces white w/ dust*. Each lorry had a likeness of the Parthenon painted in white lead on its bonnet—a childish representation of Doric columns portrayed in white varnish on the dark-grey metal. Instinctively one knew that beneath the mask of dusk the soldiers' faces were scorched by the sun, pinched by the Greek wind. The men sat in strangely stiff attitudes; they had the appearance of statues. They were so white w/ dust that they *looked as if they were made of marble*. . .

(C. Malaparte, *The Volga Rises in Europe*, 26-27)

⁶³³ **Note:** I have no idea what German unit Malaparte might be referring to here; map of German dispositions for 22.6.1941 in GSWW shows no panzer unit in sector of 11th Army.

--22.6.41: Hildegard Plievier 1900-1970 (Domodjedowo bei Moskau):⁶³⁴

An einem heissen Sommertag kam Dröll schon mit dem Fruehzug u. teilte uns, aufs hoechste erregt, mit: „Die Deutschen sind in Russland einmarsch-iert!“

Wir waren wie gelaehmt. Als wir nach dem Essen auf der Veranda sassen, brach es aus mir heraus: „Oh Theodor, was machen wir jetzt hier in diesem fremden Land?“

Mein Mann schien diese Frage erwartet u. seine Antwort schon seit Monaten vor-berichtet zu haben. Ohne zu ueberlegen, antwortete er schlicht: „Du wirst so tapfer sein, wie du immer warst!“

Diese wenigen Worte beruhigten mich ausserordentlich.

Schon am naechsten Tag spuerte man die ersten Veraenderungen. Flakbatterien wurden in unmittelbarer Naehe von uns eingegraben u. schossen sich ein. Erschrocken flogen die Voegel von ihren Nestern hoch, u. meine Hunde ver-krochen sich unter meinem Bett. Ihr leises Wimmern schnitt mir ins Herz. . . Zum Baden zu gehen, wagte ich nicht mehr, denn im Wald wimmelte es von Soldaten.

(Kempowski, *Das Echolot*, 27-28)

--“Am 22.6.1941 griff Deutschland die Sowjetunion an, obwohl Hitler im August 1939 einen Nichtangriffspakt mit Stalin abgeschlossen hatte. Als wir dies in der Heimet hoerten, waren wir entsetzt. Mein Schwiegervater meinte: „*Jetzt ist der Krieg verloren.*““ Napoleon hatte es ja schon einmal vorgelebt. (M. Miethe, *Rechts zum Friedhof*, 30-31)

--6:00 a.m., radio announcement of war with Russia on Sunday, 22 Jun 41, came as a great shock to some. Rumors of all kinds in months before war, in effort to explain growing concentrations of German troops along the demarcation line with UdSSR. For ex., German troops had agreement with Soviets to march thru Ukraine to reach Iraq, then advance to the Suez Canal. Ca. 20 Jun 41: “wurde in Leisnig allen Ernstes erzaehlt, der Anhalter Bahnhof in Berlin werde festlich geschmueckt, offenbar kaeme Stalin in die Reichshauptstadt. Fuer all diejenigen, die das geglaubt hatten, war nun der Krieg mit Russland ein *Schlag ins Gesicht*.“ (Siegfried Risse, „*Das Leisniger IR 101 u. der 2. Weltkrieg*.“ 4)

--The public reaction in Germany to the sudden outbreak of war with Soviet Russia was mixed. In Berlin, the official public response was stoical, demonstrating “complete trust in our *Wehrmacht*” and “facing the coming events with calmness and martial determination.”⁶³⁵ The reality was rather different. Many people, particularly those who had not seen it coming, reacted with a profound sense of shock. Yet there was also a profound sense of liberation among many ordinary Germans, as the weeks fraught with speculation and rumor were finally over and “Germany could at last engage with what many of them regarded as their country’s most dangerous opponent. Even the less ideologically committed would have absorbed the vehement anti-Soviet rhetoric of the early

⁶³⁴ **Note:** Schauspielerin, Romanautorin . . . emigrierte 1933 mit ihrem zweiten Mann Theodor Plievier in die Sowjetunion . . . (717)

⁶³⁵ *Völkischer Beobachter*, 24.6.41, 2. Quoted in: Roger Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 71.

1930s and adjusted only with difficulty to the tactical alliance with Moscow which had opened the war.”⁶³⁶ In the paragraphs below, *Martha Arazym*, Dr. Haape’s future wife, recalls her response to the start of Operation Barbarossa.)

And now, as of this morning, we’ve got this war with Russia. My mind wasn’t capable of comprehending the idea, never mind processing it fully. I hung on the radio, trying to find out more. The fanfares, which nearly made me tremble, would introduce every piece of breaking news over the next few years. Then the announcement: “The High Command of the *Wehrmacht* proclaims...” It is the 22nd of June 1941.

A large photo of Heinz in a simple soldier’s uniform hung in my living room, quite naturally. I looked at it for a long time, saw his clear eyes, his friendly expression and the slight smile on his lips. I smiled back. Suddenly, Heinz seemed close enough to touch, he was with me in this room. Then it came whispering from my lips: “Dear God, protect him for me. Give him Your blessing.”

I lived in constant fear and trepidation, but was also full of hope, even if I knew my Heinz was in the gravest danger on the Russian Front. I felt close to God and him. I sat daily at my desk and wrote, including him in all my day-to-day concerns. That way, I always felt connected to him. I also noticed how much interest in and engagement with my stories he showed. A strong, invisible bond joined us; gave us both strength, hope, and faith that we would see each other again.

(Martha Haape, *Memoiren*, 86C-86D)

--22.6.41: Grete Dölker-Rehder 1892-1946 (Stuttgart):⁶³⁷

Zufaellig macht Otto heute morgen das Radio an, Ribbentrop spricht, wir haben – Krieg mit Russland? – Warum! Wieso? Trotz der Geruechte, die seit Monaten umgingen, kommt es uns nun doch *sehr ueberraschen*. Jeder macht sich seine Gedanken, je nach Einstellung sagen die Leute, Gott sei Dank, das musste ja sein. Oder: unsere Fuehrung kann nicht aufhoeren, *sie siegen sich zu Tode*, sie wollen die ganze Welt erobern etc. Ich denke mir so: . . .

Soviel ist gewiss: ernste Sorge vor dem Ausgang dieses Krieges hat niemand. Der Fuehrer hat gesagt, noch nie in der Geschichte sei ein so grosses u. so gut ausgeruestetes Heer gegen ein Land gezogen, wie jetzt das deutsche gegen Russland. – Finnland u. Rumaenien helfen uns.

(Kempowski, *Das Echolot*, 20-21)

--22.6.41: *Leutnant* Heinz Döll 1919 (am Bug) (18 PD):

⁶³⁶ Roger Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 71.

⁶³⁷ **Note:** Veroeffentlichte Novellen, Erzaehlungen, Maerschen u. Romane. (709)

Genau um 3.10 des 22. Juni 1941 waren wir feuerbereit. Etwas erregt folgte ich jetzt dem Minuten- u. Sekundenzeiger meiner Uhr bis zum Feuerbefehl.

Um 3.15 durchzuckte ein Blitz von gigantischer Dimension die Nacht. Tausende von Artl.-Geschuetzen zerrissen die Stille. Ich werde diese Sekunden nie vergessen. Doch was sie fuer die Welt u. Deutschland bedeuteten – lag abseits jeder Gedankenfuehrung.

Die Geschuetzfuehrer an den Zielfernrohren feuerten auf die Scharten des rund 600 Meter entfernten Bunkers. Etwa 15 Minuten dauerte das Inferno der Artillerie. . . [see text]

Wir beiden Offiziere u. ein Kanonier als Melder stiegen in ein Sturmboot des **Kradstz.-Btl. 18**, brausten ueber den Bug, richteten Karten u. Marschkompass ein u. marschierten im ersten Tagesschimmer los. Die Infanterie ging in Gruppen vor, ihre Stahlhelme hoben sich vor dem aufsteigenden Licht ab. [See text for more details] . . .

Die Kanoniere erzaehlen mir von einem unglaublichen Erlebnis: An unserer Uebergangsstelle seien die Panzer wie U-Boote in den Bug getaucht u. am Ostufer wieder an Land gegangen. „Starker Tobak“ – dachte ich, doch so war es. [See text]

Und ziemlich empoert berieten sich die Geschuetzfuehrer von einem „Anpffiff“ des Div.-Kdrs. General Nehring: Bei Anflug sowjetischer Maschinen verlangte der General Flakfeuer. Er konnte nicht einsehen, was dazu gehoerte: [see text for details]. Sollten die Kenntnisse eines hochqualifizierten Generals *so unzureichend* gewesen sein? Ich glaube es. Einen Scherz wird sich der Panzerfuehrer wohl kaum erlaubt haben . . .

(Kempowski, *Das Echolot*, 23-24)

1.11.2: Russian (military & civilian)

--21.6.41: Der Oblt. Iwan Kowaljow 1916 (am Pruth):⁶³⁸

Sonnabend. Ueberall im Land, ausser an der schon im Verlauf des Jarhes unruhigen Westgrenze, herrschte gewoehnlicher Hochbetrieb vor dem Ruhetag. Den meisten Menschen lag der Gedanke sicher fern, dass in zehn Stunden das schreckliche Wort „Krieg“ erklingen wuerde. Nur die hoechste militaer-politische Fuehrung des Landes war lange vor jenem tragischen Tag ueber die Vorbereitungen Deutschlands auf den Ueberfall der Sowjetunion im Bilde.

Unsere Armee u. unser Volk hatten *ein grenzenloses Vertrauen zur „Genialitaet“ Stalins* u. liessen sich noch eine Woche vor dem Kriegsausbruch von einer TASS-Erklaerung einwickeln, nach der Deutschland unter keinen Umstaenden den Nichtangriffspakt verletzen u. unser Land angreifen wuerde. Sogar erfahrene Berufsmilitaers zweifelten nicht an der Glaubwuerdigkeit der offiziellen Propa-

⁶³⁸ **Note:** Im Juni 1941 Oblt. u. Chef des Stabes beim **71 Schtz.-Rgt.** der **30. Irkutsker Schtz.-Div.** (711)

ganda. Nicht zufaellig wurden auch in unserer Division, die in der Naehe der Westgrenze am Pruth stationiert war, viele Offiziere, unter ihnen der Rgt.-Kdr. des **256. Schtz.-Rgt.**, Safonow, beurlaubt u. verliessen ihre Garnisonen in Moldawien.

Ja, alle vertrauten unserer Fuehrung *grenzenlos*, obwohl 5,5 Millionen deutsche Soldaten u. ihre Verbuendeten schon an unserer Grenze aufmarschiert waren. Was konnten wir dem Gegner entgegenstellen? . . . [See text for more great details!]

(Kempowski, *Das Echolot*, 13)

--**21./22.6.41 (Brest)**: Der ehem. Krankenschwester Katschowa, Braskowa Lesnewna, **Karbuk, Georgij M.** u. Borislaw gehen mit mir [P. Kohl] ueber das Festungsgelaende. **Karbuk, G.M.**, heute **62** Jahre alt, erzaehlt:⁶³⁹

Ich war damals **18**. Am Samstag, dem **21 Jun 41**, am Vorabend des Krieges, bin ich zusammen mit meinen Freunden in den Park gegangen. Ich weiss es noch genau: Es war ein warmer Abend. Da spielte ein Orchester. Es gab Musik, die Leute haben getanzt. Wir trafen unsere Maedchen, waren lustig. Dann, in der Nacht, es begann gerade zu daemern, weckte mich ein Vater: „Steh auf!“ schrie er. „Es ist Krieg!“ Es waren nicht einzelne Schuesse zu hoeren. Es war eine ganze Kanonade. Die Artillerie, die die Festung beschoss. Da sahen wir auch schon die Bomber ueber Brest fliegen u. wie sie die Bomben abwarfen. Wir sind nach draussen auf die Strasse, da rannten unsere Soldaten. Wir fragten: „Was ist los?“ Und sie: „Seht ihr nicht, es ist Krieg!“ Wir Jugendliche wollten nicht an Krieg glauben. Fuer uns war das etwas Fernes. Wir ahnten wohl, dass *bald ein Krieg ausbrechen werde*. Wir haben doch die *Deutschen hinter dem Bug gesehen*. Trotzdem wir wollten nicht daran glauben. Doch als wir auf der Strasse die ersten Verwundeten u. Toten auf dem Pflaster liegen sahen u. all das Blut – da haben wir daran glauben muessen, dass nun Krieg war. Nach ein paar Stunden fuhren schon die ersten Panzer, danach die Motorradfahrer durch die Stadt, u. dann die Infanterie.

(P. Kohl, *„Ich wundere mich, dass ich noch lebe,“* 27-28)

--**22.6.41: Student Lew Besymenski:**⁶⁴⁰

Der Morgen des **22 Jun 41** in Moskau war *warm, sonnig u. wirklich sonntaeglich*. An einem solchen Tag konnte man *leicht alle Sorgen vergessen*, die mitunter nach der Lektuere der Zeitungen aufkamen – das bekannte TASS-Dementi vom **14 Jun 41**, das die Absicht Deutschlands, die Sowjetunion zu ueberfallen, bestritt, hatte beruhigt. . .

Der Hof unseres Hauses . . . Gegen 12 Uhr wurde die [Radio] Sendung ploetzlich unterbrochen u. eine wichtige Mitteilung angekuendigt. Ich schaltete das Radio in der Wohnung ein u. hoerte gemeinsam mit meinem Vater. Erst allmaehlich be-

⁶³⁹ **Note:** Appears from his eye-witness account that he was in town of Brest and not on the grounds of the fortress. He later states he lived in Brest.

⁶⁴⁰ **Note:** Lew Besymenski was a **20**-year-old student “des damals in der Sowjetunion weitbekanntem *Instituts fuer Philosophie, Literatur u. Geschichte*.” (6)

griff ich den Inhalt der Rede W.M. Molotows: „**Mein Sohn, das ist der Krieg**,“ diese Worte meines Vaters sind mir *unvergesslich*, damit begann der erste Krieg in meinem Leben. . .

(L. Besymenski, *Die Schlacht um Moskau*, 45)⁶⁴¹

--22.6.41: Anders⁶⁴² war die Reaktion [zum Anfang des Krieges] der Arbeiterschaft. Der Parteiorganisator u. Ingenieur Victor A. Krawchenko schildert den **22 Jun 41** in einer Moskauer Ruestungsfabrik wie folgt:

Einige Stunden nach der Molotow-Rede kam ein Parteiagitator zu uns. Wir beriefen eine Versammlung aller Arbeiter ein. Ich sass mit Direktor Manturow u. dem Chef des Parteikomitees der Fabrik, Jegorow, auf der Rednertribuene. Ich pruefte die *mueden, finsternen Gesichter unserer Arbeiter*, waehrend der Redner den Verrat des deutschen Diktators schmaechte u. die Ehrlichkeit unseres eigenen Diktators pries. Ich gewahrte *Zorn u. Verblueeffung, aber auch Muedigkeit, Verwirrung u. Kummer. Einige Frauen weinten* . . . Die von der Nachricht vor den Kopf gestossenen Arbeiter klatschten ohne Begeisterung bei den ueblichen Pausen u. kehrten dann verwirrt an ihre Arbeitsbaenke, Schreibtische u. Plaene zurueck. Wir arbeiteten wie gewoehnlich bis zum Ende des Tages.

(Cited in: P. Gosztony, “*Die erste Entscheidungsschlacht des Russlandfeldzuges 1941/42 (II)*,” 102-03)

--22.6.41: Moscow AP correspondent Henry C. Cassidy.⁶⁴³

I had what seemed at first to be very bad, but what turned out to be the very good, luck to witness the outbreak of war, not from Moscow, but from the peaceful, sunlit terrace of the *Riviera Hotel at Sochi*.⁶⁴⁴

It was a beautiful Sunday, warmed by the sun, freshly washed by the rain, after a tempest the previous day. The Black Sea dashed briskly against the breakwater and sent its waters rushing across the concrete walk. The war had been on for

⁶⁴¹ **Note:** **Lew Alexandrowitsch Besymenski** (russisch Лев Александрович Безыменский; *30. Dezember 1920 in Kasan; †26. Juni 2007 in Moskau) war ein russischer Autor, Historiker, Journalist sowie Professor für Militärgeschichte an der Moskauer Akademie für Militärwissenschaften. Er absolvierte die philosophische Fakultät der Moskauer Staatlichen Universität und war im Zweiten Weltkrieg als Dolmetscher und Aufklärungsoffizier für die Marschälle Schukow und Rokossowski tätig. Neben der Teilnahme an mehreren Schlachten dolmetschte er unter anderem 1943 in Stalingrad bei der Vernehmung des deutschen Oberbefehlshabers Friedrich Paulus. Nach Ende des Krieges beschäftigte er sich im Rahmen einer Geheimaktion der sowjetischen Führung mit der Erforschung des Führerbunkers. Im Anschluss daran war er unter anderem als Journalist in Bonn sowie als Historiker tätig. Bekannt wurde er auch als Autor zahlreicher Bücher über den Zweiten Weltkrieg und das deutsch-sowjetische Verhältnis zu dieser Zeit. Seit 1985 gehörte er dem Beirat des Zentrums für Studien zur Deutschen Geschichte in Moskau an; seine Professur an der Moskauer Akademie für Militärwissenschaften trat er 1999 an. Zuletzt arbeitete er für die Moskauer Zeitschrift *Nowoje Wremja*. (<https://de.wikipedia.org>)

⁶⁴² **Note:** Compare the downcast reaction of these tired workers w/ students at a state university in Moscow; see, P. Gosztony, Section 1.9.2.

⁶⁴³ **Note:** American journalist (1910-88)—just 30/31 years of age in June 1941.

⁶⁴⁴ **Note:** A summer beach resort town on the Black Sea coast, well east of the Crimea. Sight of the 2014 Winter Olympics.

hours, but I had no premonition of it, as I sat on the hill above the beach and watched the waves.

A telegram had come for me that morning from Moscow, saying: “Plane immediately.” Idly, I wondered what the reason for it was, personal or business. Witt Hancock, my predecessor in Moscow, had been planning vaguely to come through Moscow if he were ordered home from his post in Turkey. In that case I had left word I would return to Moscow to meet him. That, I decided, must be the reason for the telegram. I would go, of course, but *there was no hurry*. There was no plane anyway until the next day. But the reason for the telegram turned out to be business. Witt Hancock, instead of going home, went on to India and Batavia, there to be lost in Java. And I was going back to the war.

As I strolled back from the beach, through the garden, I saw a *crowd gathered around the loudspeaker in front of the hotel*. A flat emotionless voice was speaking. It was Molotov’s. He was saying:

Without any claim having been presented to the Soviet Union, without any declaration of war, German troops attacked our country, attacked our borders at many points and bombed from their airplanes our cities.

This unheard of attack on our country is *perfidy unparalleled in the history of civilized nations*. [See text]

As he spoke, his audience listened silently, first in sheer amazement, then in stunned realization. One or two women wept quietly, and moved away, but most of them stood, as though in a trance, astonished, then resigned to the ghastly news. I headed upstairs to my room, and as I passed a maid on the stairs, she gasped: “They attacked us!”

I felt worse than the Russians, for I was away from my post, and the greatest story of them all was breaking. All the ugly forecasts I had heard in Russia, in case of war, came to me: It would last three weeks to three months . . . the Germans might reach Moscow in five days . . . Moscow would be leveled by a single bombing. I might never get there in time.

[**Note:** No doubt due to all the chaos and confusion, Cassidy gets stranded at his hotel—all planes grounded, last train had left for day, etc. Then police come and rudely search his hotel . . . See text.] . . .

Tempers ran higher as the day went on. There were bickerings and stampedings about the hotel. But underneath it all there was a *current of feeling of determination, even of enthusiasm, about the war*. Marching songs, blaring from loudspeakers, began to echo back from the mountains. The crowds grew larger and larger, listening to *repeated broadcasts of Molotov’s speech and successive news bulletins*. Sometimes the people cheered and clapped.

That night the blackout was put into effect w/ surprising speed and efficiency. Blue bulbs appeared in the lights, dark curtains covered the windows, and a maid brought a candle to my room.

(Henry C. Cassidy, *Moscow Dateline*, 41-45)

-- Bryukhov Vasily Pavlovich:

I was born in 1924 in the Urals, in the town of **Osa** of **Perm Oblast**. In 1941 I finished the ten-grade standard school. Military and physical trainings were my favorite subjects in school. Even though my height then was just one hundred and sixty-two centimeters with weight fifty-two kilograms, I was considered to be a perfect athlete: I had gained the first amateur ski rank and had always been a helper to my school teachers of those disciplines. I was fond of military training and had plans for entering a naval training school after finishing school. What fancy uniforms they had!

Well, we knew that the war was brewing. Around February and March when the reservists' recall began to roundout military units many young teachers left our school ... We didn't strive to learn the German language, fools! Whenever the teacher told us that at war we would regret it, we boasted: "It's okay, at war we will talk to the Germans in the language of cannons and machine guns. They don't deserve any other talk." By the end of the war when I was in command of a tank company and later on of a tank battalion we captured POWs, but couldn't interrogate them, because the only things we could say in German were: "*Hände hoch!*" (Put your hands up!) and "*Weg!*" (Move!). Then we really regretted it..

On the 20th of June we had a prom and on the 21st of June our class went to the country for a picnic. All took along whatever food they had: potatoes, sausages, bacon. Then we neither drank vodka nor petted with girls, just huddled up at night; you would touch her and feel an electric impulse run across your body.

On Sunday afternoon returning to the town we heard loud weeping. "Is anybody being beaten?" – We thought. Little boys ran toward us each with a stick held between their legs and another stick in hand – a saber, like riders on imaginary horses, shouting: "The War! The War!" and 'sabering' the imaginary enemy. We ran home. In about forty minutes all my classmates were in the military commissariat (military registration and enlistment office). I was so afraid that I wouldn't get a chance to be at war! We thought that the war wouldn't last longer than two to three months.

The military commissariat then resembled an anthill. Recruit parties were dispatched incessantly and by September the town was deserted. All the males under forty had gone. Women, old men and we, the youth under seventeen ineligible for drafting, were the only ones left. I must say that the disaster of the 1941 retreats was not really felt in our hinterland. We were far from the battlefield anyway. We did not feel that the Germans were approaching, but certainly came to understand that the enemy was strong and the war was becoming protracted. All summer long I camped out on the doorsteps of the military commissariat. And not until the 15th of September as the youth ski champion of district and oblast was I sent to the 1st detached ski ranger battalion, which was being formed. . .

After having troubles with me in summer of 1942 they sent me to the **Stalingrad** tank training school. When the Germans approached the city the cadets who had been in the school at least three months, were sent to the front, and we, the newcomers, were evacuated to the city of **Kurgan**. Our train was the last to leave Stalingrad in early September under intense air bombardment. . .

In June of 1943 we arrived in the vicinity of **Kursk** where we integrated into the strength of the 2nd Tanks Corps, which was positioned then in the second echelon of defense. Literarily a few days after our arrival **the Battle of Kursk** broke out. There I experienced my first battle. . . (<http://iremember.ru/en>)

-- Kalinenok Marat Alexandrovich:

I was born on July 21, 1925 in **Kazan**, as my father was a military serviceman at that time and taught at the Tatar-Bashkir military school. Everything about me turned out to be so weird: my name is French, surname is Belorussian, I was born in **Tatarstan**, and my ethnicity is Russian. . .

My father's service often caused him to move from one place to another, so I had to study in schools of different cities. I went to the first grade in a school in the town of **Engels**, then I studied in **Leningrad**, **Kuibyshev**, and in **Karachev**, and when the war broke out I was already in **Konotop**, where my father served as a commissar in a Military Aviation School.

Back in school I already had a dream of becoming a historian, and, for example, during the **Spanish Civil War**, I followed closely the press releases of the hostilities and even drew maps. And as a child I read a lot. For example, I still keep my father's three-volume "History of the Civil War ", which in spite of everything, I kept with me through the evacuation. We also used to have the books from "The Officer's Library" series and after the war my father greatly regretted that I could not save them. But how could I think of them when my mother and I were carrying five children, and suitcases. But my mom managed to keep a "Singer" sewing machine, which we still keep as an heirloom. . .

- How did you hear about outbreak of the war?

As I said, we lived then in **Konotop** because my father served there as Deputy Chief of the Aviation School on political affairs. At 4 o'clock in the morning he was urgently summoned to the school, and half an hour later he phoned us and said: "War! ", although, this news was not officially announced on the radio until 12 o'clock in the afternoon. The first thing the boys thought was "Now our army is going to give them a thrashing!" When on June 23 German planes bombed the aviation school airfield, we climbed onto the roof of our four storey building to see how the Germans would be shot down. But as the bombs rained down, and we in panic rolled off the roof ... we realized that the war was not a picnic ... But we all had one common desire - to go to the front. (<http://iremember.ru/en>)

-- Yampolsky Joseph Mironovich:

I was born in 1912 in the village of Dybentsy in the district of Boguslavsky of the Kiev Region. In 1914 my father was drafted for the WW1 front. He returned home after the Revolution, but a year later he died of complications from the wounds received at the front. Trying to escape from hunger and violence, the family moved to a place named Boguslav, and a few years later, to the village of Yanovka. There I finished a seven year school and studied at a college for mechanics, but when I was 17, I picked up a bag of dried biscuits and went to look for a job. At that time an exodus of the youth from villages began. All went to the factories to work. For three years I worked in a factory in Dneprodzerzhinsk as a laborer first, and then as a machinist. In 1932 I went to Kiev and began to work at the Mechanical Plant. A few years later I entered the Kiev

Industrial (Polytechnic) Institute. I graduated from it in March, 1939 and was qualified as a mechanical engineer for chemical machine engineering. I then returned to my plant in Kiev as a chief mechanic. . .

- The day of 22 June 1941. What was it like for you?

When Molotov's speech was broadcast on the radio, I put together a backpack, said goodbye to my wife and went to the military commissariat. According to the mobilization instruction when drafted, I was supposed to arrive in the city of Lvov within 24 hours, to Stryisky Park where my tank unit was stationed. About twenty of us, all natives of Lvov were detained at the military commissariat for two days. It turned out that our unit had been taken out by bombing and instructions were issued not to send more personnel to the city until further notice. Instead, we, a team of designated commanders, were sent to Lubny and from there to the vicinity of Kharkov to the 615th Reserve Tank Regiment. Individual tank battalions for the front were being formed there.

- What tanks were in service in your unit? What was of your first fight against Germans like?

Those were the T-26 tanks, a sort of light tank fueled with kerosene. The crew consisted of three persons. Then, before the first real fight our "boxes" seemed to us to be "formidable combat vehicles"... Almost all the vehicles had radios. There were also a few BT-5 and BT-7 tanks.

Almost all the tankers, with few exceptions, had been called up from the reserve, so the level of our military skills was, to put it nicely, not very adequate... There was no time for thorough training of the reservists! Three months later we were thrown into battle. There was a village named Kilukivka, if I'm not mistaken. In the vicinity of that village the Germans had set up artillery batteries, which shelled the Kharkov highway. (<http://iremember.ru/en>)

-- Degen Ion Lazarevich:⁶⁴⁵

I was born in 1925. My father then was 62 years old. It was his second marriage. At the time of my birth my mother was only 26 years old. My father, Lazar Degen, worked as a medical attendant. He was a brilliant specialist, and many certified doctors would come to adopt his methods. My dad died in 1928.

We lived in Mogilev-Podolsky, a town in Vinnitsa oblast (province), located at the old State Border. My mother used to work as a nurse in a hospital. I remember well the famine of 1933.

At the age of 12, I went to work as an assistant blacksmith. The smith, Uncle Feodor, a man, who had only finished two grades in school, knew several languages and treated me like real father. My childhood was one of hunger: my mother's nurse salary was scarcely enough for living.

I was fond of zoology, botany, and literature. At the young naturalists' club I was allotted three land plots, 10 square meters each, where I grew rubber plants. I was growing into a young fanatic, utterly devoted to the Communism.

We, the youngsters, used to haunt the territory of the local 21st Border Guard Detachment. At the age of 16, I was able to shoot all types of firearms, including the Degtyaryouov hand-held machine

⁶⁴⁵ **Note:** This young man was a Jew.

gun; I was a good horse rider and had a good knowledge of hand grenades. The 130th Rifle Division commanded by Major General Vizhgilin was also stationed in our town. In short, when the war broke out I was already a well trained soldier.

On June 15, I finished the ninth grade and immediately went to work as a youth leader in the summer camp which was located next to the railway bridge over the Dniester River. ***Overnight on June 21- 22, as the youth leader on duty I saw a heavily laden railroad train pass across the bridge to Germany.*** Early in the morning people began muttering: "The war has broken out!"

In the afternoon our town was bombed for the first time. Policemen fired revolvers at the German bombers. Pretty pictures ... I ran to the town committee of the Komsomol (Communist League of the Youth), and from there to the military commissariat, but nobody wanted to talk to me there. I wasted my breath shouting about the duty of a Komsomol member, about protecting the Motherland, about the heroes of the Civil War. I poured out the slogans, with which I had been stuffed like a potato dumpling. The answer was short: "We don't draft children into the army."

But on the tenth day of the war at the town Komsomol Committee a volunteer destroyer battalion was organized from ninth and tenth grade students of the town schools. Our platoon consisted of ninth graders, almost all born in 1924, and only three born in 1925. There were thirty one persons in the platoon, including twenty seven Jews.

Two days later, we were issued standard army uniforms and all the volunteer fighters joined the ranks of the regular rifle companies under the 130th Rifle Division. We did not take the military oath. We were issued rifles, 100 rounds of ammunition and four hand grenades each. The platoon had a heavy "Maxim" machine gun, which I had mastered quickly and was assigned as a number one (a lead gunner) in a machine gun crew. . . (<http://iremember.ru/en>)

-- Otroschenkov Sergei Andreyevich:

I was born on the 19th of November in 1921, a year of famine, in the town of Demidov of Smolensk oblast. My father, Andrei Yegorovich Otroschenkov, had grown in the village of Bolshaya Chervonnaya of Krasnensk county in the Smolensk area also. He was a professional soldier. He did his military service in the tsarist army as a staff captain of artillery. Retiring before the Revolution, father went to work as a guard in the city prison and after a while became its director. But in 1923 he, as a former tsarist officer, was asked to resign. . .

In 1933 a terrible famine broke out. We dug kitchen gardens and went afield a number of times a day hoping to find a potato. We chewed grass. My grandfather Yegor Andreyevich swelled up and died of hunger. My father was also swelling up, but fortunately he survived.

After finishing the 9th grade in school in 1938 I went to Leningrad to find a job. I entered a three-month training course, finished it and found a job in the Marty Shipbuilding yard. I worked as a driller at the northern building berth. Ship hulls were not welded then, but were riveted. So I drilled the holes for those rivets. Other workers called us "bell-ringers" because of the terrible rumbling noise that we produced. A ship hull was like an enormous iron bell and we chiseled it! We had to wear earmuffs. . .

In the spring of 1940 I was drafted for service into the Red Army of Workers and Peasants. I was on active military duty in the town of Guive near Zhitomir. I did my military service in the 40th Tank Division, 79th Tank Regiment. By the time the war started I had the rank of junior sergeant

and was a driver-mechanic of the light T-26 tank. Later, after the battles in Stalingrad, the 79th Regiment was reformed into the 20th Guards Tank Brigade. . .

After all, the military career did not attract me. I had plans of returning after the demobilization to Leningrad, to the Shipbuilding yard and getting qualified there. I was already looking forward to my demobilization when the war broke out.

On Saturday evening June 21, the contingent of the regiment was brought to a stadium. The unit was being prepared for a sports festival. We practiced in performing exercises and were flourishing arms. And the next morning the Germans 'bugled' us a wakeup. A bomb landed right into a courtyard of a brick-built, three-storey U-shaped building of our barracks. It shattered all of the window panes right away. The Germans finished their bombing and many soldiers got wounded or killed before even waking up, let alone fighting. Can you imagine how that hurt the morale of the 18-19 year old boys?

The carelessness of our superiors was awful! Evidently not much time had passed since the Finnish Campaign was over and we had liberated Bessarabia, the Western Ukraine and Belorussia. Everybody knew that the border was near and that the war was brewing as the rumors were circulating. But we were soldiers and had no time for figuring out on political matters. We believed in whatever a commissar (political officer) told us in the barracks. And the combat readiness was disgusting. The tanks were half-disassembled. The batteries were stored in a battery room, firing and guidance units were stored in another location, and machine guns were stored in a third location. All that stuff had to be brought together and installed. Each battery weighed 62 kg (28 lb). There were four of them in a tank. The turret gunner (gun loader) Safarov and I went four times to fetch them. I was in the crew of a platoon commander's tank. A lieutenant, the tank commander, lived in a flat in Zhitomir, which was 11 kilometers away from Guive where we were based. The Germans had begun bombing us at half past four in the morning and it was already one o'clock in the afternoon when I saw the first officer in our quarters. When we set out for the frontline it was already late night and dark.

Not long before the beginning of the war thirty T-34 tanks had arrived at our regiment. They were surrounded with a three meter high wire fence and guard posts. We, the tankers, were not allowed to look at them! Such secrecy was maintained! So, we left without them. Later on they caught up with us and fought the Germans, but for the most part they had perished absurdly after bogging down in a swamp.

Advancing west we passed by the town of Novograd-Volynsky on the outskirts of which was an airfield. We witnessed how seven German Junker aircraft flew up and proceeded to bomb it. Only one Soviet Polikarpov I-15 (Seagull) biplane aircraft managed to take off. In those years the men in the army were very strong physically and morally. Many of them were prepared to face death for the right cause. The men of this sort are rarely seen now. So that snub-nose "Seagull" stuck to the tails of the bombers and managed to force one of them to file out of the formation and land on our airfield. I witnessed the whole affair of how the Junker landed. I don't know what happened there next, as we moved forward. There were refugees on the road and the Germans were bombing them. A cow was running in the field. A German aircraft was flying over it and firing at it with a machine gun! As the cow would rush aside, the German would turn around and fire again, but not at it, only to near miss it to amuse himself, chasing the cow around the field. There was so much rage in our hearts that had we gotten hold of that pilot we would have torn him to pieces.

Our first battle happened on the 26th of June. Later on, after gaining combat experience I came to an understanding of the tragic mistakes of that battle and those of many other battles at the beginning of the war. We were not real soldiers then yet, but were irrational cannon fodder.

The Soviet propaganda had worked perfectly. To some extent it did play a low-down trick with the Red Army at the beginning of the war. “And in the enemy land, the enemy will be thrashed...” – we had sung before the war, anticipating that the upcoming war on our part would be offensive-dominated only. Many people believed then that learning and getting to know the enemy better was not needed, the enemy only had to be hammered and after the first good onrush the enemy would run for his life. Even the maneuvers, in our regiment at least, were like this: “The enemy took up defenses on that hill. Let’s force him out of there. Forward, Hurrah!” And we would rush forward overtaking each other. Once during a field firing exercise someone had socked a live shell at a turret of a tank which had taken the lead. Thank God, the shell was the fragmentation type, so no one got hurt, only the tank’s headlights were damaged. So, this is the way we fought in 1941. However, there was a great difference between rushing forward while shouting “hurrah” along the firing range, which had been run up and down, and a real battle. . . (<http://iremember.ru/en>)

-- Fadin Alexander Mikhailovich:

I was born on the 10th of October 1924 in the village of Knyazevka of Arzamas area of Nizhny Novgorod oblast (province).

On Sunday June 22, 1941 I woke up late, at about 10 a.m. Having washed up and eaten brown bread washed down with a mug of tea for breakfast, I made up my mind to go to see my aunt. When I went there I saw her in tears. When asked, she told me that the war had broken out and her husband Pavel had gone to the Military Commissariat to sign up for the Red Army as a volunteer. Hastily bidding farewell I decided not to linger and headed to the dorm of the Gorky River Navigation School where I was a student. On the way by tram I heard people talking about the war and that it wouldn’t last long. “Moska dog attacked an Elephant” – one of the passengers said. . .

On Tuesday, June 24 I went to the Military Commissariat. The square in front of it was crowded with people. Everybody wanted to get to the Military Commissar. I don’t know how, but I succeeded to find my way into the corridor of the Military Commissariat where a political officer met me. He asked why I was there and I answered that I wanted to go to the front. And having learnt my age he said to me: “You know, lad, go back to school and when the time comes you’ll catch up with the war. You see how many people are here today, so we have somebody to draft”. About one month later I went to the Military Commissariat again. Following my friend’s advice I added two years to my age. I received my medical history card and having passed the medical examination was assigned to the Gorky 2nd Auto-Motorcycle Training School.

We were sent to the station named Iliyno, where after dinner we were informed that we were a part of the 9th Company under the third Motorcycle Battalion. The next day training began. We studied military regulations and practiced marching while singing songs as a whole company. We made dummy rifles out of boards for ourselves. On the 7th of August 1941 we were administered the military oath and it was the first time we bathed and were given summer military uniforms. Presently combat arms were handed to us.

We began our Motorcycle study with models AM-600 with sidecar and IZh-9 and later on, proceeded to study the newly pressed into service M-72. After a few theoretical classes we were taken to the autodrome for driving. At that time bicycles were deemed a luxury and very few boys had easy access to them or were able to ride them. Therefore, they were trained to ride bicycles first and then to ride motorcycles. . . (<http://iremember.ru/en>)

-- Orlov Nikolai Vasilievich:

I, Nikolai Vasilievich Orlov, was born in 1926 in the Nizhni Chir area of the Stalingrad region. There were four members in our family, including two children. My elder sister died of starvation at the age of three. In 1933 there was a famine. My father was an activist, while the collective farms (kolkhozes) were being organized; wheat was being requisitioned and hidden. There were attempts to set our house on fire and other threats, so it came to a point that when passports were introduced in the countryside my parents moved to Stalingrad. Earlier passports were not issued to peasants in the countryside, and none of them could leave their villages for cities without passports. As my father was a communist party activist, we were given permission to leave. We moved here (to Stalingrad) in 1933, when starvation was at its worst. My father was an agricultural worker, like my mother. . .

All without exception had a dream of becoming pilots or sailors. I dreamed of becoming a pilot. Therefore, all the games we had were physical and active: running, jumping, Russian ball, distance swim competitions - all for physical development. But we did swim mindfully, with a boat nearby as a safeguard. . .

Do you remember June 22, 1941?

Yes, we were told that Kiev had been bombed and the war had begun. To be honest, I cannot speak for the entire city, as I don't know everything, but we lived with two thoughts; that the Germans would never come here [to Stalingrad] - this is the first and the second that we would win! We only began perceiving everything in earnest when the Germans took **Rostov-on-Don** and went to the Don. I was in the city and heard all the time people murmuring: " They won't be allowed to advance any further, anyway! The Germans won't come any closer!" But the Germans went on and on... Now I hear many opinions that the Soviet authorities had allegedly forced the local populace to stay here in the city, under the Germans, under the bombardment, giving the Germans opportunity to kill our people. These're lies and speculations of those who were not here then. . . (<http://iremember.ru/en>)

-- Nikolai Dupak:

In June 1941, when I was 19, I was playing the part of Andrei in "Taras Bulba" being filmed by Dovzhenko. Studio representatives had come to our Rostov Theater School back in March. I had gone through auditions, and literally a week later received a telegram: "Please come to the Ukrfilm Studio for screen tests for the part of Andrei in the 'Taras Bulba' motion picture. Aleksandr Dovzhenko." Such an offer! It was an event for the entire school: Dovzhenko! The director who had filmed "Shchors", "Poem Earth", "Aerograd", the one who was the most leading director of them all. And suddenly he invited some Dupak.

I flew in. They met me, set me up at the Continental Hotel in a luxurious room with a bath. Fantastic! Only in the movies had I seen that people could live like that. And so: "Rest for now, a car will come for you in the morning." The car came at noon, they took the Brest-Litovsk Highway to bring me to the studio. We came to the studio, they took me to a man who was working at a vegetable plot, dressed in a shirt, pants, and sandals: "Aleksandr Petrovich, here's Dupak arrived from Rostov." He looked at me, stretched out his hand: "Dovzhenko." "Dupak." "Have you read 'Taras Bulba'?" "Yes." "What is it about?" "Well..." "Did you notice how when Cossacks died, they would in some cases curse the enemy, and in others praise their brotherhood?" In short, he started telling me how he was going to make a film about friendship, patriotism, about real people who loved life. I was stunned! Dovzhenko was discussing such things with me! We walked around for about an hour. Then -- screen tests, and they drove me back to the hotel. That's how the filming started for me.

We didn't work on Saturday and Sunday. They told us that we would have to watch some foreign film. We were supposed to come to the studio on Sunday at 12. *I was reading and re-reading something, went to bed late, and woke up from the sounds of gunfire. I walked out onto the balcony, and my neighbor also came out. "What is it?" -- "Probably exercises of the Kiev Military District", and just as he said that -- suddenly, maybe 100 meters away, an airplane with a swastika turned around and flew to bomb a bridge across the Dnieper. I saw that for the first time. It was around 5 AM. The heat was terrible, about 30 degrees. Windows were open. The neighbor went white -- it didn't look like exercises. We went downstairs. No one knew anything. I walked out to a streetcar stop. Suddenly there was another air raid. They dropped a bomb on the Jewish Market, on the spot where there is a circus now. That's when I saw the first casualties. I came to the studio. We listened to Molotov's speech. The picture became clear.* We held a meeting. Aleksandr Petrovich made a speech and said that instead of the planned year and a half for the film, we would shoot it in half a year, and then we would beat the enemy on his own territory. Such was the mood! But literally the next day, when we came to film, there was no crowd scene in which the soldiers had been supposed to participate. That's when we realized -- sorry, this would be serious and for long. Bombings continued during those days, streams of refugees from the Ukraine poured in. On the second or third day of the war, they put additional beds in my room, tried to create living space for the refugees. Started digging bomb shelters at the studio. We were going to start shooting for several more days, but then people's militia units started being created. Besides me, Aleksandr Petrovich, Andreev, and Oleinikov joined. They sent us to Novograd-Volynskii. When we got there, I didn't see any of them, only the workers and fitters. Our crew formed up: "Anyone with higher education -- 2 steps forward, secondary education -- one step forward." I didn't think I had higher education. I took one step, then hesitated, and stepped a little further. "Ri-i-ight face!" -- and we were led to the barracks. Then they started sorting us out -- where to send us for training. They asked me if I could ride a horse. I said "yes", and they put me into a cavalry school. . . (<http://iremember.ru/en>)

-- Anatoli Stat'in:

I was born in April 1919 in Vologda Oblast'. The family had many children. In 1936, after completing a secondary school (7 grades), I was admitted to the local accounting courses (an educational institution in a particular field of study) and joined the Komsomol organization. After finishing the courses I was directed to the city of Arkhangel'sk. Somehow the money for the fare was collected. Mom bought me riding breeches and a used (a bit ragged) military overcoat. I started independent life with only two rubles and fifty kopecks in my pocket. . .

In November 1939 I was called up and dispatched to the city of Ternopol', Western Ukraine, and in May 1940 they sent me to the city of L'vov as a cadet of military courses for a junior commanders.

These days you could encounter German civilians walking in the streets. It was said that they came to see the graves of their relatives who were buried here during WW-1. Nevertheless, when these visitors were approaching close to a column of cadets that marched to the training field, we heard a command "Under cover from view! Double quick!" to conceal our armament and our strength.

After completing the courses I was directed to the city of Dubno, Rovno Oblast', and there I was appointed a squad commander of the NKVD Operative Regiment. We guarded the most important objects. There were active bandits somewhere, and we, as an operative NKVD regiment, had been directed to detain criminals. There was a special jail for those near Dubno. So, I got to know the smell of powder yet before the war.

I was a propagandist in my detachment, and I still remember some newspaper publications of that time, especially about possible German attack. Another article explained that America tried to cause a clash between Germany and the USSR.

On 21 June 1941 I was appointed commander of the mentioned jail guard. Now somewhere, especially in Western Ukraine, you can hear that all of these convicts were real fighters for an independent Ukraine, and all of the Red Army men who served there, were occupiers. At the prewar time we didn't feel particularly anything like that.

Dubno was one of a few Soviet cities that had been bombarded first. The main target of the German bombardment was the airdrome situated between Dubno and Rovno.

In the middle of the night a sentry of the observation post gave the alarm signal. I ran out and saw a lot of German aircraft in the sky. They fired at us actively but we suffered no casualties. I phoned my platoon commander:

- The war started!

- "You don't say! Did you forget Stalin's order? You'll be arrested right away." (It was forbidden to use the word "war" at that time).

In some 15 minutes the platoon commander called me back:

- "I reported to the garrison commander, the major general. He said: 'It could not be.'"

Unbelievably: at 4:00 a.m. the military officials didn't know that a war started!

I received an order to be in the major general's office at 8:00 p.m. My hands began trembling because I never saw such high commanders.

At 6 a.m. it was announced that the war began, then was a long break in radio contact. Only at 11 a.m. the radio began to speak again. We heard a German broadcast appeal: "Ukrainians! We began the war against the Soviet troops. They are occupiers. We will drive them out and you will become a free people."

Our radio was silent until 11 a.m. At noon, it became known that a German landing group wearing Red Army and Soviet militia uniforms appeared in the neighborhood. We were ordered to take our rifles and to engage the group. That was the first order of the day. Some of the Germans gave themselves up with no resistance. They stated that they were communists. Thus, after that we had to guard both the convicts and the German prisoners. On 25 June our platoon was ordered to deliver all of the guarded to the city of Romny, Sumy Oblast'. I remember there were sunny days during our journey. . . (<http://iremember.ru/en>)

--Nikolai Safonov:

I was born on 8 December 1923 in the village of Leonovo, Iznosov District, Kaluga Oblast'. We were a big family: mom delivered sixteen children, I was the fifteenth one. However, only seven of them survived – there was next to nothing for medical institutions in the rural area in the 1920s and early 1930s. In our family any newborn was given the previous name of a late toddler...

Our parents were very ordinary peasants, both completely illiterate. Nevertheless, my father was a true jack-of-all-trades. He knew how to build a house, to set a stove, to make shoes, and to mat wool into felt valenki (a kind of Russian winter boots). In general, he could make everything...

The population of our village consisted of 108 peasant families and we had only an elementary school in Leonovo. Therefore I continued my middle school education in the school of the neighboring village of Veshki. In early June 1941 I completed the 8th grade.

I began spending my summer vacation in Moscow, where two my oldest brothers lived and worked. On 22 June all of us heard by radio that the war began. I wanted to go home immediately but no trains to the city of Kaluga were available. In order to reach Leonovo I took my brother's bicycle, somewhat mastered cycling and the next day I set off for the 180 kilometers-long journey. I didn't know the traffic regulations and with difficulty got out of Moscow – the traffic-controllers stopped me several times. Everything changed when I finally reached the Warsaw highway: no controllers, no traffic at all, no troops and no refugees. I arrived home the same day.

All four of my older brothers participated in the Great Patriotic War. The oldest, Ivan, was killed in action in 1941. Dmitrii served in the army when the war began. He was seriously injured and became an invalid of war. Vasilii, born in 1916, was a professional builder. He served at the front as an officer of the engineering troops. Mikhail, born in 1920, who lived with our parents, was called up on the second day of the war. He fought as an infantryman, was seriously wounded, but came through the war. . .

On 7 March 1942 I was drafted and directed to serve with the 183rd Reserved Regiment of the 33rd Army. The regiment was situated in the city of Borovsk. It was manned with recently liberated men. During the combat training we fired different infantry armament including even machine guns. . . (<http://iremember.ru/en>)

--Ivan Zabolotny:

How the War Began

I was born on 6 August 1926 in a village of Zagnitkov, Kodym District, Odessa Oblast' (province), Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. The village was near the administrative border between Ukraine and the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic.

We were a very ordinary peasant family. Initially my father was a collective farm brigade-leader, later he worked as a forester, and my mother was an ordinary collective farm member. There were three children in the family: two boys and a girl. I was the youngest child.

On the threshold of the war our family material well-being was, I would say, quite good; we weren't in need of anything. Our village was very large – around 16 000 inhabitants. There were four collective farms in the village and all of them were prosperous.

My brother and his classmates just completed their high school studies and they celebrated their graduation on the evening of 21 June 1941. It was a fine holiday in the village park. Generally life was right but the war shattered everything...

There was a club-house in our village. It was the place where the local youth liked to rest. We often played checkers there, heard recitals and so on. In that Sunday morning we were in the club-house backyard: I practiced on the horizontal bar and my friend climbed a cherry-tree. Because of the border zone military planes never flew over the village but at that moment we saw a Soviet plane flying very low over the center of the village. Both my friend and I literally fell down on the grass and began laughing at ourselves. (In a forest close to Zagnitkov a cavalry unit camped and in the neighboring village of Alexeievka an artillery unit was situated. So, perhaps that plane delivered to both of them some important information).

