

BARBAROSSA PROJECT

Book Project

Working Title: “HELL IN A VERY BIG PLACE: THE ADVANCE ON MOSCOW AND EVENTUAL RETREAT AS EXPERIENCED BY THE GERMAN “LANDSER,” JUN 41 – APR 42

Objectives: This concept would combine a narrative and topical approach, w/ focus on the experiences of the German “Landser” at and behind the front. Once again, the field post, personal diaries, memoirs of participants would form foundation of text. Yet in this book concept, the thematic approach would be emphasized.

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Note: Book will also include large number of never before published photos – many from my personal collection of ca. **250** photos. Book will also include at least one good color map for each of the chapters. (German *Lage Ost* maps?)

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¹ **Note:** And lots of horse-drawn vehicles!

BOOK OUTLINE²

***“Die Stimme des Blutes deines Bruders schreit zu mir
von der Erde“
(Genesis 4:10)***

PREFACE:

- Background – history of my research, etc., beginning in **2001/02**.
- Thanks to the many dozens of veterans, colleagues, etc. w/o whose support this project would have never been possible.
- Use of questionnaires, interview, etc. “Some peoples memories dim and others remain *crystal bright* for a lifetime. . . *Tragedies and humiliations* seem to be etched most sharply, often w/ the most unbearable exactitude. . .” (F. Joshua, “Remember This. In the Archives of our Brains. . .,” in: Notebook #9)

INTRODUCTION:

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)

Quote: Writes Oscar Daumiller, the Protestant divisional chaplain of Bavarian **6. ID** after the Battle of the Somme in **1916**:

The days on the Somme have taken on great meaning for my own thinking [about the meaning of life]. The truth of Psalm 90: 5-7 became frighteningly clear to me, just like the *emptiness of our entire famed culture of the peoples of Europe*. Men and entire peoples went bankrupt and One alone has remained fearless in his holy majesty and has again become a helper in love and in mercy for those who finally listen to him, God, the Living.

(Quoted in: Thomas Weber, Hitler’s First War, 158)

Note: “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

² **Note:** References to my Research Notebooks **I -XII** as follows: **I:24** = Book No. 1, pg. 24.

concrete and granite), its significance, etc.; the giant carved figures, the so-called “*Toten-waechter*” (“Guards of the Dead”). (*Wikipedia*)

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.³ 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.

Note: 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 thought, **Nov 10**)

Note: 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.”⁴ 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)

Note: War *unrestrained by policy* would always strive to the extreme: “The more powerful and inspiring the motives for war . . . and the fiercer the tensions that produce the outbreak, the closer will war approach its *abstract concept*, the more important will be the destruction of the enemy . . .” (Clausewitz, *On War*, quoted in: J. L. Wallach, *Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation*, 13)

Note: 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)

Note: Parallel to **1812**: This war [1812] was “*unprecedented in the history of Europe* in both scale and horror. . . Its scale was unprecedented, and raised a number of issues hitherto unknown in military history. It was also the *first modern war*, in that the *entire Russian people* were forced

³ **Note:** For example, their response to “Islamofascism” in their midst; German military behavior in Afghanistan, etc.

⁴ **Note:** That is, to compare it w/ all the factors of friction, uncertainty, etc., which made it something less than absolute.

by their own government to participate actively, and popular feeling became an element of military strategy.” (Adam Zamoyski, Moscow 1812, xv, xxii)

Note: 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 Zamoyski, Moscow 1812, 86-87)

See my Notebook #4, Section, **1.3**:⁵ “*Eastern Front (nature / impact of)*” for ideas to develop in introduction; among them:

- 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)
- “*Vabanquespiel*.” This term used repeatedly by German historians to describe nature of Hitler’s assault on Russia. (52)
- For *human cost & economic impact* of the war see, pp 54-60. (J. Erickson, D. Glantz, *Overmans*, etc.)
- Wenn ich heute einen aelteren Mann treffe, dann kann ich es nicht lassen, ihn zu fragen, ob er auch den II. Weltkrieg mitgemacht hat. Sagt er ja, dann frage ich: „Und wie haben Sie den Krieg ueberstanden?“ Dann bekomme meist die Antwort: „Ich war einige Male verwundet!“ Noch nie habe ich einen Landser getroffen, der den Krieg unbeschadet ueberstanden hat – u. wenn, dann war er gewiss kein Infanterist.“ (M. Miethe, *Rechts zum Friedhof*, 38)
- 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. (53)
- Over **80%** of the Wehrmacht fought in the East during **1941/42**; over **60%** continued to do so in **1943/44**. (53)
- P.G. Tsouras: „From the very first, Operation BARBAROSSA was different. With every kilometer advance east, the pages of relevant German military experience were blown one by one out of the book. The Germans might as well have found themselves *on a different planet*, so unprepared were they for this experience.
- G. Blumentritt: “In **1914-18**, as a lieutenant, I fought for the first two (**2**) years against the Russians. . . The Red Army of **1941-45** was *far harder than the Czar’s Army*, for they were fighting fanatically for an idea. (55)

⁵ **Note:** See also, Notebook #8, Sections **0.0** & **1.0**.

- 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. (60)
- *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. . . (53)
- *Hew Strachan*: Ultimately, in Evan Mawdsley’s view, the demands of waging the war broke the Soviet Union. (53)
- The searing effect of this terrible war on the Russian soul⁶ endured for generations, shaping the development of the postwar Soviet Union and, ultimately, contributing to its demise in **1991**. (*Soviet-German War: Myths & Realities*, 2)
- **Brutality of**: 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.).
- **“Multi-Kulti-Truppe:**” Russen, Turkmenen, Inder – fast *jeder zehnte* (10.) *Soldat* in Hilters Armeen war Kein Deutscher. (56)
- Von den rund **15,000 Franzosen**, die sich Deutschland unter dem *Vichy-Regime* fuer den Kampf „*contre le Bolchevisme*“ zur Verfuegung gestellt hatten, waren in der *Schlacht um Berlin* noch einige hundert dabei. Und so verlieh Hitler ausgerechnet drei franzoesischen Landsern die *letzten Ritterkreuze* des Zweiten Weltkrieges. (57)
- For *harsh nature of Russian terrain & weather* see, Sections **1.1 & 1.2**.

Salient thoughts:⁷

-- 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)

-- Clausewitz: „In affairs so dangerous as war, false ideas proceeding from *kindness of heart* are precisely the worst.“ (*On War*)

-- “Augustine counsels us that the *only purpose of war is to achieve a better peace.*” (“*A failure of Generalship*,” Lt.Col. Paul Yingling,)⁸

⁶ **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)

⁷ **Note:** In no particular order!

⁸ **Note:** In: Armed Force Journal (AFJ), May ’07 (<http://www.armedforcesjournal.com>)

-- One of the Macedonian infantrymen, Lucas, asks the Chronicler Costas if it were *possible to write a history of warfare w/o lying*. “Do you know what I hate about the wax-scratchers? . . . It’s the phoney [sic] phrases you use to make this shit sound like it makes sense.” (For more of their marvelous discussion see, “*A Book Review of Pressfield’s ‘The Afghan Campaign,’*” at: The “Belmont Club” web site, 28 Mar 07)⁹

-- “It seems to me that one of the truths about history that needs to be portrayed – needs to be made clear to a student or to a reader – is that *nothing ever had to happen the way it happened*. History could have gone off in any number of different directions in any number of different ways at any point along the way. . . The Greeks say that *character is destiny* and the more I read and under-stand of history, the more convinced I am that they were right. . . We are raising a generation of young Americans who are by-and-large *historically illiterate*. And it’s not their fault. . . And there’s no secret to teaching history or to making history interesting. Barbara Tuchman said it in two words, “Tell stories.” That’s what history is: a story. And what’s a story? E.M. Forster gave a wonderful definition of it: If I say to you the king died and then the queen died, that’s a sequence of events. If I say the king died and the queen died of grief, that’s a story. That’s human. That calls for empathy on the part of the teller of the story and of the reader or listener to the story. And we ought to be growing, encouraging, developing historians who have heart and empathy to put students in that place of those people before us who were just as human, just as real – and maybe in some ways *more* real than we are. We’ve got to teach history and nurture history and encourage history because it’s an *antidote to the hubris of the present* – the idea that everything we have and everything we do and everything we think is the ultimate, the best. (“*Knowing History and Knowing Who We Are,*” David McCullough, in: *Imprimis*, Apr 05)

-- Attack on Russia “one of the *greatest acts of hubris* in military history.” (Notebook #9, G. Megargee, War of Annihilation)

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

-- Both German and Russian soldier pushed repeatedly *beyond the limits of human endurance, suffering*, etc. (Examples!)

-- Total *losses* suffered in “Barbarossa,” Russian campaign, etc.
(See, *R. Overmans*, etc.)

-- 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)

-- Yet Mosier in earlier book asserted (w/o citing a source) that exchange rate on eastern front from **1941/45** was ca. **6:1** in *Wehrmacht*’s favor, and fully **11:1** in **1941!** (*John Mosier, Cross of Iron. The Rise and Fall of the German War Machine, 1918-1945*, p 181.) (Note: Check *Ruediger Overmans* and Soviet sources for clarification.)

-- Bis zum **Mar 45** sollte die Zahl [der deutschen Verluste an der Ostfront] auf **6.172.373** Menschen steigen (Tote, Vermisste u. Verwundete) (**IX: C. Hartmann, Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg, Kapitel II**)

⁹ Note: Steven Pressfield, The Afghanistan Campaign – A Novel.

-- While many may credit Pres. Reagan, Hitler and his *Wehrmacht* responsible for inaugurating the ultimate collapse of the Soviet Union.
(USSR never recovered from the conflict; lay out cost of war – demographic, economic, and so forth.)

-- Prussian military theorist von Clausewitz noted that *passion*, *probability* and *policy* each play their role in war. Any understanding of war that ignores one of these elements is fundamentally flawed. (“*A failure of Generalship*,” Lt.Col. Paul Yingling, AFJ, May ‘07)

-- For reflections on Europe’s current *malais*, and role of WWII in contributing to it, see my **IMPB:17-19**.¹⁰

-- In **1898**, H.G. Wells wrote *The War of the Worlds*, a novel that imagined the destruction of a great city and the extermination of its inhabitants by ruthless invaders. The invaders in Wells’ story were, of course, Martians. But no aliens were needed to make such devastation a reality. In the decades that followed the book’s publication, human beings repeatedly played the part of the inhuman marauders, devastating city after city in what may justly be regarded as a *single hundred-year “war of the world.”* The twentieth century was the *bloodiest era in history*. World War I killed between **9** and **10** million people, more if the influenza pandemic of **1918/19** is seen as a consequence of the war. Another **59** million people died in World War II. And those conflicts were only two of the more deadly ones in the last hundred years. By one estimate, there were **16** conflicts throughout the last century that cost more than a million lives, a further six that claimed between 500,000 and a million, and **14** that killed between 250,000 and 500,000. In all, between **167 – 188 million people died** because of organized violence in the 20th Century – as many as one in every **22** deaths in that period. (Niall Ferguson, “*The Next War of the World*,” at: <http://www.foreignaffairs.org>, Sep/Oct 2006)

-- “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)

-- 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)

-- 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)

-- No “cake walk!” See my Note No. #2 in: “*Key Perspectives concerning Operation “Barbarossa*,” 3 Jun 10.

-- Might one aver that “Barbarossa” was launched at a time – the last moment! – when the *tribal values* of the German military, and society as a whole, were still intact; when concepts like honor, faith and patriotism were everyday things implicitly understood? (Idea derived from: “*Long Ago*,” at: <http://www.belmontclub.blogspot.com>, 3 Feb 05)

-- “The road to Berlin was a long and hard one. There was fierce fighting for **1418** days and nights along a front varying in length from **3000** to **6200** kilometers, as well as behind the lines in enemy-occupied territories. The Soviet people paid a high price for victory. Every minute of the

¹⁰ **Note:** **IMPB** = “Introductory Material, Projekt ‘Barbarossa,’” (in my “*Introduction*” file).

war they lost **9** lives; every hour **587** lives; every day **14,000** lives – adding up to the staggering total of **20** million dead.¹¹ (The Rout of “Typhoon,” Dado Muriyev, 1979)

-- J. Huerter (Hitlers Feldherren) quotes from letters send by many of the O.B. of the “Ostheer” to their wives, etc., in **Jul/Aug 41** timeframe. These letters show just how shocked the generals were after only a few weeks of war – shocked by Red Army resistance, its regenerative powers, etc. Clear to all of them from very early on that this was a *different kind of war*. (See my, “*Gedankengaenge ueber Barbarossa*, gleaned from Huerter’s book.)

-- David M. Glantz:¹² In discussion of the “woefully incomplete” historiography of Russo-German war, he writes: “Second, and even more damaging, these histories discount, overlook, or deliberately ignore many other battles and operations, large and small, whose existence, potential significance, and ultimate outcome would *fundamentally alter* traditional descriptions of what actually took place during the war and why. For example, although they frequently question Hitler’s wisdom in altering his line of advance during Operation Barbarossa, German and, to a slightly lesser extent, Russian historians have minimized or totally overlooked the *many counter-attacks, counterstrokes, and counteroffensives* the Red Army conducted during this period, instead portraying Operation Barbarossa as a *virtually seamless Wehrmacht march from the Soviet Union’s western frontiers* to Leningrad, Moscow, and Rostov. While *seriously understating the Red Army’s resistance* during Operation Barbarossa, these accounts have also presented a perverted view of the *Stavka’s* strategic planning and intent during this period as well as an inadequate context in which to assess the reasons for and nature of the Red Army’s subsequent victory at Moscow.” (612-13)

-- Martin van Creveld: “Seen in retrospect, the German campaign in Russia in **1941** was the *greatest display of maneuver warfare in history*,¹³ and it will likely remain so in the future. In point of preparedness, 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, Jul 94)

-- Ralph Peters:¹⁴

“ . . . deep prejudices have crept into our military . . . that obscure elementary truths. . . There is no better example of our unthinking embrace of an error than our rejection of the term “war of attrition.” The belief that attrition, as an objective or a result, is inherently negative is simply wrong. A soldier’s job is to kill the enemy. All else, however important it may appear at the moment, is

¹¹ **Note:** The “math” doesn’t quite add up. Today, estimates for Soviet losses run even higher, up to **27** million or so.

¹² **Note:** Colossus Reborn, pp 612-13. Glantz’ remarks support my thesis that Operation “Barbarossa,” from the “get-go,” was a much more difficult slog for the Germans than many historians have hitherto acknowledged.

¹³ **Note:** Contrast w/ thoughts of Ralph Peters immediately below!

¹⁴ **Note:** From his article, “*In Praise of Attrition*,” Ralph Peters, at: <http://carlisle-www.army.mil/Parameters>, Summer 2004, pp 24-32).

secondary. And to kill the enemy is to atrit the enemy. All wars in which bullets – or arrows – fly are wars of attrition. Of course, the term “war of attrition” conjures the unimaginative slaughter of the Western Front . . . But the *nature of warfare never changes* – only its superficial manifestations. . . (R. Peters)

“The US Army also did great harm to its own intellectual and practical grasp of war by trolling for theories, especially in the **1980s**. Theories don’t win wars. Well-trained, well-led soldiers in well-equipped armies do. And they do so by killing effectively. Yet we heard a great deal of nonsense about “maneuver warfare” as the solution to all our woes, from our numerical disadvantage vis-à-vis the Warsaw Pact to our knowledge that the “active defense” on the old inner-German border was political tomfohlery and a military sham . . . (R. Peters)

Maneuver is not a solution unto itself, any more than technology is. . . Precious few military campaigns have been won by maneuver alone . . . Napoleon’s Ulm campaign, the Japanese march on Singapore, and a few others make up the short list of “bloodless” victories. Even campaigns that appear to be triumphs of maneuver prove, on closer inspection, to have been successful because of a *dynamic combination of fire and maneuver*. The opening, conventional phase of the Franco-Prussian War, culminating in the grand envelopment at Sedan, is often cited as an example of brilliant maneuver at the operational level – yet the road to Paris was paved w/ more German than French corpses. . . Other campaigns whose success was built on audacious maneuvers nonetheless required attrition battles along the way or at their climax, from Moltke’s brilliant concentration on multiple axes at Koenigsgraetz (urgent marches to a gory day), to the German blitzkrieg efforts against the Poles, French, and Russians. . . (R. Peters)

“More often than not, an over-reliance on bold operational maneuvers to win a swift campaign led to disappointment, even disaster. One may argue for centuries about the diversion of a half dozen German divisions from the right flank of the Schlieffen Plan in **1914**, but the attempt to win the war in one swift sweep led to more than four years of stalemate on the Western Front. . . There is no substitute for shedding the enemy’s blood. (R. Peters)

“Despite initial maneuver victories against Russia and in the Western Desert, a German *over-reliance 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)

-- Soviet historiography: Bernard Lewis: “My topic this evening is Europe and Islam. . . What I would like to try and offer you this evening is something of the lessons of history. . . It is sometimes forgotten that the content of history, the business of the historian, is the past, not the future. I remember being at an international meeting of historians in Rome during which a group of us were sitting and discussing the question, should historians attempt to predict the future? We batted this back and forth. This was in the days when the Soviet Union was still alive and well.

One of our Soviet colleagues finally intervened and said, 'In the Soviet Union, the most difficult task of the historian is to **predict the past**.'" ("The 2007 Irving Kristol Lecture by Bernard Lewis," at: <http://www.aei.org>, 7 Mar 07)

-- Finally – Battle of Moscow *the* turning point of Russo-German War – or even of Second World War in general?

Impetus of German "*blitzkrieg*" broken for first time since **Sep 39**. Aura of the invincible *Wehrmacht* destroyed forever.

Dramatic change in *geo-political constellation* from **Jun-Dec 41**.

(Compare to *Stalingrad* and *Kursk*)

(*Stalingrad* as turning point see, **IX: R.-D. Mueller, Hitler's War in the East**)

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I: INITIAL PLANNING & PREPARATIONS (Jul 40 – Dec 40)¹⁵

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

Quote: 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.)

Quote: Moltke: "Die Strategie ist ein System der Aushilfen. . ."¹⁶ Die Strategie ist „die Fortbildung des urspruenglich leitenden Gedankens entsprechend den stets sich aendernden Verhaelt-nissen.“ (H. Hinterhuber, Wettbewerbsstrategie, 28-29)

Quote: Clausewitz gebuehrt das grosse Verdienst, die strategischen Gesichtspunkte den politischen untergeordnet zu haben. . . Die Clausewitzsche Auffassung ueber den *Primat der Politik* gegenueber der Strategie gilt auch heute noch. . . Keine Strategie kann *isoliert* formuliert werden, u. alle grossen strategischen Plaene haben einen *politischen Charakter* u. sind mit *politischen Erwaegungen* verwoben. (H. Hinterhuber, Wettbewerbsstrategie, 25)

Quote: SunTzes Lehre ist getragen von der Einsicht, dass das wahre „*Ziel im Krieg der Frieden ist*.“ Er schreibt weiter unten: „In all deinen Schlachten zu kaempfen u. zu siegen, ist nicht die groesste Leistung. Die groesste Leistung besteht darin, den Widerstand des Feindes ohne einen Kampf zu brechen.“ (Sun Tze, Die Kunst des Krieges, quoted in: H. Hinterhuber, Wettbewerbsstrategie, 5)

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

¹⁵ **Note:** The “quotes” and “notes” at start of chapters address some key concepts, historical analogies, etc., with relevance to my topic.

¹⁶ **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)

Note: According to Clausewitz: War is „an act of force, and there is no logical limit to the application of that force. . . A clash of forces freely operating and obedient to no law but their own,” eventually reaches the extreme – ***absolute war***, that is, absolute violence ending in the *total destruction* of one side by the other. . . In the real world, the absolute is always modified, although sometimes it is closely approached, as in certain Napoleonic campaigns or in the attempt of one primitive tribe to exterminate another. [Another example, of course, is “*Barbarossa*.”] (Clausewitz, On war, quoted in: Peter Paret, “Clausewitz,” in: Makers of Modern Strategy, 199)

Note: Moltke beherrscht die Kunst, *immer vorbereitet zu sein*,¹⁷ u. in der Tat kommt alles darauf an, unterrichtet zu sein u. vorherzusehen [i.e., he thoroughly stressed vital significance of thorough preparation for war]. „Die *Vorbereitung* wird wichtiger als die *Ausfuehrung*,” ein Satz Beaufres, der auch von Moltke oder Sun Tze sein koennte. Er warnte aber stets davor zu meinen, diese Planung reiche ueber die Entscheidungen hinaus, die zum ersten Zusammenstoss mit dem Gegner fuehren. . . *Kein Operationsplan reicht mit einiger Sicherheit ueber das erste Zusammentreffen mit der feindl. Hauptmacht hinaus*. (H. Hinterhuber, Wettbewerbsstrategie, 32, 41)

Note: “War is merely the continuation of policy by other means,” writes Clausewitz. Perforce, the political leadership should ultimately control and direct the conduct of war. That is not to say that it should displace soldiers in the planning and conduct of operations. It should *take care not to ask the impossible*, and *collaborate w/ the senior commanders in developing overall policy*; but the armed forces do not exist for their own sake. They are an instrument to be used. . . Because war is the continuation of policy, “there can be no question of a *purely military* [C.’s italics] evaluation of a great strategic issue, nor of a purely military scheme to solve it.”¹⁸ (Clausewitz, On War, quoted in: Peter Paret, “Clausewitz,” in: Makers of Modern Strategy, 200)

Note: According to Horst Boog, German overemphasis on operational and tactical aspects of military ops can be traced to the elder Moltke; General Schlieffen continued the trend of narrowing the theory of war to purely military aspects. Problem of reserves also had been traditionally neglected by German military thinking – Clausewitz, Moltke and Schlieffen did not think much of strategic reserves because they thought that the decisive battles took place at the beginning of a war. (Horst Boog, “*Higher Command and Leadership in the German Luftwaffe, 1935-1945*,” in: Air Power and Warfare. The Proceedings of the 8th Military History Symposium USAF Academy 18-20 October 1978. (Article in one of my “GAF files.”)

Note: 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 Envelopment*,” in: Makers of Modern Strategy, 298)

Note: GFM v. Moltke, Chief of the General Staff from **1857-87**, possessed an acute awareness of *what was and was not possible in war*. (For insightful discussion of Moltke see, Gunther E.

¹⁷ **Note:** This is a point of fact which Hinterhuber stresses repeatedly.

¹⁸ **Note:** This paragraph is applicable in several respects to the German campaign plan, as outlined in Hitler’s Directive No. 21.

Rothenberg, “Moltke, Schlieffen, and the Doctrine of Strategic Envelopment,” in: Makers of Modern Strategy, 297)

Note: For „Barbarossa – Planning and Preparations,” see: **I:79**, ff.)

a) *Armistice at Compiègne (21-21.6.40)*

-- 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!).
(See my, **IMPB:19** for comparison of France **1940** and Russia **1941**)

-- The Armistice (*W.L. Shirer, Rise and Fall of Third Reich*, 741, ff)

-- Hitler's euphoria – tells Jodl war against Russia would be a “*Sandkastenspiel*.” (See, *France 1940 folder*.)

-- **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)

-- Colonel Hans Oster was a senior officer of German military intelligence, the *Abwehr*, and a leading member of a group that had been actively plotting Hitler's downfall. . . For all those like Oster who opposed Hitler, the fall of France in **1940** was a hammer blow. As Oster's colleague Reinhard Spitzzy recalled: the entry of German troops into Paris that summer caused all the *critics* of the Nazi regime to suddenly “fall silent.” . . . The return of the victorious troops to the capital seems to have been a cause for unalloyed and uninhibited enthusiasm. Howard Smith noted that “it was the only occasion in the better part of six [6] years that I have spent in Germany that I saw . . . Germans *weeping and laughing* from pure spontaneous joy.” (*Moorhouse, Berlin at War*, 63)

b) *Strategic Considerations – England, Balkans, Crete, etc.*

-- Hopes for *rapprochement* w/ Great Britain dashed w/in days.

Hitler reaches out; England rebuffs.

(Die britische Regierung hatte erst am **22 Jul 40** klargestellt, dass sie den Krieg gegen Deutschland unbedingt weiterfuehren wollte. *Volker Dahm (Hsg.), Die toedliche Utopie*, 573)

-- **Jul-Oct:** Air war over England beginning ca. **Jul 40**. Preparations for Operation Sea Lion. Hitler never had his heart in this operation; cancels Sea Lion on **12 Oct 40**. (*Luttichau manuscript, VIII:69*)

-- Hitler also considers – albeit half-heartedly – a so-called Mediterranean strategy – capture of Gibraltar (Operation Felix), move against Egypt, etc. Key proponent of this strategy was Admiral Raeder. The success of a Mediterranean strategy depended on Hitler's ability to obtain active support from Spain's General Francisco Franco, France's Marshal Henri

Phillippe Pétain, and Italy's Mussolini, w/ the view to creating a continental coalition. . . Hitler's diplomacy fails. (See, *Luttichau manuscript*, VIII:69-70)

- **28.10.40**: Mussolini launched surprise attack on Greece. . . As Hitler had expected, the British landed in Crete on **1 Nov 40** and sent air reinforcements to the Greek mainland. Hitler would eventually be forced to intervene. (*Luttichau*, VIII:69)
- **12.-13.11.40** [Molotov visit to Berlin]: The Berlin conference between Hitler (in Ribbentrop's presence) and Molotov on these two days was the first high-level meeting between German and Russian leaders since the Fall of **1939**. The lengthy discussions are of interest here only insofar as their results influenced Hitler's subsequent decision to attack Russia. [See text for details.] (*Luttichau manuscript*, I: 46-49; VIII:70)
- **Nov 40**: Final straw [in terms of need to attack Russia] came in **Nov 40**: first, Roosevelt won re-election as US president, thus *ruling out American isolationism* for much longer, and then Molotov visited Berlin, further convincing Hitler that accommodation w/ Russia was not possible. (*Kirchubel*, Barbarossa, 8; III:8)
- For brief overview of the – surprisingly – *vulnerable strategic situation* of Germany following French campaign of **1940** see, IX:77-79)
(As author – *Bernd Wegner* – avers: “Tatsaechlich stellte sich fuer [Hitler] u. die militaerische Fuehrung die *strategische Lage des Reiches* spaetestens seit dem Zeitpunkt, da die Fortsetzung des Krieges durch Grossbritannien absehbar war, *wesentlich schwieriger* dar, als die mil. Machtfuelle des Augenblicks suggerieren moechte. . .”)¹⁹
- **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)

c) *Initial steps toward War (Jul 40 – Dec 40)*²⁰

Note: When did Hitler *decide to attack the Soviet Union*? Was it **31 Jul 40** (Gerhard Weinberg), when Hitler ordered Halder to begin planning preparations? Or perhaps it was in **Nov 40** (Hillgruber) following the failed Molotov mission to Berlin? These two positions (and several others no doubt)²¹ have been staked out and argued over by historians for many years. (See, IX:67-68, 77)

(**Note:** Reflects Halder: “In **Dec 40**, Hitler issued his order to the three Services – the „*Barbarossa*“ Order – to make military preparations for an attack on Russia against the possibility of Russo-German relations undergoing a fundamental change. *It was a preparatory measure, no decision had then been taken*. . . Precisely when Hitler did take it, can probably no longer be established.) (See his, Hitler as Warlord, 38-39 (IX:88))

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

¹⁹ **Note:** Wegner also addresses how, independent of Hitler, **OKH** had also begun to consider a limited offensive against Russia as a way out of Germany's strategic dilemma.

²⁰ **Note:** Insert *personal accounts* where possible!

²¹ **Note:** In his “Barbarossa” manuscript, Luttichau insists that Hitler made the decision between **27 Nov** and **5 Dec 41**. (See Notebook #8).

Continuity of his thinking since **1920s** (Mein Kampf; his second book of **1928**, which was not published until **1961**)²²

(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 Piekal-kiewicz, Die Schlacht um Moskau: Die erfrorene Offensive, p 6)

(For anecdotal evidence of Hitler’s visceral anti-Bolshevic 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’s “Program” (Hillgruber)

Objectives: Eradication of *Jewish-Bolshevism*; economic autarky; basis for making “*Griff nach der Weltmacht*” vs. Anglo-Americans)

(**Note:** For great background on Hitler’s decision to attack Soviet Union see, **I:315**, ff.; **IX:** (*A. Hillgruber* references); **X:48-49**, *A. Hillgruber*: “Vier Ziele verschlingen sich in Hitlers Ostkriegskonzeption ineinander. . .”)

-- “Der radikale Bruch mit dem sowj. Verbündeten versprach dagegen immer auch unbegrenzten Zugriff auf *Rohstoffe, Energie u. Arbeitssklaven*, so dass spaetestens die Bildung eines unangreifbaren eurasischen Grossraums – so Hitlers Erwartung – Grossbritannien von der Ausichtslosigkeit jeder weiteren Auseinandersetzung mit Deutschland ueberzeugen sollte. Hier glaubte Hitler endlich die Moeglichkeit gefunden zu haben, *um seine frueheren ideologischen Entwuerfe mit der aktuellen pol.-mil. Entwicklung in Uebereinstimmung zu bringen*. . . [Die Ursachen des Russlandkrieges] sind in erster Linie in Hitlers Weltanschauung u. den strategisch-pol. Rahmenbedingungen der Jahre **1940/41** zu suchen, aber kaum in moeglichen Praeventivabsichten gegen eine vermutete Offensive der Roten Armee. (See, *Volker Dahm* (Hrg.), Die toedliche Utopie, 574)

-- Soviet invasion of Bessarabia & Bukovina began on **28.6.40**; 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:** Umbau des Heeres auf **180** Divisionen fuer moeglichen Russlandfeldzug. (See, *B. Mueller-Hillebrand, Das Heer 1933-45*, Bd. II, 76)

(See, *Tabelle 19*, „Neuaufstellungen von Div.-Verbaenden zwischen dem Westfeldzug **1940** u. dem Ostfeldzug **1941**.“ Insgesamt gab es **84** Neuaufstellungen unter Verwendung von **17** Divisionen. 79)

(For more details on expansion of German Army, and the *supply nightmare* that it caused, see, *W. Murray, War to be Won*, 118-19; **III:6**)

-- Hitler orders planning to begin (**Jul 40**)²³

²² **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 racist 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)

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

Conference on the Obersalzberg on **31 Jul 40**: “Erstmals machte Hitler bei dieser Gelegenheit 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 toeldiche Utopie, 573)

- Challenges posed by “*Barbarossa*,” overriding assumptions of the campaign, see, D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed, Vol. I, 18)
- Overarching *strategic dilemmas* since time of Frederick the Great’s Prussia – How to fight and win short wars against isolated enemies, and to avoid wars of attrition which would exhaust her limited resources.²⁴ Germany’s central position in Europe made her vulnerable to wars on multiple fronts. Elder Moltke had wrestled w/ this problem for three decades as chief of general staff (**1857-87**). Yet during his last years in office, “the octogenarian Moltke no longer was able to find a solution for Germany’s basic strategic-operational dilemma. . . [He] no longer saw a possible way to achieve this goal [of attaining an early victory against either France or Russia] and to avoid a long and destructive war of exhaustion. In **1890**, making his last public statement, he warned the Reichstag that w/ popular passions aroused, future conflicts could last ‘seven and perhaps thirty years’ and shatter the established social order.” Moltke was “prophetic, of course.” However, many did not accept his pessimistic views about the future of war. World War I witnessed Germany’s gradual exhaustion on a war of multiple fronts. Hitler, of course, acutely aware of Germany’s recent history, vowed to avoid a war on two fronts. By defeating France, and pushing England off the continent, he felt he had a narrow window of time to turn against Russia before he would have to worry about his “western” flank. (My thoughts; also, Gunther E. Rothenberg, “Moltke, Schlieffen, and the Doctrine of Strategic Envelopment,” in: Makers of Modern Strategy, 310)
- Challenges and difficulties posed by *Russian space* – for historical overview of German thinking (from GFM v. Moltke, who was “completed daunted by the difficulties presented by the Russian space,” through Schlieffen,²⁵ F. v. Bernhardt, 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)

²⁴ **Note:** “For all their differences, the two Moltkes and Schlieffen shared the assumption that Germany’s geo-strategic position demanded a rapid decision, and they looked to operations culminating in a battle of annihilation to provide the answer. . . Though increasingly pessimistic about the chances of ultimate success [i.e., given more adverse political constellation after mid **1890s**, growing strength of their potential adversaries], the German general staff continued to perfect its strategic envelopment concept and eventually launched its desperate gamble in **1914**. (Gunther E. Rothenberg, “Moltke, Schlieffen, and the Doctrine of Strategic Envelopment,” Makers of Modern Strategy, 324-25)

²⁵ **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

- (**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)
- B. v. Lossberg, army representative on **OKW** Ops Staff, drew attention to the fact that the theater of ops, from the Russo-German demarcation line in Poland to the east, widened in a *funnel-shaped manner*. The problem of creating a *clear center of gravity* was of utmost importance. (*J.L. Wallach*, 270)
 - 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.)
 - Marcks & Hossberg Studies (Aug 40)
(See, *inter alia*, **VIII:31-44**; also, an article by *Andreas Hillgruber* for a detailed analysis: "Das Russland-Bild der fuhrenden deutschen Militaers vor Beginn des Angriffs auf die Sowjetunion," in: *Die Zerstoeerung Europas. Beitrage zur Weltkriegsepoche 1941 bis 1945*." (Detailed notes in my „Biblio“ Word file.)
 - **Sep 40:** Paulus takes over planning activities (in role as **Qu I** in **OKH**).
(**Note:** In his capacity as **Qu I**, Paulus' post in fact amounted to Deputy Chief of the General Staff.)
(**Note:** **OKH** established its HQ at Fontainebleau after fall of France; this is where Paulus began his work on "Barbarossa." For fascinating "color" on the place at Fontainebleau see, **VIII:6-7**.)
(**Note:** For terrific background and anecdotes – eg., Paulus' critical and uneasy discussions w/ family members, particularly his wife – about his role in planning the Russian campaign see, *Torsten Diedrich, Paulus. Das Trauma von Stalingrad*; **VIII:245**, ff. Particularly, Paulus' wife had a „kritische Einstellung“ to coming campaign: "Coca [i.e., Constance Paulus] war „aus sittlicher u. religioeser Ueberzeugung entschieden gegen das ganze Vorhaben des Angriffs auf Russland,“ sah es „als ein Unrecht u. als unheilvoll“ an.“)
 - **Oct 40:** Das **OKL** stellte . . . bereits im **Okt 40** eine Fernaufklaerungsgruppe mit schweren Maschinen der Typen „**He 111**“ u. „**Ju 88**“ auf, die mit Spezialhoechenmotoren ausgeruestet wurden u. dazu wertvolle Fernkamas eingebaut bekamen. Diese Aufklaerungsgruppe unter Fuehrung von Obst.Lt. Rowehl wurde dem O.B. der Luftwaffe direkt unterstellt. (See, *W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 61; for more great details, *P. Carell, Hitler Moves East*, 60, etc., in: **I:118, 493; III:7**)
 - **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. . . **Crux:** 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)

- Taking into account the vastness of space and size of Russian forces . . . the termination of the war in one lightning campaign was doubtful. Clausewitz held that “the earlier [the] victory can be sought – that is the nearer to our frontiers – the easier it will be.” This Hitler tried to achieve. (*J.L. Wallach*, 275)

- **Dec 40:** Bernd Wegner:²⁶ In **Dec 40**, Hitler had explained to Jodl that “all the problems in continental Europe would have to be solved in **1941**, as the United States would be in a position to attack from **1942** onwards.” (613)

d) *Planning process matures (Dec 40)*²⁷

- **Note:** 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:** Clausewitz and his concept of the “*center of gravity*.” An essential component of good generalship is to recognize this *centrum gravitatis*. Clausewitz offered various possibilities for the identification of a center of gravity. . . (See, *J. L. Wallach*, Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation, 22-23)

²⁶ **Note:** “Facing the Global War. Germany's Strategic Dilemma after the Failure of 'Blitzkrieg,' in: From Peace to War: Germany, Soviet Russia and the World, 1939-41, B. Wegner (ed.), 611-27. Article includes good discussion of Hitler grappling w/ problem of America.

²⁷ **Note:** For fascinating perspectives germane to this planning process see, **IMPB:11-15**.

- **Crux:** British military historian and soldier Sir Michael Howard: „In structuring and preparing an army for war, you can be clear that you will not get it precisely right, but the important thing is not to be too far wrong, so that you can put it right quickly.“ (Quoted in: “*A failure of Generalship*,” Lt.Col. Paul Yingling, AFJ, May ‘07)
- “The *crucial question* in any war is, ‘What will it really take to force our enemy to surrender?’” (“*Bloodless theories, bloody wars*,” Ralph Peters, in: *Armed Forces Journal*, Apr 06)
- As many troops as possible should be brought into the engagement at the “decisive point.” This Clausewitz regarded as the *first principle in strategy*. (J. L. Wallach, Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation, 21)
- 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)
- **Dec 40:** Gegenueber dem Sommer [i.e., Frankreichfeldzug] hatte sich die militaerische Lage Deutschlands, infolge der Misserfolge der dt. Luftoffensive ueber England, der italien-ischen Niederlagen in Libyen u. auf dem Balkan, der Untaetigkeit der dt. Landstreitkraefte u. der gespannten deutsch-russ. Beziehungen *wesentlich verschlechtert*. . . Unter diesen Bedingungen waren in der ersten Dezemberhaelfte **1940** die *entscheidenden operativen Entschluesse* fuer [„Barbarossa“] getroffen. (H. Hoth, Pz-Ops, 29)
- **5.12.40:** Major planning conference w/ Hitler and top staff.
 Vortrag des Gen.St.Chef d.Heeres vor Hitler
 Hitler stresses importance of first encircling Soviet forces in Baltic region.
 (See, *inter alia*, **I:94**,ff.; H. Hoth, Panzer-Operationen, 29-31)
 Disagreements aired between Hitler and **OKH**
- **18.12.40:** “Barbarossa” Directive (*Weisung 21*) (**I:95**, ff.)
 Am **18. Dez 40** unterzeichnete Hitler im Berghof mit Blick auf den Untersberg die Weisung Nr. 21. (Volker Dahm, et al. (Hsg.), Die toedliche Utopie, 97; for fascinating background on Hitler’s Berghof retreat – its construction, “das grosse Panoramafenster in der Grossen Halle,” visitors (among them Arnold Toynbee) – on the Obersalzberg see, pp 53, 60-62, 66, 69-70, 151; see also, William L. Shirer, Rise and Fall, 129-31)
 Prepared by *Wehrmachtfuehrungsstab des OKW* (not by **OKH**)
 Discuss at length (quote from document)
 Missions of ground, sea and air forces
Crux: Encircle and destroy Soviet forces west of Dvina – Dnepr river lines (in line w/ *Clausewitzian thinking* on “convergent attack,” see, J. L. Wallach, Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation, 26)
 This encirclement also to signify a “Super Cannae,” a massive “*Vernichtungsschlacht*” which would defeat the Soviet Union in a single, decisive battle of annihilation. Doctrinal antecedents of this concept hark back to Clausewitz, Schlieffen (and even to Frederick the Great?). Count Schlieffen had also hoped to defeat France in merely six weeks;

in fact, Schlieffen was also “striving for a *final decision* in one single move. . .” (J.L. Wallach, 57, 257)²⁸

Germans had already won “striking victories based on the *Cannae concept*” in Poland and France in **1939/40**. (J.L. Wallach, 249)

Stresses priority of Baltic region and Leningrad over Moscow!

Leaves strategic discordance between Hitler and **OKH** unresolved.

(Hitler had rejected first draft on **17 Dec 41** – it did not reflect Hitler’s intention to first deal w/ Soviet forces in the Baltic region. Hoth, 31-33)

“Es is auffallend, dass die *Weisung* sich vorwiegend mit *operativen Anordnungen* beschaeftigt, die Sache des verantwortlichen Feldherrn auf dem russ. Kriegsschauplatz, des **Ob.d.H.**, waren . . . dagegen auf *strategischem Gebiet*, in bezug auf das „*Kriegsobjekt*,”²⁹ zuwenig gibt. (Hoth, 33)

(Note: In this sense, the „*Barbarossa*”-*Weisung* appears analogous the the pre-WWI Schlieffen Plan,³⁰ which was also “by no means a comprehensive plan for war, embracing all of its aspects – political, economic, and military – but only the plan for the German ground forces in case of war.” Schlieffen³¹ had been admired by many for his expertness and his *exclusive concern w/ military matters alone*. But as early as **1912**, Friedrich v. Bernhardi, a famous military thinker of the time, warned in his book, On War of To-Day, that *narrow-mindedness* had taken possession of German military thought. (See, J.L. Wallach, 36))

„Das Endziel der Operation ist die Abschirmung gegen das asiatische Russland aus der allgemeinen Linie Wolga – Archangelsk. So kann erforderlichenfalls das letzte, Russland verbleibende Industriegebiet am Ural durch die *Luftwaffe* ausgeschaltet werden.“ (See, Hoth, 31)

Note: According to Hoth’s analysis, goals of „*Barbarossa*” were much too optimistic. For example: “Die Bekaempfung der weiter oestlich gelegenen Ruestungszentren sollte dann der *Luftwaffe* zufallen. Das waren *utopische Gedanken*. Die Eindringungstiefe der dt. Bomber betrug damals **1000** km. Selbst wenn es gelang, die gewuenschte Linie Wolga – Archangelsk zu erreichen, was in einem Feldzug von **3-4** Monaten ausgeschlossen war,

²⁸ **Note**: Count v. Schlieffen was clearly the “prophet of annihilation.” His influence on German military thought can hardly be overestimated. Schlieffen also expressed a credo of his own about “the essential substance of the whole history of war.” He stressed that this essence is the *attack against the flank*. He was “obsessed by his encirclement mania.” . . . Schlieffen’s striving for mil.-technical perfectionism, his “prescription for victory,” his creation of simple dogmas appealed much more to the German soldiers than did Clausewitz’ reflections on the nature of war. This is the reason Clausewitz, the deeper and brighter intellect, was almost outshone by Schlieffen. (See, J.L. Wallach, 35, ff; 70, 77, 249, ff.)

²⁹ **Note**: Here an interesting discussion of GFM v. Moltke’s concepts of “Kriegsobjekt” and “Operationsobjekt.”

³⁰ **Note**: If one reads Directive No. **21** carefully, one gets the impression that [it] bears the same weaknesses as the Schlieffen Plan of **1905**. Instead of outlining a strategic concept, it deals merely w/ operational or rather tactical advice. The real strategic issues remain untouched and undiscussed. . . Everything was staked on the “Schlieffenian” belief in a quick campaign. (See, J.L. Wallach, 271)

³¹ **Note**: Conscious of his imminent retirement, Schlieffen had composed the famous memorandum dated **31 Dec 05** (but not transmitted to his successor until **Feb 06**) entitled “*War against France*” as his strategic testament. It was not a complete war plan, but rather a detailed exposition and guide for his successor. Omitting all political considerations and ignoring Russia, it focused on operational aspects. These embodied Schlieffen’s determination to establish the feasibility of a decisive offensive war against the increasing power of the defense. This determination to seek the offensive [not the so-called Schlieffen plan] is the real issue and Schlieffen’s most important legacy to the development of strategic thought. (Gunther E. Rothenberg, “Moltke, Schlieffen, and the Doctrine of Strategic Envelopment,” in: Makers of Modern Strategy, 318)

- haette die Reichweite der Bomber nicht ausgereicht, um die Uralindustrie . . . fuer die Kriegsfuehrung unbenutzbar zu machen.“ (Pz.-Operationen, 35)
- *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)
 - 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 Brauchtisch, Halder, Heusinger, etc?
 - First true “*Blitzkrieg*” campaign³²

Note: Insightful article by *K.-H. Frieser* offers a complete reassessment of Hitler’s so-called “*Blitzkrieg Strategie*.” As author avers: “Der ‘Blitzkrieg’ war von seiner Entstehung her kein politisch-strategisches, sondern ein *militaerisch-taktisches Phaenomen*. Diese Idee entwickelte sich voellig unabhaengig von Hitlers Eroberungsplaenen.“ Also: „Unter dem Einfluss der Schlieffen-Schule entstand naemlich die Illusion, strategische Aufgaben *rein operativ loesen zu koennen*.“ (*Karl-Heinz Frieser*, „*Die deutschen Blitzkriege: Operativer Triumph – strategische Tragoedie*,” in: Die Wehrmacht: Mythos u. Realitaet. R.-D. Mueller & H.-E. Volkmann (Hrsg.) 182-83) (Article located in my „*France 1940* file.)

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 statesmanship), 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)

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

Clausewitz more interested in *operational* level of war; Sun-Tzu, 6. Century BCE Chinese court minister, concerned w/ war on its highest *strategic level*. German High Command should have paid more attention to the latter! (*R. D. Kaplan*, “*On Forgetting the Obvious*,” *AI Magazine*, Jul-Aug ’07)

(See also, *K.-H. Frieser* article in “*France 1940*” file)

Unhealthy doctrinal emphasis on the *operational level* of war had its antecedents to at least beginning of 20th C. For example, Count v. Schlieffen saw the problem of Belgium

³² **Note:** For discussion of “*Blitzkrieg*” concept see, *B. Kroener* article (**IMPB:9**).

from “the operational viewpoint alone.” (J. L. Wallach, Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation, 40)

Informed by Clausewitz “*Vernichtungsschlacht*” concept (i.e., operational art of war at its most ruthlessly efficient). According to H. Hinterhuber, “. . . ist Clausewitz tatsaechlich der Vertreter der ‘*Vernichtungsschlacht*,’ der nach Liddell Hart die Verwuestungen zweier Weltkriege mitverschuldet hat.” (H. Hinterhuber, Wettbewerbsstrategie, 26)³³

- “In a real sense, one can say that the *Wehrmacht* had *no strategic guidance* in **1941**. Instead, the assault on Russia was launched *without a unified and coordinated plan of action* for all levels of command on all sectors of the front. In **Jun 41**, essentially two strategies were followed, one favored by Hitler and **OKW**, the other by Halder and **OKH**. In addition, by mid-**Jul 41** other strategic plans [would begin] to emerge, further clouding the situation.” (Fugate & Dvoretzky, Thunder on the Dnepr, 308)
- Apply strategic thinking of *GFM* v. Moltke to “Barbarossa” plan. (eg. – Wegen der Vielzahl der zu beruecksichtigenden Faktoren haelt Moltke nur den Beginn eines Feldzuges fuer planbar; er sieht deshalb die Aufgabe des Feldherrn vor allem in der umfassenden Vorbereitung der militaerischen Auseinandersetzung; „sobald die Ziele fuer die naechsten Jahre festgelegt werden,“ so lautet ein japanisches Sprichwort, „lacht der Teufel.“ Jeder strategische Plan muss deshalb mit dem *Ausserplanmaessigen* rechnen. . .³⁴ (See, H. Hinterhuber, Wettbewerbsstrategie, 30)
- When was final decision made to attack Russia?
(See, *inter alia* **IX:67**)

e) *Logistics planning for eastern campaign*³⁵

Note: In general, German General Staff attributed much less importance to the field of logistics, logistics planning, etc., than to operational planning. Apparently, this was also the case w/ Moltke the Elder: “Other problems, such as *logistics*, an almost intractable subject in the age of horse-drawn operational transport, held a *much lower priority* in [his] operational scheme.” Schlieffen, also, was “sanguine concerning the problems of troop fatigue and supply. . . ‘The logistics side of his intentions,’ one analyst has observed, ‘appears to have rested on singularly shaky foundations.’” According to G. Rothenberg, though the German Army did come close to success in **1914**, the advantages of the Imperial Army “were not sufficient to overcome logistic and numerical weakness and [determined enemy resistance].” (Gunther E. Rothenberg, “Moltke, Schlieffen, and the Doctrine of Strategic Envelopment,” in: Makers of Modern Strategy, 300, 319-20)

Note: Logistics was never prestigious in the German Army – the Quartermaster service had a low reputation in the GAF General Staff; chapter on supply and replacement in *Fundamental Field Manual Nr. 16 on the Conduct of the Air War* was **never written** (!). (See, Horst Boog, “Higher Command and Leadership in the German Luftwaffe, 1935-1945,” in: Air Power and

³³ **Note:** According to J.L. Wallach, Liddell Hart’s criticism of Clausewitz was “not always just.” (See, The Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation, 69)

³⁴ **Note:** In other words – question your assumptions; expect the unexpected and prepare accordingly. Something Hitler and his generals did not do.

³⁵ **Note:** Along w/ material in Notebook #1 see, Notebook #8, 50-56.

Warfare. The Proceedings of the 8th Military History Symposium USAF Academy 18-20 October 1978. (Article in one of my "GAF files.")

Note: [Mit „Barbarossa“] entfaltete sich der erste *absichtsvoll* entwickelte Plan fuer einen Blitzkrieg. Vorgesehen war ein kurzer Feldzug von **8-10** Wochen. . . Entsprechend labil war die Logistik aufgebaut: Sie war nur fuer kurze Zeitraeume ausgerichtet u. belastet mit dem Problem ueberlanger Versorgungslinien. Deshalb uebernahm die Militaerspitze die Ueberlegungen des „Ernaehrungsdiktators“ Herbert Backe, der die volle Versorgung der Wehrmacht mit Lebensmitteln *aus dem Lande* avisierte u. dabei den Hungertod von Millionen Einheimischen einkalkulierte. (See, Dieter Pohl, „Brutale Praxis,“ in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, Stephan Burgdorff (Hg.), 139)

Note: For myriad details on *logistics planning and execution* during the campaign see, Klaus A.F. Schueler, Logistik im Russlandfeldzug: Die Rolle der Eisenbahn bei Planung, Vorbereitung u. Durchfuehrung des dt. Angriffes auf die Sowjetunion bis zur Krise vor Moskow im Winter 41/42.

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

Note: It is indeed striking to discover that Clausewitz has *explicitly excluded the logistic factor* from the necessary considerations for the conduct of war. He has even excluded such commonly accepted terms as “supply,” “medical services,” and “maintenance of arms and equipment.” (See, J. L. Wallach, Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation, 11, 19-20)

Note: Both the German and Japanese armed forces of the Second World War regarded logistics and administration “as the concern of *bureaucrats* rather than warriors.” (D. Showalter, “The Prusso-German RMA, 1840-1871,” in: Dynamics of military revolution, W. Murray (ed.), 104)

Note: Some basic thoughts on logistics:

- Logistics is the *key element of warfare*. . . Success on the modern battlefield is dictated by how well the cdr manages available logistics support;
- The historical tendency of political/military leadership to *neglect logistics activities in peacetime* and expand and improve them hastily once conflict has broken out . . .;
- Modern warfare demands huge quantities of fuel [POL], ammunition, food, clothing and equipment; all these commodities must be produced, purchased, transported, and distributed to military forces;
- General Mathew B. Ridgway, of WWII fame, once observed: “What throws you in combat is rarely the fact that your tactical scheme was wrong. . . but that you failed to think through the hard cold facts of logistics,”
- Logistics governs the *tempo and power of operations*; and,

- Victories by the United States in major wars . . . in the 20th Century are linked more directly to the *ability to mobilize and bring to bear economic and industrial power* than any level of strategic or tactical design.³⁶

(Source: “*Snapshots from History, Logistical Vignettes*,” in: *Air Force Journal of Logistics*, Vol. XXXIV, Nr. 1&2 (2010) (See, my “*Logistics*” files.)

- 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))
- German Army suffered from the beginning from fuel difficulties. GFM Keitel had to impose the strictest control over fuel consumption from the autumn of 1940 in order to accumulate the necessary quantities of fuel for the planned short campaign against Russia. (J.L. Wallach, 277)
- Use of motor transport (*Kolonnenraum*) & rail transport
Logistical problems mount as campaign progresses
(See, I:546, ff.)
- For detailed breakdown of stocks of ammunition, fuel, rations, etc. (“M, B, V”) in sector of AGC see, FMS P-190, in: VI:122)
- Ratio of “*tooth to tail*” – Im gesamten dt. Feldheer lag dieses Verhaeltnis bei **85:15**. Logistik der Wehrmacht *spartanisch*.
(Aber Bedarf der Truppe war enorm. Eine einzige Inf.-Div. benoetigte pro Tag 170 Tonnen – Nahrung, Munition, Betriebsstoff, usw. (See, IX: C. Hartmann, Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg, Kapitel I)
- Despite improvisations, *arms and munitions supply* of Army did not reach originally planned figures (Details see, IX: R.-D. Mueller, Hitler’s War in the East)

f) *German Generals and “Barbarossa”*

Historical perspective: Most of Napoleon’s entourage, beginning w/ Caulaincourt and including close friends and collaborators such as General Duroc, repeatedly beseeched him *not to go down the road to war* [w/ Russia]. Many of them warned that Russia could not be defeated in conventional ways. Napoleon had read the accounts of Charles XII’s disastrous foray into Russia almost exactly 100 years before, beginning w/ the famous one by Voltaire, who wrote that “*there is no ruler who, in reading the life of Charles XII, should not be cured of the folly of conquest*.” Napoleon dismissed such arguments w/ annoyance. (Adam Zamoyski, Moscow 1812, 92)

³⁶ **Note:** This is clearly what the German General Staff did not understand, given its unhealthy obsession w/ “operational” planning, neglect of logistics, etc. The Russians also understood this salient fact of modern industrial war.

Note: After the war, German military leaders who prepared their memoirs were often more than a little *disingenuous* about their true feelings at the time concerning “Barbarossa.” No better illustration here than General Halder, who wrote: “the *military leader must see to it that the politician is left in no doubt as to the limits of what he can achieve by military action.*”³⁷ These limits must determine the war aim of the politician. . . Whether as a result of what he was told by the C-in-Cs of the three Services, Hitler brought himself to realize these limits in a responsible manner, was impossible to tell w/ this enigmatic man. . . What is certain though is that his unbridled will refused to take them into account. . .” (Halder, Hitler as War Lord, 39-40) (IX:88)

(**Note:** Conversely, Guderian was at first – as I recall – violently opposed to “Barbarossa,” but by **Jun 41** he had come around completely. However, *Russell Hart* says Guderian only “feigned surprise” about the impending attack on Russia: “In reality he offered *minimal resistance to Barbarossa*. . . In **May 41**, G. again willingly embraced and disseminated Hitler’s official justification for aggression – that *Barbarossa* was a *defensive preemptive strike* and a *noble undertaking* to save western civilization from being destroyed by the „Asiatic Bolshevik-Jewish menace.“ (*Hart, Guderian*, 66-70; I:227)

Note: From a „macro perspective,“ one of the fatal shortcomings of German military planning for „Barbarossa“ was the *failure to take the enemy seriously* – to honor and to respect him as human, intelligent, capable, etc., rather than to partly dismiss and dehumanize him as a racial inferior. Honoring your enemy is a “necessary precondition” to victory in war. (See “note” at start of Chapter VII: “Kein Kamerad”)

Note: For some terrific insights into this topic see, *Andreas Hillgruber, „Das Russland-Bild der fuhrenden deutschen Militaers vor Beginn des Angriffs auf die Sowjetunion,“* in: Die Zerstoeerung Europas. Beitraege zur Weltkriegsepoche 1941 bis 1945.“ (Detailed notes in my „Biblio“ Word file.)

(Hillgruber stresses the „*Doppelgesicht des Russland-Bildes*“ (aus dem 19. Jahrhundert) – einerseits die Auffassung, dass das Russische Reich ein „toenernen Koloss“ war . . . andererseits die alptraumartige Vorstellung von einem ungeheuren Wachstum Russlands, das bei seinem „Drang nach Westen“ alles ueberrollen werde. . . 256)

Note: 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 Heerfuehrer, 235)

Note: Concerning German perceptions of their Russian enemy – kind of “*Kriegfuehrung*” to be expected from the Red Army – *J. Huerter* makes clear that what the Germans [i.e., top cdrs] expected from their adversary was nothing short of barbarism. (For details see his, Hitlers Heerfuehrer, 231; f.n. 139, 231)

-- Near total lack of opposition to “Barbarossa”³⁸

³⁷ **Note:** Which, of course, is precisely what the German High Command did not do! (Despite Halder’s assertions to the contrary.)

³⁸ **Note:** “Im Kriege wiegen die Eigenschaften des Charakters schwerer als die des Verstandes,” GFM Graf v. Molke (Deutsches Soldatenjahrbuch, 1970, 26)

Useless in any case, given Hitler's total dominance (following French campaign)
Attitudes of German military leaders from *Reichswehr* period onward (Notebook #9,
G. Megargee, War of Annihilation)

- **Anecdote (2.5.41):** An diesem Tage unterzeichnete Gen.-Obst. Hoepner folgenden Befehl „zur bevorstehenden Kampffuehrung im Osten: “Der Krieg gegen Russland ist ein wesentlicher Abschnitt im Daseinskampf des deutschen Volkes. Es ist der alte Kampf der Germanen gegen das Slawentum, die Verteidigung europaeischer Kultur gegen moskowitzisch-asiatische Ueberschwemmung, die Abwehr des juedischen Bolschewismus. . . (For remainder of quote see, **VIII:84**)
- For perspectives of *Luftwaffe* on the impending campaign see, **I:463**. Both *Goering* and *Milch* opposed to attack on the USSR; *Gen Jeschonnek*, however, supported the campaign: “At last, a proper war.” (**I:466, 472**)
- **Myth:** “Contrary to the considered advice of experienced military leaders, Hitler decided in **1940** to launch an attack upon the Soviet Union. Logistically the *Wehrmacht* was ill prepared for a long and difficult campaign in the East, and German forces were already heavily committed in many other areas. The Fuehrer confidently waved all of these arguments aside w/ the supremely optimistic assurance that ‘it would all be over in a few weeks.’” This quote in the *preface* to *GenLt Hermann Plocher's The German Air Force versus Russia, 1943*, written apparently by the book's editor from the USAF Historical Division, is typical of the *mythology* so prevalent at the time (**1950s/60s**) – and so sedulously cultivated by the German generals' memoirs, monographs for the U.S. Army, etc., – that made Hitler the scapegoat for the decision to attack Russia and the eventual failure there (and attempted to absolve the generals from all responsibility).
- „*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)
- 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)

- Hubris of generals after victory over France
“Nothing impossible for the German soldier!”
(See, **IMPB:19**; **IX**: R. Steiger, Armored Tactics, etc.)
- 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)
- Hubris: The impact of **1940** campaign in West on German thinking, i.e., outbreak of hubris!
(See, Dennis Showalter, Hitler’s Panzers, 131);
- Hubris: “I am deeply worried by the *triumphalism* that took hold [in U.S. military] after the military victory against Iraq in the Persian Gulf War [i.e., **1991**]. As philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche wrote, success, ‘*makes the victor stupid*.’” (Jonathan Shay, Odysseus in America, 220)
- Historical analogy: Unlike the Younger Moltke, who put the German war plan into effect in **1914** w/ serious reservations, Halder, *et al.*, had few, if any, doubts about “*Barbarossa*.” Concerning Moltke: “Wenn Moltke bei der Durchfuehrung der *Niederwerfungsstrategie* an dem von vornherein kritischen Punkt, an der Marne, scheiterte, so ist darueber hinaus festzustellen, dass er *im Grunde seines Herzen* ueberhaupt an der Moeglichkeit einer solchen Strategie zweifelte. . . So hat Moltke, ein Zweifler an dem, was er selbst tat . . . nur mit halbem Herzen einen Operationsplan durchgefuehrt. . .” (Conversely, in the east in **1914**, „bewaehrte sich auf begrenztem Raume u. mit Armeen, die nicht nach Millionen, sondern nach Hunderttausenden zaehlten (bei Tannenberg **153 000** Deutsche gegen **191 000** Russen), die Schulung der dt. Fuehrer im *Bewegungskrieg u. der Gedanke der Umfassungsschlacht*.“) (Karl D. Erdmann, Die Zeit der Weltkriege, Bd. 4, 1. Teilband, „Der Erste Weltkrieg, Die Weimarer Republik,“ Handbuch der dt. Geschichte, 67-68)
- Note: “Wo liegen die Gruende fuer das Unvermoegen der obersten Wehrmachts-Generalitaet, sich dem Missbrauch der ihr anvertrauten Armee fuer eine expansive u. dann verbrecherische Kriegsplanung rechtzeitig zu widersetzen?” Siegfried F. Storbeck (Vortrag anlaesslich des **55.** Bundestreffen der OdR in Bad Honnef, 10. Okt 09) (See remainder of this quote in: **IMPB:35**)
- Clausewitz verlangte: „*Militaerisches Fuehrertum beruht nicht auf rationalem Kalkuel, spezialisiertem Fachwissen u. technischer Routine, sondern auf hoher Geistigkeit, vereint mit Charakter u. Seelenstaerke*.“ („Politik u. die Ethik des Soldaten – Gedanken zum Soldatensein im Wechsel unserer Geschichte,“ Siegfried F. Storbeck (Vortrag anlaesslich des **55.** Bundestreffen der OdR in Bad Honnef, 10. Okt 09)
- Accepted Hitler’s geo-strategic arguments³⁹
Need to knock-out England’s “continental sword”

³⁹ **Note**: Not until spring **1941** did Hitler begin to reveal his ideological and racial ideas as they pertained to “*Barbarossa*.”

Only hope of defeating England following failure of Battle of Britain

-- “*Russlandbild*” of generals

Two-fold picture: pose massive threat yet have “feet of clay” (See, Hillgruber material; also, Notebook #1: “*German High Command – Russlandbild*”)

-- 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.)

II: “TRAINS, PLANES AND AUTOMOBILES:⁴⁰ ‘AUFMARSCH’ FOR THE OFFENSIVE (Jan - Jun 41)

Quote: Das Kriegsende werde eine Chance zur Neugestaltung der Welt bieten, „*wie die Menschheit sie seit dem Zerfall der mittelalterlichen Kirche noch nie gehabt hat.*“ (Helmut James von Moltke in einer Denkschrift vom Fruehjahr 1941; see, H. Mommsen article in Moltke file.)

Quote: Ueber *Politik u. Strategie* – Moltke fuegt folgenden Zusatz hinzu, in dem er sich . . . ebenfalls dem *politischen Primat* [i.e., primacy of policy over strategy] beugt: „Die Politik darf sich in die Operationen nicht eindringen. In diesem Sinne sagt General v. Clausewitz in seinen taktischen Briefen an Mueffling: ‘Die Aufgabe u. das Recht der Kriegskunst der Politik gegenueber ist hauptsaechlich zu verhueten, dass die *Politik Dinge fordert, die gegen die Natur des Krieges sind*, dass sie aus Unkenntnis ueber die Wirkung des Instruments Fehler begeht im Gebrauch desselben.’“ (H. Hinterhuber, Wettbewerbsstrategie, 40)⁴¹

Note: For Moltke’s and Schlieffen’s doctrine of *strategic envelopment*, which so influenced German strategic/operational planning for “*Barbarossa*” see, (Gunther E. Rothenberg, “*Moltke, Schlieffen, and the Doctrine of Strategic Envelopment*,” in: Makers of Modern Strategy, 296. ff.)

a) *Meeting at the Berghof* (9 Jan 41)

-- Waehrend Halder bis Mitte Januar in Urlaub ging, musste der **ObdH** bereits am. 9. Januar erneut auf den **Berghof**. (I:127, 324, etc.)

-- Noch am 9 Jan 41 hatte auch [Hitler] als erstes Kriegsziel die Vernichtung des russ. Heeres bezeichnet. (*Hoth, Pz.-Operationen*, 40)

b) “*Aufmarschanweisung ‘Barbarossa:*” (31 Jan 41)

-- Describe in some detail

⁴⁰ **Note:** And lots of horse-drawn vehicles!

⁴¹ **Note:** And Hitler’s policies, culminating in “*Barbarossa*,” clearly made demands on the *Wehrmacht* which it was totally unable to meet.

(Notebook #1, “German High Command,” H. Hoth, Panzer-Operationen, 37, ff., etc.)

- Der Auftrag fuer die H.G.Mitte wird [so] formuliert: “H.Gr.Mitte zersprengt – starke Kraefte von ihren Fluegeln aus vortreibend – die feindl. Kraefte in Weissrussland, gewinnt . . . 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 Baltikum u. im Bereich von Leningrad kaempfenden feindl. Kraefte.” (Hoth, 37-38)
- **3.2.41:** *Aufmarschanweisung* briefed by Halder to Hitler.
(Details see, Hoth, 38-39)
- In den folgenden Monaten beschaeftigte sich Hitler weiter mit *operativen Erwaegungen*.
(See, Hoth, 39)

c) *Conference at Reichs Chancellery (30.3.41)*

Note: Parallel to **1812**: Whatever the parallels between **1812** and **1941**, the *very different objectives* of Napoleon and Hitler were not one of them. Zamoyski writes of Napoleon’s self-confidence and his “unwillingness to damage Russia any more than was necessary. He wanted to frighten her, but did not want to destroy her as a power. He wanted to co-opt her as an ally against Britain. . .” “He still refused to see Alexander as an enemy to be defeated, thinking of him rather as a wayward ally. . .” (See his, Moscow 1812, 105, 132)

- With participating commanders of the army groups, Panzer groups, armies, Navy, Luftwaffe, etc. They individually brief their plans of operation.
- Again, Hitler stresses importance of first taking possession of Baltic region! (Clear continuity of Hitler’s operational ideas!)
(For Hitler’s absolute – and repeated – insistence on the priority of a *Baltic strategy*, see Hoth, 39-40)

d) *Army Group Center prepares for War*

- Establishment of HQ in Poland
GFM v. Bock & Staff
Von Bock KTB (cite several war diary entries?)
(**Note:** For biographical background on GFM v. Bock – as well as a revealing anecdote – see, **VIII:17-20**)
- Training activities
4. AOK (GFM v. Kluge)
(Notebooks #1 & #4, *personal accounts*, etc.)
Blumentritt (**4. AOK** Stabschef on **8 May 41**): “We should not forget the reputation and the *aura of invincibility* which precedes our Wehrmacht everywhere.” (**IX:** R. Steiger, Armored Tactics; also, **I:99**, *Blumentritt*)

(For terrific details on **4. AOK** preparations for war see, *H.-M Welcker*, Aufzeichnungen, in: Notebook #9)⁴²

- For the potential Red Army use of gas, contamination of land/wells, and German training efforts to address it see below, Chapter VII (“*Kein Kamerad*”), Section, “*Barbarossa as Race War & “Vernichtungskrieg.”*”
- For interesting – and someone humorous – personal account of training involving a *Panzerjaeger* unit vs. a group of *Stugs* see, *Dr Erich Bunke*, Der Osten blieb unser Schicksal, 205-06.

e) Deployments to the East

Note: For experiences, activities and transport movements of various units (lots of *personal accounts*) see, **I:60-71**; **VII:21-39**.

- **20.7.40 (Aufmarsch im Osten): 23** dt. Divisionen im Osten vorhanden. (*H.A. Jacobsen*, Der Zweite Weltkrieg in Chronik, 35; **III:6**)⁴³
- **Feb-Jun 41:** In successive waves.
Der Aufmarsch des Feldheeres im Osten, der fast *ausschliesslich mit Hilfe der Eisenbahn* durchgefuehrt wurde, begann bereits im **Feb 41** u. vollzog sich in mehreren Staffeln. (See, Notebook #1; *B. Mueller-Hillebrand*, Das Heer 1933-45, Bd. II, 108-13)
- **Feb-Jun 41:**⁴⁴ 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. . . (See, *Luttichau manuscript*, **VIII:71-74**)
- Describe deployments of ground & air units
(For precise details of movements see, **FMS P-190**, in: **VI:108**)
(*Verpflegungsstaerke* der **4. u. 9. Armee** am **22.6.41** see, **VI:118**)⁴⁵
(For last minute deployments of *Luftwaffe* units see, **I:472-73**)
- “*Aufmarsch*” for “*Barbarossa*” **17,000** total trains (**Jan-Jun 41**), **126** total divisions (+**19** in reserve), etc. (For overview see, *Alfred Philippi, et al.*, Der Feldzug gegen Sowjetrußland: 1941 bis 1945, pp 52-53.)

⁴² **Note:** See, Welcker, ca. **2.6.41**, for “Befehl fuer Gasschutzausbildung. He was serving as **Ia, 251. ID**, by this time.

⁴³ **Note:** The following pp in Notebook #3 contain several updates on status of German deployments to the east.

⁴⁴ **Note:** When the strategic concentration for BARBAROSSA began on **7 Feb 41**, **117** divisions still had to be moved by rail and road, **22** of them (plus **2** reinforced regimental combat teams) twice because of the intervening concentration for the Balkans Campaign.

⁴⁵ **Note:** Collectively, both armies had well over **200,000** horses!

- Example of **6. ID**: Die Verladebefehl fuer den Abtransport [der Div. aus Frankreich nach Osten] – hiernach sollte die Div. in **71** Transportzuege in der Zeit vom **19.-22.3.41** verladen werden. (*Buddenbohm, Leben des Soldaten*, 39-40; **III:9**)
- For detailed account of activities of **4. PD** on eve of “*Barbarossa*” see, *Joachim Neumann, Die 4. Pz.-Div. 1938-43*. (In division file.)
- *Aufmarsch in Ostpreussen & Bereitstellung 3. PzGr in Suwalkizipfel* – “es war eine wald- u. seenreiche Landschaft” – see, *Hoth, Pz.-Operationen*, 45-46)
 - (**Note**: Writes Hoth, „Von der operativen Absicht des **Ob.d.H.**, im weiteren Verlauf schnelle Kraefte der H.Gr.Mitte zur Unterstuetzung der H.Gr.Nord nach Norden abzu-drehen, erfuhr der Befehlshaber der **PzGr 3** *erst nach dem Krieg*. [!] . . . Man muss aber wohl annehmen, dass der **Ob.d.H.**, wenn er festen Willens gewesen waere, den Wunsch Hitlers auszufuehren, nicht unterlassen haette, die Befehlshaber der operativen Truppen-koeper ueber diese Absicht zu unterrichten.⁴⁶ (48)
- *Personal accounts of movements to east*
 - “*rumor mill*” runs wild! (See, **IV** for *personal accounts*; also **IX**: *H.-M. Welcker, Aufzeichnungen*; also, **VIII:119**, ff.)
 - (**Note**: Paralell to **1812**: Napoleon’s armies, as they marched eastward across Germany and Poland, also unsure of what the future would bring and beset by rumors and wild speculation. For details see, *Adam Zamoyski, Moscow 1812*, 101-02)
- Painstaking security measures and disinformation to conceal intent from Soviet Union, etc.
 - (See, FMS **D-247**: “*German Preparations for the Attack against Russia (The German Build-up East of Warsaw)*.” Genlt. Curt Cuno.)
- **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 funf [5] seitlich festgelegten Staffeln⁴⁷ 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 Witterungseinfluessen 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**)

⁴⁶ **Note**: A terrific anecdote – example of how Brauchitsch, Halder, etc., were already scheming to undermine Hitler’s operational concepts!

⁴⁷ **Note**: These deployments, of course, started well before June 1941.

- **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**)⁴⁸
- **21.6.41:** Status of German deployments in east on eve of offensive (total number divisions, men, vehicles, aircraft, etc.).
(ca. **3.2** million men; **3580** AFVs, **7000+** artillery, aircraft, etc.)
(For German Army's order of battle see, "*Schematische Kriegsgliederung*" in **OKW KTB**, etc., in my "*Orders of Battle*" file.)
- **21.6.41:** For complete – and terrifically detailed! – order of battle of Army Group Center⁴⁹ on eve of attack see, **VII:40** (taken from KTB H.Gr.Mitte). For additional orders of battle, strength ratios, etc., **III:19**, ff.)
(AGC had some **750** batteries of artillery!)
- For "*Ostheer*" order of battle on eve of "*Barbarossa*" see materials in my "*Orders of Battle*" file; among them, W. Keilig, Das Deutsche Heer 1939-45, "*Gliederung u. Stellungbesetzung des Feldheeres, Stand: 21.6.41.*"
(See also, „*Kriegsgliederung 'Barbarossa*,' OKH Gen St d H/Op Abt (III), Stand 18.6.41, in: Mehner (Hgr.), *Geheime Tagesberichte*, 500 ff. (**IV:66**))
- **22.6.41:** For the invasion of Russia, the Germans deployed:⁵⁰ **102** infantry divisions, **19** panzer divisions, **14** motorized divisions, **5** special purpose divisions (i.e., the security divisions). The ratio of infantry to mechanized forces was about **3:1**. [Note: Author continues w/ detailed descriptions of the different types of German divisions – their organization, strengths, weaknesses, etc. This is very useful!] (*Luttichau manuscript*, "*Road to Moscow*," IV: 38-41; **VIII:73-74**)
- For *Luftwaffe* order of battle and deployment locations on eve of "*Barbarossa*" see, **I:472**; see also, Christer Bergstroem, et al., Black Cross / Red Star, in my "*Order of Battle*" file. According to this source, **2598** combat acft (**1939** serviceable) "had been brought up between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea. . ."
(See also, "*Luftwaffe Order of Battle at Outset of Russian Campaign*," in: Cajus Bekker, The Luftwaffe War Diaries, in my "*Orders of Battle*" file. Bekker gives figure of **1945** for "total acft deployed," w/ only **1440** serviceable.)

f) *Final Meeting at Reichs Chancellery (14 Jun 41)*

- The final „military powwow“ (**14 June**) lasts from **11:00** a.m. until **6:30** p.m. It was broken by lunch at **2:00** p.m., at which Hitler gave his generals yet another of his fiery, eve-of-the-battle pep talks. (For more details see, Shirer, Rise and Fall, 846; also, Hassell, Diaries, 198-99; **III:13-14**)
- **14.6.41:** An diesem Tag versammelte Hitler die Fuehrer der Hr.Gr., Armeen u. Pz. Gr. in Berlin, um ihnen seine Gruende fuer einen Präventivschlag gegen Russland zu erlaeuern. . .

⁴⁸ Demgegenueber an den anderen Fronten: Norwegen (**8**), Westfront (**38**), Suedosten (**7**), Afrika (**2**), Heimat (**1**). Insgesamt = **209** Divisionen des dt. Heeres. (p 35)

⁴⁹ **Note:** For an incredibly detailed – most detailed I've ever seen – OOB for H.Gr.Mitte on **22.6.41** see, <http://www.axishistory.com>, in my "*Orders of Battle*" file.

⁵⁰ **Note:** See, Halder KTB, **21.6.41**.

als Guderian bei der am Nachmittag des gleichen Tages stattfindenden mil. Besprechung gefragt wurde, wie viele Tage er brauche um Minsk zu erreichen, antwortete er: „Fuenf bis sechs Tage!“ (*Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 95; **III:63**)

- 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; **III:14**)

g) German Military Intelligence re: Red Army, Soviet Union, etc.

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. Beitraege 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)
- Germans not totally unaware of new Soviet tanks! (**T-34**, etc.)
(**I:127**; also, *Hoth, Pz.-Operationen*, 44))

-- Lack of good maps! (*Hoth*, 44, etc.)

h) “*Barbarossa*” a *preemptive strike*?

Note: See my notes, “*Key Perspectives concerning Operation ‘Barbarossa,’*” in: “*Introduction File.*” In these notes – pp 1-2 – I make the critical distinction between a “*pre-emptive*” and a “*preventive*” attack.

Note: Historical analogies – From 1867 on GFM v. Moltke had prepared for offensive war against France, and even considered a *preemptive strike*. . . Count Alfred v. Waldersee, who became Chief of Staff in 1888, had favored a *preemptive strike* against Russia in 1887. . . “In 1904-05, ‘when temptation was greatest for Germany to . . . disrupt the Franco-Russian alliance by a *preemptive strike*,’ [Schlieffen] abstained from pressing his case.” (*Gunther E. Rothenberg, “Moltke, Schlieffen, and the Doctrine of Strategic Envelopment,”* in: Makers of Modern Strategy, 303, 309, 313)

-- Hitler and German leadership justified war as “*praeventiv*.” (See, for eg., my “*Festvortrag – Bad Wimpfen*, in: **IX:140-41**)

-- Discuss current debate and historiography, etc.⁵¹

My perspective is that it clearly was not *preemptive*; despite occasional mutterings, Hitler, High Command, etc., expressed virtually no concern about an imminent Soviet attack against Germany; conversely, one can argue w/ some persuasiveness that “*Barbarossa*” was *preventive*.⁵² (For in-depth discussion see, **I:733**, ff.; also, my “*Festvortrag – Bad Wimpfen*,” in: **IX:147-48**, for German assessment of Soviet preparedness.)

(See also my notes in “*Introduction*” file!; also, Notebook #9, “*International Laws of War*,” for discussion of right of self-defense. (*Caroline incident*, etc.); also **IX: R.-D. Mueller, Hitler’s War in the East**)

-- In new book,⁵³ *Edwin Hoyt* states clearly – citing Ernst Topitsch – that Stalin was preparing to attack Germany “but in 1939 was not yet prepared to do so. It would be another three years before he could strike.” Perforce, book supports position that “*Barbarossa*” was preventive – at least in the long term. (See, *Edwin P. Hoyt, Stalin’s War. Tragedy and Triumph, 1941-1945*)

i) *Stalin and Soviet Union’s pre-war intelligence*

⁵¹ **Note:** “The war against the Soviet Union was a *classical war of aggression*. Any talk of a Soviet pre-emptive strike is groundless. Between the summer of 1940 and the start of the war, Germany did not feel threatened by the Soviet Union in any way. The concentrations of Soviet troops near the borders of the newly expanded Reich were not seen as indicators of an impending attack.” (*David T. Zabecki* (ed.), WWII in Europe. An Encyclopedia, Vol. II, 1691)

⁵² **Note:** See, for example, my analysis of Brogdan Musial’s Kampfplatz Deutschland in my “*Festvortrag – Bad Wimpfen: Neue Erkenntnisse zum Unternehmen ‘Barbarossa’ – Hitlers Feldzug gegen Sowjetrußland – u. Warum es fehlschlug*,” in: **IX:139**, ff. See, **I:733** for Bellamy’s distinction between „pre-emptive“ and „preventive“ war.

⁵³ **Note:** With solid endorsements from David Glantz, Earl Ziemke, etc.

Metaphor:⁵⁴ The comet of **1811**. It soon became visible to the naked eye, and by the late autumn it lit up the night sky from Lisbon to Moscow. People gazed up at it, some w/ interest, many more w/ a *sense of foreboding*. This seemed to increase the further east one went in Europe. “As they contemplated the brilliant comet of **1811**,” recalled a parish priest there, “the people of Lithuania *prepared themselves for some extraordinary event*.” Another inhabitant of the province never forgot how everyone got up from dinner and went out to gaze on the comet and then talk of “*famine, fire, war and bloodshed*.” In Russia, many linked the comet to a plague of fires which swept the land that summer and autumn, and a *blind terror* gripped them as they looked on it. . . In St. Petersburg, Tsar Alexander himself became fascinated by the phenomenon, and discussed it w/ John Quincy Adams, then American ambassador at his court. He claimed to be interested only in the scientific aspects of the comet, and made fun of all those superstitious souls who saw in it a *harbinger of catastrophe and war*. (See, *Adam Zamoycki, Moscow 1812*, 78-79)

Note:⁵⁵ [Nach dem **1. 9.39**] Stalin bemuehte sich, Hitler zu gefallen u. das geheime Buendnis zu vertiefen. Er ueberstellte deutsche Kommunisten u. polnische Juden an die Gestapo. Seine Komintern prangerte Paris u. London als Kriegstreiber an. Sowj. Vorratslager leerten sich, um Hitlers Panzer mit Treibstoff zu versorgen u. deutsche Arbeiter mit vollen Brotregalen zu besaenftigen. *Stalin finanzierte Hitlers Krieg* u. hoffte im Gegenzug auf modernste deutsche Technolgoie fuer seine Ruestung. (R.-D. Mueller, “Duel im Schnee,” in: *Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Stephan Burgdorff (Hg.), 116-17)
(Note: SU had contributed significantly to Hitler’s defeat of France in **1940** via supply of raw materials to Germany; see, **III:5-6**)

-- Even as the Germans fell further and further behind in deliveries of finished goods to the Soviet Union, the Soviets continued to meet their side of the economic agreements w/ *over-fulfillment* of raw material shipments. By **22 Jun 41**, the Soviets had delivered **2.2** million tons of grain, **1** million tons of oil, and **100,000** tons of cotton. These deliveries (particularly of oil) proved *essential for the Wehrmacht’s conduct of the coming invasion*. (W. Murray, *War to be Won*, 111; **III:22**)

-- “What did Stalin know and when did he know it!”
Attempts to warn Stalin (Churchill, etc.)
What was learned via *Ultra*

-- Stalin’s perspectives (denial of impending attack) far from unrealistic (as often portrayed)
CruX: Hitler would not be foolish enough to risk two-front war!

j) *Balkan, Crete & North African Campaigns*

-- Brief background on both campaigns.

Note: For my analysis of impact of Balkan Campaign on “*Barbarossa*” – impact largely a myth – see my, “*Key Perspectives concerning Operation ‘Barbarossa,’*” p 2, in: “*Introduction File.*”

⁵⁴ **Note:** Josef Stalin did not have any natural phenomenon as spectacular as a comet to fill him w/ forebodings of impending war, but he did have plenty of hard evidence.

⁵⁵ **Note:** Should make some mention of the “*Beschwichtigungspolitik* Stalins” vis-à-vis Hitler. See, for example, **III:10-11**.

- Myth that these operations significantly delayed “*Barbarossa*”
(For example, *Hoth* – “Die durch den Balkanfeldzug notwendig gewordene Verschiebung des Angriffsbeginns von Mitte **Mai 41** auf den **22 Jun 41**. . .“ 33)
- According to *Dennis Showalter*, von Creveld’s “careful calculations have long since discredited the long-standing argument that the Balkan operation delayed *Barbarossa* by a significant amount of time” (*Hitler’s Panzers*, 158)
- Delays caused by bringing back formations employed in both theaters were, in fact, not serious enough to prevent deployment of eastern armies being more or less completed by **10.6.41** (**IX: H. Magenheimer**, *Hitler’s War*, also, **I:100**, ff.)
- What mitigated against theoretical invasion date at end of **May 41** or in early **Jun 41** was fact that many rivers [i.e., the Bug] in western Soviet Union were *still in flood* well into **Jun 41**. (**IX: Magenheimer**; **I:100**, ff.; **IV:36-37**, for Bug water levels)
- **8.6.41**⁵⁶ [**4 Armee Ia**, **16:30 Uhr**]: Wasserstand des Bug im langsamen Fallen. (*Tagesmeldungen*, in: *Mehner*, *Geheime Tagesberichte*, 132; for an entire list of „Wasserstand“ entries thru **21 Jun 41** see, **III:63-64**))
- **Apr 41** [**Balkans**]: Despite the speed w/ which the German operations were executed – Belgrade fell on **12 Apr 41**; Athens on **27 Apr 41**; and hostilities ended on **30 Apr 41** – the fact remained that **2** armies, **1** panzer group, and a total of **28** German divisions (among them **12** armored and motorized) had been drawn directly or indirectly into the Balkans’ campaign. As a result, **14** divisions (including **1** motorized and **2** armored) would be late for Bararossa. (*Luttichau manuscript*, “*Road to Moscow*,” **III: 54**; **VIII:71**)
- **ab Apr 41** [Euphorie im Generalstab]: Auf dem afrikanischen Kriegsschauplatz schien sich **1941** das Blatt zu Gunsten der Achsenmaechte zu wenden. . . Italien befand sich im **Feb 41** in einer prekaeren militaerischen Lage. Hitler sah sich genoetigt, dem „Duce“ Hilfe zu schicken. [**Note**: Bis zum **11 Apr 41** war es dem Afrikakorps gelungen, Tobruk einzuschliessen u. bald darauf die gesamte Cyrenaika wieder in die Hand der Achsenmaechte zu bringen.] Im Generalstab des Heeres hingegen herrschte in jenem Fruehjahr Euphorie. Die am Kartentisch mit lockerer Hand entworfenen Feldzuege der Wehrmacht verliefen relativ problemlos. Schnell machten sich Uebermut u. Selbstueberschaetzung breit.⁵⁷ Die Wehrmacht schien unbesiegbar, deren Generale begnadet u. der „Fuehrer“ ein militaerisches Genie zu sein. Kritik am politischen u. militaerischen Kurs Deutschlands, auch hinter vorgehaltener Hand, verstumte immer mehr. (*Torsten Diedrich*, *Paulus*, 171; **VIII:248-49**)
- **May-Jun 41** [Crete]: Hitler’s decision to seize Crete (Operation Merkur), an operation that followed the campaigns on the mainland and threatened to cause another postponement of the jump-off date for *Barbarossa*, cost Germany dearly in irreplaceable airborne troops and transport planes. (*Luttichau manuscript*, “*Road to Moscow*,” **III: 54**; **VIII:71**)

⁵⁶ **Note**: This is the earliest reference to the water level on the Bug River beginning to fall in this series of reports by **4 AOK Ia**. Of course, despite campaign in Balkans, *Barbarossa* could not begin until the flooding of Bug river banks had subsided.

⁵⁷ **Note**: Good point – the victories in the Balkans (Yugoslavia, Greece) etc., in early **1941** only reinforced this dangerous trend in the German High Command which had begun in the spring and summer of **1940**, w/ the **6-week** victory over France.

k) *The Combatants on Eve of War*

*Wehrmacht*⁵⁸

Background Notes:

Note: For my ideas on why the *Wehrmacht* was so successful as a military institution see, **IX:66-67**.

“Concept of a *revolution in military affairs* (RMA), German *military culture*, and other key background details:

- American analysts have defined RMAs as *technological-organizational asymmetries* between combatants, usually embracing three [3] distinct but interrelated areas: 1) First and most obvious is straight-line improvement in the capacity to destroy targets; 2) second is an “information edge” generated thru exponential and synergistic increases in the ability to collect, process, and distribute information;⁵⁹ 3) third decisive aspect of American-style RMA is the provision of doctrines, skills, and force structures necessary to optimize the potential of new material. The fate of French armor in **1940** and of the Arab air forces in **1967** demonstrates the uselessness of hardware w/o appropriate concepts for its use. . . (D. Showalter, “*The Prusso-German RMA, 1840-1871*,” in: Dynamics of military revolution, W. Murray (ed.), 92)
- Prussian Army from **1840s** onward provides almost *classic model* of technological innovation that acted as catalyst for radical changes in tactics, operations, military organization, and state policy. Those changes allowed Prussia between **1866-71** to alter the very structure of the European state system.” The new technology embraced the breech-loading needle-gun, improved artillery, railroads, telegraph, etc, which acted as *force multipliers*. Period also saw development of new doctrine and tactics (eg., skirmish lines); and, of course, the Prussian general staff. Prussian RMA “proved short-lived. By mid **1870s** ‘railroads and rifles’ were the heart of every major continental army. Prussia’s rivals likewise imitated – w/o quite replicating – the general staff system. Universal short term conscription became the dominant form of military service. . . In the decades that stretched toward **1914**, Europe’s armies became increasingly symmetrical – recruited alike, trained alike, commanded alike. Innovations, whether in armament, doctrine, or organization, were incremental rather than fundamental. That pattern persisted through the First World War and into the **1930s**. Not until May 1940 did *asymmetrical forces* again contend for the mastery of Europe. But for a brief period in the **1860s**, Prussia changed the face of European war and

⁵⁸ **Note:** Lots of background in my “German Army” files, also in Notebook #1. See also, Wilhelm Necker, The German Army of To-Day, first published in **1943**; this source loaded w/ data on weapons, branches of service, etc. (In-depth summary of Necker book in my “*Biblio* file.”)

⁵⁹ **Note:** For example, the Germans’ unprecedented use of wireless in tanks, acft, etc., at beginning of World War II. This proved to be a significant “force multiplier.”

the balance of power of a continent. (D. Showalter, "The Prusso-German RMA, 1840-1871," 92-113)

- An "unparalleled profusion of RMAs sprang up in the interwar period on the basis of the insights acquired and technologies introduced in 1914-18. . . ." The adaptation of *combined-arms tactics and operations* to the pace of the internal combustion engine by *Reichswehr* and *Wehrmacht* offers perhaps the *most striking example*. . . By late **May 40** the results of the combined-arms armored warfare RMA appeared clear at last in the devastating victory of the German armies over the Allied forces in northern France. . . "The victory of **1940** was so crushing, so convincing, that it has served as the shining exemplar of the [RMA] of the mid-**20th** Century. And yet a *closer look* at the manner in which the Germans innovated in the **1920s/30s** suggests that even the most seemingly clear-cut [RMAs] are far less clear-cut from the point of view of those who determined the course of events. (See, W. Murray, "May 1940: Contingency and fragility of the German RMA," in: Dynamics of military revolution, W. Murray (ed.), 154-55)
- [Unlike the French and British] it was the Germans who studied the last war [WWI] w/ the *utmost care*. Almost immediately after its end, the *Reichswehr's* first chief of staff and second cdr, General Hans v. Seeckt, organized no fewer than 57 committees [!] to study what had really happened in **1914-18**. The crucial issue was that the Germans used a thorough review of recent battlefield *experience* as a point of departure for thinking about future war. . . The Germans built on their war experience in a coherent, careful, evolutionary fashion.⁶⁰ (For additional details see, W. Murray, "May 1940: Contingency and fragility of the German RMA," 157, ff.)
- Superior nature of German *military culture and doctrine*; the decentralized C2 system they had received from Prussian tradition – from Scharnhorst thru Moltke the Elder – and had further expanded and extended [in WWI] was the only conceivable solution [i.e., to challenges of the modern, industrial fire-power]. . . The goal v. Seeckt set forth in **1921** was to make "of each individual member of the army a soldier who, in character, capability, and knowledge, is *self-reliant, self-confident*, dedicated, and joyful in *taking responsibility* (*verantwortungsfreudig*) as a man and as a military leader." Armor and motorization fit seamlessly into this culture and into the combined-arms deep-battle approach that the Germans had come close to perfecting in **1917-18**. . . That all other European armies had for centuries followed an entirely different and highly centralized model – control from the top downward . . . – did not trouble the Germans. . . In **May 1940**, French coy cdrs for the most part remained in their bunkers, attached to the field telephones that linked them to their superiors, German *generals* [!] were on the banks of the Meuse. (For more details, W. Murray, "May 1940: Contingency and fragility of the German RMA," 159, ff.)

⁶⁰ **Note:** Writing in **1942**, two years before his death, Marc Bloch convincingly argued that „the German triumph [over France in **1940**] was, essentially, a triumph of the intellect.” The Germans had adopted their methods of warfare to the Second Industrial Revolution, which had transformed “the whole idea of distance.” The French had not. “The ruling idea of the Germans in the conduct of this war was speed. . .” Quoted in: Max Boot, War Made New, 234-35.