At noon a meeting was summoned and all of villagers came to know that the war began. I remember that it was a bolt from the blue for me. All of women including my mother began crying because of such a misfortune. At the same time most of the young villagers became enthusiastic. We were patriots and directed our steps to the voenkomat (the military enrollment and registration office) without delay. Naturally I was rejected as a minor, but a column of men including last night's graduates left the village.

In order to help our motherland, we, the teens, offered to take part in constructing defense lines. For three weeks we drove during nighttime toward the Ukraine-Moldavia border and constructed the antitank ditches and several reserve trenches on the Dnestr River's left bank. All of these works were well organized and our nourishment there was plentiful. (To be honest, now I think that there wasn't a special need for these fortifications – their location was chosen poorly). . . (<http://iremember.ru/en>)

--Vasiliy Kotov:

Kotov, Vasiliy Fedorovitch, Private. By the end of the war, he held the rank of Sergeant. Awarded three "For Bravery" medals, two Orders of the Red Star, and one Order of the Patriotic War, First Degree. Was wounded five times, three seriously. Credited with destroying four tanks.

That Was the Beginning of the War

How did the war begin? You'd better read books about it and get a smoother picture. What can I tell you? In general-bad impressions. It was a mess. Stupidity. Everybody was waiting for orders

and scared of everything. I guess we weren't scared of the Germans so much as of our own authorities.

First, we were got up on the 22nd when it was still dark, but nobody said a word about the war. We were living in training camps at that time and thought the alarm was the beginning of ordinary training. Our platoon of the battalion's ordnance received an order to march somewhere. Dig trenches and defend a road. That's all. And we went on marching. The battalion went on foot, our officers rode horses, we followed horses which were pulling the cannons. Our first sergeant traveled by cart.

There is a lot of talk about bombing, the casualties caused by the German aircraft. That they were overhead all the time. I don't remember that. We didn't see much of their aircraft on the 22nd of June. Nor ours, by the way. We weren't bombed. They might have flown somewhere over the high roads or to the big cities. We were marching to the border and found out about the war only in the evening, by the time we took our positions. But we don't have shells. And the infantry had only a small number of cartridges. Don't ask me about the grenades: nothing of the kind!

To cut it short, we were supplied with shells half an hour after the German tanks had rolled us flat and crawled back. That's it. And then a "football game" began as we were receiving orders and each order was more weird than the previous one. First, run there! Then, all at once, halt! Then, go anyway, but in the other direction! Then, leave the cannons with the tanks and go dig trenches with the infantry! Then, take the cannons back! It was three days of this, perhaps more. . . (<http://iremember.ru/en>)

-- I. Lyudnikov:

We felt the approach of the war in the spring of 1941. At that time I was serving as a chief of the Infantry College in Zhitomir, Ukraine. At the end of March, a number of military colleges, including ours, were moved from western Ukraine to cities located far to the east of the Dniepr River. The graduation of the officers, which used to be on September 1, was moved to June 1. I couldn't follow my college to the new place because *I had to become the Commander of the 200th Infantry Division* under the order of the Narkom of Defense. This division was being formed on the base of the former Belokorovich Military College. The division became a part of the 31st Infantry Corps, which was commanded directly from the District Headquarters. In May the head of the corps came to Ukraine from the East and established itself in the city of Korosten. We used to have the annual officers training after the end of harvest time--in August-September. In 1941 this rule was broken. The training took place in the period from May 15 to July 1. The transformation meant that the training was to be one of the methods of reinforcing the troops on the frontier. . .

While at the headquarters of the 36th Corps in May, I got the report that we had a corps located in Zhitomir and in the forests southwest of the city. It wasn't quiet across the border at that time. We were informed by District Headquarters that German infantry divisions, as well as their ordnance troops and corps and armies headquarters, were constantly arriving in southeastern Poland. The building of roads, aerodomes and warehouses had also been hastened there. All this revealed the approaching war. . .

I returned home about 8 p.m. My wife and children told me the news: two hours ago the officers left the house very suddenly, some of them took their bags, uniform coats and rain sheets with

them. I didn't want to disturb my family and answered that perhaps they left for a night field training. The next moment, the head of division headquarters rang me up and reported that a very important document had been received and I must become acquainted with it immediately. In a couple of minutes I arrived at headquarters and read the document that ordered the whole **200th Infantry Division** to leave at 20:00 on June 18, follow the route Belokorovichi, Zhurbovichi, Zubkovichi, Zabira, Berezhno, Stapan', Povarok, and by the morning of June 28 be concentrated in the forest 10-15 km northeast of the city of Kovel. The route was about 300 km long. The march was ordered to be done quickly and only by night, at a speed of 40 km a night. It was recommended to hide the head of the column before the beginning of every march. The ends of the columns should arrive by morning so "casual" (i.e. reconnaissance) German aircraft wouldn't notice the troop movement. It should be mentioned that in the first half of June, German military aircraft flew over our territory as far to the east as the Dniepr River without meeting any obstacles from our side. That was the reason for these precautions. There was also a special administrative order to take all the organic weaponry and equipment. Mobilization stocks should be left where they were, but the mobilization papers must be taken by the proper transport and escort.

Our divisions had been completed according to wartime standards, and had all the essential weapons. We were lacking in ordnance horses, though. That's why we couldn't move all the division ordnance at once. When I reported this situation to corps commander Maj. Gen. A.I. Lopatin, he advised me to ask the head of area headquarters, Lt. Gen. M.A. Purkaev. The lines were in bad shape by that time, and it wasn't easy for a division commander to call the head of area headquarters. Anyway, I got a chance to report to Comrade Purkaev that the division didn't have enough horses to move all the material of our two ordnance regiments. The answer was, "to take all the ordnance anyway and in case of a shortage of horses, move the ordnance by leapfrog." I said that the horses couldn't bear it. In spite of this, I was told again to follow the order and take all the ordnance.

I decided to send all the horses to the ordnance regiments, including the riding ones. It wasn't much use, because the division had been made up of horses which weren't accustomed to going in team. Another thing that worried me a lot was that we didn't have enough communications equipment, especially radios, or weapons. The flak and anti-tank divisions' material and communications were under-equipped. Its personnel started the march equipped only with rifles. Neither the order of area headquarters nor the commander of the corps gave us data on the situation. All the commanders, politrabotniks, and all other rank and file worked hard to prepare for the march for two days. By 16:00 on June 18, the troops of the division were ready to start the march.

At 19:30 all the citizens of Belokorovichi, including the wives, children and other relatives, came to the outskirts of the town to see us off. The personnel started its long and hard trek, marching in columns and singing songs.

Night freshness helped the march. The first passage went very quickly and successfully. The division stopped to rest near the railway stations of Zhuzhel, Malayay Glumcha, Kochechen and the surrounding forests.

In the middle of the day on June 19, I returned to our town and gave a thorough briefing to the catering officers. In the afternoon I returned to division headquarters. The officer in charge made a situation report about the preparations for the next leg. On the third nocturnal segment, we could see the defects of the physical conditions of the horses sent to ordnance regiments. They were getting tired and had wounds from the gear which they weren't accustomed to. Some batteries began losing. It was decided then that a part of the ordnance should be left in place by

batteries and after a certain time run down their troops. On the night of June 22 the division was doing its fourth leg. There had been a thunderstorm at the line of departure and along the route. The low clouds and fog in the forests allowed us to leave about 16:00 and not wait until dark. We were planning to complete the leg earlier, feed the horses, and give them rest until daylight of June 22.

By evening the head of the division's column approached the village Stepan' on the bank of the River Goryn'. The soldiers had already become accustomed to marching. Jolly laughing and songs could be heard in many batteries on the halts. The soldiers played accordions, sang and danced.

About midnight the commissar of the division V.M. Praynishnikov, the commander of the division ordnance Col. Leonov, the officer in charge of ordnance at headquarters Maj. Rudenko, the head of the division engineer service, and I went together ahead to the place where we planned to quarter the division in the daytime to rest, west of the River Styr' near the town of Staryi Chartoryisk. Along the way we were going to study conditions for wading across the Styr'. A bridge across the Styr' near Mayunichi wasn't sufficient to let the division pass quickly. We decided to reinforce the support group with the forward group of the division--an infantry battalion and an engineer platoon. While waiting for the troops, we took a place near the bridge. We made tea and talked about hunting and hunters. About 3 a.m. on June 22, we heard the gradually intensifying noise of aircraft. In the darkness we couldn't determine if they were ours or not. Someone remarked that our planes are also flying at night. But why are planes flying from west to east? And the noise is a bit too howling, not like our TB-3s. These aircraft sound heavy. And again, why are they going eastwards?

At 3:30 the head column of the main part of the division approached the bridge. That was the end of that leg of the march, but the soldiers had already become accustomed to marching and besides, it was a cold and fresh morning, so they didn't feel tired.

At 3:40 we heard the gradually intensifying sound of aircraft from the west again. It was getting lighter. In five minutes we could define a group of 19 planes 2-3 km to the north. Now we saw that the planes were German. I looked through my field glasses and identified U-88 bombers with yellow and black crosses on them. They passed us by. Either they hadn't seen us, or had a target far behind us in the rear. About 4 o'clock we heard the sound of the heavy bombardment in the vicinity of Staryi Chartoryisk. Major Rudenko oriented a map and found that they were going to Kolki. Some five minutes later, a group of nine aircraft were bombing a column of our 661st regiment. A narrow fork of a road in the forest on a foggy morning was a difficult target for the bombers, so the shells fell about 200 meters off. We didn't have any casualties during this first ride, but anyway, it was a sign. The war had begun and after that everything should be done battle-like. The troops received an operational order: take anti-aircraft defense measures, dig the splits, disguise the material, and put the general quarters, don't fire at the aircraft until the special fire order has been received (there was an administrative order from the area headquarters about this). Speaking of flak, our division had only machine guns.

At 6 o'clock division headquarters had established a link with the headquarters of the 31st Infantry Corps. I reported to its commander, Maj. Gen. A.I. Lopatin that the division had arrived at the designated area, and that the 661st infantry regiment had been shelled by the enemy west of Vorotinichi, with no casualties on our side.

General Lopatin said, "You don't have any casualties but some other troops of the corps do, including the communication service and ordnance of the corps.."

"What are we to do now?" I asked. The corps commander answered that the situation wasn't clear to him yet. The corps was to become part of the **5th Army**, but communications with its commander had not been established. The division should be put on wartime alert until the next order was received. The corps commander repeated, firing at the airplanes is forbidden without special orders, the troops should be properly camouflaged, any change in the situation must be immediately reported.

The booming noise of the bombers was heard from time to time and the smoke of a large fire was seen west of division headquarters.

Yes, the war has begun. How large is its area then? Have the German troops attacked along the entire western border of the USSR? What are the main directions of their movement? Is there any declaration issued by the Soviet government? Has mobilization been declared? All these questions bothered us a great deal. There was lots of talk by telephone between division headquarters and corps headquarters, the division's politotdel and the corps' politotdel. ***I received a situation report from Maj. Gen. Lopatin late in the afternoon.*** It said:

"Today at four o'clock, the troops of Nazi Germany crossed our border along its entire length from the Baltic to the Carpathians. Enemy aviation bombed many aerodromes near the border and cities far in our rear. Heavy battles near the border continue. Our border troops heroically resisted the attacks of the Nazis. The situation is very difficult and unclear. The seriousness of the situation should be explained to the personnel. Mobilization is declared and its plan should be followed. . . ."

On the first day of the war, neither the corps nor the division received any operational orders. After my conversation with the corps commander, I reported the news to the officers at division headquarters, my assistants and politotdel. At the same time an administrative order, "Activating War Alert" was issued. There were meetings in the units at which the soldiers were advised of the difficult situation. I ordered the division headquarters to send the officers in charge of mobilization to winter quarters where they could receive everything they lacked. The officers that had to be transferred to other units were sent according to plan.

By the morning of June 24, the division had finished its night march and taken its position in the forest northwest of Staryi Chartoryisk. Here we could see old slumber-and-ground constructions--mute witnesses to World War I. . . (<http://iremember.ru/en>)

-- Ivan Kononov:

I was born into a poor family in Lipetsk province. My father died whilst I was still rocking in my cradle. My mother married for a second time and in 1933 our family moved to Moscow. Soon afterwards my stepfather died and four children were left to be raised by my mother who worked as a medical orderly at the 'Dynamo' factory. Her pay and pension were barely enough to make ends meet. We lived in a state of half-starvation. At the beginning of the 30's there was a ration card system in operation in Moscow. 300g of bread was issued on a child's card. What was 300g of bread to a ten-year-old lad? In the morning for breakfast I'd have a glass of tea and eat a chunk of bread. Whilst still studying at school I began to dream of becoming a pilot. I'd read a great deal about our renowned airmen who had flown over the North Pole and about our lady aviators. In 1939, when I still hadn't reached 16, I was walking one day along the school corridor past the

staff room where there was a telephone. I looked in - nobody about. I summoned up the courage and rang the aeroclub. They replied that they were recruiting. I got together the necessary documents and went to enlist. They cast an eye over them and replied, "You're not 16 and we can't enrol you in the aircraft section, but you can start learning to fly a glider. OK?" Having come up with the idea of flying, I just had to agree. Lessons were due to start in spring, but it was already autumn before a notification arrived that I report to the aeroclub to undergo a medical and appear before the credentials committee. Once I'd got through these I was enrolled in the class training on aircraft proper.

On 11th March 1940 I went up for the first time in a U-2 trainer from Medvezhye Ozero airfield. Spring had just begun and it was cold. Words cannot express the joy I felt when flying. After a few circuits my instructor throttled back and set up to land. I shouted out to him, "Just one more flight!" - the engine was cut back and I heard - "No, I'm frozen to death!"

Nearer summer I began to fly independently. In summer we passed our exams and the "head-hunters" from our patrons, the Boris-and-Gleb Fighter School, came to get us. We all wanted to be fighter pilots! One of them told me, "We can't take you at the school since you're not yet 18. Give yourself another year, you'll be only a few months off 18, but that's no problem - we'll take you then." At a regular medical commission I even told the doctor that I was just under 18. Eyeing my scrawny figure up and down she said, "No, you're not 18." "My mum's just outside, she'll tell you I am!" I have to say my mum was totally against me becoming a pilot. In the house opposite lived a nice young lad, not one of those street- corner louts. He had finished the aeroclub and flying school, and had come home on leave in his gorgeous, dark-blue airman's uniform. We couldn't see enough of him. Literally one week after his departure to his unit came the news, 'Your son has been fatally injured whilst carrying out his military duties.' And there was I, walking around in my overalls with my 'wings' in my buttonholes. All the neighbours started trying to dissuade both my mum and me, but I wasn't for turning and my mum did not go against my will.

In short, the doctor wrote in my certificate age 22. Whilst I was engaged in this 'forgery', recruitment to the Boris-and-Gleb Fighter School had already finished and ***I was offered the chance to go to study at Bomber Flying School set up in the town of Slonim***. I wasn't about to 'kick off' about this. In Slonim we were lodged in some former stables. We cleared out the horse manure ourselves, erected trestle-beds and stuffed mattresses and pillows with hay. The only electricity was in the mess room where breakfast, lunch and evening meals were prepared for us. It's true! I have to say that it was only at school that for the first time I got my fill of food since we were fed according to the student pilot's ration - butter, meat, tea.

We flew a bit on U-2's and started a course on the R-5. In spring we were taken to camps located near to the village of Mikhailishka where we completed our flying training.

There was the feeling everywhere that war was approaching. Night after night tanks, artillery and infantry would pass by us along the road only to disperse and become camouflaged during daytime hours. Troops were being assembled up along the border, meaning that war was imminent. We, though, were convinced that we would smash them (the Germans). The saying at the time went like this: 'Leave us alone and we'll leave you alone, but put one finger on us and you'll get no quarter.'

Our training continued right up to the 22nd June 1941. On Saturday the officers had gone off on leave to their families at the garrison. At the airfield all that were left were the students and a few duty officers. The next morning the rumour suddenly went round that war had broken out. The

air-raid siren went. We grabbed our overcoat rolls and gasmasks, dropped the tent flaps and threw a couple of branches over them to camouflage them somewhat. And you know, it never occurred to anyone to disperse the planes! They were standing in the middle of the airfield wing to wing. As I now recall, seventeen superb Tupolev SB high-speed bombers and facing them as many R-5s. That afternoon we went to the mess tent and had lunch. ***It happened as evening was coming on. Suddenly some Heinkel-111 bombers approached;*** I managed to count twenty-four of them. Word went round: they're ours. So we were standing around discussing this when there came the screech of falling bombs. This terrifying howling smothered all other sounds. Someone nearby yelled, "Get down!" I scrambled underneath a wing. It felt like the bombs were falling right on my head. The screech and then the explosions! It was really dreadful...A bomb hit the opposite wing of the plane under which I was lying. The Germans completed their bombing run and began to turn away, but at the same time their rear gunners started machine-gunning us. I remember my greatcoat roll getting a round through it but I escaped being hit. They turned about and made for home. What a sight! The whole aircraft park was ablaze. Of the seventeen SBs only one remained untouched. Not one R-5. All over were the bodies of colleagues, the screams and groans of the wounded...It was a shock. That day we buried forty-eight in the bomb craters. The most seriously wounded were loaded onto lorries and taken to the field hospital. I have a persisting memory of delivering our blood-soaked lads to the first-aid station by lorry and of a gentle young Lithuanian girl bringing out six feather pillows to prop them up. (<http://iremember.ru/en>)

--Eugenii Monyushko:

A fragment from an unpublished book "Nachalo voiny" (Beginning of the War):

The Vyritsa train stations was about 50 km from Leningrad on the Vitebsk Railroad. That's where the biological station of the Leningrad A. I. Gertsen Pedagogical Institute was located.

Professor V. I. Arnold-Aliabiev was managing summer practice for the students of the Geography Department. I worked as a laboratory assistant for him - ensured the equipment's readiness for classes, helped conduct practical training, managed students' shifts at the meteorological station.

It was the third week of the practice. In the afternoon of June 22 rumors of war came from somewhere. Vyritsa was not that far from Leningrad, but neither the biostation nor surrounding houses had a radio, or a broadcast listening station, or a telephone. Only late at night did an idea come to find something out in a resort several kilometers from our base.

A group of students went to the resort. I went with them. The gates of the resort were locked, the guard announced categorically: "What war - everyone's asleep already!" The guys climbed over the fence. After some time sleep was interrupted, a radio was turned on, people assembled around the loudspeaker... War!

Several days passed. Our group decreased by more than half. Students were disappearing one after another: some at the summons of a military commissariat, others volunteered, not waiting for the summons.

We set up 24 hour duty shifts at the biostation, near the phone connected to a temporary line laid there. I was put on the duty roster because I was considered to be part of the station's staff. During the daytime, instead of classes, we dug holes for cover against possible bombings. Then we received an order to halt the practice and close the base.

Everything was familiar from the 1939-40 period in the city. Strips of paper were glued crosswise to the windows of buildings. People with gas masks were on duty at every building entrance. There was no question of black-outs yet - you could see everything during a white night even without light. Otherwise, the city was calm. Many walked with gas masks, but public transportation was working precisely, stores were full of merchandise, there was brisk trade in carbonated water with various syrups at every street corner - *a heat wave began on June 22, it was the first really hot day in Leningrad during that summer.*

My mom and brother, who were in Bolshaya Izhora on June 22, told us about what had happened during the first night of the war. They had a good view of Kronstadt (main naval port in the Baltic - trans.) from there. They saw the air raid, saw anti-aircraft fire from the ships and forts of Kronstadt, but they thought those were exercises.

In the first half of June my brother and I, as a part of a group organized, as far as I remember, by our School No.245, went to dig trenches. We rode in commuter cars pulled by a steam locomotive, but without a schedule, as a "special train". We unloaded at the Veymarn station, near Kingisepp. Then we walked for about an hour. Our job was to dig an anti-tank ditch. Work schedule - dig for 8 hours, then rest for 4 (right there on the ground), food (bread and canned meat), then 8 hours of work again, and so on. (<http://iremember.ru/en>)

--Josef Finkelshteyn:

Ever since the spring of 1941 people had been feeling the breath of a large approaching war.

At the time, I was working in the Leningrad's Research Institute as a senior engineer. While there we were taught about anti-aircraft defense. After work, in the Institute yard, we dug slit trenches and we would also wear gas masks and pretend to work for half an hour. This is how we prepared for a real gas attack.

The night of June 22nd⁶⁴⁶ *was a warm and bright evening.* It was graduation time for many schools, and I was coming back home after a party. I had met many young people there. Girls were wearing their long white evening dresses and high heel pumps. Their thin heels merrily tapped on the asphalt roads. Peace and quiet were all around. Somebody had crooned the popular foxtrot melody 'In some place in Tahiti. ...' But we were far from Tahiti and terrible events were coming. We did not know that the bloodiest war in human history was to begin in a few hours.

The next morning I went out to buy food. A huge crowd surrounded a loudspeaker which was mounted on a post. I heard the stammering voice of foreign minister Molotov, "German aircraft have bombed our cities without a declaration of war. There is a fierce battle at the border. Our brave border guards are beating off an invasion by frenzied (*ogoltelyi* - *no direct translation into English. This word means out-of-control anger but in a directed fashion. It was often used in propaganda announcements so has some political connotations* - JQ) enemy soldiers." I do not remember his words exactly, but that is how they are in my memory.

We felt the approach of war in our everyday lives long before the fighting started, but no one expected the war would begin as soon as it did or last as long as it did. Nor did we expect our

⁶⁴⁶ **Note:** I believe he means 21 June 1941; in several of these Russian accounts they place start of war on the wrong date.

defeats would continue for a long time. Everybody knew our wise leader's words, "We do not need alien land, but we will not yield an inch of our own land." We sang, "We will destroy our enemy's army on their own land with one strong blow. There will be little bloodshed," but the reality was different. By September the Germans were close to Moscow and Leningrad. (<http://iremember.ru/en>)

--Nikolai Dupak:

In June 1941, when I was 19, I was playing the part of Andrei in "Taras Bulba" being filmed by Dovzhenko. Studio representatives had come to our Rostov Theater School back in March. I had gone through auditions, and literally a week later received a telegram: "Please come to the Ukrfilm Studio for screen tests for the part of Andrei in the 'Taras Bulba' motion picture. Aleksandr Dovzhenko." Such an offer! It was an event for the entire school: Dovzhenko! The director who had filmed "Shchors", "Poem Earth", "Aerograd", the one who was the most leading director of them all. And suddenly he invited some Dupak.

I flew in. They met me, set me up at the Continental Hotel in a luxurious room with a bath. Fantastic! Only in the movies had I seen that people could live like that. And so: "Rest for now, a car will come for you in the morning." The car came at noon, they took the Brest-Litovsk Highway to bring me to the studio. We came to the studio, they took me to a man who was working at a vegetable plot, dressed in a shirt, pants, and sandals: "Aleksandr Petrovich, here's Dupak arrived from Rostov." He looked at me, stretched out his hand: "Dovzhenko." "Dupak." "Have you read 'Taras Bulba'?" "Yes." "What is it about?" "Well..." "Did you notice how when Cossacks died, they would in some cases curse the enemy, and in others praise their brotherhood?" In short, he started telling me how he was going to make a film about friendship, patriotism, about real people who loved life. I was stunned! Dovzhenko was discussing such things with me! We walked around for about an hour. Then -- screen tests, and they drove me back to the hotel. That's how the filming started for me.

We didn't work on Saturday and Sunday. They told us that we would have to watch some foreign film. We were supposed to come to the studio on Sunday at 12. I was reading and re-reading something, went to bed late, and woke up from the sounds of gunfire. I walked out onto the balcony, and my neighbor also came out. "What is it?" -- "Probably exercises of the Kiev Military District", and just as he said that -- suddenly, maybe 100 meters away, an airplane with a swastika turned around and flew to bomb a bridge across the Dnieper. I saw that for the first time. It was around 5 AM. The heat was terrible, about 30 degrees. Windows were open. The neighbor went white -- it didn't look like exercises. We went downstairs. No one knew anything. I walked out to a streetcar stop. Suddenly there was another air raid. They dropped a bomb on the Jewish Market, on the spot where there is a circus now. That's when I saw the first casualties. I came to the studio. We listened to Molotov's speech. The picture became clear. We held a meeting. Aleksandr Petrovich made a speech and said that instead of the planned year and a half for the film, we would shoot it in half a year, and then we would beat the enemy on his own territory. Such was the mood! But literally the next day, when we came to film, there was no crowd scene in which the soldiers had been supposed to participate. That's when we realized -- sorry, this would be serious and for long. Bombings continued during those days, streams of refugees from the Ukraine poured in. On the second or third day of the war, they put additional beds in my room, tried to create living space for the refugees. Started digging bomb shelters at the studio. We were going to start shooting for several more days, but then people's militia units started being created. Besides me, Aleksandr Petrovich, Andreev, and Oleinikov joined. They sent us to Novograd-Volynskii. When we got there, I didn't see any of them, only the workers and fitters. Our crew formed up:

"Anyone with higher education -- 2 steps forward, secondary education -- one step forward." I didn't think I had higher education. I took one step, then hesitated, and stepped a little further. "Ri-i-ight face!" -- and we were led to the barracks. Then they started sorting us out -- where to send us for training. They asked me if I could ride a horse. I said "yes", and they put me into a cavalry school. . . (<http://iremember.ru/en>)

1.11.3: Russian (Translations by Kurt Arlt)

EMAIL
FROM: Kurt Arlt
TO: C. Luther
8 June 2017

Hallo Craig,

als Anlage erhältst Du die ersten zwei Berichte. Ich habe die Dateien nach den Orten der Handlung benannt, damit Du sie in die entsprechenden Frontabschnitte einordnen kannst. Damit wir eine einheitliche Schreibweise bei den russischen Orts- und Familiennamen sowie Titeln der Bücher oder Zeitschriften bekommen, habe ich alles in der bibliografischen Umschrift ausgeführt, wie sie in wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten in Deutschland üblich ist (für Dich vielleicht gewöhnungsbedürftig) – Du kannst ja später alles nach Deinen Vorstellungen verändern. Aus dem gleichen Grund füge ich auch die Originaltexte in russischer Schrift an.

Mit besten Grüßen
Kurt

--Anatolij Kazakov (178 A.R. / 45 RD):

Autobiografische Aufzeichnungen aus dem Jahre 2003; Kazakov im Herbst 1939 eingezogen, bei Kriegsbeginn einfacher Soldat; sein 178. Art.Rgt. / 45. Schützen-Div. war 13 km ostwärts des Bug in der Nähe von Kovel stationiert.⁶⁴⁷

„der Nacht kam der Melder Anisimov vom Grenzposten der 98. Grenzabteilung herüber und berichtete, dass die Deutschen am Bug Pontons zu Wasser lassen und sich auf das Übersetzen vorbereiten.

Aus dem Divisionsstab kamen keinerlei Weisungen. Die Drahtnachrichtenverbindungen waren von Diversanten gekappt worden. . .

Gegen 4.00 Uhr des 22. Juni schlugen Salven schwerer deutscher Geschütze in der Unterkunft des Regiments ein. Wir hielten diesen Feuerüberfall als Provokation im Abschnitt unserer Division.

Der erste Schlag der Deutschen galt den Kasernen. Balken brachen weg, Dächer rutschten zusammen, Wände stürzten ein, im Krachen der Einschläge erhob sich Staub, der todbringende Splitter enthielt. Die Granateinschläge erreichten den Pferdestall und den Artilleriepark, wo sich die Geschütze und die Munitionskisten befanden. Durch Beschuss der Stabszelte wurde gleich in

⁶⁴⁷ **Note:** This division (**45 RD**) controlled by Soviet **5 Army**.

den ersten Minuten der Bataillonskommandeur verwundet, leblos hing seine zerschmetterte Hand am Körper herunter.

Die Führung übernahm der Stabschef des Bataillons Leutnant Volčanskij. Nach allgemeiner Kopflosigkeit setzte dann überlegtes Handeln ein. Jeder bemühte sich, seinen Platz entsprechend der Gefechtseinteilung einzunehmen. . .“

(Anatolij Kazakov, *Na toj davnišej vojne* [In diesem lang zurückliegenden Krieg], in: *Zvezda* Heft 5/2005, S. 55 – 115, S. 61

Original Russian text:

Ночью спешно прискакал связной Анисимов с погранзаставы 98-го погранотряда и сообщил, что немцы спускают понтоны в Буг и готовятся к переправе.

Никаких приказаний из штаба дивизии не поступало. Проводная связь была перерезана диверсантами.

Около четырех часов утра 22 июня залпы тяжелых немецких орудий обрушились на расположение полка. Мы посчитали этот налет провокацией на участке нашей дивизии.

[...]

Первый удар немцев пришелся на казармы. Рушились балки, проламывались крыши, оседали стены, в грохоте разрывов поднималась пыль, несущая с собой смертельные осколки. Фонтаны разрывов достигали конюшен и артпарка, где стояли орудия и зарядные ящики. Налетом на штабные палатки в первые же минуты был ранен командир дивизиона, безжизненно висела раздробленная рука.

Командование на себя взял начальник штаба дивизиона лейтенант Волчанский. Всеобщая суматоха сменилась осмысленными действиями. Каждый стремился занять свое место по боевому расписанию.

--A. V. Egorov (Stabschef 63 Pz.Rgt. / 32 TD):⁶⁴⁸

Egorov - am 22. Juni 1941 Stabschef des 63. Pz.Rgt. / 32. Panzerdivision in L'vov:

„Aus dem Armeestab, wohin der Befehlshaber der Armee alle Kommandeure der in Lvov stationierten Truppenteile befohlen hatte, kam Major Žeglov. Er ließ die Bataillonskommandeure und Kompanieführer zusammenkommen. . .

Mit Mühe begann er zu sprechen: "Heute morgen haben die Deutschen Bomben auf Lvov geworfen und das Artilleriefeuer an der Grenze eröffnet – möglicherweise zum Zwecke einer Provokation. Aus diesem Grunde müssen wir wachsam sein und dürfen uns nicht auf Provokationen einlassen. Unser Regiment marschiert in den Raum Sudova Višnja in Richtung Peremyšl." . . .

Wir waren kaum losgefahren, ertönte ein neues Kommando: "Halt, alles kehrt!" . . .

"Was bedeutet das letzte Kommando `Halt, alles kehrt!`?", fragte ich den Regimentskommandeur. – "Wir haben eine neue Aufgabe bekommen, wir haben uns in Richtung Rava-Russkaja zu bewegen. Die Deutschen haben die Grenze bei dem Dorf Krakovec durchbrochen. Wir sollen die Aggressoren zurückschlagen und die Lage wiederherstellen." . . .

⁶⁴⁸ Note: 32 TD in 4 MC (6 Army).

Wir näherten uns schon dem Wald, als plötzlich rechts und links von uns Granaten einzuschlagen begannen. Das Fahrzeug des Regimentskommandeurs erhöhte seine Geschwindigkeit, um dem Beschuss zu entgehen. Ich befahl dem Fahrer, Žeglov zu folgen. Um das Geschehen zu verstehen, öffnete ich die Luke. Das Erste, was ich bemerkte, waren Gruppen unserer Infanteristen. Sie gehen doch nicht etwa zurück?

Žeglovs Panzer hielt an. Der Regimentskommandeur stieg aus und rief einen Kämpfer zu sich heran. Auch wir blieben stehen. Ich hörte nur die Bruchstücke eines Satzes: "... deutsche Panzer sind durchgebrochen." – "Wo sind sie?" – "Hier am Waldrand, sie kommen hierher."

(A. V. Egorov, S veroj v pobedu (Zapiski komandira tankovogo polka) [Mit dem Glauben an den Sieg (Aufzeichnungen des Kommandeurs eines Panzerregiments)], Moskau 1974, 222 S., S. 15-18.)

Original Russian text:

Из штаба армии, куда командующий вызывал командиров частей, находившихся во Львове, прибыл майор Жеглов. Он приказал собрать командиров батальонов и рот.

[...]

С трудом начал говорить: — Сегодня утром немцы сбросили бомбы на Львов и открыли артиллерийский огонь на границе, возможно, в провокационных целях. Поэтому мы должны соблюдать осторожность, не поддаваться на провокации. Наш полк совершает марш в район Судова Вишня — в направлении на Перемышль.

[...]

Но только мы тронулись, последовала новая команда:

— Стой. Все кругом!

[...]

— Что означает последняя команда «Стой. Все кругом!»? — спросил я командира полка.

— Получена новая задача, — ответил он, — двигаться в направлении Рава-Русская. Немцы прорвались через границу в районе деревни Краковец. Нам предстоит выбить захватчиков и восстановить положение.

[...]

Мы уже приближались к лесу, когда вдруг справа и слева от нас начали рваться снаряды. Машина командира полка резко увеличила скорость и вышла из-под обстрела. Я передал механику-водителю: следовать за Жегловым. Чтобы понять происходящее, открываю люк. Первое, что заметил — группы наших пехотинцев. Неужели отступают?

Танк Жеглова остановился. Командир полка вышел из машины, подозвал одного из бойцов. Остановились и мы. Я услышал обрывок фразы: «...прорвались немецкие танки».

— Где они? — спрашивает Жеглов.

— Там, у леса... Идут сюда.

* * * *

1.12: Soviet Archival Documents (Translations)

1.12.1: TsAMO (*Tsentral'nyi Arkhiv Ministerstva Oborony, or TsAMO*)

1.12.1.1: Northwestern Direction:

TsAMO RF, F. 344, Op. 5554, D. 54, L. 41

Raspisanie sootnosheniya sil na fronte 8 armii na 21-22.6.41

[List of the Correlation of Forces along the 8th Army's Front on 21-22.6.41]

“The following are operating along the army's 172-kilometer front: 103,000 men; 75,000 rifles; 15,000 active; 3,888 machine gun pistols; 3,566 light machine guns; 980 heavy machine guns; 638 anti-tank rifles; 696 81mm grenade launchers; 458 81mm mortars; 661 anti-tank guns; 218 75mm infantry guns; 84 150mm infantry guns; 336 105mm howitzers; 60 105mm guns; 128 150mm howitzers; 80 infantry battalions; 9 tank battalions; 295 medium tanks; 772 light tanks; 557 armored cars; 290 motorcycles; 41 75mm guns on tanks; 84 37mm guns on tanks; 138 20mm guns on tanks; 145 machine guns on tanks; 2 cavalry regiments.” (This is strength of Soviet 8 Army?)

TsAMO RF, F. 833, Op. 1, D. 13, L. 79

Shifrovka No. 739 iz Shtaba 8 Armii, podana 22.6.41 v 0145, prinyata 22.6.41 v 0210

[Coded Message No. 739 from the 8th Army's Headquarters, sent at 0145 on 22.6.41 and received at 0210 on 22.6.41]

“To the commanders of the 10th and 11th rifle corps and the 12th Mechanized Corps.

To Colonel Omel'chenko

The army commander has ordered that blackouts are to be introduced, beginning this very night, in garrisons and places where the army's units are quartered. The movement of automobile transport is to be carried out with reduced or turned-off lights. Organize the thorough supervision of the quality of the blackout, paying particular attention to the condition of masking the troops and equipment from aerial observation. Do not carry out a blackout in the garrisons in Taurogen and Siauliai.

Smirnov.”

TsAMO RF, F. 833, Op. 1, D. 13, L. 85

Shifrovka No. 745 iz Shtaba 8 Armii, podana 22.6

[Coded Message No. 745 from the 8th Army's Headquarters]

“To the chief of staff of the Baltic Special Military District, the 10th and 11th rifle corps and the 12th Mechanized Corps.

“1. At 0400 on 22.6.41 the enemy began an artillery preparation. At 0400 [a number of unreadable words] he launched an attack.

2. The enemy’s artillery preparation was continuing at 0520 along the 11th Rifle Corps’ front, with the shells landing between the forward edge and the defensive zone, with some shells falling on Tauroggen, with the latter burning. The infantry has not attacked, while at 0445 up to 45 aircraft of various types at an altitude of 3,000 [two unreadable words]. Two planes bombed [one unreadable word] and four planes appeared [a number of unreadable words].”

TsAMO, RF, F. 833, Op. 1, D. 15, L. 31

Opersvodka No. 2 Shtab Artillerii 8 Armii, les Yautmel’kis (2 kilometra yuzhnee KURTUVENAI), 1900, 22.6.41

[Operational Report No. 2, Artillery Headquarters of the 8th Army, in the Jautmalke woods (2 kilometers south of KURTUVENAI), 1900, 22.6.41]

“1. Up to 3 infantry divisions, with tanks, and up to 2 regiments with motor-mechanized units are attacking opposite the 11th Rifle Corps’ front. Up to 15-18 artillery [presumably pieces, but a word is left out here, R.H.] fired on the area northeast of TAUROGGEN. The main group of the enemy’s artillery is in the DAUGINAVA—LAUKSARGIAI—MORDELI—GRAIMENEN area.

According to observers, 15-20% of the enemy’s shells are not exploding.

2. The 11th Rifle Corps’ artillery is in its firing positions in the area:

--51st Corps Artillery Regiment in the VALCIUNAI—PAKLEVAI—BUTENAI area;

--459th Howitzer Artillery Regiment in the . . .

--414th Artillery Regiment in the VIDULAUKIS area;

--414th Artillery Regiment in the BATAKIAI—UZEGLYNIS—LADVERCINAI area;

The 48th Rifle Division’s artillery, the 10th Artillery Regiment and the 14th Howitzer Regiment, arrived in the Raseiniai area, where they are occupying their positions.

3. At 2000 the 402nd Howitzer Regiment from the high command reserve arrived and detrained at Simsa station, from where it is moving to Radviliskis under the command of the commander of the 11th Rifle Corps.

4. There are materiel losses among the 11th Rifle Corps’ artillery and the number is being investigated.

Chief of 8th Army artillery, Major General Dorofeev.”

TsAMO RF, F. 344, Op. 5554, D. 17, L. 10

Zapiska dlya komanduyushchego 8 Armiei, lichno, 10:30, 22.6.41

[A personal note for the commander of the 8th Army]

“To the commander of the 8th Army.

The enemy, in strength up to a regiment, broke through the front in the direction of the village of Jakuliai, 6 kilometers east of Varnaiciai and is developing the attack on height 147.4 (south of the village of Kuliai).

The 204th Rifle Regiment's 2nd Battalion and the 140th Howitzer Regiment's 1st Battalion are fighting in encirclement and the 62nd Rifle Regiment's 1st Battalion is in danger of being encircled. On the right flank, the enemy, in strength of up to 2 [an unidentified word, R.H.] is developing the attack west of Kretinga to the north.

The 10th Rifle Division's situation is difficult. I request you reinforce the movement of Shestopaliv's [this is misspelled and should probably be Shestopalov's, R.H.] units and render assistance [an unidentified word] with aircraft. I don't have any real strength. I need serious aid [a number of words follow, probably speaking about munitions].

Commander of the 10th Rifle Corps, Major General Nikolaev"

TsAMO RF, F. 344, Op. 5554, D. 54, L. 41

Raspisanie Soomtnosheniya Sil na Front 8 Armii na 21-22.6.41

[List of the Correlation of Forces Along the 8th Army's Front, 21-22.6.41

"Along the army's 172-kilometer front there are operating: 103,000 men, 75,000 rifles, 15,000 active ones, 3,888 machine pistols, 3,566 light machine guns, 980 heavy machine guns, , 638 anti-tank rifles, 696 81mm grenade launchers, 458 81mm mortars, 661 anti-tank guns, 218 75mm infantry guns, 84 150mm infantry guns, 336 105mm howitzers, 60 105mm guns, 128 150mm howitzers, 80 infantry battalions, 9 tank battalions, 295 medium tanks, 772 light tanks, 557 armored cars, 290 motorcycles, 41 75mm guns on tanks, 84 37mm guns on tanks, 138 20mm guns on tanks, 145 machine guns on tanks; 2 cavalry regiments.

Chief of the 8th Army headquarters' intelligence section, Colonel Gorshkov"

TsAMO RF, F. 221, Op. 1351, D. 64, L. 2-3

Telegramma s Informatsiei v Shtab 8 Armii, 11:00, 22.6.41

[A telegram with information for the headquarters of the 8th Army]

I'm informing you of the situation. Kartena was occupied by the enemy at 0930, and the enemy is spreading out along the road to Kartena. There is up to a regiment of infantry in the Kartena area. Bogaichuk has up to a battalion of tanks. Motorized infantry has penetrated to Tauroggen and has been met by our heavy artillery fire. Up to a battalion of infantry has arrived at at the Rau River and Tauroggen. Bogda (unfinished name, but probably Bogdanov, R.H.) border detachment abandoned Jurburg and infantry is attacking in the woods to the west of Jurburg. Aircraft are unceasingly bombing [a number of words are missing here] at strafing altitude. Additionally, up to a battalion of infantry is trying to cut off Bogdanov's left flank from Jurburg.

Colonel Smirnov"

TsAMO RF, F. 344, Op. 5554, D. 71, L. 52

Operativnaya Svodka po PVO na 10:00, 22.6.41

[Operational Report on anti-aircraft defense]

“Enemy aircraft operated as follows:

0440-0600—heavy reconnaissance in the area Nemaksciai—Vidukle—Raseiniai. Aircraft: 2 Fokke [this may be Focke-Wolfs, R.H.], 2 Do-17; 2 H, 3-5 kilometers.

0445-0500—8 enemy aircraft of various types carried out a raid on Siauliai. Fighters were engaged in air combat over the airfield. No planes were shot down. There was no damage to the airfield.

0445-0545—bombings and shelling of Jurburg. Aircraft: 4 Do-22, 2 Do-17; 30-40 H [Could this be some kind of Heinkel?, R.H.] The results of the bombing are unknown.

0600-0800—reconnaissance activities of individual reconnaissance aircraft.

0925—6 Ju-88 bombed the Siauliai airfield. Results unknown.

0930—6 He-III bombed the Rokiskis area.

0739—1 Heinkel-170 landed at Laukava. The pilots hid. They are being searched for.

0800—1 He-126 landed at Nemaksciai.

0900—1 plane has been shot down by anti-aircraft fire 2 kilometers northwest of Kraziai.

Chief of army anti-aircraft defense [signature]”

TsAMO RF, F. 344, Op. 344, Op. 5554, D. 71, L. 59

Obstanovka na Fronte 11 Strelkovogo Korpusa k 10:00, 22.6.41

[Situation Along the 11th Rifle Corps' Front by 1000, 22.6.41]

“To the commander of the 8th Army.

The enemy has occupied Tauroggen. The 466th Rifle Regiment's 7th Rifle Company fell back and attached itself to the 466th Rifle Regiment's 2nd Battalion, which is holding on to its area. It is facing up to a regiment of infantry and a battalion of tanks. The 466th Rifle Regiment's 1st Battalion and the 657th Rifle Regiment's 2nd Battalion is falling back under pressure from up to two battalions of infantry and a battalion of tanks.

The 657th Rifle Regiment's 1st Battalion is holding its area.

The 657th Rifle Regiment's 3rd Battalion is falling back under pressure from up to a regiment of infantry and a battalion of tanks.

The enemy has occupied Jurburg along the 48th Rifle Division's front. In all, up to a regiment of infantry is operating opposite the 48th Rifle Division's left flank. The enemy is trying to envelop the 125th Rifle Division along two flanks.

Artillery: The 459th Artillery Regiment's 1st Battalion and the 414th Artillery Regiment's 1st Battalion have left their firing positions. The remaining battalions remain in place.

An attack by two battalions of the 749th Rifle Regiment is being prepared.”

TsAMO RF, F. 344, Op. 5554, D. 71, L. 60-61

Operativnaya Svodka No. 7, 19:00, 22.6.41, shtab 8 armii, Bubyai
[Combat Report No. 7, 1900 22.6.41, Headquarters 8th Army, Bubiai]

“1. The 8th Army’s forces, while broadly employed obstacles, during the course of 22.6 held off through a stubborn defense an offensive by up to six infantry divisions, three motorized and more than one tank division. The enemy, launching his main attack in the direction of Tilsit and Siauliai, is attempting to encircle the 8th Army’s unit.

2. The 10th Rifle Corps is fighting along its main defensive line.

A. Units of the 10th Rifle Corps abandoned Palanga, Kretinga, Kartena, and Vezaiciai. Up to two enemy infantry divisions are attacking opposite the front. The enemy’s main efforts are being aimed along the following axes: Kartena and Kuliai. By 1000 the enemy had managed to penetrate along the boundary of the 1st and 2nd battalions of the 204th Rifle Regiment and capture Iekule. The 204th Rifle Regiment 2nd Battalion and the 140th Howitzer Regiment’s 1st Battalion are fighting in encirclement. Elements of the 204th Rifle Regiment were fighting stolidly and have suffered significant losses, which are being determined. [Handwritten note in red: As a result of stubborn fighting, the 204th Rifle Regiment broke out of the encirclement, R.H.]

B. Along the 90th Rifle Division’s sector the enemy reached the Jura River at 8:30. The division’s units were holding the forward edge of the main defensive zone. Up to two infantry divisions and one tank regiment are operating along the division’s front, as well as motorized units. A large concentration of tanks and motorcyclists has been established in the following areas: the woods south of Didkiemis; in the Trinapolis area (3 km southwest of Pagramantis). At 16:00 in the Kamsciai—Didkiemis area the enemy, in strength up to an infantry regiment, managed to break through the forward edge in the direction of Silale.

3. On the 11th Rifle Corps’ front the enemy captured Tauroggen and is striving to turn the 125th Rifle Division’s units from both flanks from Pagramantis and Gavri. There are up to three infantry divisions and two tank regiments opposite the 125th Rifle Division’s front.

The 125th Rifle Division is suffering heavy losses and gradually falling back, while putting up stubborn resistance to the enemy. The 48th Rifle Division’s left flank is falling back, while holding its position in the center.

4. The 23rd Tank Division left its area with the mission of destroying, in conjunction with the 10th Rifle Corps, the enemy’s attacking units and to restore the situation along the corps’ forward edge. The situation of the remaining units of the 12th Mechanized Corps and 9th Artillery Brigade is as before.

5. The army’s air force bombed Tilsit throughout the day and operated against the enemy’s attacking troops opposite the army’s front. The enemy air force bombed Siauliai and units of the 48th Rifle Division in consecutive raids throughout the day.

Chief of the army staff, Major General Larionov.”

TsAMO RF, F. 848, Op. 1, D. 1, L. 5

Razvedsvodka No. 5, shtab 11 armii, Kaunas, 10:00, 22.6.41

[Intelligence Report No. 5, 11th Army Headquarters, Kaunas, 1000, 22.6.41]

“1. Following an artillery preparation, the enemy, supported by aviation, began an offensive at 4:00 on 22.6.41

2. By 9:00 the enemy, along the 16th Rifle Corps’ front, captured JURBURG, WLADYSLAWOW, KIBARTAI, and LUBOWO, attacking in separate groups of up to a battalion in the area of JURBURG, up to a regiment in the WLADYSLAWOW—VIRBALIS area, up to a regiment of infantry and a company of tanks in the area north of WIZAJNY, and up to a regiment of cavalry in the LUBOWO area.

3. Along the 128th Rifle Division’s front, the enemy, in strength of no less than a battalion, captured KALWARIA. In the LAZDIJAI area the enemy, in strength up to a battalion, is fighting along the approaches to LAZDIJAI, supported by 500 tanks. Along the left flank, enemy units captured KONCAVA. The 128th Rifle Division is in a difficult situation. The head of an enemy automobile column is near Seirijai. Three enemy planes have been shot down.

4. The enemy is launching his main attack in the direction of LAZDIJAI and ALYTUS.

Chief of the 11th Army Staff, Major General Shlyomin

Chief of the Army Staff’s Intelligence Section, Lieutenant Colonel Soshal’skii”

TsAMO RF, F. 221, Op. 1351, D. 68, L. 28

Nachal’nik shtaba PribOVO. Operativnaya svodka No. 6, shtab 11 armii, Kaunas, 11:00, polozhenie na 9:00 22.6.41

[Chief of staff of the Baltic Special Military District, Combat Report No. 6, Headquarters of the 11th Army, Kaunas, 1100, the Situation as of 0900 22.6.41]

“FIRST: the enemy, having violated the state boundary at 4:00 on 22.6.41, went over to the offensive along the army’s entire front, launching his main attack and pushing our units to the east.

SECOND: Along the 16th Rifle Corps’ front, by 9:00 the enemy had captured JURBURG, SILININKAI, WLADYSLAWOW, VIRBALIS, and KALWARIA.

A. Along the 5th Rifle Division’s front, its right flank fell back to the line Jurburg—Angladegiai woods. There is no information on the rest of the front.

B. The 33rd Rifle Division is securely holding its main defensive line: PRANSKABUDIS—TUMPAI—RUMOKAI—VAILISKIAI—RUDKISKIAI.

There are communications with the division and corps.

Communications have been lost with the 188th Rifle Division and there is no information.

The infantry has been attacking since morning in the direction of WYSTENEC (its strength has not been established). An infantry regiment and a company of tanks is attacking in the direction of VARTELIAI and 3 km east of Lake WIZAJNY.

THIRD: Communications have been lost with the 126th Rifle Division's battalions. The enemy has captured KALWARIA and is moving in the direction of MARIAMPOL.

FOURTH: The enemy was engaged in stubborn fighting along the 128th Rifle Division's front on the approaches to LAZDIJAI. At 8:30 he committed up to 500 tanks. The division is fighting halfway surrounded. The division commander issued orders to fall back. There are no communications with the division. Enemy units captured KONCAVA on the division's left flank. The division is in a difficult situation.

FIFTH: The 23rd Rifle Division is moving from the KARMELAVA area by forced march to the wooded area south of GODLAUKIS. By order of the [army?, R.H.] commander, one rifle battalion with the regimental artillery is being removed from the 23rd Rifle Division to the NEVEZIS River, to the UZLIEDZIAI—SALAMIAUKA sector. The reconnaissance battalion has been given the assignment of carrying out reconnaissance along the right bank of the NEMAN River and SREDNIKAI. The 126th Rifle Division has been given the mission of moving by forced march from JIEZNAS in the direction of PRIENAI.

SIXTH: During 4:30-5:30 the enemy air force carried out bombing against the following airfields: KEDAINIA, KARMELAVA, KAUNAS, ALYTUS.

The enemy lost five planes to anti-aircraft fire and in air battles, with three pilots captured.

Our losses: Three N-153 [These are probably I-153 aircraft, R.H.] planes shot down in air battles.

14 fighters, and 12 reconnaissance aircraft and 1 Ts-2 [This may be an Il-2 aircraft, R.H.] 12 planes were damaged on the ground. A hangar and service building were destroyed at the KAUNAS airfield and 2 pilots were killed and one pilot returned to the airfield.

The 61st Assault Air Regiment carried out its mission to destroy the enemy in the KALWARIA area. Fighter units carried out 3-4 regimental sorties to intercept and destroy the enemy in the air.

Chief of Staff of the 11th Army, Major General SHLYOMIN.”

TsAMO RF, F. 344, Op. 5554, D. 71, L. 63-63a

Boevoe donesenie No. 1, shtab 11 strelkovogo korpusa, les severnee Pakrazhunas, 22.6.41

[Combat Report No. 1, Headquarters of the 11th Rifle Corps, the woods north of Pakrazantis, 22.6.41]

“While holding off the enemy's pressure, the corps' units are located as follows:

125th Rifle Division—the 749th Rifle Regiment is holding the line Rudkiskiai—Rependaube—the woods north of Lapsurvas;

657th Rifle Regiment, having lost nearly all of the 3rd Battalion, is holding the area Lapsurvas—Juodpetriai—Balciske;

466th Rifle Regiment, having lost up to 40% of its strength, is putting itself in order in the Skaudvile area, after which it will be shifted to the Lomiaiai—Poeglona defensive sector.

The 281st Rifle Regiment's 1st Battalion, which has been attached to the division, is occupying a defensive area in the woods north of Batakiai. The division headquarters is in the Skaudvile woods. There is rifle and machine gun fire along the division's front.

48th Rifle Division—there is no information on two of the 328th Rifle Regiment's battalions. Individuals and transport are being detained in the Kolnui—Raseiniai area.

At 19:00a battalion of the 268th Rifle Regiment, a battalion from the 328th Rifle Regiment, the 10th Artillery Regiment [there is a break here, R.H.], and the 14th Howitzer Regiment are occupying defensive positions along the line Minioniai—Raseiniai.

The 268th Rifle Regiment's 2nd Battalion, under pressure from two infantry battalions and a battalion of tanks, is falling back to the Lybiskiai prepared battalion area.

The 301st Rifle Regiment is presumably falling back to the Reistrai area, south of Erzvilkas station; the commander of the 48th Rifle Division has organized reconnaissance along the Raseiniai—Skirsnemune road; the division's headquarters is in the woods southeast of Vidukle.

The 51st Corps Artillery Regiment took up firing positions in the Skaudvile area. Throughout the entire day's fighting the enemy's aviation put a lot of pressure on all of the corps' units.

Detachments from elements of the border detachment that have fallen back have been organized to detain those who have voluntarily left the front.

The commander of the 11th Rifle Corps, Major General Shumilov.”

1.12.1.2: Western Direction:

TsAMO RF, F. 208, Op. 2511, D. 36, L. 1

Shifr-Telegramma 4-i Armii, 1050, 22 Iyunya 1941

[Coded Telegram from the 4th Army, 1050, 22 June 1941]

“I report that at 0415 on 22.6 the enemy began to shell the fortress of Brest and the area of the city of Brest. The enemy simultaneously began to bomb the Brest, Kobrin and Pruzhany airfields. By 0600 the artillery shelling had increased in the Brest area. The city is on fire. The 42nd, 6th and 75th rifle divisions and the 22nd and 30th tank divisions are moving to their areas; there is no information on the 49th Rifle Division. I have no information as of 0630 of the enemy forcing the Bug River. I am moving with the headquarters to the reserve command post in Bukhoviche. The 22nd Tank Division is moving to its area in disorder under artillery fire. From 0600 the enemy's planes began to appear in groups of 3-9 aircraft and bombed the Pruzhany Division, although the results of this are unknown. 0640, 22.6.41, Major General Korobkov.”

TsAMO RF, F. 208, Op. 2511, D. 36, L. 3

Boevoe Donesenie No. 5, Shtaba Armii 4, 22.6.41, 1155

[Combat Report No. 5, 4th Army Headquarters, 22.6.41, 1155]

“By 1000 22.6the army’s units continue to leave for their defensive area (49th and 75th rifle divisions), while the Brest garrison has suffered heavy losses from the enemy’s air and artillery, as a result of which the 6th Rifle Division was forced by 0700 to give up Brest in fighting, while the 42nd Rifle Division’s uncoordinated units are gathering along the line Kurnesha—Vel’ke— [Beyda left a question mark here, R.H.]—Charne (the 459th Rifle Regiment is with the 472nd Rifle Regiment in the Zhabinka—Karolin—Khvedkovichi area) and [there is a break in the text, possibly including the word “are putting themselves”] in order. Thus [a break in the text] at about 1200 will move to the north, flush with its sector. The enemy outnumber us in the air and our air regiments are suffering heavy (20-40%) losses. The army’s headquarters (in Kobrin) has been destroyed. They have also bombed 28th Rifle Corps’ headquarters in Zhabinka at 1215 on 22.6; the headquarters of the 14th Mechanized Corps is in Tevl [Beyda did not have the full name of this place, R.H.][The following paragraphs contain orders to counterattack, R.H.]

Chief of Staff, 4th Army, Colonel Sandalov.”

TsAMO RF, F. 310, Op. 4376, D. 12, L. 285

Kratkoe Opisanie Boevogo Puti 3-Armii za Period Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voyny, 1941-42 gg.

[A Short Description of the 3rd Army’s Combat Path During the Great Patriotic War, 1941-42]

“The ARMY departed for the first battles with the German aggressors at 0300 on 22.6.41. The army’s units were engaged in fierce fighting with the Hitlerites’ superior forces, valiantly defending every inch of their native soil. Combat activities resembled uncoordinated skirmishes with the enemy along the entire sector from the border as far as the NEMAN River. Communications with the army’s HEADQUARTERS was disrupted as a result of the enemy’s powerful air activity.”

1.12.1.3: Southwestern Direction:

TsAMO RF, F. 229, Op. 261, D. 89, L. 76

Boevye Deistviya 8-go Mekhanizirovannogo Korpusa s 22 po 30.06.41

[Combat Activities of the 8th Mechanized Corps from 22 through 30 June 1941]

“Beginning on 22.6, units of the 8th Mechanized Corps were in rapid and constant motion over four days, carrying out marches greater than those of forced marches as defined by the manuals of the Red Army’s armored and tank troops. Due to the absence of a sufficient number of roads, these marches were carried out by the corps along two roads, which led to the columns being very strung out in depth, while the movement of other units’ and formations’ automobile columns along these roads led to the disruption of a harmonious order of movement and to an even greater stretching out.

The 8th Mechanized Corps’ combat missions were often changed by the headquarters of the Southwestern Front and by the armies to which the corps was subordinated. The corps’ units would not even have time to concentrate in the areas called for by its orders, when they were turned on the march in completely opposite directions. For example, according to orders by the

26th Army of 22.6, the corps was supposed to move west of SAMBOR, for which place it departed. At 2040 on 22.6, on orders of the Southwestern Front, the corps was given the assignment of concentrating in the KUROVITSE area, which is east of L'vov, where it was to be subordinated to the 6th Army. The corps' divisions were shifted and during 2300-2400 moved to the new area along the same routes along which they had been moving to the area west of SAMBOR.”

TsAMO RF, F. 229, Op. 161, D. 167, L. 48-49

Operativnaya Svodka 101, Shtab 6-i Armii, L'vov, 22 Iyunya 1941, 1800

[Operational Report No. 101, 6th Army Headquarters, L'vov, 22 June 1941]

“1. Since morning units of the 3rd Cavalry Division, together with units of the 4th Fortified Area, have been fighting to capture PARKHACH. At 1600 the 3rd Cavalry Division captured PARKHACH. Facing the front is up to a regiment of infantry and a company of tanks, supported by dive bombers. There are killed and wounded on both sides. Prisoners have been taken and their number is being ascertained. The 140th Independent Machine Gun Battalion lost a strong point north of PARKHACH.

2. The 41st Rifle Division counterattacked and repelled an attack by up to two infantry regiments, with tanks, in the LYUBYCHA—KRULEVSKA area and, together with units of the 6th Fortified Area is occupying the front ZHACHKI—TENIATISKA—DEBY—height 390—MONASTYR'—BRUSNO STARE. It is faced by up to an infantry division with a battalion of tanks. During the course of the day the enemy put in two parties of troops, numbering up to 30 men apiece, in the ZYCHKI—height 390 area. Losses are being ascertained.

3. The 97th Rifle Division is defending the front MLODUV—OPAKA—MENKISH NOVY—KODENITSA—LYASHKI. The division's reconnaissance battalion is securing the flank along the line KHARITYNY—ORLINEK. The division is faced by up to two infantry divisions of infantry and motorized infantry. Losses are being ascertained.

4. Throughout the day the 4th Air Defensive Division was fighting against enemy bombers, while covering L'vov. At 1555 L'vov was subjected to a third raid, as a result of which the post office building and several residential buildings were destroyed. Communications over the dial telephone exchange have been broken. The enemy's air losses during the day number 12 planes.

5. The 4th Mechanized Corps is in its jumping-off position: the 32nd Tank Division in the ZHULKEV—SKVAZHINA—STAR—SAPOSHIN—YANUVKA area; the 8th Tank Division in DOBMROVITSA and the woods to the north. The 81st Motorized Rifle Division, minus the 202nd Motorized Regiment is in the LELEKHUVKA—VYSOKA GURA MOUNTAIN—YANUV area.

At 1630 two tank battalions were removed from the 32nd Tank Division and a battalion of motorized infantry from the 81st Motorized Rifle Division for a counterattack in the direction of RADZEKHUV.

Chief of the 6th Army staff, Brigade Commander Ivanov.”

TsAMO RF, F. 229, Op. 161, D. 129, L. 1-2

Boevoe Donesenie Shtaba 6 Armii, 1250, 22.6.41

[Combat Report from the 6th Army's Headquarters, 1250, 22.6.41]

First, according to information from the 41st Rifle Division's reconnaissance battalion, at 1100 up to two companies of infantry was on the move from the direction of Vezhbitsa along the northern edge of the woods. This was occupied by infantry, whose number has not been established and which is fighting against the 102nd Rifle Regiment's 2nd Battalion for height 260. At 1130 the enemy put in a party of 20 men in the Zhychki area. In the area of height 290, which is three kilometers southwest of Lyubycha Krulevska, the enemy also put in 24 men. The earlier report about taking this height with infantry and tanks was not confirmed.

Second, according to information from the headquarters of the 25th Corps [this number is fading and may be wrong], at 1100 there was fighting with the enemy, in unknown strength, along the streets of Lyubachev and Borkhuv and Lyubachev has been occupied by the enemy's infantry. According to unverified reports, motorized units are concentrating in these areas. By this time the enemy had occupied the villages of Vysochko, Dun'kovitse and Nenovitse. There was movement by a column of infantry and artillery, of unknown strength, from the Rodymno area toward Dun'kovitse.

Chief of the 6th Army staff."

TsAMO RF, F. 229, Op. 161, D. 129, L. 76-78

Boevoe Donesenie No. 4 Razvedotdela Shtaba 6 Armii, L'vov, 1600, 22.6.41

[Combat Report No. 4 from the 6th Army Headquarters' Intelligence Section, L'vov, 1600, 22.6.41]

According to information from the 4th Fortified Area and the Directorate of Frontier Security, the enemy began to withdraw from the Parkhach area under the blows of the 158th Cavalry Division. At 1315 the 99th Cavalry Regiment, with a squadron of tanks, while occupying the northern edge of the woods two kilometers southwest of Kulichkuv, was fighting in cooperation with the border posts that had fallen back to the Kulichkuv area. The enemy's strength in this area has not been established.

According to information from the 6th Fortified Area, at 1330 several tanks and armored vehicles, evidently a reconnaissance group, was discovered in the Zhichki area.

According to unverified information from the Directorate of Frontier Security, the 41st Rifle Division's 244th Rifle Regiment attacked at 1345 from the line Mosy Male—Borisi—Puchki. According to the same information, which is being verified by the army headquarters' military communications, a section of the Verkhata—Bashnya railroad has been cut by small, individual enemy groups.

According to a report by the commander of the 394th Radio Battalion, one of his stations (which was carrying out training on 22.6), consisting of three vehicles and radio stations and including 22 soldiers and NCOs, has been captured.

Chief of the 6th Army's Intelligence Section, Captain Obodovskii."

TsAMO RF, F. 229, Op. 161, D. 129, L. 226-229

Telegramma Shtaba 6 Armii, L'vov, 1730, 22.6—Moskva, Nachal'niku Pogranichnykh Voisk NKVD, Tarnopol', Komanduyushchemu KOVO, L'vov, Komanduyushchemu 6 Armii

[Telegram from the Headquarters of the 6th Army, L'vov, to Moscow, to the Chief of the NKVD Border Troops, to the Commander of the Kiev Special Military District, to the Commander of the 6th Army.]

“The situation as of 1530.

According to information from 6th Army headquarters: at 1235 enemy infantry, supported by tanks, is attacking in the Kornin area toward Rodzekhuv; at 1245 two enemy infantry regiments, supported by tanks, are operating in the Teniatiska—Debi—height 390 area. Our units are defending the line Mloduv—Lyubachov—Opaka.

Our forces are holding the line Vudki—Menkish, while the enemy is attacking Bobruvka, east of Yaroslov, along the 92nd Regiment's sector, in strength of up to an infantry regiment. Our forces are holding the line Kozhencha—Zalzghz—Lazy—Lashki. Dun'kovitse has been occupied by the enemy. An unknown number of enemy cavalry was in the Maschichska area at 1330. According to a railroad report, at 1250 along the Bashnya—Gurk section, along the 91st communications train's sector, German units were patrolling.

An unknown number of enemy tanks are operating in the Rzhichki area. Armored vehicles are here in unknown strength. According to information from a border detachment, at 1400 the commandant's office fell back to Bubnov. Myshev has been occupied by two enemy battalions. . .”

DOCUMENTS NOT TRANSLATED

NORTHWESTERN DIRECTION

TsAMO RF, F. 357, Op. 5971, D. 23, L. 36

TsAMO RF, F. 833, Op. 1, D. 1, L. 1-2

WESTERN DIRECTION

TsAMO RF, F. 208, Op. 2511, D. 36, L. 5

TsAMO RF, F. 208, Op. 2511, D. 36, L. 19

SOUTHWESTERN DIRECTION

TsAMO RF, F. 1076, Op. 1, D. 5, L. 6ff

TsAMO RF, F. 3468, Op. 1, D. 33, L. 97

TsAMO RF, F. 1230, Op. 1 D. 1, L. 7

1.12.2: *Sbornik boevykh dokumentov* (Collection of Combat Documents)

1.12.3: Biographies of Soviet Front Cdrs (from Russian Encyclopedia)

a) Col.-Gen. F.I. Kuznetsov:

Kuznetsov, Fyodor Isidorovich (1898-1961) joined the czarist army in 1916 and fought in WWI as a platoon commander and infantry scout commander, as well as a warrant officer. He commanded a detachment of Red Guards in October 1917. He joined the Red Army in 1918 and was a company and battalion commander, assistant regimental commander and rifle regiment commander. Following the civil war he commanded a rifle regiment and brigade. In April 1930 he was appointed chief of a training section and in October 1932 chief of the Moscow Military Infantry School and during 1935-38 rose in various academic positions to that of department head in the Frunze Military Academy. In July 1938 Kuznetsov was appointed deputy commander of the Belorussian Special Military District. He took part in the Soviet-Finnish War of 1939-40. In July 1940 he was appointed chief of the General Staff Academy, commander of the North Caucasus Military District in August, and commander of the Baltic Special Military District in December 1940. Kuznetsov was promoted to Colonel General in 1941.

Upon the outbreak of the war Kuznetsov commanded the Northwestern (June-July, 1941) and Central (July-August, 1941) fronts. He later commanded the 21st Army (July, October, 1941) and 51st (August-November, 1941) armies. He was also chief of staff of the 28th Army, deputy commander of the Western Front and commander of the 61st Army (November, 1941). In April 1942 Kuznetsov was appointed chief of the Higher Military Academy, and in August 1943 deputy commander of the Volkhov Front and deputy commander of the Karelian Front in February 1944. Kuznetsov commanded the Urals Military District from February 1945 to July 1948. He was retired in 1948 due to illness.

Kuznetsov was decorated with two Orders of Lenin, three Orders of the Red Banner, the Order of Suvorov 2nd Class, the Order of the Red Star, and medals.

Source: *Voennaya Entsiklopediya*, vol. 4 p. 338). (Moscow: Voennoe Izdatel'stvo), 1999.

b. General of the Army D.G. Pavlov:

Pavlov, Dmitrii Grigor'evich (1897-1941) served in the czarist army since 1914 and fought in World War as a senior NCO. He joined the Red Army in 1919 and commanded a platoon and cavalry squadron and was an assistant commander of a cavalry regiment on various fronts. He completed the Omsk Higher Cavalry School in 1922, the Frunze Military Academy in 1928. From 1928 he commanded cavalry and then mechanized regiments. Pavlov took part in the fighting along the Chinese Eastern Railway in 1929 and completed academic courses with the Military-Technical Academy. During 1934-36 he served as commander-commissar of a mechanized brigade and in 1936-37 commanded a tank brigade in Spain during that country's civil war, for which he received the medal Hero of the Soviet Union. In November 1937 Pavlov was appointed chief of the RKKA Armor & Tank Directorate. In June 1940 he was named commander of the Belorussian Special Military District and promoted to General of the Army in 1941.

Upon the outbreak of war, Pavlov commanded the Western Front. As a result of the rapid German advance, he was accused of cowardice, lack of initiative, indecisiveness, and consciously trying to disrupt troop control and removed from his post. He was arrested in the beginning of 1941 and executed on July 22 of that year. Pavlov was posthumously rehabilitated in 1957.

Pavlov had been awarded with three Orders of Lenin and two Orders of the Red Banner.

Source: *Voennaya Entsiklopediya*, vol. 6, p. 218. (Moscow: Voennoe Izdatel'stvo, 2002)

c. Col.-Gen. M.P. Kirponos:

Kirponos, Mikhail Petrovich (1892-1941) served in the czarist army from 1915 and served in WWI as a company medic. Kirponos joined the Red Army in 1918 and fought in the civil war, during which he organized partisan detachments in Ukraine. In 1918 he served as an assistant division commander, chairman of a revolutionary military tribunal, and also was an assistant regimental commander and commander of a regiment. In 1919 he an assistant chief of a school for red commanders in Ukraine. In 1920 he was chief of a supply command and commissar of a school in Kiev. In 1922-23 Kirponos was an assistant commander and deputy commander of an NCO school in Ukraine. Following completion of the Frunze Military Academy in 1927, Kirponos commanded a rifle battalion, was an assistant chief of staff and chief of staff of a rifle division. From 1934 he served as the chief and military commissar of an infantry school. Kirponos commanded a rifle division in the Soviet-Finnish War, for which he was awarded the medal Hero of the Soviet Union. He was appointed commander of a rifle corps in April 1940 and in June commander of the Leningrad Military District. In January 1941 he was appointed commander of the Kiev Special Military District. He was promoted to the rank of Colonel General in 1941.

Upon the outbreak of war Kirponos became commander of the Southwestern Front trying to stem the German advance in Ukraine. Kirponos died in September 1941, while trying to break out of encirclement following the German capture of Kiev.

Kirponos was awarded the Order of Lenin and the Order of the Patriotic War 1st class (posthumously) and the medal "20 Years of the RKKA."

Source: *Voennaya Entsiklopediya*, vol. 4, pp. 55-56 (Moscow: Voennoe Izdatel'stvo, 1999)

* * * *

1.13: War Crimes (German & Russian)

--**Note:** What comes through on every page of Chris Bellamy's *Absolute War* is the **utter inhumanity of the German-Soviet War**. The Germans began in barbarism and the Russians replied in kind. The numbers are difficult to digest. The German Army left **4 million** men on the battlefields of eastern Europe, but they killed **27 million**.⁶⁴⁹ The Red Army lost **11.5 million** soldiers, and **15.5 million** civilians died in the territories occupied by the German army. **Nearly 10 Russians died each minute that the war lasted, 14,000 each day**.⁶⁵⁰ (R. Messenger, "The German Way of War," 37)

1.13.1: German War Crimes:

--The invasion was planned and carried out on the initiative of Adolf Hitler; it was a project over which he had a remarkable degree of control. The professional leadership of the German armed forces also enthusiastically supported it. It had, from its conception, a character that was both imperialistic and ruthlessly ideological. . . Before a shot was fired in Russia, the German onslaught was planned – both at the front and the rear – „to be the cruelest military campaign ever fought.“ (E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 3, 12)

--**Ronald Lewin** [re: Hitler's War of Annihilation]: After discussing Hitler's meeting at the Reich's Chancellery w/ his generals on **17 Mar 41** – where he announced that "the war against Russia will be such that it cannot be conducted in a knightly fashion. This is a struggle of ideologies and racial differences and will have to be waged w/ unprecedented, unmerciful and unrelenting harshness" – his "notorious order" for liquidation of political commissars, the role of the *Einsatzgruppen*, etc., he writes: "How could it be expected, assuming a German victory, that the situation in the east would be other than that so mordantly described by Tacitus, *ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant*," "where they make a wilderness, they call it peace?" (R. Lewin, *Hitler's Mistakes*, 129-30)

--My book review of, *Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg. Front u. Militaerisches Hinterland 1941/42*, by Christian Hartmann:

The Third Reich's surprise attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941 has been called "Hitler's war," the war he had dreamt of since the mid-1920s and which embraced not only his aspirations for global power but also those racial and ideological objectives which culminated in the most destructive war of annihilation (*Vernichtungskrieg*) the world has ever seen. Yet it was also the *Wehrmacht's* war, for it was here, in the forests and swamps and endless steppe lands of the East that some 10 million of its 17 million soldiers saw active military service from 1941 to 1944. And it was here where the *Wehrmacht*, following its initial spectacular victories, slowly bled to death in a remorseless war of attrition it could never win.

In recent years historians have gained new insights into the role of the *Wehrmacht* in the Russian campaign. For example, the stubborn myth of the "clean" *Wehrmacht*, waging an honorable war while SS and police units engaged

⁶⁴⁹ **Note:** Roughly **5** of these **27 million** were actually killed by Stalin.

⁶⁵⁰ **Note:** These figures are a little low. War lasted **1418** days. **27,000,000** divided by **1418** (total days of war) = **19,000+**.

in genocide behind the front, has long been discarded. As the author of this extraordinary book puts it, “above all, this Army long ago lost its innocence.” Yet while contemporary historians are well informed about the *Wehrmacht*’s combat record and complicity in war crimes in the East, not nearly enough is known about the everyday activities (*Alltag*) of the “average” German *Landser* on the eastern front – about his life at the front, his experiences in combat, his role – if any – in criminal activity, his interactions with Soviet civilians, etc. It is such lacunae in the historical record which Dr Christian Hartmann of the Institute for Contemporary History (Munich-Berlin) attempts to address in this intelligent and insightful work. . .

So what then can be said about the German soldier in the East, particularly in reference to war crimes? The author makes no attempt to quantify the number of those who committed such crimes, which he admits is hardly possible. He also avoids extreme positions which have often poisoned the debate over the *Wehrmacht*. What Hartmann does conclude is that the five divisions of his sample *collectively* – like the *Ostheer* as a whole – were responsible for a disturbing array of war crimes; however, the guilt of soldiers *individually* varied considerably, depending on such structural factors as unit assignment, function, location, etc. As a rule, the farther removed one was from the front, the greater the likelihood of participation in such murderous activity, a point underscored by the fact that the rear-area security division in this study committed by far the most war crimes. Indeed, there appears to have been a roughly inverse relationship between the heavily-occupied German front line (fewer war crimes) and the thinly held rear (majority of such crimes).

Yet it would be false, the author avers, to explain the actions and criminal activities of the average German soldier through such factors alone. More significant were the intentions of his political and military leadership which, from the beginning, gave its soldiers in the east free reign to operate outside the laws of war. Moreover, the fact that, in the east, two totalitarian states fought against each other in a manner approaching “religious fervor,” made the resulting “breach of civilization” appear – to German and Russian alike – as a virtually “normal” state of affairs.

(C. Luther, in: *The Journal of Military History*, 284-86. 2010)⁶⁵¹

Nature of fighting on eastern front:⁶⁵²

● Just as the politicians and generals „knew“ w/ absolute certainty in advance, i.e., well before 22 Jun 41, that in the „adherents of the Jewish-Bolshevistic world-view“ they would face an „antisocial criminality“ [Hitler, **30.3.41**, according to notes made by *Halder*] that would attack „insidiously from behind,“ there were also all too many rank-and-file soldiers, who were convinced beforehand that they would encounter an insidious, treacherous enemy who did not deserve any mercy.⁶⁵³ (322)

⁶⁵¹ **Note:** I believe it was Jan 2010, but not sure.

⁶⁵² **Note:** Source: *H.J. Schroeder*, “*German Soldiers’ Experiences*,” 315-22.

⁶⁵³ **Note:** *Schroeder* goes on to state: “As in any self-fulfilling prophecy, the invaders encountered everywhere a reality exactly corresponding to what they had expected in ideological terms.” Implication here, of course, is that Germans fulfilled this prophecy through their own barbaric behavior. Yet from my reading it is clear that Russians fought w/ tenacity and even barbarity outside the rules of war from first hours of the

• Term „toughness“ is insufficient to describe the fighting in Russia. It was not just „tough,“ but *brutal in the extreme*; it was a *relapse into complete barbarity*. However, we should not yet try to apportion the blame for this relapse, although the question of responsibility must be posed. (316-17)

• **1. Geb.Div.:** Bei ihrem weiteren Vorgehen kannten die Geb.Jaeger gegenueber dem Gegner kein Pardon. Als z.B. das von Salminger gefuehrte III./IR 98 am **29 Jun 41** kurz vor Lemberg die Ortschaft Brzunowice erreichte, stiess er „mitten in einen Haufen Rotarmisten, die gerade einem Transportzug entstiegen,“ wie Lanz in seiner **1954** verlegten „*Divisionsgeschichte der I.Geb.Div.*“ ausdrueckte u. dann lapidar feststellte: „In heftigen Kaempfen, oft Mann gegen Mann, wird der Gegner vernichtet.“ Dabei vermied er zu erwaechnen, dass die etwa 1000 Russen „*in Scharen in unsere MG-Garben hineinliefen und . . . wie von der Sense gemaecht*“ fielen, wie sich Wolf Kitterle, ein Angehoeriger der **12. Kp.** erinnerte. Die nicht kampfbereiten Russen wurden offenbar *einfach niedergemetzelt*. Ebenso erging es **16** russ. Kommissaren u. Offizieren, die von der **12. Kp.** zum Halten gezwungen worden waren. Das KTB der Div. vermerkte dazu, dass die meisten von ihnen “niedergemacht” wurden. . . Aehnlich diffamierend bezeichnete Lanz Gefangene als „*durchwegs Mongolentypen* – ein Vorgeschmack fuer unsere Jaeger ueber *Art u. Wesen eines Gegners, der mit Tuecke u. Grausamkeit seinen Krieg fuehrt u. sich von unseren bisherigen u. schon geschlagenen Gegnern in Polen, Frankreich u. auf dem Balkan unterschied.*“ (Meyer, *Blutiges Edelweiss*, 55-57)⁶⁵⁴

--German policy toward Soviet prisoners and civilians in the occupied territories had been formulated even before the fighting started in the East. There were **three key orders**:

- a) **13.5.41:** „*Fuehrer decree*“ limiting military *jurisdiction* in occupied areas, passing responsibility for dealing w/ criminals and insurgents to the SS.
- b) **19.5.41:** *Guidelines for the Behavior of the Fighting Forces in Russia*. They were distributed on this day. (**note:** for guidelines themselves see, *Bellamy, Absolute War*, 25)
- c) **6.6.41:** The *Kommissarbefehl* – the most notorious order of all. Hitler insisted that commissars were not to be regarded as soldiers under the Geneva Conventions, which was *completely illogical*.

(Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 26)

--The Fuehrer decree of **13.5.41** was passed on to the army by its C-in-C, von *Brauchitsch*, on **24.5.41**. Fearful that the relaxation of constraints on German troops' behavior against prisoners and local population might lead to a breakdown in *military discipline*, B. added an appendix emphasizing that the *Wehrmacht's* main job was to fight the Red Army and that „search and purge“ actions should be avoided. In an appendix to the second part of the decree he stressed that officers should continue to „prevent arbitrary excess by *individual* members of the army, so as to be in good time to prevent the degeneration of the troops.“ (see, *Bellamy, Absolute War*, 23-26)

campaign.

⁶⁵⁴ **Note:** Text beneath photograph on p. 57, showing an Asiatic-looking Russian POW: “Ein Gefangener der Roten Armee, Sommer 1941. Noch neun Jahre nach dem Krieg bediente sich Hubert Lanz *rassistischer Stereotype* zur Charakterisierung des Kriegsgegners.“

--When the German advanced slowed, **OKH** supported initiatives to get the *Commissar Order* cancelled, because, they said, it was counterproductive. Soviet resistance was getting stiffer. On **5.11.41**, GFM v. **Bock** objected to transferring POWs to the *Einsatzgruppen* and emphasized that the army's responsibility for POWs could not be shared w/ other authorities. (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 26-27)

-- *Dr Hans Rehfeldt* ("**GD**"):

Als ich nach ueber **50** Jahren meine Tagebuchaufzeichnungen ueber vier Jahre Russland u. Ostfront las, war ich *shockiert ueber meine Gefuehlskaelte*. Ueber die schrecklichsten Dinge bin ich hinweggegangen als ob sie zum taeglichen Leben gehoerten. Schon von daher sind diese Aufzeichnungen ein Zeichen der Zeit, *der Abstumpfung u. seelischen Verrohung* durch den Krieg. Ich schein alles beiseite geschoben zu haben. Anders wusste ich mir damals wohl nicht zu helfen. Nur an wenigen Stellen in all den Jahren aeusserte ich mich ueber meine Gefuehle. . . Wir selbst waren eingespannt in eine gewaltige Kriegsmaschinerie, waren physisch u. psychisch ueberfordert. Uns wurde das Letzte abverlangt! Da blieb nicht mehr viel Zeit, nachzudenken. – Es war ein Kampf, bei dem es ums Ueberleben ging. Bei den kuerzesten Ruhepausen schlief man sofort ein. Das ist selbst im Gefecht passiert (siehe meinen Bericht ueber ‚Rshew‘ im **Sep 42**). Im Nachhinein wundere ich mich selbst, dass es mir unter diesen Bedingungen ueberhaupt noch moeglich war, Tagebuch zu fuehren. Ausserdem *war es uns verboten*, weil diese persoenlichen Aufzeichnungen in hohem Masse Allgemeingueeltigkeit hatten! Kam der Feind in Besitz solcher Notizen, konnte er Schluesse ueber den Gegner einfangen. . .

(For complete account see his, *Mit dem Eliteverband des Heeres* "GD," 13)

--Belorussia: Belorussland hat neben den baltischen Republiken in diesem Krieg am meisten leiden muessen. Belorussland hatte 2.2 Millionen Tote zu beklagen. In dieser Republik kam *jeder vierte Bewohner ums Leben*. In Weissrussland, das die Nazis „Weissruthenien“ nannten, wurden 209 Staedte u. 9200 Doerfer (davon 628 Doerfer mitsamt den Bewohnern) vernichtet. Es gab dort 70 Ghettos u. 60 grosse Lager, in denen Kriegsgefangene u. Zivilisten systematisch durch Erfrierungen, Verhungern, Erschiessungen, durch bewusst herbeigefuehrte Epidemien dem Tode ausgeliefert wurden. 1.4 Million Menschen sind allein in Weissrussland in diesen Lagern umgekommen. Die Industriekapazitaet dieser Republik wurde zu 96% zerstoert. (P. Kohl, "Ich wundere mich, dass ich noch lebe," 16)

1.13.2: Russian War Crimes:⁶⁵⁵

--**Aug/Sep 39**: Am **23 Aug 39** unterzeichnete die Aussenminister Ribbentrop u. Molotov einen „Nichtsangriffvertrag zwischen Deutschland u. der Sowjetunion“ u. ein „Geheimes Zusatzprotokoll,“ in dem sich Hitler u. Stalin Polen je ungefaehr zur Haelfte in „Interessensphaeren“ aufteilten. Eine Woche darauf, am **1 Sep 39**, ueberfielen deutsche Truppen Polen (Stalin schickte Hitler ein Glueckwunschtelegramm zur erfolgreichen Einnahme von Warschau), u. am **17 Sep 39** rueckte die Rote Armee in das oestliche Polen ein. . . Elf Tage nach dem Einmarsch der Roten Armee in Ostpolen schlossen Hitler u. Stalin am **28 Sep 39** neue Abkommen: einen „Deutsch-

⁶⁵⁵ **Note:** See also, account of Dr. Heinrich Haape's experiences w/ **6 ID** on *Barbarossatag* (Section **1.6.8** above).

sowj. Grenz- u. Freundschaftsvertrag“ nebst zwei „*Geheimen Zusatzprotokollen*“ . . . alle unterzeichnet von Ribbentrop u. Molotov.

In diesem „Grenz- u. Freundschaftsvertrag“ u. in einem der beiden „*Geheimen Zusatzprotokollen* von **28 Sep 39** wurde die *gemeinsame Grenzlinie* „rektifiziert:“ In der noerdl. Haelfte Polens gab Hitler den Sowjets besetztes Land ab, dafuer liessen die Sowjets die deutsche Wehrmacht im Sueden weiter vorruecken. In der Mitte Polens wurde als gemeinsame Grenze der Bug bei Brest-Litowsk festgelegt.

Auch Stalin hatte mit Polen einen sowj.-polnischen Nichtsangriffspakt geschlossen. Das war **1932**. Nun war er in Ostpolen unter dem Vorwand einmarschiert, die dort lebenden weissrussische u. ukrainische Bevoelkerung zu schuetzen. . . Rote Armee, der Geheimdienst NKWD u. die Geheimpolizei GPU liquidierten, wie Hitler es zuvor in Westpolen u. spaeter in der Sowjetunion tat, die Verwaltung u. die Intelligenze. **300.000** Polen gerieten in sowj. Kriegsgefangenschaft. Davon ueberlebten nur **82.000**. . . Waehrend der 21 Monate dauernde Besetzung, vom **17 Sep 39** bis zum **22 Jun 41**, bis die Sowjets selbst von der deutschen Wehrmacht ueberfallen wurde, liess Stalin von den insgesamt **13** Millionen Bewohnern Ostpolens etwa **1.250.000** Menschen nach Sibirien u. Kasachstan deportieren. Das sind knapp **10%** der gesamten oertlichen Bevoelkerung. Von diesen Deportierten kamen ca. **40%** in den Gulags ums Leben. (P. Kohl, „*Ich wundere mich, dass ich noch lebe*,“ 19-20)

--From numerous accounts written by German veterans (for ex., *F. Belke's memoir „Infanterist“*) it is clear that the Landser had an absolutely visceral fear of being taken prisoner and horribly mistreated by the enemy (mutilated, etc.).

--Fear of the Soviet use of gas: Photograph of the **6./Pz.Rgt. 1** at Arys Troop Training Camp, shows men testing gas masks in the spring of **1941**. [Germans were convinced Red Army would resort to gas or chemical warfare.] (H. Reibenstahl, *The 1st Panzer Division . . . A Pictorial History*, 73)

--In the early phases of the war, *German prisoners were usually shot*, either immediately on capture or after initial interrogation. The executions were usually authorized, or at least condoned, at company, battalion and regimental level. In many cases they were carried out on the order of commissars. The *Wehrmacht Investigation Office for Breaches of International Law (WUST)* collected thousands of reports. Soviet records indicate that **90-95%** of German prisoners taken in **1941-2** did not survive . . . (*Bellamy, Absolute War*, 28-29)

--**22.6.41**: Bereits an diesem ersten Tage *zeigte die sowj. Kampffuehrung ihr wahres Gesicht*. Einer unserer Spaehtrupps, der durch den Feind abgeschnitten worden war, wurde spaeter von unseren Truppen **tot u. grauenhaft verstuemmelt aufgefunden**. Mein Ordonnanzoffizier u. ich, die wir oft auf unseren Frontfahrten durch Gelaendeabschnitten kamen, in denen noch Feindteile sein konnten, waren uns einig darueber, dass **wir nicht lebend in die Haende des Gegners fallen wollten**. Es kam spaeterhin auch oft genug vor, dass sowj. Soldaten die Haende hochhoben, um sich anscheinend zu ergeben, um dann, sobald unsere Grenadiere nah heran gekommen waren, *wieder zur Waffen zu greifen*. Oder das Verwundete *sich tot stellten*, um von rueckw. auf unsere Soldaten zu schiessen. (Manstein, *Verlorene Siege*, 178-79)

--**22.6.41** [*vor Bialystok*]: ...Der Gegner wurde zwar durch die Wucht des Anpralls zurueckgeworfen, doch mit *welcher Verbissenheit* wehrten sich diese russ. Soldaten. Wir hatten allerdings das Pech, am 1. Tag auf *Stalin-Schueler* zu stossen, das waren angehende Offiziere u. *Politruks*,

die sich nicht ergaben, sondern bis zum letzten Mann kaempften u. sich regelrecht in ihren Schuetzenloechern totschiessen liessen. *Die Art der Kriegsfuehrung hatte sich grundlegend geaendert*; sie war uns fremd. Bald wurden die ersten Spaehtrupps gefunden, die den Russen in die Haende gefallen waren. Man hatte ihnen bei lebendigem Leibe die *Geschlechtsteile abgeschnitten*, die *Augen ausgestochen*, die *Kehlen durchgeschnitten* oeder *Ohren u. Nasen abgeschnitten*. Wir gingen mit ernstesten Gesichtern umher, denn vor dieser Art des Kampfes bekamen wir Angst. Zwangslaeufig, entwickelte sich auch auf unserer Seite *eine unnatuerliche Haert*, die uns in der Ausbildung nicht anerzogen worden war. (Uffz.Fritz Huebner, *Echolot*, 24-25)

--23.6.41 [*Kriegsbericht General Heinrich (43 AK)*]⁶⁵⁶ *an seine Familie / oestlich des Bug*:⁶⁵⁷

Wir haben gestern eine russ. Division gegenueber gehabt, die in der Ueber- raschung voellig zersprengt ist. Ueberall in den grossen Waeldern, in den zahl- losen Gehoefen sitzen verlorene Soldaten, die oft genug hinterruecks schiessen. Der Russe fuehrt ueberhaupt hintertueckisch Krieg. Unsere Leute haben darauf- hin mehrfach stark aufgeraeumt, ohne Gnade. . .

(J. Huerter, *Ein deutscher General an der Ostfront. Die Briefe u. Tagebuecher des Gotthard Heinrich 1941/42*. 62-63)

--*Unteroffizier Fritz Huebner*, making contact with the enemy west of Belostok, recalled his shock and consternation – and that of his comrades – when confronted with *gruesome atrocities perpetrated by Red Army soldiers*. His account also amplifies the insidious dialectic which would result in an ever expanding universe of brutality and barbarism on the part of both antagonists:

[On 22 June] at 0400 the [artillery] fire ended and the attack began. The enemy may have been pushed back by the force of the blow, but with what tenacity did these Russian soldiers fight back! Indeed, we had the misfortune to stumble upon some disciples of Stalin on the first day: they were real budding officers and *politruks* who wouldn't surrender, but fought instead to the last man, preferring to be shot or beaten to death in their foxholes.

The way of waging war had fundamentally changed; it was completely unfamiliar to us. We soon found the first reconnaissance patrols which had fallen into Russian hands. They had had their genitals cut off while still alive, their eyes gouged out, throats cut, or ears and noses cut off. We went around with grave faces, because we were frightened of this type of fighting. Inevitably, we, too, developed an unnatural ruthlessness [*unnatuerliche Haerte*] which had not been instilled in us during training.^{declvii}

(*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Section 7.1)

* * * *

⁶⁵⁶ **Note:** Das 43 AK ueberschitt am 22.6.41 mit der 131, 134 u. 252 ID bei Mielnik den Bug, bildete die Suedflanke der Schlacht von Bialystok u. ging dann weiter nach Osten vor. Heinrichs Korps war bis zum 4.7.41 der 4 Armee (Kluge), dann der 2 Armee (Weichs) unterstellt.

⁶⁵⁷ **Note:** Several of these initial entries amplify the sinister dialectic which resulted in ever-increasing brutality and barbarism on both sides.

1.14: Terrain Features

1.14.1: Sector of Army Group South:

-- German Seventeenth Army had also to reckon on the difficulties of forcing the river San, *whose bare banks provided the attackers w/ neither cover nor concealment*. (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 123)

--The **Galacian region** through which [AGS] struck was *partially wooded and gently undulating*, making it reasonable for armored warfare but w/ excellent potential for effective defense. However, once the border area was clear and the Germans pressed into the interior, the land became *increasingly suited to armored warfare*. With *mile upon mile of treeless steppe* stretching from Bessarabia in the west to the Donets and beyond to the east, the Germans found this ideal terrain to advance upon. (Taylor, *Barbarossa to Berlin. A Chronology*, 23)

-- On the southern wing of the army group, where the frontier was formed by the River San, the divisions of General von Stülpnagel's Seventeenth Army *found things more difficult*. The bank of the San north of Przemysl was as *flat as a pancake*—without woods, without ravines, without any cover for whole regiments. That was why the assault battalions of **257 ID**, from Berlin, could not move out of their deployment areas until the night of **21/22 Jun 41**. (P. Carell, *Hitler Moves East*, 26-27)

--Die linke Grenze fuer den Aufmarsch u. spaeteren Vormarsch der H.Gr. bildeten die Pripjet-suempfe. Hier befand sich das Land in einem noch archaischen Zustand mit *verfilztem Urwald, kilometerweiten Suempfen, verchlammten Wegen*—ein Naturhindernis, das bei der spaeteren Operation sich unangenehm bemerkbar machen sollte. (W. Haupt, *Die Schlachten der H.Gr.Sued*, 9)

--Geography also favored the Soviet defenders of the Ukraine, compared to those of Belorussia. Kirponos, like Pavlov, had an exposed salient jutting into German-occupied Poland; his was around the city of L'vov. But the L'vov salient was in any event only *seriously attacked by the Germans from one side*. The southern flank of the salient faced the territory of Hungary, and Hungary was neutral, at least at the very start of the war. This flank was protected, too, by the Carpathian Mountains. In **Mar 41**, Hitler had *abandoned the original intention to add a southern pincer – the 12th Army – to AGS*. The Ukrainian front was also relatively deep. The distance from the border to Kiev was **350 miles**, compared to **200 miles** from the border to Minsk. The wide expanse of the middle Dnepr provided a backstop for the Red Army, making easier the defense of the Kiev region . . . The invading German AGS had to *operate on a much wider front* than AGC [or AGN for that matter]. . . The distance from the L'vov salient down to the Black Sea, the *operational span of German AGS*, was **450 miles**. In comparison, the width of the German AGC sector was **200 miles**. . . Meanwhile, the *impenetrable expanse of the Poles'ia marshes* [Pripjat'] provided a base from which the northern flank of Rundstedt's advance into the Ukraine could be threatened by the Russians. (Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 76)

--Kirponos was only front commander who *recovered immediately from the shock of the German invasion and he conducted his defense w/ great skill*. In this he was *aided by the nature of the country*, the broken swampland to the south of the Pripjet and the woodlands of Galicia and the western Ukraine. (Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 135)

--**Prut River:** Described by Italian war correspondent as “a sluggish, yellow river which at this point, near its mouth, broadens to form the vast, turbid pool of Lake Bratesc. (Curzio Malaparte, *The Volga Rises in Europe*, 20)

--**High Tatra Mountains (I. Geb.Div.):** The High Tatras or High Tatra Mountains, are a mountain range along the border of northern Slovakia in the Prešov Region, and southern Poland in the Lesser Poland Voivodeship. They are a range of the Tatra Mountains chain. **Elevation:** 8,356.’

The mountain range borders **Belianske Tatras** to the east, **Podtatranská kotlina** to the south and **Western Tatras** to the west. The major part and all the highest peaks of the mountains are situated in Slovakia. The highest peak is **Gerlach-ovský štít**, at **2,655 metres (8,711 ft)**.

Natural history

The High Tatras, having 29 peaks over 2,500 metres (8,200 ft) **AMSL** are, with the **Southern Carpathians**, the only mountain ranges with an **alpine** character and **habitats** in the entire 1,200 kilometres (750 mi) length of the **Carpathian Mountains** system. The first European cross-border **national park** was founded here—Tatra National Park—with **Tatra National Park (*Tatranský národný park*)** in Slovakia in 1948, and **Tatra National Park (*Tatrzański Park Narodowy*)** in Poland in 1954. The adjacent parks protect **UNESCO's** trans-border Tatra **Biosphere Reserve**.^[1]

Fauna

Many rare and **endemic** animals and plant species are native to the High Tatras. They include the Tatras' endemic **goat-antelope** and **critically endangered species**, the **Tatra chamois (*Rupicapra rupicapra tatrlica*)**. Predators include **Eurasian brown bear**, **Eurasian lynx**, **marten**, **wolf** and **fox**. The **Alpine marmot** is common in the range.

Flora

Flora of the High Tatras includes: the **endemic Tatra scurvy-grass (*Cochlearia tatrae*)**, **yellow mountain saxifrage (*Saxifraga aizoides*)**, **ground covering net-leaved willow (*Salix reticulata*)**, **Norway spruce (*Picea abies*)**, **Swiss pine (*Pinus cembra*)**, and **European larch (*Larix decidua*)**.

(*Wikipedia*)⁶⁵⁸

--**High Tatras:** *The High Tatras (Vysoké Tatry), the tallest range in the Carpathian Mountains, tower over most of Eastern Europe. Some 25 peaks measure above 2500m, but the massif is only 25km wide and 78km long, with pristine snowfields, ultramarine mountain lakes, thundering waterfalls, undulating pine forests and shimmering alpine meadows. Most of this jagged range is part of the Tatra National Park (Tanap); not that this fact... (<https://www.lonelyplanet.com>)*

--**Oleszyce, Poland (I. Geb.Div.):** Across centuries, Oleszyce was frequently raided and destroyed by **Crimean Tatars** (1498, 1624, 1672), **Zaporozhian Cossacks** (1610, 1629, 1648), burned in fires (1710, 1726), its population was also decimated by plagues (1626, 1641).In **1938**,

⁶⁵⁸ **Note:** Another source states that these mountains are full of “breathtaking mountain lakes.”

its population was **3500**, divided between Poles (920), Ukrainians (860), and Jews (1700). The village was captured by the **Wehrmacht** on September 12, 1939. A few days later, heavy fighting between the advancing Germans and retreating Polish **21st Mountain Infantry Division** took place in the area of Oleszyce, in which General **Jozef Kustron** was killed (September 16). German presence in Oleszyce was short, as on September 20, the village was occupied by the **Red Army**. Oleszyce was annexed by the **Soviet Union**, and **German-Soviet boundary was established a few kilometers north of the village** (see also **Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact**). In June 1941, the **NKVD** murdered a number of prisoners, kept in the local castle (see **NKVD prisoner massacres**). (*Wikipedia*)

1.14.2: Sector of Army Group Centre:

--See, *Barbarossa Unleashed*.