- Key to German success was a willingness to learn from combat and from realistic experiment. From the development of defense-in-depth tactics in **1917** to the exercises and deployments of the late **1930s**, *Reichswehr* and *Wehrmacht* evaluated *experience* more thoroughly and perceptively than their potential opponents. . . (See, *W. Murray*, “May 1940: *Contingency and fragility of the German RMA*,” 160-62)
- The outcome [of French campaign] reflected many of the best qualities of German *military culture* and institutions. Nevertheless, a number of *idiosyncratic factors* enabled the Germans to maximize their advantages. The first was a willingness to take *extraordinarily heavy casualties* in the face of strong French opposition. Whatever the advantages of decentralized *Auftragstaktik*, the German breakthrough [at Sedan] owed much to the *ideology* that conditioned cdrs and troops to drive forward no matter how small the chances of personal survival: *racism* [?] and *professionalism* had fused to create in a quite literal sense the “loyalty unto death” of NS rhetoric. But the German victory was also *precarious in the extreme*; Guderian himself characterized the breakthrough on **13-14 May 40** of the French defenses at Sedan by his **19. PzK** as “*almost a miracle*.” Success hung from a few fragile threads: the *suicidal combativeness* of the German infantry, Rommel’s brilliant personal leadership in forcing the crossing at Dinant, and a bridgehead secured by a single one of Guderian’s three panzer divisions. . . The *Wehrmacht* then leveraged tactical success into a *shattering operational victory*. . . [Yet] as important [to German success] was a *military culture* developed over more than a century, from the Prussian reforms of **1807-14** onward. That culture demanded effectiveness and “joy of responsibility” of every member of the army from rifleman to general, commanded constant training and practice, encouraged experiment and innovation, inculcated honesty and trust across ranks, units, and branches, nurtured its junior leaders, and punished failure only at its second or third occurrence. The slow, steady, systemic improvements of *Reichswehr* and *Wehrmacht* only became a [RMA] on the banks of the Meuse. But in no sense and at no time had the German army pursued revolutionary technological change⁶¹ for its own sake. What it had done instead was to harness *armor*, *firepower*, *radios*, and the *internal combustion engine* to a conception of war grounded firmly in *historical experience*. (*W. Murray*, “May 1940: *Contingency and fragility of the German RMA*,” in: Dynamics of military revolution, *W. Murray* (ed.), 173-74)
- 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)
- “*Blitzkrieg*” strategy - Tactical/operational concept (not strategic concept)? (See, *K.H. Frieser* article in “*France 1940 file*”)

⁶¹ **Note:** That is, they were not technological “determinists!”

Only tip of spear (ca. **15%** of force structure) capable of new, revolutionary style of warfare

- John Mosier attributes superiority of the *Wehrmacht* to its “institutional memory:” the Germans had mastered many of the problems of modern warfare, and they preserved the essentials of what they had learned as they integrated the technologies that emerged in the next decades. Their advantage in combat was thus not a function of equipment or even training: it was conceptual, and the two key concepts were speed and integration. (*J. Mosier, Cross of Iron. The Rise and Fall of the German War Machine, 1918-1945*, p 244.)
- The German Army was never mechanized to the extent its major opponents were; but its commanders were generally quicker to move than their adversaries, whether on offense or defense. Their speed, immensely aided by the *decentralization of command*, meant that the Germans generally *moved inside the decision cycle of their opponents* (i.e., Boyd’s “OODA loop” concept) (*J. Mosier, Cross of Iron. The Rise and Fall of the German War Machine, 1918-1945*, p 245.)
(Note: Only **18%** of Army Group Center’s manpower was organized into mobile units . . . During the course of the war, the *Wehrmacht* suffered greatly from a lack of enough mot. inf. to close swiftly the gaps between fast-racing tank columns and the slower foot-bound units.) (*Fugate & Dvoretzky, Thunder on the Dnepr*, 340)
- Wehrmacht’s superiority in combat was not a function of better equipment (author attempts to show that, in most cases, German materiel was inferior to that of her adversaries). Nor were the victories of **1939-41** the result of some radically new concept of warfare (i.e., so-called “*Blitzkrieg*,” which Mosier says “hardly existed”⁶²); rather, the superiority of the Wehrmacht on the battlefield “derives almost exclusively from intangibles such as *leadership, doctrine, and institutional memory*.” (*J. Mosier, Cross of Iron. The Rise and Fall of the German War Machine, 1918-1945*, pp 3-4)
- *Cohesion, leadership, and training* – as combat strength multipliers. (See, *Jonathan Shay, Odysseus in America*, 205, ff.)
- Realistic, rigorous *training*
Long, hard and realistic. (For many details see, **I:29**, ff.)
(Note: It was Frederick the Great who impressed upon his military successors – eg., the other creators of the Prussian Army of the **19th** Century, Scharnhorst & Gneisenau – the knowledge that even the peacetime life of an army consists of *hard labor* and that battles are won first on the *training ground*. (*H. Holborn, “The Prusso-German School: Moltke and the Rise of the General Staff,”* in: *Makers of Modern Strategy*, 281))
“As w/ *cohesion*, I do not make cheap hyperbole when I call training a combat strength *multiplier*. Excellent training engages the whole person: mind, body, emotions, character, and spirit. It prepares for the demands and stresses of war and other situations w/ mortal stakes. Therefore, at all levels it must be “*tough*” and *realistic*.” (*Jonathan Shay, Odysseus in America*, 223)
Following victory over Poland, the German Army [beginning in fall of **1939**] “spent **17** hours a day and **6-7** days a week implementing w/ precision and enthusiasm the **OKH** training syllabus [designed to repair the deficiencies noted during French campaign, etc.] That *ruthless and relentless training* stands in stark contrast to the generally lackadaisical practice

⁶² **Note:** This assertion is – typical of author – a bit too bold for my tastes!

of most French units during the ‘Phoney War.’”⁶³ (See, *W. Murray*, “May 1940: Contingency and fragility of the German RMA,” in: *Dynamics of military revolution*, *W. Murray* (ed.), 166; also, *Stephen G. Fritz*, *Frontsoldaten*, 11, ff.; *Dr S. Hart, et al.*, *The German Soldier in WWII*, etc.)

(Many Vietnam combat veterans felt deeply betrayed by the *irrelevance of their training* to the actual conditions and enemy they had to face. As w/ the well-chronicled deficiencies of the **M-16** rifle, this perception fostered a bitter conviction among veterans that their country simply didn’t care. *Negligence in training* of the soldiers for Vietnam is one of the deepest sources of anger in Col David Hackworth’s very angry book, *About Face*.⁶⁴ (*Shay*, *Achilles*, 196)

- Art of War – masters of operational art; combined arms approach, key modern technologies, “*Auftragstaktik*” (i.e., leadership), etc.
(See, *M. Crevelde*, “*Die Wehrmacht – eine Beurteilung*,” in: „*German Army*“ file; also, Notebook #1, „*German Army*,” **IX:103-04**, etc.)

According to P. Paret, while much (most?) of Clausewitz’ theory had been lost to the German military by early 20th Century, one of his most important legacies to German army doctrine well into the century was his *concept of imponderables*. Not to be overwhelmed by unforeseen events demanded *flexibility* in all aspects of war, from grand strategy to tactics. One result was the development of “*Auftragstaktik*,” the policy of issuing directives stating the overall intentions of the supreme command, while leaving a high degree of *initiative* and the issuance of specific orders to subordinate commands. (See, his, “*Clausewitz*,” in: *Makers of Modern Strategy*, 212)

German leadership culture: Excellence in military *leadership* is a combat *strength multiplier*. During the period of military self-reform [i.e., in U.S. military ca. **1980s**], the Army Chief of Staff, Edward “Shy” Meyer, attempted to implant a *culture of leadership* that he called “*positive leadership*.” [See text for list of his leadership practices,⁶⁵ such as, “assign missions w/o prescribing the means to accomplish them.”] Here’s the irony: the leadership practices listed above were brought to their fullest development by the Germans. . . The Israelis also follow these “German” leadership practices. (See, *Jonathan Shay*, *Odysseus in America*, 226)

Long tradition reaching back into Prussian history of fostering individual initiative and independent action in military commanders; for example see, Scharnhorst’s successor at chief of the general staff, *Wilhelm von Gneisenau*. (See, *H. Hinterhuber*, *Wettbewerbsstrategie*, 18)

(Bereits Gneisenau hat die Notwendigkeit betont, die Faehigkeit u. Autoritaet der Unterfuehrer [i.e., subordinate cdrs] zu verstaerken, aus *eigener Initiative* zu handeln. Moltkes Verdienst ist es, diesen Fuehrungsgrundsatz theoretisch untermauert u. in

⁶³ **Note:** For more details on rigorous nature of training prior to start of campaign see, **IR 241 (106. ID)**, in my Notebook #7.

⁶⁴ **Note:** Many parallels here to the training of German soldiers prior to Russian campaign; overall, this training was, for the most part, quite rigorous; conversely, the “Landser” was utterly unprepared – and inadequately equipped – for fighting at night, in forests, against a nascent counter-insurgency behind the front, etc.

⁶⁵ **Note:** This cluster of leadership practices also called “*Auftragstaktik*,” etc.

die Praxis umgesetzt zu haben.⁶⁶ (For details see, *H. Hinterhuber, Wettbewerbsstrategie*, 33-36)

(G. Rothenberg: “As Waldersee’s deputy [Schlieffen] already had strongly supported adoption of new infantry regulations in **1888**, *formally recognizing the mission tactics*.” (Gunther E. Rothenberg, “Moltke, Schlieffen, and the Doctrine of Strategic Envelopment,” in: *Makers of Modern Strategy*, 313)

--(For the influence of Count v. Schlieffen’s Cannae concept on German strategic and operational planning in **1939/41** see, *J.L. Wallach*, 249, Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation, 249-81)

-- Traditions going back to Frederick, Scharnhorst, Gneisenau & Moltke⁶⁷ had given Prussian / German officers the ability to address tactical and operational problems w/ originality and insight (without relying on formulas or templates). The sedulously fostered independence and initiative of Prussian/German field cdrs was certainly one key to success, if it sometimes gave their superiors “heartburn.”

(Ancedotes: a) In **1866** war w/ Austria, “officers silently dropped the official and overly conservative service regulations of **1847** as soon as they crossed the Bohemian frontier and followed largely their *own ideas*,” b) Moltke “remained unmoved when certain generals in the first weeks of the Franco-Prussian War [**1870/71**] by foolhardy, though gainful enterprises, *wrecked much of his plan of operations*. Moltke did not wish to paralyze the fighting spirit of the army or to cripple the *spontaneity of action and reaction* on the part of subordinate cdrs.” (*H. Holborn, “The Prusso-German School: Moltke and the Rise of the General Staff*,” in: *Makers of Modern Strategy*, 286-91)

-- Force Structure (changes in org., weaponry, etc., since **1940**)⁶⁸

For force structure, weapons, equipment and shortages on eve of “Barbarossa,” see, *Albert Seaton, The German Army 1933-45*; for increase in PDs from **10** to **20** – and reorganization of the existing **10** PDs – see, *Keilig*, Bd. II (in “Keilig file.”) (*Keilig* also for detailed “*Kriegsgliederung*” of all PDs.)

Strengths/weaknesses of *Wehrmacht*

Fire power of IDs and PDs (eg., German tanks upgraded in large numbers to **Pz III/IVs**; however, overall *motorization* leaves much to be desired – use of French *civilian vehicles*, etc. (Eg., *Hoth, Pz.-Operationen*, 44-45; for types of weapons and weapons totals in German divisions see, *B. Fugate & L. Dvoretzky, Thunder on the Dneper*, 386-90)

(See, *D. Stahel, I: 9-10*, for status of *Wehrmacht* on eve of “Barbarossa.”)

Greatest weaknesses lay in the *logistical realm* (See, *D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed*, Vol. I, 25)

⁶⁶ **Note:** Napoleon betrachtete seine Generale nur als Vollzieher seines Willens u. räumte ihnen kein selbstständiges, initiatives Handeln ein; er ueberschaute persoenlich das ganze Schlachtfeld u. griff an jedem Ort persoenlich ein. (34)

⁶⁷ **Note:** GFM v. Moltke: “. . . It is obvious that theoretical knowledge will not suffice [for the field cdr] but that here the qualities of mind and character come to a free, practical, and artistic expression, although schooled by military training and led by experiences from military history or from life itself.” Each strategic situation, he thought, called for . . . a solution in which training and knowledge were combined w/ vision and courage. (*H. Holborn*, 289)

⁶⁸ **Note:** **10. PD** as example of reorganization of armored units (A. Schick, *Geschichte der 10. PD (VII: 24-25; 36-38)*); also, D. Stahel, *Operation Barbarossa*, for great material on German armor, etc. For reorganization of the **4. PD** prior to beginning of “Barbarossa” see, J. Neumann, *Die 4. Pz-Div. 1938-43*. (This history located in division file.)

- Restructuring of German panzer and motorized units between the fall of France and outbreak of “Barbarossa” (tank production reached low of **120** in **Sep 40**; to equip mot. forces, trucks purchased from Switzerland and requisitioned from North Africa (*Dennis Showalter, Hitler’s Panzers: The Lightning Attacks that Revolutionized Warfare*, 134-43; for tank production figures see, *Thomas L. Jentz, Panzer Truppen*, appendices; see also, *B. Mueller-Hillebrand, Das Heer 1933-45*, Bd. II, 105-07; and Bd. III, 267)
 - (**18. PD** for example of chaotic “hodgepodge” of soft skinned vehicles in German force structure. Division entered fighting w/ **162** different types of soft skinned vehicles; its artl. rgt. had **445** vehicles on establishment and there were **69** different types of lorry. The problem w/ spares . . . can best be imagined. (See, *James Lucas, War on the Eastern Front*, 8; **18. PD** “*division file.*”)
- Luftwaffe force structure: For strength of GAF on eve of Russian campaign – no one appears to agree on its actual strength! – see, **I:475-77**.
 - (Note: Clearly GAF numbers were utterly insufficient for the size of Russia and scope of the campaign; according to *J.S. Corum*, Germany had fewer acft available to support the invasion of Russia than it had in France in **1940**; moreover, the GAF had **200** less bomber acft than in **1940**.)
- Besondere Vorbereitungen fuer Ostfeldzug: Die Fuehrung eines Feldzuges in der Weite des osteuropaeischen Raumes mit seinen besonderen geographischen Bedingungen . . . erforderte *Vorbereitungen*, die den herkoemmlichen Rahmen ueberschritten. Einige besonders wesentliche seien kurz angedeutet: a) *Verstaerkung der Nachrichtentruppe* (daneben wurden neue Geraete fuer *Sprechverbindungen* mit u. ohne Draht auf grosse Entfehnungen entwickelt); b) in Auswertung der bisherigen Erfahrungen wurden grosse mot. Koerper (i.e., *Panzergruppen*) gebildet;⁶⁹ c) die Fertigung von Stugs,⁷⁰ dessen Herstellung in Bezug auf Rohstoffe, Kosten u. Arbeitskraft *wesentlich geringeren Aufwand* als diejenige des PzKW erforderte, wurde gefoerdert; d) zur Erhoehung der Beweglichkeit in dem wegearmen Gebieten des Ostens wurden unmittelbar vor Feldzugsbeginn den Inf.-Div. insgesamt **15.000** mit Panjepferden bespannte *Panjewagen* zugefuehrt; e) leicht Divisionen wurden aufgestellt; f) da Nachrichten vorlagen, dass die Sowjetunion . . . den Partisanenkrieg planmaessig vorbereitete, wurden fuer die Sicherung der weiten Raeume im rueckwaertigen Gebiet Sicherungsdivisionen aufgestellt; g) die im Westen verbliebenen Inf.-Div. wurden zu Gunsten derjenigen im Osten in Bezug auf personelle Zusammensetzung, Bewaffnung, Beweglichkeit usw. so stark zurueckgestellt, dass sie nicht „ostfaehig“ waren; h) der Truppenluftschutz wurde durch Aufstellung von Heeresflakabtl. neben den bisher vorhandenen leichten Fla.-Einheiten verstaerkt; i) die Organisation der Nachschubtruppen wurde den Beduerfnissen des weiten Raumes angepasst . . . Der zur Verfuegung des Gen.Qu. stehende “Grosstransportraum” (Kraftwagentransport-Rgter u. –Abtl.) wurde von bisher rd. **20.000** t auf **45.000** t erhoeht; j) die Eisenbahntruppe wurde verstaerkt; j) unter Ausnutzung *finnischer Erfahrungen* wurde eine neue Winterausruestung . . . entwickelt, ihre Beschaffung eingeleitet. (See, *B. Mueller-Hillebrand, Das Heer 1933-45*, Bd. II, 80-81)
- Shortcomings of German *weaponry*. See, *John Mosier, Cross of Iron. The Rise and Fall of the German War Machine, 1918-1945*. (Summary in my “*Biblio file.*”)

⁶⁹ Note: For formation of the Pz.-Gr. see, Keilig, Bd. II (in “Keilig file.”)

⁷⁰ Note: As of **1 Jun 41**, there were a total of **11** Sturmgesch.-Abtl. among the German “Heerestruppen.” Of these, **6** were assigned to H.Gr.Mitte. Each battalion was composed of **3** Batteries. (*M.-Hillebrand*, Bd. II, 158, 192.)

-- *Kommandostruktur der Wehrmacht* (i.e., **OKW & OKH**)

(See, Notebook #1; M. Creveld article in „German Army” file; Albert Seaton, *The German Army 1933-45*, for useful details on German High Command planning for “Barbarossa;” dysfunctional nature of German command structure (eg., division of battlespace into **OKW** and **OKH** theaters of war). (Excerpts from Seaton’s book in my “Ground Forces, German” file.))

(**OKW vs. OKH theaters**: Mit Beginn des Feldzuges gegen die Sowjetunion war die Verantwortlichkeit des **ObdH** auf die Operationsfuehrung in diesem Feldzug, genauer auf die zwischen Schwarzem Meer u. Ostsee eingesetzten Kraefte des Heeres beschraenkt worden. Auf allen uebrigen Kriegsschauplaetzen, in Finnland, Norwegen, Daenemark, dem Westen, Nordafrika, dem Balkan u. in Griechenland unterstanden die dort eingesetzten Befehlshaber des Heeres nunmehr in *operativen Angelegenheiten* Hitler unmittelbar, dem hierfuer der **WFSt** im **OKW** zur Verfuegung stand.) (For more discussion see, *Mueller-Hillebrand, Das Heer 1933-45*, Bd. III, 36)

-- *Wehr- u. Ruestungswirtschaft* (German military economy)

Address *German military-economic policy* (for the general failure of Germany’s economic preparedness see, **IMPB:20-21**; also, Notebook #1: “German Military Economy;” and, Notebook #9, H. Magenheimer, *Hitler’s War*,⁷¹ also, *Williamson Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, for German economic problems – shortages of foreign exchange and raw materials guided the course of German rearmament – in late **1930s**. 1-2)

(**Rohstofflage**: Die **1940** in den besetzten Westgebieten sichergestellten Bestaende . . . waren verhaeltnismaessig hoch u. besserten die angespannte Lage auf vielen Gebieten entscheidend. . . Insgesamt gesehen war die *ruestungswirtschaftliche Lage* zu Beginn des Feldzuges gegen die Sowjetunion etwas besser als vor dem Westfeldzug **1940**.) (For details see, B. *Mueller-Hillebrand, Das Heer 1933-45*, Bd. II, 89-91)

(**Fertigungsprogramm**: Von unmittelbarer Rueckwirkung auf die Schlagkraft des Heeres war die Lage auf dem **Munitionsgebiet**. Aus Tabelle **21** ist zu entnehmen, dass der Munitionsverbrauch im Westfeldzug **1940** *ueberraschend gering* geblieben war. Dasselbe gilt fuer die Feldzuege in Norwegen u. auf dem Balkan. Unter Beruecksichtigung dieser Erfahrungen konnte der Bestand an Munition als befriedigend angesehen werden. Die Munitionsfertigung war daher zu Gunsten anderer Vorhaben *stark gedrosselt* worden. . .⁷² Selbst bei Beginn des Feldzuges gegen die Sowjetunion wurde die Munitionsfertigung zunaechst nicht gesteigert. . . Damit wurde ein erhebliches Risiko fuer den Fall in Kauf genommen, dass der erhoffte rasche Erfolg des Feldzuges ausblieb. . .⁷³) (See, *Mueller-Hillebrand, Bd. II, 91-92*)

-- *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**)

⁷¹ **Note**: State of uncertainty in German armaments planning (**1940/41**). German leadership still not prepared to assign top priority to “Barbarossa.” Crux: Campaign against Russia did not occupy the central position – neither in overall planning, nor in armaments production – that it merited.

⁷² **Note**: So war z.B. auf Befehl des Chefs **OKW** die Fertigungskapazitaet fuer I.F.H.-Munition groessten-teils der Luftwaffe fuer die Herstellung von Flakmunition zur Verfuegung gestellt worden. (91)

⁷³ **Note**: This table illustrates how munitions production of key types by start of “Ostfeldzug” had been throttled back to a small fraction of what it had been in **1940**. (92)

(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))⁷⁴

(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)

- 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.]
- Lack of *strategic personnel reserves*: On eve of Russo-German War, Germany only had some **80,000** men formed into reinforcement *march battalions* and some **350,000** men in Fromm’s *Ersatzheer* as the “only immediate source of reinforcements” for the impending campaign. These would be used up by late summer ’**41**. (Albert Seaton, The German Army 1933-45.)
- Gliederung des Feldheeres zu Beginn des Feldzuges gegen die Sowjetunion **1941**. (See, B. Mueller-Hillebrand, Das Heer 1933-45, Bd. II, 111; 157, ff.)
- Hitler already planning for future campaigns / Ostheer to make due w/ what it has.

Red Army & Air Forces

Note: For parallels with Russian Army of **1812** see, Adam Zamoyski, Moscow 1812, 114-19. Training of Tsar’s army “did not breed intelligence or initiative.” In battle, “obedience was considered to be a key factor.” Conversely, modernization of the Tsar’s artillery had made it by **1810** “probably the most professional in Europe.”

Note: Combat soldiers at war struggle w/ the enemy in a two-dimensional world. Those two dimensions are *bie*, violent force, and *metis*, cunning tricks and strategy. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are . . . convincing accounts of . . . these military capacities. *Achilles*, the hero of the *Iliad*, embodies *bie*, while *Odysseus*, the hero of the *Odyssey*, embodies *metis*. . . *Bie* or *metis*, which is more important in war? . . . *Odysseus* was extremely productive in all of those military endeavors that involve *metis* – cunning, intelligence, deception, reconnaissance, manipulation, secrecy, spying, and strategy. (See, Jonathan Shay, Odysseus in America, 205, 231)⁷⁵

- Discuss in some detail
(D. Glantz, Colossus Reborn & Barbarossa Derailed (26-28); also, W. Dunn, Hitler’s Nemesis)

⁷⁴ 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)

⁷⁵ Note: Russians characterized more by “metis;” Germans more by “bie?”

- Rapid growth since late **1930s**
Preparing for war against Germany and capitalist West? (*B. Musial, Kampfplatz Deutschland*)
Offensive Doctrine!
- Tuchachevsky and “deep battle” doctrine.
According to *John Mosier*, Soviet “deep battle” doctrine was developed by Triandafilov, but promoted by Tukhachevsky. (*J. Mosier, Deathride. Hitler and Stalin: The Eastern Front, 1941-45*, 48-51)
(The Red Army had a long interest in offensive warfare, going back at least to the “deep battle” and “deep operations” concepts of the military theorists of the late **1920s** and early **1930s**, commanders like V.K. Triandafillov [sp?] and M.N. Tukhachevsky. Those concepts were inherent in Stalin’s conception of the offensive Red Army in **May 41**, although these would be badly shaken by the events of the first years of the war. . . Not until late **1943** would Soviets begin to be able to “put into practice the concept of ‘deep battle.’” There was a strong continuity between pre-war doctrine and the way in which the Red Army operated from the middle of **1943**. . . Soviet operations in **1943-45** were different from those of **1941-42**. After Kursk in the summer of **1943**, Soviet operations were no longer responses to German offensives. They were stunning attacks intended to overcome and over-run the resistance of an enemy in place. The crossing of the Dnepr in late summer **1943** did not work precisely as planned, but the Red Army succeeded in keeping the *Wehrmacht* continuously off balance as it advanced across the Ukraine. The Stavka had more time to plan Operation “Bagration” in Belorussia in **Jun-Jul 44**, and it was a “deep battle set-piece.” (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 221-23)
(For an introduction to Soviet tactics/doctrine by David Glantz see, *Harold S. Orenstein* (trans.), Soviet Documents on the Use of War Experience. Vol. I: The Initial Period of the War 1941.)
- Impact of Purges / rapid growth (See, *W. S. Dunn, Stalin’s Keys to Victory*)
- Failures in Poland and Finland (**1939/40**)
- Reorganization & Mobilization following Germany’s victory in West (**1940**)
Strengths/weaknesses of *Red Army*
(*Secret mobilization* began in **Feb 41**; another mobilization plan approved in **May 41**; see, **IX: *H. Magenheimer, Hitler’s War***)
- Soviet war planning: *Defense Plan-41 (DP-41)*
Mandated by Stalin and prepared in early **1941** by Zhukov; for details see, *D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed*, Vol. I, 21-23, 27-28; also, **II:40-57**)
- **Jan-Feb 41: Soviet war games.** According to *Bryan Fugate & Lev Dvoretzky*,⁷⁶ it was during this period when the final Soviet defense strategy was formulated. . . The key elements of the strategic plan were developed during three [3] vitally important war games in **Jan-Feb 41**. This strategy would “ensure the nation’s ability not only to survive the biggest and most violent invasion in history but indeed to *prevail over it*. . . Although both war games in **Jan 41** were highly significant in influencing Soviet planning, it was the third game, the one

⁷⁶ **Note:** This makes for an intriguing theory. Yet is it accurate? Of course, Zhukov did propose (in late **Jun 41**), and Stalin did accept, a strategy of defense in depth, and the Red Army did repeatedly nip at Army Group Center’s flanks, but the authors may be making a “virtue” out of what quickly became a “necessity” following the German invasion.

in **Feb 41**, that gave final form to what would become the Soviet Union's strategy for winning the war. . .

In brief, the two games in **Jan 41** convinced Stalin and his high command that concentrating the bulk of the Red Army close to the western frontier was a *recipe for disaster*. This was particularly true of the forces located w/in the so-called Bialystok salient which jutted far to the west and could easily be cut off and its defenders surrounded and annihilated. The third and most secret war game – [which, so the authors, had *never been reported anywhere*⁷⁷] – played out the final strategy for winning the war. . . [Note: According to authors, the **Feb 41** war game resulted in decision to place powerful strategic reserves on the southern flank of Army Group Center (to so-called Red Army “thunder” in the book title) which then struck the advancing Germans “at the moment of their maximum vulnerability” – i.e., as the *Wehrmacht* pushed N and E of the Pripyat Marshes. Later, authors refer to the “carefully staged counter-offensive by the Red Army along the Smolensk-Dnepr line” and to the “effectiveness of the Timoshenko-Zhukov *echeloned defense strategy*.”] (See, Thunder on the Dnepr, xii-xiii; 39, ff.; 302-05; also, **II:40-57**)

- For “bullets” on general lack of Soviet preparedness see my “Festvortrag – Bad Wimpfen,” in: **IX:145-46**)
- In **1941** the huge Soviet tank park of **22-24,000** vehicles was largely immobile: **44%** of the tanks required rebuilding and **29%** replacement of a major component such as an engine or transmission. (*John Mosier, Deathride. Hitler and Stalin: The Eastern Front, 1941-45*, (66-67)
(Author stresses the lack of a logistics infrastructure prior to **Jun 41**; for eg., Soviets lacked spare parts, repair facilities w/ specialized equipment, vehicles capable of towing tanks, etc.)
- For a good introduction to Soviet combat acft, bomber and fighter tactics (“VVS operational tactics were to *cautious and inflexible*.”); discussion of phenomenon of “ramming” technique (*taran*); “acute sense of inferiority” of Soviet aircrews vis-à-vis GAF see, *Hardesty, Red Phoenix*. (26, ff; 61)
- Buildup of VVS from **1929-41**, new acft designs, etc. (output of acft quadrupled from **1930 (860)** to **1937 (3578)**); b) Soviet aviation especially hard hit by purges; about **75%** of senior officers of VVS eliminated by end of **1939**. (See, *Kenneth R. Whiting, “Soviet Air Power in World War II,”* in: Air Power and Warfare. The Proceedings of the 8th Military History Symposium United States Air Force Academy 18-20 October 1978.)
- 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

⁷⁷ **Note:** “The evidence we present here based on Soviet documents discovered by co-author and retired Russian colonel and eminent historian, Lev Dvoretzky, and made public for the first time, show convincingly that the failure of the German blitzkrieg in Russia was not an accident nor a blunder on anyone's part. . . Rather, the defeat of Barbarossa was much more due to the strategic vision of two remarkable men, Zhukov and Timoshenko. . . Their success during the January war games in demonstrating to Stalin the disaster that would flow from a forward strategy in the west was crucial beyond all estimation. Their ability to get the go-ahead from Stalin to implement the new in-depth strategy after conclusively proving its effectiveness in the February war game was absolutely vital.” (xiv)

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*)

-- Counter-strike capability?

Total Red Army deployments (ca. **303** Div.) in several echelons, etc.

(See, *Glantz, Dunn, IX: Magenheimer, Hitler’s War*)

-- **22.6.41** [Soviet frontier deployments]: Although formations had been moving closer to frontier from spring **1941** onward, this activity was evidently not completed by the beginning of hostilities. Comparison of published data shows that of the **170** divisions stationed in the western frontier zone, **48** divisions were positioned **10-50** km., **64** divisions **50-150** km., and **56** divisions **150-500** km. east of the Soviet frontier. Striking, at any rate, was the concentration of Soviet formations in the eastern Polish areas incorporated in the Western and Kiev special military districts. This was true particularly of the salient around Bialystok and Lvov, which projected far into German territory. (For more details see, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 85-86; *D. Glantz, III:21-22*)

-- “Although the Soviet military had modern weapons, there’s no indication that anyone understood how to use them.” (*John Mosier, The Rise and Fall of the German War Machine, 1918-1945*, p 174)

-- **Jun 41**: One fact that helps explain the initial Soviet disaster is the *disposition of Soviet forces* – whether for an offensive or a defense in depth, Red Army units were well in front of the prepared defensive positions; moving the Soviet divisions so far forward was a major factor in the astronomical losses. (*John Mosier, The Rise and Fall of the German War Machine, 1918-1945*, p 173)

(For Soviet frontier deployments see, *GSWW*, Vol. IV, Attack on the Soviet Union, in: **III: 21-22**; *James Lucas, War on the Eastern Front*, 9-10, etc.)

-- 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.)

-- **22.6.41**: For strength, positions, etc., of Pavlov’s Western Front on eve of “*Barbarossa*,” see: *Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 62; **III:65**. Among other things, Mawdsley notes that Pavlov’s front was not the “center of gravity” of Soviet deployments, as substantially larger Red Army forces were in the Ukraine.)

III: “VORMARSCH! – THE INITIAL ADVANCE OF ARMY GROUP CENTER (22 Jun – 5 Aug 41)”⁷⁸

Quote: „*War is . . . an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will.*” (*Clausewitz, On War*, quoted in: (*J. L. Wallach, Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation*, 16)

⁷⁸ **Note:** A vital source from here on out is my: Notebook #1, “*German High Command – Chronology of Events.*”

Quote: „*Wer die deutschen Infanteriedivisionen im unablaessigen Einsatz an der Ostfront erlebt hat, muss vor ihren Leistungen verstummen. In der selbstverstaendlichen Kameradschaft zwischen Offizier u. Mann ist hier bestes Soldatentum in schweigender Pflichterfuellung verkoepert.*“ General a.D. Maximilian Fretter-Pico (Deutsches Soldatenjahrbuch, 1970, 12)

Quote: „*No plan of operations can look w/ any certainty beyond the first meeting w/ the major forces of the enemy. . . The commander is compelled during the whole campaign to reach decisions on the basis of situations that cannot be predicted. All consecutive acts of war are, therefore, not executions of a premeditated plan, but spontaneous actions, directed by military tact.*“ (GFM v. Moltke, in: H. Holborn, “The Prusso-German School: Moltke and the Rise of the General Staff, in: Makers of Modern Strategy, 290)

Quote: „*Die materiellen u. moralischen Folgen jedes groesseren Gefechtes sind so weitgreifender Art, dass durch sie meist eine voellig veraenderte Situation geschaffen wird, eine neue Basis fuer neue Massregeln. Alles kommt darauf an, die Situation des Augenblicks richtig aufzufassen.*“ (GFM v. Moltke, in: Hoth, Pz.-Operationen, 69)

Quote: “*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)

Quote: „*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)

Note: Germans had also attempted to defeat France in **Aug-Sep 1914** through massive encirclement maneuvers (a so-called “Super Cannae”), but despite pushing beyond the Marne east of Paris by early **Sep 14**, German victories characterized by lack of significant “Kesselschlachten,” lack of French/British POWs, etc. French for most part able to pull back in good order.⁷⁹ Conversely, Germans won a major Kesselschlacht at Tannenberg in East Prussia. (See, W. Hubatsch, Deutschland im Weltkrieg 1914-18)

Note: 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.)

a) **17.6.41:** *Hitler erteilt den endgueltigen Angriffsbefehl fuer den Ueberfall auf die Sowjetunion.* (lexicon-der-wehrmacht)

Note: For activities of German “Landser” in final days before launch of Operation “Barbarossa” see, **IV:65-71**.

Note: For the attitudes of German “Landser” to impending attack on the Soviet Union see, **IV:73-75**.

⁷⁹ Note: In my view, force structure of period – lack of motorization of armed forces – largely responsible for German failure in France.

- „*Stimmungsbild*:“ World events (**III**); in USA, Joe Dimaggio had begun his **56**-game hit streak. Berlin & Moscow (add some color!)

(Note: The German capital living w/ blackouts and rationing. The aerial bombing of Berlin had begun in late **Aug 40**. After that, the RAF raids had continued into the autumn of **1940** “and quickly became a regular occurrence.” The city was raided on average **4** nights per week. In **Sep 40** there were **19** raids on the capital; in **Oct 40** Berlin was hit **14** times; in **Nov 41** the city was hit **8** times. Last raid of **1940** was on **20-21.12.40**. After a short hiatus in the early months of **1941**, the raids resumed in **Mar 41** w/ sporadic attacks over the central areas of the city, which continued into the summer, but w/o the intensity or frequency that had been experienced in the autumn and winter of **1940**. Indeed, in the second half of [**1941**], RAF activity over the German capital “dwindled almost to nothing” [and the city] was subjected to only a handful of serious raids. Bombs used in the raids were high explosives and incendiaries; the aircraft were mostly two-engine Hampdens, Wellingtons and Whitleys w/ very modest payloads (in comparison to the Avro Lancaster which appeared in **1942**). Hence, the devastation caused by these raids was minimal. Conversely, the effect on *morale* was significant. Common complaint was the *lack of sleep* caused by the raids and the interminable hours spent in the bomb shelters. Bombing also had major social and political impact – as early as **Oct 40**, the first children were evacuated from Berlin; tens of thousands followed in the intervening months (KLV program). (For many more details see, *Roger Moorhouse, Berlin at War*, 136, ff.; 184 ff.))

- **10.4.41**: Heavy Royal Air Force (RAF) raid on Berlin. On night of 10 April, the State Opera House, the University, the State Library and the Palace of the Crown Prince were hit. Heavy damage was caused. The Opera House was completely gutted. Hitler was outraged and as a result he had a furious argument w/ Goering. (*Nicolaus v. Below, At Hitler's Side*, 93; **III:10**)
- **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)

b) *Night of 21/22 Jun 41*:

- Final preparations / troops & vehicles move to jump-off positions
(For “generic” final preparations made by armored units prior to start of “*Barbarossa*,” see, *W. Schneider, Panzer Tactics*) (in “*Schneider* file”).
- Hitler's Aufruf to troops
- Reactions of “Landser” to new campaign
- Personal accounts*
(**IX**: *C. Hartmann, Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg, Kapitel III*; also, *Hans Roell, Oblt. Albert Blaich: Als Panzerkommandant in Ost u. West (3. PD)*, for account of final days/hours before start of „*Barbarossa*.” (See my “*Blaich* file.”))

- 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)
- 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)
- German "Siegeszuversicht." (See, for eg., E. Krehl, "Erinnerungen," and G. Meyer, Heusinger, both quoted in my "Festvortrag – Bad Wimpfen," **IX:148-49**)
- Terrain:⁸⁰ 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." Road and rail infrastructure 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"))
(Terrain between the Niemen and the borders of Russia proper [i.e., in **1812**] "is wooded and boggy in places. It is cut by a multitude of small rivers, many of which trickle along the bottom of deep ravines. Existing bridges often consisted of no more than a few tree trunks." (Zamoyski, 182)
- Terrain: The Russo-German frontier in **1941** ran from just north of the Memel on the Baltic, roughly along the line of the old East Prussian-Lithuanian frontier and then curved . . . [see text for more details.] In the centre of West European Russia immediately to the SE of the frontier at Brest-Litovsk, lay a vast area of swampland about **150** miles in width from N to S and over **300** miles in depth. This area, known as the Pripet Marshes, was interlaced w/ [see text] . . . In the Belorussian area immediately to the north of the Pripet Marshes was the direct route to Minsk – Orsha – Smolensk – Moscow. The country along this route between Orsha and Moscow, being both open and free from water obstacles, was known as the Orsha land-bridge, since it ran along the watershed between the rivers running north into the Baltic and those which flowed south into the Black Sea. The Orsha landbridge was the *gateway to Moscow* and it formed the gap between the two major water obstacles, the West Dvina and the Dnieper. Before the Germans could arrive at this landbridge they had to cross *heavily wooded forest belts*, **50** miles or more in depth, by way of roads. These forest roads would have the effect of funneling movement and *stringing out formations in great depth*. Moscow lay about **700 miles** in a direct line from the frontier. In the Baltic area . . . (See, Albert Seaton, The Russo-German War 1941-45, 55-56)

⁸⁰ **Note:** For topic of terrain see also, **IV:27** ff., and **VIII:5-6**.

-- Terrain:⁸¹ The Army Group Center Theater of War encompassed the enormous area between Berlin and Moscow, as well as between the Baltic Sea and the Pripet Marsh. The German soldier endured the struggle against a courageous, if merciless enemy, primarily in Belorussia. Belorussia, or Ruthenia (as the German occupation authority called it) is the enormous land complex tying Central and Eastern Europe together. There is *no natural boundary to the east*. Therefore, the cruel wind, which whistles over the steppes of central Russia, reaches the Belorussian marshes and forest lands unhindered. The winter is *much colder and longer* – often down to **-40** degrees – than it is in Central Europe. The summer is *moderately warm*, however, and more persistent than in Poland or the Baltic Provinces. Therefore, there is *frequent precipitation* in **June** and **July**. The transition from a land to a sea climate dominates the terrain. [?]

This is a wide plain that is separated by the western Russian ridge into a northern and a southern zone. The ridge itself boasts wide rolling hills that stretch from east to west. Three [3] great ridges are formed, including the Minsk Hills w/ the Lysaya Gora (at **343** meters the *highest point in Belorussia*). At the same time, this is the watershed between the Dnepr and the Nieman/Memel. Then there are the Dnepr Hills in the Orsha area and, finally, the Vitebsk-Nevel Hills, which form the watershed between the Duena [i.e., the Dvina?] and Finish Gulf.

The large area of **125,000** sq/km is flat in the south, while the northern ridges fall off sharply. The northern land bridge – to so-called “gate of Smolensk” – offers the most favorable line of communication to central Russia.

The plain in the north around Vitebsk and Polozk is hilly. The lakes here are drained by the Duena, which forms a natural boundary to the north. The southern plain . . . is almost flat and consists of **50%** marsh and moor. This characteristic of the terrain is esp. noticeable in the Pripet Marsh. Here the ground is water-tight, forming a permanent marsh that marks the border w/ the Ukraine.

The rivers are another characteristic of Belorussia. The total length of the waterways is **32,000** km. Four [4] water systems characterize the terrain. First is the powerful Dnepr, w/ a length of **2150** km. It emerges in the Waldai Mountains [Hills?] and runs **470** km thru the land before leaving Belorussia. It is navigable from Orsha. The river reaches a width of **75** to **320** meters, and a depth of up to **8** meters. Its largest tributaries are the Drut, Berezina, Sozh and Pripet. The second largest system is the **1000** km long Duena, which had dug a deep bed thru the land **75** – **125** meters wide. Its tributaries are the Obal, Drissa, and Luchosa. A third river system is the Lovati, which flows from south to north into Lake Ilmen. The fourth and smallest system is formed by the Niemen/Memel.

To the left and right of the rivers are often *endless and impassable forests*. Belorussia consists of about **2** million hectares of forest, so that **25%** of the total land is forest. The most forest-rich area is the Polesse Forest w/ its *tall birches and pines*. Here, traffic is only possible on corduroy roads. These embankments were built in the time of the Tsars and had been improved and widened since then. In the Belorussian forests we find **56%** spruce, **11%** fir, **10%** birch, **9%** alder, and **6%** oak. These enormous forests supported industries such as sawmills, matches, paper, and furniture.

⁸¹ **Note:** Source for this section: Werner Haupt, Army Group Center. The Wehrmacht in Russia 1941-1945.

The most important industry for the **10** million inhabitants was agriculture. The people struggled w/ meager tools to make the ground fruitful. In **1941**, there were approximately **10,000** kolkhozes and **1000** sovhozes. Their most important crops were *oats*, *barley*, and *potatoes*. Belorussia was the *potato capital of the Soviet Union*.

The native peasants [in **1941**] were still wearing the *same clothes worn by their greatgrand-fathers*: trousers and skirts of coarse homemade linen, handmade shoes from birch, and, in the winter, overcoats and capes from the skins of their own sheep. The lives of the peasants between the Dvina and the Pripyet consisted of *poverty and hard work*. As soon as the [Russo-German campaign of **1941**] began, they had to go into the fields to sow. The ground of Belorussia did not produce much other than *grain* and *potatoes*. In the north, *flax* was still grown.

Another industry was provided by the *rich animal life*. In the forests and marshes lived animals that had *long died out in Europe*. Here were *bears, foxes, elk, badgers, beaver, fish*, and *marsh otters*. Animal trapping was lucrative. There were many breeding farms run by the large Moscow and Leningrad fur farms.

[Despite size of Belorussia] there were only five [5] major cities. The most important of these was Minsk, w/ **240,000** inhabitants. Then followed Vitebsk (**167,420**), Smolensk (**156,670**), Mogilev (**99,440**), and Bobruisk (**84,110**). The only lines of communication tying Belorussia to Central Europe and central Russia lead thru these large cities. This vast area could only be crossed quickly and securely on the railroad lines and highways, which were called “*rollbahns*” by the German soldiers. Otherwise the terrain was like the people – hostile. (Note: For political history – shifting borders since WWI, etc. – see, 9-14)

c) “*Barbarossa*” unleashed

-- **Note:** For a thumbnail overview of “Barbarossa” from **Jun–Dec 41** see, (D. Glantz, Soviet-German War: Myths & Realities, 15-16)

-- **Note:** For historical parallel to Napoleon’s invasion of Russia [**24 Jun 1812**] see, *Adam Zamoycki, Moscow 1812*, 140-50) (Author estimates that actual strength of *Grande Armée’s* first wave on that day was no more than **2/3** to **¾** of the “generally accepted” figure of **450,000** men.)

-- **Note:** Vom **24 Jun 41** bis Ende **Mar 43** . . . verbrachte Hitler hauptsächlich in seinen neuen Hauptquartieren „Wolfsschanze“⁸² in Ostpreussen sowie Winniza in der Ukraine, nur sporadisch unterbrochen von Kurzaufenthalten in Berlin u. Berchtesgaden. . . Erst nach dem Fall von Stalingrad kehrte Hitler wieder in seinen Berghof zurueck, dafuer jedoch jeweils fuer mehrere Wochen oder sogar Monaten. (Volker Dahm, et al. (Hsg.), Die toedliche Utopie, 98)

(Hitler reached Rastenburg in his *special train* on evening of **23 Jun 41**. For great description of “Wolfsschanze” complex see, Nicolaus v. Below, At Hitler’s Side, 105-06;

⁸² **Note:** For a plethora of details on Hitler’s Wolfsschanze HQ. see, **I:310-15**. Dahm book (Utopie) says Hitler left the Wolfsschanze for good on **15 Jan 45**, shortly after the start of the Russian offensive from the Vistula. However, K.-J. Thies, Der Ostfeldzug 1941, H.Gr.Mitte Lageatlas, states that he departed for good on **20 Nov 44**.

- III:30-31**; for a good “thumb-nail” description see, *Neil Short, The Fuehrer’s Headquarters*, 11, 19, 26-30, 34-36)
- **Note:** 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**)
 - **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**)
 - **03.15** hours – attack begins!
 Genau **1.040 km** trennten sie damals von ihrem grossen Ziel – Moskau.
 Arillery preparation
 (For *personal accounts* of, see, **IV:82**, ff.)
 (Note: At the beginning of the offensive, more than **60** battalions of “Heeresartillerie” were allocated to H.Gr.Mitte – **6** Stug.-Abt., **15** 10-cm Kan.Abt., **16** s.F.H.Abt., **17** 21 cm Msr.Abt., etc. See, *Mueller-Hillebrand*, Bd. II, 192)
 - **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 verkundete der Propagandaminister, dass sich der „Fuehrer“ entschlossen habe, „das Schicksal 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 Atlantikkueste, in den Offizierskasinos in Belgien u. in Griechenland, in Daenemark u. in Norwegen, wurde das dann im Laufe des Tages Wiederholte *eher 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**)
 - **22.6.41: “X” Tag:**
 Total *tactical surprise* gained along entire front; yet enemy resistance was often tenacious. (eg., *Hoth, Pz.-Operationen*, 53, ff.; *Luttichau*, **VIII:72-73, 84-86**)
Personal accounts (eg., *W. Heinemann* (Btn. Chef **IR 67**) for chilling anecdote about first day of “Barbarossa,” “Anfang des Endes!,” etc. See his memoir, Pflicht u. Schuldigkeit, 255, ff.)
 - **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*)

- [Siegeszuversicht!]: Auch Paulus [i.e., **OQu I** im **OKH**] hatte seine Zweifel an der Loesbarkeit der Nachschubfragen verdraengt u. glaubte, man werde in grossen Zangenbewegungen die sowj. Verbaende schnell vernichtend schlagen. . . (**VIII:73**)
- *Luftwaffe* on "X" Tag:
Some **1800** VVS planes destroyed (*Luftwaffe* strafes anything that moves).
(Als im Hauptquartier der **Luftflotte II** in Warschau am Abend des ersten Feldzugtages Bilanz gezogen wurde, zaehlte man die Vernichtung von **210** Feindmaschinen im Luftkampf u. die Zerstoeerung von **528** Feindmaschinen am Boden!) (See, *Werner Haupt*, Sturm auf Moskau, 64; also, *Magenheimer*, **VIII:73**)
- **22.6.41**: German **9 Army** and **3 PzGr** attack at **0305** hrs in coordination w/ Army Group North. **4 Army** and **2 PzGr** move out at **0315** hrs, as does v. Rundstedt in the south. (For details see, *Kirchubel*, Barbarossa 1941, 32-33; **III:66**)
- **22.6.41**: Tauchfaehige Panzer⁸³ durchpfluegten das *vier Meter tiefe Wasser* des Grenzflusses Bug. (R.-D. Mueller, "Duel im Schnee," in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, *Stephan Burgdorff* (Hg.), 114)
- **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. (See, *Edwin P. Hoyt*, Stalin's War. Tragedy and Triumph, 1941-1945, pp 28-29)
- **22.6.41**: 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! (See, *Wolfgang Knecht*, Geschichte des Inf.-Rgts. 77, in my Notebook #7)
- **22.6.41**: Die **6 ID** stand am **22.6.41** zum Angriffsbeginn gegen Russland hinter dem Wigra-Abschnitt. . . Um **3.05** Uhr erfolgte der Angriff. . . Gegen **3.15** Uhr ging ein Stuka-Angriff auf den Ort Kalvarja nieder, der in Kuerze in Rauchwolken dalag. . . Etwa **35-50** km wurden bei sonnigem u. warmen Wetter zurueckgelegt. **21** schwere Stunden lagen seit Angriffsbeginn hinter den Soldaten, verbunden mit hohen Verlusten. Die **6 ID** verlor an diesem 1. Tag im Russlandfeldzug: **48** Offiziere gefallen [!], **5** verwundet; **48** Uffz. u. Mannschaften gefallen, **101** verwundet, **19** vermisst. . . Teile des **IR 37** setzten am spaeten Abend (**21.30** Uhr) [des **23.6.41**] bis zum fruehen Morgen ueber den Njemen. . . (*Buddenbohm*, Leben des Soldaten [**6 ID**], 52-54; **III:70**)⁸⁴
- **22.6.41**: Tank battle of **7. PD**.⁸⁵ 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.

⁸³ **Note:** These belonged to **18. PD**, and also to **17. PD**, I believe (confirm!).

⁸⁴ **Note:** Check Grossmann! KIA for officers seems impossibly high!

⁸⁵ **Note:** Seaton says this tank battle took place on **23.6.41**. (**III:69**) Confirm date!

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**)

-- 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)

-- Friendly fire incident⁸⁶ – „Eigene Artillerie schiesst in unsere Reihen. Viele Ausfaelle.“ (See, Uffz. Kieweg, „Russlandtagebuch 1941.“ (**45. ID**))

-- Response in Germany to „*Barbarossa*.“

(**I:779-80**, for reaction in Berlin; also, M. Miethe, “*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.;⁸⁷ for **Aug 14** see material(s) in my “*Berlin*” file.)

(The *public reaction* to start of “*Barbarossa*” was mixed in Berlin. . . Most [I assume] would have learned of the attack by radio,⁸⁸ 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. (For more details see, Moorhouse, Berlin at War, 68-73, 205)

d) **Border Battles – The „Kesselschlachten:“ Bialystok – Minsk (22.6.- ca. 5.7.41)**⁸⁹

⁸⁶ **Note:** Such incidents were quite common. I have many examples.

⁸⁷ **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)

⁸⁸ **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**).

⁸⁹ **Note:** Insert *personal accounts* as appropriate – as well as accounts from unit histories. One excellent, little used account = J. Huerter, Ein deutscher General an der Ostfront. Die Briefe u. Tagebuecher des Gotthardt Heinrici 1941/42. (See, **VII:539**, ff.)

Note: For all sorts of details – laid out in chronological order – of the border battles see, Notebook #3, 69, ff.

Note: Two personal accounts I can use as a thread thru entire text = *Dr.H. Haape* (Btn.Arzt / 6. ID) & *Maj W. Heinemann* (IR 67 / 23. ID)

Note: Role of ULTRA in helping Russians? Don't forget to "mine" I:798, ff., for role that ULTRA might have played on eastern front. One example: "9.7.41: Information is 'key to survival.' On 9 Jul 41, a group of British cryptanalysts break the *Enigma key* used by the German army to direct its ground-air ops on the eastern front. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 209; also, III:17, for several more entries.)

Note: For discussion of a serious flaw in the German operational plan – owing to a shortage of armored forces, the **OKH** planners had been compelled to settle for single-envelopments in the northern and southern sectors of the eastern front in the hope that such a strategy would succeed, but what had seemed feasible on the drawing board failed in the field – see, *Luttichau manuscript*, VIII:75)

Note: For a useful discussion of German C2 problems, example of Halder's effort to *circumvent Hitler's instructions*, problems w/ signals communications, etc., see, *Luttichau manuscript*, VIII:87)

Note: ab 22.6.41: The frontier battles were fought „w/ 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 16. Century.“ (*Keegan, Second World War*, 186)

Note: "Die *sture Hartnaeckigkeit*, mit der die Russen in ihren Stellungen verharreten, auch wenn sie in beiden Flanken bedroht waren, *ermoeglichte im Osten solche Einkesselungen*." (*Hoth, Pz.-Operationen*, 110)

Note: Often lacking *clear directives* (in the opening days and weeks) Guderian, and to a lesser degree Hoth, simply *interpreted their orders to suit their own conceptions*. Also, Brauchitsch, Halder, *et al.*, played something of a "cat and mouse game" w/ Hitler. (See, *D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed*, Vol. I, 54-56, 61)

Note: One special by-product of Schieffen's envelopment theory [his ideas had tremendous influence on Germany in both WWI and WWII] exercised "*fatal consequences*" on both world wars: *the danger of gaps*. In the war game of **Nov/Dec 1905**, when evolving the *annihilation idea*, he insisted on the means "to summon all forces in order to *close every gap* thru wich the misery and desperation of the enemy could find an escape-route." (See, *J. L. Wallach, Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation*, 46)

Note: For Napoleon's crossing the Berezina in late **Nov 1812** see, *Adam Zamoyski, Moscow 1812*, pp 458-80). His crossing was "by any standards, a magnificent feat of arms. Napoleon had risen to the occasion and proved himself worthy of his reputation, extricating himself from what Clausewitz called 'one of the worst situations in which a general ever found himself.' His soldiers had *fought like lions*." Yet during the three [3] days the French lost up to **25,000** (incl. as many as **10,000** non-combatant stragglers. And the scenes described by Zamoyski would do more than justice to Dante's vision of hell.

- *Preventive nature of German attack confirmed!* (so thinks the Landser!)
(Eg., **IX: Rudel**, Stuka Pilot; also Notebook #4; also, **IX:141**, for accounts of *Dr. E. Bunke*, “*Das Osten blieb unser Schicksal*,” and *Karl-Wilhelm Thilo*, Hauptmann in der Operations-Abteilung des Heeres)
(Im Russlandfeldzug wurde die *Weltanschauung* zur Waffe. . . Die meisten Soldaten glaubten der NS-Propaganda gern, einen notwendigen *Praeventivkrieg* gegen den „juedischen Bolschewismus“ zu fuehren, um die Heimit vor den „Horden asiatischer Untermenschen“ zu schuetzen. Das belegen Tausende Feldpostbriefe u. Tagebuecher deutscher Soldaten an der Ostfront.) (*Stefan Storz*, „*Perfide Rechnung*,” in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, *Stephan Burgdorff* (Hg.), 314)
- **22.-27.6.41 (PzGr 2)**: In first two [2] days of “Barbarossa,” Pz.Gr. destroyed **220** enemy tanks. Beginning about **27.6.41**, KTB reveals tensions between GFM v. Kluge (Bef. **AOK 4**) and Guderian. Kluge begins to “poach” units from G.’s **2 PzGr – 29. ID (mot.)**, **M.G. Btn. 5**, Pz.-Brig. of **10. PD** – to help **4. Army** seal off Bialystok pocket and counter enemy breakout attempts. (See notebook entries for details.) The KTB also reveals challenges resulting from structurally weak bridges unable to withstand the tremendous weight of the *Panzergruppe*’s armored columns; they sometimes collapse as result. (For more details see my, Notebook #7)
- **22.-28.6.41 (KTB AOK 4)**: Of course, this source provides the requisite overview of events – the “big picture.” 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 „beinahe laecherliche Dinger*.” Andererseits haben sich die 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*.” (See, Notebook #7)
- “This is not France!” New and shockingly brutal kind of warfare. Dialectics of reciprocal brutality. (*H. Haape*, etc.)
- **22.6.-5.7.41**: Border battles. For useful summary of details see, *D. Glantz*, Barbarossa Derailed, Vol. I, 29, ff.; also, **VIII:88-89**)
- **22.6.-8.7.41 [Summary of action in Belorussia]**: Army Group Ctr carried out an extraordinary double encirclement in Belorussia. By the 7th day of the war, Soviet forward forces stationed on the border around Belostok (now Bialystok) had been encircled by GFM v. Bock’s infantry. More strikingly, during the same week Hoth’s **3 PzGr** had attacked near Grodno (in the north), and Guderian’s **2 PzGr** at Brest (in the south). They had dashed around the inner salient to link at Minsk, **200** miles to the east. This deep “cauldron” (*Kessel*) trapped nearly all Pavlov’s remaining forces. . . About **30** Red Army divisions were trapped in what had now become the Belostok-Minsk pocket. Organized Soviet resistance continued until about **8 Jul 41**. Not the least of the dangers facing the trapped Soviet soldiers was the forest fires set off by combat and spread by the dry weather. Red Army losses included **4800** tanks and **9400** guns and mortars. A high proportion were evidently abandoned rather than destroyed by the enemy. The Germans claimed as captured **3300** tanks and **1800** artillery pieces. Russian figures for killed, missing and captured come to **340,000**, which needs to be

compared to a total strength of **680,000** in Western Army Group.⁹⁰ A very high proportion of these losses were persons taken prisoner; the Germans claimed **324,000** POWs. . . This figure is probably exaggerated by the inclusion of civilians. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 60; 440, f.n. 7; **III:73-74**)

- **23.-25.6.41** (Soviet counterattacks): Following Pavlov's orders, Boldin's "shock group" – basically the **6** (w/ over **1000** tanks) and **11 Mech Corps** and **6 Cav Corps** – advances toward Grodno in a counter-clockwise arch w/ an ultimate objective of Augustovo. In common w/ all Soviet attacks along the front in these early days, Boldin's suffers from poor command and control, no effective air support, weak combined-arms tactics and insufficient logistics. About half of the **6 Mech Corp** tanks are modern T-34s and KVs, but they had only been received a month earlier, so crews are unfamiliar w/ them. A Luftwaffe attack on **6 Cav Corps** destroys **70%** of its **36 Cav Div** in **24** hours. Boldin's assault creates a small crisis for **25 ID** around Grodno, but is unable to distract **3 PzGr**. . . Pavlov's counterattacks have shot their bolt by **25 Jun 41**, one mile shy of Grodno's center, low on fuel and ammunition w/ little to show. The **11 Mech Corps** lost all but **30** of its **305** tanks, and melted from **32,000** to **600** men in four days. Caught behind enemy lines near western edge of the front, Boldin and about **2000** of his men begin a **45-day** evasion that will eventually lead them to freedom east of Smolensk. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 36-37; **III:75**)
- **23.-26.6.41**: At Rastenburg, tensions and disagreements are already mounting between Hitler, **OKH** and AGC. The original **OKH** order of **31 Jan 41** was clear that the panzer double envelopment in depth should be directed at Minsk. GFM v. Bock, however, had always favored the much deeper envelopment on Smolensk, and again on **23 June** had tried, w/o success, to have this orders varied. Hitler, on the other hand, is fretting that the panzer groups should not overreach themselves by thrusting too deeply eastward. . . On **25 June**, Hitler's aide, Schmundt, arrives at AGC HQ posthaste from the Fuehrer, who was nervously suggesting that the caudron be closed much short of Minsk at Nowogrodek, and this proposal v. Bock resisted w/ all the eloquence at his command. (For more details see, *Seaton, Russo-German War*, 121-22; 124; **III:75**)⁹¹
- **24.6.41**: Lage: . . . Der Feind hat sich im Grenzgebiet fast ueberall geschlagen. . . Die Gefangenzahlen, die sich z.Z. am ersten Tage auf etwa **2000** vor den einzelnen Armeefronten belaufen (im ganzen also etwa **10 000**) werden erst in den kommenden Tagen wachsen, wenn die operativen Wirkungen unserer Panzerkeile fuehlbar werden. Fuer ein operatives Ausweichen des Feindes liegen keine Anzeichen vor. Nur im Norden ist ein Versuch des Zuruecknehmens zu spueren. . . Die Verwundeten- u. Totenzahlen sind ertraeglich. *Auffallend hohe Offiziersverluste*. . . (*Halder, KTB*)
- **24.6.41: Ia** war diary of **18. PD**: 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**. Diary also describes wild – almost surreal – attack on divisional HQ on night of **24.6.41**, involving inebriated Russian soldiers and "Flintenweiber!" (See, Notebook #7)

⁹⁰ **Note:** Mawdsley uses term "group" in lieu of more common "front." Hence, Western Army Group vice Western Front.

⁹¹ Seaton: "Hitler had always intended that the deep encirclement should be directed on Minsk. Von Bock, Guderian and Hoth wanted to close on Smolensk about **400** miles from the start line, and in this they obviously had some support from v. Brauchitsch and Halder." (124)

- Conversely, attackers often greeted as *liberators* by the local population. (eg. **39. PzK** hatte Wilna in den ersten Morgenstunden [des **24.6.41**] nach leichtem Kampf durch **7. PD** besetzt. . . . Die Stadt⁹² war in litauischen Farben geflaggt, die einrueckende Truppe jubelnd begruesst worden. *Hoth, Pz.-Operationen*, 60)
- Brief operational account thru clearing of Minsk & Smolensk pockets⁹³
Luftwaffe achieves air superiority (supremacy?) w/in **48-72** hours (would be shortlived)
- Germans early on face key *operational dilemma* posed by the necessity of performing two missions – i.e., advancing rapidly toward Smolensk while completing the tedious process of reducing the encirclements. Also, German *intelligence organs* consistently underestimate Red Army's remaining strength and capabilities and erroneously assess Soviet intent. (See *D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed*, Vol. I, 43)
- Initial success of operations; see, **IMPB:8-9**, for a fascinating discussion, including how Germans got inside Red Army's "OODA loop."
 Conversely, both *Hoth & Guderian* frustrated by their superiors – GFM v. Bock, Brauchitsch, even Hitler – who opt for conservative operational options (eg., at Minsk) instead of allowing panzer groups to continue pushing rapidly toward the east. (See, *Hoth, Pz.-Operationen*, 61-62, 65)
- For the initial operations of Hoth's **PzGr 3** – some fascinating details – see, **RH 21-3/788: KTB Pz.Gr. 3 (22.6.-1.7.41)**
 (Summary of details in my "Biblio" file.)
 (For spectacular advances of Hoth's **7. PD (39. PzK)** in opening days of campaign – its lightning advance on Minsk – see, *R.H.S. Stolfi, German Panzers on the Offensive*, 16-20)
- Report by **PzGr 3** notes that Russian Air Force remained active and effective in first days of "Barbarossa" – once again putting into question the "conventional wisdom" that Russian Air Force was swept from the skies within ca. **48-72** hours and then hardly seen for weeks (or longer). This account indicates that, by the time Hoth's Pz.Gr. had reached the Duena, the enemy's conduct of the battle had become much more energetic, active and effective; his conduct of the defense "auesserst geschickt." (See, "*Gefechtsberichte Russland 1941/42*," a report by **PzGr 3**, in my Notebook #7)
- **24.6.41: Hoth (PzGr 3)**, after initial breakthrough, wants to continue pursuit "in Richtung Witebsk," to reach the Orscha – Witebsk landbridge between Dvina and Dnieper Rivers. Hoth even has his **OKH** liaison officer fly to **OKH HQ** to try and convince high command of rightness of this operational approach. Yet Hoth's concept rejected; he's told to wheel SE toward Minsk, in order to encircle Soviet forces before **4. and 9. Armies** in close cooperation w/ **2. PzGr**. (See, *Hoth, Pz.-Operationen*, 61, ff.)
- Die verduzten sowj. Einheiten erholten sich rasch vom Schock des dt. Ueberfalls u. kaempften mit einer geradezu *selbsmoerderischen Verbissenheit*. **PzRgt 35** in Bericht an die **4. PD** vom **4.7.41** (see, **IX: C. Hartmann, Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg, Kapitel III**)

⁹² **Note:** For follow up – i.e., how Hitler "blew it" w/ the captive peoples of the Soviet Union, in this case the Lithuanians – see, *Hoth*, pp 64-65.

⁹³ **Note:** If too unwieldy, separate chapter for "Smolensk."

- Fighting at Brest-Litovsk (**45 ID**). Here, Germans sustained some of the most ferocious and costly fighting of opening days/weeks. Writes *Uffz. Kieweg*: “**30.6.41**: Die Kaempfe um die Festung Brest-Litowsk sind abgeschlossen. Die Verluste unserer Div. in der ersten Woche sind enorm; sie betrugen fast **500** Gefallene u. ueber **1000** Verwundete.“ (See, *Uffz. Kieweg*, “*Russlandtagebuch 1941*,” etc.)
- **24.6.-3.7.41**: Hitler intervenes in tactical matters from the outset. As early as **24 June**, he tells Brauchitsch of his worries that the encirclement at Bialystok is not tight enough. The following day (**25 June**), he expresses concern that Army Groups Center and South are operating too far in depth. On **27, 29**, and **30 June** and again on **2-3 July**, Halder records in his diary worried queries or interventions by Hitler in tactical deployments of troops. Halder’s irritation at Hitler’s interference is understandable. But the *errors and mis-judgements*, even in the first, seemingly so successful, phase of “*Barbarossa*,” were as much those of the professionals in Army High Command as of Hitler. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 407; *Halder, KTB*; **III:31-32**)⁹⁴
- **24.6.-4.7.41**: For several of Halder’s diary entries about the *toughness of the Russian soldier* see, **III:32**)
- **25.6.41**: Ferocious combat continues for citadel of Brest Litovsk. Combat teams from the three [3] inf.rgts. of **45 ID** form mixed groups of assault pioneers and infantry to reduce remaining strong points. *Nebelwerfer* multi-barrelled rocket launchers are used for support. Russian civilians (women/children) hide in barrack cellars w/ no water or anything to eat. Close-in fighting for the enclosed built-up areas is brutal. Trapped Russians, expecting to be shot at once if captured, even fight back w/ knives. (For more details see, *Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 65-67; **III:78**)
- **25.6.41**: Nordfluegel **3 PzGr** steht rund **40** km nordwestl. Minsk. Kessel ist praktisch dicht. (*Tagesmeldungen*, in: *Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 153)
- **25.-26.6.41**: With Hoth having raced past Vilnius toward Minsk on the Western Front’s northern flank, while at same time Guderian’s tanks have penetrated Soviet defenses south of Brest and are advancing rapidly toward Minsk on the front’s southern flank, Pavlov has no choice but to pull back. He attempts to withdraw to new defenses behind the Shchara River at Slonim on night of **25-26 Jun 41**. Yet the few units which actually receive the orders to with-draw are not able to break contact. Having already lost much of their fuel, motor transport and air support,⁹⁵ Pavlov’s forces withdraw eastward in disarray, on foot and under constant German air attack. (See, *Glantz, Barbarossa*, 40)
- **26.6.41**: By midday, Hoth’s **3 PzGr** is only **18** miles to the north of Minsk. That same afternoon Guderian, who is still thrusting eastwards, is ordered by AGC to turn the greater part of his group northwards and close the enemy pocket by joining Hoth at Minsk. Guderian’s right flanking **24 PzK**, however, is to be permitted to continue its eastward advance towards Bobruisk on the Beresina and towards Rogachev on the Dnieper. Guderian and Hoth obeyed reluctantly since both oppose this order and want to penetrate **200** miles deeper into the enemy rear and close the north and south pincers near Smolensk. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 121)

⁹⁴ **Note:** For Halder’s own diary entries re: Hitler’s anxieties and interventions see, **III:31-32**.

⁹⁵ **Note:** The Western Front lost **738** acft (**40%** of its total strength) on first day of war. (216, f.n. 13)

- **26.-27.6.41:** In the early afternoon of **26th**, a message was received that Hoth had reached point **18** miles to the north of Minsk. At **14.30** hrs, I received orders from the Army Group: the mass of my forces was to advance on Minsk, while **XXIV PzK** was to move on Bobruisk. I was able to signal back that **XXIV PzK** had already been given orders to capture Bobruisk and that **XLVII PzK** was attacking thru Baranovicze toward Minsk. On **June 27, 17 PD** reached the southern outskirts of Minsk and thus established contact w/ **3 PzGr**, which had already on the **26th** penetrated into the town that the Russians had largely demolished. The Russian forces which had been in the Bialystok area . . . were no completely surrounded. . . The foundations had been laid for the first great victory of the campaign. (See, *Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 158)
- **26.-29.6.41:** **3 PzGr** breaks thru the “Stalin Line” at this time. By **1600** hrs on **28 June**, the **12 PD** has entered Minsk. But the *Kessel* remains only half closed, since the willful Guderian has headed east for Moscow rather than NE toward Hoth and Minsk. Soviet units trickled out southeastwards for another two (2) days. Guderian’s **18 PD** finally closes the Minsk *Kessel* on the afternoon of **29 Jun 41**. The trap consists of three (3) main pockets, including those at Bialystok and Novogrudok. In places, Red Army soldiers escape thru Guderian’s weak southeastern cordon, while others fought to the last bullet or attacked in suicidal waves (especially at night), forcing many German units to form defensive *Igels*. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 41, 45)
- **27.6.41:** [9 Armee]: Die **3 PzGr** hat den Vorstoss auf Minsk fortgesetzt u. stand am **26.6.41** vorm. mit dem **39 AK (mot)** **10** km nordwestl. der Stadt. (*Tagesmeldungen*, in: *Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 155)
- **27.6.41:** **12 PD** enters Minsk.⁹⁶ Hoth’s men wait for Guderian’s **17 PD** to come up later from the south. Soviets take advantage of open door to escape eastwards. **7 PD** continues drive toward Smolensk. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 39)
- **27.6.41:** “. . . Bei der H.Gr.Mitte laeuft alles wie erwartet. . . Luftaufklaerung **OKH** [?] wird gegen das strategische Dreieck Orscha, Witebsk, Smolensk angesetzt, um Klarheit darueber zu gewinnen, ob sich aus den von Minsk u. Polotsk abstroemenden Feindkraefte eine neue feindliche operative Fuehrungsgruppe [i.e., *operational group*] zwischen Minsk u. Moskau bildet. Der Wunsch mag vorhanden sein, *die Moeglichkeit scheint mir aber gering*.“⁹⁷ (*Halder KTB*, 18-19)
- **27.6.41:** At Bletchley Park, British cryptographers break the *Enigma key* being used by German army on the eastern front. Known as “*Vulture*,” it provides daily readings of German military orders. On following day, Churchill gives instructions that Stalin is to be given this precious intelligence, provided its source can remain secret. Yet despite being *well-informed* of German moves against them, Stalin and his cdrs lack the resources to counter the moves. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 203; **III:17**)
- **27.-28.6.41:** On **27 June**, Guderian’s **2** and Hoth’s **3 PzGr** join up near Minsk. By nightfall on **28 June**, the marching infantry of Strauss’s **9** and v. Kluge’s **4 Armies** have joined up in the

⁹⁶ **Note:** Some minor discrepancies in this section re: times and dates of German movements. Check “Lageost” maps in Thies!

⁹⁷ **Note:** In other words, Halder believes his armies will encounter little organized resistance beyond the frontiers, having smashed the Russian frontier armies.

shorter encirclement and completely cut off the Bialystok pocket from the larger Nowo-grodek pocket to the east. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 123)

- **28.6.41** [Anecdote]: One of Hitler's two private secretaries at his *Wolfsschanze HQ* records in her diary this day: (Excellent re: *atmospherics* at Hitler's East Prussian HQ. Hitler emphasizes the "enormous danger bolshevism is for Europe and saying that, if he had *waited just one more year* it would probably have been too late.") (From *David Irving, Hitler's War*, quoted in: **III:35**).
- **28.6.41** (Minsk pocket): Guderian's **XLVI** and Hoth's **XXXIX PzK** link up at Minsk, closing the pocket and sealing the fate of nearly **300 000** Red Army soldiers and over **2500** tanks. Russians trapped in pocket did not, however, lay down their arms and surrender, nor did they wait passively in defensive positions for the German inf.-divs. Unit after unit of the Red Army marched resolutely out to attack its way out of the encirclement. There was little coordination or finesse involved in these attacks, but the Russians heavily outnumbered the handful of German divisions blockading their route to freedom. Along Guderian's portion of the cauldron particularly heavy casualties were sustained by **29 ID (mot)**, **SS „DR,“** and **18 PD**. At one point in late June in **29 ID (mot)** sector, notes Paul Carell, „the divisional staff officers were lying in the infantry foxholes w/ carbines and machine pistols,“ so attenuated had the line become. Part of the reason for these casualties stemmed from the disagreement over tactics. (For more details see, *Newton, Hitler's Commander*, 124-25; also, *Carell, Hitler Moves East*, 67; **III:83-84**)
- **28.-29.6.41**: **20 PD** and **18 PD** close Minsk pocket. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 10)
- **29.6.41**:⁹⁸ Hitler had permitted no *Wehrmacht* reports during the very first days of the campaign. But Sunday, **29 Jun 41** was, as Goebbels described it, "the day of special announcements." Twelve (**12**) of them altogether, each introduced by the "*Russian Fanfare*" based on Liszt's "*Hungarian Rhapsody*, were broadcast. (See, **III:37**)
- **29.-30.6.41**: Soviet garrison at Brest-Litovsk finally crushed. For dramatic details of German victory see, **III:84-86**. In fighting for the citadel, **45. ID** had lost more men than it had lost during the entire campaign in the West of 1940.
- **ca. 30.6.41**: Von *einer* Sorge, die das **OKH** vor dem Kriege erfuehlt hatte, war die dt. Fuehrung nun befreit – der Feind dachte nicht daran, in die „*Weite des russ. Raumes*“ auszuweichen. (*Hoth, Pz.-Operationen*, 68)
- **ca. 30.6.41**: Hitler hat Ende **Jun 41** es unterlassen, seinen Willen durchzusetzen [i.e., that is, to shift strong armored units of H.Gr.Mitte to H.Gr.Nord]. Vermutlich haben ihn die Anfangserfolge der H.Gr.Nord, besonders die schnelle Inbesitznahme von Duenaburg, getaeuscht. (*Hoth, Pz.-Operationen*, 71; also, p 106)

⁹⁸ **Note:** A daily situation report from the Wehrmacht High Command was transmitted every day following the midday news. Prefaced by an impressive fanfare lifted from one of Liszt's "Preludes", the broadcasts opened w/ the stock phrase: "Das Oberkommando der Wehrmacht gibt bekannt." It also quickly became fashionable for schoolchildren to plot the German advance [of the various campaigns] on a large map . . . marked with a pin or flag. (Moorhouse, *Berlin at War*, 207-08)

- Die Doppelschlacht von Bialystok – Minsk kostet die Sowjets . . . Mehrere sowjetische Kommandeure u. viele ihrer Soldaten verueben Selbstmord. (See, *Janusz Piekalkiewicz, Die Schlacht um Moskau: Die erfrorene Offensive*, 81)
- Die gesamte H.Gr.Mitte erhielt durch die siegreiche Schlacht von Bialystok – Minsk *volle Operationsfreiheit*. Es fragte sich, wie dieser Erfolg am wirksamsten ausgenutzt werden konnte. (See, *Hoth*, 69, ff.)
- **30.6.41**: Hoth and Guderian confer. The **OKH** directs v. Bock to advance on Smolensk. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 10)
- **30.6.41**: Auch am **28.6.41** kaempften die in den Waeldern nordostw. Bialystok u. im Gebiet um Wolkosysk eingekesselten Feindgruppen heftig um den Durchbruch durch die Umklammerung nach Osten, Suedosten, u. Norden. Der Gegner ist *ausserordentlich zaeh u. tapfer*. Die **2 PzGr** hat Bobrujsk erreicht u. dort einen Brueckenkopf ueber die Beresina gebildet. **3 PzGr** hat noch am **28.6.41** nachm. Minsk genommen. (*Tagesmeldungen*, in: *Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 158)
- **30.6.41**: As Halder had been convinced since **24 June** that the mass of the Red Army was not planning a rapid retreat but intended to stand and fight, he considered a thrust to the Dnieper crossings essential for an envelopment of enemy forces, the capture of the area between Vitebsk and Smolensk, and the opening of the way to Moscow. On **30 Jun 41** he issued a corresponding order to the two armored groups to secure the line Rogachev-Mogilev-Orsha-Vitebsk-Polotsk as quickly as possible. (Note: On **1 July** Army Group Ctr ordered the armored groups to begin their advance on **3 Jul 41**. See pp 530-31 for details of orders to the panzer groups.) (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 530)
- **30.6.-1.7.41**: Between **30 Jun - 1 Jul 41**, **18 PD** makes a **60-mile** raid to Borisov (originally Hoth's objective). **17 PD** follows in support, both violating specific orders from v. Kluge, but securing yet another breach in the Soviet wall. (Kluge would threaten both Hoth and Guderian with courts martial.) After a harrowing journey, the newly arrived **1 Moscow Mot Div**, with **1000** tanks (including **T-34s** and **KVs**) reaches Borisov the next day and makes immediate counterattacks; they all fail. Stavka tries to adjust to these new developments. Budenny's and Yeremenko's commands barely last a few days. Timoshenko takes over leadership of the West and Reserve Fronts, w/ Yeremenko as his deputy. Stalin sends Budenny to Kiev. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 46)
- **Jun-Jul 41**:⁹⁹ The German victories at Bialystok and Minsk were *each* comparable to the German victory over the combined French and British armies in **May 1940**. (*R. Messenger, German Way of War*, 32)
- **1.7.41**: Die Fruehaufklaerung ergab, dass der Gegner starke mot. Kolonnen aus dem Raum um Smolensk gegen Orscha – Witebsk heranfuehrt. Ausserdem meldet die Aufklaerung, dass die Orte Orscha – Witebsk – Smolensk stark mit mot. Kolonnen belegt sind. (*Tagesmeldungen*, in: *Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 159)¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ **Note**: Yet the Russians would continue to fight; they did not recognize defeat, as the Germans would soon discover to their great frustration.

¹⁰⁰ **Note**: Compare this entry to Halder KTB entry from **27.6.41** above.

-- **2.7.41:** Der Eindruck, dass der Gegner neue Verbaende zum Aufbau einer Abwehrfront an Dnjepr u. Duena heranfuehrt, haelt weiter an. **AOK 4** uebernimmt **3.7.41 0.00** Uhr Befehl ueber **PzGr 2 u. 3.** (*KTb OKW*, Bd. I, 505)

-- **Crux:** By **8 Jul 41** Army Group Ctr has destroyed the bulk of the Soviet forces trapped in the Minsk pocket. The **10, 3, 4 Armies** and part of **13 Army** have all been destroyed, but cadres of each army fight their way east, so that newly formed armies can be created to fight another day. Already, the **13** and **4 Armies** are in the process of being reformed and have elements in the line. Soviet losses during the frontier battle in Belorussia are disastrous; **290,000** prisoners have been taken together w/ **2500** tanks and **1500** artillery pieces destroyed or captured. It is estimated that **22** rifle and **7** tank divisions have been wiped from the Soviet order of battle, along w/ **6** mechanized bdes. Possibly as many as **100,000** Russian soldiers have been killed in the fighting; total Soviet losses are estimated at about half a million. When considering that at the onset of the battle the Western Front numbered **630,000** men, the defeat has been colossal. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 67)¹⁰¹

-- **11.7.41:** In Ergaenzung des Abschlussberichtes der H.Gr.Mitte fuer die Doppelschlacht von Bialistock u. Minsk werden auf Grund der weiteren Zaehlung nunmehr folgende bisher festgestellte Zahlen gemeldet:

323.898 Gefangene
3332 erbeutete u. vernichtete Panzer
1809 Geschuetze
339 Flugzeuge (erbeutet)

(*Mehner, Tagesmeldungen*, in: Geheime Tagesberichte, 179)

e) *Race to the Western Dvina – Dnepr Rivers (ca. 2.-9.7.41)*

Note: After the battles of the frontier, the second phase of the “*Barbarossa*” plan was the capture of the Orsha – Vitebsk landbridge and of Smolensk, which meant the breakthrough of the so-called Stalin Line. What was to be done after that was the critical question weighed during the first week in **Jul 41**. Neither Hitler nor **OKH** knew the answer. (For more details see, *Luttichau manuscript*, **VIII:74**)

-- **Note (Terrain factors):** Beyond Minsk the country became worse, and the weather no better. Blumentritt (4. AOK) vividly described the conditions.

It was appallingly difficult country for tank movement – great virgin forests, widespread swamps, terrible roads, and bridges not strong enough to bear the weight of tanks. The resistance also became stiffer, and the Russians began to cover their front w/ minefields. It was easier for them to block the way because there were so few roads.

The great motor highway leading from the frontier to Moscow was *unfinished* – the one road a Westerner would call a ‘road.’ We were not prepared for what we found because our maps in no way corresponded to reality. On those maps all supposed main roads were marked in *red*, and there seemed to be many, but they often proved to be merely sandy tracks . . .

¹⁰¹ **Note:** For accurate figures on Soviet losses in frontier battles see, Kiroosheev, Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses, Table 75.

Such country was bad enough for tanks, but worse still for the transport accompanying them – carrying their fuel, their supplies, and all the auxiliary troops they needed. Nearly all this transport consisted of *wheeled vehicles*, which could not move off the roads, nor move on it if the sand turned to mud. An hour or two's rain reduced the *panzer* forces to stagnation. It was an extraordinary sight, w/ groups of tanks and transport strung out over a **100-mile** stretch, all stuck – until the sun came out and the ground dried. (B.H. Liddell Hart, German Generals Talk, 149)

-- **Jul 41:** *Zenith of Second World War (IX: R.-D. Mueller, Hitler's War in the East)*

-- **Jul 41:** In early July – in *violation of Hitler's instructions* that the Minsk pockets be eliminated first, and largely on their own initiative – both Hoth and Guderian moved their Panzer Groups toward Smolensk from positions north and south of Minsk. As the slower-marching infantry arrived at each of the smaller pockets, they freed the armor to continue on eastward. Guderian, and to a lesser extent Hoth, did not conceal their belief that Moscow should be the *Ostheer's* main goal. (Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941, 47)

-- **Jul 41:** During first week of **Jul 41** . . . AGC's two panzer groups¹⁰² raced forward *virtually unimpeded* to the western bank of the Dnepr River east of Minsk. Hoth's panzer group marched on Polotsk – Vitebsk; Guderian's on Bobruisk – Mogilev. (See, D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed, Vol. I, 51-52)

-- **2.7.41:** *Marschleistungen* (seit dem **22.6.41**) (See, FMS **P-190**, in: **VI:109**)
(Bulk of Bock's two panzer groups finally began their *general offensive* on this day. D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed, Vol. I, 62, ff.)

-- **2.-3.7.41:** Germans establish **4. Pz Army** under GFM v. Kluge to control both panzer groups of AGC. This would work out poorly. Kluge's HQ was organized to control an *infantry* army; it was poorly equipped for C2 of armored forces, lacking adequate radio communications,¹⁰³ cross-country mobility, liaison acft, etc. Moreover, specter of *personality clashes* between equally strong-willed Kluge, Hoth and Guderian. Latter even threatened to resign over this initiative. (D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed, Vol. I, 42-43, 56)

(Note:¹⁰⁴ Guderian had managed to achieve almost total independence from his superiors. His autonomy was due in part to the machinations of Halder, for the chief of the general staff wished to see Guderian gain the cherished goal of Moscow as rapidly as possible. To ensure the panzer general's chance of success, Halder *systematically insulated Guderian from interference from above*. Creation of the **4. Pz Army** under the nominal command of von Kluge was an artificial device to confuse the command structure and keep Guderian closely tied to **OKH**. . . Creation of the panzer army command under von Kluge in early **Jul 41** was designed to give the panzer generals Guderian and Hoth the *maximum amount of freedom* to attack eastward as rapidly as possible. . . (See, *Fugate & Dvoretzky*, Thunder on the Dnepr, 308-10)

-- **2.-6.7.41:** AGC's advance to the Western Dvina – Dnepr. (For details of both Hoth's and Guderian's advances see, D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed, Vol. I, 60, ff.)

(Note: Kluge has difficulty controlling Hoth and Guderian, at least in part because he frequently did *not know where they were located or where they were headed*. Bock

¹⁰² **Note:** Or does Glantz mean only **PzGr 2**. Hoth was moving toward the Dvina.

¹⁰³ **Note:** Severe thunderstorms sometimes blocked radio communications as well. (56)

¹⁰⁴ **Note:** If this analysis is accurate, it would be a shining example of Halder's ongoing subterfuge!

- concerned lest Kluge *disperse* his panzers across *too broad a front*. As he told Kluge late on **6 Jul 41**: “*Make a fist somewhere.*” However, it was too late to do so; in addition, the *summer thunderstorms*, poor roads and swampy terrain made it difficult if not impossible to shift panzer groups and corps *laterally* across the front. (Glantz, 69))
- **2.-11.7.41**: The fierce battle of Minsk was raging, but we left the infantry to clear up the great encirclement and pushed on for the Dnieper and the Dvina. It was during this advance – between **2-11 Jul 41** – that the *terrain first caused our tanks serious trouble*. The Berezina proved a difficult river to cross. The approaches were swampy, the main bridges had been blown and the secondary ones which remained were flimsy wooden affairs. The Russians fought hard in this swampy terrain, and for the first time we began to encounter *mines in large quantities*. All this slowed down the tanks and enabled the infantry, after battle of Minsk was completed, to catch up w/ the armored forces once more. But Hoth and Guderian were not slowed down for long. Despite difficulties described above, Guderian reached the Dnieper on either side of Mogilev and Orsha w/ remarkable speed; in the north, Hoth made equally good time in his race for the Dvina at Vitebsk and Polotsk. By doing so, the armor had reached the so-called Stalin line. (Blumentritt, *Moscow*, in: Fatal Decisions, 49)
 - **3.7.41 (Reorganization of AGC)**: At this critical juncture, Army Group Center did something in common with many organizations (military and otherwise) that often pays minimum dividends at a steep cost: it reorganized. On **3 Jul 41**, the German high command converted the **4 Army** into the **4 Pz Army** with von Kluge at its head. Ostensibly, the reason behind this peculiar move so short into the campaign, was to make von Bock’s job easier and both to better coordinate and somewhat rein in Hoth and Guderian by placing them under an intermediate headquarters. (For details see, *Kirchubel, Draft*,¹⁰⁵ 6; **III:94-95**)
 - **3.7.41**: All three German army groups have advanced impressive distances: Army Group Centre, up to **285 miles**; Army Group North, **180 miles**; Army Group South, **120 miles**. In the meantime, Finland had declared war on the Soviet Union (**25 June**), and the Army of Norway had begun advances out of northern Finland toward Murmansk and Kandalaksha. (Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad, 28; *OKW KTB*, Vol. I, 1217; **III:40**)¹⁰⁶
 - **ab 3.7.41**: Hoth and Guderian resume advance eastwards. There is friction between v. Kluge and his tank cdrs, yet the control exercised by Kluge appears to have been loose. Guderian, because he has received no other orders, assumes that his objective remained the Dnieper and the general area Smolensk – Elnya – Roslavl and he thus advances eastward w/ all three [**3**] tank corps forward on a very broad front. Hoth, who has only two [**2**] panzer corps, is obliged to direct Knutzen’s **57 PzK** far to the north on Polotsk and Nevel, because of Hitler’s preoccupation w/ the enemy build-up in the area of Nevel – Velikiye Luki on the boundary between AGC and AGN. Schmidt’s **39 PzK** moved on Vitebsk. So it came about that the five [**5**] panzer corps of **4 Pz Army** *moved forward on an extended frontage of over 200 miles w/ nothing in reserve*, so that their armored thrusts lacked momentum, as Hoth said, like the fingers of an outspread hand rather than a clenched fist. An error was also made in exerting pressure on the Orsha-Smolensk axis, since this merely drove the enemy eastwards. Heavy summer rain began to fall and the roads and tracks turned overnight from deep sand and dust to seemingly bottomless rivers of mud, and in consequence the German tank columns slowed

¹⁰⁵ **Note:** All material cited as “Kirchubel Draft” is gleaned from a draft (courtesy of author) of his new book: Hitler’s Panzer Armies on the Eastern Front. 2009.