-- **Terrain**:⁶⁵⁹ Moscow lay some **1000** km away from German-Soviet demarcation line. The terrain was overwhelmingly monotonous and flat, yet “criss-crossed by rivers, mottled w/ bogs and forests, and contained large areas of wilderness.” The road and rail infrastructure was well below standards of Western Europe. Bewildering temperature variations between summer and winter, etc. (Quote from: Adam Zamoyski, *Moscow 1812*, 93; see also, Notebook #4 (“*Weather*,” “*Terrain*”))

--Hoth’s **3 PzGr** attacked from East Prussia into Lithuania . . . and it experienced the *same difficulties crossing the heavily wooded and almost trackless sandy terrain* . . . The few roads running from west to east were little more than narrow sandy woodland tracks, many of which had *never been used by a vehicle before*, and enemy resistance, however light, could not be overcome by deployment off the road. In consequence columns were repeatedly halted and the **many forest fires** added to the confusion. Any bogged or broken down vehicles completely blocked the route, and the wooden bridges over the network of streams had to be strengthened to convert them to vehicle carrying. (A. Seaton, *The Russo-German War 1941-45*, 118)

-- Byelorussia’s terrain:

The front [i.e., Western Front’s line] stretched for just **175** miles from north to south, but the ground was difficult to hold. With the exception of a few hills near Minsk, Byelorussia was flat – a blessing for an attacker, a curse for the attacked. The only two significant rivers, the Neman and the Pripet, flowed parallel to the direction of the German invasion, the Neman westward, the Pripet eastward, neither blocking the way to Minsk. Three rivers farther to the east, beyond Minsk, did help the Soviet cause, however. The West Dvina flowed NW, the Berezina SE, and the Dnieper south, and the Germans had to cross all three. Moscow lay only **300** miles beyond the Dnieper, though, and between them there wasn’t a single major river to impede the German advance.

Byelorussia consisted *largely of woods and swamps*. Its muddy jewel, the Pripet Marshes, was an oval **125** miles long and **100** miles wide, containing very few settlements and even fewer roads. No attacker could ever hope to control it. But it wouldn’t protect the defenders, either, since the swamp could not support tanks, cars, or artillery. . .

⁶⁵⁹ **Note:** For topic of terrain see also, my Notebooks **IV:27** ff., and **VIII:5-6**.

(C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 125)

1.14.3: Sector of Army Group North:

-- The terrain was an *infamous mixture of woods and marshes*, once across the Dvina it turned into a "*thick green jungle*." (Kirchubel, *Hitler's Panzer Armies*, 132)

--The region [of Kuznetsov's *front group*] offered *several natural lines of defense*. The Neman River and its tributaries lay along the border or just behind it. Some **150** miles further back was the Dvina River, where the *Tsarist armies had held out for two years in 1915-17*. A further **150** miles to the east was Lake Chud (Lake Peipus) and the Narva and Velikaia Rivers, on the line of the old border between the USSR and Estonia and Latvia. (Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 81)

-- The border zone was *heavily wooded* and *partly swampy*. East of the border there were sandy plains up to the Saltuona River valley. East of it, the deeper-cut Dubysa River valley could be used by the enemy as an obstacle. Movement and supplies would be *severely impeded by the total lack of roads and highways*, all the more since the division's supply trucks were *commercial ones* unable to travel cross-country. (Ritgen, Col., "*6th Panzer Division Operations*," in: D.M. Glantz (ed.), *Initial Period of the War*, 112)

-- *Gen. v. Kielmansegg*: The terrain . . . was *woody and swampy*. We had to *overcome this terrain all the way up to Leningrad* w/ the exception of **41 PzK** between Duna – Ostrag. I can only say you should have seen this terrain which was *thick green jungle*. We could see only a short distance ahead. The *lack of roads* was equally bad. (Ritgen, Col., "*6th Panzer Division Operations*," in: D.M. Glantz (ed.), *Initial Period of the War*, 112)

--The country in the Baltic States resembled that of East Prussia, being *flat w/ occasional uplands*, in parts covered w/ *thick forests, sandy moorlands* and *numerous lakes and swamps*. Only the coastal region was fertile pasture land. The further to the NE one travelled the more desolate and heavily wooded the terrain became. There were *few good roads*, and most were narrow and in poor repair, being made unusable by the frequent summer rains. Two rivers, flowing from east to west into the Baltic, lay like barriers across the German axis of advance. The first of these was the Niemen lying about **40** miles beyond the German start line, except where its lower reaches entered East Prussia as the Memel. The second *more formidable obstacle* was the West Dvina running through Vitebsk to Riga, about **200** miles from the East Prussian frontier. The seizure of this river would prevent its use by the enemy as a defensive line and *cut off the Red Army formations to the south of it*. (Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 101)

--The Baltic region presented special difficulties for the movement of **8 PD** . . . that tended to reduce the impact of tanks and increase the importance of motorized infantry. The Baltic area was characterized by innumerable water courses, lakes, and associated swampy areas and forests. Agriculture dominated the economy of the inland areas and was reflected in a road system of *unsurfaced and unpaved roads* generally w/o foundation or drainage ditches. Such roads were largely country lanes suitable for light horse drawn traffic and pedestrians but *not pass-able* for hvy motor vehicle traffic . . . Many "roads" on the German maps proved to be lanes w/o foundations or ditching approximately **8** feet wide. The "main highways" were few in number connecting the larger cities. They were adequate for two way traffic for motor vehicles but

unpaved and consisting of graded rock foundations w/ crushed rock surfaces reasonably effective for water runoff and load bearing. Along this communications system w/ soft swampy terrain bordering roads, **8 PD** faced “about 7 medium (**25 m** to **50 m** river width), **14** smaller (w/ names on **1:300,000** scale maps), and **16** smaller water courses to cross” from the border to Duenaburg. The division faced **38** significant streams to be crossed by its **5000** motor vehicles during movement along *sandy lanes and unpaved roads*. (R.H.S. Stolfi, *German Panzers on the Offensive*, 147-57)

* * * *

1.15: Miscellaneous

1.15.1: Germany's Allies & Operation *Barbarossa*:

--Note: War declared on Soviet Union on following dates:

<u>Italy</u> :	22.6.41
<u>Romania</u> :	22.6.41
<u>Finland</u> :	25.6.41 (recognized a <i>state of war</i> w/ Soviet Union) ⁶⁶⁰
<u>Hungary</u> :	27.6.41
<u>Bulgaria</u> :	(Did not declare war on Soviet Union or join German invasion of Russia.)

(*Wikipedia*)

--**Romania**: Although Romania took an *active part* in Hitler's war on the Soviet Union from **22 Jun 41**, the two armies involved (Third & Fourth) did not join the major offensive w/ the German Eleventh Army until **2 Jul 41**. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: 1021)

--**Hungary**: Declared war on the Soviet Union on **27 Jun 41**. The first hostilities consisted of an air raid against the city of Stanislaw east of the Carpathians, which was declared to be a "reprisal measure." Next day, Horthy wrote to tell Hitler that his army would fight "*shoulder to shoulder w/ the famed and victorious German army in the crusade for the elimination of the Communist menace, and for the protection of our culture.*" . . .

From **1 Jul 41** the "*Carpathian Group*" under Lt.Gen. Ferenc Szombathelyi, the general commanding **8 AC**, took part in the campaign against the Soviet Union. . . The Hungarian army group [including corps troops from the "Mobile Corps"] had a strength of ca. **45,000** men; it was not placed under command of AGS. Only a few days after the appearance of the "Carpathian Group," it was disbanded as a big formation. The "mobile corps" the most modern operational formation in the Hungarian Army (**24,000** men), was placed *directly under command of AGS from 9 Jul 41*, and took part in the continuing advance. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: 1028)

--**22.6.41 (Karpathen Front)**: Auch an der Karpathenfront, wo **4** ungarische Bde. sichern, blieb der grosse Krieg noch aus. Einige Schiessereien u. Ueberfalle an den Paessen, aus Nervositat hervorgerufen, war alles, was der 1. Kriegstag hier brachte. Ungarn hatte *einen Eintritt in den Krieg mit Russland abgelehnt*, obwohl in den letzten Monaten an seiner Grenze eine ganze russ. Armee, die **12 [Armee]**, mit zahlreichen Gebirgsdivisionen drohend aufmarschiert war. Diese Armee war, weil nicht gebunden, fuer die H.Gr.Sued eine grosse Gefahr. Wenn sie kehrt machte, konnte sie dem Angriff der **17 Armee** mit *grosser Ueberlegenheit* in die Flanke stossen. (C. Wagener, *Heeresgruppe Sued*, 48)

--**Slovakia**: Unlike Hungary, Slovakia had announced its readiness for military cooperation w/ Germany on **22 Jun 41**, and had *broken off diplomatic relations w/ the Soviet Union*. . . Slovakia provided an army group for deployment on the eastern front; this consisted of two infantry divisions, an advance party, and army troops (around **41,000** men). The advance party, an almost *fully*

⁶⁶⁰ **Note**: According to *Wikipedia*, both Finland and Hungary made *formal declarations of war*. Confirm!

motorized formation . . . and composed predominately of regular soldiers . . . had a strength of ca. **4800** men. This advance party was ready for action on **24 Jun 41**, and took part in the advance of German Seventeenth Army. . . The remainder of the [Slovak] army group was also placed under command of Seventeenth Army on **1 Jul 41**. This Slovak formation consisted of some **36,000** men, 60% of whom were *inadequately trained and poorly equipped reservists*, and was assigned by Seventeenth Army to covering and security tasks. [See text for more details.] (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: 1034-35)

--**Italy:** Italy and Japan, Hitler's actual partners in the Tripartite Pact, were officially informed of his decision to attack the Soviet Union only on **22 Jun 41**. . . Hitler told Mussolini about the "*hardest decision*" of his life only at the last moment, hoping to present him w/ a *fait accompli*. . . Italy was far from surprised by the German attack on the Soviet Union. Since the beginning of **1941**, Hitler and Ribbentrop had *frequently referred to the deterioration in German-Soviet relations*; moreover, the Italian military attachés in Berlin, Moscow, and Bucharest had reported the military build-up by both sides. Mussolini had concluded that he must *prepare for active Italian participation in a German-Soviet conflict*, which now appeared inevitable. On **30 May 41** he instructed the chief of the Italian general staff . . . to **set up a special army corps** . . . It appears that, after **15 Jun 41**, Mussolini instructed his military attaché in Berlin . . . to offer the *Wehrmacht* High Command an **army corps for action on the eastern front**. . . Hitler accepted the Italian offer of military assistance for the campaign in the east "*with a heart filled with gratitude*" on **21 Jun 41**. However, he also informed Mussolini that there was no need for the immediate dispatch of an army corps. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: 1037-38)

--**Bulgaria:** [A reluctant ally.] Among the European states allied w/ Germany, Bulgaria occupied a *special position*. Even after **22 Jun 41**, Sofia *maintained diplomatic relations w/ Moscow and acted as a representative of German, Hungarian, and Romanian interests there*. At the end of **Jul 41**, the German foreign ministry requested that Bulgarian-Soviet relations be broken off. . . The problem dragged on until the summer of **1944**. . . Bulgarian sympathy for Russia had deep roots, dating back to **1878**. Hitler's war against the Soviet Union was therefore *unpopular among the Bulgarian population*. The authoritarian regime of Emperor Boris III did **not offer troops for the eastern front**, and volunteers failed to come forward. In fact, the German leadership itself opposed the involvement of Bulgarian troops in *Barbarossa* for two reasons. [See text for details.] With Turkey remaining neutral despite German pressure and Turkish enthusiasm for German successes against the Red Army, Bulgaria remained **Germany's only ally in the Balkans**.⁶⁶¹(*GSWW*, Vol. IV: 1041-43)

--Bulgaria **did not join the German invasion of the Soviet Union that began on 22 June 1941 nor did it declare war on the Soviet Union**. However, despite the lack of official declarations of war by both sides, the **Bulgarian Navy** was involved in a number of skirmishes with the Soviet **Black Sea Fleet**, which attacked Bulgarian shipping. Besides this, Bulgarian armed forces garrisoned in the Balkans battled various anti-German resistance groups. (*Wikipedia*)

--**Japan:** [A reluctant ally]. Tokyo was officially informed of the German attack on Russia only on **21 Jun 41**.⁶⁶² (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: 1043)

⁶⁶¹ **Note:** Wasn't Rumania a Balkan ally as well? How is "Balkans" defined here?

⁶⁶² **Note:** On p. 1037, states that Japan was officially informed of German attack on **22.6.41**.

--**Finland:** On **22 Jun 41**, German *Mountain Corps Norway* executed Operation “Reindeer” (*Renn-tier*) and advanced unhindered from Norway into the area around Petsamo. It’s subsequent eastward deployment into the new assembly area on the Finnish-Soviet border was also completed w/o attempts at interference by Soviet forces. . . Finnish border units . . . had been placed under command of Mountain Corps Norway on **22 Jun 41**. On **29 Jun 41** German and Finnish troops of Mountain Corps Norway launched an attack toward Murmansk . . . It was followed on **1 Jul 41** by the attack of Higher Command XXXVI . . . in the central army sector toward Salla – Kandalaksha, and by the advance of the Finnish 3 Corps in the direction of Louchi-Kemi. (*GSSW*, Vol. IV: 941-42)

--The period of peace following the Winter War was widely regarded in Finland as temporary, even when peace was announced in March 1940. A period of frantic diplomatic efforts and rearmament followed. The Soviet Union kept up intense pressure on Finland, thereby hastening the Finnish efforts to improve the security of the country.

Defensive arrangements were attempted with Sweden and Great Britain, but the political and military situation in the context of the **Second World War** rendered these efforts fruitless. Finland then turned to **Nazi Germany** for military aid. As the German offensive against the Soviet Union (**Operation Barbarossa**) approached, the cooperation between the two countries intensified. German troops arrived in Finland and took up positions, mostly in **Lapland**, from where they would invade the Soviet Union. The Finnish military took part in the planning for Operation Barbarossa, and prepared to invade the Soviet Union alongside the Germans in the north, and independently in the south.

Operation Barbarossa began on 22 June 1941. On **25 June** the Soviet Union launched a massive air raid against Finnish cities, after which *Finland declared war* and also allowed German troops stationed in Finland to begin offensive warfare. The resulting war was to be called the **Continuation War**. (<https://en.wikipedia.org>)

1.15.2: Style Guide: Cities, Towns, Rivers, etc.

(**Note:** Starting point for this listing of key geographical terms was the maps provided by Col David Glantz, his “Barbarossa” book, and Evan Mawdsley’s Thunder in the East. Objective is consistency.)⁶⁶³

Aleksandrovka

Aleksin (E of Kaluga)

Alytus (Olita)

Andreapol’

Airogola (Ariogala)⁶⁶⁴

Arkhangelsk

Baranovich

Belostok (vice Bialystok)

Belyi (Bjelyi or Bjeloj)

⁶⁶³ **Note:** Most entries in **bold type** pertain to locations in sectors of Army Group South and Army Group North.

⁶⁶⁴ **Note:** Latter appears to be German spelling of the town (in war diaries, etc.).

Berdichev (Berditschew)
Beresina River (Berezina River)
Bobruisk
Borisov (on the Beresina River)
Briansk
Brody
Bubiai

Chern' (NE of Orel)

Darbenai
Daugavpils (Dünaburg / Dvinsk)
Dedilovo
Demiansk
Demidov
Desna River
Dnepr River
Dnepropetrovsk
Donbas (Donets Basin)
Dorogobuzh
Drissa (W. Dvina)
Drissa River
Drut River
Dubno
Dubysa River (Dubysa / Dubissa / Dubyussa)⁶⁶⁵
Dukhovshchina
Dvina River (Düna River / Dugave River)
Dvinsk (Daugavpils)

Efremov (N of Elets)
El'nia (Yelnya)
Elets (vice Yelets)
Epifan'
Erzvilkas (Erzwilkas)
Eydtkau

Galicia
Gargzdai (or Gargzdal?)
Gorki (or Gor'ki?)
Gomel' (or Gomel?)
Gorodishche
Glukhov (W of Kursk)
Grodno
Gumbinen (Gumbinnen)
Gzhatsk

High Tatras (Mt. Range in Slovenia)
Hrubieszow (now Novovolynsk)⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶⁵ **Note:** Latter spelling used by R. Kirchubel in his *Panzer Armies* book.

⁶⁶⁶ **Note:** This according to R.H.S. Stolfi, *German Panzers on the Offensive*, 34.

Iakhroma⁶⁶⁷

Iartsevo (not, Yartsevo (NE of Smolensk))

Insterburg

Iukhnov

Iurbarkas (Iurburg / Jurbarkas)⁶⁶⁸

Jakavpils (Jekabpils / Jakobstadt / Jacobstadt / Krustpils)

Jaungelgava (Friedrichsstadt)

Jura River (Iura)

Kalvaria (Kalvariija)

Kangailai (Kongajly)

Kashira

Kaunas (Kovno)

Kelme (Kel'me)

Khar'kov (Kharkov)

Khimki (suburb of Moscow)

Kholm

Kolomna

Kovel'

Krasnaia Poliana

Krasnyi (Krasny / Krassnoje (56 km west of Smolensk))

Krichev

Krustpils⁶⁶⁹ (**Jacobstadt**)

Kuibyshev

Kybartai

Lake Il'men

Lake Naroch (N of Minsk)

Lake Peipus (Lake Chud)

Lake Vishtyness (Wysztyter See)

Lepel'

Libau (Liepaja)

Lida

Livny

Lokhvitsa (Ukraine)

Lovat' River

Lutsk (Luck)

L'vov (Lemberg)

Lyduvinai

Maloarkhangel'sk

Maloiaroslavets

⁶⁶⁷ **Note:** German spellings of such words – Iakhroma, Iukhnov, etc. – begin w/ a “J.” German also substitutes a “ch” for the Russian “kh” (Juchnov vs. Iukhnov). American sources often begin these spellings w/ a “Y” (Yakhroma).

⁶⁶⁸ **Note:** This town on the Neman River.

⁶⁶⁹ **Note:** This town cited as **Jekabpils** on map in *GSWW*.

Mariampole (Mariampol' / Marjampol)⁶⁷⁰

Masurischen (Lake)

Medyn'

Memel River (see Neman River)

Minge (Minija) (River)

Mikailov

Mituva River

Mtsensk

Mogilev

Molodechno (Molodeczno)

Moskva River

Mozhaisk

Muchaviec River (Muchawe River)

Naro-Fominsk

Naumiestis

Neman River (Njemen River)

Nevel (Newel)

Nevezhis River

Novogrudok

Okmiana (River)

Olenino

Oleszyce (Poland)

OPOCHKA

Ostashkov

Orsha

Ostrog (Ostrag)

Pagramantis

Panevezh

Pavskoie (German = Plawskoje)

Peremysl' (Przemysl / Peremyshl)

Pleskov (Pleskau)

Pripiat' Marshes (vice Pripet)

Prokhorovka

Protva River

Prut River (Pruth River)

Pruzhany (not Pruzana)

Putivl

Radziechov (Radziechow)

Radeshev⁶⁷¹

Raseinai (Rossinie, Rossieni, Rossienie)

Rava Russkaya (Rava Russkaia / Rava Ruska)

Rembertow (near Warsaw)

Riazan'

Rogachev (on Dnepr)

⁶⁷⁰ **Note:** This is spelling in English translation of W. Haupt's *Army Group North* (31).

⁶⁷¹ **Note:** Not sure if this is (putatively) another spelling for "Radziechov."

Romintener Heide

Roslavl'

Rovno (Rowne)

Rybinsk

Rzhev

Saltuona River**Sargeliai****Saudinakai**

Schutsche Lake (Tschutsche-Sees)

Seredzius (Seredzhius)

Serpukhov

Sesuis (River)

Sevastopol'

Shat (River)

Shlissel'burg (suburb of Leningrad)

Shostka

Schushve River**Siauliai (Schaulen / Shiauliai)⁶⁷²****Skauvile (Skauville / Skauvila)**

Slonim

Slutsk

Sokal

Solnechnogorsk (or Sol'nechnogorsk)

Sosna River (Elets)

Sozh River (Krichev)

Spas-Demensk

Sredniki

Stalinogorsk

Staraia Russa

Staritsa

Stegvilai

Stolpce

Styr River

Sudost' River

Sukhinichi

Svekana

Svir River

Sychevka (SE of Rzhev)

Szeszupa River**Tarnopol****Taurage (Tauroggen)****Tel'shiai (Fortified Region)**

Tikhvin

Tilsit (Til'zit / Sovetsk)

Tolochino (Tolotschin, west of Orsha)

Tropets

Torzhok

⁶⁷² **Note:** This was one of Red Army's fortified regions in sector of Northwest Front.

Tschernigow (Chernigov)

Uman'

Ustilug

Valdai Hills

Viaz'ma (Wjasma)

Velikie Luki

Velizh (Welish)

Venev

Ventspils (Vindava)

Vereia (Wereja)⁶⁷³

Vilnius (or Vil'nius?)

Vinnitsa

Vistytis

Vitebsk

Vladimir Volynski (Wlodzimierz)

Volga-Moscow Canal

Volga Reservoir

Volkhov River

Volkovysk (near Minsk)

Volokolamsk

Vop' River

Voronezh

Western Dvina

Wilkomierz (Ukmerge)

Windau (Ventspils)

Yekaterinburg [Jekatarinburg] (2000 km beyond Moscow)

Zaporozh'e (in the Donbas)

Zhizdra (River + town)

Zhitomir (Shitomir)

Zhlobin (Slobin)

Zubtsov (SE of Rzhev)

Zusha (River)

* * * *

⁶⁷³ **Note:** In translating German to English, a “W” becomes “V.” I also believe that a “j” – as in “Wereja” – becomes an “i” when translated; hence, “Vereia,” or “Viaz'ma” vice “Wjasma.” In latter case, an “s” in German becomes a “z” in English.

1.16: Conclusions⁶⁷⁴

--It is known that **1710** Soviet cities and towns and **70,000** villages were destroyed or severely damaged, as were **40,000** hospitals, **84,000** schools, and **43,000** libraries – a *scale of devastation unparalleled in modern history*. (C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 10)

-- **Note:** Omar Bartov writes of the *German soldiers*,’ “*remarkably widespread, quasi-religious belief in Hitler*... The average German soldier retained throughout most of the war a *strong belief in the Fuehrer* as a great political and military leader. Moreover, Hitler was viewed both as the true embodiment of the ‘little man’ and the simple soldier, and... as the only human being – or at least the only German – capable of moulding history and fate.” (Bartov, *A View from Below*, 336)

1.16.1: Hitler, the *Wehrmacht* & *Ostheer*

ab 22.6.41: Within days of invasion, every *Wehrmacht* army group HQ discovered that the intelligence furnished by **FHO** about the deployment, resistance, and strength of opposing Soviet forces was *inaccurate and otherwise inadequate for operational planning in the field*. Typical example provided by *after-action report* prepared by operations section of **XLI Pz.K.**: “*The documents to hand provided indeed only a superficial picture of the enemy resistance to be expected*. Despite all endeavors including those of the *Abwehr station in Koenigsberg*, no clear picture about the strength, groupment, and organization of the enemy forces opposing the corps was attained.” **FHO** underestimation of the Red Army in **1941** was acknowledged by **OKH**, although, paradoxically, it was not deemed to be a serious problem at the time, given magnitude of initial successes and confidence in final victory. (D. Thomas, “*Foreign Armies East and German Military Intelligence in Russia 1941-45*,” in: *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 22, 1987, 278-79)

In his recent book, *Die Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, German historian Juergen Foerster encapsulates the impact of the opening weeks of the Russian campaign on Hitler and the German High Command:

The great operational successes after 22 June 1941 satisfied German expectations. They increased the *Wehrmacht*’s high level of self-esteem at all levels. After only two weeks, the Army and Hitler viewed the campaign in the east as already won. But only a few days later it became apparent that it had not been possible to destroy the “mass of the Russian army” west of the Dnepr-Dvina line, that the Bolshevik system continued to function, and that the Soviet adversary had been underestimated. Even the “intellectual elite” of the German General Staff had not been guided solely by “sober professionalism” in their operational planning. It was not just in Hitler, but also in this institution, “then highly respected throughout the world,” that elements of “the unpredictable, even irrational,” had been in evidence.^{declviii} The actual situation at the front in July/August 1941 forced the abandonment of outdated assumptions, which were in part the result of an ideological view of the enemy. This process was – particularly after the euphoria of the first two weeks – painful for *all* involved, even if blame for the failure of the blitzkrieg was later placed solely at Hitler’s door. . . .^{declxix}

⁶⁷⁴ **Note:** Some of the material under “Conclusions” might fit better in the “Introduction.”

-- See Notebook #4, Section 2.2, for some interesting observations on just what the Germans were about to encounter in the East:

...Problems involved in preparing the German field forces for an encounter w/ an opponent whose *pattern of behavior and thinking was so fundamentally different from their own* that it was often *beyond comprehension*. Moreover, the peculiarities of the Russian theater were such that German unit cdrs were faced w/ situations for which there seemed to be no solution. The unorthodox Russian tactics w/ which the Germans were not familiar were equally disturbing, and Russian *deception and trickery* caused many German casualties. (CMH Pub. 104-22, *Small Unit Actions*, 1)

German troops were *ill prepared for a prolonged campaign in Russia*. An immediate readjustment and a *radical departure from the norms* established in the western and central European theaters of war became necessary. As a first adjustment to local conditions the German Army revised the standards for selecting lower echelon cdrs. Their *average age was lowered* and the physical fitness requirements were raised. Staff cars, riding horses, and every piece of excess baggage had to be left behind whenever a German unit had to go into action against Russian forces. For *weeks at a time officers and men had no opportunity to change their underwear*. Many officers and men of the older age groups *broke down or became sick* and had to be replaced by younger men. In comparison to the Russian soldier, his *German counterpart was much too spoiled*. The German soldier of WWII had become so accustomed to barracks w/ central heating and running water, to beds w/ mattresses, and to dormitories w/ parquet floors that the adjustment to the *extremely primitive conditions* in Russia was far from easy.

(CMH Pub. 104-22, *Small Unit Actions*, 3-4)

--30.6.41 (German Situation on B+8):

- In the Army Group South area, **1 PzGr** had fought its way into the area east of Rovno, its advance having been repeatedly help up by counterattacks of skillfully led Russian [mech.] units. Farther to the south the Seventeenth Army advance had progressed to the area around and especially south of L'VOV but against strong resistance. The general impression was that the Russians facing AGS had *recovered from their initial shock* and . . . were showing considerable skill in blocking the advance. Developments in the southern part of the theater were therefore not up to expectations.
- In the Army Group Center area, the ring of encirclement around the Russian forces west of Minsk had been completely closed. The **2** and **3 PzGr** had linked up near Minsk according to plan. . . The situation in this area was so satisfactory that Hitler considered diverting forces to AGS to intercept and destroy the Red Army reserves being brought up from the rear.

- In the Army Group North area the situation developed according to plan.⁶⁷⁵ The Dvina had been crossed at Dvinsk and Yekabpils, and the crucial step toward implementing the army group plan had thus been taken. In Lithuania and Latvia, the Russians were offering strong resistance in a series of delaying actions. By this time **12-15** Russian divisions had virtually been wiped out during the fighting west of the Dvina.

- In general, the Germans had *every reason to be satisfied with the progress of the first **nine days***. The *Luftwaffe* had gained *complete air supremacy*. The Russians had been forced to give battle on all fronts. . . In view of the heavy losses suffered by the Soviet forces, the overall success of the German operation seemed assured.

(Dr. R. Gordon Grant. *Barbarossa. The German Campaign in Russia*, 44-45)⁶⁷⁶

--**Jul 41** (Christian Hartmann):

Falls Halder vor dem **22 Juni 1941** noch irgendwelche Zweifel hinsichtlich der militaerischen Durchfuehrbarkeit des Unternehmens „Barbarossa“ gehabt haben sollte, so schien die Wirklichkeit ihn tatsaechlich eines Besseren zu belehren. Die grossen Anfangserfolge der *Wehr-macht* – Anfang **Juli [1941]** waren die deutschen Verbaende bereits bis zu 400 km in das sowjet-ische Territorium eingedrungen – sorgten dafuer, dass die *letzten Bedenken des militaerischen Spezialisten fortgespuelt wurden*. Offenbar hatte sich auch dieses Wagnis gelohnt!

Zwar musste sich der Gen.St.Chef schon in den ersten Tagen eingestehen, dass es das Herr noch nie mit einem so „*hartnaeckigen u. erbitterten*“ Gegner zu tun gehabt hatte, doch waren es gerade *Haerte u. Brutalitaet* dieser Kaempfe, die seine Erwartungen anscheinend bestaetigten. In Halders Planungen, die ganz auf die „zu erwartenden Grenzschlachten“ abgestellt waren, hing viel davon ab, dass die „Russen an der Grenze . . . halten wuerde“ u. nicht in die Tiefe des Raums ausweichen. Die von Anfang an *ungewoehnlich hohen Verlusten der Roten Armee*, die stetig anschwellende Zahl an Gefangenen u. Ueberlaeufern, die schon bald in die Hunderttausende ging, sowie die schier *unermessliche Beute an Kriegsmaterial* galten der weit ueberwiegenden Mehrheit der deutschen militaerischen u. zivilen Fuehrung als unwiderlegbarer Beweis dafuer, dass es sich bei der Erschoepfung der sowj. Kampfkraft *nur noch um eine Frage der Zeit handeln wuerde*.

Auf einen Menschen wie Halder, der sich schnell von der Logik eines abstrakten Strich- u. Zahlenwerks beeindrucken liess, mussten solche Zahlen verfuhrerisch wirken: Am **8 Juli [1941]** kam er zu dem Ergebnis, das von **164** bekannten sowj. Schuetzen-Diven. **89** abgeschrieben werden konnten; bei den Pz.-Diven. rechnete er sogar mit 20 von 29.

⁶⁷⁵ **Note:** Is this a fully accurate assessment? Army Group North had been unable to encircle and destroy Soviet forces in the Baltic region, which had, for the most part, withdrawn in good order, even if a large number of Red Army units had been crushed.

⁶⁷⁶ **Note:** This book was actually published in **1955** by George E. Blau; somehow this character got to put his name on it!

(C. Hartmann. *Halder. Generalstabschef Hitlers 1938-1942*, 271-72; also, Halder, KTB III, S. 52 (8.7.41))

--3.7.41 (Halder Brief): In einem Brief, den er ebenfalls am 3. Juli [1941] verfasste,⁶⁷⁷ bekräftigte Halder, dass „der Russe . . . **diesen Krieg in den ersten acht Tagen verloren**“ habe, „*seine Verluste an Toten u. Geraet sind unvorstellbar.*“ (C. Hartmann. *Halder. Generalstabschef Hitlers 1938-1942*, 272)

--3.7.41 (Halder KTB):

Im ganzen kann man also schon jetzt sagen, dass der Auftrag, die Masse des russ. Heeres vorwaerts Duena u. Dnjepr zu zerschlagen, erfuehlt ist. Ich halte die Aussage eines gefangenen russ. komm. Generals fuer richtig, das wir ostwaerts von Duena u. Dnjepr nur noch mit Teilkraeften zu rechnen haben, die allein staerke-maessig nicht in der Lage sind, die deutschen Operationen noch entscheidend zu hindern. Es ist also wohl nicht zuviel gesagt, wenn ich behaupte, dass **der Feldzug gegen Russland innerhalb 14 Tagen gewonnen wurde**. Natuerlich ist er damit noch nicht beendet. Die Weite des Raumes u. die Hartnaeckigkeit des mit allen Mitteln gefuehrten Widerstandes wird uns noch viele Wochen beanspruchen.

(F. Halder, *Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. III, 38)

--In the first six months of fighting, the German army achieved 12 – repeat, 12 – great encirclements on a par w/ the victories at Sedan in 1871 and the Ardennes in 1940. If *Barbarossa* had been a war game, all would have been over. Yet the **Russians didn't play by quite the same rules**. On **11 Aug 41**, Halder would write [see text for details] . . . The Germans **didn't have a way to win the war if the Russians were willing to keep fighting**. The *Barbarossa* plan supposed that, if the army groups won big battles and the SS killed the intelligentsia in large numbers, **the state would collapse**. (R. Messenger, “*The German Way of War*,” 32; see also, Halder KTB, 11.8.41)

--German army employed **Bewegungskrieg** as an instrument of global political policy. When Manstein's plan to invade France through the Ardennes proved breathtakingly successful, despite evidence that France was the *stronger and better-prepared military power*, **hope replaced realistic expectation completely**. *Barbarossa* exposed the problem. The two dominant forces in the German state – Hitler and the Army – achieved their purpose to *no discernible gain*. The Russians kept fighting, and the Germans kept getting further down the logistical road. The sheer success of the Germans in surrounding and cutting off Russian armies meant *lengthy and costly mop-up operations* . . . The Russians may have been disorganized, badly led and armed, but they fought, and the toll of the German machinery and men was increasingly burdensome. By **Aug 41**, the German advance had slowed from 20 miles a day to 5. (See, R. Messenger, “*The German Way of War*,” 33)

--There is **no evidence that the capture of Moscow would have let to Soviet defeat**. Yes, Moscow was the center of authority in a totalitarian country, but the regime survived other heavy blows. Moscow's industry had been moved east, and the Soviet government had planned for evacuation. (R. Messenger, “*The German Way of War*,” 34)

⁶⁷⁷ **Note:** Eine Kopie des Briefes Halders v. 3.7.1941 an seine ehemalige Mitarbeiterin L.v.Benda, verwitwete Frau Jodl wurde d. Verf. freundlicherweise von dieser zur Verf. gestellt. Teile hiervon sind zit. in: Jodl, L, Ende, S. 55f. Halder hat spaeter seine Aussagen in diesem Brief abzuschwachen versucht. (272, f.n. 8)

-- Hitler moved down into his bunker under the Berlin Chancellery in **Jan 45**. . . Hitler voiced his radical regrets. . . Above all he regretted his leniency, his lack of the admirable ruthlessness Stalin had so consistently showed and which invited one's "unreserved respect" for him. One of his last recorded remarks, on **27 Apr 45**, three days before he killed himself, was: "*Afterwards, you rue the fact that you've been so kind.*" (Paul Johnson, Modern Times, 412-13)

--The confused fighting in the western Ukraine – the same place where Tsarist General Brusilov had mounted his famous offensive against the Austro-Hungarians in **1916** – lasted for over a week. The ***biggest tank battle (so far) in the Second World War*** was fought out. In the end, the huge Soviet force was *able to achieve nothing*. On **30 Jun 41**, the Stavka ordered Kirponos to fall back **125 miles** to the pre-1939 border – and to the partially dismantled Stalin Line. (Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 77)⁶⁷⁸

--**ab 22.6.41**: Nothing within the experience of the German soldiers had prepared them for the size of the country through whose vastness they were marching. They passed fields of sunflowers or maize extending from one horizon to the another; mile after boring mile of golden-yellow monotony – a monotony broken only when sniper fire came from the jungle of green stalks below those golden heads. The march snaked its way past woods of such dimension and of so primeval a growth that only token incursions could be made in pursuit of Red Army units who fled into them. The Army crossed unembanked rivers often ½ a mile wide in width and always fighting against an implacable, cunning enemy who might strike out of nowhere and then vanish completely. (J. Lucas, *Das Reich*, 54)

--Frontier Battles: In 18 days of combat, AGC advanced 600 km (360 miles), occupied all of Belorussia and inflicted **417,790** casualties on the Western Front, including **341,073** soldiers killed, captured, missing. In addition, the Western Front lost **4799** tanks, **9427** guns and mortars and **1777** combat acft. (Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 40)⁶⁷⁹

--A week after crashing through the Dvina line, German leading troops reached the third Russian line of defense [along northern axis] on the Velikaia River at Ostrov (**2 Jul 41**, D+10), and posed an ***imminent threat to Leningrad***. One of Kuznetsov's two border armies (**8 Army**) retreated north into Estonia, the other (**11 Army**) withdrew to the east, and the *two formations were now cut off from one another*. Kuznetsov had *clearly lost control*, and the Stavka dismissed him on **4 Jul 41**. (Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 82)

-- The *casualty exchange rate* on the Eastern Front over course of war was **3.5:1** in Germans favor, and the *Wehrmacht* continued to win this exchange rate right up to end of the war. (John Mosier, *Deathride. Hitler and Stalin: The Eastern Front, 1941-45*, 17-19)

-- "Right to the *last months of the war*, the Wehrmacht's tactics were superior, often inflicting more casualties than it took." (Martin van Creveld, *The Changing Face of War*, 157)

-- The Russo-German War was a *war of attrition* in which the contestants were *always more evenly balanced* than in Western Europe. (Theodore Ropp, *War in the Modern World*, 344)

--"Seen in retrospect, the German campaign in Russia in **1941** was the *greatest display of maneuver warfare in history*, and it will likely remain so in the future. In point of preparedness,

⁶⁷⁸ **Note**: Might make sense at start of "Conclusion" to point out results of *Barbarossa* along all three axes of German advance thru end of **Jun 41**.

⁶⁷⁹ **Note**: See also figures in *Barbarossa Unleashed*.

doctrine, numbers available for the offensive, and leadership, the German armed forces had peaked during the summer. The qualities enabled them to storm forward, advancing over **600** miles in less than six months while fighting against an opponent who was numerically at least equal, and to conquer territory about twice as large as Germany itself. The key to this unparalleled achievement was *operativ* warfare, now waged w/ the aid of armored and mechanized units and honed into the blitzkrieg. . . Coordinated mobility, even more than firepower, formed the key to this method of warfare. . . In *point of sheer operational brilliance, it has no parallel.*” (See, Martin van Creveld, *Air Power and Maneuver Warfare*, 93-94)

Paul Johnson: But Hitler’s personal mismanagement of the campaign was not the only, or indeed the chief, **reason for his failure in Russia**. The cause went deeper, to the *very conception of the war*, to the roots indeed of Hitler’s whole political purpose. In attacking Russia, he was *trying to do two quite different things simultaneously* – to achieve a military victory and to set in motion an enormous enterprise of social engineering. The *two aims were mutually incompatible*. It is not of course unusual for a military campaign to have an accompanying political purpose, to be a „war of liberation.“ That indeed would have made sense in 1941. Stalin ruled by terror alone. His regime was *universally unpopular at home*, and hated and feared throughout Europe. There were many in Germany, and still more outside Germany, who wished to view a war against Bolshevism as a *crusade*...Hitler might have put himself at the head of such a crusade. But to have done so would have been false to himself. *Hitler was not in the business of liberation. Like Stalin, he was in the business of slavery*. The accident of race made them opponents, and pitted their regimes against each other. But in *essential aspects they were fellow-ideologues*, pursuing *Utopias* based on a fundamental division of mankind into elites and *helots*...The *military object of Barbarossa was incidental. The real aim was to exterminate Bolshevism and its „Jewish catchment area*,“ to acquire territory for colonial settlement, to enslave the Slav masses in four „*Reich Commissariats*“ (termed Baltic, Ukraine, „Muscovy,“ and Caucasus), and to create an *autarchic economic system* which would be proof against any blockade the Anglo-Saxon powers might impose...By **Jul 41**, the Russian nation as a whole began to grasp the horrifying fact that they faced what appeared to be a *war of extermination*. The result was the **salvation of Stalin and his regime**. (See, *Modern Times*, 380-82)⁶⁸⁰

--Excerpt from **Barbarossa Unleashed**:⁶⁸¹

7.1: A New Kind of War

From the very first hours of the Russian campaign, German soldiers began to experience disturbing and unanticipated challenges – and, in some cases, viscerally shattering events – which, as they inexorably accumulated over days and weeks, soon convinced the average *Landser* that the war in the east bore little resemblance to previous campaigns in Poland, France, and the Balkans. As outlined in the preceding chapter, even prior to entering combat the poor roadways and rough terrain beyond the Russo-German frontier posed unexpected problems, as vehicles broke down, fuel consumption increased and forward progress stagnated. Field maps furnished to combat units were often marred by inaccuracies, causing added frustrations for tactical commanders as they sought to carry out their missions. The inhospitable Russian climate; the immense distances to be overcome; the constant forced marches for days on end, often without adequate rest, provisions or drinking water, while being tormented by heat, sand and

⁶⁸⁰ Ultimately, Hitler plans ranged from settling **100,000,000** Germans on the great plains to the west of the Urals to *hanging the Pope* in full pontificals in St. Peter’s Square. Strasbourg Cathedral would be turned into a giant „Monument to the Unknown Soldier,“ etc. (381-82)

⁶⁸¹ **Note:** This excerpt from start of Chapter 7; see book for footnote details.

insects – all placed immense physical and psychological strains on the men, as revealed by countless field post letters and personal diaries.

Shortages of food, water, ammunition, clothing, fuel, spare parts, medical care, and other vital components of modern warfare are, of course, common to periods of prolonged combat; in Russia, however, such shortages tended to be the rule rather than the exception, as inadequate German preparations, coupled with the primitive road and rail infrastructure of European Russia, and a nascent but rapidly expanding partisan threat, conspired to seriously complicate the *Ostheer's* logistical arrangements. Indeed, in assessing the characteristics of wartime daily life for the German soldier in Russia in the summer of 1941, “it is clear that, on the whole, the hardships faced by the majority of the soldiers from the start of the Russian campaign were extreme in nature and cannot be seen simply as ‘normal for wartime.’ It is doubtful whether the political leadership and the generals, prior to 22 June 1941, fully understood just what they were asking of the troops by ordering them to attack the Soviet Union.”^{dcclx}

Yet for the German soldier the Russian campaign's most staggering revelation was, far and away, the atavistic cruelty which, from the outset, was to become its most defining feature. As John Keegan keenly observes, the frontier battles were “fought with a brutality and ruthlessness not yet displayed in the Second World War, perhaps not seen in Europe since the struggle between Christians and Muslims in the Ottoman wars of the 16th Century.”^{dcclxi} If not always, Red Army soldiers often enough fought with tenacity, courage, and a savage cunning which clearly startled, even enraged, their German adversaries. And if the German political and military leadership had set the tone by unleashing a war of annihilation, the Russians often responded in kind: The rampant killing of captured German soldiers, sometimes preceded by their ghastly mutilation; the failure to observe the laws and usages of war as they pertained to German military doctors and other medical personnel; the use of ammunition proscribed by international law (such as so-called “dum-dum” bullets),^{dcclxii} the conduct of partisan warfare^{dcclxiii} in a manner often characterized by an almost preternatural barbarism – all became hallmarks of the “Russian way of war” from 22 June 1941 onward. . .

(*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Chapter 7)

--Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

7.2: Forging the Pockets

As historian Dennis Showalter argues in his recent book, *Hitler's Panzers*, one can make the case that the “relative tactical and operational superiority” of the German Army's mobile forces over their opponents was never greater than at the beginning of Operation *Barbarossa*.^{dcclxiv} In fact, with regard to leadership, training and experience, the *Wehrmacht* as a whole was at the peak of its powers in June 1941, while facing an opponent, the Red Army, which, for all the reasons adumbrated in this narrative, and many others as well, was anything but fully prepared for war. Thus it was hardly surprising that Army Group Center, its armor and motorized infantry advancing swiftly on both flanks, was able to envelop and encircle the armies of Soviet Western Front in several pockets (*Kessel*) between Belostok and Minsk in a mere seven day's time, thereby trapping some 30 Red Army divisions. “It was,” avers historian Evan Mawdsley, “the ‘Cannae’ operation – inspired by Hannibal's 216 BC battle of encirclement and annihilation – that classically educated Prussian staff officers had dreamed of since the time of Field Marshal von Schlieffen.”^{dcclxv}

Ably supported by the air corps of Kesselring's 2 Air Fleet, the pace of the German assault through Belorussia was so spectacular, the chaos and disruption visited upon the Russians so catastrophic, that command and control of Red Army units collapsed from the outset. Unable to operate on a level even approaching the lightning tempo displayed by Hoth's and Guderian's panzers, Soviet commanders reacted sluggishly and ineffectively along the key axes of the German advance. To put a finer point on it, the field-gray invaders were able to get inside the Red Army's "OODA Loop" – a concept invented by the late USAF fighter pilot and strategist John Boyd,^{declxvi} and standing for "Observe, Orient, Decide, Act" – and, thus, to palpably disrupt their decision-making cycle. Unable to parry Army Group Center's mechanized spearheads, surrounded and systematically dismantled by German armor, infantry, and air forces, Pavlov's Western Front had practically ceased to exist by 30 June.^{declxvii}

Yet the unprecedented victory of Field Marshal von Bock's army group was not without its flaws, nor the Red Army defeat – from the Soviet perspective – without its positive angles. Given the very different marching tempos of the German mobile units and foot infantry, the latter rapidly fell behind the thrusting panzer spearheads, creating dangerous gaps along lines of communication – gaps which Red Army stragglers roamed at will, and which German motorcycle messengers and supply columns navigated at their peril. Furthermore, although Bock had some 50 divisions at his disposal (among them 31 infantry and 15½ mobile formations), these forces, given the tremendous distances involved, were not enough to hermetically seal off the pockets or thwart every desperate Russian breakout attempt. The result was that significant numbers of Red Army troops – having abandoned their heavy equipment – were able to elude capture, either by successfully reaching Red Army lines to the east, or slinking away into the forests and swamps behind German lines, where their presence as partisans was soon felt. Because Soviet resistance in the pockets was protracted (the *Kessel* were not completely cleared until the first week of July), and because the marching infantry were unable to rapidly relieve mobile units holding down the easternmost encirclement line near Minsk, large elements of 2 and 3 Panzer Groups remained tied down and unable to resume the advance eastward in timely fashion.^{declxviii}

(*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Chapter 7)

--*Gen. von Waldau (Tagebuch)*:⁶⁸²

3.7.41: ...Die wesentlichsten *Momente* sind folgendermassen gekennzeichnet:

1) Die militaerischen Machtmittel der SU sind *ganz erheblich staerker* als es die Untersuchungen vor Kriegsbeginn am 22.6 erkennen liessen. Wir hatten viele Zahlenangaben als propagandistische Uebertreibung eingeschaezt. Die materielle Qualitaet ist besser als erwartet. Im einzelnen [ueberrascht ?] die Zahl der Staerken der Luftwaeffe. Es schaeelt sich heraus, dass etwa 8000 einsatzbereite Flugzeuge zur Verfuegung standen. Die voellige Ueberraschung am 1.Tag zerschlug ueber 1800...Die Motorisierung u. Zahl der Panzer uebertrifft alle realen bisherigen Vorstellungen. Sie sind mit einem 52-to-Panzer allen Abwehrwaaffen von uns gewachsen, haben anfangs erhebliche Schwierigkeiten bereitet, z.T. *oertliche Tankpanik erzeugt* u. an einigen Stellen den planmaessigen Ablauf oder Anlauf unserer Panzerfuehrung erheblich beeintraehtigt.

⁶⁸² **Note:** Von Waldau was *Chef des Luftwaffenfuhrungsstabes* from Mar 39 to **10.4.42**. All entries gleaned from: **BA-MA RL 200/17**.

2) Der Widerstandswille u. die Zaehigkeit der Massen uebertraf alle Vorstellungen. Es ist festzustellen, dass die Idee des Kommunismus der Roten Armee eine fuer uns unerwartet starke Kraft gibt, die durch die *primitive Eigenart des [Massenwollens?]* die rote Truppe voellig krisenfest gemacht hat. In den verzweifeltsten operativen Lagen geht der Kampf bis zur voelligen Vernichtung grosser Verbaende in gleicher Weise wie der Kampf des Einzelnen bis aufs Messer...In hoffnungslosen Lagen griffen eingeschlossene rote Truppen in dichten Kolonnen *wie Grenadiere des 17. Jahrhunderts* an, deckten sich hinter den Leichenbergen der Gefallenen, u. haben es z.T. erreicht, dass unsere Maschinenwaffen einfach nicht mehr gegen ankamen [?]. Hieraus erklart sich auch die bisherige Gefangenenzahl von nur 140 000 Mann, nachdem etwa 45 Rote Div. als vernichtet zu rechnen sind.

3) Die Fuehrung zu beurteilen ist insofern schwer, als die totale Ueberraschung in einen gigantischen russ. Aufmarsch [h]ineinstiess...Ein Land, das *vollig andere Begriffe vom Wert u. Unwert des Lebens besitzt* als das sogenannte kultivierte Abendland bringt Fuehrer mit einer *primitiven Einstellung* hervor, die von hohen Opfern nicht zurueckschrecken...