¹⁰⁶ **Note:** Check OKW KTB to confirm date of 3.7.41 for this entry!

down and became strung out. (Seaton, Russo-German War, 125-26; also, Hoth, Panzeroperationen, 78)¹⁰⁷

- **4.7.41:** On this day, Hitler realizes that this “most difficult decision of the war“ would require a weakening of the central sector of the front, so as to be able to send strong armored forces against Leningrad and the eastern Ukraine. Only infantry armies were to advance towards Moscow until operations in the north and south had been completed. Hitler thus confirmed again the strategic perspective that had *dominated his planning for the campaign in the east from the very beginning*. (GSWW, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 569; **III:41**)
- **4.7.41: 2 PzGr: 10 PD** hat bei Beresino Ostufer der Beresina gewonnen. **3 PzGr:** Wege u. Strassen werden immer schlechter, zahlreiche Ausfalle an Kfz.,¹⁰⁸ Geschwindigkeit nicht ueber 10 km. **12.00 Uhr** Disna genommen. Am Nordufer Duena anscheinend starker Feind. **18 ID (mot)** im Vorgehen von Prozoroki auf Polozk. **7 PD** u. **20 PD** **11.00 Uhr** Lepel erreicht, anscheinend Bruecke zerstort. Inbetriebnahme der Strecke Szolpce – Minsk auf russischem Geleis voraussichtlich **5.7.41** abends. Umnagelung von Baranowicze bis Minsk ist befohlen. (Tagesmeldungen, in: *Mehner*, Geheime Tagesberichte, 166)
- **ca. 4.7.41 [3 PD]:** By now, Model’s French- and Czech-manufactured trucks began to break down. Tank strength in the three [3] panzer btns. declined so rapidly that one armored vehicle status report indicated that by the end of the second week of the campaign, the **3 PD** had **128** of **198** tanks at least temporarily out of action. The culprit was dust more than the Red Army: Maneuvering down the primitive roads of Belorussia, German tanks went through air filters at an ungodly rate, w/ the all-pervasive dust halving the life expectancy of the engines. Even the sudden downpours on **2-3 Jul 41** that turned the main road to Smolensk into a bottomless quagmire could not dissuade Model from ordering his weary division to lurch closer to the Dnepr. His more conservative cdrs, esp. Kleemann and Audoersch, began to balk, requesting a halt of at least **24** hours to rest, regroup, and refit. Their objections were brushed aside. (Newton, Hitler’s Commander, 125-27)
- **4-9.7.41:** Hoth continues toward Vitebsk and Polotsk, thunderstorms and rising rivers hampering his every step. Five or six (**6**) new Red Army divisions establish defensive positions at Polotsk astride both banks of the Dvina. After racing **120** miles in **24** hours, **19 PD** seizes a bridge intact at Disna on **4 Jul 41**; on same day (4 July), **7 PD** runs into Konev’s **19 Army** defenses at Vitebsk and halts to wait arrival of Strauss’ infantry. At Disna, Red Army counter-attacks are supported by acft and artillery. On 5 July, heavily armored *Sturmoviki* attack **7 PD** w/o suffering a loss, despite some planes taking **200** hits. With **7 PD** stalled before Vitebsk, Hoth opts for the indirect approach. Between **5-7 July**, **20 PD** and **20 ID (mot)** encounter **62 Rifle Corps** defenses upriver at Ulla. With support from von Richthofen’s “flying artillery,” they send across two waves of assault boats, and finally overcome the numerous bunkers late on **8 July**. **20 PD’s** Kampfgruppe “von Bismarck” assaults Vitebsk from the rear the next morning (**9 July**). Red Army units counterattack desperately against the bridgeheads and the smoldering city, but ultimately Hoth’s men have

¹⁰⁷ Seaton: Hoth would later describe this broad front advance as a showpiece as to how armored warfare should not be conducted. (126)

¹⁰⁸ **Note:** On same day (**4.7.41**), Halder notes in his diary: “Hoth meldet **50%** [der] Kampfkraefte [noch] verfuegbar.”

made a deadly crack in Timoshenko's Dvina – Dnepr line. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 49, 53)¹⁰⁹

- **5.7.41:** The Red Army loses **3** armies and **747 850** men during the first two [2] weeks of the war w/ Germany. In comparison, the Tsarist Army had lost **2** armies and **245 000** men in one month of battle at Tannenberg and the Masurian Lakes in **1914**. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 205-06)
- **5.-7.7.41 [Kluge vs. Guderian!]:** Somewhere, miles back in the vicinity of Minsk, v. Kluge was *frothing w/ anger* over what he considered Guderian's reckless adventure. . . Von Kluge [now in command of **4 Pz Army** and controlling both Hoth and Guderian's tank groups] had never countenanced the approach to the Dnepr prior to the liquidation of the Minsk-Bialystock pocket; he had no intention whatsoever of allowing Hoth and Guderian to fling themselves across the river while the nearest inf.-div. was still at least two-weeks' worth of hard marching behind. Only fast talking, the taking of great liberties w/ the facts and, again, the informal support of v. Bock would allow Guderian to talk v. Kluge into allowing him to continue. (See, *Newton, Hitler's Commander*, 127-28; **III:101**)
- **6.-9.7.41:** Soviet Western Front launches Lepel' counterstroke. Key elements involved include **5. and 7. Mech Corps**. (Lepel' located W of Vitebsk.) For details see, *D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed*, Vol. I, 70, ff.)
(Note: Can use Col I.D. Vasil'ev's **14 TD** as example of Soviet operational skill – or lack of it! – at this time.)
- **6.-9.7.41 (Soviet Lepel' counterstroke):** Russian counter-attacks grew in scale as the Wehrmacht approached the Smolensk gate in the third week of the war. One of the most spectacular took place on the eve of the Battle of Smolensk itself. The Soviet **5 and 7 MC** had moved west w/ Soviet **20 Army**. On **6 Jul 41**, hundreds of Soviet tanks were thrown into a deep penetration on the flanks of Hoth's **3 PzGr** as it crossed the upper Dvina River, near Lepel'. The Russian armored group had little air cover and few AA guns. It suffered badly from Stuka attacks before its attack was broken up by German armor. The two corps were virtually destroyed; **832** tanks were lost in the four-day battle. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 68; also, **III:102-03**)
- **8.7.41:** [Vortrag Ob.d.H. u. Halder beim Fuehrer]: Von **164** bekannten russ. Schuetzenverbaenden sind heute zu bewerten:

89 vernichtet
46 kampffaeig
18 an Nebenfronten (darunter Finnland)
11 unbekannt

(*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, *Sonderakte, Anlage 14*, 1021; **III:41-42**)

- **8.7.41 (Anecdote):** Folgte der Stab der **4. Armee** unter GFM v. Kluge zum Uebergang [ueber die Beresina] bei Borissow. "Hier fanden wir die Spuren Napoleons," schreibt Stabschef Blumentritt. "Einige Kilometer noerdl. von Borissow war es, wo die Grande Armee im Winter **1812** den vereisten Fluss ueberqueren musste u. so entsetzliche Verluste erlitt. *Wenn*

¹⁰⁹ **Note:** Among other problems, Hoth's men have to cross **100** wooden bridges on the **50-mile** long road from Borisov to Lepel – all of which collapse under weight of modern army. (**III:99**)

*das Wasser klar ist, kann man noch die Reste der Pfeiler sehen, welche die franz. Ingenieure ins Flussbett getrieben haben, um die Bruecken zu stuetzen.” (Joerg Friedrich, Das Gesetz des Krieges. Das dt. Heer in Russland 1941-45, 452; **III:106**)*

- **8.7.41:** Hitler verkündete seinen Entschluss, Moskau u. Leningrad dem Erdboden gleich zu machen, „um zu verhindern, dass Menschen darin bleiben, die wir dann im Winter ernähren muessten.“ (*lexicon-der-wehrmacht*)
- **8.-11.7.41:** German strategic intelligence continues to flounder. At **8 Jul 41** conference at Rastenburg, they put Timoshenko’s strength at **11** divisions; in reality, Army Group Center faces **66** divisions (**24** in the first echelon, **37** actually in position). Three days later (**11 July**), Halder writes that the Soviets have *no reserves behind the fighting front*; in fact, Stavka has created reserves that **OKH** could only envy. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941, 49; Halder, KTB*)
- **9.7.41:** Hoth’s **PzGr 3** captures Vitebsk via adroit flanking maneuver. Before Soviet forces withdraw, they *set fire to the city* of **200,000**; demolition squads were still setting off explosives in public buildings when Germans entered. *D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed, Vol. I, 78-79*)
- **9.7.41:** In **18** days of combat, Bock’s AGC advanced **600** km to the approaches of the Western Dvina – Dnepr Rivers, occupied all of Belorussia, and inflicted **417,790** casualties on the Soviet Western Front, including **341,073** soldiers killed, captured, or missing. In addition, the Western Front lost **4799** tanks, many of which simply ran out of fuel, **9427** guns and mortars, and **1777** combat acft. In essence, at least along the Western strategic axis, AGC’s powerful juggernaut fulfilled the mission assigned to it by the Barbarossa Plan by *utterly shattering and destroying much of the Red Army’s first strategic echelon* west of the Dvina – Dnepr Rivers. In accordance w/ Plan Barbarossa’s preeminent assumption, Hitler and most in the German High Command *considered the war as won*. *D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed, Vol. I, 32-33, 40-41; also, **III:107***)
- **ca. 12.7.41:** Hitler’s Barbarossa crusade began in „spectacular fashion.“ Using Blitzkrieg tactics, his tanks thrust up to **600** km (**360** miles) into Soviet heartland in first three [**3**] weeks of the war, gobbling up most of Belorussia and large segments of the Baltic region and the Ukraine. The *Wehrmacht* demolished the Red Army’s first strategic echelon, encircled and swallowed up the bulk of the Western Front west of Minsk and reached the Dnepr river along the Moscow axis. In the process, it inflicted at least **747,870** casualties, including **588,598** killed, wounded or missing – roughly **1/6** of the Red Army’s June 1941 strength – and eliminated **10,180** Red Army tanks and **3995** acft. By any measure, this victory was indeed both „unprecedented and astounding.“ Yet the successful beginning „belied several unpleasant realities“ that would increasingly plague German military leadership, and Hitler as well: **1)** ferocity of many Red Army soldiers which astonished Germans; **2)** *Wehrmacht* had not bagged as large a percentage of Red Army as anticipated in border regions; **3)** the Ostheer already behind its timetable, particularly in the Ukraine; **4)** German advance beginning to lose its „symmetry“ (i.e., advance of AGN and AGC was beginning to outstrip that of AGS; **5)** finally, German cdrs becoming aware that the „Russian kilometre“ meant far more than a kilometre in the West (i.e., crude transportation network in east, coupled w/ immense distances, challenged carefully articulated plans and made both combat advances and logistical support a nightmare). (*Glantz, Barbarossa, 55-56*)

f) *German Advance across the Dnepr, “Timoshenko Offensive” & Breaching the Stalin Line (10-16.7.41)*

Note: The appearance of five [5] fresh Soviet armies in defenses on the Western Dvina – Dnepr Rivers’ eastern bank created *shock in German headquarters*, if not in Berlin. According to assumptions of Plan “*Barbarossa*,” this was not supposed to occur. (*D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed*, 128)

Note: For detailed overview of Guderian’s forcing of the Dniepr River line see, *Kirchubel, Draft*, 6-7; **III:96**)

-- See, *inter alia*, *D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed*, Vol. I, 88, ff.; Notebooks **I, IV**; *Lemelsen diary, Guderian’s Errinerungen*, etc.)

Hoth and Guderian begin their twin thrusts across the Dnepr on **10 Jul 41**.¹¹⁰ On **10-11 Jul 41**, Guderian’s mot. corps cross Dnepr at Kopys (**47. PzK**), Shklov (**46. PzK**) and Bykhov (**24. PzK**)

-- Soviet forces defending the Dnepr opposite Guderian’s panzer group were in *considerable confusion and disarray* (*Glantz*, 91)

(Timoshenko expecting assault in Rogachev rather than Bykhov sector.)

-- **Note:** This was the first time Bock employed his air power in a *unified and concentrated fashion*, indicating the vital importance he attached to crossing the Dnepr River. (*Glantz*, 95; *Bock, Diary*, etc.)

-- **7.7.41:** Guderian faced w/ major decision – should he continue his advance across the Dnepr w/ panzer forces only, or await arrival of the infantry armies, which, as he notes in his memoirs, would not arrive for some **14** days! (i.e., they were *that* far to the rear). (See his, *Panzer Leader*, 167-68; see also, **III:103**)

-- **7.-16.7.41:** Initially repulsed on the left, Guderian shifts his *Schwerpunkt* first to the right and then to his center. The fight along the Dnepr rages during **7-16 Jul 41**, and as the Soviets retreat they manage to destroy many bridges. Guderian’s new attack axis sends him straight for the fortress town of Mogilev. On **10-11 Jul 41**, **2 PzGr**’s attack w/ **450** operational tanks achieves bridgeheads over the Dnepr at Shklov (**XLVI PzK**) and Kopys (**XLVII PzK**), and for a second time at Bychov (**XXIV PzK**). (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 54)

-- **9.-13.7.41:** **2 PzGr** succeeds in forcing the Dnepr River either side of Mogilev at Stary Bykhov and Shklov, after hard fighting, between **10 - 11 Jul 41**. **3 PzGr**, following the line of the Dvina between Polotsk and Vitebsk, is ordered to break into the region north of Smolensk. Vitebsk falls on **9 July**. Hoth’s tanks pressed on, bypassing Russian forces on the Orscha-Smolensk road. It had, by **13 Jul 41**, set in motion the beginning of the Smolensk encirclement. (*Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 77-78; also, **III:108-09**)

-- **10.7.41:** By this date, German armies and armored groups have penetrated Soviet territory to a depth of **450-500** km in the north-western sector, **450-600** km in the western sector, and **300-500** km in the south-western sector. The Germans had occupied Lithuania, Latvia, the major part of Estonia and Belorussia, substantial areas of the Ukraine, and, after **1 Jul 41**, also attacked parts of the Moldavian SSR from Romania. . . No fewer than **28** Soviet divisions had

¹¹⁰ **Note:** Actually, I believe only G. began to cross Dnepr at this time.

been totally annihilated within a span of **3** weeks, w/ a further **70** divisions losing more than **50%** of their personnel and equipment. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 836; III:43)

- **10.-11.7.41** [**24 PzK** crosses Dnepr]: After **48** hours to regroup and prepare, his division reorganized into three [**3**] new Kampfgruppen and strongly reinforced w/ artillery and AT guns, Model's **3 PD** crossed the Dnepr on **10 Jul 41** at Staryy Bykhov. By mid-morning the next day, Gruppe Lewinski (w/ most of **6 Pz Rgt**) had already passed thru the bridgehead and resumed the advance eastward. Now that Model's men had drawn the bulk of Soviet attention in the **24 PzK** sector, both the **4 PD** and **10 ID (mot)** managed virtually unopposed crossings south of Staryy Bykhov on **11 Jul 41**. (*Newton*, Hitler's Commander, 131-32)

- **13.7.41**: By day's end, when **17. PD** captured Orsha, Timoshenko's defenses along the Dnepr had simply *collapsed*. . . By nightfall on **13 Jul 41**, the spearheads of Hoth's and Guderian's panzer groups – Funck's **7. PD** and Boltenstern's **29. ID (mot.)**, respectively, were about **55** km apart and rapidly closing in on Smolensk from north and south. (*Glantz*, 101)

- **13.-16.7.41**: For discussion of Timoshenko offensive – which was “largely imaginary”¹¹¹ – see, *Glantz*, Barbarossa Derailed, 101, ff.
Timoshenko's intent was to cut off and destroy Hoth's and Guderian's panzer groups and restore Western Front's defenses along the Dnepr. . . Yet given actual situation, no part of his plan was *remotely feasible*.
Only Soviet **21. Army** managed to carry out Timoshenko's orders w/ any degree of success, when it was able to project a sizeable force across the Dnepr and briefly threaten German communications at Bobruisk. (*Glantz*, 107)
(Note: Glantz allows reader to follow battle thru the “eyes” of Timoshenko's orders, directives, reports, etc. For example, see his report to STAVKA on situation of Western Front on **14 Jul 41**, which “seems very complicated.” He also spoke of his armies incurring “great losses of weapons,” esp. during tank and air attacks; and that “there have been instances of our units *running away from enemy air attacks and his forward tank detachments*.” 109)

- **15.7.41**: By day's end, Hoth's and Guderian's panzer groups had demolished Timoshenko's hopes to restore his defenses along the Dnepr River line. Hoth's capture of Vitebsk – Velizh – Demidov – Iartsevo had split Soviet **22. Army** away from its *front's* main forces, leaving the Soviet **19.**, **20.** and **16. Armies** almost totally encircled N and W of Smolensk. Further south, Guderian's thrust to Smolensk from the south outflanked **20. Army**, encircled a major portion of **13. Army** in Mogilev,¹¹² and forced the remainder of **13.** and **4. Armies** to fall back in disorder to the Sozh River. (*Glantz*, 124)

- **15.7.41**: By this time, Army Group Center is already suffering from a *debilitating lack of military resources*, which forced the juggling of units between crisis points and gave rise to increasingly bitter disputes among commanders. There were simply not enough resources to meet the mushrooming demands of the war. . . The declining strength of the motorized divisions was not the only factor compromising their ability to function effectively. The discordant strategic deployment of each corps – fanning out toward divergent objectives over wide areas – denied them the benefits of concentration and forced them to operate in a degree of isolation. The most far-flung and wayward operation was that of Kuntzen's 57. PzK,

¹¹¹ Note: Yet it still made a major impression on German commanders. (*Glantz*, 129)

¹¹² Note: Fortress of Mogilev would hold out for some three weeks. (*Glantz*, 119, ff.)

which, on Halder's orders (and against Bock's better judgement), was sent to enact a joint encirclement w/ Leeb's Army Group North. After a difficult drive over sunken roads, the spearhead of the corps (**19. PD**) took Nevel on **15.7.41**. [See text; in essence, Hoth launches a thrust to Velikie Luki – a "senseless folly." (*D. Stahel, "And the World held its Breath,"* 172-79; **VIII:94-97**)

-- **15.-16.7.41 (6. ID breaches Stalin Line):**¹¹³ Der Angriff auf die Festung Poloszk [Polotsk] durch Sumpf u. Bunkerlinien erfolgte dann am **15.7.41** ab **5** Uhr. Die russ. Soldaten waren sehr geschickt in den Bunkern getarnt. In der Nahe der Feldstellungen hingen Scharfschuetzen, versteckt in Koerben oder Saecken, in Baeumen u. schossen erfolgreich auf die angreifenden dt. Soldaten. Mangelhaftes Kartenmaterial hatte den Angriff sehr erschwert. Um **19** Uhr fiel dann die Stadt Poloszk. Sie brannte an allen Enden. Am **16.7.41** wurden von der Truppe die grossen Waldstuecke vor der Duena nach versprengten russischen Soldaten durchsucht. (*Buddenbohm, Leben des Soldaten*, 55)

(Note: 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"*)

(Note: 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 Dvina River, where the Soviet, Polish and Lithuanian borders come together.) (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 27-28)

g) *Kesselschlacht von Smolensk* (ca. **15.7.- 5.8.41**)¹¹⁴

-- For background on the ancient walled city of Smolensk see, *D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed*, Vol. I, 60; for details of the city as of **Aug 1812** – "surrounded by massive brick walls **25** feet high, **15** feet thick," etc. – and the horrific fighting when Napoleon attacked, *Adam Zamoyiski, Moscow 1812*, 213, ff.; also, **IV:476-77**)

Note: For *Magenheimer's* detailed account of the Battle of Smolensk in his book *Moscow 1941*, see, **VIII:90-93**)

Note: For *Mawdsley's* account of the battle in his *Thunder in the East* see, **III:110-12**. He writes, *inter alia*: "After the disaster in the Belostok salient and around Minsk, the Red Army failed to make a stand further east, on the Berezina River at Bobruisk. The focus in the center of the Russo-German front turned to what Halder had written about on **3 July 41**, the main natural defense of the region, the line of the Dvina and upper Dnepr rivers. These were about **300** miles west of Moscow. Especially important was the **50-mile** gap between the rivers, the Orsha "land bridge" or the "Smolensk gate." The latter name comes from the ancient town on the Dnepr which covers this weak spot in Russia's natural defenses. The highway from Minsk to Viaz'ma and Moscow ran through this gap. . ."

¹¹³ Note: For background on the so-called Stalin Line see, **II:44, 48-49, 52, 57**. For detailed accounts of the **6. ID** breakthrough see, **VII:180-82**.

¹¹⁴ Note: In Soviet historical account, the Battle of Smolensk lasted from **10 Jul – 10 Sep 41**.

Note: Forces of Timoshenko's Western Front defending along the Dvina – Dnepr river lines suffer from *inadequate artillery and armor* of the divisions in the foremost line. As a result, the Germans, attacking w/ superior forces at point of main effort, will achieve deep penetrations north of Vitebsk and on both sides of Mogilev. Following loss of the Dvina-Dnepr line and city of Smolensk (whose loss was regarded by Stalin as *very serious*), Soviets bring up fresh forces which they staggered in *deep echelon*. (Details see, *GWSS*, Vol. IV, Attack on the Soviet Union, 865-66; **III:109-10**)

-- **10.-13.7.41:** The Battle for Smolensk proper begins on **10 Jul 41**, when Guderian's panzer group crossed the Dnepr, dismembered the **13 Army** (whose remnants had just escaped from Minsk pocket), and began penetrating eastward toward Smolensk. By **13 July**, Guderian's **XXXXVI PzK** had passed north of Mogilev and his **XXIV PzK** south of the city, encircling **61 Rifle** and **20 Mech Corps** of **13 Army** in Mogilev on the river's western bank. Although two encircled corps resisted fiercely for another two weeks (until **26 Jul 41**), their efforts fail to halt Guderian's advance. Similarly, Lt-Gen I.S. Konev's **19 Army** literally counterattacks as it dismounts from railroad trains on **11-13 Jul 41**, in futile effort to recapture the Vitebsk region from Reinhardt's **XXXIX PzK**. By evening of **13 Jul 41**, Guderian's **29 ID (mot)** is only **11** miles from Smolensk, while Konev's army has almost disintegrated. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 78-79; **III:109-10**)

-- **13.-15.7.41:** Now across the Dvina – Dnepr line, Army Group Center set itself to close the Smolensk *Kessel* and continue eastward. Von Bock's *Schwerpunkt* now clearly lay on his *southern flank*: Guderian had three times as much armor as Hoth, while **2 Army** fielded an unusually high number of seven (7) infantry corps (**VII, IX, XII, XIII, LXVIII, LIII** and **XXXV**). On **11 July**, **XLVI PzK** had broken out of the Shklov bridgehead and made for Yelnia; **XLVII PzK** went from Kopys toward Orscha, while **XXIV PzK** covered Guderian's right. A day later (**12 July**), his men split **13** and **20 armies**, outflanking Orsha and advancing almost to Mogilev. Air activity was intense: **II Fliegerkorps** flies **885** sorties on **14 July** against **21 Army**, and **615** sorties two days later (**16 July**). Just to show he is not ignoring Smolensk, Guderian sends his **29 ID (mot)** in that direction. Now finally clear of Vitebsk, Hoth's **7 PD** closes in on Smolensk from the north; by **13 Jul 41**, only **25** miles separate it from Guderian's **29 ID (mot)**. Two days later (**15 July**), **7 PD** motors into Yartsevo, cutting the main road and rail line into Smolensk and sealing the fate of the city and most its defenders.¹¹⁵ By evening of that day, **29 ID (mot)** had reached the SW end of Smolensk. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 54)

-- **13.-16.7.41:** Hoth advances to Smolensk – Nevel; Guderian advances to Smolensk and lays siege to Mogilev. (*Glantz*, 119, ff.)

By **15 Jul 41**, Hoth's tanks have reached NE outskirts of Smolensk and Nevel proper. . . Guderian's **29. ID (mot.)** reached southern outskirts of Smolensk late on **15 Jul 41**. The next morning, Boltenstern's forces began a three-day fight for possession of the historic center city of Smolensk by seizing its golden-domed *Uspenskii Cathedral* and its vital railroad bridge after heavy fighting. . . Ultimately, it would take three days of vicious house-to-house fighting to pry the Soviet defenders out of the northern half of the city, involving both **29. ID (mot.)** and Nehring's **18. PD**, which had only **12** operational tanks left after the fighting was over.¹¹⁶ (*Glantz*, 121, 159, 163)

¹¹⁵ Before the trap closed, trains w/ reinforcements had been pulling out of Bryansk for Smolensk every **10** minutes. (57)

¹¹⁶ **Note:** Fighting in Smolensk proper would continue for days.

- **ca. mid-Jul 41 (Hitler intervenes):** As the situation was described in the army groups, Hitler did not confine himself to making suggestions for general staff planning; while he was prepared to change his views, he intervened w/ directives to the Army High Command and w/ changes in the target-planning of the Luftwaffe to such an extent that his basic plan, which was diametrically opposed to Halder's views, was preserved. . . Hitler realized that the Army General Staff had set a definite course towards Moscow. As he considered the city to be only the *third most important objective*, he intervened energetically in the planning process. (GSWW, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 571; **III:115-16**)

- **15.7.41: 2 PzGr: 29 ID (mot) 10.00 Uhr Westrand Smolensk erreicht.** Starker Widerstand in Smolensk . . . **3 PzGr:** Am **14.7.41** regere feindl. Lufttaetigkeit als bisher . . . **9 Armee:** Beiderseitige geringe Art. Taetigkeit bei **VI AK**. Marschbewegungen verlaufen planmaessig. (Mehner, *Tagesmeldungen*, in: Geheime Tagesberichte, 186)

- **15.-16.7.41: 7 PD** has lead Hoth's Panzer Group during the first three weeks of the campaign. Sweeping clockwise from Vitebsk toward Smolensk from the north, it is about to close v. Bock's second major encirclement. On evening of **15 Jul 41**, elements of the division reach the Smolensk – Moscow highway near Yartsevo; the four-lane road is packed w/ Soviet traffic, the great majority of it still heading toward the west, and doom. . . Meanwhile, on **16 Jul 41, 29. ID (mot.)** – described by Guderian as a “splendid unit” – entered Smolensk from the SW; by that evening, it had traversed the southern half of the city and was crossing the Dnepr onto the much more stoutly defended northern bank. While bulk of the **29 ID (mot)** is thus engaged, its reconnaissance elements push on eastward and link up w/ troops of **7 PD**. (Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941, 52; **III:113**)¹¹⁷

- **16.7.41:** Am Abend nimmt die **29. ID (mot.)** Smolensk nach **48** Stunden erbitterte Strassenkaempfe. . . Nun hat die **2 PzGr** von Brest-Litowsk nach Smolensk eine Strecke von gut **600** km hinter sich gebracht. . . Sie nimmt die Stadt am **25.** Tage der Operation. Bis hierher erreichten die dt. Truppen im Mittelabschnitt einen Tagesdurchschnitt von **24** km, mehr als das Doppelte von Napoleons Grande Armee. (Janusz Piekalkiewicz, Die Schlacht um Moskau: Die erfrorene Offensive, 88)

- **ab 16.7.41:** For details on encirclement Battle of Smolensk see, *Glantz*, 157, ff.) It began on **16 Jul 41** and would last until after the month's end. . . Significant Soviet forces would escape for days from a gap in the pocket near Iartsevo (E/NE of Smolensk), defended by **7. PD**.

- **16.-24.7.41:** After reaching Smolensk on **16 Jul 41, 29. ID (mot.)** spends three (**3**) days in vicious *house-to-house fighting* to pry the forces of Lubkin's **16 Army** out of the city. Fact that **18. PD** has only **12** operational tanks bore mute witness to ferocity of the fighting. . . Red Army forces almost encircled in Smolensk region now consist of bulk of **16, 19** and **20 Armies**. On **20 Jul 41**, Zhukov, representing the Stavka, orders Western Front, reinforced by four (**4**) armies from the Stavka's Front of Reserve Armies, to orchestrate a major counteroffensive, the *largest to date*. . . With the capture of Yartsevo NE of Smolensk by spearheads of **PzGr 3**, and of Smolensk itself by **PzGr 2** on **16.7.41**, the *second great battle of encirclement* approached its end. However, Germans not able to prevent the *break-out or timely withdrawal* of strong enemy forces, esp. mot. units. The “hole” east of Smolensk was not closed until **24 Jul 41**. (See, **III:123-25**)

¹¹⁷ **Note:** Fighting in the streets of Smolensk, causing heavy losses to both sides, will last until 22 July. (52)

- **18.7.41:** Als er [Guderian] Jelnja am **18.7.41** erreicht hatte, wandte er sich nach Norden, um oestwaerts Smolensk Verbindung mit dem **LVII PzK (3 PzGr)** aufzunehmen, das ueber Polozk u. Witebsk vorgegangen war u. sich dann nach Sueden gewandt hatte. So war ein neuer Kessel gebildet worden, dessen Vernichtung . . . **310 000** Gefangene, mehr als **3000** Panzer u. **3120** Geschuetze ergab. (*Bauer, Panzerkrieg*, 127)

- **19.7.41:** Guderian, still hoping to continue advance on Moscow w/o delay, had already dispatched his **10. PD (46. PzK)** eastward to secure a bridgehead over the Desna River at El'nia. This bridgehead he thought would be an ideal jumping-off position for a subsequent advance to Viaz'ma and the grand prize of Moscow. General Schaal's panzers and panzer grenadiers did so on **19 Jul 41**. (*Glantz*, 161)

- **Note:** Due to *lack of infantry*, German armored units compelled to hold major portions of the encirclement ring; they had to engage in close-in fighting w/ Soviet infantry and tanks, all the while suffering *heavy attrition*. Only when infantry arrived forward could they withdraw to obtain the rest and refitting period they so urgently needed. By early **23 Jul 41**, however, both Schmidt (**39. PzK**) and Lemelsen (**47. PzK**) were finally able to withdraw their panzer and motorized forces from the Smolensk encirclement ring. (For more details see, *Glantz*, 186)

- **20.7.41:** **4 Armee:** **2 PzGr** erreichte Linie: . . . **10 PD** hat Bahnhof Jelnja genommen u. ist im Vorgehen auf Dorogobush . . . **29 ID (mot)** hat alle Angriffe auf Smolensk abgewiesen u. befindet sich *fest in Besitz der Stadt* u. des Brueckenkopfes . . . **3 PzGr:** . . . Teile **19 PD** in Wel. Luki einen von Osten kommenden Transportzug vernichtet . . . Feindbeurteilung: . . . Auf Grund von Horchaufklaerung¹¹⁸ wird vermutet, dass noch im Antransport von Osten Richtung Smolensk befindliche Teile der **16 u. 19** russ. Armee weitere Entlastungsangriffe gegen Ostfront der **4 Pz Armee** [richtig **4 Armee**] fuehren werden. *Ein Nachlassen des Kampfwillens im grossen ist bisher beim Gegner nicht zu beobachten.* (*Mehner, Tagesmeldungen*, in: Geheime Tagesberichte, 197)

- **20.-24.7.41:** Containing the Smolensk pocket, in the face of intense enemy pressure, became an *obsession* for GFM v. Bock. „At the moment,“ he wrote on **20 July**, „there is only one pocket on the Army Group's front! And it has a hole!“ The Panzer ring holding it, lacking strong infantry support, was extremely porous. Without the attached *Luftwaffe* AA batteries, originally configured to protect the tanks against air attack, the defense situation would have been even more alarming. High-velocity **88mm** Flak guns were switched from air defense to the ground role. . . On **21 Jul 41**, v. Bock grudgingly acknowledged the pressure the enemy was applying to his closing ring, „a quite remarkable success for such a badly battered opponent!“ he admitted. Two days later [**23 July**] Bock complained, „we have still not succeeded in closing the hole at the east end of the Smolensk pocket.“¹¹⁹ Five [**5**] Soviet divisions made good their escape that night, thru the lightly defended Dnieper valley. Another three [**3**] divisions broke out the following day [**24 July**]. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 96; see also, *Manteuffel, 7 Pz.-Div.*, 153)

¹¹⁸ **Note:** Numerous references in these *Tagesmeldungen* to *Luftaufklaerung*, *Horchmeldungen*, etc. Hr.Gr.Mitte appears to have benefited greatly from both.

¹¹⁹ **Note:** The semi-official German history, “GSWW, Vol. IV,” states the hole was finally closed on **24.7.41**; KTB OKW says pocket “im Osten geschlossen” on **26.7.41**. However, Glantz says the hole was never completely closed. What does GFM v. Bock say? Check his memoirs.

- **21.-22.7.41** [Status of panzer groups]: The overall picture was a bleak one. Among the strongest of Guderian's panzer group were the **17.** and **4. PD**, which on **22 Jul 41** were operating at **40%** and **35%** strength, respectively. . . **18. PD**, despite receiving **30** new **Pz IIIs** and **Pz IVs** on **22 Jul 41**, only two days later was down to just **12** operational tanks. [!] . . . Lacking adequate resources, elements of the panzer groups were resorting to extraordinary measures to meet the demands of their extended fronts. On **21 Jul 41**, **4. PD**, having cut off **10-12,000** Soviet soldiers in a forest near Cherikov, took around **2000** prisoners in the fighting and then, lacking adequate air, artillery and panzer support, opted to allow the rest to return to Soviet lines rather [than] endure what was expected to be heavy material and personnel losses in continuing to oppose their breakout. . . As the ferocity of the fighting continued w/ unabated violence, appeals from units within the panzer groups to be pulled out of the line for a period of rest and refitting were gaining frequency. (For more details see, *D. Stahel*, "And the World held its Breath," 184-86 (**VIII:97-98**); also, *Bock Diary*, 21.7.41)
- **23.-31.7.41**:¹²⁰ The "first Soviet counteroffensive" – the counterattack by Western Front's *Operational groups*. (See below, "Other Side of the Hill")
Note: The strongest of the operational groups created by Timoshenko was the Group Kachalov, formed from Kachalov's **28. Army**. It had begun its offensive from the Roslavl' region northward toward Rudnia – Pochinok – Smolensk on **23 Jul 41**. Due to the threat it posed to AGC in the south, Guderian proceeded to rapidly destroy it between **1 – 6 Aug 41**. (See, *Glantz*, 307, ff.; also, **III:130-31**)
- **24.7.41**: *Marschleistungen* (seit dem **3.7.41**) (See, *FMS P-190*, in: **VI:110**)
- **24.7.41**: **4 Armee**: Der Feind im Smolensker Kessel ist weiter zusammengedraengt. (*Mehner, Tagesmeldungen*, in: *Geheime Tagesberichte*, 208-09) (In other words, it was a gradual process of wearing down, compressing and eventually destroying the Soviet forces in the pocket.)
- **24.7.-5.8.41**: Struggle for the Smolensk pocket.
 (See, *D. Glantz*, *Barbarossa Derailed*, 224, ff., & 328, ff., for details)
 Key points: a) Fighting continued *inside* city of Smolensk into late **Jul 41** (Soviets make attempts to recapture city); b) Germans failed to completely close the pocket, leaving open the Solov'evo corridor (i.e., gap in pocket south of Iartsevo) – thru which Soviet troops were streaming out of the pocket – by end of **Jul 41**; c) the "pocket" appears to have gradually wandered eastward and, by late **Jul 41**, away from Smolensk; d) German blocking positions often faced more pressure than they could bear (eg., divisions of **39. PzK** and **47. PzK** were fighting a *two-front battle* against concentrated forces *inside* the pocket and Rokossovsky's forces trying to break the cordon from the outside); e) German panzer and mot. divisions manning, first, the inner and, later, the outer encirclement line, such as **19.**, **20.**, **12.**, **7.** and **17. PD** and **20. ID (mot.)**, suffered *unprecedented losses* over the past two weeks [i.e., from late **Jul 41**], esp. in their infantry (panzer grenadier) units, but also in terms of their armor. (For tank losses see, *Jentz*, *Panzer Truppen*, Vol. I, 190-93, 206)

¹²⁰ **Note**: Apparently, this Soviet counteroffensive continued into early **Aug 41**. (See, *Glantz*, p 345) For useful overview see, color map ("Timoshenko Counteroffensive") in my "Maps (Russia 1941)" file. Source of map unclear.

- **25.7.41 (OKW Bericht):** Heftige Feindangriffe mit Artl. u. Panzern gegen Suedflanke u. – fluegel der H.Gr. u. von Osten gegen die Front der **PzGr 2** u. **3**. Feindangriffe im Smolensker Kessel haben aufgehoert.

Gefangene u. Beutezahlen: Vom Beginn der Operationen bis zur Beendigung der Schlacht von Minsk:

334 571 Gefangene
3 181 Panzer
1 830 Geschuetze
344 Flugzeuge

Von Beginn der Operationen bis **24.7.41:**

520 058 Gefangene
5 211 Panzer
3 748 Geschuetze
591 Fluegzeuge

(Source: *KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 539)

- **26.7.41:** Erneute Feindangriffe gegen **2 PzGr** u. Smolensk. Der Kessel von Smolensk wurde im Osten geschlossen. (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 540)
- **26.7-4.8.41:** Germans consider the Smolensk trap officially closed on **26 Jul 41**, but v. Bock has already complained in his diary that “it has a hole” – a **10-mile** gap near Yartsevo and Solovevo through which, between **31 Jul - 4 Aug 41**, substantial portions of **16** and **20 Armies** escape the *Kessel*. . . **7 PD** again bears the brunt of the fighting, fending off Rokossovsky’s infantry attacks, which came supported by **80** to **100** tanks. Of the **7 PD’s 284** tanks, only **118** are still operational; of its **166** damaged tanks, **70** are beyond repair. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 57-58)
- **28.7.41:** . . . Bei **9 Armee** u. **3 PzGr** wurde der Kessel von Smolensk von Westen her verengert. (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 543)
- **30.7.41:** Hitler issues *Weisung 34*, halting Bock’s drive on Moscow and directing the *Wehrmacht’s* armored strength toward Leningrad & Kiev; directive also gives Hoth’s and Guderian’s panzer groups **10** days to rest and refit. (*Glantz*, 304)
- **31.7.41:** **XXXXVII AK [mot]** ist mit Masse seiner Kraefte bei der Einkesselung der Feindkraefte ostw. Smolensk festgelegt . . . **9 Armee:** . . . **VIII AK** u. **V AK** verengen in langsam fortschreitendem Angriff nach Osten den Smolensker Kessel. Durchbruchversuche des Feindes nach Norden u. Nordwesten wurden zerschlagen . . . (*Mehner, Tagesmeldungen*, in: Geheime Tagesberichte, 223)
- **31.7.41:** Im Smolensker Kessel leistet der Gegner noch hartnaeckigen Widerstand. An der Ostfront wehrte die **3 PzGr** heftige Feindangriffe ab. Bei **20 PD** brach der Gegner oertlich in die Stellung ein. Gegenueber Gruppe Schubert verstaerkt sich weiter der hartnaeckig kaempfende Feind.

Gefangene u. Beute: Waehrend der Kaempfe um Dnjepr u. Duena u. in der Schlacht um Smolensk wurden bis zum **31.7.41**:

248 199 Gefangene gemacht

2 358 Panzer,

2 514 Gesch. u.

287 Flugzeuge vernichtet bzw. erbeutet.

(Source: *KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 548)

- **31.7.41** [Summary of Ops]: Bis Ende **Jul 41** blieb die dt. Ostfront unter zaehen, sich immer mehr versteifenden Kaempfen im Vorruecken nach Osten. . . Die Hr.Gr.Mitte hatte den Ring um Smolensk geschlossen u. begann, Teile der **2** u. **3 PzGr** zur *Auffrischung aus der Front zu ziehen*. Trotz aller Erfolge aber war die Bilanz nicht erfreulich: das Vortreiben der Panzerkeile, das in den vergangenen Feldzuegen die Voraussetzungen zu den schnellen Siegen geschaffen hatte, wirkte sich im Osten nicht wie erwartet aus. Denn in den grossen Raeumen war es den vorgebrochenen mot. Truppen nicht moeglich, die Kessel mit eigener Kraft voellig abzudichten; sie mussten die in Eilmaerschen herankommende Infanterie abwarten. Dabei kaempte der russ. Soldat zaeh weiter, auch wenn er eingeschlossen war, u. verschaffte so seiner Fuehrung die Moeglichkeit, Zeit zu gewinnen u. aus der Tiefe neue Kraefte heranzufuehren. Diese tagelangen *Kaempfe nach zwei Fronten* hatten die Kampfkraft der Schnellen Verbaende stark beeintraehtigt. (Hofmann, “Schlacht von Moskau,” 143)
- **Jul-Aug 41**: German losses (**I:420**, ff.) For *daily German losses of officers* see, FMS **P-190**, in: **VI:121**)
- **Jul-Aug 41**: Major *operational blunders* along eastern front. (**IX: Magenheimer, Hitler’s War**) **OKH** did very little to achieve the *original basic strategic directive*, namely to solve the “northern problem” before attack on Moscow.
- **Note**: By **1 Aug 1812** – some five [5] weeks after the French invasion had begun – the Russians were around Smolensk and Napoleon had given up trying to trap them. He had already lost nearly 100,000 men. The weather had been wet. The nights had been cold, and the days as hot as in Spain or Egypt. (Theodore Ropp, War in the Modern World, 134)
- **5.8.41**: Am **5. Aug 41** kam die Kesselschlacht von Smolensk zum Abschluss. Die Korps u. Divisionen der H.Gr.Mitte hatten seit dem **10.7.41** insgesamt **310.000** Gefangene eingebracht, **3205** Panzer u. **3120** Geschuetze erbeutet oder vernichtet. Vernichtet wurden auch die sowj. **16 Armee**, das **XXIII MC** sowie Teile der **19** u. **20 Armeen**. (Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam, 115)
- **5.8.41**: The last Soviet resistance inside Smolensk pocket ceased on this day, with loss of **309,110** prsioners, **3205** destroyed or captured tanks, **3000** guns. (See, Bock, Tagebuch, 5.8.41)¹²¹
- **5.8.41**: Smolensk cauldron battle ends. (According to the *German* narrative; according to Russian view, it continued into **Sep 41**).

¹²¹ **Note**: For German figures on their “haul” in fighting at Smolensk and along the Dnepr and Dvina see also, Mehner, “Tagesmeldungen,” in: Geheime Tagesberichte, 240.

(D. Glantz: “On the basis of fresh archival materials, this study argues that the battle of Smolensk was *much larger-scale* than previously believed, it damaged Army Group Center far more than previously thought, and, ultimately, it contributed significantly to the army group’s embarrassing defeat at the gates of Moscow in **Dec 41**. . .” (Barbarossa Derailed. Vol. I, 15)

- Precisely how many [Soviet troops] actually escaped from the Smolensk encirclement will probably remain disputed for many years, although *new documentary evidence* sheds considerable light on the matter. . . The pocket probably initially contained more than **220,000** troops, of whom as many as **170,000** were killed or captured by **7 Aug 41**, and roughly **50,000** ultimately escaped.

Whatever the true cost of the battle, on **5 Aug 41** Bock reported and the *Wehrmacht-bericht* announced two days later that the preliminary count of Soviet losses during the entire Battle of Smolensk, including the fighting along the Dnepr River near Rogachev and at Mogilev, was **309,110** soldiers captured and **3205** tanks, **3120** guns, and **1098** planes destroyed or captured. (See, *Glantz*, 358-59)

- CruX: AGC’s advance to Smolensk and encirclement of the Western Front’s **16.**, **19.** and **20. Armies** in the region NW, N and NE of the city proved to be a *textbook exercise* in the conduct of encirclement operations. . . However, despite the “clockwork” nature of this maneuver, some potentially serious problems resulted. First, in the *absence of infantry*, which was still trundling forward from the Dnepr River, the armored divisions had to both man the outer encirclement line [i.e., the front facing east] and contain Soviet forces encircled in the pocket. (For more details see, *D. Glantz*, Barbarossa Derailed, 187)
- Immediately after liquidating the Soviet pocket near Smolensk, AGC reinforced or replaced its beleaguered mobile divisions along the outer encirclement line w/ proper infantry divisions. This permitted Bock to *withdraw his precious panzer and motorized divisions for rest and refitting* prior to resuming offensive ops.¹²² (*Glantz*, 350)

h) Battles on the Flanks & Siege of Mogilev (16.-31.7.41)

- While most important fighting in sector of Bock’s AGC during second half of **Jul 41** took place when infantry of Bock’s army group struggled to liquidate Soviet armies [3] encircled in the Smolensk pocket, and when new armies assigned to Timoshenko’s Western Front fought to penetrate the outer encirclement line erected by the army group’s two panzer groups NE, E and SE of Smolensk, intense and complex fighting also developed along AGC’s *extreme northern and southern flanks*. (*Glantz*, Barbarossa Derailed, Vol, I, 256)
- In addition, as they sliced thru Timoshenko’s armies, Hoth’s and Guderian’s panzer groups *left half a dozen large pockets behind*, each of which remained a threat until follow-on armies could eliminate them. . . The pockets, collectively, and in combination w/ STAVKA’s counteroffensive at Smolensk, *appreciably slowed AGC’s forward progress*. . . disrupting the *Barbarossa timetable*. (*Glantz*, 257)

¹²² **Note:** Is this accurate? I believe some mechanized units may indeed have been withdrawn for rest & refitting, but many were not. (*Glantz* states that, in early **Aug 41**, Guderian rested and refitted **3. PD**, **4. PD** and **10. ID (mot.)** of Geyr’s panzer corps west of Roslavl. At same time, **18. PD** and **29. ID (mot.)** of Lemelsen’s panzer corps rested and refitted south of Smolensk.) However, by **8 Aug 41**, Geyr’s panzer corps was back in action. (384-85)

- Bock's army group was far ahead of its neighbors (i.e., AGN and AGS), while the latter army groups had also failed to encircle and destroy most of the Soviet forces facing them; as a result, AGC's flanks in the Nevel' region to the north and along the Sozh River to the south were now *relatively open and far more vulnerable*. (Glantz, 258)

- The *northern flank* at Nevel and Velikie Luki: Nevel – on the boundary of Army Groups Center and North – was an “enticing target,” which “fascinated” Hitler. Leeb supported Hitler's decision to attack along the Nevel' axis w/ part of Hoth's panzer group because, if the operation were successful, Leeb could then concentrate his forces to mount an effective advance on Leningrad. . . Yet *splitting Hoth's powerful panzer group* by dispatching Kuntzen's **57. PzK** toward Nevel' *weakened and delayed* Bock's efforts to close the gap south of Iartsevo and eventually seriously diminished his success at Smolensk. (For details see, Glantz, 257-70)
 - The “battle of Nevel” and Velikie Luki was a *serious mistake* on the part of the German High Command, a mistake symptomatic of a *growing nervousness and touchiness about open flanks*, (269)
 - (As Clausewitz averred: “*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.)

- The *southern flank*, Mogilev and Soviet **21. Army**: Problems on Bock's southern wing just as complex and daunting. Most serious of these were the encirclement at Mogilev; second was the persistent offensive activity by Soviet **21. Army** in the Rogachev – Zhlobin – Bobruisk regions, which slowed Weich's relief of Guderian's forces at Mogilev and threatened the army group's lines of communications in the south. (Glantz, 270)
 - Siege of Mogilev (where elements of Soviet **13. Army** were encircled). . . German forces entered Mogilev on **27 Jul 41**; in all, they captured some **35,000** Russians and **245** guns. Sacrifice of city bought time for Timoshenko to bring forward fresh reserves and commit them to the more vital battle of Smolensk. (For details see, Glantz, 275-81)
 - 21. Army**: Bock's forces faced an even more serious problem further to the south. . . The task of expelling Kuznetsov's forces [**21. Army**] from the Rogachev – Zhlobin regions and back across the Dnepr deprived Kluge's **4. Army** of a significant infantry force he could have better employed in the Smolensk region. As a result, Hoth and Guderian had to use their panzer and mot. divisions in *costly frontline fighting*, which seriously eroded their strength. . . By last week of **Jul 41**, three army corps of Weich's **2. Army** were now operating in the Bobruisk – Rogachev – Propoisk regions, threatening **21. Army** forces west of the Dnepr w/ complete destruction. (Glantz, 281-94)

- **27.7.41**: Abwehr von Feindangriffen gegen die Suedflanke u. Ostfront der H.Gr., die besonders stark nordwestl. Roslawl gefuehrt werden. . . Gefangene u. Beutezahlen nach Abschluss der Kaempfe um Mogilew. Stand vom **27.7.41** nachmittags: **35.000** Gefangene, **245** Geschuetze, Flak u. Pak, **750** MG. u. **750** Kraftfahrzeuge. Weitere Beute wird noch gesichert. (KTB OKW, Bd. I, 542)

- **27.7.41**: Soviet defenders of Mogilev hold out until **27 Jul 41** w/ the help of air-dropped supplies. The defender's efforts against **23, 15, 7** and **78 IDs** earn the accolades “Gallant Mogilev” and “Russian Madrid.” (The Spanish Civil War is still a fresh memory.) But more than **35,000 frontoviki** march into captivity. **XXIV PzK** crosses the Dnepr south of the town and makes for Krichev. (Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941, 54)

i) *Role of air power in opening battles*¹²³

Note: In opening weeks and months of campaign, German flyers put up extraordinary numbers of kills. For examples see, *W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 66, 72)

Note: Convention wisdom appears to be that the VVS was *swept from the skies* in the opening days of “Barbarossa.” Of course, the Germans did inflict a catastrophic defeat on the VVS in the first **48-72** hours of the campaign; however, my reading of literally hundreds of primary accounts (unit histories and war diaries, personal diaries, FPB, etc.) leads me to a *different conclusion*. . . (See, **IX:69**)

Note: For activities – numbers of kills, etc. – of **JG 51 & JG 52** in openings weeks of campaign see, **VII:17-18**.

Note: For many details of *Luftwaffe* planning and preparations¹²⁴ for the eastern campaign see, **I:472**, ff. As one author of the German air war over Russia avers, GAF preparations for *Barbarossa* “represent an extraordinary mixture of thorough planning, realistic formulation, and *almost unbelievable insouciance*.”

Note: For losses of the *Luftwaffe* on the eastern front see, **I:479**, ff. As a general observation, important to note that the *Luftwaffe* sustained terrible attrition rates in eastern campaign. Unlike Battle of France or Battle of Britain, however, *attrition in Russia* involved low loss rates combined w/ sustained ops over long periods of time. The cumulative effect of these small “acceptable” losses was no less decisive, however. In fact, when one considers all *Luftwaffe* ops in **1941**—i.e., in the east, the “Blitz” against British Isles in winter of 1941, Balkan campaign, commitments in Mediterranean—the *Luftwaffe went thru its entire inventory of acft in just 12 months*. By end of **1941**, German acft production and crew training could *no longer keep pace w/ losses*. By **Jan 42**, conditions forced front-line units to rob transition [i.e., training] schools of crews a month before their scheduled course completion.¹²⁵ (*W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 89, 94)¹²⁶

Note: For the operational tasks of the *Luftwaffe*, as laid out in *Weisung Nr. 21*, see: *J. Prien, Jagdfliegerverbaende 6/1*, 6-7. Prien, *et al.*, note, among other things: „Auf einen auch nur ansatzweise strategisch gefuehrten Luftkrieg gegen Ziele im Hinterland der gewaltigen Front wurde dagegen *von Beginn an verzichtet*. . . Hier lag zweifellos ein *wesentlicher Mangel des Luftwaffeneinsatzes*, doch war mit den vorhandenen geringen Kraefte u. wegen des Fehlens eines einsatzbereiten schweren Bombers ein grossangelegter Luftkrieg gegen die im sowjet. Hinterland gelegenen Ruestungs- u. Industrieanlagen ohnehin nicht moeglich. Nach der Weisung Nr. **21**, sollten Angriffe gegen Ziele der Ruestungs-

¹²³ **Note:** This section might be integrated w/ final section in this chapter (“*Luftwaffe pilots and crews*”).

¹²⁴ **Note:** Do I want to “back track” to this issue at this point in text, or address *Luftwaffe* preparations in Chapter I or II?

¹²⁵ What now happened is that operational units completed whatever training the schools could no longer finish. The process in many units involved working new pilots into squadron ops on a gradual basis while hopefully minimizing exposure to hazardous missions. Then as experienced increased, squadrons assigned pilots to more dangerous tasks until they were fully combat-ready. As Murray notes, however, this policy had “pernicious side effects.” (*W. Murray*, 94-96)

¹²⁶ **Note:** See tables in *Strategy for Defeat*, pp 89-93, for details of losses. For example, German *bomber losses* for year peaked in Jul 41 at 18.4 percent—perhaps due to beginning of aerial attacks on Moscow on **22.7.41**.

industrie, namentlich im *Uralgebiet*, erst nach Abschluss der Bewegungsoperationen des Heeres erfolgen. (6-7) (**I:473**)

- For role of *Luftwaffe* see, *inter alia*, Notebook #I, “*Luftwaffe, Chronology of Events*.” For special facets of *Luftwaffe* command and operational thinking see, *Horst Boog, “Higher Command and Leadership in the German Luftwaffe, 1935-1945,”* in: *Air Power and Warfare. The Proceedings of the 8th Military History Symposium USAF Academy 18-20 October 1978.* (Details in my “*Biblio* file.”)
- One of the pervasive myths of [WWII] historiography is that of the “*tank-Stuka team*” that supposedly combined close air support w/ armored mobility. The actual evolution of German air-ground cooperation was more prosaic, and reflects how innovation actually proceeds in an effective military force. Experiences in the Spanish Civil War caused the Germans to *reinvent* the tactics and procedures of [CAS] to help infantry in the breakthrough battle. . . But [CAS in Poland in **1939**] for armored columns remained a “primitive affair” that depended on display panels, smoke grenades, and large Nazi flags draped over the tops of *Wehrmacht* vehicles. Not surprisingly, *Luftwaffe* aircraft *regularly bombed German mechanized forces* throughout the campaign. . . Not until the attack on the Soviet Union did the German Army possess a responsive system of [CAS] for its mobile formations. (See, *W. Murray, “May 1940: Contingency and fragility of the German RMA,”* in: *Dynamics of military revolution*, W. Murray (ed.), 163; also, *James S. Corum, Wolfram v. Richthofen*, in my “*Richthofen* bio-file; *Kesselring memoirs* (in bio-file), etc.)
- For Soviet VVS see, **II:128**, ff; also, *Hardesty, v., Red Phoenix: The Rise of Soviet Air Power, 1941-1945*; also, *Kozhevnikov, M.N., The Command and Staff of the Soviet Army Air Force in the Great Patriotic War 1941-45*, etc.)
(**Note:** Key details from these and other sources – total sorties flown, types of missions, etc. – can be found in my “*Biblio* file.”)
- Numerous German accounts illustrate that VVS made a fairly rapid recovery from catastrophe it experienced at opening of campaign.
(Details see, **II:128**, ff. (“*Soviet Air Forces*”)
(Numerous anecdotes; see, for example, *Hans Roell, Oblt. Albert Blaich: Als Panzerkommandant in Ost u. West: In late Jul 41, 3. PD on the Ssosh-Abschnitt; exposed daily to attack by Soviet bombers (87)*)
- For *destruction of the VVS* in opening days of the war see, *M. N. Kozhevnikov, The Command and Staff of the Soviet Army Air Force in the Great Patriotic War 1941-45*, 33, ff.
- Combat ops revealed serious shortcomings in Soviet Air Force organizational structure, the main weakness being an inability to concentrate air [power] in massive operations; air power was being used in *peacemeal fashion*; in **May 42**, Soviets began w/ the formation of “air armies,” a giant step forward in mobility, concentration of forces, and central control. (See, *Kenneth R. Whiting, “Soviet Air Power in World War II,”* in: *Air Power and Warfare. The Proceedings of the 8th Military History Symposium United States Air Force Academy 18-20 October 1978.*
- **7.-21.6.41:** The elite **VIII Fliegerkorps** had to move from Greece and Yugoslavia to Suwalki between these dates, so **600** of its vehicles and **40%** of its acft were unavailable on *Barbarossatag*. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 23)

- **23.6.-10.7.41:** Soviet Long-Range Bomber Aviation flew **2112** combat sorties against enemy tank/mot. columns; on the whole, however, “actions of Soviet aviation against enemy troops did not have a noticeable influence” on course of events – VVS efforts often dispersed, planes not massed adequately, weapons and tactics not appropriate, etc. (39); VVS attempts first massed strikes on GAF airfields (41); f) in first **18** days of war, Soviet aviation flew **45,000** combat sorties (*numbers exaggerated?*) (*M.N. Kozhevnikov, Command and Staff of the Soviet Army Air Force*)
- **22.-26.6.41:** Field Marshal Erhard Milch records the destruction of **1800** acft on 22.6; **800** on 23.6.; **557** on 24.6.; **351** on 25.6.; and **300** on 26.6.41. (*W. Murray, War to be Won, 121; III:28*)
- **22.-29.6.41:** *Luftwaffe* destroys over **4000** Soviet planes in first week of the campaign. The resulting near *total control of the air* did not last long, but was in effect in early months of the fighting and greatly facilitated the advance of the German ground forces. (*G. Weinberg, Global History of WWII, 264; III:28*)
- **30.6.41:** Als die Kesselschlacht um Bialystock ausklang, kam es am **30 Jun 41** noch einmal zum Grossangriff russischer Jagdflugzeuge. Die dt. Maschinen vom Typ „**Bf-109F**“ des **JG 51** stiegen sofort auf u. schossen an diesem Tag allein **114** Feindflugzeuge ab. (Details see, *W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau, 65*)
- **3./5.7.41:** By this date, the *Luftwaffe* in the East had lost **491** planes (**124** fighters, **196** bombers, **171** others), while **316** planes (**110** fighters, **119** bombers, **87** others) were damaged. Thus, the *Luftwaffe* was operating at about **70%** effective strength w/ **1933** planes compared to the **2740** it had when the campaign began. Slightly more than ½ of all air-planes were concentrated in the Army Group Center sector. (*Lutichau manuscript, XIII: 25 (VIII:117); KTB OKW, Bd. 1, 1216; also, Halder KTB, 6.7.41*)
- **4.7.41:** As early as this date, **Air Fleet 2** observed that in spite of heavy losses the number of Soviet acft had scarcely declined. The army began to point out that here and there the enemy had regained air superiority and that the direction of Soviet air units was increasingly marked by a “clear-headed and aggressive leadership.” (*GSWW, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 804-05; Halder, Tagebuch, 16.-17./22.7.41*)
- **5.7.41:** On this day, **VIII Fl.K.** reports that fuel had run short, even though it had already scaled back operations. Its commander, *Generaloberst v. Richthofen*, noted that „supply is for us the greatest difficulty in this [campaign].“ By mid-**Jul 41**, *Luftwaffe* units were seriously short of fuel and ammunition. (*W. Murray, War to be Won, 127; BA-MA, RL 8/49, Russland-Feldzug 1941: VIII. Fliegerkorps*)
- **10.-30.7.41:** Air fighting is intense as the *Luftwaffe* interdicts rail lines leading into Smolensk. Between **10 Jul 41** and end of the month, the Germans launch **12 653** sorties and the Soviets ca. **5200**. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941, 57*)
- **25./27.7.41:** While the *Luftwaffe* clearly proved superior in the earliest period of Barbarossa, it was incapable of eliminating the Soviet air force and, by the end of **Jul 41**, could not even guarantee aerial superiority above the German front. . . Army Group Centre was afforded the support of the strongest of the *Luftwaffe* air fleets (**Air Fleet 2**), but even it was unable to ensure comprehensive cover to guard against costly Soviet airborne attacks. The war diary of **14. ID (mot.)** complained on **25 Jul 41** that while on a march it suffered from regular

“attacks by bombers which cost time and resulted in particular in personnel and material losses.” Two days later (27.7.41) Lemelsen’s 47. PzK reported: “Strong enemy air superiority, many low-level strafes and bomber attacks, many casualties.” (D. Stahel, “*And the World held its Breath*,” 201 (XIII:117-18))¹²⁷

- **31.7.41:** In the final analysis, *Luftwaffe* operations over the eastern front in the summer of 1941 suffered from the same debilitating deficiencies as the Army. Although the initial performance was impressive, the *Luftwaffe*’s strength was clearly insufficient to sustain the momentum into the vast spaces of the Soviet Union. Indeed, by the end of **Jul 41**, the *Luftwaffe* was reduced to a mere **1045** serviceable acft across the whole eastern front. As losses mounted and the demands of the war sharply increased, it took very little time for the *Luftwaffe* to become overextended, giving the badly mauled Soviet air force time to revive. In practice, the *Luftwaffe* became a kind of flying fire brigade, rushed to trouble spots along the front or used to support the spearhead of new offensives, but an aerial superiority of the kind enjoyed in the earliest days of the conflict was never again achieved. (D. Stahel, “*And the World held its Breath*,” 201-02; VIII:118)
- This Soviet *official history* gives virtually a weekly accounting of sorties flown by each front (numbers, types of missions, targets, etc.) Of course, the claims concerning *Luftwaffe* acft destroyed (on ground / in air), tanks, vehicles, trains, etc. knocked out, must be taken with a certain grain of salt. Conversely, this study seems to document compellingly that the VVS did not simply disappear for weeks (months?) following the catastrophe it experienced in the first 72 hours of “Barbarossa.” For example, during the “frontier battles” (22.6.-10.7.41), the VVS on all fronts managed some **47,000** sorties in just **18** days (p 44). (See, Ray Wagner (ed.), The Soviet Air Force in World War II) (See my “*VVS Notes*” for more details from this source.)
- **Jul-Aug 41:** Smolensk operation: VVS flew about **20,000** sorties (M. N. Kozhevnikov, Command and Staff, 48-49)

j) *Logistics in opening weeks of campaign*

Note: See, Notebook #1, “Logistics, ‘Chronology of Events.’”

- Logistics issues: Zuege (durchschnittl. taeglich); Lkw-Transportraum, usw. (see, FMS **P-190**, in: **VI:124-25**; also Notebook #1, “Logistics”)
 - (Also, D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed, Vol. I, 53-54, for some great details on German logistics problems; also, Barry A. Leach, German Strategy against Russia 1939-41 (in “*Leach file*”)
 - (The *mortal dependence* of the modern soldier on the military organization for everything he needs to survive is as great as that of a small child on his or her parents. (Jonathan Shay, Achilles in Vietnam, 5)
 - (Shortages of all sorts – food, water, ammunition, clothing, shelter from the elements, medical care – are *intrinsic to prolonged combat*, if for no other reason than enemy attacks on the army’s logistical support services. (Shay, 19)

¹²⁷ **Note:** Writes Stahel: “Many standard works on Barbarossa and World War II recount the initial successes of the *Luftwaffe* on the eastern front, but tend not to follow up on the development of the air war in which, as early as late **Jul 41**, the *Luftwaffe*’s increasingly limited resources could only dominate narrow sectors of the front.” (f.n. 156, 363)

- **ab 22.6.41:** Das Problem der Versorgung der Truppe vor allem mit Betriebsstoff sollte sich waehrend des gesamten Ostfeldzuges als ein Dauerproblem herausstellen. Alle in den Karten als Strassen eingezeichneten Wege in oestl. Richtung waren vielfach unbefestigte Sandwege, auf denen vor allem die Raederfahrzeuge im tiefen Sand oder an Steigungen stecken blieben u. so die ganzen folgenden Marschkolonnen aufhielten. Ein Vorbeifahren oder Ueberholen war auf den engen Waldwegen meist nicht moeglich. (*K. R. Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 102)

- **Jul 41:** By early July, Bock's *panzer* divisions are losing tanks because the supply system cannot provide parts. (see, *W. Murray, War to be Won*, 127)

- **Jul 41:** By mid- to late **Jul 41**, logistics capacity of AGC already seriously overstretched. As *David Stahel* writes: a) by **25.7.41**, the supply capacity of the hopelessly overstretched logistical network behind AGC was threatening some sectors of the precariously held front w/ collapse. . . No where was this better seen than at Yel'nya, where **46. PzK** was fighting off immense Soviet pressure w/ fewer and fewer resources. Most particularly, artillery shells were sorely lacking; b) On **28.7.41** concern was expressed at **PzGr 2** that just **45** replacement tank engines were being made available per month for the entire eastern front. [!] On the following day [**29.7.41**] new figures were reported from all the panzer divisions showing a severe decline in the number of serviceable tanks. On **22.6.41** Guderian's panzer group fielded **953** tanks of all models, but by **29.7.41** the total had sunk to **286** tanks – only **30%** of the original strength; c) The crisis of supply was denying the infantry the use of their guns to answer the powerful Soviet bombardments. To illustrate this point, Geyer [**9. AK**] stated that during this period the **263. ID** received 1000 shells per day which allowed each gun one shot every minute for **30** minutes a day.¹²⁸ (See, (*D. Stahel, "And the World held its Breath*, 203-17; **VIII:99-103**)

- **10.7.41:** The further the Germans advanced, the greater became the *supply difficulties*. Civilian trucks, stolen from western Europe, disintegrated on the primitive Soviet roads. Within **19** days of the start of the campaign, the *Wehrmacht* had lost **25%** of these vehicles, w/ little change for replacements. (*W. Murray, War to be Won*, 126; **III:42**)

- **30.7.41:** Enormous success of their initial advance has caused the Germans to outrun their fragile logistical structure; this prompted **OKH 30 Jul 41** decision to delcare a virtual stand-still so that AGC could rest and refit. **2 PzGr**'s embattled bridgehead over the Desna at El'nia was **720 km (432 miles)** from the nearest German railhead. The infantry were running short of boots, and staff ofcers began to plan for large quantities of winter clothing. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 84; also, *Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 185-86)

k) *Germans consider victory in east imminent – plan accordingly*

29.6.41: In a letter this day, Jodl's war diarist, *Helmuth Greiner*, showed that the **OKW** agreed the campaign is *going far better than expected*: „With the capture of *Dvinsk* and *Minsk* we

¹²⁸ **Note:** See, Hermann Geyer, *Das IX. Armeekorps im Ostfeldzug 1941*, pp 97-98. With the Blitzkrieg stalled, Soviet strength of arms came to the fore as the predominate force on the new immobilized battlefield. Reflecting this fact, Geyer wrote that in **137. ID**, **850** men were lost in the first **3-4** days of reaching the front; while the **263. ID** lost **750** men and the **292. ID** **300** men. The attrition of Army Group Centre was proceeding rapidly. (See, Geyer, 95-97.)

have covered in one week one third of the way to *Leningrad* and *Moscow*; at this rate we would be in both cities in another **14** days – but we can assume it'll be even sooner.“ Hitler shared this view. Staring at the wall map in his dining room [at the Wolf's Lair], he proclaimed w/in his secretaries' earshot, „In a few weeks we'll be in Moscow. Then I'll raze it to the ground and build a reservoir there. The name Moscow must be expunged.“ About the same time, Hitler assured Ambassador von der *Schulenburg*, who'd been repatriated from Moscow: „By **15 Aug** we shall be in Moscow. By **1 Oct** the Russian war will be over.“ (Irving, *Hitler's War*, 282; **III:36**)

- **Jul 41:** In der *Operationsabteilung* des Generalstabes beschaeftigte man sich in jenem Monat erwartungsvoll mit einem *Unternehmen gegen das Industriegebiet am Ural*. Von Gorkij, Kasan, Uljanovsk u. Kujbysev als Ausgangspunkten sollte die dt. Armee zu den Industriestaedten Niznij Tagil, Sverdlovsk u. Magnitogorsk im Ural vorstossen u. sich nach Zerstoerung der industriellen Anlagen wieder zurueckziehen. Das Unternehmen war als „eine grosszuegige mot. Expedition durch ein unwirtliches, wenig geeignete Wegverbindungen aufweisendes Gelaende“ fast [stilecht?] wie in alten Entdecker- u. Abenteuerzeiten gedacht! (Ueberschaer, *Scheitern des Unternehmens "Barbarossa"*, 147; also, *KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 1037; **III:39**)
- **3.7.41:** [*Ueberlegungen Halders*]: An diesem Tage traten die Deutschen zum Angriff auf die *Landbruecke von Smolensk* an. . . An diesem **3 Jul 41** nahm Generalstabschef Halder eine umfassende Lagebeurteilung vor. . . Wie siegessicher muss der Generalstabschef des Heeres gewesen sein, wenn er schon am **3 Jul 41** dem Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion *nicht mehr seine volle Aufmerksamkeit widmete!* Wie siegessicher muss er gewesen sein, wenn er Fernziele im Mittleren Osten ins Auge fasste, die dem heutigen Betrachter ziemlich utopisch anmuten! (See, *Magenheimer*, **VIII:74-75**)
- **6.7.41:** *Anecdote:* Hitler for first time states ultimate objective of German armies is the Urals (i.e., even beyond the Astrachan – Archangelsk line); on same day, *Maj H.-M. Welcker* (staff officer in **251. ID**) writes: “Stundengeschwindigkeit der pferdebespannten Truppenteile infolge der schlechten Wege unter zwei [2] km sank.“ (**IX: H.-M. Welcker**)
- **14.7.41:** Hitler orders the armaments programs reoriented toward the air force and the navy, w/ their planned employment to include both direct attacks on England and its shipping in the Atlantic as wellas the British positions in the Middle East. As in the summer of **1940**, when victory in the West was thought to have been attained, so now once again the plans for the *great battleship and acft carrier navy* were reactivated. The immense surface fleet for which the contracts were now reactivated would be fed by the oil from the conquered Russian wells; the tools for the expected war against the USA could now be forged and sustained. „For a short time all looked rosy.“ (*G. Weinberg*, *Global History of WWII*, 268; **III:43**)
- **14.7.41:** Hitler befiehlt, den Schwerpunkt der Ruestung auf die Marine u. die Luftwaaffe zu verlegen, da der Russlandfeldzug so gut wie gewonnen sei. (*lexicon-der-wehrmacht*; **IX: Magenheimer**, *Hitler's War*; *Mueller-Hillebrand*, *Das Heer 1933-45*, Bd. III, 40-42, for complete text of Hitler's order.)
 - (Note: As result, production of weapons for the Army would not again attain the level of consumption until summer of **1942**. (See, Tabelle **33**, p 42, illustrating almost total lack in key wpns production in **Jan 42**.)
 - (Note: Even before **Jul 41**, the Germans had severely curtailed production of munitions for the Army. Not until the spring/summer **1942** would munitions production catch up w/ and overtake consumption in the field. (For details see, Tabelle **34**, “*Verbrauch*,

Fertigung u. Bestand an Munition 1941/42," in: *Mueller-Hillebrand, Das Heer 1933-45*, Bd. III, 43)

- **15.7.41:** With victory in east considered imminent, **OKH** plans to restructure the Army. (**IX: Magenheimer, Hitler's War**)

l) *Other side of the hill*

Note: For useful details on Stalin's and Soviet Union's reaction to Operation "Barbarossa" see, **VIII:60-62**; also, **III:19**, ff.)

Note: The postwar Soviet leadership often boasted that, during the initial days of its Great Patriotic War, the Soviet Union and Red Army experienced the equivalent of a NUCLEAR FIRST STRIKE [my emphasis], yet survived. While overstated a bit, this claim is not far from the truth. (*D. Glantz, Barbarossa*, 74)

Note: New archival evidence now indicates that, from the *very first day* that Operation "Barbarossa" began, Stalin and Stavka consistently and repeatedly attempted to halt and drive back the German juggernaut. Beginning in late June and extending into July, August and September, they would order the Red Army to conduct a series of ops in the form of counterattacks, counterstrokes and, in one case, a full-fledged counteroffensive, all of which represented clumsy attempts to implement the Red Army's **1941 State Defense Plan**. (For details of these initial counterattacks, etc., see, *D. Glantz, Soviet-German War: Myths & Realities*, 16-17)¹²⁹

Note: For an "inside" look at first days of war by Red Army Chief-of-Staff see, *G.K. Zhukov, "The Beginning of the War,"* in: *Soviet Generals Recall World War II*, Igor Vitukhin (ed.).¹³⁰ Details include following: a) hour-by-hour break-down of first day of war; b) efforts to begin full-scale mobilization and establish institutional structures to fight the war (Stavka, GKO, etc.); c) notes that main task in days following start of "Barbarossa" was to create a *defense in depth* on approaches to Moscow; d) reference to **BODO** – a teletype w/ a scramble attachment; e) as early as **27.6.41**, a Stavka order to Western Front addresses the *weakness in the German attack* – that "first mechanized enemy echelon has broken away from its infantry for a very long distance." (i.e., growing separation of German mechanized units from following foot infantry); f) creation of State Defense Committee (GKO) on **30.6.41**, providing unity of command (Germans had no comparable deliberative and executive body); g) Battle of Smolensk – in Soviet narrative this battle lasted two months; Zhukov notes the battle's "great strategic importance" in slowing down the German advance along the main strategic axis (i.e., in the center).

- For most recent perspectives on opening days of war from Soviet side see, *C. Pleshakov, Stalin's Folly*. (my detailed notes in P. file; also, **IMPB:1**)¹³¹

¹²⁹ **Note:** Glantz: "Close examination of newly released documents, including Stavka and front orders, clearly indicates that the Stavka attempted to coordinate these operations w/ regard to their timing, conduct, and objectives." However, the "extremely fluid combat situation and the rapid German advance made these offensive operations seem uncoordinated and prevented the Germans from recognizing them for what they actually were." (16-17)

¹³⁰ **Note:** Article can be found in my "Zhukov file."

¹³¹ **IMPB** = "Introductory Material (Projekt 'Barbarossa'), in: "Introduction" file.

Vivid scenes of fighting, terrain, civilians, etc.

Supports thesis that Stalin secretly planning preemptive attack on Germany.

- Red Army *command and control* of forces along the frontier severely hampered by German sabotage actions, *Luftwaffe*, Soviet reliance on *telephones*. D. 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,’ esp. 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, Main Direction Command, and front and army levels, went by **BODO**, enciphered radio-teletype, a sort of telegraph. And many commanders relied on *liaison officers and couriers*, both airborne and ground. Of course, changes occurred in **1942** w/ more widespread use of radios.” (*Email, D. Glantz to C. Luther, 20 Aug 10*)
- **22.-29.6.41** [Stalin’s behavior]: The Soviet dictator did not suffer a psychological breakdown on **22 Jun 41**; this is a myth. His appointments diary shows he was fully occupied in meetings w/ generals and party leaders in the week after the attack. . . Still, Stalin could not help but be devastated as events unfolded in the first week – loss of acft, failure of counter-attacks, the deep Belostok-Minsk encirclement. The last straw was the breakdown of communications w/ the Western [Front] on Sunday, 29 June. A stormy meeting of political leaders and generals took place that evening, in the Commissariat of Defense. Zhukov, the Chief of the General Staff, burst into tears. Stalin withdrew in despair to his dacha outside Moscow. The dictator’s frightened Politburo comrades had to drive out and coax him back to the Kremlin. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 63-64; **III:28**)
- **23.-28.6.41**: Existing records from all operating fronts contained refrains on personnel and equipment shortages and unit and officer training deficiencies. A particularly scathing critique by the Western Front’s Military Council prepared on **23 Jun 41** began by stating: „The experience of the first day of the war demonstrates disorganization and carelessness by many cdrs, including senior cdrs.“ Periodic situation reports from the Western Front’s subordinate armies illustrated how inadequate combat readiness quickly sapped the strength of all combat formations. The **3 Army** cdr, Lt.-Gen. V.I. Kuznetsov, reported on evening of **23rd**: „We are holding out w/o transport, fuel, and sufficient ammunition. Nikolaev [the divisional cdr] alone, has only **3500** rifles. . .“ On **28 Jun 41**, as German forces approached Minsk, Maj-Gen A.N. Ermakov, Cdr of Western Front’s **2 Rifle Corps**, reported: „At the present moment the corps’ position is rather difficult:
 - a) no ammunition;
 - b) no fuel;
 - c) no food;
 - d) no transport for resupply or evacuation;
 - e) no communications w/ the **161 RD**, and the corps separate signal btn is greatly under-strength;
 - f) no hospitals (the corps hospitals were not mobilized).“

These and many similar reports clearly explain why the German attack utterly collapsed the Western Front in matter of days. (*D. Glantz, Red Army Ground Forces*, 18; **III:76**)

- Stalin’s *peace offer* of late **Jun 41** (**IX: Magenheimer, Hitler’s War**, etc.)

- Massive *mobilization* of new armies begins immediately. High Command HQ – STAVKA – established, etc. The Soviet mobilization system tapped into its *mobilization pool* of more than **10,000,000** men, generating **800,000** by the end of **Jun 41**, another **600,000** men in **Jul 41**, perhaps almost as many in **Aug 41** – dispatching over half of these men to the Western, Reserve, and Central Fronts operating along the Western (Moscow) axis. (*Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed*, 579; also, Notebook #2, etc.)
- Massive effort begins almost immediately to *dismantle and ship eastward* hundreds of Soviet factories in western Russia. (For details, Notebook #II.)
- **25.6.41** [Stavka]: Once it was clear to all of its members that not only the third directive of **22 Jun 41** but the whole previous concept of carrying the war to the enemy's territory was a mistake – and it was clear by the fourth day of the invasion – the newly formed Stavka set about developing an “*active strategic defense*.” The objectives would be to stop the enemy along the whole front, to hold him and wear him down while the strategic reserves were being assembled, and then to shift to a “decisive strategic counteroffensive.” . . . The main effort was to be in the centre. (For more details see, *Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 28; **III:33**)
- **26.6.41** [Zhukov plans defense in depth]: „On 26 Jun Stalin phoned me at the [CP] of the Southwestern Front in Ternopol: ‚A bad situation has developed on the Western Front. The enemy has approached Minsk. I don't understand what's happening to Pavlov. Nobody know where Marshal Kulik is. Marshal Shaposhnikov is ill. Can you fly to Moscow at once?’ . . . Late in the evening of **26 June**, I landed in Moscow and was taken to Stalin straight from the airport. In Stalin's office I saw Marshal Timoshenko and Lt Gen Vatutin, my First Deputy, standly stiffly at attention. Both of them were pale and drawn, their eyes red from lack of sleep. Stalin was not in his best mood. With a brief nod, he said, ‚Put your heads together and tell me what can be done in this situation.’ And he flung on the table a map showing the situation on the Western Front. I told him we would need about 40 minutes to analyze the situation. ‚Very well. Report to me in 40 minutes.’ (For remainder of Zhukov's account see, *Zhukov, War Begins*, in: *Battles Hitler Lost*, 44-45; **III:81**)
- **29.6.41**: Soviets introduce a scorched earth policy w/ a general directive from Moscow on this day. See, **III:37**.
- **30.6.41**: By the end of the month, the Soviets have called up **5,300,000** reservists. (*W. Murray, War to be Won*, 125; **III:38**)
- **30.6.41**: In Moscow, Stalin created the State Defense Committee (GKO), which superseded the Defense Committee of the Council of People's Commissars and became the war cabinet that had been envisioned in the prewar plans. Stalin was the chairman; Molotov the deputy chairman; the other members were Voroshilov and G. M. Malenkov, who was the party personnel chief and Stalin's right-hand man. The GKO was the highest wartime organ of the Soviet government, and its decrees had the force of law. Its authority encompassed both the military and civilian spheres, and the Stavka was subordinate to it. But the GKO concerned itself mainly w/ directing the nonmilitary aspects of the war effort. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 29; **III:37**)
- Anfang **Jul 41**: In Moskau kursieren alle moeglichen Geruechte. Es wird sogar behauptet, dass Stalin bereits fuer seine Verbrechen abgeurteilt wurde, u. Trotzki unterwegs sei, um die

Fuehrung zu uebernehmen. (Janusz Piekalkiewicz, Die Schlacht um Moskau: Die erfrorene Offensive, 84)

- During first half of **Jul 41**, IAW Soviet mobilization plans, the STAVKA assigned **6** mechanized corps from internal military districts to Western Front to replace the mech corps destroyed during border battles. (See, D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed, Vol. I, 48)
- Zhukov's begins to prepare *defense in depth* along Moscow axis.
- **Jun-Jul 41**: In late June/early July, Stalin, Timoshenko and Zhukov hastily formed and deployed forward the first of many groups of *Stavka's* reserve armies. In succession – throughout **Jul/Aug 41**, these armies occupied row after row of reserve defensive positions stretching eastward from the Dnepr River to the approaches to Moscow proper. (For more details of deployments see, Glantz, Barbarossa, 59; 217, f.n. 1)
- By first week of **Jul 41**, all the defending Soviet armies and divisions already experiencing *severe shortages* in tanks, communications, AT weapons, AA guns, etc. (See, D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed, Vol. I, 51)
- **Jul 41** [Soviet Counterstrokes]: List of Soviet counterattacks in **Jul 41**, many of them neglected or totally forgotten operations:
 - Western Front “Lepel Offensive” (6-11 July)
 - Timoshenko “Counterattack” and Associated Offensives (13-17 July), to include:
 - **22 Army** (at Gorodok)
 - **19 Army** (at Vitebsk)
 - **20 Army** (around Orsha)
 - **13 Army** (around Staryi Bykov)
 - **21 Army** (toward Bobruisk)
 - **16 and 4 Army** remnants (to Gor'ki)
 - “Bobruisk Offensive” Operation (13 Jul – 7 Aug)
 - “Smolensk Counteroffensive” (21 Jul – 7 Aug)

(Source: Glantz, Forgotten Battles, Vol. I, 9)

- **2.7.41**: Timoshenko appointed commander of Western Front, w/ Eremenko and Budenny as his deputies. (See, D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed, Vol. I, 58)
(At same time, Budenny's Reserve Front, which had consisted of **19, 20, 21** and **22 Armies** and which had been digging in on the line of the upper Dvina and upper Dnieper, is incorporated into Timoshenko's command. West Front still has nearly **1000** tanks at its disposal, although these are almost entirely of obsolete pattern. . . Timoshenko's West Front, which a few days later became the West Theater, consisted of **7** armies.) (For deployment of West Front armies see, Seaton, Russo-German War, 126-27)
- **3.7.41**: Stalin makes his address to the nation. See, **III:40-41**.

- **3.7.41:** In USSR, all males between ages of **16–60** are called up for military service, while women between **18–50** become eligible to serve the state. Behind the scenes, Stalin begins to reorganize the Stavka and GKO. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 60-61)

- **4.7.41:** For disposition and strength of Soviet Western Front on this day see, *D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed*, Vol. I, 45, ff; 58-59)
 By this date, Timoshenko has been reinforced by **5** reserve armies. He is defending the approaches to the Dvina – Dnepr Rivers.

- Between **5-10 Jul 41**, STAVKA begins to raise and field new reserve armies (after having committed Budenny's reserve armies to combat in hasty fashion) by accelerating mobilization program and deploying fresh reserve armies into two defensive lines being constructed between Smolensk – Moscow. (See, *D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed*, Vol. I, 49-51)

- **9.7.41:** Red Army defends the approaches to the Dnepr and river line itself w/ remnants of Western Front's shattered **13** and **4 Armies**, backed up by **5** armies from Marshal Budenny's Group of Reserve Armies. Budenny's forces had begun moving into the region as early as late May, but on **1 Jul 41** were not yet fully assembled. Stalin had placed Timoshenko in command of Western Front on **1 Jul 41**, transferring **4** of Budenny's reserve armies – **19, 20, 21** and **22** – to his command. The fifth reserve army, the weak **16 Army**, defended Smolensk. This desperate move sacrificed the original plan of using these armies as a strategic counteroffensive force. To restore the lost strategic depth, two of the first wave of armies mobilized in wartime, the **24** and **28 Armies**, concentrated around Viaz'ma and Spas-Demensk east of Smolensk to protect the approaches to Moscow. All of these armies suffered severe shortages of tanks, communications, AT wpns, AA guns, and senior cdrs were changed on almost a daily basis [!]. Still, the Germans had *no knowledge of these forces* until they bumped into them. The result would be a series of poorly coordinated but intense struggles around Smolensk from **Jul – Sep 41** which stopped the German forces in their tracks for the first time in the war. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 77)

- **10.7.41:** To improve C2 of actions of multiple fronts and armies, the **GKO** issued a directive organizing three so-called Main Commands of Directions (Axes). (See, *D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed*, Vol. I, 82)

- **10.7.41:** By this date, the newly formed State Defense Committee (**GKO**) has completed the mobilization of **56** additional divisions, which reinforce existing armies, fill out the Western and Southern Fronts' **13** and **18 Armies**, begin forming new wave of reserve armies, etc. (*D. Glantz, Red Army Ground Forces*, 7; **III:42-43**)¹³²

- **10.7.41:** On this day, Stalin takes the place of Timoshenko as head of the Stavka, the supreme headquarters. Also on this day, three [**3**] big regional military commands or "theaters" would be created. These **3** new theater commands were directly under the Moscow Stavka, but they would not be militarily effective. The cdrs were, above all, politically trusted comrades w/ personal links to the dictator: The appointment of Voroshilov, Timoshenko and Budennyi, to the Northwestern, Western, and Southwestern Theaters was the last victory of the clique of veterans of the Civil War **1 Cav Army** (Konarmiya). None of the three would turn out to be a fully competent cdr in the new war. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 64-66; **III:43**)

¹³² **Note:** Later, Glantz states that only **38** new divisions had been mobilized by 10 Jul 41, of which **15** were people's militia divisions. (38-39)

- Between **12-14 Jul 41**, STAVKA ordered formation of four (4) more new armies in region NE of Vitebsk. (D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed, Vol. I, 79)¹³³
- While Battle of Smolensk raged throughout **Jul 41**, Stalin instituted a *plethora of reforms* within the Red Army to improve its fighting capabilities, provide more effective logistics support, restore flagging discipline and morale, etc. At same time, STAVKA mobilized and deployed new armies. Yet new armies lacking training, weapons, etc. (See, D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed, Vol. I, 142, ff.)
- **12./14.7.41**: Britain and the Soviet Union sign a pact pledging “mutual assistance” against Germany. Neither side would make a separate peace. At same time, British bombing raids on Germany – designed to take pressure off the Russians – begin w/ a renewed intensity on 14.7.41, when *Hanover* was bombed; followed, in the next nine (9) days, by two more raids on *Hanover*, two on *Hamburg*, two on *Frankfurt* and *Mannheim*, and one on *Berlin* itself. (Gilbert, Second World War, 210; **III:17**)
- **13.-17.7.41** (“Timoshenko offensive”): The Germans chose to call this action the “Timoshenko offensive, named after Marshal S.K. Timoshenko, cdr of the Soviet Western Direction. General Heinz Guderian described the offensive in his memoirs [see, Panzer Leader, 144]. The “Timoshenko offensive” occurred in the midst of the initial German thrust toward Smolensk. Guderian himself was responsible for coining the operation’s name and for stressing its ferocity and significance. In reality, however, the Soviet Western Front launched the counterstroke w/ the already-shattered remnants of its **4** and **13 Armies**. Although the Soviet attacks failed, they did cause enough confusion in German ranks for elements of **13 Army** to escape from the German encirclement east of Mogilev. (Glantz, Forgotten Battles, Vol. I, 13-19; for more details, **III:116-19**)
- **15.7.41**: The Red Army undergoes a “*wholesale reorganization*” during summer of **1941**. According to David Glantz, this was “nothing more than a series of stopgap measures forced on the *Stavka* by necessity.” (For details see, **III:45**)
- **18.7.41**: To complete his defenses along the Moscow axis, on this day Stalin formed a strategic third echelon of forces by creating a new *front* designated the Front of the Mozhaisk Defense Line. STAVKA also forms other defenses in depth. (See, Glantz, 151-53)
- **23.-31.7.41**:¹³⁴ The “first Soviet counteroffensive” – the counterattack by Western Front’s *Operational groups*.
 These attacks strike German **9.** and **4. Armies** NE, E, SE of Smolensk. Timoshenko’s objectives were to: a) prevent Soviet **16., 19.** and **20 Armies** from being destroyed in Smolensk pocket; b) halt any further German exploitation to the east; and, if possible, c) encircle and destroy German forces in Smolensk region.
 Attack is hastily organized and carried out by a half-dozen so-called *operational groups* built around the nucleus of several reserve armies.
 Condition of the attacking forces poor – consist primarily of partially-trained reservists and largely untrained conscripts, w/ no cohesiveness, etc; attacking forces also suffer from severe shortages of tanks & artillery.
 Attacks begin on **23 Jul 41** but in *staggered fashion*, piecemeal. The operational groups advanced against AGC’s forward positions along a **226-km-wide** front from Belyi in the

¹³³ **Note:** Appears that some of these new mobilizations overlap.

¹³⁴ **Note:** Attacks by these “operational groups” appears to have continued into early **Aug 41**.

north southward through Iartsevo to Roslavl'. The total strength of attacking force rose to **20** divisions by **25 Jul 41**. (Combat performance of *Group Kachalov* as exemplary of this offensive.)

Timoshenko – under relentless pressure from STAVKA – ruthlessly pushes the attacks forward, which register but very *limited gains*.

Crux: Despite relative failure of offensive, the ferocity of the assaults forced Bock's army group and Hoth's and Guderian's panzer groups to *commit their last reserves*; most serious impact on AGC was the *severe attrition* the offensive caused. . . The cumulative effect of [the attacks] was to deprive AGC of its operational flexibility and seriously erode its offensive strength.

As a result, the struggle convinced Hitler and many other senior German cdrs that it would perhaps be prudent to *halt the direct offensive action along the Smolensk – Moscow axis* and instead mount a major offensive drive into the seemingly more vulnerable Ukraine. (For more details see, *D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed*, 193-224)

- **Late Jul 41**: In his memoirs, Rokossovsky states: "I encountered a great number of instances of *cowardice, panic, desertion, and self-mutilation* to evade battle among the soldiers. . ." (See, *Glantz*, 281)
- **Late Jul 41**: Unlike the German Command, the Stavka, or Russian HQ, having succeeded in forcing the attacking forces to a halt at Smolensk, expected the war to last beyond the winter.¹³⁵ Initial preparations had already been made at the end of July 1941 to bring winter clothing and equipment from the east of the country. The Soviet Command wanted to delay further the German attacks, inflict as many casualties as possible, slow down the pace of the German attack and gain time to form reserves, who, at onset of winter, were finally to bring the German advance to a standstill. The Soviets *no longer feared a collapse* of their own system and a total defeat. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 72; **III:51**)
- **End Jul 41**: The STAVKA regroups. Stalin bolsters his reserves along the Moscow axis and orders his forces to mount *fresh large-scale counteroffensives* in multiple sectors along the Smolensk – Moscow axis to preempt, blunt, or defeat the expected German thrust toward the Soviet capital. To this end, at month's end, Stalin united all of the STAVKA's reserve armies operating west of Moscow, specifically, in the region extending from Rzhev south-ward to Viaz'ma, into a new Reserve Front subordinate to Timoshenko's Western Main Direction Command and assigned his most trusted lieutenant, Zhukov, to command the new front. . . At the same time, Stalin replaced Zhukov as chief of the General Staff w/ Boris Shaposhnikov. (See, *Glantz*, 367-72, for *front order of battle*, etc.)
- **27.7.-5.8.41** (Case study of state of Red Army): Maj-Gen. V.L. Khomenko, **30 Army** cdr, assessed his army's readiness in a **27 July** report to the Western Direction Command. In it he catalogued many deficiencies, including the constant failure of staffs and cdrs to transmit orders properly, poor march discipline, chaotic fire coordination and support, inefficient and ineffective rear service ops, command and staff violations of the most basic combat staff procedures, and, finally ineffective party organ support of combat cdrs. In a lengthy subsequent report prepared on **5 Aug 41**, Khomenko informed Western Front of the problems his

¹³⁵ **Note**: On **30.7.41**, Stalin told Roosevelt's advisor, Hopkins, that he was relying on the effects of the muddy season and believed that Russia could survive the winter. Stalin's optimism, however, would change abruptly after the Red Army sustained very heavy casualties in the Battle of Kiev. He was thus forced to ask Churchill for help and called for **25-30** divisions to be employed on Russian soil. (*K. Reinhardt*, 76, f.n., 21)

command had experienced since mobilization. (For more fascinating details see, *D. Glantz, Red Army Ground Forces*, 40-41; **III:138**)

- **29.7.41:** . . . Der Gegner vor dem **XXIII AK** leistet nach Heranfuehren von Verstaerkungen, besonders Artillerie,¹³⁶ weiterhin hartnaeckigen Widerstand. (*Mehner, Tagesmeldungen*, in: *Geheime Tagesberichte*, 219)
- **Aug 41:** The effects of the Smolensk encirclement and the failed Red Army counteroffensive *seriously weakened* Timoshenko's Western Front. By early **Aug 41**, many of the *front's* rifle divisions fielded only from **1000** to **2000** men each and far fewer combat infantry men, and its tank forces were distinctly threadbare. Nonetheless, Timoshenko could *still draw on a healthy supply of reserve armies*, while Bock at Army Group Center had *virtually no reserves at all*. . . Furthermore, in light of its *large number of uncommitted reserve armies* and apparent increasing German weakness, the STAVKA resolved to continue its determined **war of attrition** against AGC. Therefore, at moment the Germans were concluding the Battle for Smolensk was over, Stalin and his STAVKA were preparing a *massive new counter-offensive*. . . (*Glantz*, 360-61)
- **1.8.41:**¹³⁷ By this date, the number of newly mobilized Red Army divisions has grown to total of **144**, including eight **[8]** **100-series** tank divisions formed primarily from tank divisions of mech. corps deploying from the internal military districts. From this wave of mobilization emerge **13** new armies¹³⁸ [mobilized from **10 Jul – 1 Aug 41**]. From four **[4]** of these new armies, Stavka forms a new Reserve Front. Thus, by **1 Aug 41**, the Red Army's total strength stands at **401** divisions, despite the loss of about **46** divisions since start of hostilities. Subsequently during August the Stavka will form **9** [or **10/unclear**] new armies. (For table listing new armies see, *D. Glantz, Red Army Ground Forces*, 9-11)¹³⁹

m) *Smolensk as major turning point?*

Note: See my comments in “*Key Perspectives concerning Operation ‘Barbarossa,’*” p 2, in: “*Introduction File.*”

Note: Despite frequent representations of the Battle of Smolensk as an unambiguous German victory, it did not achieve the main German aim of tearing open the Soviet front to allow an unhindered advance into the depths of the Soviet Union. . . Bock's encirclements in the center of the front [i.e., since start of campaign] achieved impressive operational successes, but did not open up a strategic alternative through which the war could be won. . . By early **Aug 41**, Barbarossa was in deep trouble and German claims of a definitive victory at Smolensk represented a greater propaganda success than an actual military one. In fact, given the

¹³⁶ **Note:** Virtually daily references in the “*Tagesmeldungen*” to Soviet use of artillery. Red Army amply supplied w/ artillery and seems to have made effective use of it. Their artillery must have played a major (decisive?) role in attrition of the *Wehrmacht*.

¹³⁷ **Note:** These figures clearly illustrate the regenerative powers of the Red Army and show that it was far from defeated after first six weeks of campaign.

¹³⁸ **Note:** Among these new armies is a reformed **3 Army**, which had been destroyed in the Bialystok-Minsk pocket.

¹³⁹ **Note:** Hence, by **1 Aug 41**, the Soviet mobilization system has added a total of **17** new armies and **144** divisions to the Soviet force structure. (**4** new armies [**56** div.] had been mobilized by **10 July**; **17** armies [**144** div.] by **1 Aug 41**.) (11)

German operational objectives, the battle was hardly a victory at all. . . (See, D. Stahel, “*And the World Held its Breath*,” 242; **VIII:107-08**)

Note: Smolensk broke momentum of German attack and was the *first of many turning points* of the war in the East. German difficulties there may also have *influenced the Japanese decision not to move against Russia in Manchuria* but against Anglo-Americans in Pacific, etc. (**IX:69-70**)

(See also, D. Stahel, “*And the World Held its Breath*,” 238-40; **VIII:71**. He writes: “On **4 Aug 41** the Japanese government affirmed not to involve itself in the German-Soviet war and on **6 Aug 41** the Kwantung Army was ordered to avoid any border incidents w/ the Red Army. If there was a window of opportunity for Hitler to gain direct Japanese military assistance against the Soviet Union, it had now passed. . . The Battle of Smolensk was therefore important not only for the damage done to Germany’s armies, but also for the *political and strategic ramifications* these involved.”)