4) Die mittlere u. untere Fuehrung kennzeichnet der *Mangel an eigener Verantwortung*, die Gewohnheit, nur nach Befehl zu handeln. Kein Wunder in einem Staat zentralster Vollzugsgewalt u. *unterdurchschnittlicher Intelligenz*...

--Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

7.8: The Frontier Battles in the Balance

By 9 July, 18 days after the start of Operation *Barbarossa*, the frontier battles had come to close and the *Ostheer* was racing toward distant objectives along three axes of advance. From the perspectives of Adolf Hitler, the German High Command, and the *Oberbefehlshaber* of the army groups, armies and panzer groups, a decisive victory was taking shape, one which would make the German Reich the undisputed master of the European continent from the English Channel to the Ural Mountains. Along the front of Army Group North, the six mobile divisions (three panzer, three motorized) of General Erich Hoepner's 4 Panzer Group had rapidly occupied Lithuania and, by 30 June, seized bridgeheads across the lower reaches of the Western Dvina River. Although impeded from the outset by lakes, impenetrable forests and rivers, Hoepner's tanks trundled on toward the northeast, capturing Ostrov, on Latvia's pre-1940 frontier with Russia, and piercing the Stalin line by 5 July; several days later, 41 Panzer Corps stormed into Pskov, at the southern tip of Lake Peipus and barely 300 kilometers from Leningrad. By 10 July 1941, Hoepner had – he believed – satisfied all preconditions for a final thrust on Leningrad.^{dccclxix}

While the going had been tougher for Army Group South, General Ewald von Kleist's 1 Panzer Group (five panzer, four motorized divisions) was now driving deep into the Ukraine. After shattering the mechanized corps of Soviet Southwestern Front in a series massive tank-on-tank engagements in late June, Kleist's armor broke through the Stalin line astride Novograd-Volynskiy on 6/7 July, capturing Berdichev (7 July) after costly fighting and creating the operational prerequisite for an advance on Kiev and into the great Dnepr bend to the southeast. By 10 July, Zhitomir had fallen – the vanguard of 3 Panzer Corps now barely 75 kilometers from Kiev and awaiting arrival of the marching infantry, still far to the rear.^{dccclxx}

In the center, the successes of Field Marshal von Bock's army group were even more remarkable. By 1 July, 10 days into the campaign, its forces had advanced more than 400 kilometers into Russian territory,^{dclxxi} encircling and destroying the armies of Soviet Western Front; by 9 July, Red Army resistance in the huge cauldron between Belostok and Minsk had finally flickered out. Hundreds of thousands of Soviet troops trudged into captivity, the Germans also seizing huge quantities of war material. Having registered a "decisive" victory at the frontier, the armor and motorized infantry of Hoth's and Guderian's tank groups had pressed on eastward, to the Dvina-Dnepr River barriers and the strategically vital Smolensk gate – to be followed, they fervently hoped, by an all-out advance on Moscow itself. The month of July would be a good one for the field captains of Army Group Center: Lemelsen (47 Panzer Corps), Geyr (24 Panzer Corps), Nehring (18 Panzer Division) and Model (3 Panzer Division) all garnering the Knight's Cross, while Hoth (3 Panzer Group), Guderian (2 Panzer Group), Schmidt (39 Panzer Corps) and Richthofen (8 Air Corps) were awarded the even more prestigious Oak Leaves to the Knight's Cross.^{dclxxii}

Carried away by the moment, Adolf Hitler, on 8 July 1941, announced his final plans for both Moscow and Leningrad. These great, historic cities were, he told his military staff, to be "razed to the ground."^{dclxxiii} As Halder noted laconically in his diary that day, this would render the cities "uninhabitable, so as to relieve us of the necessity of having to feed the populations through the winter. The cities will be razed by the *Luftwaffe*. Tanks must not be used for the purpose."^{dclxxiv} Also on 8 July, Hitler instructed Brauchitsch not to dispatch any new tanks to the eastern front, as these were needed for future campaigns; furthermore, the panzer divisions in the east were to be reduced in number, and idle tank crews returned to Germany to train crews for new divisions. The "Fuehrer" was already thinking well beyond *Barbarossa*.^{dclxxv}

So profoundly convinced were the Germans of their impending triumph that, later in July, Senior SD leader and SS-Colonel (*Standartenfuehrer*) Dr A.F. Six, and his "Advanced Detachment Moscow" (*Vorkommando Moskau*), anxious to reach the Soviet capital on the heels of the fighting troops, arrived at the command post of Kluge's Fourth Panzer Army. Once inside Moscow, the SS-colonel and his men intended to take over "security police duties" in the city, while also securing Soviet archives, art, cultural artifacts, and other objects of use to the Germans.^{dclxxvi}

And yet, at the highest levels of command, a vague, incipient feeling of unease was beginning to stir among a few more thoughtful souls. In a missive to his wife on 3 July 1941, Colonel Heusinger, Chief, OKH Operations Branch, again radiated confidence, but added, "in the long run the world cannot endure" based on wars of aggression. He consoled himself with the thought – the hope – that History would have a short memory; besides, surprise attacks like *Barbarossa* were "hardly unique" (*keine Seltenheit*). Still, he was troubled by how far removed things had become from the "humanity of the last century." In a startling admission, he added: "We are acting like Genghis Khan of old." Heusinger also intimated that the distances still to be covered – to Moscow, Leningrad and the Baku oil fields – were "crazy" (*irrsinnige Wege*); in fact, he told his wife on 8 July, it made him shudder to think "how far we still have to go until we've eliminated the Russian threat once and for all."^{dclxxvii}

Far beyond the OKH Mauerwald compound, and the dark forests of East Prussia, Maj.-Gen. Bogislav von Studnitz, Commander, 87 Infantry Division, wrestled with similar forebodings. For most of July 1941, Studnitz' division was far behind the battle front, in the area around Grodno, where it was responsible for collecting, registering and reporting on the vast quantities war booty scattered throughout the region – a "special assignment" (*Sonderauftrag*) which had only angered and disappointed the general and his men.^{dclxxviii} After all, there was a war on, and they were missing out on it. One day in mid-July, General Studnitz learned from his operations officer that

an artillery battery was quartered for the night in the same village as the general and his staff, whereupon the general decided to invite the battery chief, *Oberleutnant* Siegfried Knappe, to dine with him that evening. Long after the war, Knappe wrote about the encounter with his division commander:

[The general] was in his middle 50s and a little on the heavy side. He was an impressive professional soldier who understood the art of warfare and was an effective practitioner. He was an intellectual, a political and philosophical thinker, and an avid reader. He was highly respected by his men and subordinate officers.

“*Oberleutnant* Knappe, commander of 1st Battery, 187 Artillery Regiment, Herr General,” I reported to him in his log house.

“Good evening, Knappe,” he said, smiling broadly and offering his hand. “Have a seat.” He motioned to a table, and waved to his orderly to pour wine for us. “How are things going for you?” he asked.

“Just fine, Herr General,” I responded.

“How is the morale of your people?”

“Excellent. They are fine soldiers, and their attitude could not be better.”

“How are your horses holding up?”

“They are doing well. As long as they get a day of rest now and then and are well cared for, they will do fine.” . . .

[The general] looked pensive for a moment. “How do you think the campaign has gone so far?” he asked.

“Great,” I said enthusiastically. “Everything seems to be going according to plan.”

He did not respond for a moment, his thoughts seemed to be far away. “I was in Russia during the last war,” he said finally. “I have experienced the Russian winter. It is savage, like nothing we have ever experienced. It will come, and it will come soon. We are just in this little part of Russia. We have a vast empty country ahead of us, and if we do not take Moscow before the weather turns bitter cold. I worry about what will happen.”

He was clearly not optimistic. I was amazed, because it could not have been easier up to now, but I knew he was intelligent, experienced, and capable, and I began to tone down my own optimism after that. If someone had overheard our conversation and reported it to the Nazi Party, it could have cost General von Studnitz his career.^{dccclxxix}

Of course, the sober thoughts of men such as Heusinger and Studnitz were not shared by most, yet they should have been. For the great victories achieved by the *Ostheer* were not quite what they seemed. To be sure, the German armies had registered impressive territorial gains, the

armored spearheads of Guderian's panzer group alone logging an average daily advance of about 30 kilometers per day for the first 18 days of the campaign. Yet only in the central sector, along the western strategic axis, had the *Wehrmacht* succeeded in shattering and annihilating the bulk of the Soviet first strategic echelon west of the Dvina-Dnepr Rivers in accordance with the mission assigned to it by the original *Barbarossa* directive.^{dccclxxx}

German losses, while a fraction of those sustained by the Red Army, had also been quite heavy. According to the pioneering analysis of key German wartime records made by historian Dr Ruediger Overmans in the late 1990s,^{dccclxxxi} the Germans suffered 25,000 dead in the first nine days of the campaign alone (22-30 June), over 90 percent of which were incurred by the ground forces (Army and *Waffen-SS*); during July, fatal losses would accumulate at the rate of more than 2000 per day – more than double the rate of the six-week French Campaign of 1940. When the tens of thousands of wounded, sick and missing are added to these totals it becomes clear that the *Wehrmacht* in the east was already enmeshed in a brutal war of attrition.^{dccclxxxii} Material losses, particularly those of the *Luftwaffe*, were also high. By 5 July, the German air fleets in Russia had lost a total of 491 aircraft (124 fighters, 196 bombers (and dive bombers), and 171 reconnaissance and transport aircraft), or more than 20 percent of their combat-ready strength of 2250 aircraft on 22 June;^{dccclxxxiii} hundreds more aircraft had been damaged. On 5 July, 8 Air Corps reported that fuel was running low, even though it had already scaled back its operational tempo.^{dccclxxxiv}

Far from totally destroyed, the Red Army was, by early July 1941, beginning to funnel new reserve armies into new lines of defense. With each passing day, the intelligence organs of German field formations were adding new units to the Soviet order of battle, while German aerial reconnaissance was reporting the ongoing movement of troop trains chugging west toward the front. The Soviets were also starting to function more effectively at both the strategic and tactical levels – if still far behind the Germans in the operational art of war – a state of affairs confirmed by many contemporary German accounts; among them, this report by 35 Panzer Regiment (4 Panzer Division) on 4 July 1941: “Impression of the enemy: a tough fighter and distinctly brave soldier, whose morale has yet to suffer.”^{dccclxxxv} The day before (3 July), Count Helmuth James von Moltke, a brilliant young lawyer serving in the *Abwehr* (German military intelligence) as legal advisor to OKW (and who would be executed in January 1945 for his role in the German Resistance) had confided in a letter to his wife:

I still don't like the look of the Russian war; but today the big new attack begins [i.e., the advance toward the Dvina-Dnepr River lines], and perhaps it will have more decisive results than this first battle. – But the fighting morale and tactical leadership of the Russians far exceed all expectations and I'm coming to the conclusion that we were seriously misinformed about Russia; or at least I was.^{dccclxxxvi}

As July passed into August, Hitler and his military advisors would begin to recognize, and privately acknowledge, their catastrophic error of casually underestimating the fighting prowess and regenerative qualities of the Red Army in particular and the Soviet state in general. Gradually, the euphoria of the first days and weeks of the campaign would give way to a deep and abiding uneasiness about what the future of the war with Russia held in store for them.

(*Barbarossa Unleashed*, Section 7.8)

-- **Note:** AGC had entered Smolensk – 400 miles from frontier – only 3 weeks after start of campaign, setting a record that not even the Americans advancing to Baghdad in **2003** could match. (*Crevelde, Changing Face of War*, 130-31)

-- **Note:** Between **Jul-Nov 41**, Hitler's armies had "accomplished one of the *greatest sustained offensives in military history*." (R. E. Dupuy & T. N. Dupuy, *The Encyclopedia of Military History: from 3500 B.C. to the present*, 1080)

-- **Note:** "Right to the *last months of the war*, the *Wehrmacht's* tactics were superior, often inflicting more casualties than it took." (*Crevelde, The Changing Face of War*, 157)

B. Reasons For Defeat:

Note: In course of this very long book, several themes on this topic have been developed with a certain consistency and depth; hence, no need to rehash in great detail.

1. Barbarossa Fatally Underpowered:

-- This point should, by now, be abundantly clear – key theme of book!
(Initial complement of men, wpns, etc., not sufficient; but thereafter *Ostheer* largely starved of reinforcements.)

2. Serious Weaknesses of Logistics & Intelligence Apparatus:

-- "Barbarossa" was launched on a logistical "shoe string."
(Again, inadequate were the means; much too rosy were the assumptions about what could be accomplished.)

-- Campaign (and pre-campaign) characterized by one massive intelligence failure after another. Like all western states, knew little about USSR.
(Tribute to how successfully a paranoid, counterintelligence state was able to shut itself off from outside world.)

3. Hubris following defeat of France & Failure to Ramp up for War!:

-- **Note:** „Or perhaps Lebanon⁶⁸³ at this point is no longer a country but merely a human shield, captive to Hezbollah and *its own inability to imagine the limits of its mortality*. . .”⁶⁸⁴ (“*The Next Lebanon War*,” Lee Smith, at: <http://www.tabletmag.com>, 23 Jun 10)

-- Industrial preparation totally inadequate for war of attrition. For example, Germany only producing **200+** tanks per month in **Jun 41**. Fatal missed opportunity to ramp up for the War in the East from **Jul 40 – Jun 41**. Production of wpns/equipment for the Army throttled in **Jul 41**, in anticipation of impending decision in the east.

-- One more tank group?!? Can one imagine the impact that a single additional *Panzergruppe* might have had on course of campaign? To have had this, the Germans would have needed only to have increased production from **Jul 40 – Jun 41** by **50-60** tanks per month! Would have solved so many of their operational dilemmas in Summer of **1941**.

4. Role of Racism & Nazi Ideology

-- NS perspective largely shared by Hitler's generals and rank-and-file soldiers – a radicalization of German nationalist concepts popular since late **19th C**.

⁶⁸³ Substitute Hitler's Germany!

⁶⁸⁴ **Note:** This is a wonderful phrase – so apt for Hitler, **OKW** and **OKH** on eve of "Barbarossa."

-- Resulted in fatal underestimation of Russian enemy at all levels.

-- **16.7.41**: At an important five-hour meeting in the Fuehrer HQ, attended by Goering, Rosenberg, Lammers, Keitel, and Bormann, Hitler establishes the *basic guidelines of policy* and practical arrangements for administering and exploiting the new conquests. Once more, the underlying premise is the *social-Darwinist* justification that the strong deserved to inherit the earth. As Hitler states at one point, "Basically, it's a matter of dividing up the giant cake so that we can first **rule** it, secondly **administer** it, and thirdly **exploit** it." (See, *Kershaw, Hitler*, 405-06)

5. Obsession w/ Operation Art:

-- At times, front generals and Army General Staff – led by Halder – seemed to act as if victory was simply a matter of determining the better operational approach.

-- "There is no doubt that Schlieffen's attitude of conducting war as a *purely military affair* provided a decisive contribution to failure. Closely linked w/ this blunder was Schlieffen's *obsession w/ the enemy's annihilation by means of encirclement* as the *only possible strategic solution*. On the other hand the fact that the Germans had *not understood Clausewitz' philo-sophy*, and therefore had *never heeded his theory* or the practical implications to be derived from it, was w/o doubt a vital factor in Germany's defeat." (*J.L. Wallach*, 312)

-- "Despite initial maneuver victories against Russia and in the Western Desert, a German **overreliance on maneuver** as a substitute for adequate firepower ultimately led to the destruction of the Nazi armies. . . The results were not merely a matter of Clausewitzian culminating points, but of fundamentally flawed strategies. . . The point is not that maneuver is the stepbrother of fire-power, but that there is *no single answer to the battlefield, no formula*. The commander's age-old need to balance incisive movements w/ the applications of weaponry is unlikely to change even well beyond our lifetimes. . ." (*R. Peters*)

-- There is perhaps no better illustration of the bedrock political-military miscalculations of Hitler, the **OKW** and **OKH**, than the spectacular victories of the *Ostheer* in the Kiev, Viaz'mz-Briansk cauldrons in **Sep-Oct 41**, where well over **1,000,000** Soviet troops were encircled and captured (at least half a million more than in the victories at Belostok-Minsk and Smolensk combined (according to German claims more than **650,000**).⁶⁸⁵ Despite this unprecedented German success, neither the Red Army, nor the Soviet political system, broke apart in defeat – once more illustrating the **conceptual bankruptcy of the Barbarossa blueprint** and its obsession with crushing the Soviet Union in a series of ambitious operational encirclements. Yet after each bitter defeat, the Russians simply plugged the holes in their front with new armies produced by their extraordinary mobilization system, while the German armies grew progressively weaker.

6. Surprising Strength & Regenerative Powers of Soviet State

-- **Losses**: Of Red Army thru end of **1941**.

-- **CruX**: Inability of Germans to collapse the Russian state through its initial powerful blows. Powers of regeneration proved to be astounding.

-- Russian center of gravity was not [only] their forces in the field; it was their *massive reserve system* – ability to mobilize millions. (Believe Dunn pointed out that the Russians mobilized some **50** new armies from **1 Jul – 31 Dec 41**.) Germans hopes of victory contingent upon defeating USSR before most of the Soviet reserve armies could come into play. (Check my *Festvortrag*)

-- „Entscheidend – im militaerischen Sinne – wurde, dass es trotz des anfangs sehr schnellen Vordringens deutscher Panzerkeile ins sowjet. Hinterland...der sowjet. Fuehrung gelang, die **ueber 10,000,000 Mann umfassenden sowjet. Reserven** zu mobilisieren sowie an die Front zu leiten u. somit die Rote Armee trotz der immensen Verluste in den ersten Kesselschlaten in einem Masse zu verstaerken, wie es der deutschen

⁶⁸⁵ *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 604, f.n. 252.

Generalstab nicht fuer moeglich gehalten hatte. Auch die bedrohten Industrieanlagen im europaeischen Russland konnten improvisiert groesstenteils nach Osten in Sicherheit gebracht werden.“ (Hillgruber, *Die weltpolitische Entscheidungen*, 441-42)

-- Strength of Soviet State: Extraordinary robustness of Soviet state rarely taken into account when assessing reasons for Germany's failure. The Soviet Union was nothing less than a „militarized juggernaut“ and, while deeply wounded in Germany's 1941 campaign, there is *no evidence to suggest it was about to collapse either politically or militarily*. (Stahel, 297)

-- **CruX**:⁶⁸⁶ “In Stalin's USSR, *state brutality compensated for everything* – impassable roads, broken tanks, ignorant generals, inadequate food. As long as the dictatorship was able to *manipulate its own people*, it was efficient and could *sustain almost any challenge*, despite a faltering economy and jamming guns.

22 Jun [41] and the ten [10] days that followed offer gruesome proof of that. (C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly: The Tragic first Ten Days*,” 273)

(Stalin *ruthlessly lashed* his people, his nation, on to victory, sparing no sacrifice.)

-- Why did „*Barbarossa*“ fail?: Simply put, the Soviets fought tougher. See Walter Dunn's book, Hitler's Nemesis, in which he avers that the Soviets extracted the “*last drop of blood*” from their people in fight against Nazi Germany (pp xvii-xviii). Soviets employed **14-year-old** boys in factories working long shifts; Soviet factories worked round-the-clock, while in Germany they worked single shift. (For more terrific details see, **IX:68-69**)

-- The German soldier in Russia was singularly betrayed by his leadership – both political and military. Russians may have more profligate in the deliberate wastage of human life, but at least they completely mobilized virtually *every* aspect of society – civil and military – to the war effort. They engaged in a total war from the first day of the war, while the Germans were still running a peacetime economy! (Theme: *Asymmetry of effort*.)

-- **Note**: Russo-German War **1941/45** as an *asymmetric war*, that is, a war w/ an *asymmetry of effort*. Basically Soviet Union fought much harder and poured more human and material resources into effort than did Germany. Soviets will to spill more blood, ask much greater sacrifice of their people, and fight with palpably greater *ruthlessness!* (*Barbarossa = Asymmetric War, 28 May 07*)

-- Parallels to Napoleon: Like great German victories in **1941**, Napoleon's victories at Smolensk – Borodino did not produce decisive result for French. Even his taking of Moscow in **Sep 1812** counted for little when the *Russians simply refused to acknowledge defeat*. (Stahel, 297)⁶⁸⁷

C. Can We Pinpoint Actual Turning Point?

-- Impact of Smolensk: By end of **Aug 41**, it was clear that Operation *Barbarossa* would *fail in its essential goal* to conquer the Soviet Union, which by, extension destined Germany to almost certain defeat in a world war. The short window of opportunity to strike down the Soviet colossus had past. . . (See, Stahel, 280)

(German momentum finally broken at Smolensk.)

-- After Smolensk, it was clear that this would be a long war, not a blitzkrieg. (292) (When hoped for *lightning victory* proved beyond the *Wehrmacht's* strength, a longer term war-winning solution was all that remained open to Germany; but the prospects of success for this option can be *immediately dismissed*. Once blitzkrieg failed, *production, industrial capacity and manpower resources, organization and technical skill*, all became more important than tactics, training and courage. (Stahel, 293)

⁶⁸⁶ **Note**: Value of this insight cannot be overemphasized – it is, in fact, I believe, the *primary reason* the Soviet Union ultimately prevailed in the war. Hitler's devastating blow on **22.6.41** was unable to crack the Soviet state (unlike Holland, Belgium, France, etc).

⁶⁸⁷ **Note**: This speaks to my perspective of a *fundamental asymmetry* in the way both sides fought the war. Unlike in west, military defeats would not defeat USSR.

-- Production figures: Comparative German-Soviet production figures; even in **1941**, Russia outproduced Germany in all major armaments. This disparity became even greater when production figures for Britain/USA added on. (Details see, 293-94)

(After **Dec 41**, Germany fighting against ca. **75%** of the world's combined resources. H.A. Jacobsen)

(Stalin quote: „*Modern war is a war of motors.* . .“ (E. Mawdsley, 193)

-- Smolensk: Kept Japan from joining war on Russia? (See, *Hillgruber* article; *Glantz, Initial Period of the War*, 353)

(ein Eingreifen Japans in den deutsch-sowj. Krieg u. die Eroeffnung des Krieges gegen die sowj. Fernost-Position in der zweiten Juli-Haelfte **1941** bis zu dem sich abzeichnenden Ausgang der Schlacht um Smolensk u. dem daraus resultierenden Halt des dt. Vormarsches im entscheidenden Mittelabschnitt der [Ostfront] *durchaus moeglich*, wenn nicht zeitweilig gar wahrscheinlich war. (*Hillgruber*, 297)

(**9.8.41**: An diesem Tag wurde von der japanischen Fuehrung *definitiv beschlossen*, im Jahre **1941 nicht mehr in den dt.-sowj. Krieg einzugreifen**. Gleichzeitig wurden – Konsequenz aus dem Verhalten der USA (Oel-Embargo) – verstaerkte Vorbereitungen fuer den „Sued-Stoss“ (gegen die Philippinen, gegen Hongkong – Malaya – Singapore u. Niederlaendish-Indien) getroffen. (307)

D. Final Thoughts:

-- “Why did the *Wehrmacht* fail? Was the line separating victory from defeat really such a slender one? Or was their conviction that Russia could be irretrievably smashed in a matter of mere weeks illusory at its core, given the problems of space, time, available resources, and so forth?” In my view, not really. Despite spectacular operational successes in opening months of campaign, Germans never came close to ultimate victory.

-- Clausewitz: Had it right, when he said Russia could only be beaten by mobilizing its discontented masses against the regime in power. This, both Napoleon and Hitler failed to do. Once wonders – what might have been the outcome if the Germans had decided to break up the *collective farms* and give them back to the peasants?

(But as Hitler told a group of his satraps on **16.7.41**, the goal was only to exploit, dominate and rule the Soviet people. See above.)

-- C. Merridale addresses *changing attitudes of Russian people* by end of 1941: There had been many willing collaborators in the early weeks, but by that first autumn the people's “hatred of the enemy” was “growing and growing.” She also notes *shift in mood of peasants*: The dearest hope of these peasants was for an end to Soviet power. In **Sep 41**, though, they learned that the *Germans had ordered that the collective farms should stay*. Like the pre-war Soviet authorities, the conquerors cared only for the ease w/ which the peasants' grain could be collected and shipped off. *It was an irreversible mistake*. “The mood of the local population has changed sharply,” Moskvin wrote on **30.9.41**. (*Ivan's War*, 133-4) (Note: Author later states that, “once again, the Germans' own atrocities were all that held the Soviets in place.” (i.e., speaking about partisans) (*Ivan's War*, 146)

-- Ultimately the German Landser paid the price for the catastrophic mistakes of their political and military leadership: “*Wise commanders design plans that can be executed by ordinary soldiers*. They know that if they expect every soldier to be a hero and every commander a genius, they will inevitably be disappointed. Wars are never neat. The unexpected happens [see Clausewitz!]. The enemy gets a vote in determining how things go. Sound planning therefore *builds in a margin for error*: attacking w/ more force than necessary; maintaining larger reserves; expecting greater friction; and preparing for stronger enemy resistance. . .”⁶⁸⁸ (“*A Strategy for Heroes – What's wrong w/ the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review*,” Frederick W. Kagan, in: *The Weekly Standard*, 20 Feb 06.

⁶⁸⁸ **Note**: What a terrific quote – says it all about failure of “Barbarossa!”

-- **1942**: Germans could only resume the offensive on the southern part of the front. This new offensive pushed all the way to the Volga, but here again, the Germans *fatally overextended themselves* and met w/ disaster at Stalingrad. (*Stahel*, 294)

-- **302,000** German KIA in Russia in **1941**. *Wehrmacht* now a permanently blunted instrument, albeit still quite deadly! (See, *Overmans*, 277)

1.16.2: Stalin, Russia & Red Army

--*C. Bellamy*: "The survival of the Soviet Union in 1941-42 and its resilience in the face of shattering defeats can be ascribed to the character and patriotism of its people, esp. the Russians, or to the *draconian measures* imposed by Stalin, Beria and their lieutenants. In fact, it must be ascribed to both. During the war, an already authoritarian system became more so." (*Absolute War*, 687)

-- Russo-German War **1941/45** as an *asymmetric war*, that is, a war w/ an asymmetry of effort. Basically Soviet Union fought much harder and poured more human and material resources into effort than did Germany. (*Barbarossa = Asymmetric War*, 28 May 07)

--Correspondent Alexander Werth:

There is no doubt that Russia was dazed by these terrible initial reverses, and yet, almost from the first day, it was clear that it was a *national war* [italics in original]. A feeling of consternation swept the country, but it was combined w/ an under-current of national defiance and the apprehension that it would be a long, hard and desperate struggle.

Everybody realized that millions of lives would be lost, and yet only very few people seem to have visualized the possibility of utter military defeat and a total conquest of Russia by the Germans. In this respect the *contrast w/ France* during the German invasion of **1940** is very striking.

This fundamental confidence⁶⁸⁹ was characteristic of the attitude of the Russian people and of the large majority of the Ukrainians and Belorussians; it did not exist in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, or in the Western Ukraine, where pro-Nazi and other anti-Soviet influences were strong. In these areas the German invasion was either *welcomed or suffered w/ relative indifference*.

(A. Werth, *Russia at War*, 144-45)

--Two major elements led to Russian victory: production and manpower. The strength of the Soviet economy, created in large measure by *American technical assistance* in the **1930s**, enabled the Russians to outproduce the Germans. . . The Soviet Union outproduced the Germans, and willing to take losses, overwhelmed them. Was it possible for a country w/ *less than ½ the steel-making capacity of Germany* and its satellites to win the battle of production? Lend-Lease was part of the answer, as it provided Russia w/ trucks, locomotives, rails, and other goods that would have absorbed much of Soviet production capacity. . . The question still remains: How

⁶⁸⁹ **Note**: I believe that Werth's observations here are a bit "after the fact." From my research, it is clear that many (most?) Russians were patriotic and had faith in their leadership and ultimate victory, but many had darker forebodings.

could a country that was *not able to provide rifles for its army in World War I outproduce most of Europe 25 years later?* (W. Dunn, *Hitler's Nemesis*, xv-xvi)

--*W. Dunn*: "While other countries had surrendered after losing one army, let alone two, the Soviets came back w/ a third that sent the Germans reeling to the rear. . . Soviet divisions, not cold weather, stopped the Germans. ***The actual reason the Soviets were able to stop the Germans in late 1941 was an unbelievable mobilization of men and wpns*** beginning in **Sep 41**, which created a new Red Army. The Soviets formed and sent into combat in a few months more new divisions than the United States formed in the entire war. . . A major difference between the United States and the Soviet Union was that the Russians had *millions of men w/ combat experience* in World War I and the Civil War that followed. In addition, the Soviet Union had *compulsory military service* between the wars, providing a *vast pool of trained men*. . . During World War II, the Red Army created more than **10,000** combat regiments, brigades, and divisions. Professor *James Goff* made a pioneer study of the formation in the winter of **1941-42** of the group of **54** rifle divisions that received numbers in the **400** range, but then were assigned numbers of destroyed divisions, which has *confused both German intelligence experts and historians.*" (*Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 4-5)

--**CruX**: In quotation below, historian Walter Dunn, Jr., expert on the Red Army, provides one of the best analyses of the Red Army victory I have yet seen:

Whereas the Russians *extracted the last drop from their potential*,⁶⁹⁰ the Germans only talked about total war until late in **1943**. From the very beginning Russia demanded incredible sacrifices from its people. Fourteen-year-old boys, women, and invalids were employed in factories working **10-hour** shifts six or seven days a week to replace the men in the Army. Every possible ounce of human and industrial capacity was devoted to winning the war, stripping the civilian economy of all but the barest essentials.

In contrast until the very end the Germans *still had the highest ratio of **personal maids** of any country in World War II*. [!] German women were not employed in industry to any appreciable extent and factories worked only one shift. [*accurate?*]. Some teenagers served part time in anti-aircraft units, but the high schools remained open. On the other hand, the Germans continued to manufacture luxuries such as furniture and other civilian goods and obtained most non-essential products from the occupied countries.

(*W. Dunn, Hitler's Nemesis*, xvii-xviii)

--**Late Jun 41**: As early as late **Jun 41**, the Red Army attempted to blunt the German advance w/ its large tank and mechanized forces.

- In Lithuania the Northwestern Front's **3** and **12 MC** struck back at German Army Group North at Kelme and Raseiniai;
- In Belorussia the Western Front's **6**, **11** and **14 MC** counterattacked against Army Group Center near Grodno and Brest;

⁶⁹⁰ **Note**: In contrast, Germany's management of its industrial and human resources was "extremely wasteful and inefficient." (xvii)

- In the Ukraine the Southwestern Front's **4, 6, 8, 9, 15, 19, and 22 MC** launched a massive counterattack against Army Group South near Brody and Dubno.

Poorly coordinated and supported, those assaults proved utterly futile and often suicidal, and they ultimately resulted in the destruction of most of the Red Army's tank and mechanized force. Only the massive attacks in the south, personally directed by army General Georgi K. Zhukov, Chief of the Red Army General Staff, had any appreciable effect on the *overwhelming German advance*. (D.M. Glantz, "*Forgotten Battles of the Great Patriotic War*," 35)

--Excerpt from *Barbarossa Unleashed*:

7.4.3: Military Developments: First 18 Days from the Soviet Perspective

During the 18-day battle of the frontier (22 June – 9 July 1941) the average daily losses of Western Front forces facing Army Group Center in Belorussia amounted to: 23,207 men, 28,900 small arms, 267 tanks, 524 guns (artillery) and mortars, and 99 combat aircraft.^{dcclxxxvii} It was losses such as these, coupled with the huge swaths of territory relinquished by the Red Army in the summer of 1941, which has led many scholars to depict *Barbarossa* as a “virtually seamless *Wehrmacht* march from the Soviet Union's western frontiers to Leningrad, Moscow, and Rostov.”^{dcclxxxviii} The irresistible German *Vormarsch*, we are further assured, was not checked primarily by Soviet resistance, but by the mud and snow of the fall, which stopped the *Ostheer*'s mechanized units, literally, in their tracks.

While it is true that the German air fleets and panzer groups practiced a new kind of warfare – one which temporarily overwhelmed the Red Army and for which it was completely unprepared^{dcclxxxix} – it is far from true that the German advance resembled a “cakewalk” of sorts. As this narrative has repeatedly sought to emphasize, from the outset the Germans faced an adversary who fought with tenacity, ruthlessness, and a readiness to die virtually unknown in earlier campaigns. Evidence gleaned in recent years from Soviet archives underscores this point: It is now known that, from the very first days of the war – in accordance with pre-war Soviet doctrine and operational planning – Stalin, *Stavka* and the Soviet General Staff strove to drive back the German invaders through a series of coordinated counterstrokes which went on unabated through early September 1941.

The objective of this offensive strategy, as implemented on 22 June 1941, was to carry the war away from Soviet borders and onto the territory of Nazi Germany. The initial counterstrokes, however, awkwardly executed and undertaken with little awareness of actual conditions at the front, succeeded only in grinding up large chunks of the Soviet first strategic echelon of forces; within days, moreover, the Soviet military leadership became aware that it had grossly underestimated the weight of the German attack, while seriously overestimating the prowess of their own attacking forces. As Zhukov explained in his memoirs:

We did not foresee the large-scale surprise offensive launched at once by all available forces which had been deployed in advance in all major strategic directions. In short, we did not envisage the nature of the blow in its entirety. Neither the People's Commissar, nor myself or my predecessors – B.M. Shaposhnikov, K.A. Meretskov nor the General Staff top officers – expected the enemy to concentrate such huge numbers of armored and motorized troops and, on the first day, to commit them to action in powerful compact groupings in all strategic directions with the aim of striking powerful wedging blows.^{dcxc}

In late June 1941, the Soviet High Command began to adjust its strategy. While the counter-attacks continued – usually with the same dismal results – the Red Army, on the basis of Zhukov’s proposals, began to implement a two-prong policy of active strategic defense coupled with defense in depth. Along the central axis, in particular, the Soviets began to build multiple lines of defense, manned by new groupings of forces, in an effort to wear down and delay the German juggernaut.

* * * *

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⁶⁹¹ **Note:** I am only listing new sources here, particularly those addressing Army Groups North and South; bibliographical details for other sources (i.e., mostly those from AGC, or from my excerpts from *Barbarossa Unleashed* can be found in bibliography to latter book; also, complete source listings can be found in my 91 pp “Biblio” for Moscow project.

⁶⁹² **Note:** Most of the dozens of BA-MA files I used pertain to Army Group Center and supported my research for *Barbarossa Unleashed*. The “*Signaturen*” for these files can all be found in the bibliography to *Barbarossa Unleashed*.

⁶⁹³ **Note:** This original copy of Bock’s diary I actually gleaned from the holdings at the Hoover Archives (Library?), Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA.

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⁶⁹⁴ **Note:** For now at least, this is how I will cite these user guides.

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--Roll 1013 (Ia KTB Nr. 5, Bd. I: 22.6.-17.9.41)
62. Infanterie-Division
--Roll 1028 (Ia KTB mit Kriegsrankliste u. Gefechts- und Verpflegungsstärken: 20.5.-31.12.41)
75. Infanterie-Division
--Roll 1074 (Ia KTB Nr. 3: 10.5.-31.12.41)
126. Infanterie-Division
--Roll 1350 (Ia KTB Nr. 2: 31.3.-31.12.41)
--Roll 1351 (Ia Anlagen zum KTB Nr. 2: 22.6.-11.7.41)
269. Infanterie-Division
--Roll 1858 (Ia KTB Nr. 5: 22.6.-7.12.41)
290. Infanterie-Division
--Roll 1886 (Ia KTB: 19.6.-15.12.41)
291. Infanterie-Division
--Roll 1906 (Ia KTB Nr. 1: 20.6.-15.7.41)
--Roll 1912 (Anlagen zum Ia KTB, Gefechtsberichte, 22.6.-27.8.41)
297. Infanterie-Division
--Roll 1969 (Ia KTB, Bd. 2: 22.6.-27.6.41)
298. Infanterie-Division
--Roll 1984 (Ia, KTB Nr. 4: 15.5.-29.8.41)
--Roll 1985 (Anlagen zum Ia, KTB Nr. 4: 16.6.-28.6.41)

e. TsAMO (Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense)⁶⁹⁵

3 Army:

--RF, F. 310, Op. 4376, D. 12, L. 285: Краткое описание боевого пути 3-й армии за период Великой Отечественной войны 1941-42 г.г. [Short description of the battles fought by the 3rd Army, Great Patriotic War, 1941-42]

4 Army:

--RF, F. 208, Op. 2511, D. 36, L. 1: *Шифр-телеграмма 4-й армии, 10:50, 22 июня 1941* [Cypher telegram of the 4th Army, 10:50, 22 June 1941]

--RF, F. 208, Op. 2511, D. 36, L. 3: Боевое донесение № 5 штаба армии 4, 22.6.41, 11:55 [Battle report No. 5, 4th Army HQ, 22 June 1941, 11:55]

--RF, F. 208, Op. 2511, D. 36, L. 5: Приказ по тылу № 1, штаб армии 4, Запруды, 22.6.41, 19:40 [Order to the rear units No. 1, 4th Army HQ, Zaprudy, 22 June 1941, 19:40]

--RF, F. 208, Op. 2511, D. 36, L. 19: Боевой приказ № 2, штаб армии 4, Запруды, 22.6.41, 20:00 [Battle Order No. 2, 4th Army HQ, Zaprudy, 22 June 1941, 20:00]

6 Army:

--RF, F. 229, Op. 161, D. 167, L. 48-49: *Оперативная сводка 101, штаб 6-й армии, Львов, 22 июня 1941, 18:00* [Combat Report No. 101, 6th Army HQ, Lvov, 22.06.1941]

--RF, F. 229, Op. 161, D. 129, L. 1-2: *Боевое донесение штаба 6 армии, 12:50, 22.6.41* [Combat Report from the 6th Army HQ]

--RF, F. 229, Op. 161, D. 129, L. 76-78: *Боевое донесение №4 разведотдела штаба 6 армии, Львов, 16:00, 22.6.41* [Combat Report No. 4 from the 6th Army HQ's Intelligence Section]

--RF, F. 229, Op. 161, D. 129, L. 226-229: *Телеграмма штаба 6 армии, Львов, 17:30, 22.6 – Москва, начальнику пограничных войск НКВД, Тарнополь, командующему КОВО, Львов, командующему 6 армии.* [A telegram from the 6th Army HQ, Lvov to Moscow, head of the border NKVD troops, copy to the commander of the Kiev Special Military District (KOVO), to the commander of the 6th Army]⁶⁹⁶

8 Army:

⁶⁹⁵ **Note:** All of these documents are gleaned from the web site: <https://pamyat-naroda.ru> [Memory of the People.ru.]. TsAMO = *Tsentral'nyi Arkhiv Ministerstva Oborony*.

⁶⁹⁶ **Note:** This translation appears a little awkward.

--RF, F. 833, Op. 1, D. 13, L. 79: *Шифровка № 739 из штаба 8 армии, подана 22.6.41 в 01:45, принята 22.6.41 в 02:10* [Cypher Message No. 739 from the 8th Army HQ, sent on 01:45, received 02:10]

--RF, F. 833, Op. 1, D. 13, L. 85: *Шифровка №745 из штаба 8 армии, подана 22.6* [Cypher Message No. 745 from the 8th Army HQ]

--RF, F. 833, Op. 1, D. 1, L. 1-2: *Боевой приказ штаба 8 армии, 14:00, 22.6.41* [Combat Order from the 8th Army HQ]

--RF, F. 833, Op. 1, D. 15, L. 31: *Оперсводка №2 штаб артиллерии 8 армии, лес Яутмелькис (2 километра южнее КУРТУВЕНАЙ), 19:00, 22.6.41* [Combat Report No. 2, Artillery HQ of the 8th Army]

--RF, F. 344, Op. 5554, D. 17, L. 10: *Записка для командующего 8 армией, лично, 10:30, 22.6.41* [A handwritten note to the 8th Army Chief from the Chief of the 10th Rifle Corps]

--RF, F. 344, Op. 5554, D. 54, L. 41: *Расписание соотношения сил на фронте 8 армии на 21.-22.6.41* [Combat Roster of the 8th Army on 21-22.6.1941]⁶⁹⁷

--RF, F. 221, Op. 1351, D. 64, L. 2-3: *Телеграмма с информацией в штаб 8 армии, 11:00, 22.6.41* [A telegram sent to the 8th Army HQ]

--RF, F. 344, Op. 5554, D. 71, L. 52: *Оперативная сводка по ПВО на 10:00, 22.6.41* [Operative Report from Air-Defence Forces]⁶⁹⁸

--RF, F. 344, Op. 5554, D. 71, L. 60-61: *Оперативная сводка №7, 19:00, 22.6.41, штаб 8 армии, Бубяи* [Combat Report No. 7 from the 8th Army HQ]⁶⁹⁹

11 Army:

--RF, F. 848, Op. 1, D. 1, L. 5: *Разведсводка № 5, штаб 11 армии, Каунас, 10:00, 22.6.41* [Intelligence Report No. 5, 11th Army HQ]

--RF, F. 221, Op. 1351, D. 68, L. 28: *Начальник штаба ПрибОВО. Оперативная сводка №6, штаб 11 армии, Каунас, 11:00, положение на 9:00 22.6.41* [Chief of Staff of the Baltic Special Military District (PribOVO), Combat Report No. 6, 11th Army HQ]⁷⁰⁰

4 Mechanized Corps:

--RF, F. 1230, Op. 1, D. 1, L. 7: *Боевой приказ №3, штаб 4 механизированного корпуса, южная окраина КОЗИНА, 18:00, 22.6.41* [Combat Order No. 3, 4th Mechanized Corps HQ]⁷⁰¹

⁶⁹⁷ **Note:** This looks like a valuable document, listing personnel and weapons of Soviet **8 Army**.

⁶⁹⁸ **Note:** This reports appears to offer specific information on *Luftwaffe* operations.

⁶⁹⁹ **Note:** This is a fairly detailed report.

⁷⁰⁰ **Note:** Another detailed report.

⁷⁰¹ **Note:** Another detailed document.

8 Mechanized Corps:

--RF, F. 229, Op. 161, D. 89, L. 76: Боевые действия 8-го механизированного корпуса с 22 по 30.06.41 [Battles of the 8th Mechanized Corps since 22 to 30 June 1941]

11 Rifle Corps:

--RF, F. 344, Op. 5554, D. 71, L. 59: *Обстановка на фронте 11 стрелкового корпуса к 10:00, 22.6.41* [Front Report, 11th Rifle Corps]⁷⁰²

--RF, F. 344, Op. 5554, D. 71, L. 63-63a: *Боевое донесение №1, штаб 11 стрелкового корпуса, лес севернее м. Пакражунас, 22.6.41* [Combat Report No. 1, 11th Rifle Corps HQ]⁷⁰³

f. SBORNIK BOEVYKH DOKUMENTOV VELIKOI OTECHESTVENNOI VOINY (Collection of Combat Documents of the Great Patriotic War). Volumes 33-36. VOENNOE IZDATEL'STVO MINISTERSTVA OBORONY SSSR. MOSCOW, 1957-58

a. Northwestern Direction (Vol. 34)

--TsAMO RF, F. 334, Op. 6435ss, D. 8, Ll. 9-11, “*Razvedivatel'naya Svodka Shtaba Pribaltiiskogo Osobogo Voennogo Okruga ot 18 Iyunya 1941 g. o Gruppyrovke Voisk Protivnika Protiv Voisk Okruga na 17 Iyunya 1941 g.*” (Intelligence Summary by the Headquarters of the Baltic Special Military District from 18 June 1941 on the Grouping of the Enemy’s Forcers Opposite the District’s Forces as of 17 June 1941), in: *Sbornik*, Vol. 34: 18-20.

--TsAMO RF, F. 221, Op. 2467ss, D. 39, Ll. 171-175, “*Donesenie Komanduyushchego Severo-Zapadnym Frontom ot 22 Iyunya 1941 g. Narodnomu Komissaru Oborony SSSR ob Obstanovke na 22 Chasa 22 Iyunya 1941. Sovershenno Sekretno*” (Report by the Commander of the Northwestern Front on 22 June 1941 to the USSR People’s Commissar of Defense on the Situation as of 2200, 22 June 1941. Top Secret), in: SBDVOV, Vol. 34: 44.

--TsAMO RF, F. 221, Op. 3928ss, D. 28, L. 11, “*Sovershenno Sekretno. Tablitsa Sootnosheniya Sil na Fronte 8-i Armii k 18.00 21.6.41, Karta 100,000*” (Top Secret. The Correlation of Forces along the 8th Army’s Front as of 1800 21.6.41, 100,000 Map), in: SBDVOV, Vol. 34: 193.

--TsAMO RF, F. 208, Op. 3038ss, D. 12, Ll. 3-4, “*Boevoe Donesenie No.0 5, Shtarm 4, Bukhovich, 22.6.41, 10.55, Karta 100,000*” (Combat Report No. 5, 4 Army Headquarters, Bukhovich, 22.6.41, 1055, 100,000 Map”), in: SBDVOV, Vol. 35: 143-44.

--TsAMO RF, F. 221, Op. 2467ss, D. 39, Ll. 123-124, “*Donesenie Komanduyushchego Voiskami Severo-Zapadnogo Fronta ot 22 Iyunya 1941 g. Narodnomu Komissaru Oborony o Proryve Krupnykh Tankovykh i Motorizovannykh Sil Protivnika na Towards Druskeniki i Meropriyatiyakh Komandovaniya Fronta po*

⁷⁰² **Note:** Seems clear that Oleg Beyda, at least in some cases, abbreviates the English translations which are in brackets—e.g., time often missing. This report appears to have been made at **10.00** hours on **22 June 1941**.

⁷⁰³ **Note:** Another quite detailed report, w/ lots of numbers (loss figures?).

Organizatsii Razgrom Til'zitskoi Gruppyrovki Protivnika. Sovershenno Sekretno" (Report by the Commander of the Northwestern Front of 22 June 1941 to the People's Commissar of Defense on the Breakthrough by the Enemy's Major Tank and Motorized Forces Toward Druskininkai and Measures by the Front Command to Organize the Defeat of the Enemy's Tilsit Group of Forces. Top Secret), in: SBDVOV, Vol. 34: 36.

--TsAMO RF, F. 221, Op. 1351, D. 68, L. 28, "*Nachal'nik shtaba PribOVO. Operativnaya svodka No. 6, shtab 11 armii, Kaunas, 10:00, polozhenie na 8:0022.6.41*" (Chief of Staff of the Baltic Special Military District, Combat Report No. 6, Headquarters of 11 Army, Kaunas, 1000, the Situation as of 0800 22.6.41).

b. Western Direction (Vol. 35)

--TsAMO RF, F. 208, Op. 2454ss, D. 26, L. 34, "*Donesenie Shtaba Zapadnogo Osobogo Voennogo Okruga Nachal'niku General'nogo Shtaba ot 21 Iyunya 1941 g. o Narushenii Gosudarstvennoi Granitsy Germanskimi Samoletami i o Snyatii Nemtsami Provolochnykh Zagrazhdenii. Sovershenno sekretno, Vruchit' nemedlenno*" (Report by the Staff of the Western Special Military District to the Chief of the General Staff on 21 June 1941 on the Violation of the State Border by German Aircraft and on the Removal of Wire Obstacles by the Germans. Top Secret, Deliver Immediately), in: *Sbornik*, Vol., 35: 10-11.

--TsAMO RF, F. 208, Op. 2454ss, D. 26, LI. 70-73, "*Ravedivatel'naya Svodka Shtaba Zapadnogo Osobogo Voennogo Okruga o Gruppyrovke Nemetskikh Voisk na 21 Iyunya 1941 g. Sovershenno sekretno*" (Intelligence Report from the Staff of the Western Special Military District on the Disposition of German Forces on 21 June 1941. Top Secret), in: *Sbornik*, Vol. 35: 13-14.

--TsAMO RF, F. 208, Op. 3038ss, D. 12, L. 1, "*Boevoe Donesenie Komanduyushchego Voiskami 4-i Armii ot 22 Iyunya 1941g.o Napadenii Protivnika i o Deistviyakh Voisk Armii*" (Combat Report by the Commander of 4 Army on 22 June 1941 on the Enemy's Attack and the Activities of the Army's Forces), in: *Sbornik*, Vol 35: 143.

--TsAMO RF, F. 208, Op. 2454ss, D. 26, LI. 85-86, "*Boevoe Donesenie Shtaba Zapadnogo Osobogo Voennogo Okruga No. 002/op k 6 Chasam 22 Iyunya 1941g. o Boevykh Deistviyakh Protivnika Protiv Voisk Okruga. Osobo Sekretno*" (Combat Report No. 002/op by the Headquarters of the Western Special Military District as of 0600 on 22 June 1941 on the Enemy's Combat Activities Against the District's Troops. Very Secret), in: *Sbornik*, Vol 35: 15.

--TsAMO RF, F. 208, Op. 10169ss, D. 4, LI. 5-7, "*Boevoe Donesenie Shtaba Zapadnogo Osobogo Voennogo Okruga No. 004/op ot 22 Iyunya 1941 g. o Khode Boevykh Deistvii Voisk Okruga. Sov. Sekretno*" (Combat Report No. 004/op from the Headquarters of the Western Special Military District on 22 June 1941 on the Course of Combat Activities by the District's Troops. Top Secret), in: *Sbornik*, Vol. 35: 16.

--TsAMO RF, F. 226, Op. 2156ss, D. 67, LI. 2-3, "*Boevoi prikaz No. 2. Shtarm 4, Zaprudy, 22.6.41, 1730*" (Combat Order No. 2 from Headquarters, 4 Army, Zaprudy, 22.6.41, 1730), in: SBDVOV, Vol. 35: 144-45.

--TsAMO RF, F. 208, Op. 10169ss, D. 4, LI. 22-24, "*Boevoe Donesenie Shtaba Zapadnogo Osobogo Voennogo Okruga No. 005/op ot 22 Iyunya 1941 g. o Khode Boevykh Deistvii Voisk Okruga. Seriya 'G'*" (Combat Report No. 005/op by the Headquarters of the Western Special Military District from 22 June 1941 on the Course of Combat Activities by the District's Troops. Series "G"), in: SBDVOV, Vol. 35: 17.

--TsAMO RF, F. 208, Op. 10169ss, D. 7, LI. 1-4, "*Operativnaya Svodka Shtaba Zapadnogo Fronta No. 1 k 22 Chasam 22 Iyunya 1941 g. o Khode Boevykh Deistvii Voisk Fronta za 22 Iyunya 1941 g. Seriya 'G'*" (Operational Report No. 1 from the Western Front Headquarters at 2200 on 22 June 1941 on the Course of the Activities of the Front's Troops on 22 June 1941. Series "G"), in: SBDVOV, Vol. 35: 21-22.

--TsAMO RF, F. 208, Op. 3038ss, D. 12, L. 2, “Boevoe Donesenie Komanduyushchego Voiskami 3-i Armii No. 1/op k 4 Chasam 45 Minutam 22 Iyunya 1941 g. o Razvertyvanii Boevykh Deistvii Nemetsko-Fashistkimi Voiskami” (Combat Report by the Commander of 3 Army No. 1/op at 0445 on 22 June 1941 on the Unfolding of Combat Activities by the German-Fascist Forces), in: SBDVOV, Vol. 35: 135.

--TsAMO RF, F. 208, Op. 3038ss, D. 15, LI. 1-3, “Razvedivatel'naya Svodka Shtaba Zapadnogo Fronta No. 1 k 19 Chasam 22 Iyunya 1941 g. o Deistviyakh Protivnika Protiv Voisk Fronta. Seriya 'G'” (Intelligence Report No. 1 from the Headquarters of the Western Front by 1900 22 June 1941 on the Enemy's Activities Against the Front's Troops. Series “G”), in: SBDVOV, Vol. 35: 19-20.

--TsAMO RF, F. 208, Op. 3038SS, D. 15, L. 7, “Boevoe Donesenie Shtaba 3-i Armii No. 2/op k 8 Chasam 30 Minutam 22 Iyunya 1941 g. Nachal'niku Shtaba Zapadnogo Osobogo Voennogo Okruga o Boevykh Deistviyakh Voisk Protivnika. Seria 'G'” (Combat Report by the Headquarters of the 3rd Army by 0830 on 22 June 1941 to the Chief of Staff of the Western Special Military District on the Combat Activities of the Enemy's Forces. Series “G”), in: SBDVOV, Vol. 35: 136.

c. Southwestern Direction (Vol. 33):

--TsAMO RF, F. 229, Op. 3789ss, D. 6, LI. 116-121, “Opisanie Komandirov 8-go Mekhanizirovannogo Korpusa Boevykh Deistvii Korpusa s 22 Iyunya po 29 Iyunya 1941 g. Sov. Sekretno” (A Description by the Commander of the 8 Mechanized Corps of the Corps' Combat Activities from 22 Through 29 June 1941. Top Secret), in: SBDVOV, Vol. 33: 168-70.

d. Southwestern Direction (Vol. 36):

--TsAMO RF, F. 229, Op. 9776ss, D. 63, LI. 5-10, “Operativnaya Svodka Shtaba Yugo-Zapadnogo Fronta No. 1 k 19 Chasam 22 Iyunya 1941 o Boevykh Deistviyakh Voisk Fronta. Seriya 'G'” (Operational Report No. 01, Southwestern Front Headquarters, as of 1900, 22 June 1941, on the Combat Activities of the Front's Troops. Series “G”), in: SBDVOV, Vol. 36: 11-13.

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⁷⁰⁴ **Note:** Uffz. Becker commanded a tank in a panzer division—he states he was w/ **12 PD** at start of Russian campaign but this is very odd. For **12 PD** was w/ Hoth's **3 PzGr** and Becker describes taking part in combat w/ Army Group South in **Jun 41**. (22-28)

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⁷⁰⁵ **Note:** Some of the entries in this volume are from personal diaries, others from letters or post-war memoirs, etc.

⁷⁰⁶ **Note:** “This book first appeared in the 1960s, but this post-Soviet version contains several passages that were not included in the earlier editions, R.H.”

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⁷⁰⁷ **Note:** Believe that he (Major Steets) was the **Ia** of the **1 Geb.Div.**

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⁷¹² **Note:** Wonderful personal accounts of Russian military and civilians of their experiences in Great Patriotic War.

* * * *

J. Keegan, *Second World War*, 173; R. Overmans, *Deutsche militaerische Verluste*, 241. By way of comparison, by the end of 1914 – that is, after five months of fighting in World War I – total German losses had amounted to 840,000, of which roughly 150,000 were fatal losses. See, W. Hubatsch, *Deutschland im Weltkrieg*, 57-58.

ⁱⁱ For a useful study of Anglo-French appeasement and armament policies in the inter-war period see, J. Record, “*Appeasement Reconsidered.*” According to Record, “the foundation of French appeasement was military incapacity to act against Germany,” 19.

ⁱⁱⁱ *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 2; *DRZW*, Bd. IV, xiv.

^{iv} I. Kershaw, *Hitler 1936-45: Nemesis*, 389.

^v *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 2.

^{vi} I. Kershaw, *Hitler 1936-45: Nemesis*, 402.

^{vii} See, J. Wright, *Germany and Origins of Second World War*, 169-71.

^{viii} *Ibid.*

^{ix} G. Knopp, *Die Wehrmacht. Eine Bilanz*, 88.

^x L. Yahil, *The Holocaust*, 243-44.

^{xi} G. Megargee, *War of Annihilation*, 7.

^{xii} R. G. Reuth, *Hitler – Eine politische Biographie*, 525; L. Yahil, *The Holocaust*, 244. Writes Yahil: “Since the entire war was perceived as a confrontation between two conflicting ideologies, with the Jews as the personification of the one that represented the divisive force in human society, their annihilation came to be regarded as an integral part of the war effort.”

^{xiii} A. Hillgruber, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, 65.

^{xiv} D. Stahel, *And the World held its Breath*, 70 (unpublished manuscript). (Note: Special thanks to David Stahel for graciously providing his manuscript to this author prior to its publication as *Operation Barbarossa and Germany's Defeat in the East* (Cambridge, 2009)).

^{xv} A. Hillgruber, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, 45-46.

^{xvi} *Ibid.*, 46.

^{xvii} By the winter of 1940/41, Hitler’s strategic thinking had even evolved beyond Russia, to the concept of a global blitzkrieg (*Weltblitzkrieg*) in concert with Germany’s Axis allies – Italy and Japan – after Russia’s rapid defeat. The objective would be to “isolate the USA in the Western hemisphere.” See, A. Hillgruber, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, 48-49.

^{xviii} On 17 December 1940, Hitler told Jodl: “We must solve all continental European problems in 1941, for the USA would be in a position to intervene from 1942 onwards.” H.-A. Jacobsen, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg in Chronik*, 34; P. E. Schramm (Hg.), *Kriegstagebuch des OKW*, Bd. I, 996.

^{xix} A. Zamoyski, *Moscow 1812*, 105.

^{xx} P. E. Schramm (Hg.), *Kriegstagebuch des OKW*, Bd. I, 371.

^{xxi} Also present for the conference were the C-in-C of the Army, Field Marshal von Brauchitsch; Chief of the Army General Staff, General Halder; the OKH *Generalquartiermeister*, Brig.-Gen. Wagner; and Chief of the OKH Operations Branch, Colonel Heusinger. P. E. Schramm (Hg.), *Kriegstagebuch des OKW*, Bd. I, 415.

^{xxii} According to Speer, Hitler had characterized the Chancellery into which he had moved on 30 January 1933 as “suited for a soap company” (*einem Seifenkonzern angemessen*); hence, it would hardly do as the headquarters (*Zentrale*) of the now powerful German Reich. A. Speer, *Erinnerungen*, 116.

^{xxiii} L. Krier (ed.), *Albert Speer Architecture 1932-1942*, 125.

^{xxiv} A. Speer, *Erinnerungen*, 130.

^{xxv} J. Foerster & E. Mawdsley, “*Hitler and Stalin in Perspective*,” in: *War in History*, 68-69.

^{xxvi} W. L. Shirer, *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 829-30.

^{xxvii} C. Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 100.

^{xxviii} J. Keegan, *Second World War*, 174.

^{xxix} The *Barbarossa* Directive of 18 December 1940 had only indicated that all preparations for the attack were to be completed by mid-May 1941. At some point, 15 May 1941 was selected as the initial “X-Tag” for the invasion of Russia.

^{xxx} D. Stahel, *And the World held its Breath*, 96-97; K. Assmann, *Deutsche Schicksalsjahre*, 255-56.

^{xxxi} J. Loeffler, *Brauchitsch – Eine politische Biographie*, 243.

^{xxxii} H. Plocher, *The German Air Force Versus Russia, 1941*. USAF Historical Study No. 153, 37.

^{xxxiii} D. Stahel, *And the World held its Breath*, 96.

^{xxxiv} D. Stahel, *And the World held its Breath*, 96-97.

^{xxxv} C. Burdick & H.-A. Jacobsen (eds.), *The Halder Diary 1939-1942*, 292-94. “Otto,” at least, was the appellation used by Halder and his staff at OKH. The code-name employed by Lossberg and OKW was “Fritz.”

^{xxxvi} I. Kershaw, *Hitler 1936-45: Nemesis*, 335.

^{xxxvii} C. Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 126.

^{xxxviii} H. Hoth, *Panzer-Operationen*, 30-31.

^{xxxix} The 11-page document was “partly the handiwork of Jodl, a master stylist whose spoken German was very clear and simple, and partly the product of Hitler’s pen.” D. Irving, *Hitler’s War*, 190-91.

^{xl} C. Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 126.

^{xli} H. R. Trevor-Roper, *Hitler’s War Directives*, 49. For the original German text of the directive see, W. Hubatsch (Hg.), *Hitlers Weisungen fuer die Kriegfuehrung*, 84-88.

^{xlii} G. Niepold, “*Plan Barbarossa*,” in: D. M. Glantz (ed.), *Initial Period of War*, 69. According to Niepold, the directive was “based on the plan of the OKW.”

^{xliiii} H. R. Trevor-Roper, *Hitler’s War Directives*, 50-51.

^{xliiv} G. Niepold, “*Plan Barbarossa*,” in: D. M. Glantz (ed.), *Initial Period of War*, 69.

^{xlv} G. P. Megargee, *Inside Hitler’s High Command*, 131-32.

^{xlvi} J. L. Wallach, *Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation*, 42. Wallach’s book offers provocative insight into the theories of Clausewitz and Schlieffen, and their impact on Germany’s conduct of two world wars. In his view, Schlieffen exercised tremendous influence on Hitler’s operational thinking.

^{xlvii} E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 41-42.

^{xlviii} In France (1940), Guderian’s corps frontages rarely exceeded 25 km.; in Russia, the norm for his panzer group would be 130 km. or more. In general, divisions, corps and armies in Russia would hold frontages much broader than envisaged by doctrine. D. Showalter, *Hitlers Panzers*, 160.

^{xlix} J. L. Wallach, *Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation*, 270.

^l Field Marshal Moltke himself, “despite giving preference in his deployment plans to attacking Russia first, in the event of a war on two fronts, was completely daunted by the difficulties presented by the Russian space and had no conquest of Russian territory in mind. . . Count von Schlieffen rejected the ‘Great Eastern Deployment Plan’ (‘*Grosser Ostaufmarsch*’) because he considered the Russian space, i.e., its vastness and its communications difficulties, as unsuitable for the achievement of a quick and decisive victory. His successor, the younger Moltke, dropped any further work on the ‘*Grosser Ostaufmarsch*.’ . . .” In 1913, the German Great General Staff produced a secret memorandum about Russian tactics. One section of the document emphasized the problems of the terrain; these included bad road conditions, the paucity of building materials for roads and bridges, the great distances between towns and cities, vast swamps, difficult climatic conditions, and lack of accurate maps. Virtually all of these problems would adversely affect German operations in Russia in 1941. *Ibid.*, 265-66.

^{li} While Germany and German-occupied Poland used standard gauge rail lines (1435mm), the Soviets continued to use wide gauge lines (1528mm), a legacy of the Czarist era. In order to receive the large quantities of foodstuffs and raw materials the USSR was obligated to deliver to Germany under the 1939 pact, Germany had to construct two special gauge conversion yards on the German-Soviet frontier. These two rail yards also became key rail centers after the start of Operation *Barbarossa*. “*Deutsche Reichsbahn*,” at: www.feldgrau.com.

^{lii} E. F. Ziemke & M. E. Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 14.

^{liii} J. Lucas, *War on the Eastern Front*, 3.

^{liiv} *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 285. The new chief of operations at OKH, Colonel Adolf Heusinger, played a major role in the preparation of the deployment directive. Recalled a former colleague: “It was astounding to observe how, after just a few hours in the quiet of his office, which he kept closed, the picture of the deployment took shape on his 1:1,000,000 scale maps.” *Adolf Heusinger* (Bundesministerium der Verteidigung (Hg.)), 109.

^{liv} C. von Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, III:13-14.

^{livi} OKH Genst. d. H. Op.Abt. (1), Nr. 051/41 g.K., *Aufmarschanweisung OKH vom 31.1.1941 “Barbarossa*,” in: *Generaloberst Halder Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. II, H.-A. Jacobsen (Hg.), 464.

^{lvii} C. von Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, III:14-19.

^{lviii} C. von Luttichau, III:20-24; OKH Genst. d. H. Op.Abt. (1), Nr. 051/41 g.K., *Aufmarschanweisung OKH vom 31.1.1941 “Barbarossa*,” in: *Generaloberst Halder Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. II, H.-A. Jacobsen (Hg.), 464-68.

^{lix} D. Stahel, *And the World held its Breath*, 59.

^{lx} These were the *Deutsche Reichsbahn Gesellschaft* (DRG, or DR) and the *Generaldirektion der Ostbahn*, or “*Gedob*.” The DR was, above all, a civilian or commercial organization, which supported the requirements of the *Wehrmacht* as ordered to do so. In war time, the DR adhered to military regulations and was placed under the direction of the German Army General Staff’s Transportation Division. During the Polish campaign, the DR had been able to meet all supply and movement needs of the German Army, although the Polish armed forces had managed to disrupt large sections of the railway network as they retreated eastward. Shortly after the Polish campaign had ended, on 26 October 1939, the “*Gedob*” was established with its headquarters in Warsaw. This was a separate entity from the *Reichsbahn* and was responsible for administration of the railways in occupied Poland. “*Deutsche Reichsbahn*,” at: www.feldgrau.com.

^{lxi} As noted, the Army High Command, in general, referred to the planned invasion of Russia as “Otto” prior to promulgation of the *Barbarossa* directive in December 1940.

^{lxii} In his study of German railway operations in the eastern campaign, Hans Pottgiesser stated that rail deployment of the *Ostheer*, its equipment and supplies, took a total of 11,784 trains. (See, H. Pottgiesser, *Die Deutsche Reichsbahn im*

Ostfeldzug, 21-24.) According to Alfred Philippi and Ferdinand Heim, the immense operation embraced fully 17,000 trains – a figure also cited by Charles von Luttichau, along with a total of 200,000 railcars. (A. Philippi & F. Heim, *Der Feldzug gegen Sowjetrußland*, 52; C. von Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, IV:43.) According to yet another source, some 144 trains – traveling at an average speed of 24 km/h – headed eastward each day as part of the buildup. K.-R. Woche, *Zwischen Pflicht und Gewissen*, 97.

^{lxiii} Six primary rail arteries were to be used for these movements. K.-R. Woche, *Zwischen Pflicht und Gewissen*, 97.

^{lxiv} The transport of an infantry division normally required about 70 trains; that of a tank division about 90 to 100 trains. *Ibid.*, 97.

^{lxv} C. von Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, III:28-29.

^{lxvi} *Ibid.*, III:29-30.

^{lxvii} C. von Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, IV:34; H.-A. Jacobsen, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg in Chronik*, 35.

^{lxviii} C. von Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, IV:33; A. Philippi & F. Heim, *Der Feldzug gegen Sowjetrußland*, 52. While the sources differ, it appears that about 60 infantry divisions had been transported to the eastern front by 20 May 1941.

^{lxix} C. von Luttichau, IV:34-37.

^{lxx} S. Hart, et al., *The German Soldier in World War II*, 8.

^{lxxi} Throughout World War II, in fact, the Germans sometimes trained with live ammunition during periods of rest, refitting or rebuilding. R. L. DiNardo, *Germany's Panzer Arm*, 62.

^{lxxii} S. Hart, et al., *The German Soldier in World War II*, 8.

^{lxxiii} Eberhard Wardin was inducted into the Army in January 1941. Before he received any training in his chosen field – radio operator in a signal unit – he first received rigorous training as an infantryman (“*eine harte infanteristische Ausbildung*”). Ltr, E. Wardin to C. Luther, 26 Jun 04.

^{lxxiv} R. L. DiNardo, *Germany's Panzer Arm*, 60-61.

^{lxxv} W. Murray, “*May 1940: Contingency and fragility of the German RMA*,” in: *Dynamics of Military Revolution*, M. Knox & W. Murray (eds.), 166.

^{lxxvi} R. L. DiNardo, *Germany's Panzer Arm*, 62.

^{lxxvii} The training regimen of 241 Infantry Regiment (106 ID) at the troop training grounds in Wahn, Germany, included marches of up to 90 kilometers a day (135 km in two days), along with field exercises and firing practice. These long marches usually ended with a parade – for example, in front of the Opera House in Cologne. A. Meyer, *Infanterie-Regiment 241*, 8.

^{lxxviii} FMS T-34, K. Allmendinger, et al., “*Terrain Factors in the Russian Campaign*,” 25-26.

^{lxxix} Kluge fought on the western front during World War I, and was seriously wounded at Verdun in 1918. S. W. Mitcham, Jr., *Hitler's Field Marshals*, 295.

^{lxxx} S. J. Lewis, *Forgotten Legions*, 131-32.

^{lxxxi} H. Meier-Welcker, *Aufzeichnungen*, 108.

^{lxxxii} G. Blumentritt, “*Moscow*,” in: *The Fatal Decisions*, W. Richardson & S. Freidin (eds.), 34-35.

^{lxxxiii} R. Steiger, *Armour Tactics in the Second World War*, 10.

^{lxxxiv} For example, the OKH deployment directive of 31 January 1941 indicated that the troops must be prepared for the Russians to use chemical weapons, and that such weapons might even be dropped from the air: “*Auf die Verwendung chemischer Kampfmittel auch aus der Luft durch den Gegner muss die Truppe sich einstellen.*” OKH Genst. d. H. Op.Abt. (1), Nr. 050/41 g.K., *Aufmarschanweisung OKH vom 31.1.1941 “Barbarossa*,” in: *Generaloberst Halder Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. II, H.-A. Jacobsen (Hg.), 465.

^{lxxxv} In 1929, 43 parties had signed the “Third Geneva Convention,” which was actually two conventions providing protections for military personnel who fell into enemy hands – one addressing the issue of POWs, the other care of the wounded. The United States, Germany, Italy, France and Great Britain all signed them; Japan and Soviet Union did not. The USSR, however, had signed the 1925 Geneva protocol prohibiting use of poison gas and bacteriological warfare. C. Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 20.

^{lxxxvi} J. Huerter, *Hitlers Heerfuhrer*, 231. Conferencing with the staff of Fourth Army on 12 June 1941, Brauchitsch said: “The Russians will conduct the war by all possible means: Gas, spoiling of stores, and contamination of wells.” *Ibid.*, 231, f.n. 139.

^{lxxxvii} In this context it is fascinating to note that new research by Bogdan Musial, gleaned from Soviet archives, reveals that the Soviet Union by the end of the 1920s had begun to massively rearm with the objective of waging an ideologically based war of aggression against the West. In 1930, the future Marshal of the Soviet Union, M. N. Tukhachevsky, outlined a plan for such a conflict which envisaged the deployment of some 50,000 tanks, 40,000 aircraft, and the extensive use of chemical warfare. See, B. Musial, *Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 9.

^{lxxxviii} W. Murray & A. R. Millett, *A War to be Won*, 118; A. Philippi & F. Heim, *Der Feldzug gegen Sowjetrußland*, 52; H.-A. Jacobsen, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg in Chronik*, 35; *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 316; C. Burdick & H.-A. Jacobsen (eds.), *The Halder*

Diary 1939-1942, 378; C. von Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, IV:33.

^{lxxxix} *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 316; *DRZW*, Bd. IV, 269.

^{xc} C. von Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, IV:36-37.

^{xc1} *Ibid.*, IV:37.

^{xcii} A. Philippi & F. Heim, *Der Feldzug gegen Sowjetrußland*, 52.

^{xciii} A. Philippi & F. Heim, *Der Feldzug gegen Sowjetrußland*, 52; FMS P-190, R. Hofmann & A. Toppe, "Verbrauchs- und Verschleissätze während der Operationen der deutschen Heeresgruppe Mitte vom 22.6.41 – 31.12.41," 11.

^{xciv} BA-MA RH 21-3/732, "Gefechtsberichte Rußland 1941/42."

^{xcv} A full initial load of ammunition was the TOE-prescribed number of rounds for all weapons in a division and was to be carried in a division's organic transport. It amounted to some 600 tons for infantry and motorized divisions and 750 tons for armored divisions. Under a typical combat scenario, one load of ammunition was expected to last for 4-5 days; the initial attack, however, might consume 1/3 to 1/2 of a load. For the start of *Barbarossa* there were, at a minimum, three full loads of ammunition available – one with each division, and two in supply dumps (with a fourth load in the depots for tank guns and special weapons, such as rockets and AT guns). FMS P-190, R. Hofmann & A. Toppe, "Verbrauchs- und Verschleissätze während der Operationen der deutschen Heeresgruppe Mitte vom 22.6.41 – 31.12.41," 94-95; C. von Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, IV:41-42.

^{xcvi} *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 298; FMS P-190, R. Hofmann & A. Toppe, "Verbrauchs- und Verschleissätze während der Operationen der deutschen Heeresgruppe Mitte vom 22.6.41 – 31.12.41," 77-78; C. von Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, IV:41-42.

^{xcvii} A unit of consumption (*Verbrauchsatz*) was the amount of fuel required by a division to move 100 kilometers. This was roughly 25 tons for an infantry division (sufficient for about two days' operations), and 150-200 tons for a panzer division. C. von Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, IV:42.

^{xcviii} Ration requirements for all types of divisions were ca. 20 tons a day. However, infantry divisions required about 20 tons of hard feed (oats) for their 5000+ horses and another 20 tons of roughage. Since the roughage was not consistently supplied, the average daily ration supply of an infantry division was about 50 tons – that of a panzer or motorized division 20 tons. OKH had mandated that a supply for 20 days be stored in the assembly areas. The troops themselves were issued three days' field rations, while five days' standard field rations were to be held ready near the border in division supply dumps. The troops also carried four days' iron rations. *Ibid.*, IV:41.

^{xcix} FMS P-190, R. Hofmann & A. Toppe, "Verbrauchs- und Verschleissätze während der Operationen der deutschen Heeresgruppe Mitte vom 22.6.41 – 31.12.41," 75-79; C. von Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, IV:42.

^c R. Kirchubel, *Operation Barbarossa 1941* (3), *Army Group Center*, 13.

^{ci} Air Ministry Pamphlet No. 248: *Rise and Fall of the German Air Force*, 162.

^{cii} H. Plocher, *German Air Force Versus Russia, 1941*, 32-33; Air Ministry Pamphlet No. 248: *Rise and Fall of the German Air Force*, 162; *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 361.

^{ciii} D. Stahel, *And the World held its Breath*, 88; J. S. Corum, *Wolfram von Richthofen*, 267; W. Murray, *Strategy for Defeat*, 81.

^{civ} A. Kesselring, *Soldat Bis Zum Letzten Tag*, 112, 116; Air Ministry Pamphlet No. 248: *Rise and Fall of the German Air Force*, 165.

^{cv} *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 318; *DRZW*, Bd. IV, 270. Figures for tanks and assault guns, vehicles and horses are approximate.

^{cvi} OKH Gen St d H/Op.Abt. (III), "Kriegsgliederung Barbarossa," *Stand 18.6.41*, in: K. Mehner (Hg.), *Geheime Tagesberichte*, Bd. 3. The same compilation can be found at the very back of, P. E. Schramm (Hg.), *Kriegstagebuch des OKW*, Bd. I. See also, W. Keilig, *Das Deutsche Heer 1939-45*, Bd. II, Abschnitt 100, S. 6.

^{cvii} *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 318.

^{cviii} H.-A. Jacobsen, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg in Chronik*, 36; E. F. Ziemke & M. E. Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 7. According to Ziemke and Bauer, the actual number of German ground troops committed to operations in the east by the first week of July 1941 was 2.5 million.

^{cxix} A term used by Richard Muller to describe the *Luftwaffe's* 1941 campaign in Russia. See his, *German Air War in Russia*, 27.

^{cx} *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 364; J. Prien, et al., *Die Jagdfliegerverbände der Deutschen Luftwaffe*, Teil 6/1, *Unternehmen "Barbarossa"*, 28.

^{cx1} The original non-aggression pact of 23 August 1939 had led to trade agreements between Germany and the Soviet Union in February 1940 and January 1941. See, M. Zeidler, "Deutsch-sowjetische Wirtschaftsbeziehungen im Zeichen des Hitler-Stalin-Paktes," in: *Zwei Wege nach Moskau*, B. Wegner (Hg.), 93-110.

^{cxii} O. Buchbender & R. Sterz (Hg.), *Das andere Gesicht des Krieges*, 67.

^{cxiii} J. Lucas, *Das Reich*, 56.

^{cxiv} "The Experiences of a World War II German Panzer Commander," interview conducted by R. Mulcahy, 24 February 1992.

^{cxv} O. Buchbender & R. Sterz (Hg.), *Das andere Gesicht des Krieges*, 67.

- ^{cxvi} Ibid., 67.
- ^{cxvii} C. Luther & H. P. Taylor, *For Germany. The Otto Skorzeny Memoirs*, 92-93.
- ^{cxviii} H.-G. Alvermann, "Erlebnisbericht," in: "Jahresbrief 2007," *Traditions-Verband der 110. Infanterie-Division*.
- ^{cxix} F. Belke, *Infanterist*, 24.
- ^{cxx} G. W. Schrodek, *Die 11. Panzer-Division*, 116.
- ^{cxxi} H. Buecheler, *Hoepner. Ein deutsches Soldatenschicksal*, 130-31.
- ^{cxixii} For more details on British attempts – using intelligence gained from ULTRA – to alert the Russians about Operation *Barbarossa*, see comments by John Somerville (Wells, England) in: J. Rohwer & E. Jaeckel (Hg.), *Kriegswende Dezember 1941*, 220-21.
- ^{cxixiii} P. Calvocoressi & G. Wint, *Total War*, 168.
- ^{cxixiv} NKVD = People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs.
- ^{cxixv} S. Courtois, et al., *The Black Book of Communism*, 184-90.
- ^{cxixvi} According to Russian scholar Dmitri Volkogonov, whose own father was arrested and shot during the purges, between May 1937 and September 1938, 36,761 men were purged in the army and more than 3000 in the navy. D. Volkogonov, *Stalin*, 368.
- ^{cxixvii} S. Courtois, et al., *The Black Book of Communism*, 184, 198; I. Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 247.
- ^{cxixviii} S. Courtois, et al., *The Black Book of Communism*, 198.
- ^{cxixix} E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 21. Mawdsley, however, offers somewhat different figures for top-level Red Army leaders executed in the purges, compared to those listed in the *Black Book of Communism* (and cited above).
- ^{cxixxx} C. Merridale, *Ivan's War*, 70-71.
- ^{cxixxi} D. Volkogonov, *Stalin*, 368.
- ^{cxixxii} I. Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 247-48.
- ^{cxixxiii} D. M. Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 62.
- ^{cxixxiv} I. Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 249-50.
- ^{cxixxv} For example, writes Robert Kirchubel: "Massive Soviet military expansion, especially following 1938, had far more impact on the decline of the army's quality" than did the purges. See, R. Kirchubel, *Operation Barbarossa 1941* (3), *Army Group Center*, 25.
- ^{cxixxvi} Dept. of Army Pamphlet No. 20-269, "Small Unit Actions during the German Campaign in Russia," 32-37. (Note: The authors of this document are German veterans of the eastern front; however, they are not mentioned by name.)
- ^{cxixxvii} In accordance with order No. 008130 of 26 March 1941, promulgated by the war council of the Western Special Military District, all units of that military district were to be at full mobilization readiness by 15 June 1941. *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 84.
- ^{cxixxviii} D. M. Glantz, *Red Army Ground Forces*, 1-2; D. M. Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 16; see also, *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 84.
- ^{cxixxix} E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 40; H. Magenheimer, *Hitler's War*, 76-77.
- ^{cxl} D. M. Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 16; G. Roberts, *Stalin's Wars*, 73-74. According to Roberts: "From spring 1941 onward Soviet intelligence reports [erroneously] emphasized that if the Germans did attack it would be mainly in the south. . . The decision to plump for a southern concentration of the Red Army was a fateful one, which Zhukov and others were keen to explain away in their memoirs. In their version of events the decision was made by Stalin who believed that Hitler wanted to seize the economic and mineral resources of the Ukraine and southern Russia, including the oil of the Caucasus. While it is true Stalin thought that the struggle for raw materials would be crucial in the coming war, there is no direct evidence that the decision to concentrate forces in the south was specifically his, although he must have gone along with it."
- ^{cxli} E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 40.
- ^{cxlii} D. M. Glantz, *Barbarossa Derailed*, Vol. I, 21. Mandated by Stalin, State Defense Plan 1941 had been prepared by G. K. Zhukov in early 1941, following his appointment as chief of the General Staff in January 1941. The document envisaged the Red Army beginning "military operations in response to an aggressive attack." Apparently, Zhukov's May 1941 contingency plan for a pre-emptive strike was an outgrowth of DP-41. In general, DP-41 was to be carried out in harmony with the Red Army's mobilization plan (MP-41).
- ^{cxliiii} I. Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 268.
- ^{cxliv} G. Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion*, 129-30. "The games," concludes Gorodetsky, "shook the confidence displayed at the conference [of the Red Army High Command convened by Stalin in late December 1940] and exposed the vulnerability and deficiencies of the defense. The umpires of the games drew unflattering conclusions about the performance of the army." Ibid., 128.
- ^{cxlv} E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 37.
- ^{cxlvi} Ibid., 37.
- ^{cxlvii} "Rather than a line like the Maginot [line]," observes David Glantz, the Stalin Line "was a series of contiguous and noncontiguous fortified regions covering the most important axes of the enemy advance." In 1938, there were 13 fortified regions along the old Soviet border manned by 25 machine gun battalions totaling 18,000 men. Late in 1938 and early 1939, the Soviets added eight new fortified regions to the existing structure. In 1940/41,

following the incorporation of eastern Poland and the Baltic States, the Soviets built 20 fortified regions along the new border – each consisting of two defensive belts to a depth of 15-20 kilometers. These new defensive zones, however, were only partially completed by June 1941. E-Mail, D. M. Glantz to C. Luther, 12 Jul 11; D. M. Glantz, *The Military Strategy of the Soviet Union. A History*, 75.

^{cxlviii} *Frontschau* Nr. 2, “Russischer Stellungsbau,” in: *Die Frontschau*, distributed by International Historic Films.

^{cxlix} R. Kirchubel, *Operation Barbarossa 1941* (3), *Army Group Center*, 27. For a detailed study of the Stalin Line see, S. Wetzig, *Die Stalin-Linie 1941*; for an examination of Soviet field fortifications in general see, G. L. Rottman, *Soviet Field Fortifications 1941-45*.

^{cl} R. Kirchubel, *Operation Barbarossa 1941* (3), *Army Group Center*, 27.

^{cli} J. Mosier, *Rise and Fall of German War Machine*, 174.

^{clii} In one incident in the north at beginning of *Barbarossa*, 6 Panzer Division fought a two-day battle with a group of Soviet KV tanks. The tanks eventually became immobilized and were systematically destroyed with satchel charges, after which the Germans discovered that the tanks’ main armament had not been bore-sighted. D. M. Glantz, *Red Army Group Forces in June 1941*, 27.

^{cliii} The massive amounts of weapons and equipment captured by the Germans in 1941 included just 150 radio sets. In their memoirs, Zhukov and other high ranking officers acknowledge that they were often out of touch with subordinate units. (E. F. Ziemke & M. E. Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 12.) According to David Glantz, “the Soviets did have an aversion to radios early on, first, because of the paucity of reliable radio sets and, second, because of the likelihood of German ‘listening,’ especially when inexperienced Soviet commanders had difficulties using codes. Therefore, they relied on telephone, even commercial at times, and field telephones, even though wire proved highly tentative in mobile warfare. In addition, the most sensitive orders and information, in particular, at the *Stavka* . . . and front and army levels, went by BODO, enciphered radio-teletype, a sort of telegram. And many commanders also relied on liaison officers and couriers, both airborne and ground. Of course, changes occurred in 1942 with more widespread use of radios.” E-Mail, D. M. Glantz to C. Luther, 20 Aug 10.

^{cliv} Other sources for this list include: B. Musial, *Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 442-43, 452-54; I. Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 264-65; E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 26; D. M. Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 22-24; *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 89.

^{clv} A. Seaton, *Stalin as Military Commander*, 270.

^{clvi} J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 340.

^{clvii} I. Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 272-73.

^{clviii} The British Government Code and Cipher School at Bletchley Park, England, was responsible for deciphering, analyzing, and evaluating the intercepted German wireless communications, and then for passing it on to concerned military and civilian agencies. The German Navy had begun to use ENIGMA in 1926, the Army in 1928, and the *Luftwaffe* in 1935. The Germans, of course, were well aware that their enemies were listening in on their secret radio traffic; however, they “placed absolute trust in ENIGMA,” being quite convinced that their messages were undecipherable. ULTRA, the major Allied intelligence coup of the Second World War, was to remain a well-guarded secret until the early 1970s, with some aspects of the project concealed even into the 1980s because of their impact on operations against Soviet codes. D. T. Putney (ed.), *Ultra and the Army Air Forces in World War II*, ix-x; P. Johnson, *Modern Times*, 399.

^{clix} See, for example, the comment by John Somerville (Wells, England) in: J. Rohwer & E. Jaeckel (Hg.), *Kriegswende Dezember 1941*, 221.

^{clx} I. Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 274.

^{clxi} I. Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 286.

^{clxii} E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 32.

^{clxiii} On 21 February 1941, General Jodl, Chief, OKW Operations Staff, had tasked Colonel Hasso von Wedel, Chief, OKW Propaganda Branch, with carrying out the deception campaign, which even helped to spread false rumors among the German troops massing in the east. See, O. Buchbender & R. Sterz (Hg.), *Das andere Gesicht des Krieges*, 63-64.

^{clxiv} J. Hughes-Wilson, *Military Intelligence Blunders*, 52-53; I. Kershaw, *Fatal Choices*, 272; D. Volkogonov, “*The German Attack, the Soviet Response, Sunday, 22 June 1941*,” in: *Barbarossa. The Axis and the Allies*, J. Erickson & D. Dilks (eds.), 82. At the end of May 1941, German propaganda minister Goebbels directed that rumors be spread of an impending cross-channel attack on Great Britain. To add credibility to the rumors, Goebbels even directed the composition of an invasion song and new fanfares! R. G. Reuth, *Goebbels*, 476-78.

^{clxv} D. Pryce-Jones, “*Turning Points*,” (book review of Ian Kershaw’s *Fateful Choices*), in: *National Review*, 30 July 2007, 50-51.

^{clxvi} E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 35-37.

^{clxvii} J. Hughes-Wilson, *Military Intelligence Blunders*, 58.

^{clxviii} R. Kirchubel, *Operation Barbarossa 1941* (3), *Army Group Center*, 25.

^{clxix} J. J. Kiršin, “*Die sowjetischen Streitkraefte am Vorabend des Grossen Vaterlaendischen Krieges*,” in: *Zwei Wege nach Moskau*, B. Wegner (Hg.), 390.

^{clxx} D. M. Glantz, *Red Army Ground Forces in June 1941*, 48.

- ^{clxxi} The figure of 17,000 is derived from Glantz; the figure of 24,000 is cited by both Joachim Hoffman and Jurij J. Kiršin. See, D. M. Glantz (ed.), *Initial Period of War on the Eastern Front*, 33; J. Hoffmann, “*Die Angriffsvorbereitungen des Sowjetunion 1941*,” in: *Zwei Wege nach Moskau*, B. Wegner (Hg.), 369; and J. J. Kiršin, “*Die sowjetischen Streitkräfte am Vorabend des Grossen Vaterländischen Krieges*,” in: *Zwei Wege nach Moskau*, B. Wegner (Hg.), 390.
- ^{clxxii} D. M. Glantz, *Red Army Ground Forces in June 1941*, 3; D. M. Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 27.
- ^{clxxiii} A fortified region was a “defensive formation designed to create a strong defensive barrier and help canalize attacking enemy forces into regions where they could be destroyed by counterattacking mechanized forces.” The 57 fortified regions in the force structure on 22 June 1941 (42 of them in the west) included more than 190,000 men organized into seven regiments and 160 artillery and MG battalions outfitted with 1700 guns/mortars and 9800 light and heavy MGs. They were deployed in prepared positions along the frontier and in depth near the old 1939 border, as well as on the approaches to major cities. D. M. Glantz, *Red Army Ground Forces in June 1941*, 34.
- ^{clxxiv} *Ibid.*, 3.
- ^{clxxv} For the complete Red Army order of battle on 22 June 1941 see, D. M. Glantz (ed.), *Atlas and Operational Summary. The Border Battles*, 32-36. For a complete order of battle for Western Front see, Appendix 5 of this history.
- ^{clxxvi} A Soviet “front” was roughly equivalent to a German army group. After 1941, the Red Army increased the number of fronts yet reduced them in size, making them about equal to German armies. D. M. Glantz, *The Soviet-German War: Myths and Realities*, 15, f.n. 1.
- ^{clxxvii} The number and type of divisions assigned to each of the five fronts (with one division unaccounted for) was as follows (the first figure is total divisions, followed by rifle, tank, motorized and cavalry divisions): Northern Front (21: 15, 4, 2, 0), Northwestern Front (25: 19, 4, 2, 0), Western Front (44: 24, 12, 6, 2); Southwestern Front (58: 32, 16, 8, 2), Southern Front (22: 13, 4, 3, 2). H. Magenheimer, *Hitler's War*, 76; H. Seidler, *Images of War. Operation Barbarossa*, 171; D. M. Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 16. According to Evan Mawdsley, the Kiev Military District (Southwestern Front) possessed 60 divisions (including 16 tank and 8 motorized) on 22 June 1941. E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 40.
- ^{clxxviii} D. M. Glantz, *Red Army Ground Forces in June 1941*, 3; H. Magenheimer, *Moskau 1941*, 25; C. Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 175.
- ^{clxxix} D. M. Glantz, *Red Army Ground Forces in June 1941*, 3.
- ^{clxxx} D. M. Glantz, *Red Army Ground Forces in June 1941*, 3; D. M. Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 16.
- ^{clxxxi} *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 85. According to this quasi-official German history, 170 divisions were stationed in the western frontier zone; of these, 48 divisions were deployed 10-50 km., 64 divisions 50-150 km., and 56 divisions 150-500 km. east of the Russo-German demarcation line.
- ^{clxxxii} *Ibid.*, 86.
- ^{clxxxiii} M. Domarus, *Hitler – Reden und Proklamationen 1932-1945*, Bd. II, 1726-32; Dr E. Bunke, *Der Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, 208-09.
- ^{clxxxiv} E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 8.
- ^{clxxxv} K. Knoblauch, *Zwischen Metz und Moskau*, 156.
- ^{clxxxvi} E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 7-8.
- ^{clxxxvii} For example, Goebbels, in one of his “Total War” speeches which followed on the heels of the Stalingrad disaster, declared on 18 February 1943 that, for Germany in June 1941, “it was two minutes before twelve!” *Ibid.*, 8.
- ^{clxxxviii} I. Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 68.
- ^{clxxxix} G. Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion*, 86.
- ^{cxc} *Ibid.*, 86.
- ^{cxc} In his book, *Hitler's War*, David Irving offers a long list of Soviet war preparations to which German intelligence had become privy. These included details of the ongoing assembly of Russian forces along the frontier and disturbing indications that the Soviet air force “was a far greater menace than Hitler had bargained for – both in size and aircraft performance.” See, D. Irving, *Hitler's War*, 236-37.
- ^{cxcii} As Field Marshal Paulus admitted after the war, “no preparations whatever for an attack by the Soviet Union had come to our attention.” G. Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion*, 87.
- ^{cxciii} Halder, however, had noted in his diary weeks earlier, on 7 April 1941 that, “disposition of the Russian forces gives food for thought. . . one cannot help admitting that their troop dispositions are such as to enable them to pass to the offensive on shortest notice. This might become extremely unpleasant for us.” C. Burdick & H.-A. Jacobsen (eds.), *The Halder Diary 1939-1942*, 354.
- ^{cxciv} J. Foerster, *Die Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, 172.
- ^{cxcv} J. Foerster & E. Mawdsley, “*Hitler and Stalin in Perspective*,” in: *War in History*, 78; H. Magenheimer, “*Krieg zweier Angreifer*,” in: *Junge Freiheit*, 20 Jun 08.
- ^{cxcvi} J. Foerster & E. Mawdsley, “*Hitler and Stalin in Perspective*,” in: *War in History*, 78.
- ^{cxcvii} J. Foerster & E. Mawdsley, “*Hitler and Stalin in Perspective*,” in: *War in History*, 78-79; C. Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 102.
- ^{cxcviii} B. Musial, *Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 12.

^{ccxcix} Ibid., 456. Musial, however, soundly rejects the “*Praeventivkriegsthese*” – the notion that Hitler’s attack on Russia was in any way pre-emptive. As he thoroughly demonstrates, Russia was not ready for war in the summer of 1941; moreover, the Germans, he points out correctly, were largely in the dark about the true strength of the Soviet armed forces, and about ongoing Soviet preparations for their own war of aggression, which were “in full swing” (*auf Hochtouren*).

^{cc} H. Magenheimer, “*Krieg zweier Angreifer*,” in: *Junge Freiheit*, 20 Jun 08.

^{cci} Following the German defeat of France in June 1940 Stalin is said to have remarked, “The Germans will now turn on us, they will eat us alive.” J. Erickson, “*Barbarossa June 1941: Who Attacked Whom?*,” in: *History Today*, Jul 01.

^{ccii} Revisionist historian Heinz Magenheimer, however, argues that Stalin would have struck in 1941. He estimates that the gigantic Red Army deployments would have been complete by 15-20 July 1941. Furthermore, he states that, “even if there is no documentary proof for the exact date of a Soviet attack, the circumstances of the deployment itself, and the pressures of time on deployment, logistics and mobilization, all indicate a deadline in the latter half of the year, no later than the beginning of autumn.” While Magenheimer’s argument is intriguing, it is difficult for this author to imagine how the Red Army could have been ready for offensive war before the spring of 1942 at the earliest, so great were the shortfalls in training and equipment in the summer of 1941. H. Magenheimer, *Hitler’s War*, 51-53; see also, H. Magenheimer, *Moskau 1941*, 32-33.

^{cciii} J. Keegan, *Second World War*, 174. The eight motorized divisions included four so-called “light” divisions, which also were equipped with tanks. They were soon reorganized as full-fledged panzer divisions, however. In addition to the eight motorized divisions of the Army were several *Waffen-SS* regiments (*Standarten*), which were also fully motorized. W. Keilig, *Das Deutsche Heer 1939-45*, Bd. II, Abschnitt 100, S. 6-7.

^{cciv} *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 217. Of the 169 divisions, 27 were still in the process of formation in May 1940. W. Keilig, *Das Deutsche Heer 1939-45*, Bd. II, Abschnitt 100, S. 7.

^{ccv} W. Keilig, *Das Deutsche Heer 1939-45*, Bd. II, Abschnitt 100, S. 7.

^{ccvi} This figure included 15 divisions of the 15th “wave,” formed in the spring of 1941 and intended primarily for occupational duties in the Balkans, Norway and the west. G. Tessin, *Verbaende und Truppen der Wehrmacht und Waffen-SS*, Bd. I, 57.

^{ccvii} The 15 motorized divisions included several of the *Waffen-SS*.

^{ccviii} Figures compiled from, B. Mueller-Hillebrand, *Das Heer 1933-1945*, Bd. II, 111; and, “*21. Juni 1941: Zahlenmaessige Uebersicht ueber die Verteilung der deutschen Divisionen und Heerestruppen*,” in: P. E. Schramm (Hg.), *Kriegstagebuch des OKW*, Bd. I.

^{ccix} J. Keegan, *Second World War*, 173.

^{ccx} Two of the panzer divisions earmarked for the Russian campaign were assigned to the OKH reserve, as was one Army motorized division; one *Waffen-SS* motorized division was in Finland. B. Mueller-Hillebrand, *Das Heer 1933-1945*, Bd. II, 111.

^{ccxi} E. Bauer, *Panzerkrieg*, 111-12; A. Seaton, *The German Army 1933-45*, 175.

^{ccxii} D. Stahel, *And the World held its Breath*, 83.

^{ccxiii} B. Mueller-Hillebrand, *Das Heer 1933-1945*, Bd. II, 80-81.

^{ccxiv} By the beginning of the eastern campaign, production of major types of ammunition had, in some cases, been reduced to a fraction of what it had been in mid-1940. For example, the monthly output of shells for light field howitzers had averaged 1,100,000 in mid-1940; in June 1941, production plunged to just 50,000 shells and, in August 1941 to the miniscule figure of 11,000. Manufacture of 81mm mortar shells, which had averaged 1,600,000 a month in mid-1940, fell to just 100,000 in June and 62,000 in August 1941. Ibid., Bd. II, 92.

^{ccxv} *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 216; A. Seaton, *The German Army 1933-45*, 173.

^{ccxvi} Tank production alone was short of more than 6000 skilled workers in January 1941. *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 210.

^{ccxvii} Ibid., 212. While this quote pertains to the attitude of the *Luftwaffe* High Command, it also reflects the Army’s perspective. Goering’s *Luftwaffe*, moreover, by the turn of 1940/41, was already looking past *Barbarossa* and toward its future production requirements for the eventual final struggle with the United States and Great Britain.

^{ccxviii} Ibid., 209, 221.

^{ccxix} D. Stahel, *And the World held its Breath*, 75; H.R. Trevor-Roper, *Hitler’s War Directives*, 78. For the production policies pursued by Jodl and OKW in late 1940 and early 1941, which consigned the Army to third place among the three service branches, see, *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 209-11.

^{ccxx} H. Magenheimer, *Hitler’s War*, 65-68.

^{ccxxi} For example, the 18 Panzer Division was outfitted with no less than 96 different types of personnel carriers, 111 types of trucks and 37 types of motorcycles. As noted, the eastern armies began the campaign with some 2000 different types of vehicle in their inventories. R. Steiger, *Armour Tactics in the Second World War*, 127; D. Stahel, *And the World held its Breath*, 90.

^{ccxxii} *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 221. Of the 20 infantry divisions in the Fourth and Ninth Armies of Army Group Center, fully 11 had a complement of French anti-tank weapons; of these divisions, four were also partially equipped with French vehicles, while one other division had French vehicles (but no French anti-tank weapons). Only five of the 20 divisions – all of the first

wave – were equipped exclusively with German weapons, vehicles and equipment. Ibid., 222-23.