Note: Historians on both sides of the Iron Curtain have ignored – for different reasons – the Battle of Smolensk. The question was not just whether the battle stalled or did not stall the Germans. The bloody Soviet counter-offensives also *weakened the Red Army and made possible dramatic new German victories* in **Oct-Nov 41**. The Battle of Smolensk might even be classed w/ the Battle of Khar’kov in **May 42**, as an abortive Soviet offensive which exposed the Red Army to a devastating German counter-attack. . . However Smolensk is assessed, the two-month battle „cost the Red Army dear.“ Official Russian figures for the period **10 Jul – 10 Sep 41** were **490 000** personnel lost, as well as **1350** tanks and **900** acft. As in the first weeks of the war, a high proportion of these losses were Red Army soldiers who surrendered. German figures list **400 000** POWs taken in the fighting around Smolensk, including **309 000** in the Smolensk pocket itself. The Soviet losses, then, were as big as those in the frontier battles. (E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East, 72-73)

Note: Smolensk in 1812: Clausewitz saw the fighting at Smolensk as a *strategic victory for the Russians*: they had lost a great many men, but the French losses had been heavy, and while the Russians would be able to make good their losses as they moved back to meet their reinforcements, the French would not. (Zamoyski, Moscow 1812, 235-36)

Note: Since the magnitude of the Soviets’ defensive success at Smolensk was not yet apparent to senior German cdrs at this point, they made *little mention of it in their memoirs*. (Glantz, 305)

Note:¹⁴⁰ Did tenacious Soviet resistance at Smolensk (**Jul – Sep 41**) finally break the momentum of “*Barbarossa*” and result, ultimately, in German defeat (i.e., the “Glantz thesis”). Clearly, Red Army’s resistance along the Smolensk – Moscow axis in summer ’41 played a pivotal role in failure of “*Barbarossa*.” Yet might one make the case that, a) growing *logistics problems* (after crossing the Dnepr) coupled with, b) the inability of large numbers of marching infantry to reach the front in timely fashion (forcing AGC’s tank and motorized divisions to man the inner encirclement ring longer than anticipated) were equally if not more responsible for German failure? (Check German “*Lageost*” maps for second half of **Jul 41**, to determine just how many IDs were still moving up from the Dvina – Dnepr line and, perforce, not yet at the front.)

¹⁴⁰ **Note:** My thoughts, **12 Nov 10**.

Note: For terrific analysis of German advance from **10-31 Jul 41** see, *D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed*, Vol. I, 247-50)

Glantz's key points:¹⁴¹

a) less than a week after crossing the Dnepr [on **10-11 Jul 41**] and Western Dvina Rivers, AGC's two panzer groups had *shattered the Red Army's defenses* [i.e., their second echelon forces] along the two rivers and plunged eastward up to **180** km north and south of Smolensk;

b) over course of rest of month [i.e., after about **16 Jul 41**], Army Group Center faced new problems, which "stole away" its offensive momentum, while seriously weakening its vital panzer spearheads;

c) most importantly, in third week of **Jul 41**, it was surprised to encounter yet another echelon of armies; although this "third" echelon was far weaker than the second, it engaged the advancing German forces when they were *most vulnerable*, specifically, before the infantry had caught up w/ the advancing panzers and mot. troops;

d) due to lack of infantry (ca. **12-15** German infantry divisions tied down for **10-14** days at Smolensk and Mogilev), elements of Hoth's and Guderian's panzer groups forced to defend the "eastern front" E, NE and SE of Smolensk, while at same time manning the inner encirclement line containing and compressing Soviet forces in the Smolensk pocket (see text, p 249, for the *impossibly broad frontages* held by the panzer groups' modest numbers of panzer grenadier battalions);

e) hardly a wonder then that, in early **Aug 41**, Hitler began *turning his attention away from Moscow* and toward supposedly "softer" targets toward the south. Within days, Hitler's *new strategy* would begin playing out as Guderian's panzer group crossed the Sozh River and moved eastward on Roslavl (while v. Weich's **2. Army** would move on Rogachev and Gomel. . .

-- "In fact, the battles for Smolensk would *largely decide the fate of Operation Barbarossa as a whole*." (*D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed*, Vol. I, 60)

-- Timoshenko's determination to hold his positions west of Smolensk by counterattacking, and refusal to withdraw, mean that another *decisive encirclement* was in the making. *D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed*, Vol. I, 79)

-- Was German momentum decisively broken at Smolensk? (*H. Magenheimer* contests this point; see, **IX: Magenheimer, Hitler's War**)
(See, Hillgruber article; *D. Stahel, Barbarossa*, etc.)

-- Japan: Did Smolensk play a role in Japanese decision not to join German attack on Russia?
(See, *A. Hillgruber*, etc.)

¹⁴¹ **Note:** These are Dr Glantz's perspectives, which I share at least in part. I certainly have trouble with "e." Unexpected Soviet resistance at Smolensk may have *reinforced* Hitler's decision to move south, but I'm not sure it was responsible for it.

n) *Initial Experiences in the East. Panzer & motorized units & Infantry (the “two” German armies)*

Note: For numerous *personal accounts* by German officers, soldiers for first days and weeks of war see, **XIII:124**, ff.

Note: For characteristics of *summer weather* in Russia see, **IV:8-9**; for geographical features of *Belorussia, rivers, swamps, forests*, **IV:27**, ff.)

Note: For characteristics of Red Army soldiers – and German reaction to these soldiers – see, **II:57-60**.

Note: *Johannes Huerter* quotes from letters sent from many Oberbefehlshaber to their wives, etc., in **Jul/Aug 41** timeframe. These letters show how shocked were the generals after only a few weeks of war – shocked by Red Army’s resistance, regenerative powers, etc. Clear to all of them from very early on that this was a different kind of war. (See, *Huerter, Hitlers Heer-fuehrer*; **IX:104**)

Note: For details on the terrible nature of, stresses of combat, etc., see, **IV:428**, ff. (“*Combat (sights/sounds/effects of)*”).

(For myth of post-**22.6.41** “cakewalk” for *Wehrmacht* – until finally slowed by rain, mud and snow – see my, “*Key Perspectives concerning Operation ‘Barbarossa,’*” in: “*Introduction File.*”

Note: For interesting details on *self-inflicted wounds* involving both German and Russian forces, see, **VIII:239-41**)

(*Nerven- u. Geisteskrankheiten*, **VIII:240-41**. “Immerhin waren die Nerven- u. Geisteskrankheiten die Erkrankungen, die in den ersten vier [4] Kriegsjahren bis **31 Aug 43** am *haeufigsten* zu *Dienstunfaehigkeiten* fuehrten. **20.504 Soldaten** mussten in diesem Zeitraum wegen einer solchen Diagnose aus der Wehrmacht entlassen werden. **6898 deutsche Soldaten** starben bis zu diesem Datum an Selbstmord. . . Die U.S.-Amerikaner zwischen **1942-45** schickten **375.333 Soldaten** aus psychiatrischen Gruenden wieder nach Hause, einen nicht geringen Prozentsatz von Soldaten deshalb, weil sie den Anstrengungen eines Krieges seelisch einfach nicht gewachsen waren. *Diese Zahlen sind in der deutschen u. russ. Armee unvergleichlich geringer.*“)

Note: *Woran Stirbt ein Soldat „im Felde.“* These fascinating details of types of wounds, severity of, etc., gleaned from *K. Schneider-Janessen, Arzt im Krieg*, 421, ff.; **VIII:237-38**)

(One key point: “Nach einer Statistik aus dem Jahre **1944** wiesen **43%** der Soldaten, die tot auf dem Schlachtfeld geblieben waren, Kopfschuesse auf; gefolgt von **22%** Brustschuessen. **15%** waren Granatvolltreffer,¹⁴² d.h., diese Soldaten waren teilweise zerrissen oder am ganzen Koerper von Splittern durchsiebt. Mit **8%** erst an vierter Stelle kamen die Bauchschuesse. Am Arm- u. Beinverletzungen zusammen starben keine **4%** der Soldaten unmittelbar auf dem Schlachtfeld.)

Note: For treatment and transport of German wounded in opening days of campaign (not always efficient) see, **I:653-54**.

¹⁴² **Note:** This statistic is a little curious, especially for **1944**, when the Soviets had massive amounts of artillery and densities of something like **200** guns per kilometer or more (on key front sectors).

(25.6.41: *Der Abtransport der Verwundeten war miserable. Tagelang lagen sie herum. Eine einschneidende Reform des Sanitaetswesens ist dringend erforderlich.*) (*Tagebuch Stabarzt Lierow, IR 37/6. ID*)

Note: German *Kampftaktik* – überlegene Führung, Gefecht der verbundenen Waffen, usw.¹⁴³
Diese Techniken waren *damals voellig neu* u. bildeten eine Voraussetzung dafür, dass das deutsche Konzept des *Blitzkrieges* in den Weiten der Sowjetunion vorerst mit einer geradezu unheimlichen Effizienz u. Schnelligkeit funktionierte. (IX: C. Hartmann, Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg, Kapitel III)

Note: Germans soon found themselves in a “360-degree war” (i.e., attacked from all sides) (163); pockets formed by Wehrmacht in summer ’41 “in many places no more than a line on a [HQ] map” (i.e., porous!) (*Dennis Showalter, Hitler’s Panzers*, 167)

Note: Belorussia – A poor region whose *sandy soil* produced only marginal crops of oats and potatoes; area was strewn w/ patches of *heavy woods* punctuated by villages made up of wooden or adobe houses w/ thatched roofs and brick schools and government buildings. Unable to escape from the *clouds of mosquitoes* breeding in the swamps adjacent to ever river, lake and stream, the soldiers were plagued by their assaults, particularly at sunset and at night. Marching in long columns along side the roads, the infantry divisions stretched for a distance of up to **32** km, and it took up to **24** hours to cross major rivers, even w/o enemy interference. (*D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed*, Vol. I, 62)

Note: Zamoyski refers to the “great Minsk – Smolensk highway, a wide straight road running between *rows of silver birches*, laid out by Catherine the Great for the rapid movement of mail and troops. (*Moscow 1812*, 211)¹⁴⁴

Note: For graphic details of march of Napoleon’s *Grande Armee* from the Niemen River, thru Lithuania and eastern Poland and into White Russia see, *Adam Zamoyski, Moscow 1812*, 151- 97.

(One finds many parallels in experiences of Napoleon’s and Hitler’s troops. As Zamoyski writes: “Conditions were indescribable. . . The roads were littered w/ the carcasses of horses and the corpses of men, w/ abandoned wagons and gun carriages.” Napoleon’s carefully conceived system of supply hardly functioned after crossing the Niemen; it was “swelteringly hot;” sandy tracks which passed for roads agonizing for both man and beast; discipline soon broke down and the men “behaved atrociously” (stole, pillages and raped); tens of thousands deserted; men and horses pushed beyond their limits (w/ inadequate food, water, shelter); miserable villages of eastern Poland and Russia offered little; by the middle of **Jul 1812**, “most of the footsoldiers were barefoot,” as their boots had fallen to pieces; swarms of mosquitoes tormented the men in the predominately marshy areas they were marching through; sweltering heat of July days (daytime temperatures reached **36C (97F)** frequently followed by bitterly cold nights (even in summer men died of *hypothermia* in the night); men died of hungar (“hungar was the worst affliction of all); some men drank horse’s urine out of the ruts in the road; many died of dehydration or malnutrition, others got diarrhea or dysentery; horses suffered from colic, diarrhoea, constipation, saddle sores (thousands perished); to discomfort of the march were added swarms of vicious wasps, horseflies, mosquitoes that are a feature of summer in that part of the world; the dust on the roads (sandy tracks running thru

¹⁴³ **Note:** “Usw.” includes, *inter alia*, superior C2 (eg., universal use of radio).

¹⁴⁴ **Note:** Was this the road referred to in my research as the old “post road?” Confirm!

endless dark pinewoods) was so thick in places that infantry had to have the drummers beating constantly at the head of every coy, so they did not lose their way; the population, such as it was, shocked the French and their allies by its abject poverty and backwardness; even some old soldiers later reflected that the *advance into Russia had been in some respects worse than the notorious retreat*; hundreds committed suicide; the whole army had been reduced by 1/3 by the time it reached Vitebsk (i.e., late **Jul 1812**), w/o fighting a single battle.)

Note: Without mills to grind the little grain that had been found in Lithuania & White Russia – among the *poorest agricultural regions in Europe* – the men lived on *boiled rye porridge*. . . Napoleon's horses (there must have been well over **200,000** of them) had fared even worse than his men because of his violation of the old rule against campaigning before the *grain had ripened*. The French system of *living off the country* had always been hard on the men . . . but Russia was poorer than Germany in both food and communications. . . (See, *Theodore Ropp, War in the Modern World*, 134, addressing Napoleon's campaign in Russia of **1812**.)

Note: Total War in 1812: French and allied soldiers soon began to “appreciate that they were *entering alien territory* in more senses than one. ‘This kind of warfare is horrible and does not resemble in any way that which we have been used to until now,” noted *Jean-Michel Chevalier*. . . A certain basic human solidarity [*prior to the invasion of Russia*] meant that the men of both sides, however desperate they may have been to destroy them as a force, *respected the others’ desire to survive*. ‘Soldiers kill w/o hating each other,’ explained Lt. *Blaze de Bury*, who had taken part in campaigns all over Europe. . . But it was not true in Russia. *Frederick, the Great* is alleged to have said that one *first had to kill the Russian soldier and then push him over*. Napoleon's troops were reaching the same conclusion after the fighting at Krasny, Smolensk and Valutina Gora [i.e., thru mid-**Aug 1812**]. Russian soldiers did not lay down their arms. They had to be hacked to pieces. Clausewitz, who had the advantage of observing the phenomenon from w/in the Russian army, put it down to ‘motionless obstinacy.’” (Note: Russians also began to implement a *scorched earth policy*.) (See, *Zamoyski, Moscow 1812*, 227-44)

-- **Historical Parallel:** In Vietnam the enemy struck not only at the body but also at the most basic functions of the soldier's mind, attacking his perceptions by concealment; his cognitions by camouflage and deception; his intentions by surprise, anticipation, and ambush. These mind games have been part of war since time immemorial, but never in American military experience have they been directed so skillfully and w/ such thoroughness at the enlisted man as in Vietnam. . . American soldiers literally felt *tortured* by their Vietnamese enemy.¹⁴⁵ [Could the same insight be applied to the “*Landser*” in Russia?] (*Jonathan Shay, Achilles in Vietnam*, 34).

-- **Friendly fire incidents (I:460-61).** “I have described the total and terrifying dependence of the modern combat soldier on the competence and trustworthiness of others in the army. This all-inclusive dependence not only means relying on the army to provide ammunition, intelligence, food, water, and medical evacuation, but also relying on your own *not to kill you w/*

¹⁴⁵ **Note:** One area where the German medical profession remained backward was in its recognition and treatment of mental and non-combat injuries. “Battle fatigue” was not officially recognized in the German Army. . . Psychological casualties really only began to emerge for the first time in significant numbers during the Eastern Campaign. (See, Dr. S. Hart, et al., The German Soldier, 91-92)

weapons intended for the enemy. . . According to Col. David Hackworth, **15-20%** of American deaths in Vietnam were due to ‘friendly fire.’”¹⁴⁶

(Note: For horrific “friendly fire” incidents in Normandy 1944 (St. Lo) see, Paul Fussell, Wartime, 17-18, in: one of my “Air Forces (German) files.” As Fussell later writes, “bringing to bear their instinct for *civilized irony*, the most intelligent contemporary writers have perceived in *blunders, errors*, and *accidents* something very close to the *essence* of the Second World War;” and later, “the tradition that the Second World War can be usefully conceived as a *vast theater of errors*. . .” 26, 32)

- Friendly fire: Even Adolf Hitler’s regiment in WWI (Bavarian **RIR 16**, the so-called “*List Regiment*”), became a victim to “friendly fire” when it received its “baptism” of fire in late **Oct 1914**, in the First Battle of Ypres. Hitler and his comrades – of what was in actuality a second line unit – went into battle still wearing their grey cotton hats, and hence were mistaken for British troops. (For a wonderfully detailed account see, Thomas Weber, Hitler’s First War, 41, ff.)
- Friendly fire (Guderian): On **1 Aug 41**, **XXIV PzK** and **VII AK** began their attack on Roslavl. . . . On my way to **3 PD** I became involved in a *bombing attack by our own planes* on the **23 ID**’s march route which resulted in *heavy casualties*. The *first bomb burst 5 ½ yards from my car*. Insufficient training and lack of combat experience on part of the young aviators were the cause of this unfortunate occurrence; and this despite clear recognition signals on the part of the troops on the ground. . . (See, Panzer Leader, 186-88)
- Untrustworthiness of Perception: A human enemy strikes not only at the body but at the most *basic functions of the soldier’s mind*. The Vietnamese enemy defeated the soldier’s perception by *concealment* and his ability to understand what he saw by *camouflage*. The basic mental state of intention and will was attacked by *ambush, deception, surprise*, and *anticipation*. . . The cumulative effect of prolonged attacks on mental function is to undermine the soldier’s *trust* in his own perceptions. . . In such a situation, “*hypervigilance*” is a rational response. Everything must be looked at twice, three times, to be sure that it is what it appears to be.¹⁴⁷ (Shay, Achilles, 170)
- Vigilance, the mental and physical preparation for attack, is a *combat survival skill* that needs no explanation. It is difficult, however, for anyone who has never been in combat to grasp the *extent to which vigilance invades sleep*. The modern soldier’s sleep can *hardly be said to be sleep*. In Vietnam, one veteran in our program always slept on his back w/ his rifle across his chest, or sitting up. It is not safe to shut out sounds and shadowy movements, so they are not shut out but instead are acknowledged during the light, unrestorative doze that is a soldier’s sleep. By contrast, Homeric warfare was apparently suspended every night from sunset to sunrise. . . Exposed to the continuous threats of warfare, the *body remains mobilized for battle indefinitely*. There is no longer any baseline state of physical calm or comfort. [Result are all kinds of physical disorders.] (See, Shay, Achilles, 173-74)
- The destruction of time is an inner survival skill. These words, written about concentration camp prisoners, apply equally to soldiers in prolonged combat: “Thinking of the future stirs

¹⁴⁶ **Note:** What were rates in WWII? In memoirs, diaries, etc., of German soldiers/flyers in Russia I’ve encountered many “friendly fire” incidents. For a perspective on casualties from friendly fire in WWII see, Paul Fussell, Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War, 17-35.

¹⁴⁷ **Note:** Much of what is outlined here as Viet Cong and North Vietnamese behavior in war paralleled the Red Army’s style of combat.

up such intense yearning and hope that . . . it [is] unbearable; they quickly learn that these emotions . . . will make them desperate. . . The future is reduced to a matter of hours or days. *Alterations in time sense* begin w/ the *obliteration of the future* but eventually progress to *obliteration of the past*. . . Thus prisoners are eventually reduced to living in an endless present.” For combat soldiers, the *temporal horizon* shrinks as much as the moral and social horizon. Only getting through *now* has any existence. With this loss of a meaningful personal narrative that links past, present, and future comes a shrinkage of volition. (See, *Shay, Achilles*, 176)

1) *Panzer & motorized units (personal accounts)*

Note: Tactical/operational superiority of the panzers over their opponents “was never greater than in the first half of **Jul 41**.” (*Dennis Showalter, Hitler’s Panzers*, 170-71)

Note: A major problem for the Red Army in the early war years [was] the *lack of effective anti-tank (AT) guns*. In **Jun 41** the Red Army possessed **14,900** AT guns (mostly **45mm**). In the course of **1943** the situation greatly improved. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 194-95)

Note: The Russians lost the armored battles of **1941** mainly w/ the **11-ton T-26** and **14-ton BT** light tanks. A new generation of Soviet tanks, which had been appearing in small numbers in **1941**, replaced them *en masse* in **1942/43**. The most important were the **29-ton T-34** medium tank and the **45-ton KV** heavy. Both were armed w/ a **76mm** gun which, compared to what was mounted in the foreign tanks of the time, was a heavy weapon. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder*, 196-97)

Note: For the “nuts and bolts” of small unit tank tactics, life in a tank etc., see, *W. Schneider, Panzer Tactics*) (in “*Schneider* file”).

Note: Appears that Germans *not entirely unprepared* for appearance of heavier Soviet tanks. Writes Dr. Erich Bunke, a *Panzerjaeger* in **31. ID**: “Und noch etwas geschah kurz vor Kriegsbeginn. Die ungeheuer grosse Zahl von Panzern beim Russen u. auch die Tatsache, dass **KV 1** Typen in Finnland aufgetaucht waren, ermoglichten es, dass eine neue Pak konstruiert u. geliefert wurde. Das Kaliber war **5 cm**. . .” (See his, Der Osten blieb unser Schicksal, 200-01)

Note: “War is an interaction among man that centers on armed violence in a surrounding climate of *danger, exertion, uncertainty* and *chance*. In such a climate, uncertainty and change dominate. . . The various factors making up war will be exaggerated in importance in mobile war as demanded by more rapid, distant movement on the battlefield. Mobile war, in fact, can be seen to be war w/ an *exaggerated climate of uncertainty and chance* and w/ exaggerated demands on the cdr to make *independent decisions* and *take action*. . . The German Army *conducted such mobile warfare better than any other*. (For more background on mobile war as practiced by the Germans from **1939-42** see, *R.H.S. Stolfi, German Panzers on the Offensive*, 70-82; in my “*German Armor*” file.)

Note: Much of what is described below – bad roads, vehicle breakdowns, weather, poor maps, technical difficulties, the unforeseen (**KVs** and **T 34s**), human exhaustion and frailty, etc. – fall under the rubric of *Clausewitzian friction*. According to P. Paret: Friction “refers to uncertainties, errors, accidents, technical difficulties, the unforeseen, and to their effects on decisions, morale, and actions.” Clausewitz said, “Friction is the only concept that more

or less corresponds to the factors that *distinguish real war from war on paper.*” As P. Paret explains, Clausewitz posited a *dialectical relationship* between “**genius**” – defined in part by C. as “all those *gifts of mind and temperament* that in combination bear on military activity [of an army]” – and “friction” on the other. Their *interaction* defines every clash between antagonists, every incident of fighting, that occurs in war. (See, Peter Paret, “*Clausewitz*,” in: Makers of Modern Strategy, 202-05)

Organization and Equipment Tables: Briefly discuss organization (number of regiments, independent btns., etc. of PDs on eve of “*Barbarossa*.”)

(See, G. Nafziger, German Order of Battle. Panzers & Artillery in WWII; also, Thomas L. Jentz, Panzer Truppen,¹⁴⁸ 142-50, 186-213)

Terrible road/rail infrastructure / strain on vehicles, etc.

(See, **IX**: R. Steiger, Armored Tactics; also, Hoth, Pz-Operationen, 56-59, 142, for problems faced by mechanized units from very start of campaign)¹⁴⁹

Tank maintenance: For details on German tank maintenance in the east see, **I:403-08**; also, B. Mueller-Hillebrand, Das Heer 1933-45, Bd. III, 268)

Tank commanders *led from the front*, resulting in higher losses (for some examples see, **IX**: R. Steiger, Armored Tactics)

(For **7. PD** in opening days of campaign see, R.H.S. Stolfi, German Panzers on the Offensive, 16-20; for cdrs of **20. PD** & **39. PzK** commanding from the front, Stolfi, German Panzers, 21; also, **18. PD** & General Nehring)

24.6.41: Guderian almost becomes a casualty at Slonim when Russians ambush his conference w/ **XXIV PzK** cdrs. (Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941, 39)

25.6.41: Tank commanders *led from the front*. Terrific anecdote! On this fourth day of the campaign, **39 PzK** is advancing from Wilna in direction of Minsk. General Rudolf Schmidt, the commanding general of the corps, personally leads an Erkundungsvorstoss at the head of his troops, accompanied only by a reconnaissance btn. and elements of his staff. As his biographer points out, in this case it was a rather reckless venture on Schmidt’s part, who in best Prussian-German tradition always led from the front. He, his men, and a couple of armored scout vehicles are ambushed by the Russians in a tract thru the forest. After a tough skirmish, they manage to extricate themselves and early the next morning link up w/ friendly troops. But there is a postscript: (See text for details, K. R. Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam, 104-08; **III:79**)

Life in a tank: Find description of inside of tank – confined, wreaks of oil, fumes, temperature variations in summer/winter [more than **100** degrees, I believe]. (Note: M. Miethe writes: „Ich habe noch eine Schulkameraden, aber der ist so krank, dass man mit ihm nicht mehr sprechen kann, nur noch mit seiner Frau. Er war Panzerfuehrer im Russlandkrieg u. ueber die ganze Kriegszeit hinweg. Er hat davon einen schweren Schaden zurueckbehalten u. so ist es auch anderen Panzerfahrern ergangen. Sie waren ein Lebenlang von schweren, schweren Kopfschmerzen gezeichnet, aber diese Schmerzen wurden nicht als Kriegsschaeden anerkannt. . .“) (Email, M. Miethe to C. Luther, 28 Jun 06)

¹⁴⁸ **Note**: This book provides precise strength figures for all PDs on **22.6.41**.

¹⁴⁹ **Note**: Steiger (near end of my notes in Notebook #9) includes figures for tank breakdowns of **10. PD** and **18. PD** for **Jul 41**.

ab 22.6.41: Erst im Einsatzraum stellen die Pz.-Kommandanten zu ihrem Entsetzen fest, dass die Landkarten der UdSSR, die ihnen das OKH ausgehändigt hat, in keiner Weise der Wirklichkeit entsprechen: Fast alle als Strassen eingezeichneten Verbindungen erweisen sich als unbefestigte Sandwege. (*Janusz Piekalkiewicz, Die Schlacht um Moskau: Die erfrorene Offensive*, 76)

ab 22.6.41: So mussten einige dt. Panzerbesatzungen in den ersten Tagen des Vormarsches mit Erstaunen feststellen, dass die in der Grenzsicherung eingesetzten sowjet. Panzer nicht in der Lage waren ihre Panzerkanone einzusetzen. Erst nachdem man einige dieser Panzer erbeutet hatte, konnte man das Rätsel lösen: Die Panzer hatten einfach noch keine Granaten an Bord. So konnten sie nur mit ihren MG schießen. (*K. R. Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 99)

ca. 22.-26.6.41 [19. PD]:¹⁵⁰ 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 Kradschützen auf erheblichen Widerstand, wurden auch von den Seiten angegriffen. . . *Niemand hatte bis dahin ein Auge zutun koennen oder duerfen*, was sich allerdings laenger nicht haette durchhalten lassen. Hierzu ein Bericht: „Bis zu fuenf [5] Tagen hatte ich es geschafft, *mich wach zu halten*. . .“ (See, *R. Hinze, 19. Inf.- u. Pz.-Div.*, 133-34; **VIII:126-27**)

23.6.41: Model's **3. PD** – w/ Blaich's Abteilung often “an der Spitze” – drove **150 km** deep into the Soviet front, destroying and capturing large numbers of tanks, guns and equipment (45-48, 69-72); account of Feldwebel Blaich's combat actions during opening days of campaign clearly demonstrates the *overwhelming tactical superiority* of the German tank crews at this time. Clear from this account that General Model pushed his men to limits of their endurance. (See, *Hans Roell, Oblt. Albert Blaich: Als Panzerkommandant in Ost u. West*; summary in “Biblio file”).

Some characteristics of advance of motorized forces in early days (German style of maneuver warfare): a) German armored units in motion almost continuously (day & night), advancing for most part in *ad hoc* battle groups (*Kampfgruppen*); b) movements sometimes delayed by traffic jams on handful of available roads and by poor road infrastructure itself; c) shortages of *gasoline* (due to several factors); d) columns often strung out for miles (**20. PD** scattered over **70 km** of roadway, for eg.); e) not uncommon for motorized spearheads to find themselves temporarily *cut off and surrounded*; f) combat often characterized by *chance encounters* and *wild intermixing* of German and Soviet forces. In essence, German *command style* accepted “the fundamental factors of *uncertainty and chance* in war.” (See, *R.H.S. Stolfi, German Panzers on the Offensive*, 16-24)

War diary of **29 ID (mot.)** includes usual comments about traffic jams delaying forward movement, serious losses in some engagements, Soviets employing „Heckenschuetzen” and devious combat tactics, etc. Entries for **27.6.41** include gripping account of crises by **AA 29** and **K.-Btn. 29**, including reports of Soviet use of Gas. These reports of course – like others at start of campaign – prove to be false. Division also sustained heavy losses in opening days of fighting, among them 47 officers as of **1.7.41**. (See my Notebook #7 for details.)

¹⁵⁰ **Note:** On **26.6.41** abends, the **19. PD** was deployed on the NE corner of the Bialystok – Nowogrodek „Kessel.” (See map, p. 135)

Pocket battles *tied down armored units* for long periods of time (due to slow advance of the infantry (**IX**: *R. Steiger*, Armored Tactics)
(motorized units sometimes as much as ca. **150** km ahead of infantry armies)

Encounters w/ new Soviet tanks (**KV & T 34**)

(**Jul 41**: detachment of **3. PD** loses **21** tanks – more than **50%** of its strength – in battle w/ a few **T 34s**. **IX**: *R. Steiger*, Armored Tactics)

9.-13.7.41 (Brilliant achievements of German tank forces): The **17 PD** is engaged during **9 Jul 41** in heavy fighting [near Senno SW of Vitebsk] w/ hostile tanks. **100** Russian tanks are destroyed, „a fine achievement on the part of this brave division.“ By **13 July**, **17 PD** [again referred to by G. as „this brave division“] had destroyed **502** enemy tanks. (*Guderian*, Panzer Leader, 169, 174)

11.7.41: As early as this day, **18 PD** has been reduced to **83** operational tanks representing **39%** of its initial start state. It lost **2279** men, **13.3%** of its strength, in almost **20** days. (*R. Kershaw*, War Without Garlands, 169)

2) Infantry units (personal accounts)

Note: For “*Alltagserfahrungen*” and “*Marchroutine*” during the “*Vormarsch*” period see, **IV:77-80**.

Note: For interesting details on characteristics of “marching” on eastern front see, *David Westwood*, German Infantryman (2). Eastern Front 1941-43, 11-15, 61)
 (“One veteran calculated a single step covered **60cm** – men took shorter or longer paces, but this was the average – so **50km** meant an estimated **84,000** paces.)

“*Arbeitspferde*” der *Wehrmacht*; seit dem Ersten Weltkrieg *schlagkraeftiger u. mobiler* geworden (See, **IX**: *C. Hartmann*, Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg, Kapitel I)¹⁵¹
(Infantry was the „workhorse“ of German Army in WWII; Germany sent a total of **57** panzer and panzer grenadier divisions (both *Wehrmacht* & SS) into action in WWII; at same time, it organized and sent **389** IDs into battle. **Note**: The German ID of **1939** “bears an amazing resemblance to the German [ID] of **1918**.”) (See, *G. Nafziger*, German Order of Battle. Infantry in WWII, 23-25)

Organization and Equipment Tables: Briefly discuss organization (number of regiments, independent btns., etc. of IDs on eve of “*Barbarossa*.”)

Mobilization in “*waves*.” German IDs would be called up in total of **35** waves; each had a slightly different *equipment allocation* from the previous wave. The largest variations occurred among those waves called up in winter **1941/42**. Losses of equipment on Russian front were so heavy that the Germans were unable to re-equip the divisions in the field and provide sufficient equipment to bring the new divisions up to full theoretical organizational strength, so compromises were made. (For dates different waves called up see, *Nafziger*, Order of Battle, 25-29)

¹⁵¹ **Note**: For dramatic increase in firepower of German IDs from **1914-18** – eg., exponential increase in number of MGs – see, *F. Kurowski*, Infantry Aces, 484, ff. “By the outbreak of war in **1939**, automatic wpns . . . had become integral elements of the army.” 488.

For breakdown of weapons in German ID (1939) see, “*Staerke der Divisionen 1939*,” in: *Werner Haupt, Die dt. Inf.-Div., 2. Teil, Anlage 3*, 163) In general, German IDs outfitted w/ large numbers of automatic and hvy wpns (MGs, MP-40s, mortars, IG, Pak, etc.) compared to the Russians.¹⁵² (Note: For examples of weapons/equipment of **78. ID** & **292. ID** on eve of “*Barbarossa*” see, *Nafziger*, 123-24, 279-80)¹⁵³

Forced marches to **50 km/day!**

Summer weather (**IV:7**, ff.)

Strain on men/horses

(Notebook #4; also, **IX: H.-M. Welcker, Aufzeichnungen**, ab **22.6.41**)

“*Unholy trinity*” of heat, dust and thirst!

(See also, *Tolstoy, War and Peace* (Tolstoy file)

(Note: For two terrific photos of a clutch of soldiers who have simply collapsed in exhaustion at the side of a roadway see, *Heinrich Boucsein, Halten oder Sterben. Die 129. ID im Russlandfeldzug* (after p 48).

Use of stimulant *Pervitin* (*Spiegel Online*, in: “*Drug Use*” file)

(See, **I:48-50** for details, anecdotes, etc.)

Average “Landser’s” kit (wpns/equipment)

(See, *G. Barkhoff (26. ID), “Ein Soldatenleben,”* in “*Ground Forces*“ file, for a complete list of wpns/equipment he carried at start of “*Barbarossa*.”

(“Aber selbst in den Sommermonaten fehlte es an wichtigem Zubehoer. Mein Vater [i.e., *W. Buddenbohm, 6. ID*] hat in einem Feldbrief meine Mutter um Uebersendung von Gardinenstoff gebeten, um sich damit gegen die extreme Mueckenplage schuetzen zu koennen.“ (*Wilfried Buddenbohm, Email an Dr C. Luther, 24.7.10.*)

Infantry rapidly *falls well behind advance of mechanized forces*. For insight into why this was so see, *Dr E. Bunke*,¹⁵⁴ Das Osten blieb unser Schicksal, 289-90; **III:121**. Among other things he writes: “Noch den ganzen Tag ueber musste ich mit den Lkws die Vormarschstrasse entlang trampen. Diese ganze Vormarschstrasse war ein **100** Meter breiter Gelaendeabschnitt ohne Befestigung, auf dem sich Mensch, Pferd u. Motor nach Osten quaelten im wahrsten Sinne des Wortes. Ueberall, wo Flussabschnitte waren, gab es Stockungen, manchmal auch bei Einmuendungen in Waelder, die sehr eng waren u. wo nur ein Gaensemarsch, Fahrzeug hinter Fahrzeug, moeglich war. Die war kein Vormarsch, sondern ein Vorwaertsschleppen. Die Fuehrung musste einsehen, dass die Infanteriekorps, nach denen sie so schrien, wirklich nicht schneller vorwaertskommen konnten. . .“

War diary of **129. ID**: Interesting comments on terrible strains of long marches – in dust, heat and over terrible roads – on men and horses. Notes poor march discipline of mot. columns. States that **20. AK** destroyed **250** enemy tanks on one day! (**24.6.41**). Also states that division’s regiments covered an average of **90-100 km** over a 24-hour period – from evening **24 Jun** to evening **25 Jun 41!** Interesting entry (**1.7.41**) addressing *breakdowns of prime movers* (French vehicles) of the Pak companies (**14./IR**) of the

¹⁵² **Note:** For theoretical TOEs of Russian rifle division in **1941** see, *Steven J. Zaloga, et al., Red Army Handbook 1939-45*, p 9. (Source among my “reference” books.)

¹⁵³ **Note:** TOEs evince minor differences, but are largely identical.

¹⁵⁴ **Note:** Dr Bunke was “Panzerjaeger” w/ **31. ID**.

division's three infantry-regiments, limiting mobility of these vital units. (See my Notebook #7)

Account of **137. ID**: 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. (See, *Wilhelm Meyer-Detring*, Die 137. Inf.-Div. im Mittelabschnitt der Ostfront, in my Notebook #7)

Clearing forests & swamps, etc. Another *abnormal terrain factor* met w/ in western Russia, and one which was to a large extent *ignored in the German army's invasion manual*, were the vast areas of forest. These were not the tamed and regulated woods and thickets of western Europe, but great expanses of trees set in a tangled undergrowth so dense as to give them the name of a European jungle. Some tracts of those forests were at that time *untrodden by human foot*. German troops who fought in the first months across the regions covered by these forests mention that they were *seldom penetrated very deeply* by their patrols. "We do not usually go very far into the forests," wrote one soldier. "You can have no idea what they are like. The trees are mostly *deciduous* and centuries of fallen leaves lie rotting on the forest floor. The *stink is indescribable*. . . The *flies and mosquitoes* are a plague. . ." (For rest of quote see, *James Lucas*, War on the Eastern Front, 73-74; for *savage nature* of combat in forests – Germans unprepared for in most cases, suffer prohibitive losses – see, personal accounts by *Dr E. Bunke*, *G. Barkhoff*, etc., in: **IV:40-48**)

Savageness & costliness of fighting (examples)

(Eg. – **251. ID** in its first major battle **20-24 Jul 41** suffers terrible losses, see, *H.-M. Welcker*, Aufzeichnungen, in: Notebook #9; a few days later, near Welikije Luki, division commander relieved after failed attack on **2.8.41**. Due to high casualties, "musste die **251. ID** bei zwei Inf.-Rgter. je ein Btl. auflösen.")

(Eg. – **260. ID**: The difficult battles south of Bobruisk from **19 Jul – 8 Aug 41**: "Bei den harten u. blutigen Gefechten am **24.7.41** um Romanischtsche u. Ugly werden **51** von **60** angreifenden gegnerischen Panzer abgeschossen. Die Verluste der Division betragen **92** Tote, **510** Verwundete." See also history of **260. ID** by Werner Haupt (in division file).

(Eg. – **253. ID** at Welikije Luki in **Jul 41**. Soviet "Fraueneinheit" taken out by engineers w/ flamethrowers. See, Christoph Rass, "Menschenmaterial:" Deutsche Soldaten an der Ostfront. Innenansicht einer Inf.-Div. 1939-45, 336-37) (**IX:85**)

Encounters w/ new Soviet tanks

Personal accounts ("*Ostfrontkämpfer*" questionnaires!)

(**Note**: In Vietnam War, some G.I.'s became very bitter vis-à-vis their government when issued weapons that didn't perform well¹⁵⁵ – most significantly, the transition from the

¹⁵⁵ **Note**: Yet I don't recall ever coming across such a reaction from a German "Landser," for eg., when his 3.7 cm AT gun proved futile against the **T 34**. Yet "equipment failure is not new in modern warfare. I count

M-14 to the **M-16** rifle. As one Vietnam veteran said: “My personal weapon until just after this op. [Union I] was the M-14. It was heavy, but at least you could depend on it. Then we got the M-16. It was a *piece of shit* that never should have gone over there w/ all the malfunctions. . . I started *hating the fucking government*. . . I started feeling like the government really didn’t want us to get back, that there needed to be fewer of us back home. . .”) (See, *Jonathan Shay, Achilles in Vietnam*, 17)

Encounters w/ Soviet *snipers* / “*Heckenschuetzen*”

Enemy snipers took a heavy toll of Germans. Wrote one German *Unteroffizier* w/ **45. ID** on **4 Sep 41**: “Waldkaempfe. Wir erreichen die Hoehe vor Karjukowka. Hier liegen uns gegenueber rossische Scharfschuetzen, die jeden einzelnen von uns abknallen; wir sind wegen der grossen Ausfaelle alle ganz fertig.“ (See, *Uffz. Kieweg, “Russland-tagebuch 1941.”* (Summary in „*Biblio* file.“)

German **IR 18 (6. ID)** suffered serious losses in opening days of campaign from Soviet stragglers, hiding out in wooded areas. (See, *Ernst-Martin Rhein, Das Rheinisch-West-faelische Inf.-Rgt. 18. 1921-1945*, in my Notebook #7)

Soviet war crimes

Personal accounts (“*Ostfrontkaempfer*” questionnaires!)

Friendly fire incidents (**I:460-61**)

Forced to improvise (*Panje* horses, etc.)

o) *Luftwaffe pilots & crews*

-- Quickly transition from air superiority mission to other missions

CAS / Interdiction / etc.

Strafing of civilians (common practice)

Friendly fire incidents (**I:460-61**, etc.)

-- Vast majority of *Luftwaffe* support of the army did *not* involve close support; rather, it was *indirect in nature*. Only *Fliegerkorps VIII* was really suited to the CAS mission. As Muller writes: “Contrary to many postwar accounts, *the bulk of the Luftwaffe’s missions during this time were geared to indirect army support.*” (**I:468-70**)

-- GAF rapidly spread too thin.

Russian VVS would begin significant recovery by fall ’41. In fact, as *Hardesty* states, “air supremacy achieved [by GAF] in **Jun-Jul 41** quickly dissipated, as the strains of a **2000-mile** front took their toll.” (See his, *Red Phoenix: The Rise of Soviet Air Power, 1941-45*, p 72)

-- Effective new weapon (**SD-2** cluster bomb)

(See, **I:492**; also, notes from *Corum’s Richthofen* biography)

19 instances of equipment failure in the *Iliad*, of which nine [**9**] were fatal to the soldier in question.” Yet in Homeric times, equipment failure “did not cast doubt on the moral structure of the army in which he served.” I believe it was the same in the Wehrmacht. (18)

- Flying multiple sorties per day
(See, for example, *Heinz Knoke, I flew for the Fuehrer*. (First published in English in 1953.) Knoke was a **Bf 109** pilot w/ **JG 52** in Russia; only participated in first **10** days of “*Barbarossa*,” before transfer to West. Lots of great details on his training, attitudes, first missions, etc. On **22 Jun 41**, he flew **6** bombing and strafing missions, flying as low as 6 feet off the ground! (Summary in my “*Biblio* file.”)
- A number of *Luftwaffe* pilots in the east – to so-called “*Experten*” – would begin to “rack up” outrageously large numbers of acft “kills.” Erich Hartmann, the top German ace, would claim **352** acft, nearly all Russian and nearly all after Stalingrad (his combat flying career began in **Oct 42**). The second top *Luftwaffe* ace, Barkhorn, claimed **301** acft destroyed, mostly in Russia, and there were a large number of other German fighter pilots who claimed to have shot down more than **100** acft over the Soviet-German front. In contrast, the leading Russian “*asy*,” Kozhedub & Pokryshkin, claimed **62** and **59** enemy acft. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 202)
- Role of German *Stuka* dive bombers
(See, **I:485**, ff., for all kinds of background & details.)
For a chilling description of a Stuka attack from perspective of one who endured it see, *Boris Gorbachevsky’s Through the Maelstrom. A Red Army Soldier’s War on the Eastern Front, 1942-45.*, p 112.
Anecdote: “Every time I was shot down behind Russian lines—[all told, he was shot down **13** times during the war, and bailed out twice!—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.*” (Note: This pilot flew missions at Smolensk in the summer of 1941.) (Siegfried Fischer, in: *Voices of the Third Reich*, 137-39)
(See also, Major a.D. F. Lang,¹⁵⁶ „Aufzeichnungen aus der Sturzkampffliegerei,” 5-24, in: **I:487-90**; also, BrigGen (ret. GAF) Paul-Werner Hozzel, “Conversations w/ a Stuka Pilot,” in: “Hozzel file”).
(Examples of *Stuka* aircrew worked beyond limits of endurance; some suffer nervous breakdowns. See, **IV:433-34**; **IX: Rudel**, Stuka Pilot)

p) *Summary of events – 22 Jun – 5 Aug 41*

Note: For recap of German situation as of late **Jul 41** see, Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed, Vol. I, 303, 576-78. Key points: a) by this point, while still strong, the *Wehrmacht* no longer capable of conducting simultaneous full-scale offensive operations along the Leningrad, Moscow, and Kiev strategic axes; b) by late **Jul 41**, the army groups had *outrun their fragile logistical support structure* and lacked essential supplies (eg., **PzGr 2’s** embattled bridgehead over the Desna at El’nia was 720 km from the nearest German railhead); c) German casualties were mounting w/o adequate replacements. As a result, **OKH** declared a halt on **30 Jul 41**, so that AGC could rest and refit.

Note: During the period **22 Jun – 10 Jul 41**, Army Group Center advanced **500 km.**, or **25-30 km/day**. During the next **60** days, the army group moved only **200-300 km.**, or **4-5 km/day**. (*Fugate & Dvoretzky, Thunder on the Dnepr*, 341)

¹⁵⁶ **Note**: This thin volume is on my book shelf next to Black Cross / Red Star!

Note: "The need to *fight encirclements to annihilation* had not happened before in this war. It broke the tempo of the Blitzkrieg. An ominous portent of the future had been the vicious battle for the citadel at Brest-Litovsk in first days of campaign. This action on the border cost **45 ID** more casualties in one week than it lost during the entire operation in France, lasting longer than the western campaign in its entirety [!]. Encirclement battles at Minsk and Smolensk tied down more than **50%** of the offensive potential of AGC. In the West, creative General Staff planning had split and outmanoevered the allied armies, which capitulated. The Russians doggedly fought on, whatever the cost. German „fast“ mot. or panzer units were *not configured for this develop-ment* and were unpractised in defense. They were badly mauled penning their fanatical opponents, waiting for the arrival of the infantry who were to administer the *coup de grace*. (R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands, 238)

Note: Slowdown in German advance in second half of **Jul 41** also noticed by the Americans. For details see, **III:18**)

(In late **Jul 41**, General Marshall observed, „The Germans seem to have stubbed a toe in Russia at present and their army has been stalled for more than a week.“ The American popular press also noticed the German slow down. On **4 Aug 41**, *Time* magazine reported, „For a whole week the German *Krieg* has been w/o *Blitz*. . . The obvious fact was the the German *panzer* divisions, although they had sliced through the Russian lines in a dozen places, had divided but not crushed the Russian Army before Moscow.“ . . . Even Steinhardt [U.S. Ambassador in Moscow] had reason to be optimistic. . . (See, Kirchuble, „*Barbarossa and the American Controversy*, 19)

Note: For an excellent summary of situation of „*Ostheer*“ by beginning of **Aug 41** see, D. Stahel, „*And the World held its Breath*,“ 224-29; **VIII:76**) Stahel writes, *inter alia*, „The most comprehensive study of German military losses in WWII [i.e., R. Overmans] noted that **Jul 41** cost the *Wehrmacht* more soldiers than any other month on the eastern front until **Dec 42** and **Jan 43** at Stalingrad. The number of German dead in **Jul 41** was put at 63,099 men.

-- By late **Jul 41**, fighting on eastern front had, despite *Wehrmacht's* spectacular victories, *discredited several key German assumptions* regarding the nature and future course of the war. . . By this time, „intelligent and perceptive German officers and their soldiers had every reason for *reflection and dismay*. . .“ (See, Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed, 576-77)

-- Recap successes of & cost of early victories

Gen. *Nehring* (**18. PD**): “We’re killing ourselves – “*tot siegen*” – w/ victories!

Writ large, the Red Army lost up to **1/3** of its peacetime complement during the first five [**5**] weeks of war. (Glantz, 577)

-- **22.7.41:** Hitler’s overweening confidence on display; declares to Croatian Minister of Defense that Soviet armies already destroyed and that all serious resistance will cease in **6** weeks. (**IX:** R.-D. Mueller, Hitler’s War in the East)

-- **25.7.41:** Keitel visits AGC HQ to convey – *inter alia* – Hitler’s anxiety about course of operations to date – specifically, that the “cauldron” battles to date were too ambitious in scope; that in the future smaller, more manageable pockets needed to be formed and cleared, etc. (See, *Fugate & Dvoretzky*, Thunder on the Dnepr, 314-15, etc.)

- **28.7.41:** Einschätzung des **OKH**, dass “die Masse des operationsfähigen russ. Heeres *zerschlagen sei*.” Sollte sich sehr bald als Illusion erwiesen. (**IX: C. Hartmann, Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg, Kapitel III**)
- Yet first signs of a „*Stimmungsumschwung*” evident among German military and civilian leadership.
(Eg., *Goebbels* diary entry of **24 Jul 41**, see, **IX: C. Hartmann, Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg, Kapitel III**; also, accounts in “*Tagebuch Thilo*” and “*Tagebuch Muenschhausen*,” both quoted in my „*Festvortrag – Bad Wimpfen*,” **IX:150**)
- **Zweifel im OKH:** Schrittweise beschlich die ersten Offiziere im **OKH** bereits Ende **Jul 41** das Gefühl, dass der Feldzug doch wesentlich länger dauern könnte. Selbst bei Paulus [OQu I im **OKH**] war der Optimismus einem schleichenden Unbehagen gewichen. Hinzu kam, dass die führenden Generale im **OKH** im **Jul-Aug 41** immer mehr Achtung vor dem hartnäckigen Gegner bekamen. . . (*T. Diedrich, Paulus, 182-83; VIII:75*)
- First signs of German *reappraisal of Soviet forces* (**Jul-Aug 41**); for details see, *Barry A. Leach, German Strategy against Russia 1939-41* (in “*Leach file*”)
- **23.7.41:** By late **Jul 41**, Halder has „changed his tune“ about the certainty and speed of victory. Early in the month, he had told Hitler that only **46** of the known **164** Soviet divisions were still capable of combat. This had been in all probability an overestimation of the extent of destruction; it was certainly a *rash underestimation* of the enemy’s ability to replenish its forces. On **23 Jul 41**, he revises the figure to a total of **93** divisions. The enemy had been “decisively weakened,” but by not means “finally smashed,” he concluded. As a result, since Soviet manpower reserves were now seen as *inexhaustable*, he argues even more forcefully that the aim of further ops has to be the destruction of the areas of armaments production around Moscow. (*Kershaw, Hitler, 409; Halder, KTB*)
- **31.7.41:** Hatte es am **31 Jul 41** den Anschein, als hätte man mit **213.301** Gefallenen, Verwundeten u. Vermissten in **40 Tagen** Russlandfeldzug mehr Menschen verloren als vom **1.9.39** bis zum **21.6.41 (205.304)**. Täglich fielen etwa **200** Offiziere aus. (*Bauer, Panzerkrieg, 126; III:51*)

IV: STRANGE ENCOUNTERS (CULTURAL “COLLISIONS” W/ SOVIET PEOPLE AND STATE)¹⁵⁷

Note: For useful background on German soldiers’ perceptions of his enemy, of Russia, see, *James Lucas, War on the Eastern Front, 15, ff.*

a) *Germans often greeted as liberators*

- Baltic States / western Ukraine, etc. (occupied by Russia in **1939/40**)
personal accounts; also, *Lucas, War on the Eastern Front, 28-29*)

¹⁵⁷ **Note:** For this chapter see, **IV:459**, ff.; also, **I:657**, ff.

b) *Das sowj. Paradise: Reactions of German "Landser" to Soviet people/state, living conditions, poverty*

Note: Russlandbild der dt. Soldaten: Die Forschungen zum deutschen Russlandbild der **30er** u. **40er** Jahre haben die *Vielschichtigkeit* u. *Multidimensionalitaet* des Begriffs offen-gelegt. Spezifisch NS oder andere *ideologische Komponenten*, latente Stroemungen wie „*ueberkommene u. weit verbreitete Vorurteile*“, . . . weitere *sozialpsychologische Aspekte*, direkte Erfahrungen Einzelner . . . beeinflussten die kollektiven Einstellungen Deutscher zur UdSSR u. ihrer Bevoelkerung. . . Besonders Weissrussen oder Russen wurden, anders als die Ukrainer, unter „*Iwan*“ oder „*Russe(n)*“, kaukasische oder asiatische Voelker unter „*Mongolen*“ oder „*Asiaten*“ subsumiert. . . In der dt. Bevoelkerung u. somit auch in ihrem soldatischen Teil waren alte Vorstellungen von einer „asiatischen,“ d.h. *fremden u. barbarischen Bedrohung*, von *Primitivitaet*, *Rueckstaendigkeit* u. *Minderwertigkeit* slavischer Voelker, insbesondere der Russen u. der Fremdheit u. Gegnerschaft „des“ Juden zu finden. Dazu kamen ab **1917/1919** aktuelle Aengste vor bolschevistischen, atheistischen Massen, deren Ideologie zugleich eine innenpolitische Bedrohung darstellte. All dies vermengte sich schon in den **20er** Jahren mit der Berichterstattung ueber religioese Verfolgung, Zwangs-kollektivierung u. innenpolitischem Terror, in deren Zentrum Russland-Deutsche gerueckt wurden. Das vom Nationalsozialismus propagierte Feindbild des juedisch-bolschewistischen Weltfeindes u. Untermenschen, in dem Russland insgesamt „als Urheber u. Hort aller nur erdenklichen Grausamkeit, Brutalitaet, Unmenschlichkeit, Ungerechtigkeit, Verlogenheit u. Barberei“ fungierte, gegen den „*praeventiv*“ vorgegangen werden musste u. dessen Rache u. Vergeltung man spaeter fuerchtete, fiel somit nicht auf jungfraeulichen Boden. . . Die Vorstellungen deutscher Soldaten ueber die UdSSR speisten sich aus dem allgemeinen dt. Russlandbild, wobei die wehrmachtsinterne Indoktrination verstaerkend wirken konnte. (For more analysis see, *Andreas Hilger*, Deutscher Kriegsgefangene in der Sowjetunion 1941-56, 71-82)

Note: The „*Lustgarten*,“ or „Pleasure Gardens,“ in the very heart of the German capital, was well well-known to every Berliner. Located on one of the islands in the River Spree, in the shadow of Berlin's impressive Protestant cathedral, it was an open area of parkland that had long been the location for parades and public events. It had been there that a large crowd had gathered to hear the Kaiser speak on the outbreak of war in **1914**. . . In the **1920s**, the Lustgarten had hosted not only boxing matches, Christmas markets and May Day festivities, but also communist, socialist and Nazi rallies. . . In **1933**, **200,000** Berliners had assembled on the Lustgarten to protest about the appointment of Adolf Hitler as German Chancellor.

In **May 42**, the Lustgarten was the location of an important exhibition. Sacrastically entitled „*The Soviet Paradise*,“ it was intended to highlight all the „poverty, misery, depravity and need“ of life in the Soviet Union. [The exhibition], with various dioramas and exhibits, was intended to bring home to Berliners the *full horror* of life under the Bolsheviks. . . The displays were accompanied by a **15-minute** film, which juxtaposed the positive images of Soviet propaganda w/ some of the gruesome discoveries supposedly made by invading German troops:¹⁵⁸ starving, neglected orphans, desecrated churches and massacred civilians. . . For those who were still confused as to why Nazi Germany had declared war on its erstwhile ally in **Jun 41**, the *propaganda offensive* of the „*Soviet Paradise*“ was intended to provide some conclusive answers. (*Moorhouse*, Berlin at War, 267-69)

¹⁵⁸ **Note:** Without doubt, many such „discoveries“ were made by German troops, who were often shocked, even sickened by the conditions they encountered. In my collection of *Feldpostbriefe*, *Memoiren*, etc., I can cite many examples.

- Rundown nature of “Soviet paradise,” almost unbelievable ignorance and poverty, etc., confirmed rightness of decision to attack.
(Standard of life in east was so incredibly low; illumination in houses in the country was by *paraffin lamp*, and that only in the better off rural areas, for in the most primitive regions it was the *light of the sun* which controlled the length of the working day. See, *James Lucas, War on the Eastern Front*, 34)
- Soviet living conditions (towns/villages)
Describe “typical” Russian *Panjabude* (appointments, oven, etc.)
Germans astounded by poverty, ignorance, etc.
- Profound “otherness” of Russian people, way of life, etc.
personal accounts abound (eg., *Dr. H. Haape (6. ID) & Maj W. Heinemann (23. ID)*)

c) *God-fear Nature of Russian Peasants*

- German encounters with (differences in religious feeling among Russian generations – children raised under *Communism*.
(Anecdote: *H.-M. Welcker, Aufzeichnungen*, in: Notebook #9, 1 Nov 41)
- Russian peasant houses studded w/ religious icons
Examples

d) *Exposures to Russian culture*

- Numerous accounts of Russian people putting on cultural events (song, dance, etc.) for German soldiers.
(See, **IX:** *H.-M. Welcker, 8 Dec 41*, for “*Dorfkulturabend*“

e) *Personal & Sexual relationships*

Note: For the German occupation of parts of France during WWI see, *Thomas Weber, Hitler's First War*, 122, ff. Weber offers some universal insights into the nature of a military occupation – the interactions between soldiers and civilians, etc. – useful for my book. Some key points: a) “As in all wartime occupations, local officials had to face the agonizing decision about whether *collaboration*, *cooperation*, or *resistance* best served the interests of their communities;”¹⁵⁹ b) “Indeed, in reality wartime occupations produce, as one historian has put it, ‘more complex relationships than those of brutal oppression’ between occupiers and the local civilian population. . .;” c) “As our ophthalmologist and diarist from Lille noted in **Feb 1915**: . . . ‘One does not live unaffected side by side if entrenched in the same unfortunate situation; finally one starts to find this situation bearable and to set about making mutual concessions. . . The common people who live w/ the soldiers by necessity and house them will eventually fraternize w/ them. Both parties, the victors and the conquered, succumb to circumstances and have a chance to understand one another. . .’”

¹⁵⁹ **Note:** Of course, the German occupation of parts of France in WWI, and the racist and ideologically-driven occupation of Russia in WWII were two very different “animals!”

Note: Following Napoleon's occupation of Moscow in **Sep 1812**, "young women [were] reduced to the extremity of selling their sexual favors to French officers in order to be able to *feed themselves*, and indeed to *protect themselves* from the attentions of unruly soldiers." (Zamoyski, Moscow 1812, 340)

-- Personal contact took many forms, became more pronounced beginning in the fall of **1941**, when weather turned colder and German troops finally began to be quartered in Russian homes.

(Russian people performed all kinds of services for German troops – for eg., women fed them, washed their clothing, etc. See my "*Russlandkaempfer*" materials for more information.)

-- Sexual relationships were inevitable, of course.

(See, my "*Ostkaempfer*" questionnaires!)

(See, "*War Crimes*" file for review of new book by R. Muehlhaeuser, Eroberungen. Sexuelle Gewalttaten . . . deutscher Soldaten in der Sowjetunion. . .

(As Thomas Weber avers in his Hitler's First War, "rape has indeed been the hallmark of all military conflict throughout history and it occurred on all fronts during the First World War. While war tends to bring a general increase in criminal behavior among soldiers, the rise is generally higher for sex crimes." (125))

-- Many (perhaps most?) "Landser" despised the Russian people, given years of NS-Propaganda, etc. Other evinced deeply ambivalent feelings (shaken and moved by poverty of Russian people, yet also disgusted by what they saw). Still others developed a deep compassion for the Russians.

(An example of latter is *Franz-Josef Langer* (**6. ID**), an accomplished artist who made poignant sketches and drawings of Russian people. (See his personnel file for more details.)

-- *Hilfswillige* ("Hiwis") in German Army: From **1941-45** hundreds of thousands of former Soviet soldiers (*Kriegsgefangene*) and civilians functioned as "volunteers" in the *Ostheer*. Sie wurden als „Wangenlenker, Pferdeknechte, Munitionstraeger, Koeche, Baecher, Schmiede u. in aehnlichen Funktionen verwendet. An der Front hatte besonders die Pioniere einen grossen Bedarf an Hilfspersonal. . . Von besonderer Bedeutung waren Hilfswillige fuer das Feld-eisenbahnwesen. . . Zur Sicherung der riesigen besetzten Gebiete, in denen die Partisanen-gefahr von Woche zu Woche wuchs, entschlossen sich die Befehlshaber der rueckwaertigen Heeresgebiete, vertrauenswuerdigen Hilfswilligen Beutewaffen in die Hand zu druecken u. sie zur Bewachung von Depots u. Nachschubstreckten heranzuziehen. . . Im **OKH** hatte man von dieser Entwicklung nur *unklare Vorstellungen*. Das **OKW** kuemmerte sich ueberhaupt nicht darum. Auch Hitler war ueber den Umfang, in dem Hiwis u. bewaffnete Hilfswachmannschaften eingesetzt wurden, nicht informiert. . . In den dt. Streitkraeften dienten waehrend des Zweiten Weltkrieges mindestens **800.000** Angehoerige der Sowjetunion in den verschiedensten Bereichen. [i.e., Hilfswilligen, Ostlegionen, etc.] (For more useful details see, *Dr. Franz W. Seidler*, „Hilfstruppen“, in: *Deutsche Militaerzeitschrift*, Nr. 37 (in my „Hilfswillige file).

f) *Genesis of Soviet Partisan Warfare*

-- Long Russian tradition of such warfare (Napoleon)

Yet no *major* preparations in place on **22.6.41** (Soviet obsession w/ offensive warfare)
(For details re: „*Der voelkerrechtswidrige Partisanenkrieg*,“ and background on Soviet preparations for partisan warfare see, *Seidler*, 29-32)

- Stalin's speech (**3 Jul 41**)
Exhortation to partisan warfare.
- **25.7.41**: Erwaeht der deutschen *Wehrmachtsbericht* erstmals das Auftreten von Partisanen.
(*J. Piekalkiewicz*, Die Schlacht um Moskau: Die erfrorene Offensive, p 91)
- First “partisan” attacks¹⁶⁰ / German reactions (Hitler welcomes!)
Crux: Partisan threat mostly minimal in opening months
- **Aug 41**: Die Taetigkeit von Partisanengruppen, die *zentral von Moskau gesteuert wurden*, machte sich im **Aug 41** zum erstenmal im rueckw. Gebiet der H.Gr. bemerkbar. Nach russ. Angaben waren in diesem Monat **123** Partisanenabtl. mit ca. **12.000** Mann im Einsatz. Davon standen allein im Raum zwischen Smolensk u. Tula **55** Abtl. Die ersten groesseren Einsaetze erfolgten im **Sep 41**, als die Bahnlinie Bobruisk-Moskau u. im Raum Orscha **180** Lokomotiven gesprengt wurden. (*Haupt*, Sturm auf Moskau, 93-94)
- **Aug 41**: Versprengte Rotarmisten bilden die Basis fuer *Partisanentrupps*, die Funktionaere der kommunistischen Partei u. der Staatssicherheit schon im Sommer **1941** aufbauen. Nach sowjetischen Angaben betrug die Zahl der Partisanen im *dicht bewaldeten Weissrussland* **12,000** im **Aug 41**. (*Klussmann*, *Gegenwelt im Wald*, in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, *Burgdorff* (Hg.), 134)
- For useful insights into German approach to anti-partisan warfare see, *Timm C. Richter*, “*Die Wehrmacht u. der Partisanenkrieg in den besetzten Gebieten der Sowjetunion*.” (See, my „*Biblio* file.“ Key points include, *inter alia*):
 - 1) Total lack of preparation for partisan warfare (had no expectation of need to confront a major partisan movement);
 - 2) War w/ Russia clearly conceived by Hitler and German High Command as a race war;
 - 3) Close cooperation planned between SS and OKW/OKH for administration of rear areas;
 - 4) Critical role of “*Krieggerichtsbarkeiterlass*” for German approach to anti-partisan warfare (see GFM v. Bock's negative response to this directive, p 840);
 - 5) Catastrophic shortfall in personnel (police, military, etc.) to administer rear areas (eg., **9. Army**, which at beginning of campaign had only **300** troops earmarked for rear-area “*Streifendienste*” over **10,000** sq. km!); author avers that this personnel shortfall explains in part German decision to respond to any “partisan” activity w/ absolute brutality (*Abschreckungseffekt*); this

¹⁶⁰ **Note:** Many early “partisans” simply former Soviet soldiers who had fled to woods, etc., and determined to fight on.

shortfall soon led to recruitment of local, indigenous elements to support SS/Police and Wehrmacht anti-partisan operations;

- 6) *Nature of German tactics and operations* (i.e., mechanized units pushing like thin fingers deep into Soviet battlespace, leaving rear areas – forests, swamps, etc. – crawling w/ unmolested Soviet troops and stragglers) *left rear areas insecure* (see reference, Halder KTB, **1.7.41**, p 849);
- 7) Inability to completely clean out the “Kesseln” favored the formation of partisan nuclei, for eg., in the Wjasma – Bryansk area; h) by start of **1942**, there was still no central agency tasked w/ rear area security, rather, a “hodgepog” of different authorities were responsible (“*Kompetenzen-wirwarr*”). (849-52)

-- Nach sowj. Angaben waechst die Zahl der Partisanen im *dicht bewaldeten Weissrussland* von **12.000** im **Aug 41** ueber **122.600** im **Nov 43** auf **180.000** Kaempfer im **Mar 44** an. . . In den Waeldern Weissrusslands entsteht eine *Gegenwelt* des Widerstands mit Lazaretten, Schulen, Feldkuechen u. Druckereien. (Uwe Klussmann, „*Gegenwelt im Wald*“, in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, Stephan Burgdorff (Hg.), 134)

Mai 42: Nach Attentaten u. Ueberfaellen raechten sich die Deutschen durch *summarische Hinrichtungen*¹⁶¹ u. *Zerstoerungen ganzer Ortschaften*. Im Bereich der am staerksten betroffenen H.Gr.Mitte wurden z.B. bis **Mai 42** rund **80.000** Menschen als angebliche Partisanen erschossen, bei **1094** Toten in den eigenen Reihen. Von dem Massaker betroffen war vor allem die juedische Bevoelkerung. (R.-D. Mueller, “*Duel im Schnee*“, in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, Stephan Burgdorff (Hg.), 123)

-- Preternatural *savageness* of partisan warfare: Die Partisanen erhalten bestaendig Zulauf, auch durch Zwangsrekrutierungen. Nicht einmal jene zu *Raeuberbanden verrohten Partisanentrupps*, die bei Bauern Schapps erpressen, in Doerfern pluendern u. morden, treiben die Weissrussen in die Arme der Besatzungsmacht. . . Die SS, darunter die aus Kriminellen rekrutierte Einheit des SS-Sturmabfuhrers Oskar Dirlewanger, sieht sich im Kampf gegen „*Untermenschen*“ u. geht ab **Jun 42** wahllos zum Massenmord an weissrussischen Zivilisten ueber. Unter dem Vorwand der Partisanenbekaempfung ermorden SS-Einheiten die Bevoelkerung *ganzer Doerfer*. Die Moerder in Uniform erschliessen oder verbrennen *Frauen, Kinder u. Greise* bei lebendigem Leib in Scheunen u. Haeusern. (Uwe Klussmann, „*Gegenwelt im Wald*“, in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, Stephan Burgdorff (Hg.), 135-36)

V: STELLUNGSKRIEG! (5 Aug – 30 Sep 41)

Quote: “*Gewiss wird der Feldherr seine grossen Ziele stetig im Auge behalten, unbeirrt darin durch die Wechselfaelle der Begebenheiten*. . .“ (GFM v. Moltke, quoted in: *Hoth, Pz.-Operationen*, 69)

¹⁶¹ **Note:** As I understand it, according to “rules of war” at time, executing “irregulars” (i.e., those fighting w/o uniforms, insignia, concealing their weapons, etc.) was legal. A key principle governing such action was, I believe, that of “proportionality.”

Quote: „*War*,” GFM v. Moltke observed, „*cannot be conducted from a green table*.” (Gunther E. Rothenberg, “Moltke, Schlieffen, and the Doctrine of Strategic Envelopment,” in: Makers of Modern Strategy, 298)

Note: GFM v. Kluge’s **4. Army** had no divisions assigned to it until mid-**Aug 41**. (D. Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed, Vol. I, 382-83)

Note: During the period **22 Jun – 10 Jul 41**, Army Group Center advanced **500 km.**, or **25-30 km/day**. During the next **60** days, the army group moved only **200-300 km.**, or **4-5 km/day**. (Fugate & Dvoretzky, Thunder on the Dnepr, 341)

Note: The *Atlantic Charter* of **Aug 41** cemented the USA as the centerpiece of the anti-Nazi coalition. In Berlin, the Charter was read as tantamount to a *declaration of war*. Hitler, of course, continued to comfort himself and his entourage w/ bluster about the inferiority of the *mongrelized* Americans. But far more powerful in Berlin was the *fatalistic sense* that hostilities between Germany and America were *inevitable*. (See, Tooze, Wages of Destruction, 501-02)

Note: **Aug 41:** On board ship, at *Placentia Bay, Newfoundland*, Churchill and Roosevelt agree, after hearing Hopkins’s account of his meetings w/ Stalin, to give *immediate aid to Russia* “on a gigantic scale.” To give aid to Russia, C. and R. authorize the immediate dispatch of an Anglo-American Military Mission to Moscow, to discuss Soviet needs in relation to American production. (Gilbert, Second World War, 223; for more world historical background see, **III:156-57**)

a) Status of overall campaign (Ostfront as of early Aug 41)

-- Beim **Ob.d.H.** war man mit der Entwicklung der Lage im [**Jul 41**] *wenig zufrieden*. (Hoth, Pz.-Operationen, 109)

-- Smolensk; advance on Leningrad; toward the Dnieper in south, etc.

Crux: Bulge in the center of the front, but both flanks (AGN/AGS) hanging back. (See, *Lageost* maps!)

-- Total German/Soviet losses to date (men & materiel / ground & air forces)

(See, *Halder Diary*, **2 Aug 41**; for *daily losses of officers* see, FMS **P-190**, in: **VI:121**)

(For Fehlbestand an Mannschaft Ende **Aug 41** in Ostheer see, B. Mueller-Hillebrand, Das Heer 1933-45, Bd. III, 19)

-- Parallele zum *Russlandfeldzug Napoleons!* – i.e., most attrition suffered before reaching Moscow. (**IX:** C. Hartmann, Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg, Kapitel II)

-- For background on AGC’s *logistical challenges* as of mid-**Jul 41** see, Glantz, 141; also, Halder, *War Diary*, for this period)

(Crux: As early as mid-**Jul 41**, it was already evident an advance by Army Group Center to Moscow in the immediate future would be *logistically impossible*. . . Without any doubt, these realities reflected the *most dangerous weakness* in Plan Barbarossa, specifically, its calculations regarding *logistical support* necessary to sustain the campaign. 141)

- **Jul-Aug 41:** The Germans operational pause between the end of **Jul 41** and the end of **Aug 41** did not result from Hitler's and the **OKH's** arguments as to whether the next offensive should target Moscow or Leningrad and Kiev. Rather, the Germans halted because of their *inability to transport supplies of ammunition and fuel forward*, coupled w/ the impact of the Soviet Union's mobilization. As Halder noted, the Soviet reserves were desperately short of equipment, lacked experienced officers and NCOs, and possessed the barest tactical knowledge, but they would provide the manpower for a series of counterattacks that now broke on the German spearheads. (*W. Murray, War to be Won*, 125-26)
- **Jul-Sep 41:** Bis zum Augustkrise [**Aug 41**] hielt Halder den *Konflikt mit dem „Fuehrer“* immer unter dem Deckel u. versuchte, seine Intention des zentralen Stosses auf die sowj. Hauptstadt unterschwellig weiter zu verfolgen. Er sah sich dabei aehnlich wie einst Moltke oder Schlieffen u. wie auch noch Beck als „Reichsgeneralsstabschef.“ Im **Aug 41** allerdings setzte sich Hitler vehement gegen den Generalstab des Heeres durch. Er nahm dem **OKH** u. damit den Armeen u. H.Gr. mehr u. mehr das eigenstaendige Handlungsrecht, schraenkte deren Entscheidungskompetenz immer staerker ein. Gleichzeitig wuchs sein Misstrauen gegenueber seiner Generalitaet.
- Im **OKH** arbeiteten Halder, Paulus,¹⁶² Heusinger u. andere derweilen unablaessig. *Kaum ein Tag verging, an dem man vor Mitternacht ins Bett kam.* Es entwickelte sich ein permanenter Stress, der an den Nerven u. Kraeften der Generalstabsoffiziere zehrte. Paulus war in diesen Tagen mehr noch als sonst ein aeusserst fleissiger u. pedantischer Arbeiter. Er sass, so erinnert sich sein Adjutant, von morgens **8.30** Uhr bis spaet in die Nacht an seinem Schreibtisch, umgeben von seinem Adjutanten u. dem Ordonnanzoffizier, die sich beide nicht ausgelastet fuehlten, weil Paulus lieber alles selbst machte. Entwuerfe schrieb er mit Bleistift in gut leserlicher Schrift langsam, jedes Wort waegend, er korrigierte sich oft selbst, nicht, wie spaeter, in dem er etwas durchstrich, sondern er radierte aus u. setzte neu ein. Probleme bereitete in solchen Stressphasen Paulus' *angegriffene Gesundheit*. (See, *Torsten Diedrich, Paulus*, 187; **VIII:250-51**)
- Hitler and his High Command beginning to get a pronounced sense of the “jitters!” (“*Stimmungsumschwung*”)
- Halder KTB (early **Aug 41** – 360 Soviet divisions!)
- Hitler – by late **Jul** / early **Aug 41** – was becoming *extremely nervous*; had admitted to his inner circle he was enduring *sleepless nights* while trying to determine the true status of Operation “*Barbarossa*.” (*Glantz*, 305)
- Hitler to Guderian at AGC (Borissow): “If I had known Soviets had so many tanks. . .”
- Capt *Thilo Tgb*; *Munchhausen Tgb*, etc. for new insights!
- Bock diary, **12 Aug 41**: “If the Russians don't soon collapse somewhere, the objective of defeating them so badly that they will be eliminated will be difficult before the winter.” (See also his diary for late **Aug 41**: “[my eastern front] can't hold out much longer the way things look now. . .”

¹⁶² **Note:** Paulus war “der rechte Hand” des Generalstabschefs Halder. „[Der] legte grossen Wert auf Paulus' Meinung. . . Das Vertrauensverhaeltnis zwischen den beiden Generalen gestaltete sich immer enger, u. das stachelte Heusingers Neid an.“ About Heusinger and Paulus, Diedrich writes: „Hinzu kam, dass sich das Verhaeltnis zwischen Paulus u. Heusinger nicht zum Besten entwickelte. Heusinger sah Paulus als unerwunschten Nebenbuhler, den Halder ihm vor die Nase gesetzt hatte u. der zu Dingen gefragt wurde, die originaere Aufgaben der Operations-Abtl. waren.“ (187-88)

- **Aug 41:** Zwei Monate nach Beginn des Ueberfalls, also im **Aug 41**, herrschte im dt. Oberkommando des Heeres trotz des schnellen Vormarsches *fiebrhafte Nervosität*. (Mueller, *Duell im Schnee*, in: *Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Burgdorff (Hg.), 121)
- **Aug 41:** The Red Army **Jul 41** counterstrokes around Smolensk, and on the approaches to Leningrad and Kiev, had blunted and slowed, but failed to halt, the German advance along all three strategic axes. Undeterred, in August the *Stavka* ordered all of its operating *fronts* to organize fresh counterstrokes. While the fighting east of Smolensk achieved considerable notoriety, the full scope and *coordinated nature* of the Soviet offensive along all three [3] strategic axes remains largely unappreciated. In fact, in mid- and late **Aug 41**, the *Stavka* mounted offensive ops virtually simultaneously at Staraja Russa, on the approaches to Kiev and, in the largest effort of all, on a broad front east of Smolensk. (Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 84)
- **Aug 41:** In early **Aug 41**, series of Soviet counterattacks break on German spearheads. *Timoshenko*, commanding Soviet forces in the center, launched 4 of the Soviet reserve armies (approximately 37 divisions) in a series of attacks that slashed at *Guderian's* southern flank. These offensives were uncoordinated and lacked the sophistication to cause anything more than local difficulties. But they forced the Germans to fight, and they *drained the ammunition and fuel reserves* required for a resumption of the German advance. (W. Murray, *War to be Won*, 126)
- **ca. 1.8.41** [Static warfare]: As many sectors of Germany's extensive eastern front were settling into the first stages of positional warfare, the Soviets revealed their preponderant advantage in artillery w/ an unremitting rain of fire that was quickly to become the bane of the German infantryman up and down the line. Making its first appearance in **Jul 41** was the experimental Soviet **BM-13** "Katyusha" multiple rocket launcher. This new weapon delivered **320 132-mm** rockets in a **10-second** barrage. The effect was devastating and the weapon was soon moved into mass production. . . (For more details see, D. Stahel, "And the World held its Breath," 198-99; **VIII:104-06**)
- **3.8.41:** Der Gen. Quartiermeister im **OKH** leitet die Bereitstellung der *Winterbekleidung* fuer die Truppe ein (Vorbesprechungen hierzu mit dem Chef.d. Heeresverwaltung am **29.7.41**, mit dem Gen. Intendanten am **2.8.41**.) (H.A. Jacobsen, *Der Zweite Weltkrieg in Chronik*, 38; **III:54**)
- **4.8.41:** The advances of Army Groups Centre and South in July had, by early **Aug 41**, wrapped their lines halfway around the Soviet forces standing at Kiev and along the Dnepr north and south of the city, creating a potential trap for almost the whole Southwest Front. Hitler, no doubt, had entrapment in mind, and Zhukov certainly also did. The danger was obvious, but Stalin could not bring himself to sacrifice Kiev. . . On **4 Aug 41**, Stalin ordered Southwest and South Fronts to hold the Kiev area and the line of the lower Dnepr. (Ziemke & Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 33)
- **7.8.41:** . . . Die rege feindl. Lufttaetigkeit haelt an . . . **9 Armee:** . . . **VI AK:** mehrere mit ueberlegenen Kraeften gefuehrte, von starker Art. unterstuetzte Angriffe unter Einsatz von Panzern gegen den Abschnitt der **26 ID** abgewiesen. Auf der ganzen Front des Korps

lebhaftes Art. Feuer sowie mehrere *Bombenangriffe* im Abschnitt der **6 ID** . . . (*Mehner, Tagesmeldungen*, in: *Geheime Tagesberichte*, 243)¹⁶³

- **9.8.41** [Japan]: Zwar hatte das kaiserliche Hauptquartier einen Angriff der in der *Mandschurei* stationierten „*Kwantung-Armee*“ auf Sibirien erwogen, diesen aber am **9 Aug 41** wieder verworfen, nachdem man infolge des unerwartet heftigen Widerstands der Sowjets vor Smolensk nicht mehr mit einem durchschlagenden Erfolg des dt. Ostheeres im Jahre **1941** rechnete. (*Reuth, Hitler*, 548-49)
- **11.8.41**: As of this date, **OKH** has committed the *last of the German reserves*.¹⁶⁴ (*Howell, Soviet Partisan Movement*, 30; also, *Halder KTB*)
- **Mid-Aug 41** (German production priorities): In the third week of **Aug 41**, Keitel, Chief of OKW, chairs a meeting to coordinate the armament plans of the three *Wehrmacht* branches on the explicit assumption that the *land war was effectively over*. Resources could therefore be shifted away from the army towards the *Luftwaffe* to meet the growing menace of the Anglo-American airfleet. Ironically, the determination of the German army to finish the war by end of **1941** helped only to reinforce this illusion. Despite the ongoing fighting, the army procurement offices *raised little or no protest* about the imminent shift in priorities. (*Tooze, Wages of Destruction*, 493)¹⁶⁵
- **16.8.41**: STAVKA Order #270 – only published by Moscow a few years ago, documents how dangerous the military defeats and losses since beginning of campaign had become for the Soviet Union. (**IX: Magenheimer, Hitler's War**)
- **26.8.41**: Eine von Hitler genehmigte Denkschrift des **OKW** stellt fest, dass der Krieg gegen die UdSSR **1941** nicht mehr zu gewinnen sei u. weitere Operationen auf **1942** zu verschieben sei. (*lexicon-der-wehrmacht*)

b) *Hitler vs. his Generals (Moscow or Leningrad & Kiev?)*¹⁶⁶

Note: German advance in Center halted (not to resume for almost. **2** months). For details of the several directives issued by Hitler, beginning w/ *Fuehrerweisung Nr. 33* of **19 Jul 41** see, **III:46**, ff.)

Note: See my comments in “*Key Perspectives concerning Operation ‘Barbarossa,’*” p 3, in: “*Introduction File.*”

My basic thesis is that – despite all the “talk” of Hitler’s vacillation and indecision – his overall *strategic vision* remained relatively constant.¹⁶⁷ Hence, I see a large degree of real continuity in Hitler’s operational and strategic thinking. Moreover, “*Taifun*” could most

¹⁶³ **Note:** This entry typical of the “*Tagesmeldungen*” for this period. Soviet VVS already recovering, massive Soviet counterattacks w/ large amounts of artillery, etc.

¹⁶⁴ Is this accurate? The **2** and **5 PD** were not yet committed.

¹⁶⁵ **Note:** And this at a time when his **OKW**, Hitler, etc., were beginning to realize that the war in the east would most likely continue at least into **1942**; see, OKW memorandum of this period.

¹⁶⁶ **Note:** See also, Book #9:72; also, my notes from *Barry A. Leach, German Strategy Against Russia 1939-41* (in “*Leach*” file).

¹⁶⁷ **Note:** In this section, I might want to focus most of the discussion on Hitler – his strategic and operational thought – rather than on a “rehash” of the various directives, which has been done many times before.

likely not have begun much before mid- to late **Sep 41**. Why? Logistics! See text for more details.

Note: Halder re: *Hitler's interference in the eastern campaign*: "What had been comparatively infrequent in previous campaigns now became a *daily occurrence*. He interfered in the detailed conduct of operations. . ." (For more details see *Haldder, Hitler as War Lord*, 43; **IX:88-89**)

Note: [Jodl and OKW]: If there was one man who was to prove and indispensable ally to Halder in arguing the case for Moscow it was Jodl.¹⁶⁸ Exactly how much influence he exerted is difficult to gauge, but Jodl's stance is probably as significant for the arguments he advanced as the office he represented. . . (See, *D. Stahel, "And the World held its Breath,"* 196-97 (**VIII:103-04**); also, *Warlimont, Inside Hitler's Headquarters*)

Note: For insightful analysis of Hitler's strategic thinking at this time – late **Jul** – mid-**Aug 41** – see, *Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 69-71; **III:157**. He notes, *inter alia*: In late July into mid-**Aug 41**, Hitler contemplates and finally makes his decision to switch main axis of German advance to the flanks. According to Evan Mawdsley, there were "several strands to this decision." Grand strategy played its part – the war, both in Russia and against Britain, was going to drag on longer than expected. Resources were now vital; what mattered was depriving the enemy of them, gaining them for Germany, and protecting what the Reich already had.

Note: In the strategic crisis that dominated the German command for a month in **Jul-Aug 41**, Hitler emerged as the undisputed victor. He not only asserted his authority over the army and prevailed against almost unanimous opposition, but his *strategic choice was certainly the wiser alternative* given both German logistical constraints and the dreadful Soviet strategic deployment in the south. . ." (For many more details see, *D. Stahel, "And the World held its Breath,"* 282-91; **VIII:77-79**)

-- **H. Hoth**: "Es gab allerdings ein schwerwiegendes operatives Bedenken gegen die Fortsetzung des Angriffs auf Moskau. . ." (i.e., despite successes of AGC thru ca. **20 Jul 41**, the flanks in both north and south had yet to be cleared! See, Pz.-Operationen, 108)

-- **Fuehrungskrise: Unsicherheit u. Laehmung** . . . ueber die Frage, wie in einer zweiten Feldzugsphase eine mil. Entscheidung herbeizufuehren sei. (**IX: C. Hartmann, Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg, Kapitel III**)

(H. Hoth writes of „das *taegliche Hineinreden Hitlers in Einzelheiten der Fuehrung* . . . [das] zu einer *unertraeglichen Spannung* zwischen Hitler u. dem **Ob.d.H.** [i.e., GFM v. Brauchitsch] gefuehrt hatte.“

-- **19.7.-21.8.41: Flurry of Hitler Weisungen**.

According to *D. Glantz*, „for almost the first time in his life, Hitler *did not know what to do*.” Barbarossa Derailed, 306)

Weisungen **33, 33a, 34, 34a** (briefly discuss; see, *Hubatsch*; also, **IX: Magenheimer, Hitler's War; Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed**, 298, ff., etc.)

¹⁶⁸ **Note:** For more on Jodl's role – and Halder's success in winning him over as an “acolyte” of attack on Moscow – see, *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 584-85; **III:158**.

- On **18 Aug 41**, both **OKW & OKH** issue their appraisals/intentions (Details see, *Hoth, Pz.-Operationen*, 123-24)
 Guderian to *Rastenburg* (**20 Aug 41**)
 Meeting well-known (be brief)
 Continuity of Hitler's operational/strategic thinking (from opening days of campaign)
 Cite examples from beginning of campaign
- Although Hitler's many directives were unequivocal, they were not binding because virtually the entire Army leadership and even Jodl's and the **OKW's** Operations Staff resisted them. (*Glantz*, 307)
 - **19.7.-4.8.41**: The heavy and costly fighting in the Smolensk region and Hitler's continued fixation on securing the Ukraine prompted the German High Command to turn its attention to clearing Army Group Ctr's flanks. Hitler's Directives No. **33** and **34**, issued on **19** and **30 Jul 41**, respectively, stated that Leningrad and the Ukraine would, at least temporarily, receive higher priority than Moscow as strategic objectives. The Germans had already begun to implement Directive No. **34** as early as **4 Aug 41**, when its **2 Army** and **XXIV PzK** of Guderian's tank group attacked southward across the Sozh River toward Gomel. Anticipating such a move, the Stavka had formed a new Central Front on **24 July** to protect Gomel and the Sozh River sector. Guderian's attack in early August sent the Soviet Central Front's **21 Army** reeling back to the south and threatened to form a breach between the Southwestern Front forces defending Kiev and the Western and Reserve Front forces defending east of Smolensk. (*D. Glantz, Forgotten Battles*, Vol. I, 74)
 - **21.7.-6.8.41**: Waehrend seiner Besuche in den Hauptquartieren der drei Heeresgruppen bei deren Oberbefehlshabern von Leeb (**21.7.41**), von Bock (**4.8.41**) u. von Rundstedt (**6.8.41**) bekraeftigte der „Fuehrer“ seine Absicht, der UdSSR zunaechst die „lebenswichtigen Gebiete“ in der *Ukraine* sowie *Leningrad* wegzunehmen u. den Angriff auf Moskau „erst an dritter Stelle“ einzuordnen, wenn die beiden Fluegel abgesichert waren. (*Ueberschaer, Scheitern des Unternehmens „Barbarossa“*, 153; also, *Warlimont, Im Hauptquartier*, 200; *KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 1041, *Guderian, Erinnerungen*, 171)
 - **28.-29.7.41** [Halder furious over Hitler's meddling]: Halder confided in a letter to his wife his true feelings about Hitler's ruinous meddling: “He is playing warlord again and proposing such absurd ideas, that he is putting in question everything our splendid operations have won so far. . .” (For rest of quote see, *D. Stahel, “And the World held its Breath,”* 198; **VIII:104**)
 - **Aug 41**: The raw materials problem – which became more and more critical in the Reich and forced cuts in armament programmes as early as **Jul 41** – was the main reason why Hitler did not continue the attack in the centre beyond Smolensk but initiated a thrust in the direction of Kiev and the Crimea in the south, as well as sealing off Leningrad in the north. (*K. Reinhardt, “Moscow 1941,”* 211; see also, *Tagebuch Bock*, 12.8.41)
 - **4.8.41** (Borisov Conference): Hitler visits Army Group Center.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ **Note:** For this conference see also, Fugate & Dvoretzky, *Thunder on the Dnepr*, 319-20. They write: “In his account of the conversation, Guderian recorded that Hitler offered only **300** engines for the entire Eastern Front, but according to Halder's diary, the Fuehrer actually promised **350 Pz III** engines for Army Group Center.”

Hitler promises to release **350** tank engines (one month's production) and ship them east by air. Ironically, the **OKH** had *already released these engines* – half of the amount the panzer groups actually needed – *w/o Hitler's consent or prior knowledge*. Even so, Guderian's and Hoth's estimates [of when they would be able to move again] were *wildly over-optimistic*. (See, *Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed*, Vol. I, 306)

Guderian glaubte am **15 Aug 41** wieder *operationsfaehig* zu sein, waehrend *Hoth* den **20 Aug 41** als fruehesten Zeitpunkt meldete. . . [Hitler sagte] das erste Ziel bliebe aber das Industriegebiet um Leningrad, dann kaeme Charkow; Moskau stuende erst an dritter Stelle. . . (See, *Hoth, Pz.-Operationen*, 117)

Conference at Borisov: While Hitler struggled w/ his flagging resolution on how to proceed, his search for conviction led him to Bock's HQ on **4 Aug 41** to hear first hand the view of his battlefield commanders – a perspective he trusted far more than the self-serving clique at **OKH**. Ordered to attend, Hoth and Guderian flew into Borisov to join Bock who was already hosting a visit by Heusinger – no doubt the eyes and ears of the **OKH** and probably w/ a mandate to ensure uniformity throughout the army command. . . Hitler arrived by plane w/ his usual entourage, which included Keitel, Jodl and Schmudt. The proceedings opened w/ Hitler warmly congratulating Bock on his “unprecedented successes.” Then Hitler proceeded to question each of the generals separately in another room so as to gauge their opinions individually, w/o each man knowing what the others had said. . . (For more details, *D. Stahel, „And the World Held its Breath,”* 230-32; **VIII:106-07**)

Conference at Borisov: For the account in adjutant von Bulow's memoirs see, **III:145**. He stresses the *continuity of Hitler's strategic thinking*. He writes: “The long argument between Hitler and **OKH** *got on one's nerves*. I remember exactly what Hitler had said *before the campaign*. Over and over he emphasized his conviction that Leningrad and Rostov were the key cities. (At Hitler's Side, 110-11; also, **III:146-48**)

- **8.-12.8.41** [Halder misleads Hitler]: The assessment of the enemy's situation of **8 Aug 41**, agreed upon by the generals for the oral report to Hitler, presented following picture: [see text for details]. . . Comparison of the results of reconnaissance and intelligence findings presented here w/ Jodl's “agreed” report to Hitler clearly shows Halder's intention to *marshal convincing reasons for his operational planning*. His task was to prove that Army Groups North and South were able, w/ the forces available to them locally, to overcome the enemy forces opposing them. In reality, however, he was *well aware that the Soviet colossus had been underestimated* and, in spite of great losses, would always have enough human reserves to create new divisions in an emergency. . . (See, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 586-90; **III:158-59**)
- **10./18.8.41**: On **10 Aug 41**, Warlimont's Department “L” produced a study that called for a resumption of the Moscow offensive at the end of **Aug 41** after first eliminating the immediate threats to the flanks of AGC around Gomel and Velikie-Luki – Toropets w/ the help of **PzGr 2 & 3**. . . On **18 Aug 41**, Warlimont's “Assessment of the Eastern Situation” laid down the goals for the remainder of **1941**. . . The key to all subsequent operations, so Warlimont, was to be Moscow. . . (For details see, *Fugate & Dvoretzky, Thunder on the Dnepr*, 325-28)
- Halder, Jodl, etc., deceive Hitler (to no avail)!
(**IX: Megargee, War of Annihilation**)

(Note: By **27 Jul 41**, Jodl had changed his mind and advised Hitler to undertake an immediate assault on Moscow after the conclusion of the battles around Smolensk. Also, Jodl's deputy, Warlimont (Dept. "L" ("*Landesverteidigung*")) had "worked diligently on behalf of the Moscow project since the fall of **1940**." Hence, Halder's confidence in his ability to manipulate OKW was great.) (For more details see, *Fugate & Dvoretzky*, Thunder on the Dnepr, 317, ff.)

- For possible alternatives to the Kiev operation see, *Alfred Philippi, et al.*, Der Feldzug gegen Sowjetrussland: 1941 bis 1945, p 79. Authors assessment: "Was Hitler aber nicht begreifen wollte, war das alte Gesetz, dass man in der entscheidenden Richtung *nie stark genug sein kann* – anders gesagt, dass ein Feldzug gegen Russland nicht mit zersplitterten Kraefen gewonnen wird!" (See my „*Biblio* file.“)
- Hitler was probably the first to realize the *entire campaign was in jeopardy* because AGN and AGS were *not strong enough to achieve their missions* and would thus require assistance. . . Hitler realized that he could only provide help by diverting some of GFM v. Bock's armor. (*D. Glantz*, Barbarossa Derailed, 138)
- "Abandonment" of the "*Barbarossa*" plan – For in-depth account of Hitler's decision to divert forces of AGC for envelopment of Kiev see, *Barry A. Leach*, German Strategy against Russia 1939-41 (in "*Leach file*"). Among other things, he notes that *rate of supply* of AGC "not only ruled out a triple-pronged thrust on Moscow in **Aug 41**, but it made it difficult to support simultaneous operations of both **PzGr 2** and **PzGr 3**. . . The supply of Guderian's **PzGr 2** for a southward thrust towards Kiev was more feasible, esp. when major supply points had been established at Roslavl – Gomet." ¹⁷⁰
- In the end, by seeking to reach a *synthesis* between military, political, and economic objectives, Hitler issues, altered, and reissued half a dozen directives and orders during the five-week period from mid-**Jul 41** thru late **Aug 41**. His actions led Halder to *complain bitterly* that the Fuehrer was meddling in matters he simply did not understand. (*Glantz*, 298)
- **12.-15.8.41**: In his Supplement to Directive No. **34**, issued on **12 Aug 41**, Hitler *for the first time stated categorically* that once the *threats from the flanks* were eliminated, and the *panzer* groups refreshed, the attack on the enemy forces massed before Moscow was to be prosecuted. Yet three days later (**15.8.41**), Hitler intervenes once more in the tactical dispositions, ordering the tank forces from the northern flank of Army Group Ctr to help Army Group North resist a strong Soviet counterattack. Hitler's concession, if heavily qualified, on Moscow, then – in effect – rapid negation of the decision, may have been affected by the *severe attack of dysentery* from which he was suffering in the first half of August. Although he had enjoyed remarkably good health over the past years, he was now "*laid low at a vital time.*" (*Kershaw*, Hitler, 411; *DRZW*, Bd. 4, 504; also, *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 590-94; **III:160**)
- By mid-**Aug 41**, Hitler and his advisers in Berlin were now certain the advance [on Moscow] had to be delayed until after they dealt w/ the *crises on Army Group Center's flanks*. The most important aspects of these crises were the Soviet counterstroke in the Staraia Russa region to the north, which, while unsuccessful, ultimately stalled the advance of Leeb's AGN on Leningrad by at least a full week; and the obstinate resistance of Soviet **5. Army** west of

¹⁷⁰ **Note**: Leach's thesis is that, by **Aug 41**, "*Barbarossa*" had failed; and that the resumption of the offensive in **Oct 41** ("*Taifun*") was simply an improvisation.

the Dnepr, which had been delaying the advance of Rundstedt's AGS on Kiev for *well over a month*. In Hitler's view, the only feasible solutions to these problems were to divert a sizeable chunk of **PzGr 3** northward to assist AGN and unleash Guderian's **PzGr2** (w/ Weich's **2. Army**) on a drive southward to hold AGS. Hitler declared as much in the supplement he issued to his Directive No. **34** on **12 Aug 41**. It is also abundantly clear that the pummeling many German divisions were experiencing NE and E of Smolensk and in the El'nia region, which confirmed the Soviets were *reinforcing and fortifying their defenses along the Moscow axis*, contributed to Hitler's decision to strike northward and southward rather than move directly eastward to Moscow.

If the intense fighting during the first three weeks of **Aug 41** was not *proof enough that Hitler's judgement was correct*, the even more intense costly fighting in late **Aug** / early **Sep 41** would be *proof positive*. (*Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed*, Vol. I, 547-50)

- **15.-24.8.41:** Bereits am **15. Aug 41** hatte Hitler im Zusammenhang mit einer oertlichen Krise bei der H.Gr.Nord eine weitreichende Entscheidung getroffen, indem er befahl, dass von der **3 PzGr** sofort ein Pz.-Korps an H.Gr.Nord abzugeben sei. So musste das **XXXIX AK (mot)** mit der **12 PD**, **18** u. **20 ID (mot)** am **16. Aug 41** von der H.Gr.Mitte zur H.Gr.Nord verlegen, wo es am **24. Aug 41** eintraf. (*Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 116)
- **21.8.41:** In seinem mueckenverseuchten Fuehrerhauptquartier beim Rastenburg nahm Hitler sich *zum zweiten Mal seit seiner Machtuebernahme* die Zeit, eine Denkschrift zu verfassen. Darin begruendete er seinen Entschluss, gegen den Widerstand der Heeresfuehrung zunaechst die lebenswichtigen Zentren im Sueden anzugreifen. Im Rueckblick ist deutlicher zu erkennen, dass Hitler damit bereits im Spaetsommer **1941** den ganzen „Fall *Barbarossa*“ zum Scheitern brachte. (*Mueller, Duell im Schnee*, in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, Burgdorff (Hg.), 121)
- **21.8.41:** Hitler makes final decision!¹⁷¹
 - Assess significance of
 - (*Crevelde*: Only held up “Taifun” by a week because of logistics problems)
 - (*Glantz*: Actually worked to Germans benefit to postpone “Taifun” until **Oct 41**)
 - Delay in decision a classic example of “*friction*” in war¹⁷²
 - „Friction is the very medium in which any kind of strategic action must unfold, and *war's most constant companion*.“ (*Edward N. Luttwak, Strategy. The Logic of War and Peace*, 10)
 - Clausewitz emphasizes the “*human factor*” as mainly responsible for its occurrence (See, *J. L. Wallach, Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation*, 19)
 - Hitler berates Army (Brauchitsch)
 - Brauchitsch & Halder contemplate resigning
 - (My Note: It appears that one reason Hitler ultimately decided to send Guderian south was because it appeared to offer the path of least resistance, given German successes at

¹⁷¹ **Note:** For the “back and forth” between Hitler, OKH, front commanders, etc., during this time period see, **III:161**, ff.

¹⁷² **Note:** In context of discussion of friction in war (described as the “*organizational risk of failure*, in contrast to the *combat risk*, i.e., direct exposure to the enemy): “Breakdowns, errors, and delays, each perhaps almost insignificant in itself, can accumulate into an insurmountable obstacle to any purposeful action. *Nothing is more frequently encountered in war than unscheduled postponements*, lasting hours or perhaps critical days or even weeks. They fill the record of military history, accounting for many defeats . . .” (*Edward N. Luttwak, Strategy. The Logic of War and Peace*, 12)

Roslavl – Gomel in **Aug 41**, coupled w/ stubborn and unexpected Soviet resistance around Smolensk; see, section immediately below)

- **21.8.41:** On this day, Hitler validated Soviet concerns [i.e., that he was turning strong elements of AGC south into the Ukraine] by deciding to accelerate the German southward advance. He issued new orders (over the objections of many of his generals) that diverted the entire **2 Army** and **2 PzGr** southward into the Ukraine. Only days before (**14 Aug 41**), the Stavka tried to thwart German intentions by forming the new Briansk Front under Lt.-Gen. A.I. Eremenko.¹⁷³ The new front's mission was to fill the gap between the Western Front defending east of Smolensk and the weak Central Front defending along the Sozh River line south of Smolensk and protect Kiev against attack from the north. The Stavka assigned **3 Army**, the new **50 Army** and the Central Front's **13 Army** to Eremenko's new front. (*D. Glantz, Forgotten Battles*, Vol. I, 74-75)
- Halder on Hitler's decision: "[Hitler's ultimate decision to move south, into the Ukraine] marked the *final turning point of the Eastern campaign*. Hitler's decision forced the Army Command to abandon the clear line which it had hitherto followed¹⁷⁴ of aiming at the central point of Russian power, and to take on in its place an operation of minor importance which at best could do no more than hasten the collapse of an already yielding secondary front. . . . If the turning point in the *operational conduct* was Kiev. . ." (See his, Hitler as War Lord, 46-47, 61; **IX:89-90**)
- **23.-24.8.41:** Guderian meets w/ Hitler at Rastenburg [details known]. When he reports to Halder the next day (**24 Aug 41**), the Chief of the Army General Staff fell into a rage at Guderian's complete *volte-face* on being confronted by Hitler at first hand. Halder's dismay is all the greater since Guderian, whom he had considered as a possible future Army C-in-C, had been among the *most vehement critics* of Hitler during the meeting at Hr.Gr. Mitte HQ the previous day. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 415; also, *Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 198-202; *Halder KTB*; also, **III:192-93** for key details)
- **Note:** The most heated controversy associated w/ Operation "Barbarossa" was the wisdom of Hitler's order to cease the advance on Moscow in **Aug 41** and turn Guderian's panzer group south-ward toward Kiev in **Sep 41**. Most German generals and many historians have sharply criticized Hitler's August decision, arguing that Guderian's diversion into the Ukraine thwarted the German capture of Moscow in **1941** and, perhaps, also prevented German victory in the East. Significant new evidence now contradicts their arguments. . . It is now apparent that the *Wehrmacht's best opportunity* for capturing Moscow occurred in **Oct 41** rather than September. This was so because Red Army opposition to a German thrust toward Moscow in October was far weaker than it had been in September, for three **[3]** basic reasons: [For details see, *D. Glantz, Barbarossa*, 213)

c) *Hoth turns north w/ 8. Air Corps; Guderian & 2. Army turn south (Roslavl, Krichev & Gomel - 1-21 Aug 41*

- **Note:** For overview of Army Group Center's **Aug 41** battles see, *Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed*, 578-81.

¹⁷³ **Note:** For Stavka order creating Briansk Front, its order of battle, etc., see p 74-75)

¹⁷⁴ **Note:** And followed w/ a certain duplicité and dishonesty vis-à-vis Hitler!

- **Note:** For the “back and forth” between Hitler, Brauchitsch, Halder, v. Bock, etc. concerning operations in direction of Gomel see, **III:49**) In essence, the German generals looked at the Gomel operation as an unnecessary diversion away from the main axis toward Moscow, while Hitler wanted to eliminate the enemy forces immediately in the “triangle between AGC and AGS.”
- Guderian first clears flanks at Roslavl & Kritschew, while **2. Army** eliminates Russian pressure from Gomel. (ca. **1-21 Aug 41**)
(See, Minor “*Kesselschlachten*,” FMS **P-190**, in: **VI:110-11**; also, *Hoth*, Pz.-Operationen, 118-119)
- **27.7.41 (Conference at Borisov):** On [this day], accompanied by my chief of staff, Lt-Col Fhr. v. Liebenstein, I flew over Orsha to Borissov, the HQ of the Army Group, in order to receive my instructions for future operations and report on condition of troops under my command. I expected to be told to push on towards Moscow or at least Bryansk; to my surprise, I learned that Hitler had ordered that my **2 PzGr** was to go for Gomel in collaboration w/ **2 Army**. . . Regardless of what decisions Hitler might now take, the immediate need of **2 PzGr** was to dispose of the *most dangerous enemy threat to its right flank*. I therefore proposed to the C-in-C of the Army Group my plan for an attack on Roslavl; the capture of this important road centre would give us the mastery of the communications to the east, the south, and the SW, and I asked that I be given the necessary additional forces to carry it out. My plan was accepted and **2 PzGr** allotted [new forces]. (For more details see, *Guderian*, Panzer Leader, 183; **III:137-38**)
- **31.7.41:** Guderian’s **2 PzGr** completes its redeployment on the southern flank of Army Group Ctr, as did **2 Army**. (*Taylor*, Barbarossa to Berlin, 85)
- **Early Aug 41:** Both Panzer corps of **3. PzGr** began w/ their “*Auffrischung*” (after *Smolensker Kesselschlacht* completed. (*Hoth*, Pz.-Operationen, 118)
- **Aug 41 (Stukas over Roslavl):** Die naechste Stadt, die zu nehmen war, hiess Roslavl, ein wichtiger Strassen- u. Eisenbahnknotenpunkt. Das **IR 9 [23 ID]** wurde zunaechst in Reserve gehalten, musste dann aber doch mit seinem III. Btn. zur Unterstuetzung bedraengter Einheiten einer Nachbardivision eingesetzt werden. **48 Stukas** hatten sich in vier grossen Einsaetzen zu Beginn des Sturms auf die eingeschlossene Stadt u. einen abgestellten sowjet. Panzerzug gestuerzt. Mit Gaenzehaut beobachteten die Infanteristen dieses vielfachen Tod bringende, sich mit ohrenbetaeubendem Laerm auf das Angriffsziel stuerzende Waffensystem. Am Mittag des **3. Aug 41** marschiert das **IR 9** durch die eroberte Stadt. (*Nayhauss-Cormons*, *Zwischen Gehorsam u. Gewissen*, 169)
- **1.8.41:** Im allgemeinen hat der Feindruck vor der gesamten Front der H.Gr. (mit Ausnahme vor rechtem Fluegel **2 Armee**) in den letzten Tagen zugenommen. Auftreten *staerkerer Artillerie* an allen Frontstellen,¹⁷⁵ verstaerkter Einsatz der *feindl. Luftwaffe* . . . **ArGr Guderian:** zahlreiche heftige, von Artillerie u. Panzern unterstuetzte Feindangriffe gegen Suedfluegel u. Ostfront der Armeegruppe wurden abegwiesen . . . Zahlreiche heftige Feindangriffe mit Artillerie u. Panzern gegen Ostfront der **3 PzGr** . . . (*Mehner*, *Tagesmeldungen*, in: Geheime Tagesberichte, 225)

¹⁷⁵ **Note:** Once again, another reference in these daily OKW reports to robust nature of Soviet artillery support.

-- **1.-3.8.41:** On **1 Aug 41** „Army Group Guderian“¹⁷⁶ began its attack on Roslavl w/ **VII AK** and **XXIV PzK**. By **3 Aug 41** the enemy forces there, w/ a strength of **4** divisions and armored formations, were encircled. The armored group had thus reached a point between Krichev and the upper Desna south of the road to Moscow. An expansion of the deployment to secure the southern flank was prepared by **2 Army**, which was to advance via Rogachev to Gomel in order to eliminate Soviet **5 Army** for good in co-operation w/ Army Group South. This operation as a whole met the requirements of the tactical situation of the army group as well as Hitler's conditions for an attack on Moscow. It therefore had to be completed w/ large forces in shortest possible time to permit regrouping from the newly captured strong-points to be carried out by **20 August**. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 590; for more details on Roslavl operation see, **III:143-48**)

-- **1.-6.8.41** (Roslavl): By late **Jul** – early **Aug 41**, **46.** and **24. PzK** of Guderian's panzer group began perceptively “tilting” AGC's *main effort southward* to deal w/ one of the most dangerous threats to the ongoing ops against the Smolensk pocket. This threat came from Kachalov's **28 Army**.

By now, Guderian's panzer group had been elevated by **OKH** to status of a full army group (*Armeegruppe Guderian*). Guderian (reinforced by large amounts of infantry) begins all-out assault to capture Roslavl – an important road junction and communications center – in Kachalov's immediate rear. Kachalov's forces quickly surrounded and liquidated (**1-6 Aug 41**). Germans count **38,561** prisoners-of-war, **250** tanks and tracked vehicles, **713** guns of all types, etc. (See, *Glantz*, 307, ff.)

-- From Hitler's perspective – and, increasingly from the **OKH's** perspective as well – Guderian's victory at Roslavl, coupled w/ Timoshenko's and Zhukov's fierce resistance east of Smolensk and the Southwestern Front's stubborn defense of the Kiev region in the south, offered *new opportunities* to conduct a massive and decisive encirclement operation in the Kiev region east of the Dnepr. (*Glantz*, 360-61)

-- Gomel: From German's perspective, Kachalov's defeat seemed to *offer new opportunities*. . . Since by now Hitler had decided to *clear AGC's southern flank before attacking Moscow*, he [thought in terms of] a possible advance toward Gomel from the north to close the *growing gap* between AGC and AGS. (*Glantz*, 326)

-- **1.-14.8.41** (Roslavl' & Kirchev): On **1 Aug 41**, Guderian began his operation against Roslavl'. This operation completed by **8 Aug 41**; some **38,000** Soviet prisoners taken and Soviet **28. Army** smashed.¹⁷⁷ Yet in order to truly have *free flanks for a drive on Moscow*, Guderian must also first eliminate the threat from the deep right flank at Kirchev. On **14 Aug 41**, this operation is also successfully concluded, w/ three (**3**) more Soviet divisions smashed and **16,000** prisoners taken, as well as large quantities of guns and equipment of all kinds captured. (For account of these actions see, *Paul Carell*, Hitler Moves East, 104-08; **III:180**)

-- **6.-21.8.41** (Gomel): AGC begins to implement Directive No. **34** on **6 Aug 41**, immediately after Guderian's tank group had completed liquidating encircled Group Kachalov. That day,

¹⁷⁶ **Note:** The renaming as an “army group” (*Armeegruppe*) was for the assignment to capture Gomel. See, p 590, f.n. 208)

¹⁷⁷ **Note:** For **OKW** figures on prisoners and booty in Roslavl “Kessel” see, **III:183** (OKW KTB, Bd. I, 560-61)

the inf.-divs. of Strauss's **2 Army** and the **XXIV PzK**'s **3** and **4 PDs** strike southward across the Sozh river toward Gomel. Anticipating such a move, on **23 Jul 41** the *Stavka* had formed a new Central Front, under Col-Gen F.I. Kuznetsov, and consisting of Efremov's **21** and Lt-Gen V.F. Gerasimov's **13 Armies**. They ordered this new *front* to protect Gomel and the Sozh river sector. Guderian's attack sent **21 Army** reeling back to the south and threatened to form a breach between the Soviet Southwestern Front's forces defending Kiev and the Western and Reserve Fronts' forces defending east of Smolensk. By **18 Aug 41**, Guderian's tanks and **2 Army** infantry had captured Pochep and reached the outskirts of Gomel and Starodub, threatening to separate **21** and **13 Armies** and drive a wedge between the Central and Reserve Fronts. (For more details see, *Glantz, Barbarossa*, 85-86; **III:181**)

- **8.-14.8.41:** *Armeegruppe Guderian's* advance across the Sozh River and the Krichev encirclement. (See, *Glantz*, 384, ff.)

Before Guderian could undertake any further ops in any direction, he had to *secure his left flank* along the Sozh east and west of Krichev, where remnants of Central Front's **13.** and **4. Armies** were firmly dug in. This further advance to the south promised to eliminate large Red Army forces threatening AGC's right wing; most importantly, such a strategy *avoided the strongest concentrations of Red Army forces*, specifically, the armies the STAVKA had deployed in depth along the Moscow axis. (384-85)

By end of first week in **Aug 41**, Guderian was in position to strike southward across the Sozh River in concert w/ a general assault by Weich's **2. Army** into the Rogachev – Gomel' regions. (385)

Guderian [moved] shortly after dawn on **8 Aug 41**, when **3.** and **4. PD** of Geyr's **24. PzK** struck southward across the Sozh between Roslavl' and Kirchey. Within **6** days after beginning its attack, Geyr's panzer corps reported capturing more than **16,000** prisoners, **76** guns, **15** tanks, and an armored train. (See, *Glantz*, 385, ff., for details of fighting.)

- **8.-24.8.41:** On **8 Aug 41**, Roslavl pocket, consisting mainly of Soviet **28 Army**, was cleared w/ the capture of a further **38 000** prisoners and **200** tanks. **24 PzK** was then dispatched further to the south against the rear of the new Central Front to the west and north of Gomel. These attacks made by **24 PzK** on Klitsy from the north, and by v. Weich's **2 Army** eastwards from Bobruisk, virtually destroyed the Central Front, and by **24 Aug 41** the Red Army lost a further **78 000** prisoners. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 130)

- **12.8.41:** For Hitler, maneuvering against Gomel was the next logical step toward the Ukraine. In terms of blitzkrieg thinking, it was completely consistent with the 'line of least resistance' aim. To Stavka this move likewise made sense: the Soviet high command assumed von Bock merely sought to firm up his flanks in preparation for the anticipated assault on Moscow. Von Weichs' **2 Army** received the mission of taking Gomel, but due to a *dearth of artillery ammunition*, muddy roads and other factors, its attack developed slowly. Only on **12 Aug 41** were his men ready. To prevent any defenders from escaping, Guderian sent his far right element, **XXIV PzK**, hooking around the city to the east. (*Kirchubel, Draft*, 13; for more details on Gomel operation see, **III:185-91**)

- **12.-18.8.41:** Weich's **2. Army** advances on Gomel'. (*Glantz*, 387, ff.)
Only days after Geyr's motorized corps began its southward advance, forces of **2. Army** joined the offensive, striking southward across the Sozh toward Gomel' w/ **8** infantry divisions of its **12.** and **13. AK**. From Bock's perspective, an offensive to capture Gomel'

had been a *virtual necessity* every since Soviet **21. Army** attacked his army group's right wing in mid-**Jul 41**, recapturing Zhlobin and Rogachev and even threatening Bobruisk w/ a cavalry corps for a time. (See, 387)

(Note: Although Weichs had intended to begin his offensive in concert w/ Guderian's advance, a *shortage of artillery ammunition*, muddy roads, and his army's inability to line up its corps . . . prompted Weichs to *postpone the attack three times*. He finally moved to the attack on **12 Aug 41**. Within two days, his *pincer maneuver* had encircled the bulk of **21. Army's 63. and 67. Rifle Corps** – a total of at least **6** rifle divisions – in a pocket on the eastern bank of the Dnepr NW of Gomel.¹⁷⁸ (390)

- **14.8.41**: On this day, the STAVKA acted even more decisively to block Guderian's advance southward by forming the new Briansk Front to plug the gap between the Western and Reserve Fronts operating along the Smolensk – El'nia axes and the Central Front along the Gomel' axis. Eremenko assigned as *front* cdr. New Briansk Front also ordered to protect northern approaches to Kiev, etc. Briansk Front was also to join the Western Main Direction's planned counteroffensive against AGC. (*Glantz*, 393-94)
- **15.8.41**: An diesem Tage traf Hitler, wieder unter dem Eindruck einer *oertlichen Krise* bei der H.Gr.Nord, eine *weitreichende Entscheidung*. (Note: Both tank corps of **PzGr 3** in matter of a few days dispatched to H.Gr.Nord, w/ no operational results to speak of.) (For details see, *Hoth*, Pz.-Operationen, 112-24)
- **15.8.41** [Gomel]: On **15 Aug 41**, I was busy trying to persuade my superiors not to try to exploit the success of **XXIV PzK** [during its Krichev operation] by making them push on to Gomel. (Note: Guderian's plea is unsuccessful; entire **XXIV PzK** is committed to the Gomel operation. As G. notes, Geyr's tank corps had *not had a single day out of action* and was „urgently in need of a rest period for tank maintenance.“¹⁷⁹) (See, *Guderian*, Panzer Leader, 195-97)
- Crux: Durch die Abgabe von **5** schnellen Verbaenden der **PzGr 3** nach Norden in Verbindung mit dem Festlegen der Masse der **PzGr 2** in suedl. Richtung auf Gomel war die H.Gr.Mitte der Moeglichkeit beraubt, auf Moskau vorzustossen. *Es war die Entscheidung des Krieges*, die Hitler schon am **4 Jul 41** angekuendigt u. immer wieder verschoben hatte. (*Hoth*, Pz.-Operationen, 123-24)
- **15.-21.8.41** [Gomel operation]: Guderian's successes at Roslavl and Krichev whetted the appetite of the High Command of the Wehrmacht. On very next day [i.e., **15 Aug 41**] it demanded that Timoshenko's strong force in the Gomel area should also be attacked, so as to bring relive to v. Weichs's **2 Army**. On this day, **24 PzK** moved off again – towards the south – w/ **3** and **4 PD** in the forefront, followed by **10 ID (mot.)**. On **16 Aug 41**, the **3 PD** took the road intersection of Mglin; on **17 Aug 41** it took the railway junction of Unecha. Thus, the railway-line Gomel – Bryansk – Moscow was cut. On **21 Aug 41** Guderian's two panzer corps reached the important jumping-off positions of Starodub and Pochep. *All the points were now set for the drive to Moscow* [i.e., Guderian's armor had captured Yelnya - Roslavl – Krichev – Gomel, etc., as springboards for attack on Soviet capital.] Yet on this

¹⁷⁸ Note: Weichs's Gomel operation supported – if unwillingly – by Guderian's **24. PzK**.

¹⁷⁹ Note: This illustrates that at least some of the mechanized units – as late as mid-**Aug 41** – had yet to enjoy a single day out of the line for refurbishing and reequipping!

very day – **21 Aug 41** – Hitler finally called off all plans against Moscow and ordered the advance into the Ukraine. (*P. Carell, Hitler Moves East*, 108)

-- **15.-21.8.41:** *Armeegruppe Guderian's advance to Starodub and **2. Army's** capture of Gomel'.* (*Glantz*, 394, ff.)

On **15 Aug 41**, OKH ordered Geyr's **24. PzK** to continue its southward drive. Two days later, Guderian commits Lemelsen's panzer corps to the operation. . . Model's **3. PD** captured Starodub on **19 Aug 41**. By this time, Guderian's forces had carved a **115-km-wide** and **120-km-deep** salient south of the Sozh River between Briansk Front and Central Front and threatened the latter w/ isolation and encirclement in the Gomel' region. Meanwhile, Weich's **2. Army** bearing down on Gomel', reaching the northern outskirts of the city on **19 Aug 41**. His infantry (**13. AK** & Feldt's **1. Cav. Div.**) captured the city the next day.

Capture of city forced roughly half of Soviet **21. Army** to retreat eastward and southeastward; en route, the withdrawing Soviets encountered Geyr's **24. PzK**, whose panzers and panzer grenadiers were establishing blocking positions. Geyr's wall of armor and mot. infantry also formed a massive wedge separating Central Front from Briansk Front, which was just beginning to assemble in the Briansk region to the east. (397-99)

Meanwhile, sealing Central Front's fate, Geyr's mot. corps completed constructing a line of imposing blocking positions late on **21 Aug 41**. (401)

The consequences of the seizure of Gomel' by **2. Army** were far reaching. Soon, Weich's army reported capturing more than **50,000** Red Army soldiers, almost **500** guns, and more than **100** tanks and tractors. Together w/ **2. Army's** share of the successful encirclement at Krichev, this brought the total "bag" of prisoners and booty seized by the army since **14 Aug 41** to **78,000** prisoners, **700** guns, **144** tanks. Weich's casualties during the same period amounted to **5190** officers and men, including **1468** KIA, **3367** wounded, and **355** missing. (402-03)

Crux: In addition to liquidating the persistent threat to AGC's southern flank, the capture of Gomel' helped precipitate the *collapse of the entire Soviet defensive system west of the Dnepr and Desna Rivers*. Combined w/ Army Group South's victories farther south, the fall of Gomel' also dispelled any lingering doubts Hitler may have harbored about the wisdom of the "*southern turn*" he postulated in Directive No. **34**. (Details see, 403)

Stalin, w/ *sizeable strategic reserves* still at his disposal, reacted to the new situation by deciding he had *no other resource by to unleash even more massive counteroffensives* by Timoshenko's Western Main Direction Command. (403)

-- **19.8.41:** **2 Armee** nahm **15.00** Uhr Gomel. . . (*KTB OKW*, Bd I, 579)

-- **21.8.41:** In der Schlacht von Gomel u. Kritschew wurden die **21** u. **13** russ. **Armee** mit **17. Schuetz**, **1. russ. Mot.**, **2. russ. Pz.** u. **5. russ. Kav Div.** u. **2** russ. Luftlande-Brig. geschlagen. Reste hiervon leisten [noch?] ostwaerts Gomel Widerstand. Gomel selbst ist am **19.8.41** genommen, Bruecken suedl. Gomel sind gesprengt. Als Ergebnis der Schlacht wurden bisher gemeldet: **78374** Gefangene, **144** erbeutete oder vernichtete Panzer, **700** Geschuetze, **38** Flugzeuge, **2** Pz-Zuege . . . Gefangene u. Beute: Bis **16.8.41** = **1 164 443 (4933)** kriegsgefangene Russen. (*Mehner, Tagesmeldungen*, in: Geheime Tagesberichte, 288)

- **31.8.41:** Since beginning of Russlandfeldzug, German army in the east has suffered total of **409,998** losses, or **11.05%** of the average strength figure of **3.78** million men employed in the Russian theater [too high an estimate?]. These losses include: **87,489** KIA, **19,688** MIA; among the dead are **4006** officers. Total officer casualties = **14,457**. To compensate for these losses, Army High Command assigned **317,000** replacements from the Zone of Interior to the Russian theater; as of **31 Aug 41**, however, only **217,000** men had arrived in the Russian theater to compensate for the losses. Thus the personnel shortage in the theater amounts to about **193,000** men. (*G. Blau, German Campaign in Russia*, 71)
- **31.8.41:** A total of **21** out of **24** divisions, constituting the German Army High Command reserves at the beginning of the campaign, have reached the front by end of **Aug 41**. Of these **10** go to Army Gr South (**9** inf. + **1** mot. inf. div.), **8** inf.-divs. go to Army Gr Ctr, and the remaining **3** to Army Gr North. Only **3** divisions remain in hands of OKH. (*G. Blau, German Campaign in Russia*, 71-72)

d) *Operations on fronts of Army Groups North & South (Kiev Kesselschlacht)*

- **Note:** For Army Group South ops in **Aug-Sep 41** see, **III:172**, ff.
- **Note:** For assessments of Glantz and other historians on consequences of the German turn south, into the Ukraine, see, **III:240**, ff.)
- **Note:** As the *Schwerpunkt* of AGC's advance shifts to the south [i.e., Kiev], Stalin and Stavka "failed to realize in time the fundamental change in the thrust of German operations." (See, *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 867-68; **III:189**)
- **Aug-Sep 41:** Achievements in sectors of army groups North and South.
Leningrad invested (See, Notebook #3, Section 3.5)
Kiewer "*Kesselschlacht*"
(*Kiewer Kesselschlacht*: Neue Dokumenten zeigen, dass Stalin zum ersten Mal *in Panik geriet*. Seinem Botschafter in London schrieb er, „dass, wenn die Englaender in den naechsten zwei, drei Wochen in Europa keine zweite Front schaffen, wir u. unsere Verbuendeten dann diese Geschichte verlieren koennten. Das waere traurig, aber es kann so kommen.“ (R.-D. Mueller, "*Duel im Schnee*," in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, Stephan Burgdorff (Hg.), 121))
- **23.-24.8.41:** Generaloberst Guderian's **2 PzGr** begins its move south on **23 Aug 41**,¹⁸⁰ a blisteringly hot summer day. Armored columns raise immense clouds of impenetrable dust. Advancing along primitive, sandy roads (which reduce fuel consumption), after **40** km the lead battle group – Kampfgruppe "Lewinski" – passes the first road sign bearing the distinctive Cyrillic characters which indicate they are entering the Soviet Socialist Republic of the Ukraine. The encirclement battles at Minsk and Smolensk have already exacted a heavy toll on Guderian's group. His panzer divisions were on average only at **45%** effective strength. Exceptions were the **10 PD** at **83%** and the **18 PD** at **57%**. On **24 Aug 41**, an advanced battle group from **3 PD** captures the **700m**-long bridge spanning the River Desna at Novgorad Seversk. **SS "DR"** captures another bridge on the division's right flank at Makoshim, after a daring assault by its motorcycle infantry reconnaissance btn. *Stuka* dive bomber

¹⁸⁰ **Note:** Glantz (*Barbarossa*, p 86-87) says Guderian began to move south on **25 Aug 41**.

air support had been frustratingly delayed. As the SS soldiers began to prepare the bridgehead against inevitable Russian counterattacks, the missing Stukas appeared and howled into the attack, dive-bombing their own troops. **40** Waffen-SS soldiers were killed. (R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands, 155; also, *Halder KTB*, 28.8.41)

- **24.8.41** [**3. PD** in Kiev operation]:¹⁸¹ On **24 Aug 41**, the same day **3 PD**'s Gruppe Audoersch seized Novozybkhov, Model learns that the original intention of the Starodub – Gomel offensive – clearing the ground for an immediate advance on Moscow – has been vetoed from above. Instead, **2 PzGr**, led by **XXIV PzK** and spearheaded by **3 PD**, is being dispatched due south, w/ the objective of slicing into the rear of the Soviet armies defending Kiev and the lower Dniepr. For Model and his men this would involve the most daring blitzkrieg yet, requiring them to traverse more than **275** kilometers of enemy territory, enjoying no flank protection whatsoever while crossing **3** major rivers and receiving virtually all supplies via airdrop. More amazing still, this had to be accomplished by a panzer division w/ only **41** tanks of the original complement of **198** in running order. (Newton, Hitler's Commander, 134-36)

(Note: For details of Model's drive into Ukraine see, **III:196-97**)

- **25.8.41**: German **2 Army** and Guderian's **2 PzGr** started south against the relatively weak forces of Central Front on **25 Aug 41**. To make matters worse for it, Headquarters, Central Front, was just then, as the result of another Stavka decision, at the point of being deactivated and was turning its sector over to Bryansk Front. To check Bryansk Front, which might have endangered his flank and rear, Guderian left behind most of his panzer group's infantry and a panzer corps. These units became **4 Army** under GFM v. Kluge's HQ, which had relinquished its panzer army designation. Guderian's course would take him on an almost straight line toward Romny – **120** miles east of Kiev. (Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad, 34; also, **III:194**, ff.)
- **30.8.-15.9.41** [Soviets counterattack Guderian / Roslavl'–Novozybkov Offensive]: The third and most ambitious segment of the Soviet Smolensk counteroffensive was the offensive of General Eremenko's Briansk Front, which the Stavka launched into the very teeth of Guderian's advance. About **10** days after forming the Briansk Front, the Stavka abolished the Central Front, whose position was already precarious, reinforced the Briansk Front, and assigned it responsibility for much of the Central Front's sector. . . Despite the reorganization, Guderian's **2 PzGr** continued its threatening advance southward toward Starodub. . . On **10 Sep 41**, Guderian's tanks crossed the Desna River and pushed on to Romny in the deep Soviet rear. By this time, the gap between the Briansk and Central Fronts had reached **60** km and could not be repaired. . .

These measures were, however, too late. By **15 Sep 41**, Guderian's forces linked up near Lokhvits w/ those of General v. Kleist's **1 PzGr**, encircling **21 Army** and the entire Southwest Front. The ambitious Briansk Front offensive ended in total disaster. This failure also spelled doom for entire Soviet effort to recapture Smolensk. The human and material costs of the Roslavl' – Novozybkov operation were immense. Out of the **261,696** men and **259** tanks it committed to combat during the operation, the Briansk Front suffered about **100,000** casualties and lost **140** tanks. More critical still was the parlous condition of the front's forces after the offensive: Fewer than **200,000** men remained to oppose the concerted German attack

¹⁸¹ **Note:** Another example of "unreal" achievements of German armored units – even those which were now but a "shadow" of their former selves.

that commenced less than three [3] weeks later. (For more details, *D. Glantz, Forgotten Battles*, Vol. I, 88-102; **III:203-04**)

- **4.-6.9.41:** Even Hitler felt tension emanating from this ambitious enterprise [i.e., Kiev operation]. Guderian, he insisted, should be concentrating his forces for the drive south. GFM Keitel telephoned v. Bock twice on **4 Sep 41** and stated, „if the Army Group and the C-in-C of the Army don't intervene w/ orders, the Fuehrer will do it.“ Guderian became so *headstrong and irritated* at the perceived lack of support from his army [group?] cdr that v. Bock felt, „I finally had to *ask for his relief*.“ On **5 Sep 41** he admitted, „I cannot hide my worries about new difficulties w/ this outstanding and brave cdr.“ On the following day [**6 Sep**], the weather broke. Torrential summer storms turned the roads into a quagmire. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 155; see also, *Bock Tagebuch*)
- **14.9.41:** At **18.20** hours, **1 PzGr** (Kleist) and **2 PzGr** (Guderian) linked up more than **100** miles to the east of Kiev, in the Lokhvitsa-Lubny area; five [5] Soviet armies were now skewered by these armored spikes. . . The white Very lights, which always signified German presence, and which were exchanged between Guderian's **3 PD** on meeting Kleist's **16 PD** east of Kiev, were themselves the mere tokens of encirclement. But the outer armored ring thickened: the inner infantry ring tightened. (*J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 208-09; for more background, **III:216**, ff.)
- **15.9.41:** The **PzRgt 6 (3 PD)** had numbered about **198** tanks at the outset of Operation „Barbarossa.“ On this day, it was down to one [1] **Pz IV**, three [3] **Pz III** and six [6] **Pz II** tanks – that is to say ten [10] tanks were all that was left of the rgt. It was an ominous portent of the Pyrrhic nature of a victory yet to be confirmed and, as Guderian commented, gave „a vivid picture of how badly the troops needed a rest and a period for maintenance.“ (*Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 219)
- **26.9.41:** [Kiewer Kesselschlacht] . . . Abschluss der Kaempfe im Dnjepr – Desna – Bogen: Die zur doppelseitigen Umfassung u. Vernichtung der roten Suedwestfront gefuehrte Operation hat ihren siegreichen Abschluss gefunden. Der Zweck der Operation wurde in der hierfuer vorge-sehenen Zeit voll erreicht. . . Gefangene- u. Beutezahlen aus der Schlacht im Dnjepr/Desna – Bogen:

665 212 Gefangene
824 Panzer
3 018 Geschuetze
418 Pak

(Source: *KTB OKW*, Bd I, 661)¹⁸²

e) *Static Warfare in Center (Soviet “Smolensk” counteroffensives, etc.)*

Note: For overview of German successes, as well as *unprecedented tactical victories* achieved by Red Army in **Aug 41** – and the serious harm they inflicted on Army Group Center – see, *Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed*, 579-80)

¹⁸² **Note:** According to these OKW statistics, vast majority of prisoners (**492 885**) were taken by units of H.Gr.Sued. For more details see report (661). The numbers of prisoners, booty, etc. also appear to encompass all related operations of both army groups since end of **Aug 41**.

Note: As Glantz makes clear, Soviets confident in **Aug 41** that they could collapse the front of AGC east of Smolensk. For one thing, it was virtually “tankless,” w/ armor of **PzGr 2 & 3** gradually shifted to the flanks. (581)

Note: Soviet counteroffensives in summer ‘41: recent *archival evidence* shows that, far from collapsing in disorganized panic, from start of “*Barbarossa*” the Red Army conducted a “spectrum of counterattacks in a coherent attempt to implement pre-war plans for an active defense ending in a decisive counteroffensive.” (Dennis Showalter, Hitler’s Panzers, 162-63).

Note: The Stavka’s late **Aug** and early **Sep 41** Smolensk counteroffensive, which extended from Velikie Luki in the north to Shchors in the south, was a massive undertaking conducted by major elements of three [3] *fronts*. It was Stavka’s most ambitious offensive to date, and its scope and objectives far eclipsed the fragmented and hasty offensives of July and early August. Conversely, the late-August counteroffensive also became its most spectacular failure of summer **1941**. *Stavka thoroughly misunderstood the capabilities of its own forces and those of the Wehrmacht*. Until late summer, it congenitally overestimated the former and underestimated the latter; thus the Stavka assigned its forces unrealistic missions. The results were „predictably disastrous.“ For the German camp, the battles around Smolensk had *immense significance*, first and foremost because they *impelled Hitler to alter his Barbarossa strategy*. (**Note:** For more analysis of reasons for Soviet defeat, such as totally inadequate military logistical and support infrastructure see, Glantz, Barbarossa, 96)

-- Army Group Center faces incessant Soviet counterattacks

These attacks actually began in early **Jul 41** (*Timoshenko* offensive)

Pick up steam in **Aug 41** (describe briefly)

Unknown to Germans; these offensives signify a serious, *coordinated* effort!

(See, D. Glantz; also, Maj. T. Wray, Standing Fast, section on defense of Army Group Center, **Jul-Sep 41**; see also, FMS P-190, in: VI:112)

-- Analogies to World War I (artillery fire)¹⁸³

Personal accounts

(For **251. ID** see, H.-M. Welcker, Aufzeichnungen, **Aug 41**)

Effects of artillery fire: It was not just the shrapnel emanating from the explosion of shells and mines that made heavy artillery fire so deadly. It was also so lethal because of the shock waves of the explosions which destroyed the body’s most easily compressed tissue, which is situated in the lungs. (See, *Thomas Weber*, Hitler’s First War, 157)

-- **Note:** For detailed study of *German field defenses* (based mainly on separate pockets of resistance – strong points, centers of resistance – equipped for all-round defense and located

¹⁸³ **Note:** In his book, Hitler’s First War, Thomas Weber argues that Hitler’s **RIR 16** (List Rgt.) experienced a collapse of morale and discipline on eve of the Battle of the Somme in summer **1916**. This collapse resulted from “the kind of fear occasioned by incessant long-range [artillery] fire as well as from the expectation of being deployed in a battle in which the men of **RIR 16** had no control over their own survival.” Hence, a “very significant number of soldiers [went] AWOL on the eve of the Battle of the Somme. . .” (Weber, 149-52) On the Russian front in WWII such an “option” was hardly practicable, for the German soldiers were much, much farther from home and, in any case, the enforcement of discipline in the Wehrmacht was much more draconian. “Shirkers” attempting to slink away from the combat zone would have most likely been executed for “Wehrzersetzung.”

w/ mutual fire support; importance of populated areas; engineering preparations of field defenses; etc.) see, *Harold S. Orenstein* (trans.), Soviet Documents on the Use of War Experience. Vol. I: The Initial Period of the War 1941.

-- Encounters w/ new Soviet weapons

T 34 / *Katusha* rocket projectors / “*Ratsch-Bumm*” / etc.¹⁸⁴

(Also, *F. Frisch*, Condemned to Live. A Panzer Artilleryman’s Five-Front War, for stark appraisals of “*Stalinorgel*,” **T 34**.) (Summary in “*Biblio file*.”)

-- **ab 8.8.41**: Assaults by Timoshenko’s Western Front NE and E of Smolensk. Soviet assaults parried by German **9. Army** E and NE of Dukhovshchina (50 km NE of Smolensk), but they did so only after they employed their *last tactical reserves*. (*Glantz*, 407)

-- **11.8.41**: Shortly after Guderian began ops southward across the Sozh (**8 Aug 41**), STAVKA ordered Timoshenko’s Western and Zhukov’s Reserve Fronts to commence *massive coordinated assaults* against AGC’s defenses in the sector from east of Dukhovshchina southward to El’nia. First round of assaults ended in failure on same day (**11 Aug 41**). (*Glantz*, 409)

-- **11.8.41**: By the middle of **Aug 41** most of GFM v. Bock’s tanks begin to depart in directions of Leningrad and Kiev, so **4** and **9 Armies** take over the sector’s defense. The bulk of Kesselring’s two Fliegerkorps also fly north and south. Thus, as Army Group Ctr abdicates the initiative, Timoshenko seizes it. By **11 Aug 41**, the Soviets are *assaulting all along v. Bock’s front*.¹⁸⁵ Timoshenko’s subordinate **19 Army** (reinforced by a tank division and a mixed aviation division) achieves a 6-mile penetration across the Vop River. As Timoshenko pounded German positions north of Yelnia salient, Zhukov, now commanding Reserve Front, lavished his attention on Yelnia. His main asset is Maj Gen Rakutin’s **24 Army**. At same time, Maj Gen Dovator leads the **50** and **53 Cav Divs** on a raid deep into the German rear area. *Kirchubel*, Barbarossa 1941, 63)

-- **12.-28.8.41**: [**IR 37/6 ID**]: Am **12 Aug 41** erfolgte die Verlegung des **IR 37** in den Raum der **26 ID** bei Prussochowo. . . Am **13.8.41** ging es dann von Prussochowo nach Punewo. Hier wurde abends Biwak bezogen. An den Folgetagen erfolgte der Ausbau der schlechten Stellungen. Vom **15.-26.8.41** ergaben sich verlustreiche Abwehrkaempfe, der die Kampfkraft des **IR 37** erheblich geschwaecht hat. Seit dem **18. Aug 41** griff der Feind taeglich in Komp.- u. Btn.-Staerke unter staerkstem Feuerschutz aller Waffen an. Die Infanterie hatte die Hauptlast des Abwehrkampfes, der in vielen Faellen erst auf Handgranatenwurfweite entschieden wird, zu tragen. . . Der Kampf in diesem Stellungsbereich kostete dem **IR 37** allein **12** gefallene Offiziere, darunter auch den Rgts-Kdr Obst-Lt Hennicke. . . Obst-Lt Kohlsdorfer uebernahm am **28.8.41** das Kommando des **IR 37**.¹⁸⁶ (*W. Buddenbohm*, Das Leben des Soldaten, 59-60; **III:185-86**)

-- **17.8.41**: Acting on Timoshenko’s recommendations, STAVKA ordered his and Zhukov’s *fronts*, arrayed from north to south, to mount a *coordinated offensive* on **17 Aug 41**, which by end of the month, would engulf the *entire region* from Toropets in the north to Briansk in the south. However, the chaotic combat situation forced Timoshenko to conduct his offensive in

¹⁸⁴ **Note**: Can glean much information here from my veterans’ questionnaires!

¹⁸⁵ **Note**: Earlier in text, author writes that on 11 August 1941, the “Soviets begin general offensive around Yelnia.”

¹⁸⁶ **Note**: Kohlsdorfer was replaced as rgt cdr by Oberst Rohr in late **Sep 41**. (66)

piecemeal fashion and prevented him from coordinating his attacks w/ those of Zhukov's armies to the south. (*Glantz*, 411)

Timoshenko's plan for his *front's* so-called "Dukhovshchina offensive" required his armies to regroup their forces for two days and then conduct their assault on **17 Aug 41** w/ two shock groups. (See, 415-36., for planning details & preparations: after penetrating defenses of German **5. AK**, assault groups were to capture D., then continue their advance toward Smolensk to link up w/ forces of Zhukov's Reserve Front, supposedly advancing on Smolensk from SE. Zhukov's preparations for his offensive against Germans' El'nia bridgehead were equally elaborate. . .

By dawn, **17 Aug 41**, the Western Front's shock groups were either in or nearing their jumping off positions. Either way, the steady movements of Guderian's and Weich's forces southward toward Gomel' made it essential for Timoshenko to launch his offensive on schedule. (436)

(For Soviet / German order of battle see, 436-37.) Timoshenko's two shock groups able to concentrate their divisions on *attack frontages* of **2-3** km. This enabled both Konev (**19. Army**) and Khomenko (**30. Army**) to establish local superiorities of between **5** and **8 to 1** in infantry and slightly less in artillery. (The German IDs defending against Timoshenko operated in sectors **8-30** km wide; see, p 437 for attack frontages by division, German strongpoint defenses, etc.) Yet the Germans retained air superiority and rough parity in armor. Also, **9. AOK** still retained Funck's **7. PD** in operational reserve NE of Smolensk. Funck's division numbered roughly **100** tanks, w/ **70-80** operational on any given day. (437)

- **17.-19.8.41:** The second Soviet counteroffensive – The Western Front's Dukhovshchina offensive (the initial phase).¹⁸⁷
(*Glantz*, 438, ff.)

17.8.41: Konev's **19. Army** registers some immediate successes – eg., vicious assaults by two of his rifle divisions – from their jump off positions along the Vop River – tore a gaping hole in right wing of German **161. ID.**, which is soon overrun or forced to withdraw in disorder. Conversely, Khomenko's **30. Army** achieves far more limited results. CruX: Konev's and Khomenko's armies were hammering **9. Army** defenses E and NE of Dukhovshchina.

18.8.41: Reservedly optimistic over results of previous day's fighting, Timoshenko orders his took shock groups to *intensify their attacks* on **18 Aug 41**. (447, ff.)

19.8.41: Attacks continue on **19 Aug 41**, registering modest gains. Other than on Konev's front, the only other successes recorded in Western Front's sector occurred when Dovator's Cavalry Group went into action in the gap between **29** and **30. Armies**. (461, ff.)

- CruX: The action during the first phase of the offensive by Timoshenko's Western Front met, if not exceeded, the *front* commander's wildest expectations. And both Stalin and the STAVKA were equally encouraged. The violent assault by Konev's **19. Army** north of Iartsevo had

¹⁸⁷ **Note:** Maslennikov's **29. Army** also played a part in this offensive. Its objective, as of **19 Aug 41**, was to try to collapse German **9. Army's** left wing along and south of the Western Dvina. Three German IDs, each holding frontages of about **30** km, faced Soviet **29. Army**. (see, 440, 451, 461, etc.)

torn a gaping hole in the defenses along German **9. Army's** "eastern front" and severely damaged **8. AK's 161. ID**¹⁸⁸ and inflicted grievous losses on **5. & 28. IDs** and the reinforcing tanks of **900. Mot. Bde.** GFM v. Bock, like Strauss [C-in-C **9. AOK**] had no choice but to "scrape the bottom of the barrel" to generate reserves necessary to sustain **9. Army's** defense. Complicating matters, Hitler's decision to send the bulk of **PzGr 3's** armor northward,¹⁸⁹ left Bock and Strauss w/ barely adequate reserves w/ which to solidify their defenses along the army group's "eastern front." (Details see, *Glantz*, 475)

- **17.8.-8.9.41** [Dukhovshchina Offensive]: Begun on **17 Aug 41** IAW a **15 August** Western Front order, by end of month this offensive encompassed the entire Western Front sector from Toropetz to Iartsevo. Despite careful planning, combat conditions forced Western Front to initiate the counterstroke in piecemeal fashion. . . Initially, General I.S. Konev's **19 Army**, rein-forced by **101 TD** and **64 RD**, the **43 Mixed Aviation Division**, and considerable artillery support, forced the Vop River and on 18 August penetrated **10 km** deep into defenses of the German **161 ID**. General Maslennikov's **29 Army** supported the effort in the Velizh sector by seizing crossings over the Western Dvina before being halted by German reserves. On **21 Aug 41**, Zhukov expanded Western Front's mission by ordering it to capture Velizh, Demidov, and Smolensk. Meanwhile, German **3 PzGr** attacked Soviet **22** and **29 Armies** and forced them back across the Western Dvina River until engineer reinforcements halted the German thrust. In the process, the Germans encircled **22 Army** in the Velikie Luki region, ultimately decimating the army. The Soviet **30 Army** came to its neighbor's assistance on **29 Aug 41** by attacking and penetrating German defenses east of Velizh. Maj-Gen L.M. Dovator's Cavalry Group (**50** and **53 Cav Div**) then exploited the gap and began a deep raid into the German rear that lasted over a week and tied down three [3] German divisions dispatched to contain Dovator's group and protect German rear installations.

After several preliminary attacks on **28 and 29 Aug 41**, on **1 Sep 41** the Western Front's **16, 19** and **20 Armies** launched a combined assault on German defenses east of Smolensk along the entire front from Dukhovshchina to Iartsevo. These assaults began a nearly constant nine [9] day battle that placed immense pressure on the defending Germans but resulted in only limited Soviet gains at heavy cost in casualties. On **8 Sep 41**, Marshal V.M. Shaposhnikov reluctantly ordered Western Front to *go over to the defensive*, ending the three [3] weeks of fighting east and NE of Smolensk and to so-called „Dukhovshchina Operation.“ Although they are not yet known, the Western Front suffered heavy casualties in the failed operation. This bloody toll *undoubtedly contributed to the front's collapse in October*, when Germans began Operation „Taifun.“ (*D. Glantz, Forgotten Battles*, Vol. I, 77-82)

- **20.-24.8.41**: The second Soviet counteroffensive – The Western Front's Dukhovshchina offensive, the German counterstroke, and aftermath:
(*Glantz*, 481-511)

20.8.41: Neither Soviet **29.** nor **30 Armies** made significant gains.

¹⁸⁸ **Note:** In fact, by nightfall **19 Aug 41**, **161. ID** had been reduced to ca. **25%** of its original combat strength. (481-82)

¹⁸⁹ **Note:** Hitler and OKH had just ordered Bock to dispatch the bulk of armor and motorized forces of Hoth's **PzGr 3** northward to reinforce Army Group North's flagging offensive toward Leningrad and to deal w/ the perceived threat to Bock's left flank. Specifically, **39. PzK** marched northward toward Staraia Russa and Leningrad, while **57. PzK** (re-designated as Gruppe Stumme) wheeled NW to attack and crush Soviet **22. Army**, in the Velikie Luki region. (See, 461-63)

21.8.41: Soviet **19. Army** continues to consolidate its hard-won footholds along the Tsarevich River and expand the offensive beyond the river's western bank. In his bridgehead, Konev struggled to parry Funck's panzer assaults.

More than satisfied that Konev had his situation well in hand (see below, "German **9. Army's** Counterstroke"), Timoshenko continued reinforcing **19. Army** forces along the Vop' River and ordered both **29.** and **20. Armies** to intensify their attacks to maintain constant heavy pressure against front of German **9. Army** NE and E of Smolensk, as well as the northern wing of German **4. Army** SE of Smolensk.

22.8.41: Konev's **19. Army** resumes its attacks. Timoshenko permits his **30.** and **20. Armies** either to rest and refit or conduct only local attacks. Konev now confident he can accomplish his primary mission – the capture of Dukhovshchina. Thus, from Western Front's perspective, heaviest fighting this day took place in **19. Army's** bridgehead west of the Vop' River. However, much farther north, in sector of Ershakov's **22. Army**, what Timoshenko initially perceived as merely local German attacks of no immediate importance, would ultimately *morph into a major German effort* w/ an immense impact on the ultimate fate of his Western Front's **Aug 41** counteroffensive. (Note: In a report to Western Front late in the day, Konev's **19. Army** states: "We destroyed about **80** enemy tanks on **21** and **22 Aug [41]**." (509) Although Konev's forces had achieved significant victories – including inflicting heavy losses on **7. PD's** counterstroke force – the effort had also considerably weakened **19. Army's** offensive punch. In fact, the damage done by Funck's assault, combined w/ Bock's decision to release **14. ID (mot.)** for commitment along the Tsarevich River, ultimately thwarted **19. Army's** exploitation.

-- **20.-22.8.41:** German **9. Army's** counterstroke (**7. PD**)

(See, *Glantz*, 481, ff.)

Note: Hoth now in command of the army; Strauss sick.

20.8.41: Hoth counterattacks w/ **7. PD**, roughly **110** tanks, and support elements, striking Soviet **19. Army** in its supposedly open and defenseless right flank. Yet the route [of attack] chosen by Hoth propelled him into the center of Konev's AT defenses. . . Hoth's armored assault [from east and west of Losevo] began a two-day struggle during which the advancing Germans found themselves enmeshed in a deadly web of dug-in tanks, interlocking infantry and AT strongpoints and under a hail of Soviet artillery and mortar fire.

21.8.41: By late on **21 Aug 41**, the sheer density and deadly effectiveness of Konev's AT defenses left Funck w/ no choice but to withdraw the bulk of his panzer *Kampfgruppe* back to its jumping-off positions, towing back half of their destroyed and damaged tanks.

(Note: This engagement provides good example of just *how much the Soviets had learned* since **22 Jun 41**! **7. PD** counterattack on **20 Aug 41** "had no success." [*Bock Diary*] In two days of bitter fighting, Konev's army met and defeated the reinforced **7. PD**, destroying or damaging roughly **2/3** of its tanks and forcing it to withdraw. For the *first time in the war*, Red Army infantrymen, cooperating closely w/ field and AA artillerymen, a handful of tanks, sappers, and some supporting pilots and their crews were able to repulse a German armored thrust and, by doing so, keep **19. Army's** bridgehead intact. (528))

-- CruX: Timoshenko's „Dukovshchina“ offensive from mid-**Aug 41** inflicted "heavy damage" on AGC's **9. Army**. In fact, the victories the Western Front achieved along the Vop' and Western Dvina, which were *unprecedented* for the Red Army, convinced T. and his masters in Moscow that perseverance in the region east of Smolensk might force the *Wehrmacht* to halt the prolonged victorious advance of *Armeegruppe Guderian* and **2. Army** southward

toward Kiev. But GFM v. Bock was about to *unleash his last panzer reserves* to defeat Timoshenko's offensive. (*Glantz*, 481)

-- Timoshenko's fortunes were "beginning to turn." Although his *front's* operational summary on night of **22 Aug 41** spoke only of local defeats in **22. Army** sector, those local defeats were the *harbinger of an impending operational disaster* – a disaster whose immense proportions would begin to take shape the next day.

-- **ab 21.8.41:** Despite heavy casualties suffered by Timoshenko's Western and Zhukov's Reserve Fronts, both commanders were *determined to destroy AGC's forces in the Smolensk region*. Convinced that Bock's forces, in particular, his infantry divisions along his army group's forward defenses, were *about to collapse*, both Stalin and STAVKA were confident this could be done but only if Timoshenko expanded scope and power of his offensive. Therefore, beginning on **21 Aug 41**, the STAVKA began *releasing vital strategic reserves* to Timoshenko and, on **25 Aug 41**, issued new orders to T. to capture Velizh – Demidov – Smolensk once and for all. It also ordered the two forward armies of Zhukov's Reserve Front to destroy the German forces in the El'nia bridgehead. . . However, three [3] days before STAVKA issued orders for its *culminating general counteroffensive*, Hitler's gamble suddenly materialized. On **22 Aug 41**, two German panzer and seven cooperating IDs subordinate to *Gruppe Stumme* (**9. AOK**) struck a massive blow against the right flank of T.'s Western Front. (See, below, "e) The Northern Flank – the struggle for Velikie Luki.") The *climax* of the Battle of Smolensk was at hand. (*Glantz*, 550)

-- **23-24.8.41:** The aftermath.
(*Glantz*, 511, ff.)

23.8.41: Timoshenko's northern and southern shock groups (**30. Army** and now reinforced **19. Army**) resume their offensives at dawn, while Maslennikov's **29. Army** also continued its attacks along and south of the Western Dvina. However, midst the wave of optimistic reports reaching Western Front HQ during the day was increasingly unsettling news from Ershakov's **22. Army**, ostensibly still on the attack S and SE of Velikie Luki. By day's end, the news was bad enough to force Timoshenko to alter his plans significantly. (511)

Crux: Timoshenko beginning to realize that, while his Western Front was taking advantage of absence of German panzers along the Vop' River front, over Bock's objections, **OKH** and AGC were preparing a riposte of their own w/ roughly *half of the army group's armored forces*, which had "disappeared" only 4 days before. (517)

24.8.41: German and Soviet commands playing a "maturing strategic game of *cat and mouse*" across central sector of front. . . Timoshenko's attacks continued, but day mostly characterized by a brief lull in Soviet ops. By this day, the Germans had significantly bolstered their defenses along Soviet **19. Army** front. (525)

-- **Aug-Sep 41:** The second half of **August** and **Sep 41** saw fighting by the **4 Army**¹⁹⁰ along the Desna and by **9 Army** along the Dnieper north of Dorogobuzh. Guderian's **2 PzGr** was fighting w/ **2 Army**, to our south, while Hoth's **3 PzGr** was now w/ **9 Army**. Without any considerable armored support, we were reduced to *trench warfare* along the Desna, which made very heavy demands on the troops. The Russians attacked violently and over and over

¹⁹⁰ **Note:** By this time, the **4 Pz Army** had been dissolved and **4 Army** reconstituted as an infantry army – again w/ v. Kluge in command.

again succeeded in *breaking through our thinly held lines*. . . When I say that our lines were thin, this is an understatement. Divisions were assigned sectors almost 20 miles wide. Furthermore, in view of the heavy losses already suffered, these divisions were usually under strength and tactical reserves were *non-existent*. In the fighting, particularly around Yelna, further heavy casualties were suffered by our divisions. (*Blumentritt, Moscow*, in: Fatal Decisions, 51-52)

- **1.9.41:** . . . Das Bild der Abwehrkaempfe an der Ostfront der **9 Armee** wird durch folgende Zahlen erlaeutert; die in der Zeit vom **6.-28.8.41** beim **V u. VIII AK** (mit zusammen **7 Div.**) entstanden sind:

Gesamtverluste:

271 Offiziere
8075 Mann
 davon gefallen: **56** Offizieren, **2019** Mann
 vermisst: **3** Offiziere, **366** Mann

In der gleichen Zeit wurden von den beiden Korps **4350** Gefangene u. **17** Geschuetze eingebracht u. **182** Panzer erbeutet u. vernichtet. (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 314)

- **Sep 41** [Soviet September Counterstrokes]: List of neglected or totally forgotten operations includes following:

- “Smolensk Counteroffensive” (**17 Aug – 12 Sep 41**),
Including:
 - Western Front’s “Dukhovshchina Offensive” (**17 Aug – 8 Sep**)
 - Reserve Front’s “El’nia Offensive” (**30 Aug – 8 Sep**)
 - Bryansk Front’s “Roslavl’ – Novozybkov Offensive” (**30 Aug – 12 Sep**)

(Source: *Glantz, Forgotten Battles*, Vol. I, 9)

- **6.9.41:** Elnya falls to Soviet **24 Army**. Other units of the army press forward to the Desna. This relatively minor action is hailed in Moscow as a great victory. From this victory, the first Guards units are created. Since **10 Jul 41**, the Soviet Western Front armies have suffered **310,000** killed and missing and **159,600** wounded. Moreover, the Reserve Front has lost **45,700** killed and missing and **57,000** wounded since **30 Jul 41**. Bryansk Front suffered **51,000** killed and missing and a further **28,600** wounded since **16 Aug 41**. The Soviets also lost **1350** tanks, **9300** artillery pieces and **900** acft. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 114; also, *Kirosheev, Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses*, Table 75)

- **10.9.41:** Soviets will soon regret expending so much energy in attacking during the late summer. On **10 Sep 41**, Stavka orders forces facing v. Bock to go over to the defensive. By then, the average strength of many rifle divisions stands at only about **3000** men. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 69)

f) *The Northern Flank – German counterstroke at Velikie Luki*

- **18.-27.8.41** [Zweite Schlacht bei Welikije-Luki / **19 PD**]: Am **18. Aug 41** erhielt die Division neuen Einsatzbefehl, um eine um Welikije-Luki vermutete Feindarmee einzuschliessen. . . Die Sowjets bemuehten sich zunaechst, einen Ausweg nach Norden zu erkaempfen. . . Die nach-rueckenden Schuetzen gelangten bis an die ersten Haeuser von Wel-Luki u. sperrten damit die asphaltierte Ausweichstrasse nach Norden in Richtung Cholm, schlossen damit den Kreis um die Stadt. In voelliger Dunkelheit erstuermten die Sowjets in der folgenden Nacht in dichten Reihen mit „Hurraa“ die vordersten dt. Stellungen, ueberrannten diese u. drangen bis in die eigene Artilleriestellugnen vor. Nur geringen Teilen der Sowjets gelang der Ausbruch. . . In der folgenden Nacht vom **25 - 26 Aug 41** versuchte der sowjet. Armeestab den Ausbruch. Der Kom.Gen. fiel hierbei durch die Pistolenkugeln des Oberschirrmeisters Heinz Meier (**9/AR 19**). Am naechsten Tag marschierten lange Kolonne Rotarmisten in die Gefangenschaft. Man schaezte ueber **30 000** Gefangene, im „Kessel“ alber mehr als **40 000** Tote. (*R. Hinze, 19. Pz.-Div., 44*)

- **21.-24.8.41**: The Northern Flank – the struggle for Velikie Luki (*Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed, 550-73*)

- Although capture of Gomel’ on **20 Aug 41** and simultaneous advance by Guderian’s panzers to Starodub *resolved the problems on AGC’s southern flank*, the confusion on the army group’s northern flank continued to worry Bock and Hitler. . . For Hitler, the Soviet strong-holds at Velikie Luki and Toropets represented a red flag, since Soviet ops from these two regions still posed a threat to Strauss’ **9. Army** and Hoth’s **PzGr 3**. (See *Glantz* for more background details.)

- **Crux**: Before the German storm broke over Soviet **22. Army**’s defenses, neither this army and Timoshenko nor Stalin and his STAVKA seemed to have *any idea* about what was about to happen to the Western Front’s right wing. . . **22. Army** was actually attacking on **21-22 Aug 41**. Then, on **22 Aug 41**, two German panzer and seven [7] cooperating IDs subordinate to **9. Army**’s Gruppe Stumme abruptly ended the week-long game of *cat and mouse* by striking a massive blow against the right flank of Timoshenko’s Western Front. The result was the “Velikie Luki encirclement” of **22-24 Aug 41**. The German assault “surprised, paralyzed, and shattered **22. Army**’s main shock groups in short order. . . By nightfall, **22. Army** was in a *state of utter shock*.”

- By night of **24-25 Aug 41**, remants of **22. Army** were running the gauntlet northward out of Velikie Luki, while **19. PD** was advancing into the city from the east and **253. ID (23. AK)** approaching it from the west. The deadly deed of crushing the encirclement pocket fell to **23. AK (3 IDs)**. . . The remainder of Ershakov’s army, about **25,000** men [in a number of pockets] fought to the death or surrendered over the next two days.

- By evening **24 Aug 41**, the crushing defeat German **9. Army**’s *Gruppe Stumme* inflicted on Western Front’s **22. Army** in the Velikie Luki region *fundamentally altered the tactical and operational situation along the left wing of Bock’s AGC and the right wing of Timoshenko’s Western Front*. For example, the German victory “compelled the Western Front to weaken its main effort by transferring vital reserves away from Konev’s **19. Army** and Khomenko’s **30. Army**.” Also, and perhaps more important, Hitler’s successful gambit w/ *Gruppe Stumme* seriously undermined the pervasive “*air of unrequited optimism*” in Moscow and in Western Front HQ as well. . . It forced [the Soviets] to alter their planned counteroffensive significantly just as the *climax* of the battle for Smolensk was approaching. . . In short, although the *outcome* of the twin struggles along AGC’s northern and southern flanks was *still in doubt* late on **24 Aug 41**, the defeats the Red Army suffered in the Gomel’ and Starodub regions in

the south and the Velikie Luki region in the north clearly undermined Stalin's, the STAVKA's and Timoshenko's certainty that their [planned] general counteroffensive w/ three *fronts* would yield strategic victory. (Glantz, 572-73)

- **26.8.41:** . . . Die Schlacht um Welikije Luki ist abgeschlossen. In knapp 4 ½ taegigem Kampf wurde die russ. **2 Armee** [22?] mit **8** Divisionen eingekreist u. vernichtet. Bisher wurden an Gefangenen u. Beute eingebracht:

29 500 Gefangene
270 Geschuetze
123 Pak, etc.

Die Zahl der gefallenen Russen wird auf mindestens die Zahl der Gefangenen geschaetzt. (KTB OKW, Bd I, 593)

- **End Aug 41:** When the last week of **Aug 41** began, Timoshenko began orchestrating a *new and expanded counteroffensive*, this time w/ the forces of *three fronts* instead of two, and w/ reinforcements provided by the STAVKA. In turn, this new counteroffensive would determine, once and for all, the strategy Hitler would employ to achieve the objectives set forth in Operation "*Barbarossa*." (Glantz, 581)

g) *Bloodletting at Yeln'ya* (Jul – Sep 41)

- **Note:** For good background on fighting at Yeln'ya see, **III:128-33**. This bridgehead over the Desna River was viewed by Germans as an excellent *jump-off point* for an attack on Moscow. Initially, **10. PD** and **SS "DR"** occupy the position and had to defend it until the marching infantry arrived. Thus, the German salient here suffered from a *shortage of infantry and close air support*.
- **Note:** Not surprisingly, the German advance in **Aug 41** was *minimal*. Heaviest fighting occurred on front of Army Group Center. In mid-**Jul 41**, *Guderian* had seized the high ground around Yeln'ya as a jumping-off point for Moscow, In late July and August, no less than **6** Soviet armies counterattacked the Yeln'ya and Smolensk positions, while **11** Soviet armies attacked Army Group Center's forces from Velkie Luki in the north to Gomel in the south. *Guderian* and his superiors argued that German troops should hold Yeln'ya for *reasons of prestige*. Soviet attacks, often poorly executed, broke w/ ferocity on troops in the *Yeln'ya salient*; motorized and Waffen-SS units from *Guderian's* panzer group held the ground until early **Aug 41**, when **4 Army's** infantry divisions caught up. The conditions of this battle were something the Germans had *yet to experience in the war*. For ex., w/ no depth to its defenses, the **78 ID** held a front of **18 km** w/ no reserves and w/ Soviet positions right on top of its troops. The result was heavy casualties. With-in a *four-day-period*, the division lost **400** men in an effort to simply hold its line; throughout its time in the salient, it was under *constant artillery bombardment*. By the time the Germans abandoned Yeln'ya in early **Sep 41**, the battle had *wrecked 5 infantry divisions*. (W. Murray, War to be Won, 128)
- **18.7.41:** Germans capture Yeln'ya / Springboard for attack on Moscow.
The Soviets conducted their initial attacks against the El'nia bridgehead during the last week of **Jul 41** and first week of **Aug 41**. (Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed, 535)

- **25.-26.7.41:** By this day, the supply capacity of the hopelessly overstretched logistical network behind AGC was threatening some sectors of the precariously held front w/ collapse. . . No where was this better seen than at Yel'nya, where **46. PzK** was fighting off immense Soviet pressure w/ fewer and fewer resources. Most particularly, artillery shells were sorely lacking, while the Soviet guns were capable of delivering a bombardment, according to one participant, "to be compared w/ the heaviest days of the western front in the [First] World War." . . . The Soviet air force dominated the skies above. . . By **26.7.41**, **PzGr 2** judged the situation at Yel'nya to be "exceedingly critical" and the war diary of **10. PD** reported: "Heaviest attacks on all fronts w/ bombers, fighters and tanks." . . . (For many more details see, *D. Stahel*, "*And the World held its Breath*," 203-17; **VIII:99-103**)

- For a *personal account* of heavy fighting around Yelnya see, F. Frisch, Condemned to Live. A Panzer Artilleryman's Five-Front War. Frisch served w/ a motorized artil. rgt. (**AR 109**). Of Yelnya he writes, "The Russians were *beating the shit out of us!*" Frisch also provides stark impressions of Soviet "*Stalinorgel*" and **T 34** (avers that the men were "terrified" on this tank). (For summary see, "*Biblio* file.")

- Heavy & costly fighting took place at El'nia ever since **10. PD** and SS "**DR**" had captured the town on **18 Jul 41**, and would continue until Bock ordered its evacuation on **6 Sep 41**. In the interim, **10** German divisions were *bled white* defending the bridgehead. The fact that the bridgehead held out at all was largely due to the *effective air support* by Kesselrings **2. Luftflotte**. (During his **4 Aug 41** conference in Borisov, Hitler resolved to hold firm at El'nia come what may.) (*Glantz*, 407)

- **1.-4.8.41:** A perpetual state of crisis hung over the German position at Yel'nya. The **60** km-wide salient was caught in an unrelenting battle, typified by artillery fire which transformed the landscape into a cratered wasteland. On **1 Aug 41** Vietinghoff [**46. PzK**] reported to AGC that, in the average area of a company, upwards of **200** shells landed in **5** minutes as the troops lay helplessly in their foxholes. The following day (**2.8.41**) the **268. ID** reported **300-400** shells landing in one hour in the area of a battalion. On **3.8.41** during an enemy attack, Vietinghoff's corps was hit w/ **1550** shells, the majority of which came from heavy caliber **15-cm** guns. Hearing such reports, Halder characterized the Soviet artillery as "insufferable" – a fact borne out by the debilitating cost of holding Yel'nya. On **2.8.41**, **46 PzK** recorded that SS "**DR**" had thus far suffered nearly **3000** casualties w/ company strengths in some instances as low as **60-70** men. Only two days later (**4.8.41**) the same diary reported company strengths had sunk further, in some cases to just **20** men. As Halder anxiously observed, "The holding of this 'bridgehead' costs us much blood."¹⁹¹ (See, *D. Stahel*, "*And the World Held its Breath*," 218-24; **VIII:105**)

- **3.8.41:** The STAVKA ordered its Western and Reserve Fronts to intensify their attacks in the Smolensk – El'nia regions. Zhukov ordered Rakutin [**24. Army**] "to encircle the enemy's entire El'nia grouping completely and capture it on **4 Aug [41]**." Rakutin's fierce assaults on El'nia collapsed after two days of particularly bloody and costly fighting. Undeterred by this failure, in response to new STAVKA orders, on **6 Aug 41** Zhukov ordered Rakutin to resume his attacks. (*Glantz*, 406-07)

- By this time, like Verdun in WWI, El'nia had become a *symbol to both sides*. (*Glantz*, 407)

¹⁹¹ **Note:** Halder diary, **3.8.41**.

- **6.8.41:** The capture of Roslavl' by Guderian's panzer group on **3 Aug 41** had created another "dangerous hole" in the defenses of Timoshenko's Main Direction Command. If and when the Germans defeated Group Kachalov, that hole promised to turn into a major gap threatening the coherence of Timoshenko's entire defense. Therefore, at **0216** hours on **6 Aug 41**, the STAVKA ordered Zhukov's Reserve Front to destroy Guderian's concentration in its key strategic bridgehead at El'nia and, simultaneously, also attack Guderian's Roslavl' grouping to save Group Kachalov. (See, *Glantz*, 372, ff.)

(**Note:** The order Zhukov dispatched to **24. Army** at **2000** hours [**6 Aug 41**] required the army to attack and liquidate the salient around El'nia, which was defended by **3** divisions of Guderian's **20. AK**. . . Like other orders prepared by the Reserve Front, this order was *extremely detailed* because Zhukov and his staff understood that their forces and, in particular, their mid-grade, and junior command cadre, *lacked experience in conducting military operations of any sort*. . . However, within **24** hours, Zhukov *revoked the attack orders*. Why? He now fully understood just how *poorly trained* his forces were; thus he decided to postpone the offensive and, instead, spend time reorganizing his defenses and *training his forces*. . . Heavy fighting at El'nia would indeed begin in the second week of **Aug 41**. (*Glantz*, 376-79)

- **7.8.41:** After recapturing Roslavl', Guderian slowly replaced the divisions of Vietinghoff's **46. PzK**, which were defending the El'nia bridgehead on his left wing, w/ infantry from General Walter Schroth's **20. AK**. By doing so, by **7 Aug 41**, Vietinghoff was able to withdraw **10. PD** and **SS "DR"** into reserve west of El'nia,¹⁹² replacing them in the bridgehead w/ **15. ID**, **268. ID** and part of **292. ID** (all **20. AK**). (*Glantz*, 384)
- **8.-21.8.41:** The second Soviet counteroffensive: The Reserve Front's (**24. Army**) El'nia offensive:
(*Glantz*, Barbarossa Derailed, 532, ff.)

By **8 Aug 41**, the German-occupied El'nia bridgehead on eastern bank of the Desna was **22** km wide and up to **12** km deep. (Details see, 532-33)

Under Zhukov's direction, Rakutin's army [**24. Army**] continued its assaults virtually every day from **12** thru **20 Aug 41**.

24 Army's shock groups, driven on relentlessly by Rakutin and Zhukov, advanced only **1-4** km into the Germans' defenses from **12-14 Aug 41** and suffered heavy losses. By mid-**Aug 41**, the heavy losses suffered by Materna's **20. AK** forced the corps' commander to turn to Guderian for help. As Bock recorded in his diary late on **14 Aug 41**, Materna informed him, "He had only *one battalion in reserve*," and "El'nia could not be held in the long term." Guderian offers help [see, p 539]. By this time, **SS "DR"** had repelled **83** separate Soviet attacks and delivered **27** counterattacks of its own during the previous four [**4**] weeks; **15. ID** had lost **2254** soldiers and **97** officers, most of them from its combat units, just in the previous week's fighting. [!]

¹⁹² **Note:** Later, Glantz states that **SS "DR"** was "still in the line near El'nia and would remain there until **18 Aug 41** [along w/ "**GD**"], thus depriving Vietinghoff's motorized corps, which had been in *constant combat since 22.6.41*, of much needed time to rest and rehabilitate its forces." **SS "DR"** must have only been withdrawn temporarily. (393; 539)

The fighting around the El'nia bridgehead during first three [3] weeks of **Aug 41** yielded *no significant results operationally or tactically*. (Note: For Russian & German losses over this period see, pp 546-47)

It is no wonder that the bloodletting in the El'nia sector, like that in **9. Army's** sector E/NE of Smolensk, only *increased Hitler's reluctance to continue the likely costly advance on Moscow*. . . (547)

- Incessant Soviet counterattacks
Terrible attrition of German defenders
(Eg., *D. Stahel* in: **VIII:99-103**)
- **Aug-Sep 41**: As in sector of AGS, anti-aircraft units were used primarily against ground targets by AGC. The high velocity and flat trajectory of the heavy AA guns and their relatively high rate of fire made them a feared and successful wpn against armor and bunkers. In the Yelnya salient, batteries of **I AA Corps** formed the main defense of the army units fighting there for more than four [4] weeks. By **30 Aug 41**, this corps had shot down **259** enemy acft in the east. On **9 Sep 41**, the AA units of AGC, which were under the *Luftwaffe* cdr w/ the army group, shot down their **500th** enemy acft; they had also destroyed **360** Soviet tanks. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 774-75)
- **9.8.-6.9.41: 292. ID** in „Jelnja-Bogen.“
Nach Feststellung der Artl.-Aufklaerung hatte der Russe in der Zeit vom **10.-20.8.41** aus **263** verschiedenen Feuerstellungen in den Abschnitt der Division geschossen. **40** konnten einwandfrei als staendig besetzt festgestellt werden. In der Zeit vom **8.-24.8.41** wurden im Div.-Abschnitt an Angriffen abgewiesen: **2** in Staerke von **3-4** Btlnen.; **2** in Staerke von **2-3** Btlnen.; **5** in Staerke von **2** Btlnen.; **10** in Staerke von **1** Btl.; **11** in Staerke von **2** Kpn.; **15** in Staerke von **1** Kpn. In **17** Tagen waren also **45** Angriffe abgewiesen worden, nicht eingerechnet die zahlreichen russ. Stoss- u. Spaechtrupp-Unternehmungen. (For more details, **VIII:194-96**)¹⁹³
- **17.-25.8.41**: Acting on orders received from Zhukov on **15 Aug 41**, Rakutin's **24 Army** began assaulting German positions in the El'nia bridgehead on **17 Aug 41**. Five [5] divisions of the German **4 Army** defended the exposed bridgehead on the east bank of the Desna. After achieving only limited gains at heavy cost, on **21 Aug 41** Rakutin requested and received Zhukov's permission to halt the attack. A stubborn Zhukov then asked the Stavka to approve a fresh assault on the seemingly vulnerable German bridgehead. Meanwhile, Rakutin's army regrouped and was reinforced by three (3) additional divisions, bringing its total strength on **23 Aug 41** to **10** divisions, including the **102** and **105 Tank Div** and **103 Mot Div**. The Stavka issued its directive for the renewed assault on El'nia on **25 Aug 41**. (See, *Glantz, Barbarossa*, 89)
- **30.8.-10.9.41**: The Stavka issued its directive for the renewed assault on El'nia on **25 Aug 1941**. This time, it closely coordinated the assault w/ offensives by the Western Front against German forces at Dukhovshchina and by the Briansk Front's forces against Roslavl' and Novozybkov. [Text of Stavka directive follows, pp 82-84.]. . . Having received fresh Stavka guidance, Zhukov ordered Reserve Front's **24 Army** to capture the El'nia bridgehead and

¹⁹³ Note: For prohibitive losses of **292. ID** – and insufficient replacements received – as of **15 Sep 41** see, **VIII:196**. Div. cdr.: “Die Division ist infolge des grossen personellen Fehlbestandes, der zu **80%** die Infanterie belastet, in ihrer Kampfkraft entsprechend beeinträchtigt.“

the **43 Army** to capture the city of Roslavl. The Briansk Front's **50 Army** was to support **43 Army**'s attack by assaulting NW from Zhukovka. . .

The **24 Army** attacked on **30 Aug 41** and succeeded in penetrating German forward defenses in extremely heavy and difficult fighting. Despite strong and repeated German counter-attacks, by **4 Sep 41** General Rakutin's northern and southern shock groups had deeply enveloped the defending Germans threatening the El'nia force w/ encirclement. Worse still for the defending Germans, the heavy fighting that raged elsewhere along the front *prevented them from reinforcing* their beleaguered bridgehead defenders. Thus, German Army Group Ctr ordered its forces in the bridgehead to *conduct a fighting withdrawal* from their forward positions. . . After several days of heavy fighting, on **5 Sep 41** the Soviet **19 RD** penetrated into El'nia and, assisted by **100, 103, 309** and **120 RDs**, captured the city on the morning of the 6th.¹⁹⁴ (See, *D. Glantz, Forgotten Battles*, Vol. I, 82-88; **III:201-02**)

- **6.9.41**: Zhukov finally recaptures in first major Soviet victory of war.
Many awesome *personal accounts* ("**GD**" Div., etc.)

h) *Role of air power – Aug/Sep 41*

- **3.8.41**: The **VIII Fliegerkorps** departs for Army Group North to assist assault on Leningrad. As a result, Soviet air effort increases "dramatically" on front of Army Group Center. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 57)
- **11.8.41**: Bei **9 Armee** Feindangriffe besonders gegen **V AK**. Feind besitzt im ganzen Armeebereich die Luftueberlegenheit. (*KTB OKW*, Bd I, 565)
- **12.8.41**: **9 Armee**: . . . Feind hat im gesamten Armeebereich Luftueberlegenheit. (*KTB OKW*, Bd I, 566)
- **Aug-Sep 41**: During this period, Army Group Center virtually denuded of air support. In **Aug 41**, **VIII Fliegerkorps** sent to H.Gr.Nord. "Die uebrigen Kampf- u. Jagdgeschwader wurden nun zur Unterstuetzung der **PzGr 2** in der Ukraine gebraucht u. nicht fuer die schwerbedraengten Inf.-Div. am Wop, bei Smolensk u. Jelnia. So verliessen saemtliche Stukastaffeln den Mittelabschnitt. . . Im Monat **Sep 41** waren nur kleinste fliegende Einheiten noch ueber die dt. Linien zu sehen. (For more details see, *W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 69-73)
- For role of *Luftwaffe* see, *inter alia*, Notebook #**I**, "*Luftwaffe, Chronology of Events*."
(For example of use of bomber units in **Aug-Sep 41** – in this case, **KG 53** "*Legion Condor*" – see, *W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 70-72. Haupt illustrates thru this example the many different types of targets struck by German bombers – "Nacht-Grossangriff auf Moskau . . . Daemmerungseinsatz auf Bahnhof . . . Tagangriff auf Artl.-Stellung . . . Tagangriff auf Truppen . . . Tagangriff Bahnlinien . . . Nachtangriff auf Versorgungsanlagen . . . Tagangriff auf fahrende Zuege . . . Tageangriff auf Truppenansammlungen," etc.)

¹⁹⁴ **Note:** During the heavy fighting, Zhukov spoke by telephone w/ Stalin and Shaposhnikov in Moscow. During the conversation, Zhukov noted that a German soldier had deserted and provided useful information. Stalin replied: "You should not place too much faith in prisoners of war. Interrogate him under torture and then shoot him." (86)

- For Soviet VVS see, Hardesty, v., *Red Phoenix: The Rise of Soviet Air Power, 1941-1945*: also, Kozhevnikov, M.N., *The Command and Staff of the Soviet Army Air Force in the Great Patriotic War 1941-45*, etc.)

(**Note:** Key details from these and other sources – total sorties flown, types of missions, etc. – can be found in my “*Bibliography*.”)

- As German front lengthened – stretching *Luftwaffe* – and *Luftwaffe* turned its attention to support of ground troops, VVS began to make a rapid recovery.¹⁹⁵ Numerous *personal accounts* by Germans bear this out.
(eg. – *E. Hager, War Diaries of a Pz. Soldier*, 31, ff.)

i) *Logistics of Army Group Center*

- For **9. Army** see, FMS **P-201** in: **VI:131**, ff.)
(See also, **I:546**, ff.)
- Zuege (durchschnittl. taeglich); Lkw-Transportraum, usw. (see, FMS **P-190**, in: **VI:124-25**)
- **15.8.41**: Aided by thousands of prisoners, army engineers labored around the clock to repair the demolished Russian railway lines and relay them on the different German gauge. By mid-**Aug 41**, a *twin-track* extended as far as Smolensk. (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 305)
- **16.8.41**: Conversion of railway gauge [from Soviet to European standard] extended to Orscha and Smolensk by this date. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 168)
- **Aug-Sep 41**: Late in **Aug 41**, Guderian cleared out Soviet forces near Gomel and moved on the Ukraine. By early **Sep 41**, the Germans had improved the railroad to Gomel, which provided a logistical line of crucial importance for Guderian's drive. (*W. Murray, War to be Won*, 129-30)
- **13.-14.9.41**: GFM v. Kluge, cdr **4 Army**, declares on **13 Sep 41** that „w/ growing distances, the army is almost completely dependent on the railways.” Although current consumption is met, the build-up of offensive stocks is less certain. “The army lives had to mouth,” he admitted, especially as regards the fuel situation.” The **9 Army** C-in-C was less compromising, commenting the following day [**14 Sep 41**] that its transport “was insufficient to support the coming operations.” (*Crevelde, Supplying War*, 170-71)

j) *Sicherung des ruckwaertigen Gebietes*

- Die Front der H.Gr.Mitte in Richtung Moskau blieb [vom ca. **21 Aug 41**] praktisch bis Ende **Sep 41** in der bisherigen Linie stehen. Dabei kam es in diesen Wochen zu schweren Abwehrkaempfen, die besonders den Inf.-Div. erhebliche Verluste an Menschen u. Material zuefuegten. (*W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 90)
- Vordringlichste Aufgabe in diesen Wochen war fuer die H.Gr. die *Sicherung des ruckwaertigen Gebietes* u. damit die Gewaehrleistung des Nachschubs an Menschen u. Material.

¹⁹⁵ **Note:** This perspective a “corrective” to the assertion of many authors that Red Air Force virtually disappeared for months after **22.6.41**.

Der Befehlshaber im ruckw. Gebiet der H.Gr.Mitte, Gen. d. Inf. von Schenckendorff, hatte hierzu an selben Tag [i.e., late **Aug 41**] foldende Verbaende zur Verfuegung: **339.** u. **707. ID; 221., 296., u. 403. Sich.D., 1. SS-Kav.Bde.** Diese Grossverbaende hatten zwei Aufgaben zu erfuellen: Die erste war, dass jeweils eine rgts.-starke Einheit der einzelnen Divisionen den Armeen folgte, um die in die Waelder gefluechteten sowj. Truppen aufzuspueren u. zu vernichten. Die uebrigen Truppen der Divisionen loesten die zweite Aufgabe u. hatten Strassen u. Eisenbahnwege in Ordnung zu halten . . . Diese Sicherungsverbaende wurden unterstuetzt von Heeres-Baupionierbtl., Landesschuetzeneinheiten, Polizeibtl., u. Abtl. des RAD. (*Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 91-93)

- Dazu kamen etwa von Mitte **Aug 41** an die ersten im Hinterland der H.Gr.Mitte aufgestellten Ost-Bataillone. Diese Einheiten entstanden aus sowj. Gefangenen, die sich freiwillig zum Dienst bei der *Wehrmacht* meldeten u. unter dt. Fuehrung vornehmlich zur Bewachung von Eisenbahnstrecken u. Bruecken eingesetzt wurden. Mitte **Sep 41** lagen zum Brueckenschutz entlang Beresina, Dnjepr, Pripjet u. noerdliche Wolga die Ost.-Btl. **601, 602, 604 u. 605**, die sich im ersten Jahr ihres Bestehens hervorragend bewaehrten. (*Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 93)
- Die Taetigkeit von Partisanengruppen, die *zentral von Moskau gesteuert wurden*, machte sich im **Aug 41** zum erstenmal im ruckw. Gebiet der H.Gr. bemerkbar. Nach russ. Angaben waren in diesem Monat **123** Partisanenabtl. mit ca. **12.000** Mann im Einsatz. Davon standen allein im Raum zwischen Smolensk u. Tula **55** Abtl. Die ersten groesseren Einsaetze erfolgten im **Sep 41**, als die Bahnlinie Bobruisk-Moskau u. im Raum Orscha **180** Lokomotiven gesprengt wurden. (*Haupt*, 93-94)

k) Status of Army Group Center on eve of “Typhoon” (30 Sep 41)

Note: As of **30.9.41**, the Red Army and Navy have suffered **2,129,677** killed and missing in action during the first quarter of the war, and a further **687,626** wounded. (*Kirosheev, Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses*, Table 75)

Note: For D. Glantz’s assessment of the Red Army’s “ill-advised and inappropriate strategy of ‘offensiveness,’” and its impact on *Wehrmacht* through the summer of **1941** see, Barbarossa, 206: **III:240**)

Note: For excellent overview of condition of German and Soviet forces as of **30 Sep 41** see, *E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 85-87; **III:171-72**. He notes, *inter alia*: The Germans had run into the Red Army’s „second strategic echelon,” which in turn was reinforced by wave after wave of Russian reserve divisions from the interior. The *German intelligence blunder* was now evident. [See Halder KTB for **11 Aug 41**] . . . Devastating defeats had not shaken Soviet Russia politically. A battle of annihilation had become a *war of attrition*. The paradox was that although the Red Army had not been destroyed in the initial onslaught, it had suffered near mortal damage. . . It is „hard to grasp“ just how much damage the Red Army had suffered. All told, the Red Army lost **177** divisions in **1941** – most of them in the June – September period. Soviet military losses up to the end of **Sep 41** have been given as at least **2 050 000**.

- By late summer ’41, the German army groups in Russia were essentially fighting “three different campaigns . . . in parallel.” (*John Mosier, Deathride. Hitler and Stalin: The Eastern Front, 1941-45*, p 142.)

- Front line of Army Group
Lage Ost maps! (*Lageatlas*, K.-J. Thies)
- “*Lage bei der PzGr 3*“ (Sep 41), see, (*Hoth*, *Pz.-Operationen*, 130-31)
- Total losses of ground & air forces (men & materiel), etc.
 Losses inflicted on enemy (POWs captured, etc.)
- For good overview – w/ numerous statistics – of “*Ostheer*” as of late summer **1941** see, **III:165-66**. Key points include: Yet however difficult the shortages, quoted in round figures, appeared to v. Brauchitsch or to the cdrs of the German army groups, the position on the ground, particularly in the *marching infantry formations*, was in reality much worse, since the wear and tear on men, horses and equipment could not be measured in statistical returns. . . **22 ID** was not the only formation to note that difficulties were arising in battle w/ the infantry replacements, that all ranks were no longer part of a team, and that their action was no longer intuitive, all contingencies having to be covered by orders. The experiences of **98 ID** were similar. . . The infantry were exhausted and dozens of horses were dying every day in the harness. The general service horse wagons w/ their rubber tyres and ball-bearing mounted wheels broke up, so unsuited were they to the abominable tracks. The locally impressed panje carts were apparently indestructable. Good German, Hungarian and Irish horses died from fatigue and lack of fodder, but the scrubby native Russian ponies survived, eating anything, even birch twigs and the thatched roofs of farm huts. Rifle companies had only **30 to 40** of the original men left and from **31 Jul - 10 Aug 41** a single inf. rgt. lost **37** officers and **1200** men. The division was **3800** men understrength on **27 Sep 41** when the first reinforcements arrived, and of these one btn. received **37** men and reported the replacement as a drop in the ocean. . . Gradually, the *most simple necessities were missing*: razor blades, soap, tooth paste, shoe materials, needles and thread. (*Seaton*, *Russo-German War*, 171-74; also, *Gareis*, *Kampf u. Ende der 98. Inf.-Div.*, 125-130)
- **1.9.41:**¹⁹⁶ On **1 Sep 41**, OKH realized that “at the moment there is such a shortage of men that it is no longer possible to offset casualties.” (Note: Halder had already written on **26 Aug 41** “After **1 Oct.** [41] we shall have exhausted practically all our replacements. As early as **4 Jun 41** in a Chefbesprechung in the OKH, attended by all the Chiefs of the General Staff of armies to be employed in Russia, the head of the Organizations Branch pointed out that during the operations in the east, w/ the exception of the **130** field replacement btns, it would “not be possible to replace men” and any shortages of personnel and materiel could only be offset by “measures taken by the command.”) (*K. Reinhardt*, *Moscow – The Turning Point*, 66-67, f.n. 26)

VI: “FRONTALLTAG:” EVERYDAY LIFE ON THE EASTERN FRONT¹⁹⁷

- MGFA (Failures of): “Im Hinblick auf Methode u. Quellenerfassung war in vergangenen Jahrzehnten dem MGFA in Freiburg ein Vorwurf zu machen. Das Amt hatte es versaeumt, eine

¹⁹⁶ Note: Reports such as this illustrate what a gamble “Typhoon” really was.