^{cexxiii} D. Stahel, *And the World held its Breath*, 90.

^{cexxiv} “*The Wages of Short-Sighted War are Rape*,” at: <http://www.redstate.com/repair-man-jack>, 24 March 2011.

^{cexxv} S. Hart, et al., *The German Soldier in World War II*, 21.

^{cexxvi} This compares to 57 Army and SS panzer and panzer grenadier divisions established during the war.

G. F. Nafziger, *German Order of Battle – Infantry*, 23.

^{cexxvii} G. H. Bidermann, *In Deadly Combat*, 4-5. Signal and reconnaissance units also had some motorized elements; however, the latter continued to mount some its soldiers on bicycles.

^{cexxviii} According to one source, an infantry regiment consisted of 75 officers, seven administrators, 493 NCOs and 2474 men.

No time period, however, is given for these data. A. Buchner, *German Infantry Handbook*, 51.

^{cexxix} *Handbook on German Military Forces*, U.S. War Department, March 1945, 310.

^{cexxx} A. Buchner, *German Infantry Handbook*, 47-49.

^{cexxxi} S. Hart, et al., *The German Soldier in World War II*, 54-55.

^{cexxxii} E. Beinhauer (Hg.), *Artillerie im Osten*, 8.

^{cexxxiii} Ibid., 8.

^{cexxxiv} For technical information on German light and medium field howitzers see, A. Buchner, *German Infantry Handbook*, 88-90; see also, *Handbook on German Military Forces*, U.S. War Department, March 1945, 332-33.

^{cexxxv} A. Buchner, *German Infantry Handbook*, 85.

^{cexxxvi} A. Seaton, *The German Army 1933-45*, 173; *Handbook on German Military Forces*, U.S. War Department, March 1945, 395-99; A. Schick, *Die 10. Panzer-Division 1939-43*, 264.

^{cexxxvii} Only six assault guns had taken part in the campaign in the West in 1940. *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 219.

^{cexxxviii} E. Bauer, *Panzerkrieg*, 113. During the second half of 1941, German factories produced an additional 285 StuG IIIs.

^{cexxxix} *Handbook on German Military Forces*, U.S. War Department, March 1945, 365; D. Stahel, *And the World held its Breath*, 78.

^{cecli} Lt. J. Hahn, “*Feldzug gegen Russland*” (collection of unpublished field post letters). In one action on the central front in December 1941, two StuG IIIs assigned to 260 ID would destroy 12 T-34s and two KV-1s which had broken through the division’s main battle line. Such successes were hardly uncommon on the eastern front from 1941-44. *Die 260. Infanterie-Division*, Kameradenhilfswerk und Traditionsverband der 260. ID (Hg.), 90.

^{cecli} *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 219.

^{ceclii} Ibid., 219.

^{cecliii} Ibid., 219.

^{cecliv} D. Stahel, *And the World held its Breath*, 76.

^{ceclv} Only in 1934, in fact, did the Germans introduce the term “*Panzerkampfwagen*” (literally “armored battle wagon”) to describe their tanks, dropping the former designation of armored scout car (“*Panzerspauhwagen*”). W. K. Nehring, *Geschichte der deutschen Panzerwaffe*, 117.

^{ceclvi} Hereafter, the shortened designation of “Pz” will be used for each tank model. For example, “Pz I” in place of “Pz Kpfw I.”

^{ceclvii} I. V. Hogg, *Armoured Fighting Vehicles*, 81; D. Stahel, *And the World held its Breath*, 76.

^{ceclviii} H.-A. Jacobsen (Hg.), *Generaloberst Halder Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. III, 42.

^{ceclix} I. V. Hogg, *Armoured Fighting Vehicles*, 82-83; *Handbook on German Military Forces*, U.S. War Department, March 1945, 384. After production of the Pz II had been discontinued, its modified hull would still be in use late into the war as a self-propelled gun carriage, most notably for the 150mm s.IG 33 and the 105mm le.FH 18.

^{cecli} D. Stahel, *And the World held its Breath*, 77.

^{cecli} T. L. Jentz (ed.), *Panzer Truppen*, 190.

^{cecli} Raus was appointed acting commander of 6 PD in September 1941; on 29 April 1942, he officially took over the division. E. Raus, *Panzer Operations*, 352.

^{cecliii} Ibid., 11.

^{cecliv} K. Reinhardt, *Wende vor Moskau*, 206.

^{ceclv} D. Stahel, *And the World held its Breath*, 77.

^{ceclvi} According to Thomas L. Jentz, more than 500 Pz 38(t)s were assigned to Hoth’s 3 Panzer Group. See, T. L. Jentz (ed.), *Panzer Truppen*, 190-93.

^{ceclvii} D. Stahel, *And the World held its Breath*, 78.

^{ceclviii} W. K. Nehring, *Geschichte der deutschen Panzerwaffe*, 118.

^{ceclix} I. V. Hogg, *Armoured Fighting Vehicles*, 84-86.

^{ceclx} I. V. Hogg, *Armoured Fighting Vehicles*, 86; D. Stahel, *And the World held its Breath*, 78.

^{ceclxi} H. Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, 138.

^{ceclxii} I. V. Hogg, *Armoured Fighting Vehicles*, 87.

^{ceclxiii} C. Burdick & H.-A. Jacobsen (eds.), *The Halder Diary 1939-1942*, 210.

- cclxiv W. Keilig, *Das Deutsche Heer 1939-45*, Bd. II, Abschnitt 103, S. 1; P. P. Battistelli, *Panzer Divisions*, 10.
- cclxv T. L. Jentz (ed.), *Panzer Truppen*, 120-21.
- cclxvi E. Bauer, *Panzerkrieg*, 113.
- cclxvii B. Mueller-Hillebrand, *Das Heer 1933-1945*, Bd. II, 107.
- cclxviii For a detailed breakdown of the reorganization and expansion of the panzer divisions see, W. Keilig, *Das Deutsche Heer 1939-45*, Bd. II, Abschnitt 103, S. 1-20. For the complete order of battle of one panzer division on 22 June 1941 see, A Schick, *Die 10. Panzer-Division 1939-43*, 254-66.
- cclxix W. Keilig, *Das Deutsche Heer 1939-45*, Bd. II, Abschnitt 103, S. 11-12.
- ccxx H. Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, 174.
- ccxxi A. Seaton, *The German Army 1933-45*, 266.
- ccxxii One of the best equipped was the elite 4 Panzer Division. Its inventory of weapons and vehicles in June 1941 included the following: 177 tanks in its 35 Panzer Regiment (among them 105 Pz IIIs and 20 Pz IVs), 35 armored cars, 43 armored personnel carriers, 185 prime movers, 1992 trucks, 1001 cars and 1586 motorcycles. In addition to the tanks in the panzer regiment, the division's artillery regiment possessed several Pz II observation tanks (*Beobachtungswagen*), while the combat engineer battalion was equipped with a dozen Pz I and Pz II tanks. The 4 PD's anti-tank battalion was outfitted mainly with 37mm AT guns; however, just prior to the start of *Barbarossa*, it received three batteries of 50mm AT guns (all towed by half-track prime movers). See, R. Michulec, *4. Panzer-Division*, 4.
- ccxxiii E. Bauer, *Panzerkrieg*, 113. In comparison, the German army corps of 1914 was equipped with only 160 77mm and 105 150mm guns.
- ccxxiv The 250 assault guns, an infantry support weapon, are not included in this total.
- ccxxv As David Stahel observes: "The qualitative advantage of these Soviet tanks was enormous. In practical terms it meant that none of the German tanks regardless of armament could penetrate the armor on the T-34 at ranges above 500 meters. Indeed, only the later models of the [Pz III] equipped with 5cm L/42 main guns could effectively penetrate the armor of the T-34 at less than 500 meters. The KV-1 was simply impervious to all tank-mounted German firepower as well as the standard 3.7cm anti-tank guns issued to the infantry divisions." D. Stahel, *And the World held its Breath*, 79.
- ccxxvi Note: This order of battle – simplified from Keilig – portrays a "typical" German panzer division with a tank regiment of two battalions equipped with German tanks only. There were, of course, many variations to this "normal" OOB (*Normalgliederung*).
- ccxxvii Nine panzer divisions (3, 6, 7, 8, 12, 17, 18, 19, 20) had three tank battalions. W. Keilig, *Das Deutsche Heer 1939-45*, Bd. II, Abschnitt 103, S. 18.
- ccxxviii These were armored cars, with a 20mm main armament.
- ccxxix Note: The actual German term, "*Panzerjaeger*," literally means "tank hunter."
- ccxxx This Flak company was not in the OOB of 3, 15, 19 and 20 Panzer Divisions.
- ccxxxi No number given for tanks; however, this company in the Armored Engineer Battalion of 4 PD had a dozen Pz Is and Pz IIs. R. Michulec, *4. Panzer-Division*, 4.
- ccxxxii SPW = "*Schuetzenpanzerwagen*," or armored personnel carrier (APC). These vehicles (in German nomenclature Sd.Kfz. 250 or 251) offered significantly more protection than the typical troop transports then in service and were highly valued by the *Landser* lucky enough to ride in them. However, in June 1941, most panzer and motorized divisions possessed but a small number of these SPWs. Not uncommon was the situation of 10 Panzer Division, whose entire rifle brigade had just a single company mounted in SPWs. A. Schick, *Die 10. Panzer-Division 1939-43*, 263.
- ccxxxiii W. Keilig, *Das Deutsche Heer 1939-45*, Bd. II, Abschnitt 103, S. 18-20.
- ccxxxiv This figure excludes the four so-called "light divisions" which, at the time, were also classified as motorized divisions; they were soon reorganized as panzer divisions.
- ccxxxv A. Seaton, *The German Army 1933-45*, 264.
- ccxxxvi A. Seaton, *The German Army 1933-45*, 264; W. Keilig, *Das Deutsche Heer 1939-45*, Bd. II, Abschnitt 100, S. 6-7.
- ccxxxvii C. Winchester, *Hitler's War on Russia*, 21-22.
- ccxxxviii R. J. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 88.
- ccxxxix W. Murray, *Strategy for Defeat*, 55.
- cexc R. P. Hallion, "*Control of the Air: The Enduring Requirement*," paper prepared by author, 8 September 1999.
- cexcii W. Murray, *Strategy for Defeat*, 53-54.
- cexciii *Ibid.*, 80.
- cexciv J. S. Corum, "*Defeat of the Luftwaffe, 1939-1945*," in: *Why Air Forces Fail*, R. Higham & S. J. Harris (eds.), 217.
- cexcv *Ibid.*, 203.
- cexcvi R. Muller, *The German Air War in Russia*, 33-35.
- cexcvii A. Kesselring, *The Memoirs of Field-Marshal Kesselring*, 88-89.
- cexcviii R. Muller, *The German Air War in Russia*, 3.
- cexcix "In fact," writes James Corum, "many airpower and military historians regard [Richthofen] as the best tactical air force commander of World War II. This is a fair judgment, and no hyperbole. From 1936 to 1944 von Richthofen pioneered many

of the most important elements of air-ground joint warfare to include the use of air forces as flank protection for armored forces and coordination of air support for ground forces by observers on the front lines.” He was also the “first major commander to employ modern precision munitions in combat.” J. S. Corum, *Wolfram von Richthofen*, 4.

^{cecxix} J. S. Corum, *Wolfram von Richthofen*, 4-11, 260-61; G. Huemmelchen, “Generalfeldmarschall Wolfram Frhr. v. Richthofen,” in: *Hitlers militaerische Elite*, Bd. 2, G. R. Ueberschaer (Hg.), 170-71.

^{ccc} Air Ministry Pamphlet No. 248: *Rise and Fall of the German Air Force*, 174.

^{ceci} R. Muller, *The German Air War in Russia*, 2.

^{ceci} Ibid., 3-15. Muller calls this concept the “central tenet of German air power theory.” *Operativer Luftkrieg* “came to refer to an air force, using its unique attributes of range, speed, and surprise, striking at the sources of enemy military, economic, and moral strength (war industries, population and communication centers, and military installations) in order to achieve a strategic decision in concert with the more traditional branches of the armed service.” Ibid., 11.

^{ceci} Following Germany’s public recognition of its hitherto secret *Luftwaffe*, Wever was appointed chief of staff on 1 March 1935. Internet site at: <http://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht>.

^{ceci} R. Suchenwirth, *Historical Turning Points in the German Air Force War Effort*, USAF Historical Study No. 189, 77-78.

^{cecv} R. Muller, *The German Air War in Russia*, 9.

^{cevi} Ibid., 4.

^{cevi} *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 802-03.

^{cevi} Ibid., 802-14. For an insightful discussion of *Luftwaffe* attempts to wage a strategic air war in Russia in 1943/44 see, R. Muller, *The German Air War in Russia*, 112-22, 149-88.

^{ceci} C. Bergström & A. Mikhailov, *Black Cross Red Star*, Vol. I, 11; Internet site at: <http://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht>.

^{cecx} On 22 June 1941, three fighter groups (and only Bf 109Es) were equipped with special mounts under the fuselage to carry the SD-2 *Splitterbomben*. Yet despite the weapon’s devastating effect, the suspension of the bombs under the fuselage adversely affected aerodynamic performance of the “*Emils*,” while the pilot also faced serious challenges in dropping the 96 two kilogram bomblets. Because some aircraft were lost as a result, use of the munition by the Bf 109E was soon terminated. The SD-2 was employed with more success by German bomber groups, which used it extensively during 1941. At the start of the attack on Russia, the *Luftwaffe* possessed a total inventory of 2,298,500 of the *Splitterbomben*. J. Prien, et al., *Die Jagdfliegerverbaende der deutschen Luftwaffe*, Teil 6/I, *Unternehmen “Barbarossa,”* 34-35. For more insight into problems associated with the SD-2 fragmentation bomblets see, C. Bekker, *The Luftwaffe War Diaries*, 219-20.

^{ceci} J. S. Corum, *Wolfram von Richthofen*, 270. The SD-2 was also used against parked aircraft and airfield installations. See also, J. Prien, et al., *Die Jagdfliegerverbaende der deutschen Luftwaffe*, Teil 6/I, *Unternehmen “Barbarossa,”* 33.

^{ceci} J. Prien, et al., *Die Jagdfliegerverbaende der deutschen Luftwaffe*, Teil 6/I, *Unternehmen “Barbarossa,”* 28.

^{ceci} D. T. Zabecki, *World War II in Europe – An Encyclopedia*, 965; C. Bergström & A. Mikhailov, *Black Cross Red Star*, Vol. I, 11.

^{ceci} According to *Luftwaffe* expert John Weal, *Luftwaffe* fighter pilots “did not often use the dogmatic term ‘*As*’ (ace) in relation to a specific number of victories. They preferred the more generic ‘*Experte*,’ which was taken to mean any pilot of outstanding ability and achievement.” J. Weal, *Bf 109 Aces of the Russian Front*, 7.

^{ceci} Major Erich Hartmann (52 JG) registered 352 kills, followed by Major Gerhard Barkhorn (52 JG) with 301 kills. In both cases, all of the kills took place on the eastern front. C. Shores, *Luftwaffe Fighter Units Russia 1941-45*, 46.

^{ceci} A German *Gruppe* was normally composed of about 30 aircraft of the same type; a *Geschwader* (wing) possessed some 90 aircraft at full strength.

^{ceci} C. Bergström & A. Mikhailov, *Black Cross Red Star*, Vol. I, 7, 11-12; R. Muller, *The German Air War in Russia*, 33; W. Green, *War Planes of the Second World War, Fighters*, Vol. I, 164-67.

^{ceci} D. T. Zabecki, *World War II in Europe – An Encyclopedia*, 865-66; C. Bergström & A. Mikhailov, *Black Cross Red Star*, Vol. I, 12; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dornier_Do_17.

^{ceci} D. T. Zabecki, *World War II in Europe – An Encyclopedia*, 866; Capt. E. Brown, *Wings of the Luftwaffe*, 122.

^{ceci} D. T. Zabecki, *World War II in Europe – An Encyclopedia*, 866; J. Piekalkiewicz, *Die Schlacht um Moskau*, 278.

^{ceci} U. Balke, *Kampfgeschwader 100 “Wiking,”* 54a-54b.

^{ceci} *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 364.

^{ceci} W. Murray, *Strategy for Defeat*, 103.

^{ceci} B. Gorbachevsky, *Through the Maelstrom*, 112.

^{ceci} Internet site at: <http://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht>; Lt.-Col. A. J. Barker, *Stuka Ju-87*, 17.

^{ceci} Capt. E. Brown, *Wings of the Luftwaffe*, 27; Major F. Lang (a.D.), *Aufzeichnungen aus der Sturzkampffliegerei*, 6-7.

^{ceci} The remaining 37 *Stukas* were in 5 Air Fleet in Norway. *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 364. For consistency, and due to the authoritative nature of the source, this narrative relies largely on Horst Boog’s *Luftwaffe* strength figures throughout (Ibid., 364). Concerning aggregate *Stuka* numbers, however, the war diary of Army Group Center states that only 276 Ju 87Bs were available to the army group on 22 June 1941. BA-MA RH 19 II/120, *KTB H.Gr.Mitte*, 22.6.41.

^{ceci} Major F. Lang (a.D.), *Aufzeichnungen aus der Sturzkampffliegerei*, 13-24; Lt.-Col. A. J. Barker, *Stuka Ju-87*, 17.

- ccccxix H. J. Schroeder, *Die gestohlenen Jahren*, 512-14.
- ccccxx J. Steinhoff, et al. (eds.), *Voices from the Third Reich*, 137-39.
- ccccxxi Capt. E. Brown, *Wings of the Luftwaffe*, 132-33.
- ccccxxii The initial version had only one power plant; flight testing of the Ju 52/3m with three engines began in 1932, and it was variants of this model which saw combat duty from 1936-45. Production of the aircraft ended in 1944. Internet site at: <http://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht>.
- ccccxxiii Capt. E. Brown, *Wings of the Luftwaffe*, 134.
- ccccxxiv C. Bergström & A. Mikhailov, *Black Cross Red Star*, Vol. II, 28; Capt. E. Brown, *Wings of the Luftwaffe*, 134-36; W. Murray, *Strategy for Defeat*, 13-15.
- ccccxxv *Geschichte einer Transportflieger-Gruppe im II. Weltkrieg*, Kameradschaft ehemaliger Transportflieger (Hg.), 107-11.
- ccccxxvi E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 12-13.
- ccccxxvii J. Erickson, "Soviet War Losses," in: *Barbarossa. The Axis and the Allies*, J. Erickson & D. Dilks (eds.), 256.
- ccccxxviii As German officers recalled in a post-war study, the very first days of the Russian campaign revealed the fact that the "Red Army soldier bore little resemblance to the Russian soldier of 1914-17. The Bolshevik regime had certainly understood how to imbue the Soviet soldier with a new spirit over the course of 20 years. This revelation was another of the surprises of the Russo-German war. The Russian soldier had always been brave and steadfast. But the new masters of Russia have succeeded in rousing the soldier from his passive stupor, in giving him a strong sense of responsibility toward state and nation, and even in turning him into a fanatic." FMS T-34, K. Allmendinger, et al., "Terrain Factors in the Russian Campaign," 64-65.
- ccccxxix D. M. Glantz (ed.), *Initial Period of War on the Eastern Front*, 2.
- cccxli *Ibid.*, 4-5.
- cccxlii B. Musial, *Kampfplatz Deutschland*, 9.
- cccxliii *Ibid.* 450, 463-64. Musial sees a strong continuity in Soviet Russia's preparations for a war of aggression against the West since at least 1931.
- cccxliiii *Ibid.*, 464.
- cccxliiv By 1940, at the latest, in view of the dramatically transformed strategic situation in Europe, the Soviet military buildup was driven less by any immediate or future aggressive intent than by fear of an impending German invasion.
- cccxlv E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 48. According to Walter S. Dunn, after eight years of developing their heavy industry, the Soviets switched to weapons production in 1937. See, W. S. Dunn, Jr., *Hitler's Nemesis. The Red Army 1930-45*, xv.
- cccxlvi E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 43.
- cccxlvii Munitions = shells and mines.
- cccxlviii J. N. Westwood, *A History of Russian Railways*, 242-43.
- cccxlix American engineers played an integral part in helping the Soviets reach their economic objectives. During the 1920s and 1930s, they instructed the Russians in the techniques of low-cost mass production and planned obsolescence. "Planned obsolescence," avers Walter S. Dunn, "by cutting tolerances, that is, increasing the margin of error, the acceptable variation from the ideal measurement, reduced the number of hours and degree of skill required to complete a product but at the same time reduced the life span of the engine or weapon. However, the determining factor of the life expectancy of a weapon on the eastern front was not its degree of perfection but shells from a German anti-tank gun." During the 1930s, American engineers also designed and constructed *all* of the Russian tank factories and many other factories for mass production. "Many were improved copies of the most efficient American plants. The Germans could not adopt the American philosophy because their factories were smaller and not designed for mass production." W. S. Dunn, Jr., *Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 24-26.
- ccccl Compulsory military service was a major feature of Soviet military policy between the wars, providing the Red Army with an immense pool of trained men. *Ibid.*, 5.
- ccccli D. M. Glantz, *Red Army Ground Forces in June 1941*, 1-3.
- cccclii *Ibid.*, 48.
- ccccliii P. Calvocoressi & G. Wint, *Total War*, 168.
- ccccliv NKVD = People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs.
- cccclv S. Courtois, et al., *The Black Book of Communism*, 184-90.
- cccclvi According to Russian scholar Dmitri Volkogonov, whose own father was arrested and shot during the purges, between May 1937 and September 1938, 36,761 men were purged in the army and more than 3000 in the navy. D. Volkogonov, *Stalin*, 368.
- cccclvii S. Courtois, et al., *The Black Book of Communism*, 184, 198; I. Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 247.
- cccclviii S. Courtois, et al., *The Black Book of Communism*, 198.
- cccclix E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 21. Mawdsley, however, offers somewhat different figures for top-level Red Army leaders executed in the purges, compared to those listed in the *Black Book of Communism* (and cited above).
- cccclx C. Merridale, *Ivan's War*, 70-71.
- cccclxi D. Volkogonov, *Stalin*, 368.
- cccclxii I. Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 247-48.

- ceclxiii D. M. Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 62.
- ceclxiv I. Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 249-50.
- ceclxv For example, writes Robert Kirchubel: “Massive Soviet military expansion, especially following 1938, had far more impact on the decline of the army’s quality” than did the purges. See, R. Kirchubel, *Operation Barbarossa 1941* (3), *Army Group Center*, 25.
- ceclxvi C. Merridale, *Ivan’s War*, 82.
- ceclxvii The Soviet Union endured severe food shortages throughout the war, particularly during 1941/42. After the launch of *Barbarossa*, the Red Army’s logistics system collapsed, consigning its soldiers to “severe and persistent food deprivation.” D. M. Glantz, *Colossus Reborn*, 555.
- ceclxviii C. Merridale, *Ivan’s War*, 16.
- ceclxix D. M. Glantz, *Red Army Ground Forces*, 13. However, as war loomed, most divisions in the internal military districts had yet to make the transition, or were in the process of doing so.
- ceclxx *Ibid.*, 13.
- ceclxxi D. M. Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 24.
- ceclxxii C. Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 176; C. Merridale, *Ivan’s War*, 100.
- ceclxxiii J. Erickson, “Soviet War Losses,” in: *Barbarossa. The Axis and the Allies*, J. Erickson & D. Dilks (eds.), 267.
- ceclxxiv D. M. Glantz, *Red Army Ground Forces*, 19.
- ceclxxv C. Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 176.
- ceclxxvi A. Zamoyski, *Moscow 1812*, 116.
- ceclxxvii W. S. Dunn, Jr., *Stalin’s Keys to Victory*, 28.
- ceclxxviii E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 26.
- ceclxxix *Ibid.*, 26.
- ceclxxx D. M. Glantz, *Red Army Ground Forces*, 29; D. M. Glantz, *Red Army Weapons and Equipment*, 11.
- ceclxxxi M. Foedrowitz, *Stalin Organs*, 11; A. Werth, *Russia at War*, 172.
- ceclxxxii The rocket launchers were first demonstrated to the Soviet military on 15 June 1941: “Minister of Defense Timoshenko wanted a demonstration of new artillery armaments to be conducted at the firing range. . . The demonstration of the rocket weaponry was the last item on the schedule. The effect of the drumfire and the howling of forty-eight flying projectiles made a staggering impression on the marshals and generals. Clouds of dust rose up and flames raged in the area of the target. It seemed that nothing living could have withstood such an artillery strike. . . Twenty-four hours before Nazi Germany attacked, a resolution was issued, signed by Stalin, for the series production of rockets and launchers.” B. Chertok, *Rockets and People*, Vol. I, 167-71.
- ceclxxxiii Apparently, the length of the rockets reminded the Germans of organ-pipes. D. Peeters, *Vermisst in Stalingrad*, 13.
- ceclxxxiv M. Domarus, *Hitler. Reden und Proklamationen 1932-1945*, Bd. II, 1742-43.
- ceclxxxv W. S. Dunn, Jr., *Stalin’s Keys to Victory*, 29.
- ceclxxxvi D. M. Glantz, *Red Army Ground Forces*, 29.
- ceclxxxvii G. Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion*, 115-17.
- ceclxxxviii G. Roberts, *Stalin’s Wars*, 70-71, 80. “The Soviet High Command,” avers Roberts, “intended to fight the next war by taking the battle to the enemy, by launching attacks and counterattacks and by the deep penetration and invasion of the opponent’s territory.”
- ceclxxxix D. M. Glantz (ed.), *Initial Period of War on the Eastern Front*, 10-11.
- cecxcc Marshal of the Soviet Union Tukhachevsky was put on trial and executed in June 1937. Triandafillov had perished in an airplane accident in 1931. Isserson was arrested in 1942 and spent 14 years in labor camps and internal exile. He died in 1976.
- cecxci D. M. Glantz (ed.), *Initial Period of War on the Eastern Front*, 13-16. Writes Glantz: “The Soviets generally concluded, as a result of combat in Spain, that armored forces were indeed fragile on the battlefield unless they were fully integrated into a well articulated combined arms force. Tanks proved very vulnerable to artillery fire, and when their supporting infantry was stripped away they were very vulnerable to destruction by enemy infantry as well. When they returned from Spain, many Soviet military leaders recommended the creation of smaller armored units of more balanced combined arms nature.” Apparently, the miserable state of Red Army logistics contributed significantly to the decision to do away with the tank corps. According to the late German historian Joachim Hoffmann, the Soviet decision was also influenced by the fighting against the Japanese at Lake Khazan in July-August 1938, and on the Khalkin-Gol River in May 1939. See, *GSSW*, Vol. IV, 72.
- cecxcii D. M. Glantz (ed.), *Initial Period of War on the Eastern Front*, 16.
- cecxciiii The TOE for a tank division was roughly 11,000 men, 60 guns and mortars, and 375 tanks; in theory, the motorized division possessed 11,650 men, 98 guns and mortars, 275 light tanks, and 49 armored cars.
- cecxciiv D. M. Glantz, *Red Army Ground Forces*, 20.
- cecxceiv The Soviet intent was to complete the creation of these immense new mechanized corps by the summer of 1942. *Ibid.*, 20.
- cecxcev *Ibid.* 20-21.

- cccxvii Ibid., 20.
- cccxviii E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 26.
- cccxviiii R. J. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 70.
- cccxvix C. Merridale, *Ivan's War*, 87.
- cd W. S. Dunn, Jr., *Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 93.
- cdi H.-A. Jacobsen (Hg.), *Generaloberst Halder Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. III, 14.
- cdii "Top Ten Tanks," Military Channel documentary, Oct 05.
- cdiii W. S. Dunn, Jr., *Stalin's Keys to Victory*, 92-93; R. J. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 69.
- cdiv Steven Zaloga, who has written extensively on the T-34, doing research in both Russian and German sources, argues that the German Army was not "totally unaware" of the new Soviet tank: "Documents in the archives in Washington identify it by the prototype number T32. So German intelligence did know the Soviets had a new medium tank T32, but they did not know the significance of it." According to Zaloga, a German study of the Soviet war industry shortly before the outbreak of war with Russia even identified – correctly – that the T32 prototype was in production at a factory in Khar'kov. Remarks by Steven Zaloga in: D. M. Glantz (ed.), *Initial Period of War on the Eastern Front*, 452.
- cdv G. P. Megargee, *Inside Hitler's High Command*, 114.
- cdvi According to a *Wehrmacht* training video, the rear and flanks of the T-34, where the armor was thinner, along with the turret ring, were the most vulnerable areas of the tank. *Frontschau Nr. 5/6*, in: *Die Frontschau*, distributed by International Historic Films.
- cdvii D. M. Glantz, *Red Army Ground Forces*, 28.
- cdviii D. M. Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 65.
- cdix E. Raus, "Russian Combat Methods in World War II," in: *Fighting in Hell*, P. G. Tsouras (ed.), 40-42.
- cdx D. M. Glantz, *Red Army Ground Forces*, 28-29.
- cdxi In doing so, however, the German veterans have a tendency to dramatically overestimate the numbers of Soviet airborne forces available in June 1941. For example, a pamphlet prepared by two German eastern front veterans in the 1990s contends that the Red Army on 22 June 1941 included more than one million parachutists distributed over 10 air landing corps – a figure apparently gleaned from the works of Russian revisionist historian Vladimir Rezun (pseudonym of Viktor Suvorov). E. Wardin & H. Drenger, *Ich hatt' einen Kameraden*, n.d.
- cdxii D. M. Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 27-28.
- cdxiii A Soviet air regiment on the eve of war was roughly equivalent in size to a German *Gruppe*, possessing about 30 aircraft. E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 25.
- cdxiv M. N. Kozhevnikov, *The Command and Staff of the Soviet Army Air Force*, 14-18. "Extensive measures were implemented to prepare the theater of military operations," states Kozhevnikov. "Runway construction, expansion, and reconstruction at more than 250 airfields assumed broad scope in spring 1941. A significant number of airfields was built in the new border zone formed due to the annexation of western Belorussian and Ukrainian regions [i.e., eastern Poland] and admission of new republics – Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia – into the USSR. . . . One hundred airfield construction battalions were formed to accelerate airfield construction previously begun. In addition, 25,000 laborers were transferred at the end of March from railroad construction projects to construction of airfields. In western border military districts, where new types of planes were to be based, the runways were lengthened and paved with concrete, and fuel and ammunition dumps and airfield control posts were built at many existing airfields. Owing to this, new types of aircraft could not operate from these airfields temporarily, while the use of obsolete aircraft was restricted." Ibid., 18.
- cdxv D. R. Jones, "From Disaster to Recovery: Russia's Air Forces in the Two World Wars," in: *Why Air Forces Fail*, R. Higham & S.J. Harris (eds.), 275.
- cdxvi D. M. Glantz, *Red Army Weapons and Equipment*, 47.
- cdxvii R. Muller, *The German Air War in Russia*, 40-41.
- cdxviii R. Kirchubel, *Operation Barbarossa 1941(3)*, Army Group Center, 28.
- cdxix V. Hardesty, *Red Phoenix*, 26; C. Bergström & A. Mikhailov, *Black Cross Red Star*, Vol. II, 36-37.
- cdxx V. Hardesty, *Red Phoenix*, 61; A. Seaton, *The Battle for Moscow*, 82.
- cdxxi On 12 April 1941, Timoshenko and Zhukov complained that two or three aircraft were being lost each day to training accidents and demanded removal of several senior VVS officers. D. M. Glantz & D. House, *When Titans Clashed*, 37-38.
- cdxxii A. Kesselring, *Soldat Bis Zum Letzten Tag*, 120.
- cdxxiii R. Wagner (ed.), *The Soviet Air Force in World War II*, 44.
- cdxxiv A. Kesselring, *Soldat Bis Zum Letzten Tag*, 117.
- cdxxv BA-MA MSg 1/1147: *Tagebuch Lemelsen*, 21.6.41.
- cdxxvi G. Blumentritt, "Moscow," in: *The Fatal Decisions*, W. Richardson & S. Freidin (eds.), 46.
- cdxxvii H. Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, 153.
- cdxxviii BA-MA MSg 1/1147: *Tagebuch Lemelsen*, 21.6.41.
- cdxxix D. Volkogonov, "The German Attack, the Soviet Response, Sunday, 22 June 1941," in: *Barbarossa, The Axis and the Allies*, J. Erickson & D. Dilks (eds.), 84; A. Kesselring, *Soldat Bis Zum Letzten Tag*, 117.
- cdxxx A. Kesselring, *Soldat Bis Zum Letzten Tag*, 116-17.

edxxxix R. Kirchubel, *Operation Barbarossa 1941* (3), *Army Group Center*, 32.

edxxxix W. Schneider, *Panzer Tactics*, 5.

edxxxiii A. Opitz, “*Die Stimmung in der Truppe am Vorabend des Ueberfalls auf die Sowjetunion*,” in: *Der Krieg des kleinen Mannes*, W. Wette (Hg.), 236.

edxxxiv W. Schneider, *Panzer Tactics*, 5; C. G. Sweeting, *Hitler’s Personal Pilot*, 155; R. J. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 10.

edxxxv Quoted in: Dr E. Bunke, *Der Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, 208-09.

edxxxvi This, of course, is a large generalization, which was far from always true. Dr Alfred Opitz wrote after the war that, in his company, news of the impending war with Russia – as well as the officially proffered justifications for it – which they received on the afternoon of 21 June, was met with “very mixed feelings.” (A. Opitz, “*Die Stimmung in der Truppe am Vorabend des Ueberfalls auf die Sowjetunion*,” in: *Der Krieg des kleinen Mannes*, W. Wette (Hg.), 236-37.) In the recollections of another German veteran, Emanuel Selder (62 IR/7 ID), the response to Hitler’s dramatic proclamation “fluctuated . . . between dismay and elation.” E. Selder, *Der Krieg der Infanterie*, 25.

edxxxvii C. Hartmann, *Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg*, 247-48. Observes Hartmann, “Much of the evidence indicates that most of the soldiers (even those who had little to do with NS-ideology) were convinced of the necessity for such a war.”

edxxxviii *Ibid.*, 248.

edxxxix “*Die meisten*,” wuerden sich “maechtig” freuen, “dass es endlich wieder einmal kracht.” BA-MA MSg 1/3268: Fritz Farnbacher, *Tagebuch*, 22.6.41, quoted in: C. Hartmann, *Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg*, 247.

cdxl BfZ, Slg. Sterz (04 650), *Brief L.B.*, 22.6.41, quoted in: C. Hartmann, *Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg*, 247. (Note: BfZ = *Bibliothek fuer Zeitgeschichte*, Stuttgart. Hereafter cited as “Collection BfZ.”)

cdxli C. Luther & H. P. Taylor, *For Germany. The Otto Skorzeny Memoirs*, 93.

cdxlii R. Kirchubel, *Operation Barbarossa 1941* (3), *Army Group Center*, 32.

cdxliii H.-J. Roell, *Oberleutnant Albert Blaich. Als Panzerkommandant in Ost und West*, 41-42.

cdxliv Ltr, H. Haape to fiancée, 21.6.41.

cdxlv Emblazoned on the field belt buckle (*Koppelschloss*) of every German soldier was the Prussian motto, “*Gott mit uns*” (God is with us). The phrase, however, was not stamped onto the belt buckles of *Luftwaffe* or SS soldiers. A. Sáiz, *Deutsche Soldaten*, 89.

cdxlvi Hptm. Herbert S. (00 401), Collection BfZ.

cdxlvii On 26 June 1941, in a pastoral letter, the German catholic bishops hailed Operation *Barbarossa* as a “service to the fatherland” (*Dienst am Vaterland*). Four days later (30 June 1941), an official agency of the German protestant (*evangelisch*) church, in a telegram to Hitler, approved the war as a struggle “against the mortal enemy of all order and western Christian culture.” W. Schneider (Hg.), *Alltag unter Hitler*, “*Chronik 1941*.”

cdxlviii B. Haering, *Embattled Witness*, 4-6.

cdxlxi G. Habedanck, “*Bei Brest-Litovsk ueber die Grenze*,” *Die Wehrmacht, 1941*, 233; quoted in: R. J. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 29.

cdl D 107/56 Nr. 4, “*Aus Briefen des Adjutanten Inf.Rgt. 18, Oberleutnant Juerg von Kalckreuth*,” Staats- und Personenstandsarchiv Detmold. *Oberleutnant Kalckreuth* was on the staff of 18 Infantry Regiment (6 ID). The first paragraph is from a letter to his wife, Gisela; the second was gleaned from his personal diary.

cdli A. Freitag, *Aufzeichnungen aus Krieg und Gefangenschaft*, 50-51.

cdlii German Ninth Army and 3 Panzer Group attacked at 0305 hours, in synchronization with Army Group North; Fourth Army and 2 Panzer Group began their attack 10 minutes later (0315 hours) along with Army Group South. C. von Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, VI:9.

cdliii H. Martin, *Weit war der Weg*, 13.

cdliv Quoted in: G. Knopp, *Die Wehrmacht. Eine Bilanz*, 79. See Chapter 6 (Section 6.2.2) for his battalion commander’s (Major Werner Heinemann’s) somewhat different, albeit largely confirming, recollection of this event.

cdlv E. Krehl, *Erinnerungen eines 85 Jahre alten Mannes*, 42 (self-published memoir). Krehl served on the staff of Artillery Commander 121 (Arko 121), which was assigned to 57 Panzer Corps. OKH Gen St d H/Op.Abt. (III), “*Kriegsgliederung Barbarossa*,” *Stand 18.6.41*, in: K. Mehner (Hg.), *Geheime Tagesberichte*, Bd. 3.

cdlvi S. Risse, “*Das IR 101 und der 2. Weltkrieg*.”

cdlvii P. Johnson, *Modern Times*, 377-78.

cdlviii A. Kesselring, *Soldat Bis Zum Letzten Tag*, 111-12.

cdlix P. Johnson, *Modern Times*, 377.

cdlx According to official Soviet estimates, the Germans had occupied ca. 1.8 million sq.km. (693,000 square miles) of Russia territory by November 1942. E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 45.

cdlxi Col.-Gen. G. F. Krivosheev (ed.), *Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses*, 101, 111, 260.

cdlxii E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 47.

cdlxiii E. Bauer, *Der Panzerkrieg*, 122; *DRZW*, Bd. IV, Beiheft (maps); K.-J. Thies, *Der Ostfeldzug – Ein Lageatlas*, “Aufmarsch am 21.6.1941 abds., Heeresgruppe Mitte.”

- edlxiv P. Paret, "Clausewitz," in: *Makers of Modern Strategy*, P. Paret (ed.), 212; see also, H. Holborn, "The Prussian-German School: Moltke and the Rise of the General Staff," in: *Makers of Modern Strategy*, P. Paret (ed.), 281-95. Writes Max Boot about the campaign in France in 1940: "The German leadership advantage extended to the lower ranks, which, in the best Moltkean tradition, were taught to exercise their own initiative. German commanders continued to issue spare *Auftragstaktik* (mission-type orders) and push authority down to the lowliest NCO, while the French forces relied on a more centralized style of command that made it difficult for them to deviate from elaborate plans prepared before the start of the fighting. Contrary to cultural stereotypes, the soldiers of the Nazi regime often displayed more individual initiative than the soldiers of the liberal democracies." Boot's analysis, of course, holds true for the war in Russia as well. M. Boot, *War Made New*, 224.
- edlxv S. Hart, et al., *The German Soldier in World War II*, 8-9.
- edlxvi It has been argued that the extraordinary German successes in the first half of 1941 were as much the result of Soviet incompetence at all levels as they were of German operational brilliance. This author agrees with that assessment.
- edlxvii J. Keegan, *The Second World War*, 87.
- edlxviii G. Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion*, 309.
- edlxix A. Werth, *Russia at War*, 125-26.
- edlxx G. Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion*, 309. The Soviet ambassador, Dekanozov, finally received an audience with State Secretary Ernst von Weizsaecker at 9.30 that evening, and "handed him a note, similar to the one Schulenburg had received in Moscow, specifying some 180 cases of German reconnaissance flights over Soviet territory since the latest Soviet complaint in April. . . Weizsaecker gained time by proposing that Dekanozov await the official response." *Ibid.*, 310.
- edlxxi *Ibid.*, 309.
- edlxxii C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 23-24.
- edlxxiii C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 24; G. Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion*, 310-11.
- edlxxiv D. Volkogonov, "The German Attack, the Soviet Response, Sunday, 22 June 1941," in: *Barbarossa, The Axis and the Allies*, J. Erickson & D. Dilks (eds.), 86.
- edlxxv G. Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion*, 310-11.
- edlxxvi D. Volkogonov, "The German Attack, the Soviet Response, Sunday, 22 June 1941," in: *Barbarossa, The Axis and the Allies*, J. Erickson & D. Dilks (eds.), 86.
- edlxxvii C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 98. According to Rodric Braithwaite, the directive reached Pavlov's Western Special Military District headquarters at "just before 1:00 a.m. on 22 June," and was "passed on to subordinate units only at 2:30 a.m." In any case, as Braithwaite correctly observes, "it did not matter. The message was far too late." R. Braithwaite, *Moscow 1941*, 67.
- edlxxviii G. Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion*, 311; C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 97. According to Pleshakov's account, Zhukov called Stalin at 0:30 a.m. Stalin asked him if he had sent the directive to the military districts. Zhukov replied that he had, and that was the end of the discussion.
- edlxxix D. Volkogonov, "The German Attack, the Soviet Response, Sunday, 22 June 1941," in: *Barbarossa, The Axis and the Allies*, J. Erickson & D. Dilks (eds.), 85; E. P. Hoyt, *Stalin's War*, 25.
- edlxxx C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 99-100.
- edlxxxi C. von Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, VI:3-4.
- edlxxxii C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 100-01.
- edlxxxiii F. Frisch & W. D. Jones, Jr., *Condemned to Live*, 69.
- edlxxxiv Chief of the Army General Staff Franz Halder recorded in his diary on 22 June that, "the enemy has apparently been tactically *surprised* along the entire line. The Bug River bridges, and those along the entire river frontier, were undefended and have fallen into our hands intact." H.-A. Jacobsen (Hg.), *Generaloberst Halder Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. III, 3.
- edlxxxv OKH Gen St d H/Op.Abt. (III), "Kriegsgliederung Barbarossa," *Stand 18.6.41*, in: K. Mehner (Hg.), *Geheime Tagesberichte*, Bd. 3.
- edlxxxvi Bauer provides a figure of 750 tanks; Lenz, however, only 726. E. Bauer, *Der Panzerkrieg*, 117; T. L. Jentz (ed.), *Panzer Truppen*, 191-92.
- edlxxxvii *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 290, 362-64; W. K. Nehring, *Geschichte der deutschen Panzerwaffe*, 219.
- edlxxxviii "It must be understood," recalled Haering, "that in the German army at that time it was absolutely illegal for priests who were medical aides – not chaplains – to engage in any pastoral care for soldiers or lay people, or to conduct any religious service." B. Haering, *Embattled Witness*, 2.
- edlxxxix K. Gerbet (ed.), *GFM Fedor von Bock, The War Diary*, 223; K.-J. Thies, *Der Ostfeldzug – Ein Lageatlas*, "Aufmarsch am 21.6.1941 abds., Heeresgruppe Mitte."
- edxc L. Besymenski, *Die Schlacht um Moskau 1941*, 32.
- edxci A. W. Turney, *Disaster at Moscow*, 5-6.
- edxcii M. M. Boatner III, *Biographical Dictionary of World War II*, 49; K. Gerbet (ed.), *GFM Fedor von Bock, The War Diary*, 13.
- edxciii K. Gerbet (ed.), *GFM Fedor von Bock, The War Diary*, 13-14.
- edxciv K. Gerbet (ed.), *GFM Fedor von Bock, The War Diary*, 14-15; Fedor von Bock, at: <http://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht>.

- ^{edxcv} M. M. Boatner III, *Biographical Dictionary of World War II*, 49.
- ^{edxcvi} “Das ganze Getriebe des Nationalsozialismus war ihm innerlich zuwider.” F. von Schlabrendorff, *Offiziere gegen Hitler*, 57.
- ^{edxcvii} Fedor von Bock, at: <http://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht>; K. Gerbet (ed.), *GFM Fedor von Bock, The War Diary*, 16.
- ^{edxcviii} S. W. Mitcham, Jr., *Hitler's Field Marshals*, 148.
- ^{edxcix} M. M. Boatner III, *Biographical Dictionary of World War II*, 50.
- ^d Fedor von Bock, at: <http://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht>; K. Gerbet (ed.), *GFM Fedor von Bock, The War Diary*, 19.
- ^{di} See Chapter 2, Section 2.5.
- ^{dii} BA-MA RH 19 II/120, *KTB H.Gr.Mitte*, 2.10.41.
- ^{diii} OKH Gen St d H/Op.Abt. (III), “*Kriegsgliederung Barbarossa*,” *Stand 18.6.41*, in: K. Mehner (Hg.), *Geheime Tagesberichte*, Bd. 3; BA-MA RH 19 II/120, *KTB H.Gr.Mitte*, 2.10.41; E. Bauer, *Der Panzerkrieg*, 116; T. L. Jentz (ed.), *Panzer Truppen*, 190-93. Figures on tank strength for both Guderian's and Hoth's panzer groups exclude command tanks. For a complete breakdown of tank strength by division for both panzer groups see, Appendix 4.
- ^{div} Minsk was roughly 250 kilometers to the east (as the crow flies) of 3 Panzer Group in the Suwalki region; from the sector of 2 Panzer Group, on the right wing of Army Group Center, the city was more than 300 kilometers distant.
- ^{dv} A. Seaton, *The Battle for Moscow*, 38; *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 290; H. Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, 146-47.
- ^{dvi} H. R. Trevor-Roper, *Hitler's War Directives*, 50.
- ^{dvii} Of the Western Front tanks, 2192 were operational on 22 June 1941; of these, most were obsolete older models, but several hundred were new KVs and T-34s. Special thanks to David Glantz for Soviet Western Front strength figures. E-Mail, D. M. Glantz to C. Luther, 16 May 12.
- ^{dviii} K.-J. Thies, *Der Ostfeldzug – Ein Lageatlas*, “Aufmarsch am 21.6.1941 abds., Heeresgruppe Mitte.”
- ^{dix} J. Erickson, *The Road to Stalingrad*, 109.
- ^{dx} R. J. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 31; D. M. Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 35.
- ^{dxii} 24 Panzer Corps reported the capture of the bridge at Koden to its superiors at 2 Panzer Group at 0345 hours that morning. BA-MA RH 21-2/927, *KTB Panzergruppe 2*, 22.6.41. The German assault party belonged to 3 Panzer Division. W. Haupt, *Army Group Center*, 26-27. See also, C. von Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, VI:8.
- ^{dxiii} BA-MA RH 21-2/927, *KTB Panzergruppe 2*, 22.6.41. By 0030 hours, 22 June, all corps had passed on the codeword “*Kyffhaeuser*” to panzer group headquarters, signifying that all units had completed their concentration (*Bereitstellung*) for the attack.
- ^{dxiiii} H. Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, 153.
- ^{dxv} C. von Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, VI:8.
- ^{dxvi} BA-MA MSg 1/1147: *Tagebuch Lemelsen*, 25.6.41.
- ^{dxvii} G. Blumentritt, “*Moscow*,” in: *The Fatal Decisions*, W. Richardson & S. Freidin (eds.), 46-47.
- ^{dxviii} Apparently, the reason for the staggered start times was that sunrise occurred minutes earlier farther north, in the sectors of Army Group North and the left wing of Army Group Center. M. Graf v. Nayhauss-Cormons, *Zwischen Gehorsam und Gewissen*, 130. In his diary, Bock insisted that, despite his concerns about the staggered times for beginning the bombardment, Field Marshal von Leeb, Commander, Army Group North, was adamant about beginning the artillery preparation at 0305 hours. “So I'm the one who has to suffer and have to attack with my right wing at Rundstedt's time and with my left wing at Leeb's time,” Bock wrote in his diary two days before the attack. K. Gerbet (ed.), *GFM Fedor von Bock, The War Diary*, 222.
- ^{dxix} OKH Gen St d H/Op.Abt. (III), “*Kriegsgliederung Barbarossa*,” *Stand 18.6.41*, in: K. Mehner (Hg.), *Geheime Tagesberichte*, Bd. 3; BA-MA RH 19 II/120, *KTB H.Gr.Mitte*, 2.10.41.
- ^{dxix} H. Haape, *Moscow Tram Stop*, 15.
- ^{dxix} G. Blumentritt, “*Moscow*,” in: *The Fatal Decisions*, W. Richardson & S. Freidin (eds.), 47.
- ^{dxxi} F. Frisch & W. D. Jones, Jr., *Condemned to Live*, 69.
- ^{dxixii} I. Hammer & S. zur Nieden (Hg.), *Sehr selten habe ich geweint*, 226-27.
- ^{dxixiii} S. Knappe, *Soldat*, 203-05.
- ^{dxixiv} R. Hinze, *19. Infanterie- und Panzer-Division*, 125-26.
- ^{dxixv} J. Dingreiter, *Die Vierziger. Chronik des Regiments*, 39.
- ^{dxixvi} C. von Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, VI:10.
- ^{dxixvii} *Tagebuch Kreuter*, 22.6.41 (unpublished diary). The *Stuka* mentioned by Kreuter was apparently one of only two Ju 87s lost on this first day of the war. See, Section 6.5.
- ^{dxixviii} A. Freitag, *Aufzeichnungen aus Krieg und Gefangenschaft*, 51. Corporal Freitag served principally as a limber driver (*Protzenfahrer*) in the infantry gun company (13) of 18 Infantry Regiment, one of the three infantry regiments of 6 ID.
- ^{dxixix} A. Schick, *Die Geschichte der 10. Panzer-Division*, 270-71.
- ^{dxixx} *Ibid.*, 271.
- ^{dxixxi} K.-J. Thies, *Der Ostfeldzug – Ein Lageatlas*, “Aufmarsch am 21.6.1941 abds., Heeresgruppe Mitte.”
- ^{dxixxii} R.-D. Mueller, “*Duell im Schnee*,” in: *Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, S. Burgdorff & K. Wiegrefe (Hg.), 114.