¹⁹⁷ Note: For this chapter see, **IV:436**, ff.; also, **I**: “*German Army*.” See also, Stephen G. Fritz, *Frontsoldaten* for useful insights. For lots of terrific – and solid – information on “*Verpflegung*,” “*Ausruestung*,” “*Versorgung*,” etc. see, *Lexicon-der-Wehrmacht* (internet site).

besondere wichtige Aufgabe zu uebernehmen, die nachtraeglich kaum geloest werden kann, naemlich die *systematische Befragung* von Wissenstraegern der Armee u. der Kriegsmarine von **1914**, der Reichswehr u. der Wehrmacht. Diese Wissenstraeger, auch wenn der Kreis auf die Generale u. Admirale beschaenkt gewesen waere, sind nicht rechtzeitig befragt worden. . . Es ist allerdings dankbar anzuerkennen, dass in juengster Zeit, insbesondere wo es um die Geschichte der Bundeswehr geht, das MGFA Befragungen viel intensiver durchfuehrt. Die Bedeutung der Wissenstraeger hatten die Amerikaner schon fruehzeitig erkannt, als sie nach dem Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges in ihrer Historical Division versuchten, die Erfahrungen der deutschen Generale u. Admirale fuer die amerikanische Armee nutzbar zu machen. . .“ (See, Dermot Bradley’s Generaloberst Heinz Guderian, 1986, p 5)¹⁹⁸

Note: For many topics germane to this chapter – *food, music, tobacco, leave and leisure time*, etc. – see, *Agustin Saiz, Deutsche Soldaten*
(Also, **VIII:56-59**)

Note: In WWII, one-third of all casualties [U.S.] were psychiatric. In Vietnam the required tour of duty had been limited to one year in response to statistical data from WWII indicating that *breakdowns rose sharply after one year of combat*. (Shay, Achilles, 203)

Note: *Shortage, privation, and daily physical torment* play no role in the *Iliad*. . . Homer’s complete silence on the deprivations suffered by men in combat screams out for correction. Where are thirst, hunger, lack of sleep, maddening heat, and agonizing cold? Where are filth, squalor, an inability to wash the body, pants sticky and reeking from dysentery, the utter lack of privacy? Where are the lice, rats, fire ants, scorpions, snakes, mosquitoes? (Shay, Achilles, 121)¹⁹⁹

a) *Along the “Hauptkampflinie”*

-- Most German soldiers lived and died in narrow strip of land along the so-called “main battle line” (“*Hauptkampflinie*,” or HKL)

HKL maybe **2-3** km in depth.

(Infantry most exposed; artillery, AFVs, etc., farther back)

High “tooth to tail” ratio (ca. **85%** are fighting troops; smaller staffs, support units compared to US Army)

-- **Note (Weapons & Equipment):** This might be a good spot to briefly introduce key weapons and equipment items used by the “*Ostheer*” in **1941**:²⁰⁰ Gewehr **98K**, **MP 40**, infantry AT weapons (“Panzerbüchsen”), **37mm** and **50mm** AT guns, Flak guns, howitzers and cannon, etc. Conversely, can also illustrate reactions of Germans to key Soviet weapons, such as the **T-34**, enemy artillery, “Stalin Organ,” “Ratsch-Bumm,” etc. For latter topic see, *Ostkaempfer Questionnaires*.

¹⁹⁸ **Note:** Also, I don’t believe the Bundeswehr – or any other outfit in Germany – ever undertook a WWII project remotely similar to what Steven Ambrose accomplished at the Eisenhower Center in New Orleans (i.e., interviews w/ thousands of U.S. Normandy veterans).

¹⁹⁹ **Note:** For “Landser” in Russia **41/42** other torments included: endless marching distances, ubiquitous dust of summer, poisoned or brackish well water, hostile and unfamiliar terrain (endless primeval forests, swamps, etc.), 360% potential for combat, day or night, etc.

²⁰⁰ **Note:** Or, I might want to do this at end of Chapter III (“Vormarsch”).

- Analogy from WWI: The men of **RIR 16** [i.e., Hitler's "List Rgt."] now did what many soldiers do in alien environments. They gave familiar names to locations in their segment of the front, thus trying to create a miniature version of Bavaria as well as a sense of familiarity and belonging. One dugout was christened "Loewenbraeu" after Munich's famous brewery; a position just behind the trenches was christened "Wasserburg" after the upper Bavarian town of the same name, etc. [This, of course, happened in Russia in WWII; for example, during withdrawal to the "Koenigsberg Line" in late **Dec 41**.] (*Thomas Weber, Hitler's First War*, 81)

- Analogy from WWI: Many soldiers in the List Regiment did not buy into the kind of stories and news coverage aimed at inspiring soldiers and at sustaining their morale. As Alois Schnelldorfer [soldier in **RIR 16**] told his parents, he found much of the newspaper coverage of the war laughable: "While reading the papers I discovered so many 'new' things [and learned] how wonderful the war and life in the trenches was. . ." [By fall **1941**, many German soldiers beginning to become embittered by the "sterilized" home front reporting on the war; as well as by statements from top Nazi leaders, among them Press Secretary Dietrich's statement of ca. **9 Oct 41** that the war in Russia was essentially over.]²⁰¹ (See, *Thomas Weber, Hitler's First War*, 85)

- In Vietnam [i.e., in modern war; also in Russia during WWII],²⁰² American troops were *exposed to attack 24 hours a day* but were most often attacked at night. . . Night warfare reflects a *change in the customs of war* since Homer's time. (*Jonathan Shay, Achilles in Vietnam*, 59)

- Administrative troops, logistics units stationed in behind the front.
The so-called "*Etappe*," and so-called "*Etappenschweine*."

- "*Urlaub*:" Leave was irregular at best
Personal accounts; also, *James Lucas, War on the Eastern Front*, 88)
Urlaubssperre ca. **Jan 42** (confirm date!)

- For original discussion of U.S. vs. German *replacement and rotation policies*, leadership and training policies, importance of unit cohesion, etc., see, *Jonathan Shay, Odysseus in America. Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming*. (Excerpts from book in my file "*German Army, Unit Organization*.")

b) *Growing bonds of comradeship*²⁰³

Note: For background on *comradeship* see, *Stephen G. Fritz, Frontsoldaten. The German Soldier in World War II*, 156, ff.)

Note: An archetypal relationship between bonded soldiers would be that of *Achilles* to *Patroklos*, the former's brother by adoption. (For details see, *Jonathan Shay, Achilles in Vietnam*, 40, ff.)

²⁰¹ **Note:** Also, by this time, German soldiers in Russia beginning to feel a growing sense of alienation from the civilian world at home.

²⁰² **Note:** Russians often relished attacking at night; Germans were not fond of night warfare.

²⁰³ **Note:** See, Notebook #1, "*Cohesion / Kameradschaft*," etc.

Note: The terror and privation of combat bonds men in a passion of care that the word *brother* only partly captures. (*Jonathan Shay, Achilles in Vietnam*, 49)
(Discussion of Greek word, “*Philia*.” (40, ff.)

Note: The powerful bond that arises between men in combat “may be so intense as to *blot out the distinction* between self and others, leading each to value the other’s life above his own. (*Shay, Achilles*, 69)

Note: Christian scripture tells us, “There is no greater love than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friend.” (John **15:13**). Soldiers in combat often hold the lives of their comrades dearer than their own and fear their comrades’ deaths more deeply. In our culture [and in Germany, too] this represents a convergence of Christian self-sacrifice, military training, and the spontaneous bonds of love and loyalty that develop among men who fight together. This *willingness for self-sacrifice* is endemic in combat and evidenced by thousands of unambiguously *sacrificial deaths* in war. (*Shay, Achilles*, 74)

-- Growing *alienation* from home front (narrowing social horizon)
Growing bitterness over propaganda on home front
Example of Dietrich’s proclamation of victory ca. **9 Oct 41**

-- Why men fight:

“Men fight mainly for their comrades; this has become *conventional wisdom* even among civilians. Prolonged exposure to danger and the *profound strain of battle* compel this *contraction of loyalty* to some degree in every war.” (See, *Jonathan Shay, Achilles in Vietnam*, 23)

(**Note:** As *Thomas Weber* illustrates, many factors – anthropological, military-institutional, ideological, and social – explain “why men fight.” For his useful discussion see, Hitler’s First War, 187-92. He notes, *inter alia*, that in First World War, “soldiers also proved more or less immune to ideological indoctrination.” [In distinct contrast to the Second World War.]

-- On eastern front, the bonds forged w/in a soldier’s primary group may have been particularly strong. Why? Because there were, literally, no escape valves. Desertion, or going AWOL, were not options – as it had been for a small but growing number in WWI – as German military discipline under the *Wehrmacht* was infinitely harsher than in the First World War.²⁰⁴ Secondly, going over to the enemy, surrendering, was also not an option. For surrender = death. Perforce, a soldier had little choice – no matter how unbearable his situation – to “sink or swim” w/ his primary group as his only hope of survival.

(**Note:** Be careful when using such concepts as “*Kameradschaft*,” or “*Frontgemeinschaft*.” Yes, as *Thomas Weber* points out, it is “true that in wars throughout history loyalty to one’s mates has been one of the prime battle motivators.” Yet, as author also makes clear, there are factors which militate against the development of such a sense of community among soldiers – among them the often *high fluctuation rate* of soldiers in a given unit. This can inhibit many soldiers from fully identifying w/ their unit and, in author’s view, “explains the growing fragmentation in [Hitler’s] List Regiment.”) (See, *Thomas Weber, Hitler’s First War*, 187)

²⁰⁴ **Note:** In fact, in WWI, the minimum sentence for various forms of desertion and going absent w/o leave was reduced twice in **1916/17** at the urging of the Reichstag. (See, *Thomas Weber, Hitler’s First War*, 166).

- Discipline w/in the *Wehrmacht*: Should also be noted that discipline in the German armed forces in WWII was draconian and often brutal. Many thousands of soldiers were executed over course of war; in contrast to WWI, where few were executed. *Omar Bartov* estimates that at least 15,000 German soldiers were executed during WWII, mostly for offenses considered to have been *politically motivated*, such as desertion, cowardice, and self-inflicted wounds. . . Conversely, in WWI, the Germans did not use disciplinary measures as relentlessly as the British, French, and Italians. While **307** British servicemen, ca. **700** French soldiers, and up to **900** Italian soldiers were executed, the Germans carried out the death penalty only on **48** of their men. (For more useful details see, **I:37-40**; also, *Thomas Weber*, Hitler's First War, 72)

(Note: Near end of his book, Weber states that “between **20,000** and **22,000** German soldiers were executed during the Second World War.” (p 328). (These data gleaned from *Manfred Messerschmidt & Fritz Wuellner*, Die Wehrmachtjustiz: Zerstoerung einer Legende, pp 63-91) According to Weber, one “lesson“ Hitler learned from his first war was that the „comparatively benign and lenient approach towards military justice in his regiment and in the German armed forces as a whole had undermined the German war effort.”²⁰⁵ Hence the shift to a more draconian policy.)

- *Cohesion, leadership, and training* – as combat strength multipliers. (See, *Jonathan Shay*, Odysseus in America, 205, ff.)
(*Social cohesion* – from having trained together and traveled to the war zone together – is what keeps people physically alive and mentally sane when faced w/ a human enemy who *really is trying to kill them*. . . The idea that the *social connectedness* and esteem of the soldier's unit are psychologically protective is *not* new, and is found in the lessons learned in WWII (but then forgotten [i.e., by U.S. military]). A *cohesive unit* creates courage by reducing fear. . . Cohesion both increased the ability to overcome fear (we call that courage) and reduces fear. The fictional Spartan platoon cdr named Dienikes, in the acclaimed novel Gates of Fire, puts it very compactly: “The opposite of fear . . . is love.” Tough, realistic training reduces fear and bonds the unit together. . . Cohesion reduces fear in the face of real danger, *and* going thru danger together increases cohesion. . .)
- The military strengthening and psychologically protective effect of stable, *socially cohesive units* is neither scientifically speculative, ambiguous, nor uncertain. . . American military historian Gerald Linderman notes about WWII that: “*Almost all other armies* [i.e., except for U.S. Army] *established systems of rotating units out of the line*. Even the *Wehrmacht* . . . managed *practically to the war's end to withdraw combat formations for days and weeks of refitting* [integrating cohesive subunit packets of replacements].” Whatever the Germans did, they did *by units*. Surely, the Germans loved efficiency every bit as much as we Americans do, and yet they *never* adopted an individual replacement or rotation policy for their troops.²⁰⁶
The inconveniences of managing units, rather than individuals, were something that the

²⁰⁵ **Note:** For a terrific anecdote about just how lenient German military justice could be during First World War, see case involving Anton Markl, a soldier in **10. Coy, RIR 16**, in **Jul 1917**. Several days after start of British artillery bombardment preceding start of 3rd Ypres – from **16-31 Jul 17** the British fired **4.3** million shells, including many gas shells, at the Germans deployed in the Ypres salient – Markl committed several major acts of disobedience. Markl “manged to force his own arrest only after he deserted as his coy was about to return to the trenches, walked to a nearby town, and turned himself in.” (195-96)

²⁰⁶ **Note:** Be careful w/ this material – In his other book, Shay writes that most [US] WWII soldiers, “trained together, went overseas together, fought together, had R&R together, and came home together.” (Achilles, 198)

Germans took in stride, according to van Creveld.²⁰⁷ (See, *Jonathan Shay, Odysseus in America*, 212-13)

- Vietnam: The *individual* (as contrasted to the *unit*) rotation policy practiced in Vietnam, which moved individual men in and out of combat units on a preordained time schedule, systematically *destroyed the unit cohesion* of combat groups. Very, very few Vietnam veterans went over w/ the unit they had trained with, fought w/ that unit, *and* returned "to the world" w/ it. I estimate that of the three-quarters of a million Vietnam combat veterans, only a few hundred or thousand did so. By contrast, my impression is that this was the majority experience in WWII, particularly in the Pacific. Even men who went over as individual replacements in WWII spent weeks or months w/ their units after fighting had ended and universally returned by boat. (*Jonathan Shay, Achilles in Vietnam*, 61)
- Noch waehrend des Krieges arbeiteten im Auftrag der US-Armee Scharen von Sozialwissenschaftlern fieberhaft, um hinter das Geheimnis des Durchhaltewillens der *Wehrmacht* zu kommen. Ihr Befund: Die „*ausserordentliche Zaehigkeit*“ der Deutschen stuetze sich „nur in ganz geringem Masse“ auf deren NS-Ueberzeugung. „Weitaus wichtiger fuer den entschlossenen Widerstand“ vieler Landser sei der Zusammenhalt in ihrer Gruppe gewesen. „Fast immer,“ resuemierten die Forscher das Ergebnis ihrer Befragung von Kriegsgefangenen, „betonten die dt. Soldaten den hohen Grad an Kameradschaft in ihrer Einheit. Sie sprachen von ihr oft als einer grossen Familie.“ Hielt die Gruppe zusammen, blieb auch der einzelne Soldat standhaft. Fiel sie auseinander, so haeuften sich Desertionen u. psychische Zusammenbrueche. Die *Wehrmacht* hat den Zusammenhalt der Truppe nach Kraefte gefoerdert. Sie schuf zielgerichtet, durch die Art ihrer Ausbildung, ihres Rekrutierungs- u. Ersatzsystems unter den Soldaten „*enge Maennerbuende*“ (Creveld), die gemeinsam litten, kaempften u. starben. (See, *Stefan Storz, „Perfide Rechnung,“* in: *Der Zweite Weltkrieg, Stephan Burgdorff* (Hg.), 313)²⁰⁸
- Beide Eckpfeiler des dt. Kampfwillens [i.e., *Kameradschaft* and *NS-Gesinnung*] zerbroeckelten zusehends. Waehrend der heftigen Kaempfe im Winter **1941/42** vor Moskau zeigten sich erstmals schwere Einbrueche in der dt. Kampfmoral. „Die Moral u. Disziplin haben stark gelitten,“ notiert ein Leutnant der **185. ID** erschuettert in sein Tagebuch. „Solche Verfallserscheinungen sind selbst **1918 nicht** bei der kaempfenden Truppe beobachtet worden.“ Kein Wunder, denn bereits zu diesem Zeitpunkt waren durch die ungeheuren Verluste der *Wehrmacht* viele aufeinander eingespielte Kampfgruppen ausgeloescht, u. damit war das soziale Netzwerk des Ostheeres weitgehend zerrissen [i.e., primary groups decimated]. So zaehlte etwa das vormalige **6000** Mann starke **IR „GD“** Ende **Feb [42]** noch **3** Offiziere u. knapp **30** Mann. (*Stefan Storz, „Perfide Rechnung,“* in: *Der Zweite Weltkrieg, Stephan Burgdorff* (Hg.), 314-15)
- Aber mit den Niederlagen seit **1943** zerfiel die Kampfmoral unaufhaltsam. . . Die Fuehrung der *Wehrmacht* sah daher in einem *immer brutaleren **Durchhalteterror*** das allein noch wirksame Mittel, um den Kampfgeist aufrechtzuerhalten. Als die dramatischen Rueckzuege immer wieder in panische Flucht uebergingen, ordnete Hitler an, „*mit eisernen Mitteln*“ vorzugehen u. „Ungehorsame auf der Stelle zu erschiessen.“ Dennoch schnellte die Zahl der Fahnenfluechtigen seit Mitte **1943** sprunghaft nach oben. . . Ueber **35.000** Soldaten wurden wegen

²⁰⁷ **Note:** The single most important preventive psychiatry move for the military is to keep people together: train them together, send them into danger together, and bring them home together. (219)

²⁰⁸ **Note:** In explaining the remarkable cohesion of the Wehrmacht, the author cites three primary factors: Kameradschaft; Nazi-Gesinnung; Durchhalteterror (brutal discipline, etc.).

Fahnenflucht von Militaergerichten verurteilt, davon **23.000** zum Tode. Mindestens **15.000** wurden hingerichtet. Die Dunkelziffer ist hoch, denn im Krieg gingen viele Akten verloren, u. allein waehrend der Endkaempfe wurden weitere Tausende ohne Urteil gehenkt oder erschossen. Im Ersten Weltkrieg waren dagegen „nur“ **18** deutsche Soldaten exekutiert worden. (Stefan Storz, „*Perfide Rechnung*“, in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, Stephan Burgdorff (Hg.), 316)

c) *Death at the front*

Note: The ancient Greeks believed that the unburied dead continue to suffer dreadful misery until covered by the earth. (Shay, Achilles, 88)

Note: Check Heinrich Haape's memoir, Moscow Tram Stop, for his insights into this topic. He saw his battalion (part of **6. ID**) literally disintegrate by **Dec 41** – from ca. **750** soldiers to barely **30** or so. (An experience which was not uncommon.) As his unit's "*Bataillonarzt*," he evinced touching "maternal" care for his charges.

Note: To die of war wounds is usually to "die in lingering agony and madness." (Shay, Achilles, 127)

(In Russia, being wounded – particularly in fall/winter **41/42** – often meant a long and agonizing journey by rail to military hospitals well in the rear, even in Germany; if one were lucky, he might be placed in an actual hospital train; but many were simply shunted into whatever was available (eg., barely heated freight wagons w/ straw on the floor) for the long journey from the front. Also, suffering even minor wounds in freezing winter weather often consigned on to a death sentence.)²⁰⁹

Note: The soldier's hymn, "*Ich hatt' einen Kameraden*," originally penned during the Napoleonic wars, was a staple at countless military funerals in Germany. It was a moving soldier's tribute to a fallen comrade. (For text of hymn – in German and English – see, Moorhouse, Berlin at War, 250)

-- Dealing w/ death of comrades (men *and* horses)

Examples from *Feldpostbriefe*, my "*Russlandkaempfer* files?"

-- "We can never fathom the soldier's grief if we do not know the human attachment which battle nourishes and then amputates. . . Combat calls forth a *passion of care* among men who fight beside each other that is comparable to the earliest and most deeply felt family relationships. (Jonathan Shay, Achilles in Vietnam, 39)

(Any blow in life will have longer-lasting and more serious consequences if there is no opportunity to *communalize it*. This means some mix of *formal social ceremony* [i.e., burial process, the wooden crosses, paying respects to the dead, etc., which the Germans did] and informal telling of the story w/ feeling to *socially connected others* who do not let the survivor go thru it alone. . . The emergence of rage out of intense grief may be a human universal. . . 39-40))

-- Shay writes of the "rapid transformation of grief into rage." As one soldier remarked after death of his close buddy, "I just didn't care if I lived or died. I just wanted blood. I just wanted

²⁰⁹ **Note:** For useful discussion of nature of war wounds – i.e., what a high-velocity bullet does to a human being – see, p 128.

revenge.” The principal feature of *Achilles* grief is, of course, his rage at Hecktor and lust for revenge. Carrying out this revenge dominates the *Iliad* until Hektor’s death near the end of Book **22**. (Note: Author believes that “the emergence of rage out of intense grief is a biological universal.”) (Achilles, 52-55)

- The reality of combat calls forth the language and emotion of the earliest and strongest *family relationships* in every place and era. A [Vietnam] veteran, speaking of his closest friend-in-arms, says: “*It’s a closeness you never had before*. It’s closer than your mother and father. . . We needed each other to survive.” (For rest of quote see, *Jonathan Shay*, Achilles in Vietnam, 40)²¹⁰
- Men learned in combat that to care passionately for the well-being of an individual person is to become vulnerable to *pain and grief*. Many soldiers drew the logical conclusion from this and say that after a special comrade was killed, they “just stayed the fuck away – didn’t get close to nobody.” *Jonathan Shay*, Achilles in Vietnam, 44)
- In many cases soldiers would be buried, temporarily, by his fellows, w/ a simple wooden cross bearing his name, unit and date of death, topped perhaps w/ his “*coal-scuttle*” helmet. (My note: Tiny *birch crosses* spring up like “mushrooms” along route of advance; provide some examples, maybe from photos).
- Those same comrades would also register the death, by snapping off half of the victim’s *Erkennungsmarke*, or dog tag – a tin disc worn around the neck, bearing the holder’s serial number, unit and blood group – and handing it in to HQ.
- Later, situation permitting, the dead soldier would later be disinterred and reburied in a formal war cemetery.
(Examples in my photos of German cemeteries in Russia.)
- Word of a soldier’s death would in time be passed to the bereaved at home. In some cases, news of the death would be brought personally by troops on leave or be letter from a fellow soldier. . . In the majority of cases, however, the victim’s next of kin would receive notification of the death from the relevant authorities – the *Wehrmachtsauskunftsstelle*, or “Army Information Center,” in Berlin, known colloquially as the “WASt” – usually in the form of a letter forwarded from a superior officer or regimental chaplain. (See, *Moorhouse*, Berlin at War, 251, ff.)
(Example of btl. cdr, *Werner Heinemann*, who on one occasion in summer **1941** was confronted w/ preparing over **150** condolence letters after a particularly costly stretch of fighting. (See his *Feldpostbriefe* in my “*Heinemann* file.”))
- From very first days of Polish campaign, grieving families posted somber black-lined death notices in German newspapers. Most of them carried similar wording. Beneath a facsimile of the Iron Cross, the *heavy gothic text* would tell of a “Hero’s death” “for Fuehrer and Fatherland” on the “Field of Honor.” (*Moorhouse*, 253)

²¹⁰ **Note:** Maybe this explains the enduring significance of veterans’ organizations to the veteran. In Germany, these “Kameradschaftverbaende” were – and in some cases still are – of tremendous importance. During my visit to Normandy in **Jun 83**, I participated in a formal ceremony at the German military cemetery at La Cambes (sp?) w/ veterans of the **12. SS “HJ” PD** and the French Foreign Legion (if I recall correctly). To this day, I recall the solemnity of that day and what I learned about the deep and enduring ties these old soldiers still retained to their fallen comrades.

(See examples in my files.)

- *Kuratorium Rzhev*:²¹¹ Fighting in and around this city of some **54,000 (1939)** from **Oct 41 – Mar 43** among most devastating and costly of entire war. Russians lost over **1,000,000** men; the Germans hundreds of thousands; battles were lost to history until ca. mid-1990s, when work of David Glantz, Russians, “resurrected” them.

(Strategic importance of German Rzhev salient (dagger pointed at Moscow). Finally evacuated on **3 Mar 43**, in course of the so-called “*Bueffelbewegung*,” this strategic withdrawal so critical that Hitler listened in on the telephone from East Prussia while German engineers blew the final bridge over the Volga!)

Like all of Russia, the area littered w/ innumerable gravesites. German gravesites still being looted by Russians to this very day – they are looking for *Erkennungsmarke*, etc., to sell. According to rumors I heard in Rzhev, skulls of German soldiers sold for use as lamps!

In early **1990s**, German veterans founded the *Kuratorium Rzhev*²¹² seeking reconciliation w/ Russian veterans, etc. Working w/ German “*Kriegsgraeberfuersorge*” organization, Russian authorities, etc., they were finally successful in recent years in getting a joint military cemetery built in the town.

(See, Oleg A. Kondratjew, Die Schlacht von Rshew for key details – dates, losses, etc.; my issues of *Kuratorium*’s newsletter; my “*Russland Tagebuch – Rzhev Reise*,” **May 05**; my photos of German paratrooper gravesite, etc.)

- *Heinrich Stuehlmeier* (**6. ID**) writes: “Ich denke auch an die vielen russ. Soldaten, die bei Rshew gefallen sind, sie wurden alle nicht beerdigt. Jetzt immer noch suchen russ. Jugendliche nach den Resten was von den gefallenen russ. Soldaten uebrig geblieben ist. Die Lehrerin Vera Lewschowa, mit der ich sei[t] **9** Jahren befreundet bin, berichtet manchmal darueber. Da weiss man gar nicht was man dazu sagen soll. Das ist doch eine *Menschenverachtung*. Man kann das gar nicht begreifen. (*Ltr, H. Stuehlmeier to C. Luther, 25 Jan 08*)

d) *Kriegskamerad “Pferd”*

- For background on horses in German army see, *David Westwood*, German Infantryman (2). Eastern Front 1941-43, 5-9)
- German Army entered Russia w/ some **625,000** horses. Vast majority of “*Ostheer*” dependent upon horse-drawn transport – as was Napoleon’s *Grande Armee*, the Kaiser’s Imperial Army of World War I, etc.

²¹¹ **Note:** Poignant example of how the war dead are still very much a “live” issue today.

²¹² **Note:** Das Kuratorium Rshew fand sich Anfang der **1990er** Jahre zusammen, um die dort gefallen, verstreut liegenden dt. Soldaten zu bergen, moeglicherweise noch Vermisstenschicksale klaeren zu koennen u. in einem zentralen Friedhof zu bestatten. Nach anfaenglichen fast kaum zu ueberwindenden Schwierigkeiten konnte dieses Vorhaben als Anlage fuer dt. u. russ. Gefallene nachbarschaftlich in zwei Bereichen verwirklicht werden. Fuer dieses Anliegen konnten verschiedene dt. Traditionsgemeinschaften . . . gewonnen werden. Grosse Hilfe u. Unterstuetzung wurde dem Kuratorium durch den *Volksbund dt. Kriegsgraeberfuersorge* zuteil. Ohne die Kenntnisse u. Tatkraft vor Ort u. die finanzielle Foerderung des VdK waere das Projekt wohl gescheitert. Der „Friedenspark Rshew“ war jedoch nur eines der Anliegen, verbunden damit war von Anfang jedoch auch der Gedanke von der „*Versoehnung*“ *ueber den Graebn*,“ naemlich, auch der Stadt u. den Bewohnern dort *Hilfe zu leisten* u. insbesondere Jugendlichen die Moeglichkeit u. das Erleben des friedlichen Miteinanders persoenlich spueren zu lassen. (“*Jahresbrief 2010*,” *Traditions-Verband der 110. Inf.-Div.*, Horst Paul (Vorsitzender)). (Document located in my **110. ID** file.)

(Provide examples; ca. **4-6000** horses in each Inf.-Div. Confirm!)

-- [Das Ostheer] marschiert, fuhr auf ueber **600.000** mot. Fahrzeugen u. **3650** Panzer u. fuehrten auch noch **625.000** Pferde. . . (R.-D. Mueller, "Duel im Schnee," in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, Stephan Burgdorff (Hg.), 114)

-- Account after account illustrates just how devoted many (most?) German soldiers were to their horses.

(Anecdotes. See, for example, Herbert Franze, Kriegskamerad Pferde (tiny book on shelves among memoirs); also, Heinrich Haape, Moscow Tram Stop; Dr Helmuth Pante,²¹³ Meine Kriegserlebnisse; Notebook #1: 613, ff.)

-- Horses *suffered* from heat, cold, exhaustion, lack of sustenance as much as the men did. During winter **41/42**, some **1000** horses/day perished in sector of Army Group Center alone (confirm!).²¹⁴

(Historical analogy: Am **28 Jun 1812**, dem siebten Tag seiner Operationen, erreichte Napoleon Wilna. Graf Anatole de Montesquiou, ein juengerer Leutnant im Stabe, zaehlte auf dem Weg von Njemen nach Wilna **1240** tote Pferde. (See, Janusz Piekalkiewicz, Die Schlacht um Moskau: Die erfrorene Offensive, p 81))

-- Use of Russian *panje* horses. Heavier northern European horses suffered under Russian climactic conditions; Germans soon forced to turn to indigenous stock in Russia, the tough, reliable little *panje* horses.

(Examples/anecdotes; Notebook #1, etc.)

e) **Food and drink**

-- Diet / Soldiers always hungry!

(See, **I:382-83**; H. Stuehlmeier, *Feldpostbriefe*, etc.)

-- Rations: The German Army, like all others, had ration scales laid down for both men and horses. However, once the Russian campaign had started, ration supplies were often erratic, and the men in the field had to scavenge for themselves. The following is an "intelligence report" [by U.S. Army?] on ration scales. It applied whenever possible, but was *never more than a guide* when means were in short supply. (For fascinating details on "march rations," "Iron rations" and other topics see, David Westwood, German Infantryman (2). Eastern Front 1941-43, 7-11, 61)

-- Living "off the land"

(for example see, E. Hager, The War Diaries of a Pz. Soldier, 31, ff.; see also, Goering quote from **2 May 41**, dass sich die Wehrmacht aus dem Land ernaehren muesse, auch wenn dadurch „zweifellos zig Millionen Menschen verhungern.“ F.W. Seidler, Verbrechen an der Wehrmacht, 17)

²¹³ Dr Pante was veterinarian w/ the *Veterinaer-Untersuchungsstelle* 509.

²¹⁴ **Note:** James Lucas states that ca. **1000** horses died each day of the Russian campaign on average. "Research has shown that the greatest number [of horses on eastern front] were killed by shell-fire or else fell victim to aerial maching-gunning, and that **17%** died of heart failure brought about by the exertion of towing guns. . . " Disease killed **8%**. See, War on the Eastern Front, 114-15)

- *Eintopf*²¹⁵ – Rather less popular [here, w/ *civilians*] was the ubiquitous *Eintopf*, or “one pot meal,” a simple catch-all stew that was ordered to be served by every household once a month. The idea was that the *Eintopf* would be consumed by Gauleiters and ordinary workmen alike, enhancing a sense of *national solidarity*. . . Though primarily intended to be prepared w/in each household, the *Eintopf* was also served in restaurants, hotels and even *al fresco* by Nazi welfare organizations. On Berlin’s streets, vast wheeled soup kitchens – colloquially known as “*goulash cannons*” – would appear, from which the steaming stew would be ladled out to the waiting public. (*Moorhouse*, Berlin at War, 90)
- *Muckefuck*²¹⁶ – One of the most common – and unpopular – *ersatz* products [in Germany] was coffee. Made from roasted malt or chicory and known colloquially as *Muckefuck* – from the French *mocca faux* – it was a poor, caffeine-free alternative. (See, *Roger Moorhouse*, Berlin at War, 90)
- Universality of cigarette smoking!
 (Jeder dt. Soldat erhielt taeglich 5 Zigaretten zugeteilt u. konnte sich weitere 5 als Marken-
 derwaren fuer 3 Pfennige pro Stueck dazukaufen. *F.W. Seidler*, Verbrechen an der Wehr-
macht, 13)²¹⁷
 Use of Russian “*Machorka*” by German soldiers
 (See, **IV:441**, ff.; *H. Pagel’s*, “*From the Other Side*,” in: “*Drug Use*” file; also article on
 Third Reich’s anti-smoking campaign in same file; personal accounts, etc.)

f) *Games & Music (Swing & Lili Marlene!)*

- Card games (*Skat*, *Doppelkopf*, etc.)²¹⁸
Skat, a “trick-taking” card game originating in early **1800s**; features prominently in *Guenter Grass* novel, The Tin Drum; played by many soldiers in *Remarque’s* novel All Quiet on the Western Front; was a favorite game of *Richard Strauss*. (*Wikipedia*)
- Popularity of American “swing” music w/ some soldiers
 Ex. of Walter Vollmer (**106. ID**), others.
- German soldiers *love to sing* (on march, etc.)
Lili Marlene (recorded in **1939** by Lale Andersen)
Soldatensender Belgrad
 Soldiers reaction to (*personal accounts*)
 Universality of (would become favorite of Allied forces as well)
 (See also, *L. Leibovitz*, Lili Marlene; and, *Moorhouse*, Berlin at War, 215-17)

g) *Feldpostbriefe & Relations w/ home & family*

- **30-40** billion sent during war
 Largely ignored as source material until **1980s**

²¹⁵ **Note:** German soldiers ate this concoction regularly; if I recall, Heinrich Haape refers to it constantly in his Moscow Tramstop.

²¹⁶ **Note:** This ersatz coffee was also consumed by the troops.

²¹⁷ **Note:** From text, not clear if this allotment was for entire war, or only from end of **1943** on.

²¹⁸ **Note:** Placed material on card games in my “*Wehrmacht – Drug Use*,” file, for lack of a better place to put it!

(See, **IV:442**, ff., for reams of information on *Feldpostbriefe*.)

-- *Aussagekraft?*

What they tell us; what they do not tell us (criminal activity, etc.)

Role of censorship (by authorities / personal censorship)

-- Vital psychological significance of

-- **Note:** Key points below gleaned from, *Klaus Latzel*, „*Feldpostbriefe: Ueberlegungen zur Aussagekraft einer Quelle*“, in: *Verbrechen der Wehrmacht. Bilanz einer Debatte*. *Christian Hartmann, et al.* (ed.).

1) Estimate is of some **30-40 billion** FPB sent during WWII, about ¼ of which (i.e., **7.5 to 10 billion**) were sent by the soldiers at the front themselves;

2) If one takes the figure of **17.4** million total soldiers in the Wehrmacht between **1939-45**, then one arrives at an average of ca. **430 to 570** letters sent by each soldier; (171);

3) Of this most massive amount, but a tiny, tiny fraction – “weit ueber hunderttausend “ – in archives and private collections which are available to researchers;

4) Frage der inneren u. aeusseren Zensur: “Wir muessen immer davon ausgehen, dass das, was in den Briefen ausgesprochen wird, vor einem Hintergrund des Schweigens steht, der uns unbekannt bleibt;” (173);

5) “Die Briefe eines einzelnen Soldaten ueber seinen Kriegseinsatz koennen eine wertvolle Ergaenzung fuer die aktenmaessige Ueberlieferung seines Truppenverbandes sein, u. fuer die Entwicklung von Forschungsfragen u. zur Thesenbildung taugen selbst geringe Bestaende allemaal;“

6) „Ist doch . . . festzuhalten, dass quantifizierende Generalisierungen auf der Basis von Feldpostbriefen nicht moeglich sind; sich mit der mangelnden statistischen Verallgemeinerbarkeit abzufinden, faellt insofern leicht, als FPB aeusserst ergiebige Quellen fuer Fragestellungen sind, die sich um die Art u. Weise der *Erfahrung* des Krieges drehen, also fuer die so genannte qualitative Forschung. . .“ (175);

7) „Die bisherigen Untersuchungen ueber FPB kommen einhellig zu dem Befund, dass Kriegsverbrechen in dieser Quelle nur selten konkret benannt oder gar genauer beschrieben werden u. noch weniger die Beteiligung daran.“ (175)

-- German soldiers serving in occupied lands of Europe sent home „vast amounts of goods“ to the Reich. Much of this was the result of simple plunder, especially that which originated on the more lawless Eastern Front. However, the vast majority of it was legitimately purchased and sent home from comparatively well-supplied areas such as France, Belgium and Denmark. German soldiers *stripped occupied western Europe bare*. Either sending it by post or carrying it themselves, they transported enormous amounts of foodstuffs and consumer items to the Reich: *bacon and butter* from Denmark, *fish and fox furs* from Norway, *eggs* from the

Ukraine, tobacco from Greece or honey from Russia. This state of affairs was tolerated, even encouraged, by military authorities. . . Goering even formulated what became known as the “*Schlepperlass*,” or “*Schlepp Decree*,” in **Oct 40**, which stated that German soldiers abroad could take w/ them on home leave whatever they could carry so long as it was intended for their personal use. (See, *Moorhouse*, Berlin at War, 95)

h) *Relations w/ Russian civilian population*

-- Relations often cordial (**I:657**, ff.)

(See, *Haering*, Embattled Witness; *Perau*, Priester im Herre Hitlers, etc. Also, *Ostfront-kaempfer* responses in my Notebook #5!)

-- Enduring ambivalence of German attitudes toward Russia people

Contempt and feelings of (racial) superiority vie juxtaposed w/ sense of compassion for sublime sufferings of Russian people.

-- *E.M. Rhein* (**6. ID**) notes that German soldiers were *very disciplined*. If they committed offenses against Russian civilians, they were *very harshly dealt with*. Noted that the „*Wehrmacht-ausstellung hat mich innerlich kaputt gemacht, weil es ein Bild der dt. Soldaten gezeigt hat, was voellig wirklichkeitsfremd ist.*“ (See, **I:657-58** for remainder of my interview w/ Herr Rhein.)

-- *Bernard Haering*²¹⁹ (medic w/ unit of Hr.Gr.Sued): Served as medic on battlegrounds and among civilian populations of France, Poland, Russia. Impression of Russian people was of their *deep piety* and how they often shared their meager food and abundant faith. Also writes of the decency of some of his superiors who used to turn a blind eye when Haering would send home his wounded Russian prisoners. (*Embattled Witness*, front flap).

i) *Religion at the front*²²⁰

Note: In World War I, to better face the growing hardships and experience of war, many had also turned to religion for solace. For example, by the winter of **1914/15**, “a religious renaissance was almost universal w/in [Hitler’s own] List Regiment. As a soldier [from **RIR 16**] wrote home in the aftermath of his experience in combat: ‘Quite a few of the men told me after the battle that they rediscovered their long-forgotten prayers to God.’” (*Thomas Weber*, Hitler’s First War, 58, 73, 112-13)²²¹

Note: The term *evangelische Kirche* refers to the Lutheran members of the Reformed Churches. The terms Protestant and Episcopalian also refer to the Lutheran faith, which was the pre-

²¹⁹ Paul Collins, in 5 Feb 99 article in *National Catholic Reporter*, calls Haering, “arguably the greatest Catholic moral theologian of the 20th Century and one of those most responsible for the renewal of contemporary Catholicism.” Haering has also been called the “father of modern moral theology” in Roman Catholic Church. He died in Jun 98, at age of 85.

²²⁰ **Note:** See, Notebook #4: “*Soldaten-Alltag*.”

²²¹ **Note:** In **1915**, “makeshift altars and crucifixes now mushroomed in the dugouts of the List Regiment, while front-line soldiers carried on them rosaries and medallions blessed by priests.” I don’t recall this phenomenon on eastern front in WWII; could coming of age under the NS-regime be responsible for something of a decline in religious faith?

dominant Reformed faith in Germany during NS-period. Kriegspfarrer is the WWII title for an army chaplain. (M. Hayden, German Military Chaplains, 7-8)

- See, **IV: 456-58**; also, J. Perau, Priester im Herre Hitlers (47-48, 53); Haering, Embattled Witness, etc.
(Also, *Ostfrontkaempfer* responses in my Notebook #5!)
- Roll of priests in ministering to locals in Russia. According to Hayden, this was quite common in both White Russia and the Ukraine. Russian people had been robbed of their religious heritage by the Communists. Thousands of churches had been destroyed, or desecrated by the Communists; if not destroyed, they were often used for other purposes – such as storage facilities, schools, hospitals, museums, etc. Memoir after memoir of German soldiers attest to this, and to their disgust at what they saw.
- Waehrend des Zweiten Weltkrieges uebten etwa **900** *katholische Geistliche* die Seelsorge in der *Wehrmacht* aus, unter ihnen **500** hauptamtliche Kriegspfarrer. Neben ihnen betreuten etwa **10.000** Ordensleute u. Kleriker ab der Subdiakonsweihe ihre Kameraden als „Priestersoldaten,“ entweder in der Funktion von Sanitaetern oder als Soldaten der kaempfenden Truppe. Obwohl ihnen *offiziell seelsorgliche Funktionen verboten waren*, liess sich ihr Tun in der Praxis nicht kontrollieren. Selbst in einigen Divisionen der Waffen-SS gab es Militaerpfarrer. Insgesamt gab es etwa **20.000** Priestersoldaten in der *Wehrmacht*. . . Die Zahl der *evangelischen Pfarrer* u. Pfarramtskandidaten betrug etwas weniger als **10.000**. (See, F.W. Seidler, Verbrechen an der Wehrmacht, 23)
- Background: Many priests and religious (the term priest refers to Diocesan or parish clergy whilst religious refers to priests belonging to a religious order such as the Jesuits) served as chaplains in the *Wehrmacht* and many more served as soldiers in medical and front-line regiments. Being a priest or a member of a religious order or even a seminarian did not prevent a German from being drafted. However, an annex to the Nazi-Vatican Concordat of 1933 governed the treatment of clergy in the event that conscription was enacted in Germany. . . . As a result many clergy ended up in uniform as medical personnel and often acted as *unofficial chaplains* w/ the tacit approval of their superiors. (See, Mark Hayden, German Military Chaplains, 10)
- Chaplains served in almost every theater of operations; also evidence of chaplains serving w/ the Waffen-SS and *Luftwaffe*, even though the *Luftwaffe* did not officially have chaplains. Yet how could a priest serve as a chaplain when the Nazis were persecuting the church that he served? Memoirs I have read of catholic or protestant clergy serving in the *Wehrmacht* illustrate that they were often deeply conflicted over their loyalties.
- Church / State Relations:
 - Both Catholic and Protestant authorities in Germany have been sharply criticized for their support and lack of opposition to Hitler’s regime. Church authorities – and lay followers – often viewed the NS-regime as a *bulwark against Bolshevism*. And they, like others, fatally misjudged the ultimate intentions of Hitler and his regime. Also undercutting possible resistance was the new oath to Hitler taken by the *Wehrmacht* in **1934**. “The oath was used to tie the German soldier in holy obedience to the *Fuehrer* and a number of clergy referred to this oath in postwar interviews as an explanation for their service as chaplains during the war.” Moreover, the Catholic Church forbid *tyrannicide*. (For more details see, Hayden, Chaplains, 31-34)

- Hayden states, “the churches accepted the Nazis as the legitimate authority in Germany and exhorted the faithful to remain true to the State, even as evidence of state sanctioned religious persecution grew.” The erosion of the Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches was one of the ultimate goals of the Nazi party. Thus began a huge interference in church affairs by the state far in excess of that by the ultamontane Chancellor Bismarck in the 19th Century: Church youth groups were closed down; clergy were imprisoned, censured and assaulted; false charges were made against leading Christians, church property was seized and religious education in schools had to follow the new state curriculum w/ its emphasis on race, nation and German supremacy. (Hayden, 19, 33)
- The Christian group that was most pro-establishment was the group known as the German Christians. They were drawn from the *Evangelische Kirche* (Lutheran Church), and were organized under the counsel and advise of the *Fuehrer*. . . Ludwig Mueller was elected as Bishop and head of the German Christian movement. . . Shortly after his election as Bishop, the Prussian General Synod, which was dominated by the German Christians, ratified a proposal that any future holder of a clerical office should be of Aryan ancestry. This ratification led to *virulent protests* from the majority of the Evangelical churches and eventually led to founding of the Confessional Church. This group took a *firm stance against the German Christians* and their barely disguised masters. At one point in the mid-1930s nearly **10,000** of the **18,000** Evangelical priests had enrolled in the Confessional Church. This brave witness was not w/o cost as many of the priests of the Confessional Church [*“Bekenntniskirche”*] languished in prison and concentration camps for the duration of Nazi rule and many paid the ultimate price. The leading spokesman for the Confessional Church was also a naval veteran of WWI – Martin Niemoller. (For more details on Niemoller and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, etc., see, Hayden, 19-24)
- The Roman Catholic Church in Germany faced a somewhat different situation than that faced by the Reformed Churches. The persecution of the Roman Catholic Church was *very severe* because of its international nature and the fact that the Roman Catholic faithful gave their loyalty to a foreign head of state – the Pope. . . Those members of the Roman Catholic faith who resisted the Nazis from the beginning were *left w/ little or no grounds for argument* after Nazi Germany signed a Concordat w/ the Vatican in **1933**. (Note: Apparently, the Concordat undercut ability of Catholics to resist the state based on their religious beliefs. See, Hayden, 24-26, 49)²²²
- The churches in Germany objected to the interference by the state in their schools and also objected to the **T4** programme, which was “cleansing” German society of genetic defects by killing those deemed genetically inferior. However, why didn’t the the churches speak out against to now commonplace deportations of Jews and other non-desirables to concentration camps? (Hayden, 30)
- Role of the Chaplain: Their primary role was to provide for the *spiritual needs* of the soldiers both in the field and behind the lines – i.e, conducting religious services, hearing confessions of soldiers, succoring sick and wounded in military hospitals, conducting *sacramental duties* such as baptisms and weddings, etc. One of the chaplain’s most important roles was to *act as*

²²² **Note:** The man who acted on behalf of the Vatican was Cardinal Pacelli, who went on to become Pope Pius XII. Pius like many other Catholics saw the “true threat to Europe and his church as coming from the influence of Soviet Russia.” He has been vilified for his so-called support of – or at least inaction against – the Nazis, but this is unfair – and unhistorical – in my view.

a link between officers and men. The chaplain's duties "could be be an uphill struggle because many of the soldiers they ministered to had grown to maturity on a diet of [NS] thought and opinion and *many had turned their backs on organized religion completely.*" Chaplains also provided services for the *local population* if their priest was not present. This happened quite a lot in White Russia & the Ukraine. . . A large portion of the chaplain's time taken up in conducting funeral services.²²³ . . German chaplains were usually attached to medical units of field hospitals and were also on the staff of larger hospitals. . . Chaplains were also expected to keep up the morale of the soldiers; this often took the form of patriotic sermons and many chaplains *believed in the great crusade against the Godless Bolsheviks.* . . . Chaplains all spoke of how important the *attitude of the commanding officer* toward their ministry was. . . Above all, the chaplains felt that their place was *in the front* and for some this meant the actual foxholes and trenches and others in the field hospitals. There was no point in expecting to have any credibility²²⁴ w/ the soldiers if the chaplain only saw them when they were in the rear areas. . . Cooperation between Protestant and Roman Catholic chaplains was *very limited*. . . (See, *Hayden*, 35-66)

- Chaplain insignia: German chaplains usually wore military uniform when on duty. This extended to performing many *sacramental duties* in full military uniform such as funerals, baptisms and weddings. . . German army chaplains wore the standard officer's uniform of the day – tunic, cap and breeches. This was due to the fact that they were accorded the rank of officer by virtue of their office as chaplain. . . The branch of service color for German chaplains was violet and can be found on the piping of peaked caps, the *soutache* on overseas caps [?] and on the collar *litzen* of the service tunic. . . The first and most recognizable item of insignia worn by a German chaplain was the cross worn suspended on a silver chain of **76cm** around the neck. . . This cross was supposed to be worn at all times while on duty but in practice it was often neither possible nor wise to wear it. Wearing a large silver badge around one's neck in a forward area of Russia was just asking to be shot by a sniper. The chaplain also wore a cross on the service cap. . . Another distinguishing feature of the German chaplain is the special armband worn w/ the uniform. Under the Geneva and Hague Conventions, chaplains were classed as non-combatants and as such were entitled to wear the Red Cross brassard. However, the German chaplain's armband had an additional band of violet cloth of **7cm** that lay on either side of the Red Cross to specifically identify the wearer as a priest. By virtue of wearing the armband, clergy, like medical personnel, were *forbidden to wear side arms or carry weapons*. However, the field manual H.Dv. 373, dated **18 Jun 41**, required the wear of pistols by chaplains in enemy countries. This may have reflected the fact that w/ the commencement of Operation "*Barbarossa*" the chaplains would be entering the territory of a country that was not a signatory to the Geneva Convention, thereby robbing the clergy of their non-combatant status. . . Chaplains did still wear the armband in Russia and initially spent a lot of time *ministering to a people starved of religious freedom* since the Bolshevik revolution. (See, *Hayden*, 66-107)
- Chaplain awards: According to *Hayden*, in WWII there was a "prejudice against awarding the *EKI* to chaplains." (108-14)

²²³ **Note:** At funerals, in keeping w/ tradition, chaplains would scatter some earth on the coffins before burial. See photograph, p 102.

²²⁴ **Note:** See C. Nehring's remarks about the Evangelische and Katholische priests in his father's **18. PD**. The former was not respected, the latter highly respected for his courage to minister to the soldiers at the front lines.

VII: KEIN KAMERAD: THE BARBARIZATION OF WARFARE (GERMAN / SOVIET WAR CRIMES)²²⁵

Quote: As the Chronicler Costas says to the Macedonian infantryman, Lucas: “*There is no honor in war my friend. Only in poems of war.*” (*A Book Review of Pressfield’s ‘The Afghan Campaign,’* at: The “Belmont Club” web site, 28 Mar 07)²²⁶

Quote: “*Hektor, I’ll have no talk of pacts w/ you, . . . As between men and lions there are none, no concord between wolves and sheep, but all hold one another hateful through and through, so there can be no courtesy.*” (*Homer’s Iliad*, quoted in: Jonathan Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 83)

-- Note: “The reason why . . . it is difficult for us today to determine how widespread wartime brutalization [in WWI] really was is that *acts of decency and of treacherous violence co-existed* and were sometimes combined.” (*Thomas Weber, Hitler’s First War*, 147)

-- Note: In his first book [of *On War*], “*On the Nature of War*,” Clausewitz stressed that war is not only a political act, “but a true political instrument, a continuation of political activity by other means. . .” Therefore, if *war belongs to policy*, it will *naturally take on the latter’s character*.²²⁷ This decides the scale of the military actions, because wars vary IAW the *nature of their motives* and of the circumstances from which they arise. (See, J. L. Wallach, *Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation*, 12)

-- Note: It is because of our capacity for self-impeachment and remorse that Aristotle famously called man “*the beast w/ the red cheeks.*” Aristotle’s description holds up very well more than 2000 years later. Even people who most flagrantly repudiate morality . . . nearly always respond to detection w/ excuses and rationalizations. . .” (“*The Surprising Fact of Morality*,” Dinesh D’Souza, at: <http://article.nationalreview.com>, 4 Nov 09)

-- Note: See my notes, „*Antworten auf Barbarossa Fragekomplex*,” 14 Jan 05, re: attitudes of former “Ostfront” veterans to their recent portrayal in Germany as murderers, to the *Wehrmacht-Dauerausstellung*, examples of Christian charity and kindness by German soldiers (Bernard Haering’s *Embattled Witness*), etc.

Note:²²⁸ “An army, ancient or modern, is a *social construction* defined by shared expectations and values. Some of these are embodied in formal regulations, defined authority, written orders, ranks, incentives, punishments, and formal task and occupational definitions. Others circulate as traditions, archetypal stories of things to be emulated or shunned, and accepted truth about what is praiseworthy and what is culpable. All together, these form a **moral world** that most of the participants most of the time regard as legitimate, “natural,” and personally binding. The *moral power of an army* is so great that it can motivate men to get up out of a trench and step into enemy machine-gun fire. When a leader destroys the legitimacy of the army’s moral order by betraying “what’s right,” he inflicts manifold injuries on his men. The *Iliad* is a story of these immediate and devastating consequences. (*Jonathan Shay, Achilles in Vietnam*, 6)

²²⁵ Note: For insights into “war crimes” issue see my, **IMPB:33-35**.

²²⁶ Note: This article can be found in one of my “*Introduction*” files.

²²⁷ Note: And “Barbarossa” clearly took on the genocidal character of Hitler’s ultimate policy objectives.

²²⁸ Note: Insights such as this resonate, of course, w/ the German “Landser” in Russia.

Note: *Achilles* is a very high-ranking [Greek] officer. . . Initially, he cares about the *whole* army. . . . He is man of good character, with broad sympathies and wide moral commitment. . . . However, *Achilles* – following mortal injury inflicted on him by *Agamemnon*, etc. – suffers serious psychological injuries. Before these injuries, recorded in the *Iliad*, *Achilles*’ habit was to respect enemy dead rather than defile them, and to ransom enemy prisoners rather than to kill them. *Achilles loses his humanity* in two stages: He ceases to care about his fellow Greeks after betrayal by his commander, and then he loses all compassion for any human being after the death of *Patroklos*. The *Iliad* is the story of the undoing of *Achilles* character.²²⁹ (Jonathan Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 24-25)

- „Barbarossa“ vs. present-day Afghanistan. Anecdotes of how our *counter-insurgency* strategy, attempts to win “hearts and minds,” is endangering lives of U.S. soldiers. Many fire-fights these days are strictly rifle and MG fights – i.e., fought w/ less fire support than what was available to American units.²³⁰ (See, “*An NCO recognizes a flawed Afghanistan strategy*,” George F. Will, at: www.washingtonpost.com, 20 Jun 10; see, **IMPB:27**)
- Bigger problem w/ McChrystal’s leadership has always been the general’s devotion to unreasonably *restrictive rules of engagement* that are resulting in the unnecessary deaths of American and coalition forces. We have many, many accounts of the rules endangering Americans, and the *Rolling Stone* article provides more evidence. In the story, a soldier at Combat Outpost JFM who had earlier met w/ McChrystal was killed in a house that American officers had asked permission to destroy. (See, “*McChrystal’s real offense*,” Byron York, at: www.printthis.clickability.com, 22 Jun 10; see, **IMPB:27**)

Note: Respect the enemy as human. Another cultural “truth” that I have disputed through my reading of the *Iliad* is the notion that fighting spirit depends upon *dehumanization of the enemy*. The *Iliad* shows that it is possible to regard the enemy as human and honorable like oneself and still fight w/ fierce tenacity. I have argued that viewing the enemy as subhuman vermin or nonhuman matter *endangers soldiers’ physical survival* during war and moral recovery after it. . . All levels of authority concerned w/ making war . . . must acquire the habit of *honoring the enemy*, if the nation is to avoid future hemorrhage of blood and spirit as in Vietnam – and to avoid defeats. This is one of the vital lessons of Vietnam that I fervently hope the military victory in the Persian Gulf [i.e., “DESERT STORM,” 1991] has not obliterated. *The visible respect that the American military leadership had for the Iraqi forces was a necessary precondition for the technical superiority of American arms to be effective.* [author’s italics]. If the war had been conducted w/ the “turkey shoot” mentality that characterized the early years of the Vietnam War, the Gulf War could have cost thousands, possibly tens of thousands of American lives. . . It is *logical* that the Persian Gulf military victory would strengthen the habit of respecting the enemy, but there is such a strong cultural pressure to return to “We’re number one!” that a war that was a walkover readily turns people back to the *illusion* that the next enemy is again “just Gooks,” *not to be taken seriously*. (Shay, *Achilles*, 203)

Note: “Der Russlandfeldzug, wie die Deutschen den Krieg nannten, bzw. der Grosse Vaterlaendische Krieg, wie ihn die Sowjets nannten, war in vielerlei Hinsichten *ein Krieg ausserhalb des Voelkerrechts*. . .” (See text for rest of quote, which would be a good one for beginning of my chapter. F.W. Seidler, Verbrechen an der Wehrmacht, 24-25)

²²⁹ **Note:** Moral parallels to “Landser” (Wehrmacht) in Russia?

²³⁰ **Note:** U.S. military policy also limited use of air power to avoid civilian casualties.

a) *The Integration of the Wehrmacht into the “NS-Unrechtsstaat”*

Note: Wie kam es zu dieser *tiefgreifenden Integration* des Militärs in das [NS-Staat]? Zweifels- ohne bildete die *politische Integration* der Armee in den Staat die Voraussetzung. Zugleich aber machte die Mehrheit des Personals den *gleichen Anpassungsprozess* mit wie die übrige Bevölkerung auch. Extremer Nationalismus, Hitler-Verehrung u. Antisemitismus gehörten zum Allgemeingut der meisten deutschen Soldaten seit **1936/37**, wenn auch individuell in sehr unterschiedlicher Färbung. (Dieter Pohl, „Brutale Praxis,“ in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, Stephan Burgdorff (Hg.), 141)

Note: C. Hartmann makes interesting point about an ancillary objective of the Russian campaign – to promote the “NS-education” of the *Wehrmacht*: „Zumindest im Verständnis der NS-Machthaber war deren Gleichschaltung noch längst nicht abgeschlossen, weder **1941** noch **1944**. Insofern hatte das ‘Unternehmen Barbarossa’ hier eine weitere Funktion zu erfüllen, die eines gigantischen Erziehungsprogramms.“ (IX:81)

Note: The military culture of the *Wehrmacht* was radically different from that of the Imperial German Army of WWI in key respects. For example, discipline in the *Wehrmacht* – as noted in “Frontalltag” chapter above – was infinitely harsher (ca. **20,000** executions vs. **48** in First World War!). Secondly, anti-semitism was, for the most part, fully embraced by the *Wehrmacht* leadership, resulting in a murderous radicalization of war fighting policy on the eastern front. During the First World War, Jews had served w/ distinction in the Kaiser’s armed forces. To be sure, the German Army in **Oct 1916** had conducted a “Jewish census,” officially at least to refute claims that the Jews were dodging front-line duties. (Nationwide, calculations carried out after the war showed that almost exactly the same % of Jews as gentiles served in the German armed forces during the war.) Moreover, Jewish converts to Christianity had become officers even in the pre-war [pre-WWI] Prussian Army. As Thomas Weber avers, “The German armed forces [of WWI period] were *not a hotbed of radical anti-Semitism*. . . During the war, the German armed forces tried to make special arrangements for its Jewish soldiers to observe Jewish holidays. . . On the Eastern Front, meanwhile, where German troops encountered the several million strong Jewish populations of Poland and the Baltic that the SS were to target for destruction less than **30** years later, the Germans presented themselves, not w/o reason, as the liberators of Jews from tsarist oppression. . . The majority of German soldiers on the eastern front *shunned anti-Semitism*.”²³¹ (For more details see, Thomas Weber, Hitler’s First War, 173-76)

-- Schon kurz nach der „*Machtergreifung*“ **1933** versicherte Hitler seinen Generälen, die NSDAP werde das dt. Volk *geistig wehrhaft machen* u. „erstklassiges Rekrutenmaterial“ liefern. Und Reichswehrminister General Werner von Blomberg versprach seinem Führer, das Ausbildungsziel der *Wehrmacht* sei „nicht nur der Kämpfer, sondern der seines Volkstums bewusste Mann.“ (Stefan Storz, „*Perfide Rechnung*,“ in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, Stephan Burgdorff (Hg.), 314)

²³¹ **Note:** For example, two articles from the army newspaper of the German **10th Army** told its readers in early **1916** – just **25** years before “Barbarossa” – that at their core the Jews of Eastern Europe had kept a ‘truly astounding vitality and moral fortitude,’ “a strong and selfless idealism,” and “a deep and honest thirst for knowledge and education driven by great intelligence, sobriety, temperance, thrift, and a goodness of character,” etc. All told, **59** Jews had served in Hitler’s regiment during WWI, w/o any serious antagonisms. (176)

- Die Kampfmoral der *Wehrmacht* beruhte nicht allein auf dem kameradschaftlichen Zusammenhalt der Truppe, sondern auch auf ihrer *weltanschaulichen Geschlossenheit*. Die Legende von der unpolitischen, moralisch sauberen *Wehrmacht* hat lange verdeckt, wie sehr die Armee u. ihre Soldaten in die Nazi-Ideologie verstrickt waren. (Stefan Storz, „*Perfide Rechnung*“, in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, Stephan Burgdorff (Hg.), 314)

- Am **22.6.41** begann mit dem Angriff der *Wehrmacht* auf die Sowjetunion die brutalste Vernichtungskrieg der Geschichte. . . Doch die *Integration der Wehrmacht in den NS Unrechtsstaat* reicht viel weiter zurueck. . . Zum Beispiel betrieb die Wehrmachtfuehrung [waehrend der **30er** Jahren] in ihrer Schulung u. Propaganda eine *deutliche Anpassung an die rassistische Ideologie*. (See, Dieter Pohl, „*Brutale Praxis*“, in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, Stephan Burgdorff (Hg.), 137)

- Mit den Polenfeldzug vom **Sep 39** begann die Integration des Militaers in die NS-Verbrechen. Etwa **20.000** polnische Kriegsgefangene u. Zivilisten wurden im Verlauf des Feldzuges ermordet, u. zwar nicht nur durch SS u. Polizei. Etwa die Haelfte [**50%**] der Opfer ging auf das Konto deutscher *Heeresseinheiten*. . . Schon in Polen hatte die kurzzeitig waehrende *Militaerverwaltung 1939* die Pluenderung der Bevoelkerung u. vor allem die *Entrechtung der Juden* eingeleitet. . . **1940** reiste der ObdH, GFM v. Brauchitsch, eigens nach Paris, um dort die *Enteignung der franz. Juden* voranzutreiben. Die Rueckkehr zur direkten Gewaltanwendung bracht nicht erst der Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion, sondern bereits der Ueberfall auf Suedosteuropa ab **Apr 41**. Aehnlich wie in Polen, richteten deutsche Truppen grosse Massaker an. Nach den erbitterten Kaempfen um Kreta, an denen sich auch die einheimische Bevoelkerung beteiligt hatte, erschoss die dt. Fallschirmtruppe in zahlreichen Doerfern die Maenner. (See, Dieter Pohl, „*Brutale Praxis*“, in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, Stephan Burgdorff (Hg.), 138)

- Juergen Foerster makes strong case for what we all know now to be true – the *Wehrmacht's* deep complicity in NS crimes. He sees a sharp line of *continuity* in ideological thinking of the military establishment and NS-Party going back to WWI; as well as the genesis of an anti-Jewish tradition in the German military during WWI (eg., the so-called “*Judenzaehlung*” of **1916**). This anti-Semitism was made more acute by the Russian revolution of **1917** and its impact on Germany in years that followed, resulting in conflation of Jew w/ Bolshevism. Article illustrates how anti-Jewish measures took hold in Reichswehr / Wehrmacht from **1933** on, and the strong support given to Hitler's ever-more aggressive racist policies. As Juergen shows, the German military (high command, field cdrs, rank-and-file) overwhelmingly supported ideological/racial objectives of Hitler's Third Reich; for this, he cites many examples. Hitler's generals also largely accepted Hitler's concept of “*Barbarossa*” as a race war (eg., guidelines of GFM v. Brauchitsch). (See his, „*Wehrmacht, Krieg u. Holocaust*“, in: Die Wehrmacht: Mythos u. Realitaet. R.-D. Mueller & H.-E. Volkman (Hrsg.) (Article in my „*War Crimes*” folder.)

- We begin in the *moral world of the soldier* – what his culture understands to be right – and betrayal of that moral order by a commander. This is how Homer opens the *Iliad*. *Agamemnon*, *Achilles'* commander, wrongfully seizes the prize of honor voted to *Achilles* by the troops. *Achilles* experiences betrayal of “what's right” . . . (Jonathan Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 3)

b) *Reciprocal criminal behavior – The brutal “dialectical logic of action and reaction”²³² on the eastern front*

Note: For insights of C. Hartmann see, **IX: Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg, Kapitel V)**

Note: My so-called „*Atrocities – Russian / German*“ files contain lots of untapped materials; among them, many accounts provide me by German veterans.

Note: For example of this *brutal dialectical logic* in action (**253. ID**) at beginning of campaign see, Christoph Rass, “*Menschenmaterial: Deutsche Soldaten an der Ostfront. Innenansicht einer Inf.-Div. 1939-45*, 334-35. (**IX:84**)

Note: Many factors contribute to atrocities in wartime – beyond cultural and ideological “drivers” of such action. These factors would include: a) *inadequate training*; b) *poor discipline* (likely a concomitant to “a”); c) *nervousness and anxiety*; and, d) *panic and fear*. All, or some, of these factors would have contributed to atrocities on both sides. (**Note:** This idea gleaned from Thomas Weber’s *Hitler’s First War*, Chptr 2, “*Baptism of Fire*.”)

Note: To our modern mind the enemy is *detestable* – by definition. The enemy must first be *dehumanized*, “degraded to less than full human status. Collectively, the population [and soldiers] of the other country must become ‘gooks,’ ‘Nips,’ ‘Japs,’ ‘Krauts,’ or ‘Huns.’ One must first *hide from the full humanity of the opponent* before [one] is able to kill him.” (See, Shay, *Achilles*, 103, ff.)

(Operative factors here include: NS racial, anti-Slav propaganda; over **20** years of Soviet propaganda, instilling its people w/ visceral hatred of capitalists, the “West,” and, of course, Germans.)²³³

-- Eastern front w/ own unique murderous character: Both sides guilty of incessant violations of the laws and usages of war

Hague Treaty (**1907**) and Geneva Conventions (**1929**)

Lenin had withdrawn Russia from the Hague Treaty; Russians were not signatories to two (**2**) Geneva Conventions. For excellent details & background on both of these international agreements see, F.W. Seidler, *Verbrechen*, 25-26)

Basically suspended by Germans.

-- *Spiral of violence* that led to atrocities and reprisals received its impetus not so much from notorious Nazi “criminal orders,” but from the *direct experience of the soldiers of both sides*, says H. Magenheimer (**IX: Hitler’s War**)

-- Anecdote: Example of how quickly so many became calloused to what they saw and experienced: Dr. Rudolf Gross marschierte als Truppenarzt in der **3. Abteilung des Werfer-Rgt. 53**²³⁴ in Russland ein. Er erinnert sich an einige vor allem menschlich bedeutsame Einzelheiten aus der Zeit des Vormarsches: „Ausserdem hatte ich damals den peinlichen Eindruck, dass ein Grossteil der Landser doch schon *verroht* war. . . Bei unseren Soldaten sah ich aber *nicht das geringste Mitgefuehl fuer diese Menschen* [i.e., Frauen, Kinder, usw.]. (See, K. Schneider-Janessen, *Arzt im Krieg*, 37-39; **VIII:125-26**)

²³² **Note:** This phrase from P. Paret’s essay on Clausewitz in: *Makers of Modern Strategy*, p 206.

²³³ **Note:** Conversely, Germans often developed a grudging respect for their Russian opponent, whose tenacious fighting qualities were worthy of honor.

²³⁴ **Note:** This was a “Nebelwerfer” regiment.

- Initial post-war template: Germans fought “clean” war (w/ exception of SS)
 This impression sedulously fostered by former German generals; by Halder in his work w/ the U.S. Army’s Historical Division (late **1940s** & early **1950s**)
 (See, **IX**: *S. Neitzel, Abgehört*)
 By **1960s** more honest appraisals began to see the light of day
 Examples of new scholarship
Komplizenschaft der Wehrmacht im “Vernichtungskrieg” – Orders issued by **4. PD** from **Nov 41 – Mar 42**. (C. Hartmann, *Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg*, Prolog)
 „Den Mythos von der ‚sauberen‘ Wehrmacht braucht niemand mehr zu entlarven. Ihre Schuld ist so erdrueckend, dass sich darueber jede Diskussion eruebrigt. (See, **IX**: C. Hartmann, *Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg, Schluss* (i.e., very end of my notes))

- Wie verbrecherisch war die *Wehrmacht*? Die Exponenten der Wehrmachtsdebatte haben ganz konkrete Zahlen in die Debatte eingebracht, allen voran Hannes Heer,²³⁵ der als Leiter der ersten Wehrmachtsausstellung die Quote der Taeter an der Ostfront auf **60 – 70%** veranschlagte. Dagegen nannte Rolf-Dieter Mueller, ein Mitarbeiter des MGFA in Potsdam, eine sehr viel niedrigere Zahl, u. zwar unter **5%**. . .“ (See, **IX**:**79-81**)

- Wehrmachtausstellung: Die Angriffe gegen die *Wehrmacht*, die **1945** bis **1990** lediglich sporadisch auftraten u. *einzelne* betrafen, eskalierten nach der *Wiedervereinigung Deutschlands* zu Pauschalattacken. . . Auch die *Kriminalisierung der Wehrmacht* nahm erst nach **1989** groteske Zuege an. . . Die raffinierteste, einpraegsamste u. populaerste Agitationsunternehmen gegen die *Wehrmacht* wurde **1995** mit der Ausstellung, „*Vernichtungskrieg. Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941 bis 1944*“ gestartet. Sie ist wahrscheinlich die *erfolgreichstehistorische Wanderausstellung*, die es seit der Gruendung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland gibt. (Note: For many more details – and a scholarly „debunking“ of this „travelling exhibit“ – see, *Franz W. Seidler (Hrsg.), Verbrechen an die Wehrmacht. Kriegsgreuel der Roten Armee 1941/42*, 8-14)²³⁶

- Beim Russlandfeldzug Deutschlands . . . muss man auf dt. Seite zwischen politischer Planung u. militaerischer Wirklichkeit unterscheiden. Viele Plaene waren in der Tat verbrecherisch. Aber nicht alle Plaene wurden in Befehle umgesetzt u. nicht alle Befehle wurden so ausgefuehrt, wie der Wortlauf besagte. . . Beispiel: Bei einer Konferenz mit Staatssekretaren, die fuer Wirtschaftsfragen im Osten zustaendig waren, aeusserte Goering, der als Beauftragter fuer den Vierjahresplan die Ausbeutung der Ostgebiete zugunsten der dt. Kriegswirtschaft lenken sollte, am **2.5.41** kaltschnaeuzig, dass sich die *Wehrmacht aus dem Lande ernaehren muesse*, auch wenn dadurch „zweifellos zig Millionen Menschen verhungern.“ In Wirklichkeit verpflegte die *Wehrmacht* aus ihren Bestaenden nicht nur zigtausend Hiwis, d.h. Ueberlaeufer u. Kriegsgefangene im Dienst der Fronttruppen, sondern ganze Doerfer. Denn die Rote Armee hatte bei ihrem Rueckzug *alles mitgenommen*, was beweglich war, u. *alles zerstoeert*, was als Lebensgrundlage fuer die Bevoelkerung haette dienen koennen. Es waren die Sowjets, die die Bevoelkerung, dem *Verhungern* preisgegeben hatten u. nicht die dt. Streitkraefte. (F.W. Seidler, *Verbrechen*, 17)

²³⁵ **Note:** A former Communist, I believe.

²³⁶ **Note:** One might conclude – or so it appears to me – that the “*Wehrmachtausstellung*” attempted to accomplish what even the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg had refrained from doing – i.e., branding the entire Wehrmacht as a criminal organization. Another example of the success of the “Left” – w/ an always complicit media – in hijacking history.

-- Types of criminal activity (German); how widespread?²³⁷

Some **5%** of Germans involved in such activity, out of about **10** million who served in the east from **1941/44**? See, C. Hartmann, "Wie Verbrecherisch war die Wehrmacht, in: **IX:79-81**; also, C. Hartmann, "Verbrecherischer Krieg – verbrecherische Wehrmacht?, in: VfZ, 1/2004)²³⁸

(Note: As I conclude in my book review of C. Hartmann's Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg: "All things considered, however, the number of perpetrators, while significant, remained a *distinct minority*, for most German soldiers served directly at the front and were, perforce, fully absorbed in their legitimate combat duties." (See, C. Luther, "Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg," in: *Journal of Military History*, Jan 10)

-- Anecdote: Despite the growing "convention wisdom" of willing and widespread *Wehrmacht* participation in war crimes; there remained many exceptions. For example: Graphic account of German officer attempting to stop Lituanian militia from murdering Jews in Wilna (Jun 41). The officer (Hauptmann) in a Pz.-Jg. unit is stunned by what he observes and tries to put an end to it. He has two Lituanian men disarmed and a Jew freed from their custody, who he then orders to go: "Gehen Sie! – Was dort geschieht, ist nicht im Sinne der deutschen Wehrmacht." (See, J. Moeller, *Gratwanderung*, 197-98; **VIII:243**)

-- Russians' worst crimes at end of war (rape as sanctioned terror tactic, etc.

c) *Barbarossa as Race War & "Vernichtungskrieg"*

Note: For brief overview of Hitler's „Besatzungspolitik“ and the *Wehrmacht's* deep complicity in it see, (R.-D. Mueller, "Duel im Schnee," in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, Stephan Burgdorff (Hg.), 119-20)

Note: Die hemmungslose Beteiligung der Wehrmachtfuehrung an der Planung von Massenverbrechen ist *nur verstaendlich*, wenn man beruecksichtigt, dass die Militaers erwarteten, die Hoheit *binnen kurzer Frist* an zivile Besatzungsbehoerden abzugeben. (Dieter Pohl, „Brutale Praxis," in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, Stephan Burgdorff (Hg.), 139)

Note: Was Hitler von der Wehrmachtsfuehrung verlangte u. was diese gehorsam vollzog, war der *radikale Bruch* mit soldatischen Traditionen, mit den Gruendsaetzen der Kriegfuehrung, wie sie etwa in der *Haager Landkriegsordnung* festgelegt waren, u. mit allen Prinzipien des allgemeinen *Voelkerrechts*. (Rainer Traub, „Versklavt u. vernichtet," in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, Stephan Burgdorff (Hg.), 164)

Note: Francis Lieber's **1863** "Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States in the Field" (the Lieber Code) expressed what I believe to be the continuing consensus of serious military professionals: "Men who take up arms against one another in public war do not cease on this account to be moral beings, responsible to one another and to God." (Jonathan Shay, Odysseus in America, 225)

²³⁷ Note: Among other sources, use C. Rass's book Menschenmaterial and his article (both addressing activities of **253. ID**).

²³⁸ Note: Because most German soldiers served in narrow strip along **HKL**, etc. See Hartmann's breakdown of "Ostheer" in Fall of **1943**. (**IX:80**)

Note: Im Gegensatz zum Ersten Weltkrieg war das deutsche Militaers nun insgesamt *viel homogener* eingestellt,²³⁹ nicht zuletzt wegen der Erfolge bis **1942**. Trotz dieses *generellen Grundkonsenses* ist nicht zu bezweifeln, dass unter den insgesamt **18** Millionen Maennern noch eine erhebliche Bandbreite an politischen Anschauungen vorherrschte. Allerdings kam diese kaum zum Ausdruck, weil regimiekritische Aeusserungen verfolgt wurden u. die Masse des Personals im Korsett einer straffen Hierarchie u. oftmals in militaerischen Zwangslagen agierten. Den Generaelen u. den oberen Raengen des Offizierskorps blieben jedoch *erhebliche Handlungsspielraeume*. Zwar laesst sich die Zahl der Soldaten, die an Massenverbrechen teilgenommen haben, nicht mehr genau quantifizieren, doch handelt es sich *nur um einen Bruchteil der Armee*. Entscheidend blieb die Einbindung durch die Oberkommandos. Vor allem Sicherungsverbaende u. Militaerverwaltungen in Osteuropa waren systematisch an Verbrechen beteiligt, Fronttruppen in sehr unterschiedlichem Ausmass, etwa wenn sie sowj. Grossstaedte eroberten oder einen brutalen Antipartisanenkampf fuehrten. (Dieter Pohl, „Brutale Praxis,“ in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, Stephan Burgdorff (Hg.), 141-42)

-- Conflation of Bolshevism w/ hated and feared Jewish enemy

-- Hitler's conference w/ generals (**30.3.41**)

Finally reveals ideological nature of impending war
Virtually no recorded objections to Hitler's objectives
Brauchitsch, *et al.* support „racialist“ war perspective

-- Bereits die militaerische Anlage des Russlandfeldzuges barg eine *Radikalisierung* in sich. Hier entfaltete sich der erste *absichtsvoll* entwickelte Plan fuer einen Blitzkrieg. Vorgesehen war ein kurzer Feldzug von **8-10** Wochen. . . Entsprechend labil war die Logistik aufgebaut: Sie war nur fuer kurze Zeitraeume ausgerichtet u. belastet mit dem Problem ueberlanger Versorgungslinien. Deshalb uebernahm die Militaerspitze die Ueberlegungen des „Ernaehrungsdiktators“ Herbert Backe, der die volle Versorgung der Wehrmacht mit Lebensmitteln *aus dem Lande* avisierte u. dabei den Hungertod von Millionen Einheimischen einkalkulierte. (See, Dieter Pohl, „Brutale Praxis,“ in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, Stephan Burgdorff (Hg.), 139)

-- Trinity of criminal orders

“Gerichtsbarkeiterlass” (Military jurisdiction decree) (**13 May 41**)

(This was „eine *praeventive Amnestie* fuer Verbrechen von Soldaten gegenueber Sowjetbuerger in u. ohne Uniform.“ (See, Juergen Foerster, “Wehrmacht, Krieg u. Holocaust,“ 953))

(Um jeglichem Widerstand im Hinterland brachial den Boden zu entziehen, wurden die Einheimischen im sogenannten *Kriegsgerichtsbarkeiterlass* voellig entrechtet; den Soldaten versprach er bei Gewaltanwendung weitgehende Straffreiheit. (Dieter Pohl, „Brutale Praxis,“ in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, Stephan Burgdorff (Hg.), 139))

²³⁹ **Note:** Yet as F.W. Seidler notes: “. . . die Masse des hoeheren Offizierkorps dachte preussisch oder vaterlaendisch u. nicht nationalsozialistisch. . . Fuer wie unzuverlaessig Hitler die bewaffnete Macht hielt, zeigt sich u.a. darin, dass er **1943** den „nationalsozialistischen Fuehrungsoffizier“ einfuehrte, eine Art, 'Politkommissar' zur Kontrolle des Offizierkorps.“ (For more details see his, Verbrechen an der Wehrmacht, 16)

(Note: For more details on „*Gerichtsbareiterlass*,“ attitude of GFM v. Bock towards, etc. see, *F.W. Seidler, Verbrechen an der Wehrmacht*, 21-23)²⁴⁰

“*Kommissarbefehl*“ (Commissar Order) (**6.6.41**)

(Zwar meldeten etwa die Haelfte [**50%**] aller Divisionen die Erschiessung von Politkommissaren der Roten Armee, doch regten sich auch *deutliche Widerstaende* gegen die Ausfuehrung dieser Morde. (*Dieter Pohl, „Brutale Praxis,“ in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Stephan Burgdorff (Hg.), 139))

(Diese Anweisung zum Massenmord gab das **OKH** zwei Wochen vor Beginn von „*Barbarossa*,“ am **6.6.41**, an die fuer den Ostkrieg bereitstehenden Wehrmachtstruppen weiter. (See, *Rainer Traub, „Versklavt u. vernichtet,“ in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, Stephan Burgdorff (Hg.), 165))

(Anecdote: German post-war denial of war crimes. In a letter to a Dr. M.G. Williams, former panzer general Walther K. Nehring stated: “Der *Kommissarbefehl* ist ohne Wissen des Oberkdos. des Heeres erlassen worden. Die Befehlshaber des Heeres u. der Armeen haben ihn abgelehnt u. verboten, nach ihm zu handeln. Beispiel: mein Commanding General Guderian (Panzergruppe Guderian) u. mein Korpskommandeur Lemelsen, ich selbst als Kdr. der [**18. PD**]. Mir ist keine Erschiessung auch nur eines russ. Kommissars bekannt worden.“) (*Ltr. W.K. Nehring to Dr. M.G. Williams, 1 Jun 75*) (Courtesy of *Christoph Nehring*, in: *Nehring personnel file*.)

(Note: For terrific background on the “*Kommissarbefehl*,“ origins of, Hitler’s justification for, implementation of (and non-implementation of) by German field cdrs in the east see, *F.W. Seidler, Verbrechen an der Wehrmacht*, 17-21)²⁴¹

“*Richtlinien*” for German soldiers

Germans fear Soviet use of **gas** (**IX**: *H.-M Welcker, Aufzeichnungen*, ca. **2.6.41**; see also, *J. Huerter, Hitlers Heerfuehrer*, 231; f.n. 139, 231; also accounts by *Dr. E. Bunke* in: **IV:61-62**)

(Ueber die Besprechung [bei **AOK 4**] mit Brauchtsch am [**12.6.41**]: „Der Russe wird Krieg mit allen Mitteln fuehren: Gas, Verderben von Vorrtaeten, Verseuchen von Brunnen.“ (f.n. 139, 231)

-- **Jun-Dec 41**: For participation of **253. ID** in Hitler’s „*Vernichtungskrieg*“ see, *Christoph Rass, „Verbrecherische Kriegfuehrung an der Front. Eine Infanteriedivision u. ihre Soldaten,“* and his *Menschenmaterial*, in: **IX:82-87**.

(See also the perspective of *C. Hartmann* re: **253. ID** – its shooting of **230** “*Partisanen*” by early **Dec 41**; fact that members of division were still brought to justice for “plundering” and other crimes, despite the Military Jurisdiction Decree of **May 41**, etc. (**IX:81**))²⁴²

²⁴⁰ **Note**: Speaking against a complete and whole-hearted implementation of such criminal orders by German field cdrs in the east is the utterly deleterious impact such a policy at the front would have had on discipline. As Seidler avers: “Die Sorge um die Disziplin gehoerte zu den vorrangigen Aufgaben jades Offiziers.” (21)

²⁴¹ **Note**: So Seidler: “Bei der Beweisaufnahme im Nuernberger **OKW**-Prozess stellte sich heraus, dass der *Kommissarbefehl* in der Tat weitgehend sabotiert worden war.” (See, p 20)

²⁴² **Note**: The conclusion of Hartmann is as follows: „Anstelle einer massenhaften Beteiligung an Kriegsverbrechen waren es vielmehr *ganz bestimmte, meist wenige Einheiten, Kommandeure oder Dienststellen*, die mit Abstand die **groesste Verantwortung** fuer all das Unrecht tragen, das im deutschen Namen geschah.“ (**IX:81**)

- **16.7.41:** Hitler erlaeuert der Parteiprominenz seine Kriegsziele im Osten: Aufteilung u. Ausbeutung der Gebiete der besetzten UdSSR.
- **16.7.41:** At a meeting Hitler convened w/ several close associates on **16 Jul 41** – when he and his generals were convinced that overall victory lay in reach – he defined his objective in a now-famous phrase: “In principle, it is important to divide up this vast cake properly so as to enable us to: 1. to rule it (*beherrschen*), 2. to administer it (*verwalten*), 3. to loot it (*ausbeuten*). (Leni Yahil, The Fate of European Jewery, 1932-45, 245)

d) *Einsatzgruppen & Genocide against Jews*

Note: Ueber die Massaker der SS- u. Polizeieinheiten, zunaechst an juedische Maennern veruebt, waren die Oberkommandos gut informiert. Kritik daran wurde hoechstens unter der Hand geaeussert. Als aber deutlich wurde, dass die SS nach **2 bis 3** Monaten auch juedische Frauen u. Kinder zu erschiessen begann, erhob sich an vielen Stellen Protest. Freilich galt dies kaum fuer die Militaerverwaltung; die meisten Stellen halfen weiterhin beim Massenmord, sei es durch die *Anordnung zur Versammlung* der Juden, durch die *Lieferung von Munition* an die SS, gelegentlich sogar durch die *Teilnahme von Soldaten* oder durch den *Einsatz von Pionieren* beim Bedecken der Massengraeber. (Dieter Pohl, „Brutale Praxis,“ in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, Stephan Burgdorff (Hg.), 139-40)

- Activities of (sketch only!)
(**I:721-23**; **IX: Megargee**, War of Annihilation)
- Support by *Wehrmacht* units
This historical reality no longer in dispute.
- Locals – Ukrainians, Balts, etc. – get in on the “action.” Spontaneous pogroms, etc. (See for eg., H.-M. Welcker, Aufzeichnungen for **2.7.42**, in: Notebook #9, for a harrowing anecdote involving Lithuanians.)

e) *Soviet Prisoners of War*

- German treatment of (Kein Kamerad, See, C. Streit)
(For horrific anecdote addressing treatment of Soviet POWs see, J. Perau, Priester im Heere Hitlers, 53)
- Ca. **3,800.000** captured by end of **1941** (ca. **60%** perish in captivity)
Conditions in camps (typhus, even cannibalism, etc.)
(For in-depth discussion see, **I:711**, ff.)
- **Sep 41:** Diejenigen [POWs], die in summarischen Selektionen als Juden, Kommissare u./oder Angehoerige der Intelligenz registriert wurden, kamen vor Exekutionskommandos. Die Selektionen fanden in mehreren Wellen an der Front, im Hinterland u. im Reichsgebiet statt. Wer nach der Gefangennahme zunaechst am Leben blieb, wurde haeufig spaeter in Kriegsgefangenenlagern selektiert u. in ein KZ deportiert – zur „Sonderbehandlung.“ Im KZ Auschwitz kamen **900** sowj. Kriegsgefangene Anfang **Sep 41** in einem zugemauerten Keller durch das Giftgas Zyklon B um. Der „Erfolg“ der Methode fuehrte zum Beschluss, dieses Gas zur Vernichtung der Juden zu benutzen. In den KZ-Lagern Buchenwald u. Sachsen-

hausen waren als Untersuchungsraeume getarnte Genickschussanlagen in Betrieb. Im KZ Dachau wurde auf dem Schiessplatz liquidiert. Im KZ Mauthausen toetete man Gefangene durch Injektionen oder erstickte sie. (See, *Rainer Traub*, „*Versklavt u. vernichtet*“, in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, *Stephan Burgdorff* (Hg.), 166)

- Unzaehlige starben bereits auf dem Weg von der Gefangenschaft ins Auffanglager. Ein Verkehrsnetz zum Abtransport existierte in der Weite des russischen Raumes kaum. Wo Moeglichkeit dazu bestanden, verweigerten Eisenbahnkommandanten u. Lastwagenfahrer oft unter Hinweis auf die *Verlausung der Russen* den Transport. So wurden Fussmaersche die Regel, bei denen die unterernaehrten Gefangenen wochenlang 25 bis 40 Kilometer am Tag bewaeltigen mussten. Wer zusammenbrach, wurde erschossen. Nach Einbruch des Winters transportierte man die Gefangene auch bei Frost in offenen Eisenbahnwaggonen. Das ueberlebte viele nicht. (*Rainer Traub*, „*Versklavt u. vernichtet*“, in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, *Stephan Burgdorff* (Hg.), 166)
- Die Gefangenen errichteten in ihrer Not mit Hilfe von Zweigen, Laub u. Stroh Huetten, gruben mit blossen Haenden u. Kochgeschirr Erdloecher als primitiven Schutz oder kampierten unter freiem Himmel. Im Winter erfroren viele. Andere fielen Lungenentzuendungen u. Epidemien wie dem Fleckfieber zum Opfer. Allein zwischen **Nov 41** – **Jan 42** starben **500.000** gefangene Rotarmisten. (*Rainer Traub*, „*Versklavt u. vernichtet*“, in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, *Stephan Burgdorff* (Hg.), 168)
- Da im Spaetherbst **1941** alle Hoffnungen auf einen Blitzsieg zerstoeben waren, schlugen die Verantwortlichen der dt. Wirtschaft nun immer lauter Alarm: Es fehlten weit ueber eine Million Arbeitskraefte, die Kohlenfoerderung sank dramatisch. . . Die Massensterben erreichte seinen Hoehepunkt im Winter **1941/42** – obwohl schon am **31.10.41** ein „Fuehrerbefehl“ die gefangenen Russen zum „Grosseinsatz fuer die Beduerfnisse der Kriegswirtschaft“ kommandiert hatte, fuer den sie „angemessen“ zu ernaehren seien. (*Rainer Traub*, „*Versklavt u. vernichtet*“, in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, *Stephan Burgdorff* (Hg.), 168-69)
- Im **Nov 41** wurde zwecks Ernaehrung der Gefangenen die Herstellung eines „*Russenbrotes*“ aus **50%** Roggenschrot, **20%** Zueckerruebenschntzel, **20%** Zellmehl u. **10%** Stroh oder Laub beschlossen. (*Rainer Traub*, „*Versklavt u. vernichtet*“, in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, *Stephan Burgdorff* (Hg.), 169)
- Die *Wehrmacht* trieb mehr als drei [3] Millionen Kriegsgefangene ueber die Strassen. . . Die Mehrzahl von ihnen starb an Hunger u. Krankheiten oder wurde erschossen. Als die Ueberlebenden spaeter Sklavenarbeit leisten sollten, glaubte Wirtschaftschef Goering, sie mit Katzen u. minderwertigem „*Russenbrot*“ ernaehren zu koennen. Die barbarische Einstellung der deutschen Behoerden aenderte sich nur sehr zoegerlich. (*R.-D. Mueller*, „*Duel im Schnee*“, in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, *Stephan Burgdorff* (Hg.), 120)
- Army Group Center alone, by **31 Dec 41**, claims to have taken **1 912 376** Soviet prisoners! (**III:598**)
- **Oct 41:** Aus den Kesselschlachten von Wjasma u. Brjansk: Sie [POWs] zu ernaehren, vor der Kaelte zu schuetzen u. einigermassen menschlich unterzubringen, war *selbst bei bestem Willen nicht moeglich*. Es geschah mit ihnen das, was auch die deutschen Gefangenen aus dem Kessel von Stalingrad etwa ein Jahr spaeter ueber sich ergehen lassen mussten: In Marschkolonnen – so gut wie nicht ernaehrt u. in beissender Kaelte – wurden sie zu

Eisenbahn-Knotenpunkten getrieben, von wo aus sie in Auffanglager mit einem – im Prinzip wenigstens – geregelten Lagerbetrieb gebracht werden konnten. Bei diesen Elendsmärschen u. in den Lagern verendeten während des Krieges viele Zehntausende, Russe wie Deutsche. (K. Schneider-Janessen, *Arzt im Krieg*, 66; VIII:243)

-- 20.11.41 (268. ID / russ. Kriegsgefangene): Feldpostbrief:²⁴³

Die Gefangenen-Ernaehrung ist kein Problem, wenn nichts da ist, bekommen die Kerle nichts. Aber tote Pferde u. Kartoffeln finden sie genuegend, sodass nur bei Massen-ansammlungen von Gefangenen Hunger auftritt. Aber letzten Endes sind es die Leute gewohnt u. selbst schuld, denn das Essen haben ihre sauberen Komplizen ja weggeschleppt. Und das Hueten [i.e., *watching over*] muessen wenige machen, natuerlich unter Einsatz sehr drakonischer Massnahmen. Wir haben erfreulicherweise nichts damit zu tun. („Hans-Otto“, *Briefsammlung*; VIII:244)

ca. 25.12.41 [Weihnachten / Orel]: „In diesem Winter haben unsere Landser toten Russen als erstes die Filzstiefel ausgezogen. . . Auch Pelzkappen u. Maentel waren sehr beliebt. Wir hatten uns ja in alles Moegliche gehuellt. *Manche liefen angezogen wie alte Frauen herum*. Wir haben Weihnachten 1941 in Orel gefeiert. Das ist mir unvergesslich: Der Battr.-Chef hatte eine Rede gehalten, die Kueche hatte etwas Zucker, Mehl u. Fett gespart u. Krapfen [i.e., *donuts*] gemacht. Die Leute heulten vor Ruehrung. Sie dachten an die Heimat, an Frau u. Kind. Es wurde gegessen u. getrunken, u. es hat auch Rotwein gegeben. Manche hatten davon zuviel getrunken u. mussten sich uebergeben. Am naechsten Morgen wurden dann aus einem nahegelegenen Gefangenenlager schon zum Skelett abgemagerte russ. Gefangene herbeigebracht um aufzuraeumen. *Da fielen diese Gefangenen ueber den Abfall her u. klaubten mit den Haenden das gefrorene Erbrochene auf, um es zu essen*. Das habe ich mit eigenen Augen gesehen. Es war ein schrecklicher Eindruck fuer mich.“ (Bericht, *Deutscher Arzt Dr. Rudolf Gross*; quoted in: K. Schneider-Janessen, *Arzt im Krieg*, 82-83; VIII:244)

-- Zwischen **Feb 42** und dem Kriegsende starben weitere **1.3 Millionen**. Die Gesamtzahl betraegt damit etwa **3 Millionen** von insgesamt **5.7 Millionen** Mann – ueber **50%** der in dt. Gefangenschaft geratenen Russen. Zum Vergleich: Von den etwa **3.2 Millionen** dt. Soldaten in russ. Gefangenschaft kam gut ein Drittel um. (Rainer Traub, „*Versklavt u. vernichtet*“, in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, Stephan Burgdorff (Hg.), 169)

f) *Attitudes of German soldiers/officers toward brutality of eastern front*

-- **Note:** In chapter 5 of his book, Achilles, Shay addresses the concept he calls “*berserking*.” He adumbrates the events/conditions which bring on the “berserk state.” This state embraces “a special state of mind, body, and social disconnection” when memorable deeds or “blood-crazed” atrocities can occur. “Vietnam narratives reveal that the [catalytic] events that drive soldiers berserk are betrayal, insult, or humiliation by a leader; death of a friend-in-arms; being wounded; being overrun, surrounded, or trapped; seeing dead comrades who have been mutilated by the enemy; and unexpected deliverance from certain death. . . Major and minor

²⁴³ **Note:** No doubt, this very callous attitude was typical of many German soldiers. Of course, the letter writer is also correct – the Soviets did try to strip the land bare of anything the Germans could use before withdrawing into the interior.

warriors at Troy often display the *transformation from grief into killing rage*. (For details see, pp 77-99)

- *Landser*: From *Feldpostbriefe* and other sources, clear that majority of German “*Landser*” supported Hitler’s goals in the east. (their contempt for *Bolshevism* and rightness of German decision to attack only enhanced by what they experienced in Russia).²⁴⁴

Many took photographs of criminal actions – *Einsatzgruppen* killings, for example. Others were shocked and disturbed by what they saw, or had to take part in. (See for eg., *M. Miethe*, “*Rechts zum Friedhof*,” 33, for anecdote.)

- *German officers* – See, *H. Stieff* (FPB); *Maj-Gen. Henning von Treschow* (AGC conspirators, etc.; *GFM v. Kluge vs. Reichenau, Manstein*, etc.)²⁴⁵

Gen.-Obst Rudolf Schmidt (convinced anti-Nazi; issued orders in early **1942** for better treatment of POWs/civilians (See, *C. Hartmann*, Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg, Prolog); also General Erich Hoepner, etc.

- Anecdote: Ca. **Oct 41**, *H. Stuehlmeier* (**6. ID**)²⁴⁶ noted that following rumor was making the rounds in his unit: “Nach einem sofortigen Gegenangriff wurden ein paar dt. Soldaten wieder befreit. Die Russen hatten sie mit der Zunge auf den Tisch genagelt. Diese Geschichte wurde damals in unserer Kp. erzahlt. . . . Ist das wirklich die Wahrheit gewesen? Aber nach allem, was wir in spaeteren Jahren erlebt u. erfahren haben, koennte das tatsaechlich passiert sein.” Stuehl-meyer also indicates that, about the same time, his father heard exactly the same rumor in a restaurant (which is hardly surprising, given the regional recruitment policies of *Wehrmacht*. Other soldiers on leave might have brought the rumor home, or talked about it in *Feldpost*. (Ltr, *H. Stuehlmeier* to *C. Luther*, 25 Jan 08; in his personal file)

g) *Soviet war crimes*²⁴⁷

Note (Historical analogy): The Russians had already implemented a scorched-earth policy while retreating in **1915** [i.e., in WWI]. . . . During the war the Russians also conducted forced deportations of ca. **200,000** ethnic Germans, at least **500,000** Jews, **300,000** Lithuanians, **250,000** Latvians, and **743,000** ethnic Poles from tsarist Poland and the Baltic to the East. (*Thomas Weber*, Hitler’s First War, 181-82)

Note: Massenverbrechen gehoerten zum Charakter des sowj. Systems. (For „thumbnail“ sketch of these crimes see, *F.W. Seidler*, Verbrechen, 43)

Note: Soviet “*Greuelpropaganda*” against the Germans played a major role in unleashing Red Army barbarism on *Wehrmacht* soldiers: “Der Hass der sowj. Propagandisten war von *barbarischer Wildheit*. (See, *Seidler*, Verbrechen, 40)

- From opening hours of war (*H. Haape*, etc.)
Examples of Soviet violations of laws and usages of war

²⁴⁴ **Note**: This does not mean of course that most supported acts of extermination, or that they participated in such actions.

²⁴⁵ **Note**: See biographies of Stieff, Treschow, GFM v. Kluge, etc., in: Notebook #1. See also, *Freiherr v. Boeselager* files.

²⁴⁶ **Note**: Per his request, do not cite him by name in book. Use initials “H.S.”

²⁴⁷ **Note**: For details see, **II:144**, ff.; also, my “*Ostfrontkaempfer*” questionnaires.

Germans clearly shocked by brutal nature of their enemy

- Missachtung des Roten Kreuzes: Die Angehoerigen der Roten Armee waren durch keine voelkerrechtlichen Verpflichtungen gebunden. . . Die sowj. Truppenfuehrung ignorierte, als der Krieg begann, das Zeichen des Roten Kreuzes. Deutsche Verwundeten u. vorgeschobene HVP, die mit einer weithin sichtbaren Rotkreuz-Fahne gekennzeichnet waren, zogen in besonderm Masse feindl. Artl.-Feuer auf sich, so dass schliesslich das Ausflaggen unterlassen wurde, weil es keinen Schutz bot. Da auch die dt. Feldsanitaeter, die eine Rotkreuz-Armbinde trugen u. waffenlos waren, bei ihrer Gefangennahme zusammen mit den Verwundeten gemeuchelt wurden, erhielten sie zum Schutz der Verwundeten eine Pistole 38. Das Anlegen der Rotkreuz-Armbinde wurde ihnen untersagt, um sie vor Scharfschuetzen, denen sie eine deutlich sichtbares Ziel boten, zu bewahren. (See, *F.W. Seidler*, Verbrechen an der Wehrmacht, 32-33)

- Late **Jun 41**: Sowj. Versprengten in der Gegend noerdl. von Minsk hatten im Ruecken der **7. PD** mehrfach Ruecktransporte von Verwundeten *voelkerrechtswidrig* ueberfall. (*Hoth*, Pz.-Operationen, 64)

- ca. **20** years of Soviet indoctrination had instilled furious hatred of outsiders (particularly of Germans)

- **Aug 41**: Despatches submitted during **Aug 41** by Army Group South contained reports of the first atrocities committed by Soviet troops. They were *so appalling that even Hitler was doubtful*, and he sent me to Nikolayev to check w/ **16 PD**. I spoke there w/ General Hube and a very good friend of mine, Udo v. Alvensleben. They described to me the discovery of the corpses of more than **100** murdered soldiers of **6./IR 79** at Grigovo station. At another place German prisoners had been drawn and quartered alive. Our troops had responded accordingly. When I explained the facts to Hitler at Wolfsschanze he thought about it for some time and said finally that General Staff ought to know; then they might take a different view of the sort of enemy we were fighting against. (v. *Below*, At Hitler's Side, 112; **III:54**)

- Treatment of German prisoners.²⁴⁸ *Andreas Hilger* macht ueberzeugend klar, dass die Sowjetunion das Kriegsgefangenenwesen zwar „intern, ohne formale Bindung an voelkerrechtlichen Vorschriften“ (S. 50) regelte, aber durch die eigene Gesetzgebung eine *sehr grosse Naehe* zu eben diesen Vorschriften herbeifuehrte. . . Er bleibt damit aber nicht stehen, sondern geht auch den Ausnahmen von der Regel nach: die Wechselwirkung von Propagandahetze u. Uebergriffe auf Gefangenen, vor allem Gefangenenerschuessungen, die (schlechte) Unterbringung u. Ernaehrung, die Ausbeutung durch den Arbeitseinsatz, das Verwirrspiel um die tatsaechliche Zahl deutscher Kriegsgefangener . . . Fazit: Die Sowjetunion *hielt grundsaeztlich an den voelkerrechtlichen Normen fest*, ordnete sie aber im Zweifelsfall ihren nationalen Interessen unter. (*Rezension*, Joerg Morre, „*Andreas Hilger: Deutsche Kriegsgefangene in der Sowjetunion 1941-56.*“) („*War Crimes*“ file)
(Note: In the literature there is confusion over a) total number of German POWs in Russia; and, b) total who perished in captivity. According to *Simon Rees*, “officially, the Soviet Union took **2,388,000** Germans and **1,097,000** combatants from other European nations as prisoners during and just after the war. *More than a million of the German*

²⁴⁸ **Note**: In first months of war (thru **Dec 41**), only about **26,000** Germans were captured by Soviet forces. After the Battle of Moscow and the retreat of the German forces the number of prisoners in Soviet POW camps rose to **120,000**. (“*Wikipedia*” article cited below.)

captives died.") (See S. Rees, "German POWs and the Art of Survival," in: "War Crimes" file.)

(According to Ruediger Overmanns & Richard Overy, an estimated **374,000** out of **3.3** million German POWs²⁴⁹ died in Soviet labor camps. The official Soviet number was **356,700**²⁵⁰ deaths (mortality rate between **14%** and **30%**, depending on total POW numbers). An estimate by a special commission says that almost a million of German prisoners died in the Soviet camps between **1941-52.**) (See, Wikipedia, "German prisoners of war in the Soviet Union," in "War Crimes" file.)

-- German POWs: Die Verordnung des Rats der Volkskommissare ueber Kriegsgefangene vom **1. Jul 41** . . . erreichte die groesste Naehue aller sowj. Erlasse zu den aktuellen voelkerrechtlichen Bestimmungen. Die UdSSR war also offensichtlich willens, die voelkerrechtlichen Standards der Kriegsgefangenenbehandlung grundsaeztlich zu beachten. (53) . . . Trotzdem sind zahlreiche Verstoesse schon gegen seinen elementaren Grundsatz, die Schonung des Lebens der Gefangenen, belegt. (55) . . . Gerade fuer den Zustaendigkeitsbereich der Roten Armee hat die Forschung eine ganze Reihe von Belegen fuer Folterungen, Verstuemmelungen u. Ermordungen von Gefangenen zusammengetragen. Das Ausmass ist in seiner Entwicklung ueber die Kriegsjahre hinweg unbekannt. (56-57) . . . Befehle zur Gefangenenerschiessung sind in Einzelfaellen bis zur Divisionsebene hinauf belegt. (58-59) . . . Die sowj. Propaganda an die Rote Armee erschwerte die Durchsetzung [bei der Truppe] humanitaerer Grundsaeetze. Dass nicht zuletzt die fruehen Verlautbaren Stalins die Konfusion der kaempfernden Truppe hinsichtlich der wirklichen Ziele u. Wuensche ihres obersten Befehlshabers verstaerkten, zeigte die Aussage eines sowj. Leutnants: (siehe S. 59-60) . . . Es ist davon auszugehen, dass Gefangenenerschiessungen gerade in den ersten Monaten des Krieges bei den ohnehin seltenen Gefangennahmen keine Ausnahme darstellten. Anders lassen sich umfangreiche Presseberichte u. ihre ausfuehrliche Wuerdigung durch Stalin sowie der dezidierte Gegenbefehl vom **23. Feb 42** nicht sinnvoll erklaren. (siehe S. 60-61). . . Die Ueberlebenschance der Soldaten, die bis **1943/44** von Partisaneneinheiten gefangengenommen wurden, war dabei allerdings wohl grundsaeztlich geringer. (61) . . . Die sowj. Seite zeigte sich frueh am Arbeitseinsatz deutscher Kriegsgefangener nach Kriegsende interessiert. (68) . . . Die sowj. Kriegsgefangenenverwaltung registrierte fast **2,4 Millionen deutsche Kriegsgefangene**: Von **2.388.443** kriegsgefangenen Deutschen wurden nach einer Aufstellung der Gefaengnisabteilung des **MVD 2.031.743** Gefangene repatriiert, **356.687** verstarben in der Gefangenschaft. (71) (*Andreas Hilger, Deutsche Kriegsgefangene in der Sowjetunion 1941-56*, 48-71)

-- For shooting of German doctors, medical orderlies, firing on Red Cross vehicles, mutilation and murder of captured German soldiers, etc., from first day of Operation "Barbarossa," see, **II:150**, ff.

(Eg.: "Erste Ueberfaelle aus dem Hinterhalt werden festgestellt. Feldwachen sind erstochen u. graesslich verstuemmelt.) (*H. Boucsein, Halten oder Sterben*, **129. ID**, ca. 15)

(Eg.: "Wir hatten den Schwerpunkt des Angriffes. Von den **6** Aerzten des Regiments ist einer gefallen (Kopfschuss) u. einer verwundet. Dazu sind auch **4** Krankentraeger gefallen. . . . – Viel Arbeit habe ich gehabt u. oft unter schweren Maschinengewehrfeuer Kameraden verbunden.") (*Tagebuch, Haape*, **6. ID**)

(Eg.: "[vor Bialystok]: ...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

²⁴⁹ **Note:** This **3.3** million figure may include not only Germans but allied troops as well.

²⁵⁰ **Note:** This figure apparently taken from A. Hilger. See his, Deutsche Kriegsgefangene in der Sowjetunion 1941-56, 71; also, Tabelle III, S. 137.

abgeschnitten. Wir gingen mit ernsten Gesichtern umher, denn vor dieser Art des Kampfes bekamen wir Angst. Zwangsläufig, entwickelte sich auch auf unserer Seite *eine unnatuerliche Haert*, die uns in der Ausbildung nicht anerzogen worden war.“ (Uffz.Fritz Huebner, *Echolot*, 24-25)²⁵¹

- Horrific mutilation of German prisoners/wounded, etc.
(WUSt.: “Schon die erste Niederschrift behandelte **45** Faelle russischer Mordtaten,²⁵² die sich allein in den Tagen vom **22.** bis zum **30. Jun 41** zugetragen haben, darunter viele Massen-morde, die groesstenteils unter Anwendung grausamster Mittel vollzogen wurden.“ See, *Seidler*, Verbrechen, 65; also, *personal accounts*)
- However, summary executions of German soldiers immediately upon capture began to become a problem for the Russians – eg., captured Germans were not interrogated, denying Red Army key intelligence; murder of POWs only served to stiffen German resistance, etc. Hence, attempt made to at least end the immediate killing of POWs (Red Army soldiers assured that the Germans they brought to the rear for interrogation would be executed later!); this attempt not always successful.
(Note: For Stalin’s order of **6 Nov 41** (in his radio address) to kill all Germans and ethnic Germans on Russian soil see, *Seidler*, 68-69)
- Use of proscribed munitions (i.e., “Dum-Dum” bullets) by Soviets. See, *Seidler*, Verbrechen, 264-72; **II:148-49** (letters from *H. Stockhoff*, *H. Stuehlmeier*), etc.
- Soviet Partisans:²⁵³ Die Partisanen standen *ausserhalb des Voelkerrechts*, weil sie gegen den Artikel 1 der *Haager Landkriegsordnung* verstiessen. Ihre Hinrichtung war voelkerrechtlich nicht zu beanstanden. Auch *Repressalien* gegen die Zivilbevoelkerung – so „ungerecht“ sie im Sinne einer hoeheren Moral auch sind – waren erlaubt, wenn Attentaeter u. Saboteure nicht gefasst werden konnten u. der Verdacht bestand, sie wuerden gedeckt. (*Franz W. Seidler* (Hrsg.), Verbrechen an die Wehrmacht, 10)
(For details re: „*Der voelkerrechtswidrige Partisanenkrieg*“ see, *Seidler*, 29-32)
- Findings of the *Wehrmachtuntersuchungsstelle*, etc.
(For several hundred examples covering **1941/42** see, *Franz W. Seidler* (Hrsg.), Verbrechen an die Wehrmacht; also, **II:147-48**)
(Note: Die Ausschreitungen der Polen gegen die volksdt. Minderheit u. gegen verwundete dt. Soldaten in den ersten Kriegstagen veranlassten die *Wehrmachtfuehrung* zur Gruendung einer offiziellen Untersuchungsinstanz. Sie wurde von der Op.Abt. im Wehrmachtfuehrungsstab angeregt u. von Hitler als O.B. der Wehrmacht gebilligt. Die entsprechende Verfueung vom **4.9.39**, die Gen.Obst. Keitel as Chef des **OKW** unterschrieb, lautete: “Beim [**OKW**] ist eine

²⁵¹ **Note:** All of these incidents took place on first day of the war.

²⁵² **Note:** For summaries of more than **300** individual cases see, *Seidler*, 71, ff.

²⁵³ **Note:** For historical analogies to Napoleon’s invasion of Russia see, Adam Zamoyski, Moscow 1812, 325-30. Some peasants began to ambush French foraging parties, venting their rage on their captives “in acts of barely believable savagery, mutilating them, burying them alive or roasting them over fires.” The French and their allies “responded in kind.” Denis Davidov, an officer of Hussars in **2. Army** – later to be immortalized by Tolstoy in the guise of Denisov in War and Peace – conducted partisan operations in the French rear. There were also numbers of peasants who formed guerrilla bands. But modern Russian historians “are generally agreed that there was no *guerrilla* that could bear any comparison w/ the Spanish model.”

‘Wehrmacht-Untersuchungsstelle fuer Verletzungen des Voelkerrechts’ gebildet worden mit der Aufgabe. . . See, *Seidler, Verbrechen*, 45)²⁵⁴

- Soviets “murdered and mistreated [POWs] on a larger scale [than the Germans],” as few as **10%** of German prisoners of war survived the Soviet prison camps,²⁵⁵ and that this is the figure used by the MGFA. (*John Mosier, Deathride. Hitler and Stalin: The Eastern Front, 1941-45*, 13, 17)
(Es gibt tausende Augenzeugenberichte, dass die sich Ergebenden erschossen wurden. . . . Von den **1941/42** in sowj. Gefangenschaft geratenen dt. Soldaten ueberlebten nur **5%** den Krieg. . . Von den **3.15** Millionen dt. Kriegsgefangenen starben **1.1** Millionen. Das Schicksal von **360.000** ist ungeklaert. For more details see, *F.W. Seidler, Verbrechen*, 33-34, 44)
- Barbaric crimes committed by **NKVD** on Russian people during war “dressed up” to look like German war crimes. (**Note:** Be careful addressing this issue. It appears that a **Nov 41** decree of Stalin has been *doctored!*) (See, *William R. Corson & Robert T. Crowley, The New KGB. Engine of Soviet Power.*)
- Deportation of ethnic groups: For background on Soviet deportations of *Crimean Tartars*, *Volga Germans*, etc. see, **II:146-47**.
- *Vertreibung* der Ostdeutschen. Millions in East Prussia, eastern Germany, flee Red Army spearheads in late **1944** early **1945**.
Many swallowed up in maelstrom that was final weeks/months of war. Russians use *rape as a systematic weapon of war and terror*. (*De Zayas*, etc.)
- Killing of Germans, ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsch*) continued after the war
Recent discoveries of mass graves throughout eastern Europe – Poland, Hungary, former Czechoslovakia, former Yugoslavia, etc.
(See articles in “*Atrocities*,” file; Massaker von Marienburg, etc.)

VIII: GERMAN BOMBERS OVER MOSCOW – FAILURE OF A “STRATEGIC” BOMBING CAMPAIGN

a) *Luftwaffe & strategic bombing mission*

Note: Prevailing *Luftwaffe* doctrine of air-ground cooperation a consequence of German experience in WWI and Spain; Seeckt conceived of the *Luftwaffe* as an auxiliary instrument for land offensives to enhance power of attacking armies. Interdiction was to him more remunerative than strategic air bombing. (*Horst Boog, “Higher Command and Leadership in the German Luftwaffe, 1935-1945,”* in: Air Power and Warfare. The Proceedings of the 8th

²⁵⁴ **Note:** The field work and findings of the WUST. were meticulous and above reproach. The agency was serious about its credibility. Findings supported by witness statements (under oath), photographs, medical & forensics investigations, etc. *Seidler*: “Die Untersuchungsergebnisse der [WUST.] umfassten bis zum Kriegsende **226** Aktenbaende. Sie enthielten rund **8000** dokumentierte Faelle. Nach dem Krieg wurden die Unterlagen in die USA ueberfuehrt u. kamen mit grossen Luecken **1968** wieder nach Deutschland zurueck.” (48, 55)

²⁵⁵ **Note:** I don’t believe this figure is accurate.

Military History Symposium USAF Academy 18-20 October 1978. (Article in one of my "GAF files.")

Note: For great background on topic of *Luftwaffe* and "strategic" bombing in **1930s** see, Williamson Murray, Strategy for Defeat, 1-21)

(German interest in a "strategic" air weapon goes back to the early days of the First World War. . . Yet in **1930s** Germany lacked the designers, industrial capacity, or experience to build a "strategic" bomber fleet. Murray also addresses Wever's doctrinal thinking; the Air Ministry's cancellation in **1936** of development of the four-engine Dornier **Do 19** and Junkers **Ju 89**, because suitable engines were not yet available from the German acft industry; discusses **He 177** project, which began in **1937** and ultimately failed. Author avers that the *Luftwaffe's* doctrinal thinking "remained enamored w/ 'strategic' bombing throughout the **1930s**." He also enumerates the reasons for failure of *Luftwaffe* to develop a strategic bombing force. However, he makes clear "that Germany was not able to wage a successful 'strategic' bombing campaign in **1940** [and **1941/42** over Russia for that matter] reflected merely the fact that German air strategists in the prewar period, like those of other nations, had *considerably overestimated their ability to inflict punishing damage w/ the weapons at hand.*"

-- Would be impolitic to begin this chapter w/ discussion of German inability to develop a true strategic bomber (story well-known)
(See, *J. Mosier, Deathride*, Chptr. 2)

-- Early examples of
Warsaw, Rotterdam, Belgrade, etc.

-- Lack of preparation for strategic bombing mission
German air doctrine
Wanting capabilities of German medium bombers
Ju 88, He 111, Do 17, etc.
No long-range, strategic (four-engine) bomber

-- "Strategic bombing" in its infancy in **1941/42**. Writes Paul Fussell: "Navigation through winds and clouds and turbulence presented such problems that as early as **Aug 41**, it was clear to even the most naïve in RAF Bomber Command that on a typical mission 'only one in ten of the bombers found its way to w/in **5** miles of the assigned target.'" In the first German raids on London, when **500** tons of bombs were dropped, only half fell on the land at all, and only **30** tons hit London. One memorable ironic action occurred on **10 May 40**, when a *Luftwaffe* squadron, setting out to bomb Dijon, by some error dropped its load on its own civilians in Freiburg-im-Breisgau, killing **57** of them. . ." (Wartime. Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War, 14)

-- **Note:** For useful background on German bombers, types of munitions, etc., see, *inter alia*, **I:483**, ff.; *Eric Brown, Wings of the Luftwaffe*; *Manfred Griehl, German Bombers over Russia*; *Robert Stedman, Kampfflieger: Bomber Crewmen of the Luftwaffe 1939-45*; *Jerry Scutts, Luftwaffe Bomber Units 1939-41*. Former **He 111** navigator *George Zirk* writes: "The [**He 111**] was easy to fly for a skilled pilot. I flew it on occasions on the way home, having a C glider license. The cockpit was roomy but very drafty, no heat. At **5000** m it was **-34 C**. in winter. After several hrs. in the air it was very cold. But as a Nav., I was very busy and had no time to thing about the cold." (*Email to C. Luther, 14 Jan 05*, in: Notebook #5, "*Ostfrontkaempfer*;" also, *G. Zirk, Red Griffins over Russia*)

b) Soviet efforts to prepare air defenses of city

- **Jul 41:** For excellent account of the frantic Soviet efforts to defend and camouflage Moscow against air attack see, *Janusz Piekalkiewicz, Die Schlacht um Moskau: Die erfrorene Offensive*, 89-90. (See also, Notebook #2.)

c) German aerial bombardment of Moscow

- Hitler orders bombing of Soviet capital
Rationale for (Fuehrerweisung Nr. **33** am **19.7.41** verlangt: “. . . Der Angriff auf Moskau mit Kampfkraefte der **Luftflotte 2**, voruebergehend verstaerkt durch Kampfkraefte aus dem Westen, is als Vergeltung fuer die sowjetruss. Angriffe gegen Bukarest u. Helsinki sobald als moeglich zu fuehren!“ (*W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 67)
- In addition to the great demands made on the Luftwaffe’s dwindling resources, three weeks into the campaign Hitler insisted upon “terror air raids” to be launched against Moscow. Extraneous to its duel tasks of suppressing Soviet air activity, and providing tactical support to the Army, the demands of a strategic bombing campaign were well beyond the capacity of the Luftwaffe. Kesselring spoke of a “harmful dissipation,” while Bock wanted the Luftwaffe concentrated “without any limitation to smash the enemy’s reserves.” Yet, as Warlimont explains, the raids had nothing to do w/ the operational objectives of the campaign, Hitler ordered them in reprisal for Soviet raids against Bucharest and Helsinki. (*D. Stahel, “And the World held its Breath,”* 201 (**XIII:117**); *Kesselring, Memoirs*, 94; *R. Muller, German Air War in Russia*, 51-54)
- **21.7.41:** First bombing mission
Describe in detail (**I:493**, ff; also, *Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 67-68 for good details and battle report)
- Soviet air defenses
Describe in detail
(According to *W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, these defenses were dramatically increased in a matter of days following first German attack.)
- Describe several missions (in some detail / **I:493**, ff., *Haupt, Sturm*, etc.)
Personal accounts

d) Total missions & results (thru early 1942)

- Results minimal (compare w/ Anglo-American bomber offensive!)
(See, *Horst Boog’s* section in, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 802-14. Boog provides examples comparing level of German “strategic” air attacks against Leningrad and Moscow w/ those of the Anglo-American bomber offensive in **1944/45** (they are very illustrative!)
- Science of targeting (i.e., matching weapons to targets) still in infancy
(Examples)

- Significance of failure to conduct serious strategic bombing campaign
 - Minor efforts made in **1941/42** (cite examples)
 - (See, *Horst Boog's* section in, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 802-14; also, **I:470-72**).
 - More "serious" efforts in **1943/44** (examples)
 - (Only in **1943** did *Luftwaffe* come to the view that Army support in a defensive ground battle in the East was not a war-winner. Strategic air power was, in theory, another weapon that Germany could employ against the USSR. . . In the summer of **1943**, just before the Battle of Kursk, the German **6th Air Fleet** (based behind Army Group Ctr), mounted isolated but relatively large night raids (**100** medium bombers) against the important Russian industrial centres of Gor'kii – Iaroslavl' – Saratov. But late **1943** was the first time since the Battle of Britain in **1940** that "independent" bombing operations were actually conceived by the German planners as a main element of *Luftwaffe* activity. (For more details²⁵⁶ see, *E. Mawdsley*, Thunder in the East, 219-20; see also, *R. Muller*, The German Air War in Russia, Chpr 5)

e) *Soviet strategic bombing*

- VVS air raids on Berlin (**10** raids during **Aug-Sep 41**); also bomber strikes on key Axis industrial facilities (Koenigsberg, Danzig, Helsinki, Warsaw, Ploesti, etc.) (See, *M. N. Kozhevnikov*, The Command and Staff of the Soviet Army Air Force in the Great Patriotic War 1941-45, 50)
- **6.8.41**: Russians respond to German aerial attacks on Moscow w/ a token bomber raid on Berlin by **18** Ilyushin **Il-4s** of the Baltic Red Banner Fleet's torpedo/mine air wing on **6 Aug 41**. German raids on Moscow will prompt more bombing by Soviet long-range air force in **Sep 41**, but advance of *Ostheer* quickly puts most Russian airfields beyond range of Berlin. (*C. Winchester*, Hitler's War on Russia, 71)

IX: OPERATION "TYPHOON:" THE ADVANCE ON MOSCOW, PHASE I (Oct 41)²⁵⁷

Quote: "*Auf die Witterung kann man keine Operationen bauen, wohl aber auf die Jahreszeit.*" (GFM. v. Moltke nach dem Feldzug **1864**, quoted in: *Hoth*, Pz.-Operationen, 129-30)

Quote: Betr.: *Die Konzentration der Kraefte*: „*Die beste Strategie ist immer recht stark zu sein, zuerst ueberhaupt u. demnaechst auf dem entscheidenden Punkt. Daher gibt es ausser der Anstrengung, welche die Kraefte schafft, u. die nicht immer vom Feldherrn ausgeht, kein*

²⁵⁶ **Note:** For example, the lack of a German heavy bomber. The (highly flawed) **He 177** only became available in small numbers in summer of **1944**. Also discussion of plan – ultimately abortive – for major German air op (some **8** bomber groups) against Soviet electrical power generating stations near Gork'ii – Moscow – Iaroslavl' in **Nov 43** (Operation "Eisenhammer.") (220)

²⁵⁷ **Note:** For interesting reflections on "Taifun" see, **IMPB:15-16**. For account by AGC chief of staff see, **FMS T-28**: "*Battle of Moscow (41-42)*." Gen. Hans v. Greiffenberg, *et al.*

hoeheres u. einfacheres Gesetz fuer die Strategie als das: seine Kraefte zusammenhalten.
(Clausewitz, Vom Kriege; quoted in: H. Hinterhuber, Wettbewerbsstrategie, 21)²⁵⁸

Quote: Es ist eine alte Wahrheit, dass der Anfangserfolg des Angreifers noch nicht seinen endgueltigen Sieg bedeutet; „wegen des Kulminationspunkt . . . gibt es nur einen Erfolg, naemlich den Enderfolg. Bis dahin ist nichts entschieden, nichts gewonnen, nichts verloren.“ (Clausewitz, Vom Kriege, quoted in: H. Hinterhuber, Wettbewerbsstrategie, 23)

Quote: „Zu der Rechnung mit einer bekannten u. einer unbekannten Groesse – dem eigenen u. dem feindl. Willen – treten noch dritte Faktoren, die sich vollends jeder Voraussicht entziehen, Witterung, Krankheiten u. Eisenbahnunfaelle . . . kurz alle die Einwirkungen, welche man Zufall, Verhaengnis oder hoehere Fuegung nennen mag, die aber der Mensch weder schafft noch beherrscht.“ (H. Hinterhuber, Wettbewerbsstrategie, 44)

Note: Another proposition of Clausewitz holds that for reasons of *time, space* and *energy*²⁵⁹ the offensive gradually weakens until a “*culminating point*” is reached – the stage beyond which the attacker can no longer easily defend himself against a counterattack. For example, the German advance on the Marne in **Sep 1914**. (Peter Paret, “Clausewitz,” in: Makers of Modern Strategy, 205)

Note: For plethora of details on nature of fall/winter weather, sunlight differentials, detailed temperature readings see, **IV:7**, ff.)

Note: For Napoleon’s march into Moscow [ca. **14 Sep 1812**] – how his men marveled at “one of the most beautiful cities in the world,” the fire that destroyed **2/3** of the city, the degeneration into looting and raping, etc. – see, Adam Zamoyski, Moscow 1812, 296-315)
(For details of *Grande Armee’s* stay in Moscow, see, Zamoyski, 337-57.)²⁶⁰

Note: For status of all three German army groups as of **30 Sep 41** see, G. Blau, German Campaign in Russia, 77-78; **III:170-71**)

Note: For status of all three German army groups from **7.10.-8.11.41** see, G. Blau, German Campaign in Russia, 80-81; **III:250-51**)

a) *Planning the “final” push*

Note: For an *exhaustive list* of critical planning events, critical dates, etc., see, GSWW, Vol. IV, Attack on the Soviet Union, 664-72; **III:206-08**).
(For more planning details, **III:208**, ff.)

Note: Objective of „*Barbarossa*“ was to shatter the Soviet military forces west of the Dniepr-Dvina Rivers – and in process shatter the Soviet state – in campaign of **7-10** weeks; in other

²⁵⁸ **Note:** A critical maxim, in view of just how quickly the “*Schwerpunkt*” of the attack on Moscow was weakened and forces sent in excentric directions (Kalinin, Kursk, etc.)

²⁵⁹ **Note:** According to Clausewitz, force, time, space and psychological elements signified “the operative elements in war.” (Paret, 197)

²⁶⁰ **Note:** Napoleon took up residence in the Kremlin, where he occupied the same apartment overlooking the river Moskva and part of the city as Alexander had a few weeks before. . . His copy of Voltaire’s history of Charles XII was always w/in reach. (337)

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 clear objectives. With failure of “*Barbarossa*,” the war became a *war of attrition* (“*Abnutzungskrieg*”) for which Germany was patently unprepared and which she could perform never win. (IX:71)

- **Sep 41:** As the preparations for the offensive [“*Taifun*”] take almost the whole month, Army Group Centre and its subordinate commands have sufficient time to plan this new operation in detail and to test its validity by means of map exercises. (K. Reinhardt, “*Moscow 1941*,” 211)

- **4.9.41:** At start of planning for operation, Halder had himself informed on combat-readiness of armored divisions. On **4 Sep 41**, **30%** of tanks were completely out of action; **23%** were in overhaul (which at this time was still done in Germany). **125** tanks had been provided as replacements. Halder attempts to improve situation by requesting release of **181** more tanks, which together w/ the **125** already in Orsha and Daugavpils, would raise combat-readiness of tank divisions by **10%**. However, of these **181** additional tanks, only **30** are Mark IVs; the rest are Mark IIIs (**95**) and Czech P-38s (**56**). These tanks are stationed in Magdeburg and Vienna and thus are not taken from the new production for newly raised units. Shortfall of motor vehicles is estimated at **22%**. Situation w/ regard to fuel was similar. To transfer units, replenish supplies, etc., **27** trains are needed daily in **Sep 41**. OKW is unable to promise this figure until end of month. For ops in **Oct 41**, requirements are estimated at **29** trains per day, but only **20** can be promised. (GSWW, Vol. IV, 667-70);

- **5.9.41:** Reluctantly, Hitler gives in to urgings of Brauchitsch, Halder and Bock and consents to resumption of drive on Moscow. Halder sees Hitler on afternoon of **5 Sep.**, and now the Fuehrer, his mind made up, is in a hurry to get to the Kremlin. “Get started on the central front within **8 to 10** days,” he orders. “Impossible,” Halder exclaims in his diary. “Encircle them, beat and destroy them,” Hitler adds, promising to return to Army Group Ctr Guderian’s panzer group (still heavily engaged in the Ukraine) and Reinhardt’s tank corps from the Leningrad front. (Shirer, Rise and Fall, 859; Halder KTB)

- **6.9.41:** As late as this date, Hitler wanted the attack on Moscow fixed for the first third of September, which clearly reveals to what extent he had already come under the *pressure of time*. (K. Reinhardt, “*Moscow 1941*,” 212)

- **6.9.41:** Having, as he thought, safeguarded his flanks by the clearing ops in the areas of Kiev, Velikiye Luki, Staraya Russa and Demyansk, Hitler issued on **6 Sep 41** the order for the thrust on Moscow in Directive 35. (Seaton, Russo-German War, 176)

- **6.9.41:** Hitler issues Directive No. **35**, calling for operation against Moscow. “In the final analysis, it was [the] commitment of Jodl [i.e., to assault on Moscow], plus Goering’s promise to neutralize Leningrad w/ airpower, that *finally swayed Hitler* in the fall of **1941** to attempt the taking of Moscow. Ultimately, too, Guderian’s insistence on the importance of the capture of the Soviet capital for troop morale . . . had a decisive influence on Hitler. (See, *Fugate & Dvoretzky*, Thunder on the Dnepr, 334; also, W. Hubatsch, Hitlers Weisungen fuer die Kriegfuehrung)

- **6.9.41:** Hitler issues a new directive base on recommendations made by Army High Command. The prerequisites for a decisive offensive existed in Army Gp Ctr area now that Leningrad is

encircled and the early destruction of the Russian forces facing Army Gp South can be anticipated. The plan calls for envelopment of Soviet units west of Vyazma by a pincers attack to be launched at end of September. For this purpose two armored forces are to be concentrated near Roslavl and east of Velizh. Only after bulk of Timoshenko's forces have been annihilated are the attack forces to launch a pursuit in the direction of Moscow along a front extending from the Oka River on the right to the upper Volga on the left.

The directive conforms to recommendations of **OKH**, except for the deadline. The Army is doubtful whether mobile elements of **2 PzGr** can be moved up by end of September. To avoid any delay, it is decided that the armored force whose assembly was near Roslavl would be controlled by **4 PzGr HQ**, which was to be transferred from Army Gp North. This attack force is to consist of the **10 PD**, in the Roslavl area; **2** and **5 PD**, to be transferred from **OKH** reserve; the **11 PD**, to be transferred from Army Gp South; and the **19** and **20 PD**, to be transferred from Army Gp North.

The armored force to be concentrated near Velizh, is to be led by **3 PzGr**, whose HQ is already established in this area. This force is to be composed of the **7 PD**, in the Velizh area; and the **1 PD** and **6 PD**, to be transferred from Army Gp North. Many difficulties were encountered in performing the lateral displacements necessitated by the assembly of **3** and **4 PzGr**, some elements of which had to move several hundred miles. As soon as it reverted to Army Gp Ctr, Guderian's **2 PzGr**, composed of **3, 4, 9, 17, 18 PD**, is to make a wide enveloping sweep from Glukhov toward Orel.

The mission of Army Gp South is clear cut: After the battle at Kiev, it is to advance toward Rostov and Kharkov. During this drive the northern wing is to be so strengthened that it can provide flank protection for the advancing Army Gp Ctr. Army Gp North is to tighten its grip on Leningrad and, at the same time, reinforce its flank along the Volkhov River and south of Lake Ilmen. The latter flank was particularly important in that its reinforcement provided simultaneous protection for Army Gp Ctr. (*G. Blau, German Campaign in Russia, 75-76*)

- **11.9.41:** Hitler once again is forced to *reverse priorities in war production*: the army and the AA defenses had to be put on top once more so that the German army could carry on in the East and the home front be defended against British air attacks. The navy and air force would have to wait. (*G. Weinberg, Global History of WWII, 270*)
- Army Group Center prepares for offensive
GFM v. Bock (KTB?)
(See, **IV:176**, ff.; useful details on German preparations (and Soviet counter-preparations) in: *J. Piekalkiewicz, Die Schlacht um Moskau: Die erfrorene Offensive, 104-06*)
- The Operational Plan (**III:264**)
Another double envelopment (yet w/ shallower operational depth)
(For the *operative Ueberlegungen* of **PzGr 3** see, *Hoth, Pz.-Operationen, 131, ff.*)
- Deutsche Luftaufklaerung sowie Funkaufklaerung der Abwehrdienststellen des Heeres meldeten Mitte **Sep 41** etwa genau die Aufstellung der „Roten Armee“ gegenueber der H.Gr.Mitte. (See, *W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau, 98-99*)
- **19.9.41:** An diesem Tage erhielt dieses Unternehmen den Decknamen „*Taifun*.“ (*Ueberschaer, Scheitern des Unternehmens „Barbarossa“, 154*)

- **26.9.41:** Erliess die H.Gr.Mitte nachstehenden Befehl (Auszug) zum Angriff: (See, *Hofmann*, „*Schlacht von Moskau*,“ 148-49; **III:223-25**)
- **26.-27.9.41:** Attack order for Operation „Taifun“ is issued on **26 Sep 41**. Although in the last week of **Sep 41** the concentration [of forces] had not yet been completed, GFM v. Bock was pushing for an early attack so as to take advantage of the weather, which was still good. On **27 Sep 41** he set the time for launch of the attack for **2 Oct 41** at **5.30 a.m.** **2 PzGr** was even to start on **30 Sep 41**. . . OKH plans assumed that Operation „Taifun,“ and w/ it the Eastern campaign, would be completed by the end of **Nov 41** and that they could then finally begin resting and re-equipping the army. (For details of attack plan see, *K. Reinhardt*, *Moscow – The Turning Point*, 59-60)

b) *Assembling the strike force (Aufmarsch “Taifun”)*

- Note:** For losses of H.Gr.Mitte thru early **Sep 41** see, *W. Haupt*, *Sturm auf Moskau*, 95-97. He notes, *inter alia*, losses of **9. AK** thru **5.9.41** (i.e., **12,700** Mann); losses of **PzGr 2 & 3**: “Der Zahl von **1736** Kampfwagen am **22.6.41** standen am **4.9.41** nur noch **669** einsatzbereite Kampfwagen gegenueber.”
- Return of armor & air units (Richthofen) from Army Group North; Guderian returns from south. (For examples of *Marschleistungen* see, FMS **P-190**, in: **VI:113**)
(**Note:** Auch zahlreiche Stugs u. schwere Artl., hauptsaechlich Abgaben der H.Gr.Nord, waren an die entscheidende Front herangefuehrt. *Hoth*, *Pz.-Operationen*, 129)
 - Die Bewegungen der Inf.- u. Pz.-Div. der **2. Armee** u. **PzGr 2** fuer das „Unternehmen *Taifun*“ begannen bereits Mitte **Sep 41**, nachdem sie aus der Umfassungsfront von Kiew herausfielen oder zur Endphase dieser Schlacht nicht mehr gebraucht wurden. Von diesen Bewegungen berichteten z.B. *Tagebuchaufzeichnungen* von Offizieren u. Mannschaften. . . (For two interesting reports see, *W. Haupt*, *Sturm auf Moskau*, 101)
 - Movements of **41. PzK** from Army Group North to Army Group Center in late **Sep 41** had to be accomplished “on foot” (no by rail), thus tracked vehicles suffered large numbers of breakdowns; not all elements of corps assembled on **2 Oct 41**. (See, study by *Hans Roettiger* (corps chief-of-staff) in: *Steven H. Newton*, *German Battle Tactics on the Russian Front 1941-1945*.)
 - The **4 PzGr** has to relocate **600** km from Leningrad via Luga, Pskov and Nevel to joint AGC SE of Velizh. Large numbers of tanks and SP guns break down during the rapid **3-4** day administrative march. Service support vehicles are obliged to move northward from the Panzergruppe assembly area to recover many of these vehicles, denying vital last-minute support to the remainder prior to the offensive. Artillery gun numbers are reduced as a result of half-track prime movers breaking down and a shortage of spare parts. „**3 PzGr**’s main supply point in the Ribshevo area in no respect carried sufficient supplies to feed a far-reaching attack later on,“ admitted Oberst Hans Roettiger, the Chief of Staff of **XXXXI PzK**. Fuel and ammunition are particularly short, as also spare parts for tanks and artillery towing vehicles. On eve of the battle, the corps possesses between **50** and **75%** of its strength, about one to one and a half divisions. Its **1 PD** is down to **90** tanks, having begun the campaign w/ **154**. Army Group Ctr is about to embark on the last thrust on Moscow w/ **340** km to go, w/

under half (**48%**) of its serviceable tank strength.²⁶¹ (R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands, 169; see also, H. Roettiger, XXXXI Pz Corps during Battle of Moscow, in: S.H. Newton, German Battle Tactics, 16-17)

- Partial refurbishment of armored force in **Sep 41**
Addition of **2. PD** and **5. PD**
(For partial re-equipping of **PzRgt 35** on eve of “*Taifun*” see, Joachim Neumann, Die 4. Pz.-Div. 1938-43. (In division file.)
- **15.9.41: [Panzer replacements]**: The status of the Pz.-Div. on the eastern front was assessed in an **OKH** report of **15 Sep 41**. The operational status of each Pz.-Div. was reported as shown on the chart. [See, p. 206.] Up to this time, comparatively few replacements had been sent to the Panzer units.²⁶² On **12 Sep 41**, there were **35** Pz 38(t), **71** Pz III, and **20** Pz IV in the **OKH Reserve Sagan** available in Orscha/Duenaburg ready to be issued as replacements. **OKH** also requested the release of the **56** Pz 38(t), **95** Pz III, and **30** Pz IV for replacements that were currently available in the ordnance depots in Magdeburg and Wien. These replacements actually arrived at the Pz.-Rgts. during **Sep-Oct 41**. In addition, the **2 PD** and **5 PD** had been refurbished and sent to the front. This brought the total number of Pz.-Div. on the eastern front to **19**. (T.L. Jentz, Panzertruppen, 205)
- **16.9.41**: Germans begin to pull **2 Army** out of its positions to redeploy onto the Moscow axis. Guderian’s **2 PzGr** is unable to disengage as it is involved in heavy fighting around the Kiev pocket. (Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin, 121)
- **16.-26.9.41**: On **16 Sep 41**, GFM v. Bock writes in his diary: „Kesselring arrives and is horrified at the length of time it is taking to bring up the troops for the attack. So am I. In fact, not one of all the panzer divisions that Army Group North was to had over to me has starting marching.“ On **19 Sep 41**, Bock writes of „another lengthy delay in the arrival of the panzer divisions and mot. Divisions from Army Group North. The entry for **26 Sep 41** was equally negative. (K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point, 66, f.n. 23)
- **17.9.41**: In the area of Army Group North, the mass of the panzer divisions which had been employed here were placed at the disposal of Army Group Ctr and began to move south; these were the staff of **4 PzGr**, the staffs of **XLI**, **LVI** and **LVII Corps**, the **3 ID (mot)**, and the **6**, **20** and, later, **1 PDs**.²⁶³ (Guderian, Panzer Leader, 220)
- **ab 23.9.41 [Guderian]**: In the third week of **Sep 41** [?], Guderian wheeled his forces (now reinforced by the **XLVIII PzK** from von Kleist) northeast for Barbarossa’s upcoming showdown over Moscow. In fact, thanks to the panzer armies’ rapid redeployment,²⁶⁴ Army Group Center rewrote its plans for Operation Typhoon, and added the **2 PzGr** to the offensive’s order of battle, making the assault into a triple encirclement of the city’s western-

²⁶¹ **Note:** I believe this figure for “serviceable tank strength” is too low. Confirm!

²⁶² **Note:** In fact, the **OKH** report shows that fully **8** of the **17** tank divisions on the eastern front had received no replacements at all! Nine (9) divisions had received replacement tanks: **6. PD (2)**, **7. PD (21)**, **9. PD (3)**, **11. PD (9)**, **12. PD (7)**, **13. PD (3)**, **14. PD (5)**, **18. PD (25)**, **20. PD (14)**. Hence, by early **Sep 41**, the entire Ostheer had received – **89** replacement tanks! Of these, **60** were allocated to tank divisions w/ H.Gr.Mitte at start of “*Taifun*.” Of course, H.Gr.Mitte received additional replacement tanks before start of fall offensive, as well as **2.** and **5. PD**. (206)

²⁶³ **Note:** **19. PD** also to be transferred from AGN? (See “Blau entry” above, **6.9.41**.)

²⁶⁴ **Note:** In his memoirs, Guderian states that the “regrouping for the new operation” began from **23.9.41**. See his, Panzer Leader, 224-25.

most defenses. Anxious over the possibility that the notorious Russian weather would turn bad at any moment, Guderian asked for and received permission to attack on **30 Sep 41**, before the rest of von Bock's command. Although **2 PzGr**'s operational rate for combat vehicles stood only at **50%**, he commanded a sizable force. (For Guderian's order of battle see, *Kirchubel, Draft*, 18; **III:221-22**)

- Overview of status of H.Gr.Mitte – available forces, logistics, etc. – on eve of “*Taifun*” & discussion of preparations (deployments, operational strategy, etc.) for offensive. H.Gr. Sued contributed **2 PD**, **2 ID** (mot.) and **5 ID** for the operation. Also, on **11 Sep 41**, **OKH** ordered transfer of **5 Pz.-Div.**, **2 ID** (mot.) u. **8. Air Corps** from Nord to Mitte by **25 Sep 41**. (See, *Alfred Philippi, et al., Der Feldzug gegen Sowjetrussland: 1941 bis 1945*, pp 81-86; also, my “*Biblio file*.”)
- *Marschbataillone* partially fill up infantry losses
(For terrific details of all four waves see, *FMS P-190*, in: **VI:119-20**)
- Die *Luftwaffe* verstaerkte sich jetzt gleichfalls. (For details see, *W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 98)
(Note: GFM v. Richthofen was critical of the fact that his air corps began “*Taifun*” not fully prepared and with little rest; his air corps was also **50%** weaker than in the previous months of campaigning. For this and more useful details, *H.W. Deichmann, “VIII Flieger-Korps Russland-Feldzug,”* in: **VII:19-20**).
- Luftwaffe: **Luftflotte 2** HQ, located in woods near *Smolensk*, was considerably reinforced for the coming offensive. **VIII Fliegerkorps** is moved from the Leningrad front at end of **Sep 41** and attached to the left wing of the gathering panzer spearheads to support **3** and **4 PzGr**. The latter are also reinforced by **2 Flak Corps** configured in a ground role. The **1 Flak Corps** is placed on the right wing to support **4 Army** and **2 Pz Army**. In addition to relocation of **VIII Fliegerkorps**, **1 StG**, **77 StG** and **26 JG**, formerly committed to the Kiev area, arrived at airfields in AGC's area of ops. Once again, **Luftflotte 2** is positioned to support the army w/ *massive sortie rates*. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 169)
- Luftwaffe: In connection w/ preparations for the attack on Moscow, **Air Fleet 2**, whose staff was located in a forest camp near *Smolensk*, was significantly reinforced. At end of **Sep 41**, **VIII Air Corps** was transferred from the front at Leningrad to left wing of the army group in the area of *Smolensk*, where it was assigned the tasks of supporting **9 Army**, more particularly the spearheads of **3** and **4 PzGr**. The corps had not been rehabilitated after the fighting in the north and was thus considerably weaker than had been envisaged for the attack. Individual army units considered this to be so serious that they *advised against the attack*. [See, *Richthofen, Tagebuch*, 26.9.41, 1.-2.10.41] **4 PzGr** was also reinforced by **II Flak Corps**, which for this purpose had been transferred from **Air Fleet 4** to **Air Fleet 2** and moved to Roslavl. **II Air Corps**, at Shatalovka-East, was also reinforced by formations from **Air Fleet 4** and, together w/ **I Flak Corps**, which was used as “reinforcement and assault artillery,” deployed on the right wing of AGC for co-operation w/ **2 Army** and, especially, **4 Army** and **2 PzGr**. Its close-support forces were combined under a single close-support leader. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 790-93; see also the *Luftwaffe* Order of Battle for “*Taifun*,” 791-92)
- **29.9.41**: Bei **2 PzGr** truebe, Regen. Bei **2** u. **4 Armee** bedeckt, leichte Niederschlaege. Bei **9 Armee** bedeckt. Abends Wetterbesserung bei **2 PzGr**. Strassen bei **2 PzGr** aufgeweicht, so dass Marschbewegungen verzoeigert werden. (*KTB OKW*, Bd I, 667-68)

- **29.9.41 [3 PD]:** After frantic regrouping, the division retraced its steps, marching back across the Ssula and the Seim nearly **100** km to Glochov [sp?], arriving there on **29 Sep 41**. Division receives orders that attack in its sector will begin the next day. Model's workshop companies have miraculously managed, via cannibalization and the installation of a handful of replacement engines arrived from Germany, to „coerce“ nearly **100** tanks of division's **6 PzRgt** back into working order,²⁶⁵ along w/ a healthy number of armored personnel carriers (APCs.). (*Newton, Hitler's Commander*, 144)
- **29.9.41: 2 PzGr** is ready to attack toward Moscow. Guderian retains **24 PzK** and **47 PzK** but gives up **46 PzK** to **4 PzGr**. In compensation, **48 PzK**, **34 AK** and **35 AK** are allocated to Guderian's group. The **47 PzK** deploys on the left flank near Shostka; **24 PzK** in the centre at Glukhov; and **48 PzK** on the right around Putivl. The infantry of **34** and **35 AK** hold the outer flanks. Unfortunately, the bulk of **48 PzK** has been unable to assemble as it was bogged down in fighting near Sumy. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 128)
- **30.9.41:** Army Group now has ca. **78** large formations and **1.9** million men ready for Moscow offensive. Yet it does not have the firepower these figures suggest. Most of the units, e.g. almost all of the mobile divisions, have been transferred directly from ops in other areas w/o significant replenishment. Due to heavy losses/inadequate replacements, in terms of fighting ability they are *no longer the units they had been on 22 Jun 41*. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV, 671; on material and personnel preparations also, *Reinhardt*, 52 ff.)²⁶⁶
- For Operation “*Taifun*,” Army Group Center has amassed about **4000** heavy caliber weapons (including **2300 105mm**, **1000 150mm**, **184 210mm** guns and **270 Nebelwerfer** rocket launchers). Furthermore, the army group had **14** assault-gun battalions w/ about **350 StuG IIIs**, giving the infantry more firepower. (For more details, including size of supporting *Luftwaffe* forces see, *Robert Forczyk, Moscow 1941*, 21-22)
- German order of battle (Ground and Air Forces)
(See, **III:264**, ff.; also, **IV:172**; also, German orders of battle in *K. Reinhardt, Keilig*, etc., in my “*Orders of Battle*” file.)
(For *Luftwaffe* see, **I:477-78**)
- German order of battle: Once assembled, the German assault force numbers **1 929 406** men (exluding *Luftwaffe* personnel), organized in **3** armies and **3** panzer groups, and **78** divisions, including **14** tank and **8** motorized divisions. This force fields **14 000** artillery pieces, over **1000** tanks, and **1390** combat acft. It was the largest armada the Wehrmacht had yet to assemble. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 141)
- German order of battle: Army Group organized into three (**3**) Army High Commands and three (**3**) Panzer Groups, having at their disposal a total of **78** divisions: **46** Inf.-Div., **14** Pz.-Div., **8** mot. Inf.-Div., **6** security div., **1** Cav. Div., **1** SS Cav. Bde. (*K. Reinhardt, “Moscow 1941,”* 211-12, 223, f.n. 20)²⁶⁷

²⁶⁵ **Note:** As of mid-Sep 41, this tank regiment was down to **10** operational tanks! See, Guderian, Panzer Leader, 219.

²⁶⁶ **Note:** Halder was well aware before **Jun 41** that trained replacements would be “used up” by **Oct 41**. (671, f.n. 458)

²⁶⁷ **Note:** To be precise, AGC had **1 929 406** men at its disposal. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 63)

(Note: For more details on OOB and attack plans see, **III:264-65**)

- **Late Sep 41:** Versammlung u. Aufmarsch der von Nord u. Sued herangeholten Kraefte verliefen nicht reibungslos; die **2 PzGr**, die aus der Schlacht um Kiev hatte kehrt machen muessen, musste sich ihren Aufmarschraum *teilweise erst erkaempfen*, auch hingen einige Divisionen der **2 Armee** noch erheblich zurueck. Die von der H.Gr. Nord abgestellten Verbaende kamen sehr spaet, ihre Marschstrasse kreuzte die Ost-West-Verbindungen der **9 u. 4 Armee**; um ihre Bewegungen zu beschleunigen, leitete das **OKH** diesen Marsch selber. Da keine Zeit zu verlieren war, entschloss sich die H.Gr.Mitte trotz der *nicht ganz abgeschlossenen Bereitstellung* zum Angriffsbeginn am **2 Ok 41**, waehrend die **2 PzGr** schon am **30.9.41** antreten sollte. (Hofmann, "Schlacht von Moskau," 150)
- The attack frontage of v. Bock's army group was unusually wide. Between Hoth's starting line, north of Smolensk, and Guderian, on the left bank of the Desna, were over **150** miles. . . Long as the attack frontage was by normal army group standards, it was but **1/5** of the line on **22 Jun 41**, yet the number of panzer divisions taking part was only three fewer. [Note: Hence, the Germans had, for once, achieved a genuine strategic Schwerpunkt.] (A. Clark, *Barbarossa*, 148, 155; **VIII:109**)
- In **Sep 41**, despite vigorous efforts, it was impossible to bring AGC up to a strength which would have offset the casualties sustained so far in the campaign. The operational reserves of **OKH** had already been used up. The available forces of the German Replacement Army had been brought to the front, so that casualties sustained after mid-**Sep 41** could not be replaced. At end of **Aug 41**, out of the original **24** divisions of the **OKH** reserve, **21** had already been employed, **8** of them in AGC. At start of "Taifun" the **3** remaining reserve divisions of **OKH** had been brought to the front, leaving no more reserves available. More importantly, all the materiel lost by the panzer divisions was not replaced because Hitler was withholding panzers coming off the production line for ops after Barbarossa. . . As early as mid-**Jul 41**, when the head of the Organization Branch of the Army General Staff, Gen.-Maj. Walter Buhle, estimated that **50%** of the panzers on the entire eastern front had been lost, Hitler released only **70** Pz. IIIs and **15** Pz. IVs, as well as some Czech tanks which had been seized. Hitler was "hoarding for the planned winter campaigns in the Middle East and North Africa." As a result, at beginning of **Oct 41**, the actual panzer strength of **2 PzGr** was only at **50%**, that of **3 PzGr** at between **70-80%**, but that of **4 PzGr** was at **100%**. . . (For more details see, K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point, 60-61; 68, f.n. 32-34; see also, *Mueller-Hillebrand*, Vol. III, 20)²⁶⁸
- Reserve forces: Die Heeresgruppenkommando spielte in diesen ersten Tagen der neuen Offensive praktisch ein „Vabanque-Spiel“, das schon in den ersten zwei Wochen die vor der H.Gr. stehenden Sowjetarmeen in grossen Kesseln einschliessen musste. Deshalb stande der GFM v. Bock nur wenige kampfkraeftige Einheiten als Reserve zur Verfuegung. Das Heeresgruppenkommando selbst befahl nur ueber die **19. PD**, die **Pz-Lehr-Bde 900** u. das **IR „GD“**

²⁶⁸ **Note:** There were two reasons for the huge panzer losses – the large numbers of total losses on the eastern front, and the poor German repair system, which was unable to meet the demands placed on it. As the army groups only had spare parts depots, but not enough repair workshops, panzers that were out of action had to be sent back home to be repaired in the armaments factories. The effects of Soviet tanks and mines, the extensive wear and tear, meant that tank losses were substantially higher than had been expected; thus this centralized system of panzer repair could not cope. To add to this, there were problems w/ spare parts. It was not until 1942 that a decentralized repair system in the field was introduced. (See, pp 61-62)

als Reservetruppen. Das **AOK 9** behielt sich die **161. ID** u. das **AOK 2** die **112. ID** als Reservetruppe zurueck; alle uebrigen Armeeoberkommandos besaessen am **2. Okt 41** nicht ein Division, die als Reserve haette zum Einsatz kommen koennen. (*W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 113)²⁶⁹

c) *Logistics Buildup*

Note: For useful overview of Army Group Center's logistical shortcomings see, *Robert Forczyk, Moscow 1941*, 23-24)

- Address *in detail* (overview of vital significance of logistical support since the start of the "Barbarossa" campaign)²⁷⁰
(For **9. Army** see, **FMS P-201** in: **VI:131**, ff.; also, **I:546**, ff.)
- **Clausewitz:** "These arteries [supply lines], then, must not be permanently cut, nor must they be too long or difficult to use. A long road always means a certain waste of strength, which tends to cripple an army." (*On War*, 345, quoted in: **IX: R. Steiger, Armored Tactics**; see *Steiger* for more details on long German supply lines)
- Wehrmacht leaders approach plan w/ their usual confidence, w/o appreciation of how difficult logistical situation had become (**IX: Megargee, War of Annihilation**)
- Der bisherige Versorgungsbezirk um Minsk wurde erheblich vergroessert u. nach dem Abflauen der Schlacht um Smolensk wurde entlang der „Rollbahn“ zwischen Orscha – Smolensk ein weiterer Versorgungsbezirk errichtet. (*W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 97)
- Die Feldeisenbahndirektion 2 baute mit mit den ihr unterstellten Eisenbahn-Pionierbtl. u. den RAD-Abtl. so schnell wie moeglich die Eisenbahnstrecken Minsk-Smolensk, Mogilew-Rosslawl u. Polozk-Witebsk-Smolensk aus, um den Nachschub an Menschen, Material u. Waffen moeglichst so weit nach vorn zu bringen, wie es die Feindlage zulies. (*W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 97)
- Durch Nachschub an Panzerkampfwagen, Motoren, Ersatzteilen u. Waffen, besonders aber durch die aufopfernde Arbeit der Instandsetzungskompanien steigerte sich der Prozentsatz der einsatzbereiten Kampfwagen. (For details on all three *Panzergruppen* see, *W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau* 97-98)
- **30.9.41:** For a month now, Army Group Ctr has fought a relatively static battle, so it has accurate intelligence on Soviet strength and dispositions; it has identified **80** of the **83** Soviet rifle divisions to its front (typically, **FHO** identified only **54** of them). Yet even in this static situation, German *logistics are still unsatisfactory*: despite large depots at Gomel, Roslawl, Smolensk and Toropets, they can only sustain a short burst toward Moscow. Tank serviceability rates are a problem: they stand at **50%** for Guderian, **70-80%** for Hoth, and **100%** for Hoepner. Prior to "*Taifun*," for ex., **4 PD** receives as replacements only **30** Pz IIIs and **5** Pz IVs (for a total of **110** operational tanks), and only enough fuel to travel **60** miles. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 68)

²⁶⁹ **Note:** Confirm these figures w/ other OOBs (eg., in: GSWW, Vol. IV).

²⁷⁰ **Note:** Virtually nothing on this vital topic in my outline to this point.

- Zuege (durchschnittl. taeglich), Ausbau der Versorgungsstuetzpunkte, usw. (FMS **P-190**, in: **VI:124-25**)
- **30.9.41** (Rail end points): Except for **2 PzGr**, the German tank availability had improved and risen to **70%** of establishment. The delay in mounting the offensive against Moscow brought other administrative advantages, slight though these were, since the conversion of gauge of the railway line had proceeded from Gomel to Roslawl, from Minsk to Smolensk, and through Vitebsk to Toropets and had brought some improvements in the supply situation. These advantages had to be weighed against the drain of German military strength thru casualties caused by holding ground, and the *great expenditure of artillery and mortar ammunition* which defensive battles always entail. (Seaton, Russo-German War, 175)
- **Sep-Oct 41**: Even during the buildup for Operation „*Taifun*“, the concentration of all Germany’s offensive strength on one army group had created *huge transport bottlenecks*. In **Sep-Oct 41**, the supply dumps in Gomel, Roslawl, Smolensk and Witebsk were lucky on any given day to receive 2/3 of the stores needed to maintain „*Taifun*“ at full strength. (Tooze, Wages of Destruction, 492)
- **Oct 41**: Contrary to all expectation, only about **1000** wide-gauge locomotives – of which only **500** were in working order – and about **21,000** goods wagons were seized in the USSR by end of October 1941. The Germans were thus forced to convert far more Russian routes to the German track [Umnagelung] than they had originally intended. [Note: By **1.10.41**, about **15,000** km had been converted (to European gauge).] . . . In **Oct 41**, **2500** locomotives and **200,000** were required in the occupied eastern territories to meet demands at the front. . . but also to transport the harvest and other booty from the east. . . Thus there was a serious shortage of rolling stock and simply no way to overcome it in the short term. . . (K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point, 147; 157, f.n. 64)

d) *The “Other Side of the Hill:” Soviet preparations for defense of Moscow*

Note: For “Stellenbesetzung der russ. Fronten u. Armeen vor Moskau“ see, *Klaus Reinhardt*, Die Wende vor Moskau, Anlage 5, in my „*Orders of Battle*“ file.

Note: For useful overview of Soviet preparations and buildup prior to start of “*Taifun*” see, *Robert Forczyk*, Moscow 1941, 25-27)

- Status of Red Army
 - Badly exhausted by incessant summer counterattacks
 - Example of Bryansk Front
- Construction of defensive lines for defense of Moscow
 - Began as early as **Jul 41** (Describe)
 - (For good details on efforts of Moscow’s citizens to build city’s defenses see, *Dado Muriyev*, The Rout of “Typhoon.” Author states that states **11** railroad lines running in and out of Moscow, 7 of which the Germans had cut by mid-**Oct 41**.)
- **Jul 41**: Excellent account of the frantic Soviet efforts to defend and camouflage Moscow against air attack (*Janusz Piekalkiewicz*, Die Schlacht um Moskau: Die erfrorene Offensive, 89-90)

- *Dichte der sowjet. Verteidigungsfront* (Nr. von Pak, Artillerie, Panzer, usw. per km) (See, Janusz Piekalkiewicz, Die Schlacht um Moskau: Die erfrorene Offensive, 124)

- Soviet Order of Battle (See, **III:266**, ff.; also, **IV:173-75**; also, "Soviet Manpower and Armament in the Battle of Moscow" in: *M. Parrish, Battle of Moscow*. The Soviet **1942** General Staff Study," in my "Orders of Battle" file.)
 (According to the latter source (Parrish), Soviet strength on Moscow axis 1 Oct 41 as follows: **1,252,591** men; **831,599** rifles, **8994** MGs, **20,665** artillery (field), **739** artillery (anti-acft), **849** tanks. These resources in men and material allocated to Western, Reserve and Bryansk Fronts. See text for breakdown by front.)

- The total Russian strength [opposite H.Gr.Mitte], including the active forces of Koniev and Yeremenko and the "reserve front" was **15** infantry armies. In numbers this came to over **500,000**, but their equipment varied enormously. Almost all were short of artillery, though mortars and smaller arms were plentiful. Their mobility factor was low – even horses were beginning to be scarce, and were being drafted into mixed horse-drawn and mechanized "corps" (actually of about divisional strength) which were useful in reconnaissance or rear-guard actions but lacked the weight and firepower needed for prolonged fighting. Still more serious was the *decline in the quality of the human material*. . . From the point of view of equipment and training, the armies w/ which the STAVKA found itself fighting the opening stages of the Battle of Moscow were the ***weakest the Soviets ever put into the field***. Nearly all were reservists; what little they could remember of their basic training would have been along principles very different from those which had become ***de rigueur*** against the Panzers. (*Alan Clark, Barbarossa*, 148-49; **VIII:108-09**)

- Soviet expectations
Not expecting attack so late in year
 Did **ULTRA** play any role here? (**I:798**, ff.)
 (As Germans begin Operation „*Taifun*“, Churchill reads the German secret msgs giving details of the assault. „Are you warning the Russians of the developing concentrations?“ he asks the head of the Secret Intelligence Service, and adds: „Show me the last five msgs you have sent.“) (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 239)

- **9.9.41**: British cryptologists at *Bletchley* decrypt the German orders for Operation „*Taifun*“, the attack on Moscow. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 232)

- **20.-25.9.41**: From London, w/ Churchill's authority, British intelligence sends Stalin a *series of warnings* based upon the reading of the most secret German „*Vulture*“ msgs²⁷¹ being sent to and from the eastern front. They provide details of German intentions and movements on the *Moscow front*. These details include information on the location and strength of German air and ground concentrations in the Smolensk area. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 237)

- **26.9.41**: Konev reports that the Germans are preparing to attack across his front [West Front] on **1 Oct 41**. This new *completely surprises Stalin*, who issues another defensive directive the next day (**27 Sep**). By end of **Sep 41**, Soviets are confident that their system could respond, survive, and probably not collapse. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 72)

²⁷¹ **Note:** „Vulture“ – code name for German Enigma key used on the eastern front and broken by Bletchley in **Jun 41**.

- **30.9.41:** By this time, I.S. Konev, cdr Western Front, has formed a reserve that is larger than a normal army, a main defensive belt, and a security belt **4 – 20 km (2.4 – 12 miles)** deep. He also has taken preventative measures [against impending German assault], such as intensifying reconnaissance, strengthening AT and AA defenses, and ordering preparation of an artillery counter-preparation in **16 and 19 Army** sectors to disrupt any enemy offensive. Eremekno, cdr Briansk Front, begins issuing similar orders on **28 Sep 41**. Nevertheless, as one recent Russia source put it: “the *Stavka* failed to divine German intentions along the Moscow axis. It failed to concentrate its forces along the Germans’ intended main attack axes, it issued its warnings of an impending attack too late, and when it did, it never ordered the Reserve Front to prepare its defenses.” (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 144)

- **30.9.41:** At end of **Sep 41**, Russia forces [in the centre] were drawn up on a relatively straight north-south line, drawn **30 miles** to the east of Smolensk (and **200 miles** to the west of Moscow). In all, the defensive line in the centre was about 600 miles long. This position was roughly where Army Group Ctr had halted in **Jul 41**. It was a „predictable,“ even necessary, place for covering the distant approaches to the Soviet capital. As early as **May 41**, work had begun here on a third, Ostashkov-Pochep, line of defense (behind the „Molotov“ and „Stalin“ lines). In **Jul 41**, a „front of reserve armies“ had been created here. Anchored in the north around Ostashkov, in the glacial lakes and hills of the Valdai Uplands, the line ran south to Pochep (west of Briansk) and beyond to Glukhov. . . This whole position west of Moscow, the Ostaskov-Pochep Line, was of vital strategic importance. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 91-93)

- **30.9.41:** Since mid-**Jul 41**, the Soviets have been building and improving works to defend their capital. The most important of these, the Mozhaisk Line, is **40-50%** complete by **30 Sep 41**, and the same can be said for the other three Fortified Regions: Volokolamsk, Maloyaroslavets and Kaluga. The Soviets had expected the “final assault” on Moscow around late August, and have allowed themselves to be lulled into a false sense of security since then. They also assume, given the imminent season of *rasputitsa* (mud), that Hitler will not try to attack following the Kiev battle. Moreover, they think that most of the German armor is in the north and south. Red Army intelligence misses the movement of much of **4 PzGr** from v. Leeb to Bock, and the return of **2 PzGr** plus some of v. Kleist’s **1 PzGr**.

With *Stavka*’s *mistaken appreciation* of the correlaton of forces, it is no surprise that they also defend the wrong places. They expect the main thrust directly at Viazma along the Minsk highway. But GFM v. Bock’s strike on either side of the main defenses, and Guderian’s south of Bryansk, will catch them completely off guard. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 69)

- **Soviet Order of Battle:** Soviet OOB defending Moscow included: **83** rifle divisions, **2** mot. rifle divisions, **1** tank division, **9** cavalry divisions, and **13** tank bdes. **66** divisions were employed in the first echelon and **17** divisions and **7** tank bdes in the second echelon; w/ **12** divisions and **6** tank bdes in reserve. The attacking Germans faced **1 252 591** defenders, **849** tanks, **5637** artillery and **4961** mortars, **62 651** vehicles and **936** acft, of which **545** were fighters. The point of main effort of these forces was along the Smolensk-Moscow motorway and in the Bryansk area, as the main German thrusts were expected there. (For more details, *K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 72-74)

- **Soviet Order of Battle:** Three [**3**] Red Army *fronts* defend the **800 km (480 mile)** sector opposite Army Group Centre: [see text for breakdown of forces of each “*front*”] . . . The three [**3**] *fronts*, which comprised **40%** of the Red Army’s forces between the Baltic and the

Black Sea numbered **1 250 000** men, supported by **7600** guns and mortars, **990** tanks, and **667** combat acft. The divisions assigned to the three *fronts* were a mixture of veteran units worn down in previous battles and new, poorly trained and equipped People's Volunteer formations. Most rifle divisions were at half-strength (**5 – 7000** men) and many lacked their necessary artillery and MGs. The **193 000** replacements the three *fronts* received to make up for past losses fell far short of requirements. Only **45** of Konev's **479** tanks were new models, and all three *fronts* had severe shortages of trained officers, modern acft, and effective AA and AT wpns. (See, *Glantz, Barbarossa*, 141-42; for more details on Soviet OOB, defensive concepts, etc., **III:267-69**)

- Soviet defensive works:²⁷² The *Stavka's* defensive concept requires all three *fronts* to erect deeply echeloned defenses to prevent Germans from advancing on Moscow. The heaviest defenses are along the Smolensk – Moscow road (the Minsk highway) and the Roslavl – Moscow road (the Warsaw highway). . . The *Stavka* had begun construction of defensive works on the approaches to Moscow in early **Jul 41**, using military engineers, construction troops, and civilian levies. The forward defense line, extending along the Desna and Sudost rivers west of Viaz'ma, became the forward edge of the Western, Reserve, and Bryansk Fronts defense in **Aug 41**. To the east, the Rzhev – Viaz'ma Defense Line consisted of two [2] separate belts – the first extending [from?] Lake Seligar [sp?] thru Selizharov and Olenino to Dorogobuzh; the second **35-45 km (21-27 miles)** to the east. The most important defense system west of Moscow was the Mozhaisk Defense Line, which the *Stavka* began erecting on **16 Jul 41**. This line's main belt was anchored on four [4] fortified regions at Volokolamsk, Mozhaisk, Maloiaroslavets, and Kaluga and was protected by a second belt several km to the west. Both defense lines consisted of field rather than concrete and steel fortifications, and by **30 Sep 41** both were only **40 – 50%** complete. (See, *Glantz, Barbarossa*, 143-44)
- Soviet defensive works: Soviet government had made frantic efforts to build two great linear earthwork systems west of Moscow using civilian labor, more than **75%** of which was female. Soviet defenses were as follows:
 - a. The forward of these defensive lines – known as the Vyazma line – ran from an area about **30 miles** east of Ostashkov near the Valdai Hills in the north, forward of Vyazma to beyond Kirov in the south, being about **200 miles** in length;
 - b. The rearward Mozhaisk line was about **80 miles** to the west of Moscow and ran from Volokolamsk to Likhvin and was about **160 miles** in extent;
 - c. A further four [4] semicircular defense lines ringed Moscow from the west.
 - d. The defense of the approaches to Moscow was entrusted to West Theater, having a frontage of about **450 miles** and composed of three [3] separate fronts: West Front (Konev), Reserve Front (Budenny) and Bryansk Front (Eremenko). All told, West Theater is said to have numbered **83 divisions**, **9 cavalry divisions** and **13 tank bdes**, in all **800 000 men**, **770 tanks** and **360 aircraft**.

(See, *Seaton, Russo-German War*, 178-79)

²⁷² **Note:** According to Col. Kirchubel, the average per mile strength of Soviet defenses before Moscow in late **Sep 41** was: **1000** men, one tank, **1.5** AT guns, **7.5** indirect-fire wpns (**76mm** or larger). See his, *Barbarossa 1941*, 70.

- **Oct 41:** For the Red Army, shortages were everywhere crucial, made worse as falling production coincided w/ appalling battlefield losses. On the Soviet-German front, Red Army strength was falling frighteningly to its lowest ever ebb – **2,300,000**, from the **4,700,000** who were or could be fielded in **Jun 41**. . . The whole massive swarm of Soviet tanks which had existed in **Jun 41**, was now more or less obliterated: those left were “brigaded” very abruptly, but the few divisions left and the current brigades were more often than not mere paper units. . . Red Army artillery compressed into dangerous straits, suffering calamitous losses in guns and gun-crews, so many of whom, as Col.-Gen. Halder noted w/ a surprised respect, were killed at their guns: a high total of guns destroyed or captured, but so few gunners by comparison taken prisoner. Voronov had to persuade Stalin of the need for drastic reorganization of Red Army artillery. . . To fill the gaps in guns, a crash programme to produce mortars went into operation. . . (*J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 225-26)

e) *The Offensive begins*

- **Note:** For useful day-by-day account see, *Janusz Piekalkiewicz, Die Schlacht um Moskau: Die erfrorene Offensive*, 123, ff.; see also, my **24** pp of notes from *Carl Wagener's Moskau 1941: Der Angriff auf die russ. Hauptstadt*. (“Wagener file”)
- **Note:** For a basic yet useful chronology of events thru **15.10.41** see, *Robert Forczyk, Moscow 1941*, 31)
- **Note:** Guderian’s panzer group will actually have to *fight its way* into its assembly areas for “Taifun.” (See, **III:225**)
- **Note:** A vital point – the Soviets “failed to identify the points of main effort of the German attack. . .” Hence no measures were taken to reinforce the threatened sectors or to concentrate reserves at those points. These omissions contributed significantly to AGC’s initial success. (See, *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 885-87; **III:272-73**)
- **26.9.41:** GFM v. Bock erliess [an diesem Tag] den Angriffsbefehl. (Details see, *W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 103-04)
- **30.9.41:** Guderian’s **2. PzGr:**
First **48** hours in south; Soviets consider G.’s attack to be a diversion.
(For details of G.’s dispositions and movements see, Panzer Leader, 227-28; see also, **III:227-30.**)
- **1.-2.10.41:** At the start of the Moscow offensive, Hitler addresses an *appeal to the soldiers of the eastern front*. It is read to the troops on night of **1-2 Oct 41**. In it, Hitler announces the start of the last great decisive battle of the year, which will crush the Soviet enemy and thus also Britain, the instigator of the war. Several days later (**10 Oct 41**) Hitler’s address is published in the Voelkischer Beobachter. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 672, f.n. 460; also, *Domarus, Hitler*, 1756 ff.)
- **1.-2.10.41:** The **XXIV PzK** takes Sevsk. „We had succeeded in breaking through the enemy front.“ The advance was energetically pursued, so far as the fuel situation would permit. I drove from Gluchov thru Essman, to **4 PD** at Sevsk. On the side of the road lay shot-up Russian vehicles of all sorts, further proof that the enemy had been surprised by our attack.

On this day [**1 Oct 41**], the spearhead of **XXIV PzK** covered a distance of **85 miles**. [!] On **2 Oct 41** the attack was resumed w/ „violence.“ A complete break-through was achieved and the Russian **13 Army** thrown back to the NE. Our casualties during these days were happily light. The **4 PD** took Kromy and thus reached the metalled road that led to Orel. (*Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 228-30; **III:272**)

- **2.10.41** [Tagesbefehl Hoepners].²⁷³ „Der 2. Oktober ist der Geburtstag des verewigten GFMs von Beneckendorff u. von Hindenburg. Er war der erste, der grosse Siege ueber die Russen errang u. damit ihren Einfall in das Reich verhinderte. An seinem Geburtstag treten wir an zu einem entscheidenden Waffengang gegen die letzte grosse russ. Kraeftegruppe an. Fuer die Panzergruppe sei am **2.10.41** die Parole: „HINDENBURG – VORWAERTS – SIEG!““ gez. Hoepner Generaloberst. (*G. Schrodek, 11. Pz.-Div.*, 246)
- **2.10.41**: Main attack goes in.
 Describe spectacle of artil. & aerial bombardment
Personal accounts (Use of *Nebelwerfer*)
 (For background on the German “*Nebelwerfer*” see, *James Lucas, War on the Eastern Front*, 161-69)
 Gains on first day (Hoepner / Hoth, etc.)
 (Note: See *Halder KTB*, also *W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 114-18 for breakdown of gains on opening day of offensive.)
- **2.10.41**: After a short artillery preparation lays a dense smokescreen along the front, at first light Bock’s massive main force springs into action along the 600 km front from the Western Dvina to the Desna. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 146-47)
- **2.10.41** [Luftwaffe support]: At **5:30** a.m., units of **9 Army** and **3 PzGr** jumped off on the northern flank between Smolensk and Byelov, w/ **Fliegerkorps VIII** in full support. Acft from all units of the air corps averaged four sorties [**4**] on the first day, with **Stuka-geschwader 2’s JU-87s** *flying no fewer than six*. The attacks involved the usual mixture of „direct“ and „indirect“ objectives: „enemy tanks, horses, retreating columns, enemy airfields.“ (*Muller, German Air War*, 58)
 (Note: For *Luftwaffe* air support of “Taifun” see, **I:516**, ff.)
- **2.10.41**: German **9** and **4 Armies** create penetrations in trench-fighting involving *bayonets, hand grenades, sidearms and spades*; by end of the day, **260 ID** has overcome **120** bunkers. The infantry often reoccupy the same Yelnia battlefield it had given up a month earlier. Hoth’s and Hoepner’s armor exploit the gaps in enemy lines, and it takes the latter only **2** hours to overcome the Desna River defenses. The **7 PD’s** artillery preparation amounted to **130** tubes per mile, while their [?] **300** tanks spread across a **1 1/2** mile front in two waves. **3 PzGr** splits apart **19** and **30 armies**, while **4 PzGr** smashes **43 Army** in Budenny’s first echelon and hits **33 Army** behind it. Hoth’s men are supported by **4** fighter and attack *Geschwader*. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 73)
- **2.10.41**: By day’s end, Hoth’s **3 PzGr** has shattered Soviet defenses at the junction of Lukin’s **19 Army** and Khomenko’s **30 Army** and advanced **5-10** km into the depths. South of the Warsaw Highway, Hoepner’s **12** divisions likewise smash the defenses of Sobennikov’s **43 Army**, penetrate **40 km**, and strike the defenses of Gen. D.P. Onuprieko’s **33 Army** in the Reserve Front’s second echelon. Konev unleashed his artillery counter-preparation against

²⁷³ Note: Telling that Hoepner invokes name of Hindenburg, and not of Hitler!

Hoth's armored spearheads and began assembling reserves to parry the German armored strike. He releases three [3] rifle divs. and a mot. group to Khomenko and orders him to restore the situation. To the south, Eremenko moves part of his *front's* reserve to the Nerussa river to block Guderian's advance. Yet all these measures are in vain, since the regrouping is too slow and the advancing German tanks are already too deep into the Soviet defenses. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 147; see also, **III:274**, ff.)

- **2.10.41 [6 u. 7 PD]:**²⁷⁴ Oberst Koll fuehrte die Panzerbrigade, zusammengestellt aus den **11 (6 PD)** u. **25 (7 PD) PzRgt.** Auf einer Breite von **3000** Meter griffen ueber **200** Panzer an – nach dem Vorbereitungsfeuer der Artillerie (**177** Geschuetze auf **3** km Breite). (*H. Scheibert*, *6. Pz.-Div.*, 76)
- **2.10.41:** Russians taken by surprise by “*Taifun*.” Their air reconnaissance and their wireless intelligence were poor. (*Calvocoressi & Wint, Total War*, 178)
- **2.10.41 [6 ID]:** Div. ab **00.00** Uhr [**1.10.41**] dem **XXXXI AK**, **IR 18** mit **III/AR 6** der **1 PD** unterstellt. Nach Art.-Vorbereitung von **15** Minuten auf erkannten Feindstellungen u. die Einbruchsstellen, rasches Fortschreiten des Angriffs gegen *schwachen Feindwiderstand*. Erste Teile **IR 58** bereits um **6.20** Uhr am Westrand des Ossotnja-Sumpfes. . . [Note: Losses of the division on this day: Offz.: **5** tot, **12** verwundet. Uffz u. Mannschaften: **104** tot, **360** verwundet, **12** vermisst. . .] Das Vorgehen wurde noch dadurch sehr erschwert, dass die angreifende Infanterie tief in den Sumpf einsank u. ihr das Mitfuehren schwerer Inf.-Waffen unmoeglich wurde. Die Schwierigkeiten, den Sumpfabschnitt zu ueberwinden, werden am besten dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass in mehreren Faellen verwundete u. wahrscheinlich auch unverwundete Schuetzen ertranken. Verwundete teilweise erst am naechsten Morgen aus dem Sumpf geborgen werden konnten. . .“ (More details see, (*KTB 6 ID*; quoted in: *Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 51*, S. 1-2; 7)
- **ab 2.10.41:** As Germans advance closer to Moscow, Russian peasants set fire to their already harvested crops, drive away their livestock, and blow up the main buildings in their villages. This is the pre-arranged and self-inflicted *scorched earth policy*; the Germans are to be denied all but a blackened terrain. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 241-42)
- **OKW Berichte:** Das deutsche Volk erfuhr am diesen Tage [**2.10.41**] noch nichts von der neuen Schlacht im Osten. Die Berichte des **OKW** brachten erst am naechsten Tag – dem **3. Okt 41** – die belanglose Nachricht „Kampfflugzeuge bombardierten in der Nacht zum **3. Okt [41]** mit beobachteter Wirkung militaerische Anlagen in Moskau. . .“ u. am naechsten Tag [**4.10.41**] klang durch den Rundfunk die Meldung: „An der Ostfront sind Kampfhandlungen von grosser Tragweite im Gange.“ (*W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 108)
(Die Berichte des **OKW** gaben der dt. Bevoelkerung am **8. u. 9. Okt 41** erstmalig Nachricht ueber die neuesten Ereignisse an der Ostfront. *Haupt*, 124)

f) **Kesselschlachten: Bryansk & Wyas'ma (to 20.10.41)**

Note: As GFM v. Moltke (the elder) had recognized, the key to a successful strategy was *inter alia*, a) intensive and comprehensive preparation (sig. of Aufmarsch!); and, b) a well-trained but *flexible* mind, which adhered to basic underlying principles but also recognized

²⁷⁴ **Note:** Example of just how narrow the attack frontages of the „Panzerkeile“ could be to effect the breakthrough.

that every strategic situation was *unique* and, perforce, could not be mastered via the application of some kind of *formulaic*, or patented, response.

As Moltke instructed: “Der Krieg – wie jede Kunst – erlernt sich nicht auf rationalistischem, sondern nur auf empirischem Wege. Im Kriege wie in der Kunst gibt es *keine allgemeine Norm*, in beiden kann das Talent nicht durch eine Regel ersetzt werden . . . Sollen die Regeln fuer den Krieg unter allen Umstaenden gueltig bleiben, so schrumpfen sie zu Axiomen zusammen wie in der Mathematik, dass Gleiches zu Gleichem Gleiches ergibt. . .“ (See, H. Hinterhuber, Wettbewerbsstrategie, 30-31)

Lies man diese Aussagen, wird man an Goethes „Faust“ erinnert, von dem Moltke *ganze Szenen aus dem Gedaechnis vortragen konnte*: „**Grau teurer Freund, ist alle Theorie, u. gruen des Lebens goldner Baum.**“ (Hinterhuber, 31)

In this context, was it wrong for the Germans, in their *operational thinking*, to adhere once again to the concept of the “*Vernichtungsschlacht*” based on a two-pronged envelopment and encirclement of the enemy? The lesson ostensibly gleaned from Bialystok – Minsk, Smolensk, etc., was that the envelopments had been too extensive in terms of depth and space (esp. w/ regard to the deep penetrations made by the mechanized forces, and the resulting gaps because the infantry remained so far behind). This had cost too much time and enabled too many of the enemy to escape from encirclement. In response to this “lesson learned,” the *operational* objective for “Taifun” was based on more modest encirclements (in space and time).

Yet maybe a more effective approach – given the closeness to Moscow (some **300 km**) and the lateness of the year (approaching wet weather) – would have been to abandon the *Cannae concept* altogether and simply have effected a breach in the enemy defenses, then let loose the armored forces to make a bold dash all the way to Moscow? The chaos caused by such an approach, the shattering psychological impact, might brought better results. And even if such an approach might not have ended the war, it would have enabled the Germans to establish a much better strategic position for a campaign in **1942**.²⁷⁵

-- Useful summary of „*Kesselschlachten*” of Vyaz'ma – Bryansk in: *Alfred Philippi, et al., Der Feldzug gegen Sowjetrussland: 1941 bis 1945*, p 86)

(Note: For operations of **3 & 4 Pz Gr** in opening days of offensive see, **III:276-78**)

-- **2.-5.10.41 [Vyaz'ma axis/3 PzGr]**: The German northern assault wing, **3 PzGr**, launched the attack on **2 Oct 41** and broke through between **19** and **30 Armies** towards Kholm and w/ some units towards Belyy. The following day, Kholm had fallen into German hands; the Germans also succeeded in building two bridgeheads over the Dnieper east of the town, from which the assault was to be pursued the next day towards Beloye. However, shortcomings in supplies in **3 PzGr** jeopardized this rapid assault. The panzer group, which was depending on unreliable supply routes, ran out of fuel on 4 Oct 41, bringing the advance of the panzer divisions to a standstill. . . In the evening of the **4th**, the panzer group was forced to ask the Luftwaffe to transport supplies, as their supply columns had got stuck on the unpaved roads. Thus **24 hours were lost** and it was not until the afternoon of **5 Oct 41** that the panzer group was again fully operational. The Russians took immediate advantage of this loss of time. Konev. . . received the order from the Stavka in the afternoon of the **5th** to withdraw to the reinforced Vyaz'ma-Rzhev defense line. At same time, **31** and **32 Armies** of Reserve Front

²⁷⁵ Note: My thoughts, **25 Nov 10**.

were placed under his command to ensure coherent leadership in area around Vyaz'ma. The Russian troops, who defended initially, thus allaying German fears they could escape the assault, were now beginning to withdraw eastwards in attempt to escape from the pocket. (K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point, 85-86)

- **2.-7.10.41 [23. ID]:** During this six-day period, **23. ID** sustains more than **1250** casualties. (See, *Nayhauss-Cormons*, Zwischen Gehorsam u. Gewissen, 178; **III:295**)
- **2.-8.10.41:** While spectacular progress made by Germans on both flanks, some units found the going difficult and costly. For example, see KTB entries for the **292. ID**,²⁷⁶ which suffered terrible losses. (**VIII:197-99**)
(During this one week period, **292. ID** lost **1450** men. Quote from the KTB!; also, G. Nitz, Die 292. Inf.-Div., 66-69)
- **3.10.41: 4 PD (2 PzGr)** arrived at Orel and there caught the Soviets so much by surprise that the trams were still running as the German tanks rolled in. (*W. Murray*, War to be Won, 132)
- **3.10.41: Orel**, city of **120,000** sitting astride a strategic road and rail junction, is captured by Guderian's tank group on **3 Oct 41**.²⁷⁷ **4 PD** had covered **240** km from Gluchow to the objective in four [**4**] days. The fuel and rations captured at Orel are enough to keep **2 Pz Army** resupplied for two [**2**] weeks. (*R. Kershaw*, War Without Garlands; 181)
- **3.-5.10.41:** The German advance had struck so swiftly and *unexpectedly* that Moscow's initial intimation of disaster came from a speech Hitler delivers in Berlin announcing the start of the final offensive. (**3.10.41**) The Stavka received *no intelligence* indicating that anything had gone wrong expect for fact that communications between Moscow and the fronts confronting Army Group Ctr had ceased. On **5.10.41**, Soviet reconnaissance pilots report a German armored column **25** km long advancing on the great highway from Smolensk to Moscow. Despite **NKVD** efforts to arrest the pilots as panic mongers, their reports alerted the authorities to extent of the danger. (*W. Murray*, War to be Won, 132-33)
- **3.-6.10.41:** Guderian at Bryansk
Orel captured (**3.10.41**)
Pincers close near Bryansk (**6.10.41**)
Clearing of the two pockets on this sector (complete by mid-**Oct 41**)
Losses of Soviet Bryansk Front
- **3.-7.10.41 [6. ID]:** For an illuminating account of the activities of a German infantry division during first days of „*Taifun*“ see, *Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 51*, S. 4-8; **III:282-83**. Summary: During this period – **3.-7.10.41** – advance of division often slowed by marshy, boggy terrain; engineers work tirelessly to repair roadways, lay down corduroy roads, etc. Division captures many villages, clears forests of enemy stragglers (despite being held up by obstacles placed in their path and enemy minefields). A primary mission of division is to protect the northern flank of **XXXXI PzK**. Terrible condition of roadways

²⁷⁶ **Note:** Beim Anfang des Unternehmens „Taifun“ wiesen die Gefechtsstaerken der Infanterie schon bedenkliche Luecken auf, aber die Artillerie war noch vollzaehlig vorhanden. (**VIII:198**)

²⁷⁷ **Note:** Immediately after capture of Orel, the airfield there became a base for dive-bombers and fighters and a supply centre w/ the primary task of providing fuel for **2 Pz Army**. It became the target of fierce Soviet air attacks. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 793-94)

(often little more than torn-up tracks), marshy ground, forces elements of division to temporarily leave their heavy vehicles and heavy wpns behind. Supply difficulties soon set in; shortages of fuel arise. Assigned to the division at this time is an assault gun battery – **Sturmgesch.-Btr 665** – which supports the advance.]