- ^{dxxxiii} A. Seaton, *The Russo-German War*, 118.
- ^{dxxxiv} K. Gerbet (ed.), *GFM Fedor von Bock, The War Diary*, 224.
- ^{dxxxv} P. E. Schramm (Hg.), *Kriegstagebuch des OKW*, Bd. I, 417.
- ^{dxxxvi} That the Germans were often greeting in the border regions as liberators is confirmed by contemporary accounts too many to mention. The reference here is from, R. Kirchubel, *Operation Barbarossa 1941* (3), *Army Group Center*, 32.
- ^{dxxxvii} D. M. Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 35.
- ^{dxxxviii} Guderian is referring to Kluge's Fourth Army, to which his panzer group was subordinated for the initial attack. W. Keilig, *Das Deutsche Heer*, Bd. I, Abschnitt 34, S. 7.
- ^{dxxxix} A *Rollbahn*, or *Panzerstrasse*, was a road designated as a main axis of advance for motorized formations. Normally, marching infantry divisions were barred from using these "good" roads, which were vital to the forward progress of the mobile units. J. Steinhoff, et al., *Voices from the Third Reich*, 535; FMS T-34, K. Allmendinger, et al., "*Terrain Factors in the Russian Campaign*," 52.
- ^{dxl} Quoted in: J. Dinglreiter, *Die Vierziger. Chronik des Regiments*, 38.
- ^{dxli} R. Kirchubel, *Hitler's Panzer Armies*, 63.
- ^{dxlii} The panzer group's third tank corps, 46 Panzer Corps (10 PD, SS *Das Reich*, Inf.-Rgt. *Grossdeutschland*) was well back from the front in reserve. K.-J. Thies, *Der Ostfeldzug – Ein Lageatlas*, "Aufmarsch am 21.6.1941 abds., Heeresgruppe Mitte;" W. Keilig, *Das Deutsche Heer*, Bd. I, Abschnitt 34, S. 7-8.
- ^{dxliii} H. Magenheimer, *Moskau 1941*, 38-39.
- ^{dxliv} R. A. Hart, *Guderian*, 71. See also, H. Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, 146-47. According to Hart, "Guderian's squabble with von Kluge was both personal and professional. Von Kluge saw Guderian as a dangerous, impetuous innovator. Guderian saw von Kluge as intolerant, deceitful, and doctrinally opposed to maneuver warfare. He thus disliked von Kluge from the beginning and became even more distrustful, his suspicion ultimately burgeoning into hatred. Von Kluge tried repeatedly to patch up their relationship, but was rebuffed each time by Guderian. Their squabble was a fundamental clash between two different types of commanders – a calculating risk-taker versus a prudent, yet equally distinguished, commander."
- ^{dxlv} BA-MA 27-3/14, *KTB 3. Pz.-Div.*, 22.6.41. See also, *Geschichte der 3. Panzer-Division*, Traditionsverband der Division (Hg.), 108-09.
- ^{dxlvi} H.-J. Roell, *Oberleutnant Albert Blaich. Als Panzerkommandant in Ost und West*, 42-43.
- ^{dxlvii} H. Schaeufler (ed.), *Knight's Cross Panzers*, 72.
- ^{dxlviii} The "G," about 30 centimeters in height, identified the tanks as belonging to Guderian's panzer group. *Geschichte der 3. Panzer-Division*, Traditionsverband der Division (Hg.), 107.
- ^{dxlix} BA-MA RH 21-2/927, *KTB Panzergruppe 2*, 22.6.41; R. Kirchubel, *Hitler's Panzer Armies*, 63. As noted above, Panzer Route 1 led via Kobrin and Slutsk to Bobruisk.
- ^{dl} K.-J. Thies, *Der Ostfeldzug – Ein Lageatlas*, "Aufmarsch am 21.6.1941 abds., Heeresgruppe Mitte;" BA-MA RH 20-4/188, *Die Kämpfe der 4. Armee*.
- ^{dli} BA-MA RH 20-4/1199, *KTB AOK 4*, 22.6.41.
- ^{dlii} G. Blumentritt, "*Moscow*," in: *The Fatal Decisions*, W. Richardson & S. Freidin (eds.), 47. This incident (and another like it) was also recorded in the Fourth Army war diary. BA-MA RH 20-4/1199, *KTB AOK 4*, 22.6.41.
- ^{dliiii} M. Graf v. Nayhauss-Cormons, *Zwischen Gehorsam und Gewissen*, 131.
- ^{dliv} *Ibid.*, 131-32.
- ^{dlv} W. Heinemann, *Pflicht und Schuldigkeit*, 255.
- ^{dlvi} *Ibid.*, 256.
- ^{dlvii} *Ibid.*, 256-57.
- ^{dlviii} *Ibid.*, 257.
- ^{dlvix} W. Meyer-Detring, *Die 137. Infanterie-Division im Mittelabschnitt der Ostfront*, 19. According to the war diary of 137 ID, combat engineers had completed a bridge across the Bug by 1230 hours, while assault guns, light 100mm howitzers and heavy weapons of the infantry were ferried across the river. BA-MA RH 26-137/4, *KTB 137. Inf.-Div.*, 22.6.41.
- ^{dlx} BA-MA RH 26-137/5, "*Verlustliste der 137. Inf. Division*."
- ^{dlxi} BA-MA RH 20-4/1199, *KTB AOK 4*, 22.6.41.
- ^{dlxii} *Ibid.*
- ^{dlxiii} 292 Infantry Division (9 Army Corps, Fourth Army) noted in its war diary that morning occasional fire fights (*Schiessereien*) with Russian elements in the forests and cornfields. BA-MA RH 26-292/7, *KTB 292. Inf.-Div.*, 22.6.41.
- ^{dlxiv} J. Huerter, *Hitlers Heerfuhrer*, 664.
- ^{dlxv} K.-J. Thies, *Der Ostfeldzug – Ein Lageatlas*, "Aufmarsch am 21.6.1941 abds., Heeresgruppe Mitte" & "Lage am 22.6.1941 abds.;" J. Erickson, *The Road to Stalingrad*, 129.
- ^{dlxvi} At the same time, the advance of Hoth's 3 Panzer Group out of the Suwalki triangle was threatening Soviet 3 Army with envelopment. J. Erickson, *The Road to Stalingrad*, 129.
- ^{dlxvii} C. von Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, VI:16-17.
- ^{dlxviii} For details see, H. Boucsein, *Halten oder Sterben*, 16-17.

dlxix BA-MA RH 26-129/3, *KTB 129. Inf.-Div.*, 22.6.41.

dlxx Ibid., 22.6.41.

dlxxi BA-MA RH 26-256/12, *KTB 256. Inf.-Div.*, 22.6.41.

dlxxii H. Wijers (Hg.), *Chronik der Sturmgeschuetzabteilung 210*, 3. The assault gun battery also destroyed 11 Soviet tanks on this first day of the war.

dlxxiii BA-MA RH 26-256/12, 22.6.41; Internet sites at: <http://www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/lida-district/now-encyc.htm>, and, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org>. In 1921, there were 402 Jews in Novy Dvor, about one-third of the town's population. In October 1941, the Jews of Novy Dvor were transported to the ghetto at Ostryna, and, in the spring of 1942, to the ghetto in Sukhovolia. From there they were sent to the extermination camp at Auschwitz. No Jews returned to Novy Dvor after the war.

dlxxiv K.-R. Woche, *Zwischen Pflicht und Gewissen*, 100; R. Kirchubel, *Hitler's Panzer Armies*, 97. With the help of sympathetic Lithuanians on both sides of the border, 3 Panzer Army was able to develop good intelligence about Soviet dispositions.

dlxxv As recorded in an official account of 3 Panzer Group: "The fighting was . . . tougher than in Poland and the western campaign." (*Der Kampf wurde . . . haerter als in Polen und im Westfeldzug.*) BA-MA RH 21-3/732, "Gefechtsberichte Russland 1941/42." Hermann Hoth, in his post-war study of the operations of his panzer group in the summer of 1941, also emphasized the vigorous resistance put up by some Red Army units. H. Hoth, *Panzer-Operationen*, 53-55.

dlxxvi H. Hoth, *Panzer-Operationen*, 53.

dlxxvii BA-MA RH 21-3/788, *KTB Panzergruppe 3*, 22.6.41; BA-MA RH 27-7/46, *KTB 7. Pz.-Div.*, 22.6.41; K.-R. Woche, *Zwischen Pflicht und Gewissen*, 100.

dlxxviii On 22 June 1941, 7 Panzer Division possessed 53 Pz II, 167 Pz 38(t), 30 Pz IV, and 15 command tanks in its three tank battalions. T. L. Jentz (ed.), *Panzer Truppen*, 190.

dlxxix BA-MA RH 27-7/46, *KTB 7. Pz.-Div.*, 22.6.41; BA-MA RH 21-3/788, *KTB Panzergruppe 3*, 22.6.41; K.-R. Woche, *Zwischen Pflicht und Gewissen*, 100; H. v. Manteuffel, *Die 7. Panzer-Division*, 49; R.H.S. Stolfi, *German Panzers on the Offensive*, 17; R. Kirchubel, *Hitler's Panzer Armies*, 97.

dlxxx Even the war diary of 3 Panzer Group acknowledged that "our own 7 Panzer Division has won its most difficult battle since the beginning of the war, in the process destroying 80 enemy tanks." BA-MA RH 21-3/788, *KTB Panzergruppe 3*, 22.6.41.

dlxxxi F. Kurowski (Hg.), *Hasso von Manteuffel*, 213; Internet site at: <http://www.lexicon-der-wehrmacht.de>. For the circumstances of Rothenburg's death see, Section 7.2.2.

dlxxxii G. Bopp, *Kriegstagebuch*, 72.

dlxxxiii One battalion of 37 IR participated in the opening attack to seize a commanding terrain feature, which would have adversely affected the advance of 18 IR. The battalion had successfully completed this mission by 0310 hours. BA-MA RH 26-6/8, *KTB 6. Inf.-Div.*, 22.6.41.

dlxxxiv BA-MA RH 26-6/8, *KTB 6. Inf.-Div.*, 22.6.41; H. Grossmann, *Geschichte der 6. Infanterie-Division*, 40-41.

dlxxxv H. Haape, *Moscow Tram Stop*, 20.

dlxxxvi H. Haape, *Moscow Tram Stop*, 20-21; H. Grossmann, *Geschichte der 6. Infanterie-Division*, 41. According to Haape, a flight of eight Russian bombers took part in the attack, while Grossmann mentioned 20 Soviet "aircraft."

dlxxxvii Most of the 6 ID's reconnaissance battalion (6 AA) had been assigned directly 6 Army Corps, to serve as an advance detachment (*Vorausabteilung*) for the corps. All that was left of the battalion to 6 ID was a cavalry and a cycle squadron, reinforced by a mortar battery, a heavy MG battery, and an AA battery. These units were assembled under Boeselager's command. P. Freiherr von Boeselager, *Valkyrie*, 38; H. Grossmann, *Geschichte der 6. Infanterie-Division*, 39.

dlxxxviii BA-MA RH 26-6/8, *KTB 6. Inf.-Div.*, 22.6.41; H. Grossmann, *Geschichte der 6. Infanterie-Division*, 41-42.

dlxxxix W. Knecht, *Geschichte des Infanterie-Regiments 77*, 53-54.

dxci Ibid., 55.

dxci W. Knecht, *Geschichte des Infanterie-Regiments 77*, 53-54.

dxcii W. Haupt, *Die deutschen Infanterie-Divisionen*, 26-27.

dxci H. Grossmann, *Geschichte der 6. Infanterie-Division*, 31-33.

dxci H. Grossmann, *Geschichte der 6. Infanterie-Division*, 34-35; C. von Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, IV:10.

dxci H. Haape, *Moscow Tram Stop*, 9.

dxci Ibid., 10.

dxci Ogfr. E. G. Schaefer, PK 612 (mot.), "Der Arzt mit dem Deutschen Kreuz," 19.2.1943; "Besonders ausgezeichnet hat sich Oberarzt Dr. Haape," n.d. (both in author's possession as: *Nachlass Haape*).

A typical evaluation of Haape's performance as a military doctor and soldier was that of his regimental commander in October 1942: "As a medical officer, soldier, and a man equally extraordinary [*gleich hervorragend*]. Rich in experience, practical in his thinking, independent, energetic and with his own ideas. Particularly dashing [*schnedig*] in the face of the enemy. . . One could not wish for a better [military] doctor." "Beurteilungen," in: *Nachlass Haape*.

dxci H. Haape, *Moscow Tram Stop*, 10.

^{dxcix} Unless otherwise indicated, this account of Haape's experiences on 22 June 1941 is derived from his war memoir, *Moscow Tram Stop*, 16-32.

^{dc} Haape also recorded this tragic incident in his diary, stating only that six Russian "heavy bombers" were shot down, and that three men of the German artillery column "were immediately buried alive [by the impact of the burning Russian bomber] and completely carbonized [*verkohltten vollstaendig*], five others received the most severe burns." *Tagebuch Haape*, 23.6.41.

^{dci} *Tagebuch Haape*, 22.6.41.

^{dci} K.-R. Woche, *Zwischen Pflicht und Gewissen*, 203.

^{dci} H. Hoth, *Panzer-Operationen*, 64.

^{dci} *Tagebuch Kummer*, 14.7.41.

^{dci} *Tagebuch Kreuter*, 17.7.41.

^{dci} Intvw, Dr C. Luther with E.-M. Rhein, 8/9 Dec 06; Ltr, H. Schillke to C. Luther, 15 Mar 05; E. Wardin, "*Winterschlacht*" (unpublished memoir).

^{dci} Ltr, H. Schillke to C. Luther, 15 Mar 05.

^{dci} See, BA-MA RW 2/v. 145, 78-98; also, F. W. Seidler (Hg.), *Verbrechen an der Wehrmacht*, 279-327.

^{dci} Of course, German ground and air forces were also guilty of attacking Soviet medical personnel, field hospitals, hospital trains, etc. However, from accounts by Haape and other German front doctors, it seems clear that such actions were not based on official policy. Germany was, after all, a signatory to both the Hague and Geneva Conventions, and Haape and other German military doctors did their best to abide by such protocols, as did many German soldiers.

^{dci} F. W. Seidler (Hg.), *Verbrechen an der Wehrmacht*, 32. The Walther Pistol 38 was a 9mm, recoil-operated, semi-automatic pistol. *Handbook on German Military Forces*, U.S. War Department, March 1945, 309.

^{dci} F. W. Seidler (Hg.), *Verbrechen an der Wehrmacht*, 35-43. Observes Seidler: "The hatred of the Soviet propagandists was characterized by a barbaric fury [*barbarischer Wildheit*]." Among the aspersions leveled at German soldiers by Soviet propagandists, such as Ilya Ehrenburg, were: "creatures," "thieves," "butchers," "mass murderers," "women killers," "criminals," "scoundrels," and "wild beasts."

^{dci} S. Courtois, et al., *The Black Book of Communism. Crimes, Terror, Repression*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1999.

^{dci} I. Kershaw, *Hitler 1936-45: Nemesis*, 647.

^{dci} R. Hinze, *Ostfront Drama 1944*, 15.

^{dci} A. Axell, *Russia's Heroes 1941-45*, 24.

^{dci} J. Erickson, *The Road to Stalingrad*, 120.

^{dci} A. Axell, *Russia's Heroes 1941-45*, 23-24; R. J. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 29-30; Dr R. Gschoepf, *Mein Weg mit der 45. Inf.-Div.*, 206-07.

^{dci} C. Bellamy, *Absolute War*, 185; J. Erickson, *The Road to Stalingrad*, 119-20. After the start of hostilities, the Soviet garrison was reinforced by troops falling back on the fortress, which helps to explain the much larger number of Russian prisoners (more than 7000) captured there by the end of June. (See, Section 7.2.3.)

^{dci} H. Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, 147.

^{dci} Dr R. Gschoepf, *Mein Weg mit der 45. Inf.-Div.*, 202-03.

^{dci} Dr R. Gschoepf, *Mein Weg mit der 45. Inf.-Div.*, 204-05; R. J. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 47. Despite the powerful artillery assembled for the preliminary barrage, the commander of 45 ID found it inadequate for the task at hand. According to an after-action report prepared by the division: "The plan of attack for the artillery was based less on its actual physical impact [*tatsaechliche Wirkung*] than on its surprise effect on the enemy. This was because the available artillery, despite repeated requests of the division, was insufficient." BA-MA RH 20-4/192, "*Gefechtsbericht ueber die Wegnahme von Brest Litowsk.*"

^{dci} Dr R. Gschoepf, *Mein Weg mit der 45. Inf.-Div.*, 204.

^{dci} Dr E. Bunke, *Der Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, 218.

^{dci} Dr R. Gschoepf, *Mein Weg mit der 45. Inf.-Div.*, 206; R. J. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 48; BA-MA RH 20-4/192, "*Gefechtsbericht ueber die Wegnahme von Brest Litowsk.*"

^{dci} BA-MA RH 26-45/20, *KTB 45. Inf.-Div.*, 22.6.41.

^{dci} BA-MA RH 26-45/20, *KTB 45. Inf.-Div.*, 22.6.41; Dr R. Gschoepf, *Mein Weg mit der 45. Inf.-Div.*, 207.

^{dci} BA-MA RH 20-4/192, "*Gefechtsbericht ueber die Wegnahme von Brest Litowsk.*;" C. von Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, VI:11.

^{dci} BA-MA RH 20-4/192, "*Gefechtsbericht ueber die Wegnahme von Brest Litowsk.*;" BA-MA RH 26-45/20, *KTB 45. Inf.-Div.*, 22.6.41; R. J. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 50.

^{dci} "*Die ersten acht Tage*," in: *Kampf gegen die Sowjets*, Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (Hg.), 37-38.

^{dci} Not until noon, two days later, did an assault group from 133 IR break through to the men trapped inside the church and rescue them. Dr R. Gschoepf, *Mein Weg mit der 45. Inf.-Div.*, 210; BA-MA RH 20-4/192, "*Gefechtsbericht ueber die Wegnahme von Brest Litowsk.*"

^{dci} Dr R. Gschoepf, *Mein Weg mit der 45. Inf.-Div.*, 208.

dexxxii BA-MA MSg 1/1147: *Tagebuch* Lemelsen, 21.6.41.

dexxxiii BA-MA RH 27-18/20, *KTB 18. Pz.-Div.*, 22.6.41.

dexxxiv *Leutnant* H. Doell, quoted in: *Das Echolot*, W. Kempowski (Hg.), 23.

dexxxv According to one of General Nehring's staff officers, these included: An armored personnel carrier (Nehring's command vehicle), two Panzer III command tanks, two self-propelled Flak guns, a vehicle which served as the general's living quarters, and some 30 motorcycles. G. A. Schulze, "*General der Panzertruppe a.D. Walther K. Nehring. Der persoenliche Ordonnanzoffizier berichtet von der Vormarschzeit in Russland 1941-1942*" (unpublished manuscript).

dexxxvi W. Paul, *Panzer-General Walther K. Nehring*, 118; C. von Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, VI:10; P. Carell, *Unternehmen Barbarossa*, 24.

dexxxvii C. von Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, VI:10. According to von Luttichau, "Lemelsen's 47 Panzer Corps had no Bug bridges to capture. It had to build them. . . The axis of advance was to be Panzer Route Two, an arbitrary link between the towns of Pruzhany, Slonim, and Minsk." *Ibid.*, VI:9.

dexxxviii BA-MA MSg 1/1147: *Tagebuch* Lemelsen, 25.6.41.

dexxxix *Ibid.*, 25.6.41. Lemelsen's account of his encounter with Russian stragglers follows immediately on the heels of his discussion of events on 22 June 1941. My assumption is that this encounter also took place on 22 June; however, it may have occurred on the 25th. Regardless, it is indicative of the dangerous situations often faced by German tank generals – with their penchant for leading from the front – from the very first day of the war in the east. The impetuous Guderian also had several close scrapes with the Russians in the opening days of the war. See his, *Panzer Leader*, 154-56; also, Chapter 8, Section 8.2.2.

dexl 18 PD began the campaign with 6 Pz I, 50 Pz II, 114 Pz III, 36 Pz IV and 12 command tanks – 218 tanks in all. T. L. Jentz (ed.), *Panzer Truppen*, 192.

dexli BA-MA RH 27-18/20, *KTB 18. Pz.-Div.*, 22.6.41; W. Paul, *Geschichte der 18. Panzer-Division*, 17; R. Kirchubel, *Hitler's Panzer Armies*, 63; A. Seaton, *The Russo-German War*, 120.

dexlii OKH Gen St d H/Op.Abt. (III), "*Kriegsgliederung Barbarossa*," *Stand 18.6.41*, in: K. Mehner (Hg.), *Geheime Tagesberichte*, Bd. 3.

dexliiii Figures on tank strength differ slightly from source to source. According to Eddy Bauer, 4 Panzer Group had 570 tanks on "Tage X." See, E. Bauer, *Der Panzerkrieg*, Bd. I, 115. Thomas Jentz offers the figure of 602 tanks for the panzer group. T. L. Jentz (ed.), *Panzer Truppen*, 190-91.

dexliv Apart from "minor amendments," however, the assignments of all three army groups closely adhered to Directive No. 21 of 18 December 1940. *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 290.

dexlv *Ibid.*, 290-91, 364.

dexlvi J. Keegan, *The Second World War*, 182.

dexlvii *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 364. Figures on the numerical strength of the *Luftwaffe* order of battle for *Barbarossa* differ significantly from source to source. The figures used here, however, gleaned from the German quasi-official history of World War II, are drawn from several key *Luftwaffe* and OKH documents, hence one can be relatively confident of their accuracy.

dexlviii *Ibid.*, 366-67.

dexlix R. J. Kershaw, *War Without Garlands*, 31-33; D. Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 35.

dexl Accounts differ as to the number of German aircraft committed to the initial attacks. David Glantz cites figures of 500 bombers, 270 dive bombers and 480 fighters. Martin van Creveld states the first strike was conducted by 637 bombers (and dive bombers) and 231 fighters. The quasi-official German history (*GSWW*, Vol. IV) does not appear to provide figures. D. Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 35; M. van Creveld, et al., *Air Power and Maneuver Warfare*, 69.

dexli L. von Heinemann, "*Erste Kaempfe vom 22.6. bis ca. 3.7.41*," in: Karlsruhe Document Collection. (Hereafter cited as "KDC.")

dexlii *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 764; E. P. Hoyt, *Stalin's War*, 28-30; H. Rudel, *Stuka Pilot*, 17; M. van Creveld, et al., *Air Power and Maneuver Warfare*, 69; J. Erickson, *The Road to Stalingrad*, 118.

dexliiii H. Knoke, *I flew for the Fuehrer*, 46-47. *Leutnant* Knoke lifted off on his sixth, and final, sortie of the day at 2000 hours: "There has been no sign of the Russian Air Force the entire day, and we are able to do our work without encountering opposition." *Ibid.*, 48.

dexliv H. Rudel, *Stuka Pilot*, 17.

dexlv H. Rudel, *Stuka Pilot*, 16; R. Muller, *The German Air War in Russia*, 122-23.

dexlvi Once again, however, one must be careful when generalizing about human behavior. On 22 June 1941, 15 Soviet fighter pilots displayed the indomitable courage to ram German aircraft in flight. Because most Soviet fighters "were light and slow, a ram wasn't necessarily fatal for the desperate crew if they had their parachutes ready; if they didn't damage the fuel tank, they could leap from the flaming plane. Nonetheless, instant death was probable." C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 140.

dexlvii D. M. Glantz & J. House, *When Titans Clashed*, 38. Write Glantz and House: "Both in Spain and in the opening battles of 1941, Red Air Force tactics tended to be very rigid. Throughout the disastrous summer of 1941, Soviet bombers stubbornly attacked at an altitude of 8000 feet, too high to ensure accurate bombing but low enough for German fighters to locate and attack them."

- delviii A. Kesselring, *Soldat Bis Zum Letzen Tag*, 120. In fact, in the opening days of the war, the Soviet bomber fleet was “practically eliminated and hardly made its presence felt during the following months, even though it still undertook sporadic, ineffective, and costly attacks against the German rear area.” *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 766.
- delix W. Meyer-Detring, *Die 137. Infanterie-Division im Mittelabschnitt der Ostfront*, 20.
- delx R. Gschoepf, *Mein Weg mit der 45. Inf.-Div.*, 206.
- delxi *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 764.
- delxii D. Volkogonov, “*The German Attack, the Soviet Response, Sunday, 22 June 1941*,” in: *Barbarossa, The Axis and the Allies*, J. Erickson & D. Dilks (eds.), 91.
- delxiii A. Werth, *Russia at War*, 151-52.
- delxiv Quoted in: A. Werth, *Russia at War*, 152.
- delxv *Ibid.*, 152-53.
- delxvi *Ibid.*, 153.
- delxvii *Ibid.*, 153.
- delxviii *Ibid.*, 154.
- delxix M. van Creveld, et al., *Air Power and Maneuver Warfare*, 69; *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 764.
- delxx BA-MA RL 200/17, Hoffmann von Waldau, *Tagebuch*, 22.6.41. Wrote von Waldau: “*Im Grossen ist mit durchschlagendem Erfolg zu rechnen.*”
- delxxi *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 764; “*Der Luftkrieg im Osten gegen Russland 1941. (Aus einer Studie der 8. Abteilung 1943/1944.)*,” KDC.
- delxxii “*Der Luftkrieg im Osten gegen Russland 1941. (Aus einer Studie der 8. Abteilung 1943/1944.)*,” KDC.
- delxxiii *Ibid.*
- delxxiv *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 766.
- delxxv W. Murray, *Strategy for Defeat*, 82.
- delxxvi A. Kesselring, *Soldat Bis Zum Letzen Tag*, 119-20.
- delxxvii J. Prien, et al., *Die Jagdfliegerverbaende der Deutschen Luftwaffe, Teil 6/I, Unternehmen “Barbarossa,”* 12.
- delxxviii Even some official German accounts offer these figures. See, for example, “*Der Luftkrieg im Osten gegen Russland 1941. (Aus einer Studie der 8. Abteilung 1943/1944.)*,” KDC. The quasi-official German history of Operation *Barbarossa*, citing a *Luftwaffe* situation report, also gives the figure of 35 German aircraft lost on 22 June 1941. See, *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 764.
- delxxix BA-MA RL 2/1185, “*Verluste lt. Meldungen des GQM, 6. Abt.*” No date is provided for this report.
- delxxx J. Prien, et al., *Die Jagdfliegerverbaende der Deutschen Luftwaffe, Teil 6/I, Unternehmen “Barbarossa,”* 12-13.
- delxxxi *Ibid.*, 13.
- delxxxii On 18 August 1940, at the height of the air war over England, the *Luftwaffe* had suffered a loss of 77 aircraft. *Ibid.*, 13.
- delxxxiii *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 764.
- delxxxiv *Ibid.*, 290-91, 364.
- delxxxv By the spring of 1941, American correspondent in Berlin Harry W. Flannery was even noticing shortages of beer in the German capital, while cigarettes “also became harder to buy.” H. W. Flannery, *Assignment to Berlin*, 259-60.
- delxxxvi R. Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 81, 136-44; N. von Below, *At Hitler’s Side*, 93. See also, H. W. Flannery, *Assignment to Berlin*.
- delxxxvii R. Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 68; S. Risse, “*Das IR 101 und der 2. Weltkrieg*” (unpublished report). On 24 May 1941, 24-year-old White Russian émigré, Marie Vassiltchikov, wrote in her secret Berlin diary that people were speaking more and more of troop concentrations along the border with Russia, and that “nearly all the men we know are being transferred from the west to the east. This can only mean one thing.” On 10 June 1941, she observed: “Most of the German army seems to be massing on the Russian border.” M. Vassiltchikov, *Berlin Diaries*, 52, 54.
- delxxxviii N. von Below, *At Hitler’s Side*, 103.
- delxxxix D. Irving, *Hitler’s War*, 267-68.
- dexc D. M. Glantz, *Barbarossa Derailed*, Vol. I, 20.
- dexci A. Hillgruber, “*Das Russland-Bild der fuehrenden deutschen Militaers vor Beginn des Angriffs auf die Sowjetunion*,” in: *Die Zerstoerung Europas*, A. Hillgruber, 264-65.
- dexcii Writes Panzer General Hermann Hoth: “Only gradually, beginning in January 1941, did the army and corps commanders become familiar with their tasks in the eastern campaign. . . Only now were military-geographic descriptions of the terrain and maps prepared. These were based, in part, on meticulous work done in the years before World War I and were now outdated and insufficient. From the maps we were given we could only seldom determine which roads and bridges were useable for motor vehicles and tanks. Frequently, roads had to be assigned without knowing if they were actually passable, leaving it up to the units themselves to deal with whatever problems arose.” H. Hoth, *Panzer-Operationen*, 44.
- dexciii D. Thomas, “*Foreign Armies East and German Military Intelligence in Russia 1941-45*,” in: *Journal of Contemporary History*, 275.

- dexciv G. P. Megargee, *Inside Hitler's High Command*, 111. "The fact that the Germans," observes Megargee, "would entrust such a man with a task of such importance speaks volumes." One again, the Germans would pay dearly for their underestimation of the vital importance of such fields of warfare as intelligence and logistics, while overemphasizing the operational art of war.
- dexcv "Weil man so gar nichts über Russland wisse, es koenne eine grosse Seifenblase sein, es koenne aber auch ebensogut anders sein." Quoted in: C. Schroeder, *Er war mein Chef*, 113; see also, D. Irving, *Hitler's War*, 271.
- dexcvi Quoted in: D. Irving, *Hitler's War*, 269.
- dexcvi M. Domarus, *Hitler – Reden und Proklamationen 1932-1945*, Bd. II, 1724.
- dexcvi D. Irving, *Hitler's War*, 268.
- dexcix D. Irving, *Hitler's War*, 269; P. E. Schramm (Hg.), *Kriegstagebuch des OKW*, Bd. I, 408; G. R. Ueberschaer, "Das Scheitern des Unternehmens 'Barbarossa.' Der deutsch-sowjetische Krieg vom Ueberfall bis zur Wende vor Moskau im Winter 1941/42," in: G. R. Ueberschaer & W. Wette (Hg.), "Unternehmen Barbarossa." *Der deutsche Ueberfall auf die Sowjetunion 1941*, 145.
- dcc By attacking Soviet Russia, Hitler had once again confronted his Italian partner with a *fait accompli*. Mussolini's response upon learning of Operation *Barbarossa* was to tell his foreign minister Ciano: "I hope for only one thing, that in this war in the east the Germans lose a lot of feathers." W. L. Shirer, *Rise and Fall*, 851.
- dcc R. G. Reuth, *Goebbels*, 479-80; I. Kershaw, *Hitler 1936-45: Nemesis*, 386-87.
- dccii The words are Ian Kershaw's. I. Kershaw, *Hitler 1936-45: Nemesis*, 388.
- dcciii R. G. Reuth, *Goebbels*, 480.
- dcciv D. Irving, *Hitler's War*, 273.
- dccv D. Irving, *Hitler's War*, 273; M. Domarus, *Hitler – Reden und Proklamationen 1932-1945*, Bd. II, 1739; J. Prien, et al., *Die Jagdfliegerverbände der Deutschen Luftwaffe*, Teil 6/I, *Unternehmen "Barbarossa"*, 207.
- dccvi R. G. Reuth (Hg.), *Joseph Goebbels. Tagebücher*, Bd. IV, 1611-13.
- dccvii Shortly after the war began, Hitler told his former ambassador to the Soviet Union, Friedrich Werner Graf von der Schulenburg, that he expected to be in Moscow by mid-August 1941, and to finish the entire war by 1 October. D. Stahel, *And the World held its Breath*, 197.
- dccviii According to Maj.-Gen. Gerd Niepold, who worked with Paulus for most of 1941, Brauchitsch said: "Ja, Paulus, Sie werden Recht haben, acht Wochen werden wir wohl fuer Russland brauchen." See, Georg Meyer, *Adolf Heusinger*, 151, 850 (f.n. 23).
- dccix R. Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 70. It was also, for the most part, the same proclamation Hitler had already issued to his troops in the east, only both had slightly different endings tailored to their audiences. For the complete text of Hitler's "Proklamation an das deutsche Volk," see, M. Domarus, *Hitler – Reden und Proklamationen 1932-1945*, Bd. II, 1725-32.
- dccx M. Domarus, *Hitler – Reden und Proklamationen 1932-1945*, Bd. II, 1725-32.
- dccxi *Voelkischer Beobachter*, 24.6.41, 2. Quoted in: R. Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 71.
- dccxii R. Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 71.
- dccxiii M. Vassiltchikov, *Berlin Diaries*, 55.
- dccxiv M. Miethe, *Memoiren 1921-1945*.
- dccxv R. Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 71.
- dccxvi O. Buchbender & R. Sterz (Hg.), *Das andere Gesicht des Krieges*, 70.
- dccxvii H. W. Flannery, *Assignment to Berlin*, 365.
- dccxviii C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 100-01.
- dccxix *Ibid.*, 101.
- dccxx G. Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion*, 311.
- dccxxi R. Braithwaite, *Moscow 1941*, 35.
- dccxxii G. Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion*, 311.
- dccxxiii G. Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion*, 312-13; C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 110.
- dccxxiv The Komsomol was the Communist youth organization.
- dccxxv C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 104-05. For an account of how the citizens of Moscow responded to the news of war see, R. Braithwaite, *Moscow 1941*, 73-79.
- dccxxvi C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 106.
- dccxxvii *Ibid.* 106.
- dccxxviii D. Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 38.
- dccxxix C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly*, 111-12.
- dccxxx *Ibid.*, 126.
- dccxxxi D. Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 38-39; D. Glantz, *Barbarossa Derailed*, Vol. I, 31.
- dccxxxii G. Roberts, *Stalin's Wars*, 93.
- dccxxxiii D. Volkogonov, "The German Attack, the Soviet Response, Sunday, 22 June 1941," in: *Barbarossa, The Axis and the Allies*, J. Erickson & D. Dilks (eds.), 89.
- dccxxxiv J. Erickson, *The Road to Stalingrad*, 134.

^{decxxxv} Marshal G. I. Kulik, a Soviet artillery specialist, was sent to Western Front, along with Marshal Shaposhnikov. As noted by John Erickson: “Kulik was a nonentity. His prime qualification was that Stalin had known him during the days of the defense of Tsaritsyn [Stalingrad] in 1918. It was this which ultimately transformed him, in 1937, into the overlord of Soviet artillery, head of the Main Artillery Administration, Deputy Defense Commissar.” *Ibid.*, 17. Writes Simon Montefiore: “The boozy buffoon, Marshal Kulik, whose war was to be a chronicle of tragicomical blunders, outfitted himself in a pilot’s fetching leathers, cap and goggles and arrived on the Western Front like a Stalinist Biggles on the evening of 23 June. Bewildered by the rout of 10 Army, he was cut off, surrounded and almost captured.” S. S. Montefiore, *Stalin. The Court of the Red Tsar*, 369-70.

^{decxxxvi} General N. F. Vatutin. According to Evan Mawdsley, Vatutin, Zhukov’s deputy, was sent to oversee the Northwestern Front. E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 65.

^{decxxxvii} Col.-Gen. F. I. Kuznetsov, Commander, Northwestern Front.

^{decxxxviii} J. Erickson, *The Road to Stalingrad*, 126, 134.

^{decxxxix} D. Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 39.

^{decxl} J. Erickson, *The Road to Stalingrad*, 134-35.

^{decxli} S. S. Montefiore, *Stalin. The Court of the Red Tsar*, 369.

^{decxlii} The reference here is to Soviet 10 Army. H.-A. Jacobsen (Hg.), *Generaloberst Halder Kriegstagebuch*, Bd. III, 5.

^{decxliii} C. Burdick & H.-A. Jacobsen (eds.), *The Halder Diary 1939-1942*, 412-13.

^{decxliv} *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 539.

^{decxlv} *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 539; J. Erickson, *The Road to Stalingrad*, 128; D. M. Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 43; A. Clark, *Barbarossa*, 49.

^{decxlvi} A. Seaton, *The Russo-German War*, 135; P. Carell, *Hitler Moves East*, 37; D. M. Glantz, *Red Army Ground Forces*, 25; E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 76-77.

^{decxlvii} W. Haupt, *Sturm auf Moskau 1941*, 23; *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 526-27.

^{decxlviii} H. Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, 154.

^{decxlix} BA-MA RH 27-3/14, *KTB 3. Pz.-Div.*, 22.6.41; BA-MA RH 21-2/927, *KTB 2 Panzergruppe*, 22.6.41; C. von Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, VI:11-12.

^{decel} H. Hoth, *Panzer-Operationen*, 53-54; C. von Luttichau, *Road to Moscow*, VI:15; K.-J. Thies, *Der Ostfeldzug – Ein Lageatlas*, “Lage am 22.6.1941 abds., Heeresgruppe Mitte.”

^{deceli} C. Burdick & H.-A. Jacobsen (eds.), *The Halder Diary 1939-1942*, 413.

^{decelii} W. Haupt, *Sturm auf Moskau 1941*, 22-23; R. Kirchubel, *Operation Barbarossa 1941* (3), *Army Group Center*, 33.

^{deceliii} In its evening report to corps headquarters, 3 Panzer Division reported that the challenges of navigating difficult terrain had been greater than those caused by the enemy on this day. BA-MA RH 27-3/14, *KTB 3. Pz.-Div.*, 22.6.41.

^{deceliv} BA-MA RH 21-3/732, “*Gefechtsberichte Russland 1941/42.*”

^{decelv} BA-MA RH 21-2/927, *KTB Panzergruppe 2*, 22.6.41.

^{decelvi} H. Hoth, *Panzer-Operationen*, 55.

^{decelvii} W. Kempowski (Hg.), *Das Echolot*, 24-25.

^{decelviii} Thus had German historian Karl-Heinz Frieser characterized the difference between Hitler and his general staff in May 1940. See, K.-H. Frieser, *Blitzkrieg-Legende*, 321.

^{decelix} J. Foerster, *Die Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, 173-74.

^{decelx} H. J. Schroeder, “*Erfahrungen deutscher Mannschaftssoldaten waehrend der ersten Phase des Russlandkrieges,*” in: *Zwei Wege nach Moskau*, B. Wegner (Hg.), 313.

^{decelxi} J. Keegan, *Second World War*, 186.

^{decelxii} Incidents of the use of proscribed ammunition by the Soviets in the summer of 1941 (as well as the discovery of such ammunition on Red Army soldiers, or in captured Russian positions) were carefully catalogued by the *Wehrmacht War Crimes Bureau (Wehrmacht-Untersuchungsstelle fuer Verletzungen des Voelkerrechts)*. See, BA-MA RW 2/v. 145, “*Kriegsverbrechen der russischen Wehrmacht 1941.*” For a detailed history of this neglected, albeit important, institution see, Alfred M. de Zayas, *The Wehrmacht War Crimes Bureau, 1939-45*. For details on the use of “dum-dum” bullets and explosive shells by the Red Army, see below, Chapter 9, Section 9.4.3: “Use of Proscribed Ammunition.”

^{decelxiii} Attacks on German troops and supply columns by armed Soviet civilians – as well as by Red Army soldiers who had fled to the forests, shed their uniforms, and taken up partisan warfare – began on the first day of the war. About one such incident historian Timothy Mulligan writes: “Before nightfall on 22 June 1941 . . . 7 Panzer Division of the attacking Army Group Center encountered armed Soviet civilians who ambushed German vehicles and soldiers. During the first 48 hours of the invasion, at least two members of the division had been killed and several wounded, while 15 guerillas were shot in battle or summarily executed. The partisan war in the central USSR had claimed its first victims.” T. P. Mulligan, “*Reckoning the Cost of People’s War: The German Experience in the Central USSR,*” in: *Russian History/Histoire Russe*, 9, Pt. 1, 27.

^{decelxiv} Describing the eventual German victory at Smolensk in early August 1941, Showalter’s complete quote reads: “It was the climax of a series of virtuoso performances that combine to make a case that the relative tactical and operational superiority of the panzers over their opponents was never greater than in the first half of July 1941, on the high road to

Moscow. Guderian spoke of attacks going in like training exercises.” See, D. Showalter, *Hitler’s Panzers*, 170-71.

declxv E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 60.

declxvi The decision cycle, or “OODA Loop,” signifies the “process by which an entity (either an individual or an organization) reacts to an event. According to this idea, the key to victory is to be able to create situations wherein one can make appropriate decisions more quickly than one’s opponent. The construct was originally developed out of Boyd’s Energy-Maneuverability theory and his observations on air combat between MiGs and F-86s in Korea. Harry Hillaker (chief designer of the F-16) said of the OODA theory, ‘Time is the dominant parameter. The pilot who goes through the OODA cycle in the shortest time prevails because his opponent is caught responding to situations that have already changed.’ Boyd hypothesized that all intelligent organisms and organizations undergo a continuous cycle of interaction with their environment. Boyd breaks this cycle down to four interrelated and overlapping processes through which one cycles continuously: Observation: the collection of data by means of the senses; Orientation: the analysis and synthesis of data to form one’s current mental perspective; Decision: the determination of a course of action based on one’s current mental perspective; [and] Action: the physical playing-out of decisions. . . This decision cycle is thus known as the OODA loop. Boyd emphasized that this decision cycle is the central mechanism enabling adaptation (apart from natural selection) and is therefore critical to survival.” Internet site at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Boyd.

declxvii D. M. Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 40.

declxviii *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 527.

declxix *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 537-41; J. Keegan, *The Second World War*, 191; R. Kirchubel, *Hitler’s Panzer Armies*, 136-37; “*Tagesmeldungen der Operations-Abteilung des GenStdH*,” in: P. E. Schramm (Hg.), *Kriegstagebuch des OKW*, Bd. I, 515.

declxx H. Magenheimer, *Moskau 1941*, 44-45; R. Kirchubel, *Hitler’s Panzer Armies*, 19-24. See also, *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 546-66.

declxxi As of 2 July 1941, the greatest advances had been registered by Guderian’s 2 Panzer Group: 24 Panzer Corps to the Berezina (450 km); 46 Panzer Corps to Dukora (450 km); and 47 Panzer Corps to Borisov (400 km). FMS P-190, R. Hofmann & A. Toppe, “*Verbrauchs- und Verschleisssetze waehrend der Operationen der deutschen Heeresgruppe Mitte vom 22.6.41 – 31.12.41*,” 14.

declxxii D. Stahel, *And the World held its Breath*, 175; J. Huerter, *Hitlers Heerfuehrer*, 280.

declxxiii The German text reads as follows: “*Fuehrer betont grundsatzlich, dass er Moskau und Leningrad dem Erdboden gleich machen wolle.*” “*Sonderakte, 8. Juli 1941*,” in: P. E. Schramm (Hg.), *Kriegstagebuch des OKW*, Bd. I, 1021.

declxxiv C. Burdick & H.-A. Jacobsen (eds.), *The Halder Diary 1939-1942*, 458.

declxxv D. Irving, *Hitler’s War*, 284.

declxxvi R.-D. Mueller & G. R. Ueberschaer, *Hitler’s War in the East. A Critical Assessment*, 89-90.

declxxvii G. Meyer, *Adolf Heusinger*, 153.

declxxviii H. Oehmichen & M. Mann, *Der Weg der 87. Infanterie-Division*, 79-81.

declxxix S. Knappe, *Soldat*, 211-12.

declxxx D. M. Glantz, *Barbarossa Derailed*, Vol. I, 33, 41.

declxxxi Dr Overmans was the first to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the records of the *Wehrmacht’s* Information Office for War Losses and Prisoners of War, or WAsT, which during the war meticulously recorded German military casualties (dead, wounded, sick, missing). Today, this office is called the *Deutsche Dienststelle (WASt)* and is responsible for providing next-of-kin with information on *Wehrmacht* soldiers killed during the war. See, <http://www.dd-wast.de>.

declxxxii R. Overmans, *Deutsche militaerische Verluste im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 277. As Overmans’ study makes clear, even Halder and the German General Staff were – astonishingly – unaware of the actual rate of the losses they were experiencing in the east. In his diary, Halder put the *Ostheer’s* fatal losses up to 3 July 1941 at just 11,822 (724 officers), along with 3961 missing (66 officers). C. Burdick & H.-A. Jacobsen (eds.), *The Halder Diary 1939-1942*, 453-54. For the period 22 June to 31 July 1941, General Staff figures put total German Army dead in the east at 46,470 (along with 11,758 missing), when the actual number (as tallied by Overmans) was more than 80,000 dead. For German General Staff calculations see, “*Anlage 1 zu OKH/GenStdH/GenQu/Abt. I/Qu 2/III, Nr. 1/58/42 g.Kdos. vom 5. Januar 1942*,” in: P. E. Schramm (Hg.), *Kriegstagebuch des OKW*, Bd. I, 1120.

declxxxiii P. E. Schramm (Hg.), *Kriegstagebuch des OKW*, Bd. I, 1216. The *Luftwaffe* losses resulted primarily from the merciless wear and tear (*technischen Verschleiss*) to which the aircraft were subjected in the east, rather than from combat action. See, J. Prien, et al., *Die Jagdfliegerverbaende der Deutschen Luftwaffe*, Teil 6/I, *Unternehmen “Barbarossa*,” 14.

declxxxiv W. Murray & A. R. Millet, *A War to be Won*, 127.

declxxxv IfZ-Archiv, MA 1589: *Pz. Rgt. 35, Bericht an die 4. Pz. Div. vom 4.7.1941*, quoted in: C. Hartmann, *Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg*, 253, f.n. 44. Two days before (2 July), 4 PD had reported: “The Russians have begun to catch their stride again.” BA-MA RH 27-4/109: 4. Pz. Div., Abt. Ic, *Taetigkeitsbericht vom 3.6.1941 – 31.3.1942, Eintrag vom 2.7.1941*, quoted in: C. Hartmann, *Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg*, 253, f.n. 45.

declxxxvi B. R. von Oppen (ed.), *Helmuth James von Moltke, Letters to Freya*, 12, 144. At the front, *Leutnant* Heinz Doell (18 PD) wrote on 1 July: “The battles increased in severity (*Haerte*) from day to day, as Red Army resistance began to coalesce. Even at night we had no peace. We formed hedgehog positions, whereby almost one-third of our battlegroup was always in combat readiness.” (W. Kempowski (Hg.), *Das Echolot*, 174.) *Leutnant* Georg Kreuter (18 PD) recorded in his diary four days later (5 July): “At 2400 we continue the advance. The three large bridges along the Autobahn have been destroyed! The

enemy is now doing a better job of organizing his resistance.” (*Tagebuch Kreuter*, 5.7.41.) Accounts such as Hans-Joachim Roell’s *Oberleutnant Albert Blaich* also illustrate how much more effective Soviet resistance at the tactical level rapidly became.

^{declxxxvii} Col.-Gen. G. F. Krivosheev (ed.), *Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses*, 111, 260.

^{declxxxviii} D. M. Glantz, *Colossus Reborn*, 612-13.

^{declxxxix} E. F. Ziemke, *The Red Army 1918-1941*, 277. According to Ziemke, “the German air fleets and panzer groups overwhelmed the Red Army commands with a form of war for which they were wholly unprepared and mostly could not comprehend, a war which substituted mobility for mass to an extreme incomprehensible even to some of the German commanders until well after 22 June.”

^{deccxc} Quoted in: G. Roberts, *Stalin’s Wars*, 93-94.