- **Note:** For fascinating report of a “*Sonderberichterstatte*” entitled “*Auf einem Huegel bei Wyasma*” see, *W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 109. Among other things author writes: “‘Kesselschlacht’ ist ein verfuehrerisch vereinfachendes Wort, das leicht vergessen laesst, wie schwer u. opfervoll die Einkreisung u. Vernichtung eines Millionenheeres ist, das aus fanatisch u. hinterhaeltig kaempfernden Bolschewisten besteht. Der Kessel von Wyasma umfasst – wie der von Brjansk – riesige Raume mit *undurchdringlichen Waeldern*, leicht zu verteidigenden *Hoehenzuege* u. weiten *offenen Flaechen*, mit Minen aller Art verseucht u. von Schuetzengraeben u. Schuetzenloechern uebersaet, durchzogen von tiefen Tankfallen u. unpassierbaren Sumpfstrecken, Bunkern ueber Bunkern, oft auf kurze Entfernung unerkennbar. . . .”²⁷⁸
- **Note:** For interesting report of **35. ID** on Vyasma “*Kesselschlacht*” see, *W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 130-31) Among other things: „Das Schlachtfeld bot mit seinem Chaos von Gefallenen, Verwundeten, Pferden, Fahrzeugen u. Waffen aller Art ein *unbeschreibliches Bild der Verwuestung*. Vor der Front des **IR 34** hatte der Feind besonders hohe Verluste. In **10**taegigen Kaempfen hatte die Division **8500** Gefangene gemacht, **64** Panzer, **325** Geschuetze aller Art, **360** MG u. Gr.Wr., **2500** Gewehre, **1350** Lkw. u. Pkw., **116** Zugmaschinen, **500** bespannte Fahrzeuge u. **750** Pferde vernichtet oder erbeutet.“ (*W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 130-31)
- **Note:** For treatment of German wounded in opening days of “*Taifun*” see, (*Bericht des Div.-Arztes*, quoted in: *Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 52*, S. 28) (Summary of report in: **I:654**)
- **5.10.41:** Ein Absetzen des Gegners im Grossen ist vor der Front der H.Gr. [Mitte] nicht zu erkennen. . . . (*OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 680: **III:286-87**)
- **5.10.41:** The **1** and **2 PzGr** are redesignated as panzer armies on this day. (*G. Blau, German Campaign in Russia*, 80)
- **5.10.41:** **4 PzGr** captures Yukhnov and Mosalsk, while **4 Army** takes Sukhinichi as Soviet **43 Army** falls back. Koniev orders Boldin to block German advance upon Vyazma from the north, while **16 Army** does so from the south . . . **24 PzK** moves upon Tula; however, the advance is hindered by an alarming lack of fuel, movement being stalled as the lead tanks run out of gasoline. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 141)
- **5.10.41:** As Konev’s and Budenny’s forces continue to cling to their defenses between the two penetration sectors, Hoth’s and Hoepner’s armored spearheads approach to within 45 km of Viaz’ma. Late on **5 Oct 41**, Konev orders Group Boldin to block the German advance on Viaz’ma from the north, and for Rokossovky’s **16 Army** to do the same from the south. Less than an hour later, Shaposhnikov informs Konev that “the Stavka VGK has permitted you to *begin withdrawing tonight* in accordance w/ your request.” Similar orders go out to the Reserve and Briansk Fronts. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 148)

²⁷⁸ **Note:** For a graphic account of the “Kesselschlacht” see, *W. Heinemann, Feldpostbriefe* (in my “Heinemann” file).

- **5.10.41:** I reached General Lemelsen's HQ at **10.30** hrs on **5 Oct 41** [by his liaison plane, it seems]. **18 PD** was sent across the Orel-Bryansk road in a northerly direction, while **17 PD** was ordered to capture Bryansk by a *coup de main*. From Lemelsen's HQ at Lobanovo, I flew back in my little liaison plane to the HQ of **XXIV PzK** at Dmitrovsk. General Geyr complained about the poor state of our fuel supply; the future extend of our movements was ultimately dependent on this. Unfortunately, captured stocks were small. But as we had occupied the Orel airfield, I sent an urgent request to cdr of **Air Fleet 2** that he fly us in the needed quantity, ca. **100 000** gallons, to that field. . . **XLVIII PzK** took Rylsk; **XXIV PzK** enlarged its bridgeheads over the Susha to the north of Orel; **XLVII PzK** captured Karachev. (Guderian, Panzer Leader, 232-33)

- **ab ca. 5.10.41:** Soviet command recognized danger of an operational breakthrough at Orel through Tula towards Moscow. They attempted to halt the German advance w/ help of units hurriedly transported to Mtsensk by the air force and additional units who had marched there, from which the **1 Gds RC** was formed. The main opposition to Guderian's units came from the **4 Tank Bde** under Colonel M.E. Katukov, equipped w/ **T-34** tanks, which gave the attacking **4 PD** a „hard time.“ These rapid counter-measures enabled the Russians to *halt the mass of XXIV PzK for a week* initially and inflict heavy casualties upon them. (K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point, 81; see also, Guderian, Erinnerungen, 213; and, *KTb H.Gr.Mitte*, 5.10.41)

- **5.-6.10.41:** During the night of **5-6 Oct 41**, Russian forces attempt to disengage and withdraw to the Mozhaisk Line. Vyaz'ma falls. . . Farther south, Bryansk Front is in imminent danger of encirclement. **17 PD** captures Bryansk and crosses the Desna [on **6 Oct 41**]. . . Soviet control over the entire Central Front has collapsed. Operation “Typhoon” has ripped open the front line from Bryansk to Vyaz'ma and encircled two enormous groups of Soviet armies. . . About this time, Jodl states: “Wir haben endgueltig u. ohne Uebertreibung diesen Krieg gewonnen.“ (See, **III:289-90**)

- **6.10.41:** **17 PD** captures Briansk²⁷⁹ from the east, including its Desna River bridges. This maneu-ver assists forward movement of **2 Army** attacking to the NW. Near Trubchevsk elements of **3** and **13 armies** are trapped, while elements of **50 Army** are encircled to the NE. (Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941, 70)

- **6.10.41:** Durch den Vorstoss der verst. **3 PzGr** erreichten Teile des **LVI AK** die Autobahn **3 km** noerdl. Wjasma. . . Wetter: Bewoelkt, stuermisch, kalt. Strassenzustand: im allgemeinen unveraendert. Bei **2 Pz Armee** stellenweise nass u. schluepfrig. (*KTb OKW*, Bd I, 682-83)

- Hoth (Reinhardt) & Hoepner at Wyaz'ma
 Breakthrough battles (narrative sweep from right to left)
 Wyaz'ma captured (**7.10.41**)
 Both panzer groups link up behind Soviet Western Front

²⁷⁹ **Note:** Bryansk may have fallen on **7.10.41**. Confirm!

- (For **PzGr 3** see, *Hoth, Pz.-Operationen*, 135-36; for **41. PzK** of **PzGr 3** see, FMS study by *Hans Roettiger* (corps chief-of-staff), in: *Steven H. Newton, German Battle Tactics on the Russian Front 1941-1945*; summary in my “*Biblio file.*”)²⁸⁰
- Clearing the pocket (*personal accounts*)
Losses of Soviet W & SW Fronts
- For operations of **7. PD** – its critical role in Vyasma “*Kesselschlacht*” – see, *H. Scheibert, Die Gespenster-Division; Hasso v. Manteuffel, Die 7. Pz.-Div. 1935-45*, and other materials in division file.
 (“Abschlussbericht des **OKW** meldet als Ergebnis der Doppelschlacht Briansk-Wjasma: **648.196** Gef., **1197** Pz., **5229** Gesch.”) (*Scheibert, 72*)
 - For operations of the **10. PD** from **2.-7.10.41** – on latter day linking up w/ **7. PD** at Vyasma – see, *R.H.S. Stolfi, German Panzers on the Offensive*, 26-32; see also, *Albert Schick, Die Geschichte der 10. Pz.-Div.*)
 (**6.10.41**: The **2d Btn., PzRgt 7**, now broke out into the clear and at **1915** radioed division HQ that it had seized the Vyasma²⁸¹ airfield. A few hours later, the division [**10. PD**] would link up w/ elements of **7. PD** advancing from the north and block the escape route of **55** Soviet divisions. . .) (32)
 - **6.-25.10.41** [Bryansk pockets]: Since **6 Oct 41**, Eremenko w/ Bryansk Front has lost all communciation w/ the Soviet High Command in Moscow; on night of **8 Oct 41**, he orders the withdrawal by night of his already encircled forces. Many of his troops do succeed in breaking out. On **17 Oct 41**, that part of Soviet **50 Army** in the pocket to the north of Bryansk surrenders, but resistance to the south of the town lasts until **25 Oct 41**. **3, 13** and **50 Armies** yield about **50 000** prisoners; Petrov, cdr of **50 Army**, is also killed. . . The clearing of the Bryansk pocket had been no easy task, since the forests were unthinned and untended, full of primeval marsh, thicket and undergrowth, and combing out the Red Army men could be a costly and dangerous business. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 181-82)
 - **7.10.41**: Hitler verbietet die Annahme der Kapitulation von Moskau. (*H.A. Jacobsen, Der Zweite Weltkrieg in Chronik*, 38)
 - **7.10.41** [Vyaz'ma pocket]: Not until [this day] did Germans finally succeed in closing the gap in the pocket east of Vyaz'ma by linking up **10 PD** from **3 PzGr** w/ the **7 PD** from **4 PzGr**. Reports by the *Luftwaffe* stated that a „large number of enemy columns. . . had already escaped from the pincer offensive“ and it was confirmed that „east of Vyaz'ma a very large number of troops was running off in the direction of Moscow.“ While they sustained heavy casualties, the Russians again succeeded in withdrawing a large number of troops from the encirclement in time. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 86; for more details of link up at Vyaz'ma see, **III:292-94**)
 - **7.-8.10.41**: On **7 Oct 41**, Guderian ordered the **XLVII PzK** to curl around counter-clockwise back toward the city of Bryansk and **2 Army** units advancing near there. The **17 PD** entered

²⁸⁰ **Note:** Among other things, Roettiger avers that enemy air activity in early **Oct 41** against corps' spearheads “surpassed everything so far experienced in Russia.” Inadequacy of the supply situation is a constant theme of Roettiger's.

²⁸¹ **Note:** This is Stolfi's spelling of the town. Advance of **10. PD** to Vyasma characterized by several key acts of initiative on part of local German cdrs; battlegroups of **10. PD** often moving at night, slowed by terrain and poor roads, lack of fuel, enemy resistance.

the city and captured the Bryansk Front headquarters to the south (although most of the staff escaped). On **8 Oct 41, 18 PD** finally linked up with elements of **2 Army**, *officially closing* the Bryansk half of Typhoon's triple envelopment. As before, largely because Guderian did not put the required emphasis on closing the pocket **13 000** men from **3 Army**, **10 000** men from **13 Army** and nearly **10%** of the **50 Army** escaped captivity. Nonetheless, together von Bock's forces had rent a 450 km gash in the Soviet lines while capturing another two-thirds of a million POWs. Zhukov, now in total command of Moscow's defenses, but with no apparent reserves to fill up the massive hole, decided he would establish the main line of resistance for the capital at Mozhaisk, and that in the south he would try to halt Guderian near Mtsensk. That mission fell on the **1 Gds Rifle Corps**.²⁸² The weather offered the defenders a helping hand. (See, *Kirchubel, Draft*, 20-21; **III:295-96**)

- **ca 7.-17.10.41**: The Kesselschlachten at Vyazma and Bryansk will last **10** days. Fighting rages in woods, villages and over strategic road junctions and around lakeland to finish off the last effective remaining Soviet armies before Moscow. As in earlier encirclement battles, the *initial burden of the fight falls upon the mot. infantry and motorcycle btns of the Panzer divisions*. **SR 6** of the **7 PD** is ordered to hold **6** km-wide btn. sectors, which was two [**2**] or three [**3**] times greater than the norm. This could only be practically achieved by establishing inter-locking strongpoints. These covered wide stretches of front w/ limited or often no depth. . . (See, *R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 183)

(Note: For a *personal account* of the horrific nature of the "cauldron" battle at Vyaz'ma see, *W. Heinemann, Tagebuch*, 27.10.41, 10.11.41. Heinemann, a btl. cdr in **IR 67 (23. ID)**, describes just how difficult the battle was – not only for the Russians – but for the thin lines of Germans defending against the utterly violent and incessant Soviet breakout attempts.) (*Heinemann file*)

- **11.10.41 [Wjasma / 35. ID]**: Verzweifelte Versuche der Russen, aus der Umklammerung auszubrechen, wurden am **11. Okt 41** endgueltig zunichte gemacht. Das Schlachtfeld bot jetzt mit seinem Chaos an Gefallenen, Verwundeten, Pferden, Fahrzeugen u. Waffen ein *unbeschreibliches Bild der Verwuestung*. Vor der Front des **IR 34 [35 ID]** hatte der Feind besonders hohe Verluste. **8500** Gefangene wurden eingebracht, **64** Panzer, **325** Geschuetze, **1350** Kfz., **116** Zugmaschinen, **500** bespannte Fahrzeuge, **750** Pferde erbeutet oder vernichtet.²⁸³ (*Kameradendienst 35 e.V., 35. Inf.-Div., 95*).

- **11.-12.10.41 [Vyaz'ma pocket]**: Russian escape attempts caused heavy casualties among some of the German encirclement troops. This also emerged from a letter from the cdr of **7 PD** to GFM v. Bock on **18 Oct 41**. According to him, on **11-12 Oct 41**, the **7 PD** had lost almost **1000** men; a whole btn was „literally. . . wiped out“ in its positions. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 110-111, f.n. 45; also, *KTb H.Gr.Mitte*. Note: Check other sources on **7 PD** to see what they say about this incident.)

- **Mid-Oct 41**: The massive Viaz'ma and Briansk encirclements virtually destroyed the Western and Reserve Fronts and severely damaged Briansk Front. The encirclement cost the three *fronts*:

7 of their **15** armies

²⁸² Glantz, *ibid*, p. 149; Haywood, *ibid*, pp. 143, 146; Reinhardt, *ibid*, p. 87. Eremenko and an adjutant escaped and eventually made it to a **3 Army** command post several days later. On the 13th he was wounded by a Luftwaffe raid and would be out of the war for nearly a year.

²⁸³ Note: This booty secured by **IR 34**, or by entire **35 ID**?

64 of 95 divisions
11 of 15 tank bdes
50 of 62 attached artillery regiments

Equipment losses totaled 6000 guns and mortars and 830 tanks. An estimated 85 000 men escaped the Viaz'ma cauldron; 23 000 escaped from the Bryansk encirclement; 98 000 men from 29 and 33 Armies, Group Ermakov, and 22 Army also made it to safety. Counting those that reached other units, total escapees numbered about 250 000. Thus, it is likely that 1 million troops were lost at Viaz'ma and Bryansk, of which 688 000 fell captive to the Germans. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 153)

- **15.10.41:** Bei Wjasma ist die Schlacht zu Ende. Bei u. suedl. Brjansk sind schwere Kaempfe gegen den eingeschlossenen u. verzweifelt sich wehrenden Feind noch im Gange. . . (*KTB OKW*, Bd I, 702)
- **18.10.41:** Der Kessel NO Brjansk ist zum groessten Teil aufgeloeset. Bis zum **16.10.41** wurden hier ueber 50 000 Gefangene gemacht u. 400 Geschuetze erbeutet. Der Kessel suedl. Brjansk verengt sich weiter, allein am **17.10.41** wurden hier 2340 Gefangene gemacht. . . (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 407)
- **19.10.41:** On this day in his diary, GFM v. Bock records a count of 673 000 Russian prisoners. (*Bock Tagebuch*)
- **20.10.41:** The Russians encircled near Trubchevsk [south of Bryansk] surrendered. (*Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 240)
- **23.10.41** [Bryansk pocket]: The Germans claim that fighting in the Battle of Bryansk ended officially on **19 Oct 41** (see, *KTB H.Gr.Mitte*). In reality, however, fighting continued until the Russian 3 and 50 Armies broke through on **23 Oct 41**. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 108, f.n. 16)
- For *Marschleistungen* of AGC from **2.-13.10.41** see, FMS P-190, in: VI:114)

g) *Role of air power during “Taifun”*

- For role of *Luftwaffe* see, *inter alia*, Notebook #I, “*Luftwaffe, Chronology of Events*.”
(**Note:** Die enttauschende Erfahrung des Feldzuges bezueglich unserer Luftwaffe ist, wie schwach sie doch ist u. schnell abgenutzt. Englands u. Amerikas Luftwaffe waechst zur Prioritaet u. darueber hinaus. . . (*Tagebuch Muenchhausen*, Okt 41; see, I:461)
- For Soviet VVS see, *Hardesty*, v., Red Phoenix: The Rise of Soviet Air Power, 1941-1945; also, *Kozhevnikov*, M.N., The Command and Staff of the Soviet Army Air Force in the Great Patriotic War 1941-45, etc.)
(**Note:** Key details from these and other sources – total sorties flown, types of missions, etc. – can be found in my “*Bibliography*.”)
- Soviet aviation in Battle of Moscow (52 ff.); **11.-18.10.41:** massed VVS strikes on GAF airfields along entire eastern front (55); **30.9.-31.10.41:** VVS flies 26,000 combat sorties in defense of central sector (57); o) **Nov 41:** Another wave of VVS attacks on GAF airfields (59) (*M. N. Kozhevnikov*)

- **6.-9.10.41:** Rain begins to fall in the southern sector of the front on **6 Oct 41** and elsewhere on the next day. *Luftwaffe* sorties drop from **1400** on **6-7 Oct 41** to **139** on **9 Oct 41**. Supplies cannot come forward. Wounded cannot be evacuated. (*Kirchubel*, Barbarossa 1941, 75)
- **17.10.-10.11.41:** On **3 Nov 41**, the Lagebericht Ost spoke of "aerial reconnaissance that had produced nothing for days." The KTB KdrLw HGr Mitte reported "bad weather (rain and low cloud)," sometimes snow, from **17 Oct–5 Nov 41**. The usual formula was: "No night-time reconnaissance and no daytime reconnaissance owing to bad weather." Not until **31 Oct 41** did they again report "very limited daytime reconnaissance yielding no information on the enemy." No transport of troops was reported before **10 Nov 41**. (*K. Reinhardt*, Moscow – The Turning Point, 125-26, f.n. 198)

h) German "*Siegeseuphorie*"

- **3.10.41:** Hitler's Reichstag speech
(See, *Max Domarus*, Hitler. Reden u. Proklamationen, Bd. II, 1758)
- **3.10.41:** Hitler erklärt in seiner Rede zur Eröffnung des *Winterhilfswerkes*: „Dieser Gegner ist bereits gebrochen u. wird sich nie mehr erheben.“ (*H.A. Jacobsen*, Der Zweite Weltkrieg in Chronik, 38)
- **3.-4.10.41:** Around **1:00 p.m.**, Hitler's train [*Amerika*] pulls into Berlin. Goebbels is immediately summoned to the Reich Chancellery. He finds Hitler looking well and full of *optimism*. In the privacy of Hitler's room, he is given an overview of the situation at the front. The advance is proceeding better than expected. Big successes are being attained. „The Fuehrer is convinced,“ comments Goebbels in his diary the next day (**4.10.41**) „that if the weather stays moderately favorable the Soviet army will be essentially smashed w/in fourteen [14] days.“ (*Kershaw*, Hitler, 431)
- **7.10.41:** [*Hewel diary*]: „Viaz'ma taken. Ring round Timoschenko army closed. Jodl: Most decisive day of the Russian war. Comparison w/ *Koeniggraetz*.“ („*Wiasma genommen. Ring um Timoschenko-Armee geschlossen. Jodl: Entscheidender Tag des Russenkrieges. Vergleich mit Koeniggraetz.*“) (Quoted in: *Kershaw*, Hitler, 951, f.n. 228; for confidence of Hr.Gr. Mitte and Halder see, *DRZW*, Bd. 4, 576)
- **7.-8.10.41:** By **7 Oct 41**, the Bryansk pocket is completely sealed and the armored divisions are about to close the other huge ring around Vyazma. Grippled by this military drama, Hitler *does not eat this day*. Jodl calls the 7th, „the most crucial day of the whole Russian war,“ and compares it w/ *Koeniggraetz*. The next day (8th), Jodl repeats his triumphant verdict: „We have finally and w/o any exaggeration won this war! (*Irving*, Hitler's War, 321-22)
- **8.-11.10.41:** On evening of the 8th, Hitler spoke of the decisive turn in the military situation over the previous three (**3**) days. Werner *Koeppen*, Rosenberg's liaison at FHQ, reported to his boss that „the Russian army can essentially be seen as annihilated.“ Hitler's view is that Bolshevism was heading for ruin through *lack of anti-tank defenses* (*Monologe*, **10.-11.10.41**) "The rapid collapse of Russia would have a *disastrous impact on England*," he assured.

Churchill had placed all his hopes in the Russian war-machine. "Now that too is past." (Koeppen, **16.10.41**) (Kershaw, Hitler, 433)

-- **9.10.41**: Press Secretary Dietrich's announcement of victory over Soviet Union.

Background to his announcement

(Note: In his memoir, Dietrich states that Hitler dictated word-for-word the text of his, Dietrich's, (ill-fated) press announcement. Afterward, in what Dietrich describes as an "emotional outburst," Hitler insisted that the war in the east was all but won. (See, *Otto Dietrich, The Hitler I Knew*, 69-70)

-- German troops at front would grow to have increasing bitterness and contempt for such "out of touch" perspectives.

-- **10.10.41**: The **OKW** called off Army of Norway operations out of northern Finland because it believed the *war was about over on the main front*. Much of the world, the British and U.S. governments especially, wanted to believe otherwise, but to do so, except as a desperate act of faith, hardly seemed reasonable. The U.S. military attaché in Moscow had reported on **10 Oct 41** that it seemed "the end of Russian resistance is not far away." The British government had suspected the end might be near in **Sep 41**, before "Taifun" began. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 39)

-- **15.10.41**: On this day, the State Secretary for Aviation and Inspector-General of the *Luftwaffe*, GFM Erhard Milch, considered some of the bomb and ammunition requirements of the Luftwaffe quartermaster-general to be "much too high, especially if one considers that the war situation indicates that the *great campaign against Russia will be concluded in the near future*." At about the same time, IAW instructions from Hitler, the chief of the operations department of the *Luftwaffe* General Staff was considering the strengthening of the air defenses of the Reich territory by bringing back anti-aircraft units from the east. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 814)

-- Goebbels' diary entries

(See, *Ralf Georg Reuth, Goebbels Tagebuecher*, Bd. IV, etc.)

-- Response of German people to spectacular initial victories (Berlin?)

-- **OKH / OKW**:

Halder KTB ("classic encirclement battle")

Jodl, etc.

-- **24.10.41**: Erster Operationsentwurf fuer eine deutsche Offensive in Richtung Kaukasus – unter Abdeckung der Nordflanke Stalingrad – Astrachan – in der Op.Abt. des GenStdH fertiggestellt. (*A. Hillgruber, Chronik*, in: *OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 1233)

-- Conversely, "fuer wenige Tagen im **Okt 41** dachte Stalin sogar an *Flucht aus dem Kreml*." (See, *R.-D. Mueller, "Duel im Schnee,"* in: *Der Zweite Weltkrieg*, *Stephan Burgdorff* (Hg.), 122)

i) *The Pursuit toward Moscow begins (then slows to crawl)*

Note: *Dennis Showalter's* discussion of Operation "Typhoon" begins on p. 182; stresses German operational errors, eg., sending **PzGr 3** NE toward Kalinin vice using it for a direct assault on Moscow (Hitler's Panzers).

Note: For *logistical failures*, and their role in the overall failure of Operation *Taifun* see, *Robert Forczyk, Moscow 1941*, 23-24, 43-44, 70-71)

Note: [Rate of the German advance]: In period from **2-15 Oct 41** the average pace of the attack by Army Group Centre was **16** km/day; that of **3 PzGr** from **11-15 Oct** was **30** km/day; and that of the **2 PzGr** from **30 Sep – 2 Oct 41** as much as **60** km/day. Towards the end of **Oct 41**, the daily average dropped to **5.3** km. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 132, f.n. 1)

Note: War diary of AGC makes clear just how hard GFM v. Bock, his Chief of Staff, etc., drove subordinate armies to conduct a relentless pursuit following breakthroughs and encirclement of Soviet forces in early **Oct 41**; also clear that, following these breakthroughs and the Kesselschlachten of Wyasma and Brjansk, they were convinced that virtually nothing lay between them and Moscow – only militia units, construction troops, etc., defending the capital. In first two-three weeks of "Taifun," two key points emerge: a) gradual dispersion of German assault into several separate axes of advance (i.e., N, NE on southern flank of Army Group North, direct assault on Moscow, and in south axis of advance on Kursk),²⁸⁴ b) Hitler's growing "meddling" in operational and *tactical* details. For telling example of Hitler's meddling in operational/tactical issues see diary entry for **26.10.41**. (For more details see, KTB excerpts in Notebook #7)

-- **5.-11.10.41** [Mtsensk]: At Bryansk the Red Army not only committed heavier tanks [**T 34s**] en masse but also deployed some of its best operationa cdrs in desperate attempt to blunt the German thrust. Maj-Gen. Dmitri D. Lelyushenko's hastily assembled **1 Gds RC** included the **5** and **6 Gds RDs**, the **4** and **11 Tank Bde** (both equipped w/ **T 34s**), several bdes of the **V Parachute Corps**, the **36 Motorcycle Rgt**, artillery from the Tula Military School, and a regiment of Katusha multiple rocket-launchers. Stalin personally made decision to support Lelyushenko w/ two fighter, one ground attack, and one light bomber regiment from the Soviet air force's meager holdings. Lelyushenko was one of the few Russian cdrs who had at least held his own in tank battles against the Germans at Dvinsk and Ostrov, and he was ably supported by Col. Mikhail E. Katukov, cdr **4 Tank Bde**. As soon as each element of his corps arived, Lelyushenko threw it into battle; in heavy fighting around Mtensk on the Zusha River from **5-11 Oct 41**, he succeeded in fighting the **XXIV PzK** to a virtual standstill. Even though the **4 PD** finally manged to close the Bryansk pocket, the tenacious Soviet defenders of Mtensk held on to the town until **22 Oct 41**, repulsing at least three [**3**] heavy attacks in which Model's **3 PD** took part. (*Newton, Hitler's Commander*, 145-46)

-- **7.10.41**: Fatal decisions taken by **OKH & H.Gr.Mitte** on this day
3. PzGr + 9. Armee diverted to NE – toward Rshew and Kalinin
This *excentric movement* shifts key forces away from direct Moscow axis
Fatally dilutes German *Schwerpunkt*?
Decisive for further course of events?

-- **7.10.41**: GFM v. Bock issues orders for continuation of the offensive. In the north, **9 Army** and **3 PzGr** are to advance on Rzhev and Kalinin. In the centre, **4 Army** is to make for Maloyaro-

²⁸⁴ **Note:** For this problem, see GFM v. Bock's comments in war diary on **23.10.41**.

slavets and Kaluga, while Hoepner aims for Mozhaisk. To the south, Guderian (his command now renamed **2 Pz Army**) is to drive toward Tula w/ **2 Army** in support. However, all of this has to wait until the two encirclements are cleared [?]²⁸⁵ – a task requiring 2/3 of the army group and between one and two weeks. Moreover, v. Bock's logistic problems prevent his army group from continuing sustained ops. So, just as v. Bock has rent a **300-mile** hole in the Moscow defenses, behind which the Russians can muster scant reserves, he has to slow down to await reduction of the pockets and to reconsolidate his forces. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 75)

-- **7.10.41**: On [this day], with the encirclement [at Vyaz'ma] finally completed, the Army High Command and AGC believed it was time to begin the pursuit towards Moscow. The successes achieved in the encirclement made the German Command exceptionally optimistic and they believed „that we can take some risks“ and that it was different this time from the situation at Minsk and Smolensk, where the enemy succeeded in building new defensive lines in time and delaying the German advance. Bock now believes his forces are strong enough this time to carry out both tasks – i.e., reduction of the pocket and simultaneous pursuit w/ available units. As the enemy did *not seem to have any available reserves* worth talking about, the German Command believed it was important to avail themselves of this opportunity and break through rapidly towards Moscow. At a meeting in Army Group Ctr on **7 Oct 41**, which was also attended by Brauchitsch and Oberst (i.G.) Heusinger (head of Ops Branch in Army General Staff), the far-reaching objectives the individual armies were ordered to achieve revealed to what extent their position was regarded as favorable. [Note: By their decisions of **7 Oct 41**, Germans fatally dilute the *Schwerpunkt* of the advance on Moscow – eg., **3 PzGr**, along w/ **9 Army**, was to “assemble for a thrust towards Kalinin and Rzhev“ (i.e., to the NE, away from Moscow axis). As a result, these forces were “*not available at the decisive moment* for rapid deployment against Moscow at a time when the new Russian defensive lines had not been fortified and most of the reserve troops were still being brought up. . .” (For more details, *K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 86-88; **III:292-93**)

-- Great *window of opportunity* for Germans from ca. **7-15.10.41** goes largely unexploited. Had torn open roughly **300 km** hole in Russian lines; unable to exploit fully.

-- Key pursuit milestones: (See also, **IV:180**, ff.)
Moshaisk defense line reached (by **10.10.41**)
 Reinhardt reaches the Volga (**11.10.41**)
Staritz (on road to Kalinin) (**12.10.41**); Kaluga²⁸⁶ (**13.10.41**); Kalinin (**14.10.41**); Rshev (**14.10.41**);²⁸⁷
Erste Moskauer Schutzenstellung pierced (Borodino, etc.) (mid-**Oct 41**)
 In mid-**Oct 41**, advance reduced to a crawl (mud period!)

-- Note: According to *Dado Muriyev, The Rout of “Typhoon,”* Soviet **32. RD** at Borodino held up the German advance for **5 days**.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁵ **Note**: This is inaccurate – the pursuit did not wait for one to two weeks.

²⁸⁶ **Note**: Both Kaluga and Tula had long been centers of Russian military production. See, Zamoyski, *Moscow 1812*, 333. For an interesting account of capture of Kaluga – w/ good details on characteristics of the city – see, W. Haupt, *Sturm auf Moskau*, 147-48.

²⁸⁷ **Note**: Confirm dates!

²⁸⁸ **Note**: For a detailed account of Napoleon's battle at Borodino in **Sep 1812** see, Adam Zamoyski, *Moscow 1812*, 252-95.

-- Example of **45. ID** – *Marschleistungen 1 – 12 Oct 41* (IX: C. Hartmann, Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg, Kapitel III)

-- **ca. 7-13.10.41**: [**1 PD** to Kalinin]: In sector of **3 PzGr**, **XXXXI PzK**, spearheaded by **1 PD**, is ordered to attack beyond the forming pockets NW towards Kalinin on the River Volga. After it has captured Staritza [**12.10.41**], NW of Rzhev, resupply difficulties make themselves felt. Non-combat vehicles are ordered to remain behind to husband sufficient fuel to reach the Volga. Petrol is siphoned off from these non-combatant types and reallocated to Panzers, half-tracks and artillery prime-movers. These ad hoc measures maintain the ops tempo and achieve absolute surprise, reflected in a buoyant radio transmission from the **1 PD** ops officer to the Corps Chief of Staff, Oberst Hans Roettiger. „Russian units, although not included in our march-tables, are attempting continuously to share our road space“ between Staritza and Kalinin, it reads. Mischievously, Roettiger is informed the intermingling of Russian w/ German vehicles is „partly responsible for the delay of our advance on Kalinin. Please advise what to do.“ The **1 PD** is boldly advancing w/ completely open flanks. Its supporting **36 ID (mot)** is languishing to the rear, held up by bad roads and fuel shortages. Oberst Roettiger, in effect, orders **1 PD** to ignore the risks and drive on.

Trams are still running in the streets of Kalinin as the lead elements of the tank division rumble into the city. Furious street fighting erupts once armed Russian factory workers, still dressed in civilian overalls, realised who they were. Flamethrower Panzers drench MG nests w/ fiery petroleum while German motorcycle soldiers are pinned down in the streets by Russian roof-top snipers. . . By the evening of **14 Oct 41**, Kalinin was in German hands. (R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands; 182; W. Haupt, Die Schlachten der H.Gr.Mitte, 95-97; also, H. Roettiger, **XXXXI Pz Corps** during *Battle of Moscow*, in: S.H. Newton, German Battle Tactics, 26-28; for more details see also, R. Stoves, 1. Pz.-Div., 109-10; **III:298**)

-- **8.10.41**: In his memoirs, Guderian writes about how emotionally and spiritually draining the recent battles were on his leading cdrs. Discusses setback at Mtsensk; disturbing reports on quality and improved tactical handling of Russian tanks, etc. (For details see, *Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 234-35; **III:300-01**)

-- **10.-11.10.41**: The lead elements of Hoepner's **4 PzGr** reach the edge of the Mozhaisk Line on Friday, **10 Oct 41**, meeting only scratch Soviet units. A **GKO** decree is passed the next day (**11 Oct 41**) putting the **NKVD** in control of the Moscow region and ordering construction of defenses on the line Khlebnikovo-Moskva River. (E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East, 96)

-- **10.-13.10.41** [**6. ID**]: Dieser Tag brachte allerdings in vielen Bereichen bereits Ernuechterung. Die Durchfuehrung des Angriffs wurde schon allein durch Betriebstoffmangel erheblich erschwert. Pak-Geschuetze mussten bereits aus diesem Grund mit Pferden gezogen werden. Die Fernsprech- u. Funktrupps wurden ebenfalls immer unbeweglicher. Die Befehlsuebermittlung war fast nur noch durch Melder moeglich. Das **IR 37** erreichte an diesem Tag gegen **17 Uhr** Slepszowa u. am folgenden Tag den Ort Ssytschewka. Starke feindliche Flieger-taetigkeit erschwerte den Vormarsch. In der Nacht zum **11.10.41** hatte es gefroren u. geschniet. Bei Slepszowo wurde der Dnjepr ueberschritten. Ostwaerts des Flusses wurde bei Woskressenskoje die Panzerstrasse nach Rshew erreicht. Weiteres Ziel war, ostw. Rshew ueber die Wolga u. dann in Richtung Kalinin (Tver) vorzustossen. . . Der Weitermarsch erfolgte auf der “Panzerstrasse” Ssyschewka – Subtzow – Staritza – Kalinin bei eingetretener

Dunkelheit am **13.10.41** um **18 Uhr**. Das Tagesziel Subtzow wurde nicht erreicht, da die Strassen mit Fahrzeugen aller Art voellig verstopft waren.

Deutsche Flugzeuge aller Typen (vor allem **Ju 52**) flogen unaufhoerlich ueber die Truppe hinweg. Sie brachten Munition u. Treibstoff nach vorn. Sogar der Hafer fuer die Pferde wurde auf diesem Weg transportiert. Der Verpflegungsnachschub gestaltete sich auch deshalb so schwierig, weil in nur **10** Tagen die Front ueber **200 km** nach Osten verschoben wurde. (*W. Buddenbohm, Das Leben des Soldaten*, 70)

- **10.-15.10.41:** By **10 Oct 41**, the Germans have reached the Mozhaisk defensive line – a **300 km** series of fortifications about **120 km** from Moscow. In heavy fighting they outflank the Mozhaisk line to take Kaluga to the south on **13 Oct 41**, and Kalinin to the north on **14 Oct 41**. On the night of **14-15 Oct**, they achieve a *crucial breakthrough* at Borodino, in the Volokolamsk sector of the front. The road to Moscow seems open. (*Barber, Moscow Crisis*, 202-03)
- **10.-16.10.41:** Kluge's **4 Army**, at full combat strength, begins advancing along the Minsk, Warsaw and Kiev highways toward the Mozhaisk Line on **10 Oct 41**, even before the *Viaz'ma Kessel* has been liquidated. By this time, only scratch forces formed around the nucleus of four [4] rifle divisions man the Mozhaisk Defense Line, and these forces have wide open flanks. To strengthen its defenses west of Moscow, on **13 Oct 41** the *Stavka* merges the Moscow Reserve Front into the Western Front and forms the **16, 5, 43, and 49 Armies** to defend the Volokolamsk, Mozhaisk, Maloiaroslavets, and Kaluga axes, respectively. German forces reach and begin fighting for all four [4] points between **11 - 16 Oct 41**. Combat develops in fragmented fashion as both sides continue to feed fresh forces into desperate struggles for possession of the four towns, all the while struggling to overcome appalling terrain conditions produced by the intermittent freezes, thaws, and rains. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 154)
- **11.10.41:** Die freigemachten Pz.-Div. stiessen trotz schlechtesten Wetterlage u. chronischem Spritmangel weiter in die Tiefe des russ. Raumes. Die **3. Pz Armee** [sic] des Gen. d. Pz.Tr. Reinhardt gewann am schnellsten ihre Operationsfreiheit zurueck. Ihre [VA] erreichten schon am **11. Okt 41** die Wolga bei Pogoreloje-Gorodischtsche. Damit standen **zum erstenmal deutsche Truppen an der Wolga**. (*W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 131)
- **11.10.41:** On this day, **11 Oct 41**, the headline on the front page of the *Voelkischer Beobachter* reads: "Stalin's armies have vanished from the earth!" (*K. Reinhardt, "Moscow 1941,"* 213)
- **11.10.41:**²⁸⁹ Trotz Schnee, Frost u. grundlos[e] Wege wurde der Vormarsch fortgesetzt. **9 PD** im Vorgehen ueber Patesh auf Kursk. **4 PD** hat Mzensk genommen u. kaempft dort mit fdl. Panzern. Der Feind greift ausserdem aus Osten die Flanke an. Vorausabteilung der **3 PD** im Marsch auf Bolchow – Mzensk. **18 PD** geht von Karatschew nach Norden vor. Der Kessel westl. Brjansk wird weiterhin durch Vorstoss der ihn einschliessenden Divisionen verengt. Aeusserste Anstrengungen des Feindes auszubrechen, wurden abgewiesen. **4. Armee:** erreichte im Vorgehen nach Osten mit **260 ID** die Oka bei Peremischl. **17 PD** nahm Kaluga **30 km** nordl. davon. **PzGr 4:** kaempft mit **3 ID (mot)** bei Medyn. Auch der Kessel westl. Wjasma verengt sich weiter trotz heftiger Gegenwehr. . . **PzGr 3** stoessst weiter nach Osten

²⁸⁹ **Note:** Terrific example of a highly optimistic report from German High Command at this time. Implies capture of Moscow is a foregone conclusion.

vor in Richtung Gshatsk u. Karmanowo. . . Anzeichen fuer ein Heranruecken staerkerer Kraefte von Osten bzw. ein Abziehen von anderen Fronten liegen nicht vor. Die **Aufloesungserscheinungen** halten weiter an. Nach uebereinstimmenden Gefangeneaussagen verfuegt der Feind um Moskau nur noch ueber Sicherheits- u. Miliz-Verbaende (meist unausgebildet, *keine Artillerie, wenig schwere Waffen*). (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 393)

- **11.-15.10.41:** Although the pursuit yielded local gains and on **11 - 12 Oct 41** Medyn and Kaluga, respectively, were taken, and thus initial penetration of the Mozhaisk defense line could be reported, the continuous fighting in the encirclements revealed that the encirclement forces could not quickly be released, as had been hoped. Thus, the spearheads were too weak to break the growing Russian resistance in the first attack, and in advancing sustained very heavy casualties. (Note: Russian attempts to escape from Vyaz'ma pocket between **10-12 Oct 41** hit **XXXX** and **XXXXVI PzK**, which had been designated for the pursuit, especially hard and thus made it difficult to relieve them quickly. It was not until **14 Oct 41** that the bulk of the units of **4** and **9 Armies** fighting in the Battle of Vyaz'ma could be regrouped for the pursuit, which started after 15 Oct 41.) (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 91; 115, f.n. 94; also, *KTB H.Gr.Mitte*, 10.-12.10.41)

- **11.-19.10.41:** First battle of the Mozhaisk line ends in stalemate (**11-16 Oct 41**). Town of Mozhaisk falls on the **19th**. Soviet Mozhaisk defenses consist of two (**2**) nearly parallel lines that include **225** miles of ditches and other anti-tank obstacles, **66** miles of dragons teeth, and **380** miles of wire obstacles. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 10, 70)

- **11.-19.10.41:** Durchbruch der **19. PD** durch die *Moskau-Schutzstellung*. . . Das Kraefte-verhaeltnis zwischen sowj. u. deutschen Kraeften laesst sich im einzelnen nachtraeglich schlecht feststellen. Verhaeltnisse von 20:1 bis 25:1 bei den eingesetzten Inf.-Kraeften duerften nicht selten gewesen sein. . . (**VIII:200-01**; for more details on activities of **19. PD** at this time – including the annihilation of an entire tank coy of the division ca. **17.10.41** by a Soviet Pak front see, *R. Hinze, 19. Pz.-Div.*, 56; **III:315-16**))

- **11.-19.10.41** [German strategic plans]: On **11 Oct 41**, the **OKH** informed AGC of its ideas for subsequent deployment of **9 Army** and **3 PzGr** after the imminent conquest of Kalinin. These units were to advance towards Torzhok, even as far as Vyshniy Volochok and Ostashkov “to prevent, if possible, an escape eastwards by the enemy forces who were retreating or still holding out before the inner wings of Army Groups Centre and North.” Thus, the entire north wing of the army group was withdrawn from a direct assault on Moscow. Only **2 Pz Army**,²⁹⁰ **4 Army** and **4 PzGr** were now to envelop the capital. On **12 Oct 41**, Hitler said that “Moscow was not to be allowed to capitulate” but that the Soviet capital was to be enveloped and “worn down by artillery fire and air raids.” . . . His realization of the actual situation [?] led him not only to deploy the left wing of AGC to the north but also to order **2 Army** to advance southwards via Kursk to Voronezh to eliminate a threat to the inner flanks of Army Groups Centre and South. He thus hoped at the same time to cut off the rail link between Moscow and the south. (For more details, *K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 95-96)

²⁹⁰ **Note:** Yet on **12 Oct 41**, Guderian's panzer army complains of “unimaginable difficulties:” one km per hour was the normal progress made by mot. units! (**III:313**) Clearly, Hitler, Halder, et al., are unaware of true situation at the front.

- **12.10.41:** Staritz, on the road to Kalinin, falls to **1 PD**, which forces back Soviet **30 Army**. With Moscow now threatened from the NW, Stavka forms the Kalinin Group [Front] to the right of the Western Front. Koniev is placed in command, but his force consists only of three (3) weakened rifle divisions and a single tank bde. On approaches to the Mozhaisk line, SS “**DR**” captures Gzhatsk. Pogoreloye falls to **36 ID (mot)**, while **Lehr Mot Bde** takes Zubtsov. . . **13 AK** captures Kaluga, forcing back Soviet **49 Army**. Closer to Moscow, the GKO orders construction of extensive defenses before the city; nearly half a million civilians will be drafted to complete the work. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 147)
- **12.10.41** [OKH Fernschreiben an H.Gr.Mitte]: **OKW** hat befohlen: Der Fuehrer hat erneut entschieden, dass eine *Kapitulation von Moskau nicht anzunehmen ist*, auch wenn sie von der Gegenseit angeboten wurde. (For details see, *OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 1070-71)
- **13.10.41:** Kalinin durch **3 PzGr** erobert. Verteidiger: **31** sowjet. **Armee**. (*A. Hillgruber, Chronik*, in: *OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 1232)
- **13.10.41:** Die **9 Armee** (OB Generaloberst Strauss) erreicht den Westrand von Rshew. (*Stein, GFM Model*, 240)
- **13.-14.10.41** [**1 PD** / Kalinin]: A detailed map (p 136) shows the Panzerraid of **1 PD** on **13.-14.10.41** from Staritz to Volga and Kalinin: „Maj Dr. J. Eckinger, Kdr **I** (gep.)/ **113**, nimmt am **14.10.41** Kalinin mit verst. SPW Btl. **SR 113** nach Panzerraid ueber mehr als **75** km u. gewinnt mit der **3/113** die beiden wichtigsten Wolga-Uebergaenge (dabei die einzige Wolga-Bruecke, die der Wehrmacht unbeschadigt in die Hand fiel!) im Handstreich!“ (*R. Stoves, 1. Pz.-Div.*, 136)²⁹¹
- **13.-14.10.41:** The fall of Kaluga on the **13 Oct 41** and Kalinin the following day unhinges the defense belt south and north of Moscow. The weak defense line from Volokolamsk to Mozhaisk and Maloyaroslavets that lay in between is breached in several places. In Moscow, there is little knowledge about what is going on. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 194)
- **14.10.41:** **OKW** directive re: encirclement of Moscow illustrates how the *Schwerpunkt* of the operation was severely diluted by excentric nature of operations. (See, *Alfred Philippi, et al., Der Feldzug gegen Sowjetrussland*, pp 90-93)
- **14.10.41:** On [this day] the report from Army Group Ctr on the situation of the enemy judged that he was no longer able of opposing an attack on Moscow w/ such strong forces that prolonged resistance was to be feared. . . GFM v. Bock vainly resisted the eccentric movements ordered for the armies on his wings and the weakening of the attack as a whole, whose effects would be felt at precisely the moment when he wanted to regroup his forces to pursue the enemy. (See, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 677-78)
- **14.10.41:** On this day, v. Brauchitsch issues an **OKH** order – which is really of course a Hitler order – outlining the further development of operations by Army Group Ctr. Moscow is to be surrounded but not occupied and any offer of capitulation is to be rejected. The military orders which follow this “curious premise” are no less impracticable, and involve the complete dispersal of the force which had been concentrated for the destruction of West Front

²⁹¹ **Note:** Kalinin will be occupied and held by **41 PzK** from 14.10.-13.11.41; more specifically, by the **1 PD** u. **36 ID (mot)**.

and seizure of Moscow. Von Weich's **2 Army** is to move from Kursk to Voronezh, while Guderian's **2 Pz Army** is to take Tula and encircle Moscow from the SE. Von Kluge's **4 Army** is to pin the Red Army forces to the west of Moscow while Reinhardt's **3 PzGr** and Hoepner's **4 PzGr** are to encircle the capital from the NE. Strauss's **9 Army** is to move directly north from the line Kalinin – Staritsa to Vyshniy Volochok in the area of the Valdai Hills and to assist Army Group North. These operations would have spread AGC over a frontage of about **600** miles; v. Brauchitsch's plan brings a protest from v. Bock who wants to attack Moscow by the shortest and most direct route. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 186)

- **14.10.41** [Regrouping of AGC's southern wing]: Bei dem Kraefteansatz zur befohlenen Einschliessung Moskaus hatte die H.Gr.Mitte *besondere Sorge um ihren rechten Fluegel*. Denn hier war die H.Gr.Sued mit ihrem linken Fluegel nicht, wie vorgesehen, im Vorgehen auf Obojan, sondern weiter suedl. auf Bjelgorod. So entsand hier eine etwa **80 km breite Luecke** zwischen den inneren Fluegeln der H.Gr., die der Feind wohl kaum ungenutzt lassen wuerde. Daher beabsichtigte die H.Gr.Mitte, die Suedflanke der **2 Pz Armee** durch die bei Brjansk freiwerdende **2 Armee** zu schuetzen u. sie in Linie Jeletz – Stalinogorsk vorgehen zu lassen; dabei hatte der Suedfluegel der **2 Armee** Kursk zu nehmen. In der Ausfuehrung bedeutete das eine Umgruppierung: die beiden bisher der **2 Pz Armee** unterstellten Hoeheren Kommandos **XXXIV** u. **XXXV** hatten unter den Befehl der **2 Armee** zu treten, die ihrerseits das **XXXXIII** u. **LIII AK** an die **2 Pz Armee** abzugeben hatte. Auf dem Nordfluegel sah die Weisung des **OKH** vor, mit den zusammen-gefassten Kraeften der **9 Armee** ueber Kalinin nach Norden vorzustossen, um im Zusammenwirken mit dem Suedfluegel der H.Gr.Nord (**16 Armee**) den dortigen Feind zu vernichten; der Russe wehrte sich zaeh bei Kalinin, wohin er von allen Seiten Verstaerkungen heranholte, um diesen wichtigen Knotenpunkt wieder in eigene Hand zu bekommen. (*Hofmann, "Schlacht von Moskau,"* 154-55)²⁹²
- **14.10.41**: **9 Armee** (Strauss) erobert Rschew. (*A. Hillgruber, Chronik*, in: *OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 1232)
- **14.10.41**: As of this day, GFM v. Bock still believes there are no Soviet units defending Moscow. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 77)
- **14.-19.10.41**: **98. ID** endures a tenacious five-day struggle to break through the first "Moskauer -Schutzstellung" at Detschino from **14.-19.10.41**. Combat strength of the division is finally broken on the Nara in late **Oct 41**; from **31 Jul – 31 Oct 41** division sustains **5881** casualties. (See my Notebook #7)
- **ca. 14.-15.10.41** [Borodino]: Town formed part of the Mozhaisk defense line, the outer ring of concentric barriers protecting Moscow, stretching almost **300 km** from Kalinin to Kaluga. This line was attacked by the spearhead of **4 PzGr**: the SS "**DR**" and **10 PD**. A newsreel portrayed unprecedented realism, narrated by war reporter Hugo Landgraf as he participated in the actual attack. On third day of attack, a breakthrough on a wide front is finally achieved. Much was made of this example of realistic war reporting, which proceeded to show the extent of the defenses overcome on this position either side of the Moscow road. A diagrammatic survey shows automatic flamethrowers, zig-zag trenches and wide anti-tank traps covered by artillery and spiky "hedghog" tank obstacles constructed from sections of railway track. Heavy concrete bunkers convered by intermediate positions housing heavy

²⁹² **Note:** As Hofmann makes clear, the objectives of OKH laid out in this directive were soon overtaken by the weather. (155)

wpns and artillery formed the core of the line. . . Both the **10 PD** and **SS “DR”** in support suffer heavy losses during the Borodino fighting. The “**Der Fuehrer**” **IR** is down to **35** men per company, compared to a normal complement of **176**. They were over-stretched. The rgt’s first btn. and motorcycle btn. had fought the Soviet **82 Mot RD** for possession of Schelkowka, an important crossroads on the advance: The **18-** to **20-year-olds** had repulsed two Soviet btns in close combat w/ spades, hand grenades and bayonets. Many of the young SS men were killed, and all were barefoot in their boots in **15** [Grad] below freezing. (*Otto Weidinger*, Comrades to the End, 93-95; quoted in: *R. Kershaw*, War Without Garlands, 190)

- **Mid-Oct 41 [Borodino]**: On the old Napoleonic battlefield at Borodino, two (2) rgts of the newly arrived Siberian **32 RD** plus **18** and **19 Tank Bdes** try to halt **10 PD** and **SS “R”** divisions. On one night the cdr of a company from **98 ID** requests permission to attack. “Attack where?,” the rgt asked; the lieutenant answers: “We’re freezing – it doesn’t matter where, we need quarters!” (*Kirchubel*, Barbarossa 1941, 76)

- **Mid-Oct 41**: The German command believed that once the encirclements had been completed and the pursuit started, the battle for Moscow had essentially been won. They now only had to beat the remaining forces of the Red Army and eliminate Zhukov’s few remaining troops, who were defending west of Moscow. The **OKH** thought they could afford to withdraw one corps HQ, **4** infantry divisions [**VIII AK** w/ **8** and **28 ID** as well as **5** and **15 ID**] and the **1 Cav Div** from the front, transfer them to the west and re-organize them into divisions for operations after “Barbarossa.” (*K. Reinhardt*, Moscow – The Turning Point, 95; 118, f.n. 127)

- **Mid-Oct 41**: German advance slows to a crawl w/ arrival of fall rains, and *Luftwaffe* support ceases almost entirely. Question as to whether the advance should continue in face of logistic difficulties and approach of winter *rarely surfaces* in top-level discussions among German leaders. Of senior cdrs of Army Group Center, only GFM v. Kluge (**4 Army**) appears to have *recognized the danger*. His war diary notes that operations in Russia have reached a *critical point*. Exhaustion of armored forces after battles of Bryansk and Vyazma supported v. Kluge’s position. **10 PD**, which had possessed **200** tanks on **10 Oct 41**, was down to **60** by **16 Oct 41**; **4 PD** possessed but **38**. (*W. Murray*, War to be Won, 133; see also, *Reinhardt*, Wende vor Moskau, 77)

- **Mid-Oct 41**: Due west of Moscow, Army Group Ctr assaults the new Moscow Reserve Front, specifically, **16 Army** at Volokolamsk, **5 Army** at Mozhaisk, **43 Army** at Maloyaroslavets, and **49 Army** at Kaluga. By **16 Oct 41**, all four (4) armies have been defeated. Yet still Soviet defense stiffens. In about ten (10) days in mid-October, the forces defending the Mozhaisk positions grow from **6** rifle divisions, a like number of tank bdes and **10** artillery rgts, to **14** rifle divisions, **16** tank bdes, and over **40** artillery rgts. These defenses are not simply a single line, but *reach in depth* all the way back to Moscow. With the *Luftwaffe* giving little effort to interdiction since mid-**Oct 41**, the capital’s railway system provides an easy way to reinforce the Mozhaisk positions. Part way thru the battle, Stavka merges Artemev’s command w/ the West Front. (*Kirchubel*, Barbarossa 1941, 76)

- **Mid-Oct 41**: On the extreme north flank of Army Group South, von Reichenau’s **6 Army**, still trying to keep in touch w/ v. Weich’s **2 Army** on the right flank of AGC, took Sumy on **10 Oct 41** and then advanced on Belgorod and Kharkov. Hitler, interfering repeatedly w/ ops, was to direct that both **17** and **6 Armies** should move in a south-easterly direction in order to support and keep in close contact w/ v. Kleist’s **1 Pz Army**, despite the fact that Halder did

warn him at the time that this would leave the right flank of AGC in the air and give rise to a gap between **6** and **2 Armies**. The German armies were in fact moving on divergent rather than on parallel axes and gaps were bound to appear between them. Von Weich's **2 Army** in its turn was to be continually drawn to the SE and east, in order to keep in touch w/ **6 Army** to its south, and in consequence was unable to give any support to Guderian to its north. Guderian's **2 Pz Army** was moving in a north-easterly direction towards Moscow, w/ a dangerously exposed right flank which v. Weichs could not cover.²⁹³ (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 192-93)

- **Mid-Oct 41**: Now it was the turn of **OKH** to issue nonsense orders [date?], like those directing Guderian to capture Gorky, over **400** km east of Moscow. Halder and the remainder of the German high command had *no idea what its own men were capable of nor what resources the Red Army had available*. Meanwhile, Guderian's spearhead, the **XXIV PzK**, made for Tula, 'Little Moscow,' with its ultimate objective as Kolomna and Kashira. With **3 PD** on the left and **4 PD** on the right, it headed north. A week after leaving Orel, they were nowhere close to Tula, but had run into a hornets' nest of **T-34** tanks at Mtsensk. Only 88s, 105mm artillery pieces and Stukas had any effect against these monsters. By **mid-Oct 41** the entire panzer army counted only **271** panzers. With Guderian stalled far south of Tula, German hopes shifted to the efforts of **3** and **4 Pz Armies** assaulting north of Moscow. (*Kirchubel, Draft*, 21)
- **ca. 15.10.41**: Near Mtsensk and Bolkhov **XXIV PzK** [Guderian] was involved in heavy fighting. **4 Army** gained but little ground in the east; it was delayed by well-aimed tactical attacks on the Medyn-Maloyaroslavets road, on the highway, and in the areas south of Detchino and west of Mozhaysk. **3 PzGr** held Kalinin and its **1 PD** reached Torzhok. **9 Army** took Rzhev and regrouped for the advance northward via Lukovnikovo, where it was to cut the retreat route of the enemy forces facing **16 Army** of Army Group North. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV, 678; also, *Bock, Tagebuch*, 15.10.41)
- **15.10.41**: By [this date], **2 Pz Army**, still bogged down by the weather, had not advanced beyond Mtsensk. There was only one good route from Orel to Tula and this had broken up under the weight of the heavy traffic and bad weather. Red Army sappers had mined the road verges and demolished the bridges. The Germans had to lay corduroy roads of tree trunks for miles on end. Vehicle fuel was in very short supply and this further restricted mobility. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 181-82)
- **15.-29.10.41** [Kalinin]: Heavy fighting rages in the region [of Kalinin] from **15-29 Oct 41**, and, although the Germans are able to maintain their grip on the city, the counterattacks force them to abandon any idea of advancing on Torzhok and Vyshnii Volochek. During this fighting, on **17 Oct 41**, the *Stavka* subordinates all forces in the region (**22, 29, 30** and **31 Armies** and Operational Group Vatutin) to the newly formed Kalinin Front under Konev's command. After reducing the Viaz'ma encirclement, on **24 Oct 41**, **9 Army** forces join **3 PzGr** at Kalinin and try to revive their offensive on Torzhok. However, the Kalinin Front manages to contain the advance in seven [7] days of heavy fighting. Thereafter, the front stabilizes w/ Konev's *front* perched perilously over Army Group Center's long left flank. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 154)
- **15.-30.10.41**: Key pursuit milestones:

²⁹³ **Note:** And Guderian would be forced to siphon off forces from his main drive to protect his more and more extended right flank.

In heavy fighting throughout remainder of **Oct 41**, Germans finally capture: Volokolamsk – Mozhaïsk – Maloïaroslavets – Kaluga and advance to Naro Fominsk in center of AGC front, etc.

Meanwhile, Guderian held up at Mzensk (Soviet **T 34s!**)²⁹⁴

(discuss in detail; town finally captured ca. **14.10.41**)

Germans launch commission after this traumatic event

(For commission see, **IX: R. Steiger, Armored Tactics**)

2. Army (GFM v. Weichs) attacking toward Kursk (late **Oct 41**)

On **30.10.41** first elements of Guderian's panzer army enter suburbs of Tula (**3:348**)

- **15.-30.10.41:** In heavy fighting throughout remainder of **Oct 41**, German forces finally capture Volokolamsk, Mozhaïsk, Maloïaroslavets and Kaluga²⁹⁵ and advance to outskirts of Kubinka and Naro-Fominsk in the center [**4 Army**] and Serpukhov and Tula in the south [**2 Pz Army**]. During this period, the *Stavka* reinforces Zhukov's Front w/ Lt-Gen M.G. Efremov's newly formed **33 Army**, which goes into action near Naro-Fominsk. Inexorably, a combination of stiff and at times desperate Soviet resistance and heavy rains brought the German offensive to a temporary halt. By **30 Oct 41**, Operation „Typhoon“ has lost its momentum along the east end of the Mozhaïsk Defense Line. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 154-55)
- **16.10.41 [German tank losses]:** In period from start of “Taifun” up to mid-**Oct 41** panzer losses rose quickly. Thus, **6 PD**, which still had over **200** tanks on **10 Oct 41**, reported that it was left w/ only **60** operational tanks on **16 Oct 41**. The **20 PD**, which was one of the first units to start to pursuit toward Moscow, was left w/ **43** total wreckages²⁹⁶ [?] on **16 Oct 41** out of the **283** panzers they had at their disposal on **28 Sep 41**. In the same period, **4 PD**, stuck in the fighting for Mtsensk, was left w/ only **38** panzers. . . On **16 Oct 41**, **2 Pz Army** was left w/ a total of **271** panzers; **3 PzGr** with **259**; and **4 PzGr** with **710**. These figures give the “strength” and give no indication about the actual “operational capability” of the panzers, which was much lower. All told, AGC still had more than **1240** tanks. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 91-92; 115, f.n. 100)
- **ca. 17.10.41:** Information on heavy panzer losses during the German pursuit is given in a “Vororientierung der 4 Armee” of **17 Oct 41**. It states the following of the **LVII PzK**: “**19 PD**: Attack towards the east against enemy positions at Iyinskoye [Russian **43 Army**]; one of our own panzer coys and **18** panzers completely destroyed. . .” (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 103; 124, f.n. 183; also, *KTB H.Gr.Mitte*, B, p 306; and, *Knobelsdorff, 19. Panzer-Division*, 124)
- **17.10.41:** The infantry of Army Group Ctr had also sustained heavy losses. In period from **1.-17. Oct 41** AGC lost roughly **50 000** men. During this period casualties amounted to **1791** officers and **47 430** NCOs and men. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 92; 115, f.n. 101)
- **17.-19.10.41:** In area of **9 Army** and **3 PzGr** supply problems were becoming so acute that their advance was delayed considerably. The north wing of the army group was entirely dependent on the Vyaz'ma-Moscow motorway, and the effects of various wpns, bomb

²⁹⁴ **Note:** For an in-depth personal account of a German panzer unit's (**4. PD**) first encounter w/ **T-34s**, at Mzensk, see, F. Kurowski, *Panzer Aces*, 86, ff. For chronology of events at Mzensk see, R. Forczyk, *Moscow 1941*, 46-47)

²⁹⁵ **Note:** Kaluga captured on **13 Oct 41**.

²⁹⁶ Must be muddy translation. Check original German text.

damage, overcrowding, Russian time-fuses, and blown-up bridges, as well as the impassability of the terrain on both sides of the motorway, made its main supply line unusable. The critical supply situation developed into a supply crisis. . . **OKH** was now trying to minimize the supply problems in area of **9 Army** by extending the railway from Vyaz'ma to Sychevka, but this took time and precisely when speed was of the essence, was of very little help. A shortage of locomotives and wagons in area of Army Group Ctr meant that this extension brought very little improvement. (See, *K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 93-95)²⁹⁷

- **18.10.41:** Die **2. Pz Armee** des Gen.Obst. Guderian hatte am **18. Okt 41** das Schlachtfeld um Brjansk geraeumt u. konzentrierte sich nun zum weiteren Vormarsch in Richtung Tula. Der O.B. der Armee liess an diesem Tag einen Befehl verlesen, in dem er noch einmal auf die Erfolge u. die bisherigen Leistungen seit dem **30. Sep 41** zu sprechen kam. So hatte die Pz.-Armee bis heute **80.044** Gefangene gemacht, **236** Panzer, **539** Geschuetze, **66** Pak, **87** Flak u. **16** Flugzeuge vernichtet bzw. erbeutet. (*W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 157; also, *Guderian, Erinnerungen*)

- **18.10.41:** On [this day], tanks of Stumme's **40 PzK** had already entered Mozhaisk on the second defense line about **60** miles from Moscow, after some fierce fighting against **3** tank bdes near Borodino. The Mozhaisk line had already been breached by Knutzen's **57 PzK** near Maloyaroslavets and Borovsk and by Felder's **13 AK** near Kaluga. A threat existed to the Naro-Fominsk and Podolsk areas to the south of Moscow and the communications between Moscow and Tula were in danger of being cut. To meet this situation a new army, **33 Army** under Efremov, is formed in this area and Golubev's **43 Army** is reinforced. The **3** Moscow defense rings are strengthened w/ barricades, strong points and AT obstacles and **3** workers divisions are hurriedly formed from volunteers and conscripted civilians. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 185)

- **19.10.41:** After the Bryansk pocket had been cleared, **2 Pz Army** and **2 Army** begin to prepare their further advance on **19 Oct 41**. Guderian hopes to begin attack on Mtsensk on **20 Oct 41**, if road conditions permit. **2 Army** is to take Kursk; the plans regarding Voronezh were postponed. **4 Army** continued its costly penetration of the enemy positions protecting Moscow and entered Mozhaysk [**100** km from Moscow]. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 678-79)

- **19.10.41** [Halder dreams!]: On this day the Army General Staff instructs Army Group Ctr to assemble strong, mobile forces in the area of Kalinin and Torzhok for a pincer movement against the enemy group in the Valday Hills. There Halder saw another great operational task to be completed before the end of autumn. Its objective, after the destruction of the enemy forces facing AGN's **16 Army**, was to secure the front over a great distance towards the NE and east. After the occupation of Rybinsk (the air distance between Kalinin and Rybinsk is about **230** km.), the line from Vologda to the lakes area and the "western edge of the tundra" was to be reached and the railway line between Archangel and Moscow cut. While strategic ideas replaced reality in the thinking of the Army General Staff, a rapid thaw and rainy weather set in along the front of the army group and quickly led to a serious supply crisis. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 678-79)

²⁹⁷ **Note:** Reinhardt includes here a long, graphic quote from war diary of **9 Army**, which among other things states: "The time-fuses, particularly, have proved to be very dangerous and effective sources of disturbance and destruction. . . charges are . . . made to explode using time-fuses and tear a hole **10** m. deep and **30** m. wide in the road, making it completely unpassable." (94)

- **ab 19.10.41: 292. ID** im Waldkampf. Terrific account of nature of forest combat. Author makes clear that the Germans did not enjoy this kind of fighting, which was often at close quarters: “Wir sassen in unseren Loechern u. erwarteten jeden Augenblick Tod oder Verwundung durch die verfluchten Baumkrepierer, bei denen der Segen von oben kam u. die Loecher nichts nuetzten. Dazu kam der ewige Regen, der knietiefe Schlamm u. die Naesse. *Jeder Schuss droehnte im Wald **zehnmal so laut** u. riss entsprechend mehr an den Nerven.* Vom Feinde sahen wir nichts, nur sein Feuer spueren wir. . . Waldkampf bedeutete u.U. Nahkampf. Im Nahkampf war der Deutsche dem Russen fuer gewoehlich nicht ueberlegen. Unsere Leute kaempften mit dem Feuer auf Entfernung, gingen auch todesmutig ins feindl. Feuer, aber den Nahkampf mit Bajonetten – den *vermied man gerne*. Hinzu kam, dass wir fuer den Kampf im Dickicht nicht ausgeruestet waren. . .“ (VIII:201-03)

- **20.10.41:** Resistance in the Vyazma pocket comes to an end. Five [5] Soviet armies and Boldin’s tactical group cease to exist. . . As for the encirclement of the six [6] Soviet armies at Vyazma, this can scarcely have enhanced the defense of Moscow, considering that the Mozhaysk line had been broken at several points as early as **13 Oct 41**, at a time when resistance in the pocket was still continuing. . . The German penetration of the Mozhaysk line and, on the Naro-Fominsk sector, also of the third line of the Moscow defense zone,²⁹⁸ which ran from Klin in a wide arc to Serpukhov, created an immediate threat to Moscow even before the end of the third week in **Oct 41**. (For more on the morale of the Red Army troops at this time see, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 891-93)

- **20.10.41: 19 PD** im Vorgehen auf Dinara, etwa **70 km** suedwestl. Moskau. **10 PD** kaempft gegen hartnaeckigen Gegner ostw. Moshaisk. **11 PD** im Vorgehen auf den Rusa-Abschnitt. . . . **PzGr 3: . . . 102 ID** hat die Wolga suedl. Selisharowo erreicht. (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 411)

- **ca. 20.10.41** [Effect of Rasputitsa]: By the end of the third week in **Oct 41**, the spearhead divisions of **4 PzGr** and **2 Pz Army** had become stretched out over **25-30** miles, and the infantry was sometimes outdistancing the tanks. **3 PzGr** contemplated dismounting the tank crews and going ahead on foot and w/ panje wagons. Meanwhile, dismayingly strong counter-attacks on **3 PzGr** at Kalinin and on **2 Pz Army** along the Zusha River at Mtsensk had demonstrated that the Russians would not give up Moscow w/o a fight. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 40)

- **20.10.-1.11.41:** Russian resistance, heavy losses, supply difficulties and bad weather – these factors result in a *discontinuation of the attack* on Moscow during the last **10** days of **Oct 41**; the suspension of the offensive is officially approved by GFM v. Bock on **1 Nov 41**. (*K. Reinhardt, “Moscow 1941,”* 214)

- **21.10.41:** In attempt to provide the Ostheer w/ experience in winter fighting, **OKH** set up short training courses and detached some classes from the mountaineering school in Fulpmes to the army groups, so that the „winter courses“ could be held there. . . After **21 Oct 41**, **6** classes from the school under the cdr of the mountaineering school, Major von Schleebrugge, were seconded to Army Group Centre. . . The object of the courses was: „a) Training of teachers and commanders for the raiding parties that were to be trained in every rgt on skis and sleighs in winter; b) Maintenance and use of inf. wpns. in winter; c) Protection of the troops from the effects of the cold w/ winter hygiene and in winter quarters.“ . . . However, these measures

²⁹⁸ **Note:** Third major Soviet defensive line thus ran from Klin thru Naro-Fominsk to Serpukhov.

came too late and were ineffectual. (*Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 171; 178, f.n. 12-13)

- **22.10.41:** Unimpressed by the fierce enemy attacks on the positions of **9 Army** near Kalinin, on **22 Oct 41** **OKH** again demands an early attack to the NE. At the same time, a reinforcement of the attack in the south against Kursk and Voronezh, w/ **XXXXVIII PzK**, is considered. However, the army group, also bearing in mind the enemy pressure on the right flank of **4 Army**, insists that all available forces of **2 Pz Army** be concentrated for the thrust towards Tula. If the movement is to be continued via Kursk to Voronezh, the army should be divided, w/ **XXXIV AK** being placed under **6 Army** and **XXXV AK** under **2 Pz Army**. **OKH** there-upon orders mobile units to be assigned to **2 Army**, which was then to take Voronezh. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 680-81)
- **22.10.41:** Bei **2 Pz Armee** besetzte **XXXXVII AK** mit Teilen der **18 PD Fatesh**. Dabei wurden **10** Feindpanzer (**25** t) vernichtet. **4 Armee** hat mit dem rechten Fluegel beim **XXXXIII AK** u. **XIII AK** Raum nach Osten gewonnen. Der Feind setzte sich auf das Ostufer der Oka bei Aleksin ab. Trotz schlechtester Wegeverhaeltnisse konnten vor der Mitte der Armee die Brueckenkoepfe ueber die Nara erweitert u. fuer den am **23.10.41** vorgesehenen Angriff verstaerkt werden. . . (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 717-18)
- **22.-23.10.41.** Am **22. Okt 41** scheitert der Angriff von Verbaenden des **XXIV PzK** bei Mzensk. Am **23. Okt 41** nimmt die **3 PD Mzensk** u. beginnt als Spitzenverband den Vormarsch auf Tula. (*Stein, GFM Model*, 240)
(Note: Guderian's advance hampered by damp ground and extensive Russian minefields, see, **III:341**)
- **23.-24.10.41:** Am **23. Okt 41** war dem **XXIV PzK** der Uebergang ueber die Susha bei Mzensk gelungen. Am **24.** nahm dieses Korps Tschern u. ging in Richtung Tula weiter vor. (*Guderian, "Vortoss auf Tula,"* 749)
- **23.10.-1.11.41** [Tula]: In diesem aufreibenden Kampf gegen die Unbilden des Wetters u. gegen den zahn Gegner gewannen die angreifenden dt. Verbaenden sehr langsam Boden, aber sie kamen bis Anfang **Nov 41** immer noch vorwaerts. Die **2 Pz Armee**, die auf die einzige Strasse Orel – Tula angewiesen war, hatte die *Masse der verfuegbaren Panzer* unter dem **XXIV PzK** mit dem **IR „GD“** u. diesen Verband auf Kosten aller anderen Teilen voll aufgetankt; sie stiess am **24.10.41** von Mzensk auf Tula vor. Die Stadt wurde am **30.10.41** erreicht, konnte aber bei der hartnaeckigen Verteidigung durch den Russen von den verhaelt-nismaessig schwachen Kraeften nicht genommen werden, zumal das von Westen angesetzte **XXXXIII AK** sich bei Alexin festgelaufen hatte. So hatte sich bei der **2 Pz Armee** nun eine langgestreckte Ostflanke entwickelt, die zwar zunaechst nicht angegriffen wurde, aber in deren Richtung von Osten her Bahntransportbewegungen festgestellt waren. Die Armee drehte daher das **LIII AK** hinter der Panzerspitze zum Schutz der Ostflanke ab. In der weitem Tiefe der Ostflanke kam die **2 Armee** Schritt vor Schritt in die Linie Kursk – Nowosil heran, so dass die Gefahr gegen Suedosten einigermaßen abgedeckt erschien. . . (*Hofmann, "Schlacht von Moskau,"* 156-58)
- **24.-25.10.41:** Daily entries in this *Luftwaffe* report from late **Oct 41** reveal impression that the Army units supported by **8. Fl.K. (9. AOK, etc.)** were losing their *elan*, their will to fight. See entries for **24./25.10.41** for two marvelous anecdotes on this topic. (*H.W. Deichmann, "VIII Flieger-Korps Russland-Feldzug,"* in: **VIII:20**)

- **25.10.41:** On this day, Soviet **16 Army** blew up the locks of the Ira reservoir [Istra?] and flooded the assault ground of **4 PzGr** to a distance of about **50 km** and to a height of **2.5 m** in places. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 126, f.n., 206)

- **25.10.41:** An diesem Tage trat eine Neugliederung der Armeen des rechten Fluegels der Hr.Gr.Mitte in Kraft. Die **2 Armee**, die bisher links der **2 Pz Armee** gefochten hatte, wurde rechts neben sie gesetzt; drei [3] Korps meiner Armee wurden an sie abgegeben. Als Ersatz erhielt ich zwei [2] Inf.-Korps der bisherigen Front der **2 Armee**. Die **2 Pz Armee** sah nun folgendermassen aus: (For more details see, *Guderian, Vortoss auf Tula*, 749-50; also, **III:346-47**)

- **25.10.41** [**6 ID** / Angriff auf Torshok]:²⁹⁹ Die Division tritt **07.00** Uhr mit **IR 58** aus dem Raum um Derjagina, **IR 18** aus dem Raum um Stanischino, **IR 37** aus dem Raum Tschadowo an. . . . Verluste: Offz.: **2** tot u. **3** verwundet. Uffz. u. Mannschaften: **15** tot, **76** verwundet u. **7** vermisst. . . [KTB 6. ID]. . . [KTB Soeffker]: „Angriffsbeginn **7.30** Uhr. . . Der Angriff geht fluessig fort, stellenweise ist nur sehr schwacher Feind. Schon gegen Mittag erreicht das I. Btn. [**IR 37**] als vorderste Btn. den Tma-Fluss (Taja) bei Szkomorochowa. . . Fuer das I. Btn. ist es unmoeglich, ueber den Fluss zu kommen. Die Kompanien gehen zur Verteidigung ueber. Die **26 ID** links von uns ist noch weiter zurueck, waehrend rechts **IR 18** gut vorwaerts gekommen ist. . . **IR 58**, rechts von **IR 18**, haengt weit ab. . . Dadurch kommt der Angriff der Division sehr ins Stocken. Die Nacht ueber bleibe ich mit meinen Maennern in Schuetzenloechern in dem Wald liegen. Es ist kalt u. regnerisch. In den Loechern ‚zittern‘ wir uns warm. Alle halbe Stunde muss man aufstehen, weil die Fuesse wie abgestorben sind. Das Kriegfuehren macht um diese Zeit bald keinen Spass mehr. Nachschub kommt schon seit Wochen nicht mehr nach vorne.“ (*KTB 6. ID & KTB Soeffker*; quoted in, *Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 52*, S. 9-10, 12)

- **25.-30.10.41** [Guderian reaches Tula]: On **25 Oct 41**, **XXIV PzK** renewed its attacks with the support of **IR “GD.”** A day later, the combination of Red infantry, **T-34** and **KV** tanks, mud, Soviet CAS, half-completed antitank ditches and low fuel halted the Germans. That road-block overcome, Guderian continued his northeast trek. Just to keep the drive alive, a few **Ju 52** aircraft flew supplies to the muddy airfield at Tschern, south of Tula. A **3 PD** historian calls the battle against the **1 Gds Rifle Corps** a ‘labor of Sisyphus.’ All of the corps’ panzers were consolidated under Colonel Heinrich Eberbach, who earned the Oakleaves to his Knight’s Cross during these struggles. Toward the end of the month, Guderian measured progress in **5 km** per **48** hour increments. On **28 Oct 41**, he visited the remnants of **XXIV PzK** to exhort them to fight on the final **25 km** to Tula. The Red Army Air Force ruled the skies with the *Luftwaffe* nowhere to be seen. However, by the **29th**, the Germans found that they had barely advanced **10 km**.³⁰⁰

On **30 Oct 41**, the first Germans, a company of **60** men under a **19-year-old** lieutenant entered Tula’s suburbs. Some **Ju 52s** managed to drop supply canisters from a height of **15** meters: many canisters broke into pieces upon impact with the frozen rock-hard ground. Fighting raged around Count Leo Tolstoy’s estate, which the Germans tried not to damage. Dead *Landsers* were buried right next to the author’s grave. On the same day Hitler gave approval to the plan for the final push to surround Moscow. Seemingly divorced from reality on the ground, he ordered Guderian to attack over Kashira, swing around in a counter-

²⁹⁹ **Note:** Weather already becoming more than simply uncomfortably cold.

³⁰⁰ Neumann, *ibid*, pp. 333, 335; Richter, *ibid*, pp. 194-95, 197-99.

clockwise direction east of Moscow, in order to meet up with **3 Pz Army** coming from the opposite bearing. (*Kirchubel, Draft*, 21-22)

- **26.10.41 [6 ID]**: Drei [3] Mann haben mit einem Flosssack von heute Morgen um **06.00** Uhr bis **16.00** Uhr in stroemendem Regen auf einem Acker gelegen. Sie konnten wegen Feindfeuer nicht vor- noch rueckwaerts. Die Jungens habe ich bedauert – deutsche Infanterie – anspruchslos. . . Es regnet seit heute Morgen unaufhoerlich. (*KTB Soeffker*, quoted in: *Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 52*, S. 13-14)³⁰¹
- **26.10.41**: Bei **9 Armee** greift der Feind die Stellung um Kalinin besonders heftig von Westen u. Suedwesten an. (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 725)
- **26.10.41**: Im Angriff auf Moskau stiessen die Divisionen weiter nach Nordosten ueber die [Nara] vor. **19 PD** nahm Gorki u. steht im Kampf gegen starken Gegner mit Panzern. . . **10 PD** kaempft ostw. Rusa. **5 PD**, **11 PD** u. **2 PD** im Angriff nach Osten. Bei Kalinin wurde fdl., mit Artillerie unterstuetzte Angriffe abgewiesen. **VI AK** u. **XXIII AK** stiess weiter nach Norden vor. (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 423)
- **26.10.41 [4. Army]**: By end of **Oct 41**, our sector [i.e., **4 AOK**] of the weakened German front followed the course of the Oka River from Aleksin north, then that of the Nara to Naro-Fominsk, after which it turned NW across the main road and the Moskau [?] towards Ruza and Volokolamsk. And this marked, for the time being, the limit of our advance, for our „offensive ability was exhausted.“ Opposite us the Russians held their position in depth in the *forests* covering Moscow. Part of our artillery and heavy vehicles were stuck in the mud, often far behind the front somewhere between Vyasma and the Nara. But Moscow was within our grasp. At night we could see the Russian anti-aircraft shells bursting above their capital. (*Blumentritt, Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 57)
- **26.10.41 [4 Army on defensive]**: Gegen gesamte Front der **4 Armee**, vor allem beiderseits u. suedl. der Roll- u. Autobahn, fuehrte Feind wieder heftige, von Artl. u. Panzern unterstuetzte Gegenangriffe. Bei den schweren Abwehrkaempfen kam es an einzelnen Stellen zu oertlichen Einbruechen. Abgesehen von linkem Fluegel des **XII AK** an der Rollbahn, der etwas zurueckgenommen werden musste, ist jedoch die Lage z.Z. nach erfolgreichem eigenen Gegenstoss wieder hergestellt. An der Front suedl. der Rollbahn ist die Lage gespannt; schwere Kaempfe um die Erhaltung der gewonnenen Brueckenkoepfe. **4 Armee** musste daher mit **XIII**, **XII**, **LVII** u. **XX AK** zur Abwehr uebergehen. . . (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 725)
- **27.10.41**: Elements of **5 AK** capture Volokolamsk³⁰² after a long battle w/ three (3) rifle divs. of **16 Army**. In the centre, **4 Army** repulses renewed Soviet attacks. . . Volokolamsk was initially held by Rokossovskiy, who made use of a deeply echeloned defense system. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV, 893; *Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 154)
- **27.10.41**: **4 Armee** konnte mit **XIII AK** die Brueckenkoepfe ueber die Protwa erweitern. Mit **XII**, **XX** u. **LVII AK** musste die Armee wiederholte heftige, von schwersten Panzern unterstuetzte Feindangriffe abwehren. Die Gefechtskraft einzelner Divisionen dieser Korps ist in den letzten Tagen erheblich gesunken. Auf dem Nordfluegel der Armee gelang es der

³⁰¹ **Note:** From numerous accounts by German participants the tremendous respect they had for their infantry comes through repeatedly.

³⁰² **Note:** Volokolamsk was only **75** miles from Moscow. (Gilbert, *Second World War*, 251)

78 ID, in die fdl. Bunkerstellung einzubrechen. . . Bei **9 Armee** dauerten die Feindangriffe von Norden, Westen, Suedwesten u. Suedosten auf Kalinin an. Sie wurden abgewehrt. . . (KTB OKW, Bd. I, 727)

- **27.-28.10.41** [Guderian]: Am **27 Okt 41** erhielten wir die Meldung von Antransport frischer russ. Kraefte von Osten. Kennzeichnend fuer unser **OKW** war der sofort auftauchende Gedanke, die **2 Pz Armee** aus ihrer bisherigen Stossrichtung Tula auf Woronesh abzdrehen, um diesem neuen Gegner zu begegnen. Dorthin fuehrten aber aus unserem gegenwaertigen Raum keine Strassen. Ueberdies mussten wir als Voraussetzung einer solchen Operation erst einmal im Besitz von Tula sein. Ich befand mich an diesem Tage in Tschern, dicht hinter den vorderen Elementen des **XXIV PzK**. Von dort konnte ich nur abraten, diesen neuen Plan zu verwirklichen; am **28 Okt 41** wurde meiner Bitte entsprochen. Der Vormarsch auf Tula wurde fortgesetzt. (Guderian, *Vortoss auf Tula*, 750)
- **28.10.41**: Der Vormarsch auf Tula wurde fortgesetzt. Aus Brennstoffmangel liess Eberbach ein Btn. „GD“ auf die Panzer aufsitzen, um mit dieser kleinen Gruppe zu versuchen, durch Handstreich in den Besitz des ersehnten Zieles zu gelangen. Wir kamen an diesem Tage bis Pissarewo, **30 km** suedl. Tula. (Guderian, *Vortoss auf Tula*, 750)
- **28.10.41**:³⁰³ **4 Armee** wehrte heftige, von Panzern unterstuezte Angriffe bis zu Batl.-Staerke ab. . . Bei **9 Armee** wurden Angriffe gegen die Nordfront von Kalinin abgewiesen, voruebergehend oertliche Einbrueche bereinigt. . . Wetter: Stellenweise klar, bei Eintreten der Dunkelheit Frost. Strassenzustand: noch ueberall schlecht. (KTB OKW, Bd. I, 729)
- **28.10.41**: On [this day] Army Group Ctr also ordered **9 Army** to suspend its attack to the north and go on the defensive along the line running from Kalinin to south of Torzhok and on to Bolshaya Kosha. Its main task remained the elimination of enemy resistance in area south and SW of Kalinin between the Volga and the Volga reservoir, as well as the capture of road- and rail-bridges across the western tip of the reservoir. [Note: About same time, Hitler wants to divert Guderian's ops away from Tula axis toward Voronezh to cut off strong enemy forces. Hitler also feared that the panzer army would not have enough bridging material to cross the numerous river stretches it would encounter in its previous direction of attack [!]. On **28 Oct 41** the opposing views of the Army General Staff finally induced Hitler to rescind the order for **2 Pz Army** to halt and change its direction of advance. . . In view of the situation of **4 Army** and road conditions, Hitler now ordered Guderian's panzer army to continue its attack in a general NE direction. (More details see, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 681-83; **III:342-43**)
- **29.10.41** [Tula]: On **29 Oct 41**, our leading tanks reached a point some **2 miles** from Tula. An attempt to capture the town in a coup de main failed owing to the enemy's strong AT and AA defenses. We lost many tanks and officers. General Heinrici, always a "practical and sensible man," who commanded **XLIII AK**, now came to see me and described the bad condition of his troops supplies: among other things, there had been no issue of bread since 20 Oct 41. (Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, 244)
- **29.10.41**: **2 Pz Armee** erreichte mit Anfaengen die Gegend **4 km** suedl. Tula. Im Waldgelaende **15 km** suedl. Tula noch Kaempfe mit Feindresten. **4 Armee**: . . . Bei **VII AK**

³⁰³ **Note:** By end of **Oct 41**, German advance had largely come to a halt (although clearly many units were still struggling to advance). Red Army is attacking vigorously along the entire front – from Kalinin in the north, against **4 Army** in the center, to Guderian in the south.

zwang ein mit Panzern unterstützter Feindangriff dazu, den im Laufe des Tages an der Autobahn erzielten Gelaendegewinn teilweise wieder aufzugeben. **V AK** setzte den Angriff nach Norden fort u. erreichte die von Jaropolez nach Osten fuehrende Strasse. Im Bereich der **9 Armee** wurde bei Kalinin ein von Panzern unterstützter Angriff gegen die Suedostfront abgeschlagen. Lebhaftes fdl. Artl.-Feuer u.a. auf Flugplatz. . . (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 731)

- **29.10.41: Bde Eberbach** is just two (2) miles from Tula and launches a direct assault upon the town. However, **50 Army** defenses prove too strong. Eberbach loses many tanks to Soviet AT batteries. To the south, **53 AK** advances toward Yepifan to protect the open southern flank of **2 Pz Army**.³⁰⁴ (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 155; see also, **III:352-53**)

- **30.10.41:** Failure of *Kampfgruppe* Eberbach's coup-de-main at Tula. (See, *Robert Forczyk, Moscow 1941*, 66)

- **30.10.41:** By [this date], the **LIII AK** was advancing from the west along the Orel-Tula road. After final destruction of the Bryansk pocket, on **19 Oct 41**, the corps had moved east. . . During this march it had suffered much from the prevailing mud and had been unable to take all its motorized vehicles, in particular its heavy artillery, w/ it. The motorized parts of the corps had to take a detour by following the "good" road from Orel to Mzensk. In view of the Russians reported to be arriving from the east since **27 Oct 41**, I felt compelled to commit **LIII AK** as flank guard on our right against the line Yepifan–Stalinogorsk. The condition of the Orel-Tula road had meanwhile grown so bad that arrangements had to be made for **3 PD**, which was following behind Battle Group Eberbach, to be supplied by air. In view of the impossibility of launching a frontal attack on Tula, General Geyr suggested that to continue our advance we by-pass the town to the east. I agreed w/ this and ordered that the attack go on towards Dedilovo and the crossing-places over the Shat. (See, *Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 244-45)

- **30.10.41: 4 Armee** wies russ. Angriffe mit starker Artl.-Unterstützung – insbesondere gegen die Brueckenkoefpe ueber die Nara westl. Kamenka u. bei Naro-Fominsk sowie gegen das Strassenkreuz bei St. Dorochowo – ab. **V AK** nahm nach Haeuserkampf Jaropolez. Bei **9 Armee** wurden fdl. Vorstoesse gegen Kalinin auch am **30.10.41** unter starkem Einsatz von Artl. u. Nebelwerfern [Russian? Stalinorgel?] fortgesetzt. Fdl. Angriffe bis zu Btl.-Staerke, die saemtlich abgewiesen wurden, richteten sich insbesondere gegen die Nordfront von Kalinin. . . Es haben erreicht: **2 Armee: . . . XXXXVIII AK: 95 ID** u. **9 PD** mit Anfaengen **12** bzw. **18** km nordwestl. Kursk. . . (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 732-33)

- **30.10.41:** Mud and Soviet resistance has checked the German offensive at end of October along a line running from Kalinin on the Volga, through Turginovo, Volokolamsk, Dorokhovo, Naro-Fominsk and Aleksin on the River Oka and south to the outskirts of Tula. Army Group Ctr has bitten off a linear strip of **230 – 260** km penetrating into the Russian interior. Some units were within **120 – 140** km of Moscow. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 195)

- **30.10.41 [Summary]:** For a variety of reasons, the *Wehrmacht* has been unable to exploit the tremendous successes it achieved during the first half of **Oct 41**, and, in all critical sectors [all along eastern front] its offensives faltered by end of the month. In the case of AGC, the

³⁰⁴ **Note:** Guderian compelled to siphon off more and more forces to protect his extended and growing right flank from Soviet counterthrusts.

twin encirclements had forced GFM v. Bock to commit over half of his forces (**48 of 75** divisions) for **7-14** days in order to eradicate the encircled forces, thereby losing the opportunity to exploit the empty defenses west of Moscow. Thereafter, overconfidence and utter contempt for what it thought was left of the Red Army governed German actions. Considering Moscow as available for the taking, it spread its forces too broadly by dispatching **3 PzGr** to the north and **2 Pz Army** to the south, thus weakening its critical blow in the Centre. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 158)

- **30.10.41**: By – or about – this point, the *Wehrmacht* had reached what Clausewitz called the “*Kulminationspunkt*.” In *On War*, he developed his concept of the “*diminishing force of the attack*.” It seems that even by the most vigorous advance, there might be reached a certain point beyond which every further penetration is *liable to be checked*. This point he called the “*Culminating Point*,” a term that subsequently became a classic. “The solution of this riddle,” he said, “lies in the *weakening which every strategic assault suffers eo ipso in its advance*.” (See, *J. L. Wallach, Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation*, 25-26)
Auch bei der mit groesster Energie vorangetriebenen Offensivstrategie wird ein Punkt erreicht, hinter dem weitere Erfolge unmoeglich werden. Clausewitz nennt diesen Punkt den „*Kulminationspunkt*.“ Jeder strategische Offensive wird *um so schwaecher*, je weiter sie fortschreitet. . . (See, *H. Hinterhuber, Wettbewerbsstrategie*, 22-23)
- **31.10.41: OKH** issues yet another “Continuation of Operations Directive” on this day. It orders **9 Army** to attack toward the Volga Reservoir while **3** and **4 PzGr** would slash toward Yaroslavl (nearly **200** miles NE of the Volga) in the north. **2 Pz Army**, w/ only **50** of its **600** tanks operational, is to aim for Gorky (over **200** miles away), w/ **2 Army** covering its right while also advancing on Voronezh. Once again, **4 Army** represents the army group’s *Schwerpunkt*, w/ Moscow as objective.³⁰⁵ The attack is to begin on **15 Nov 41**. The other army groups receive equally unrealistic missions: North is to link up w/ the Finns, while South is to push on to Stalingrad and Maikop! (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 78)
- **31.10.41 [Logistics shortfalls]**: Die taegliche Marschleistung der Lkw sank unter **30** km, u. da die Deutschen sich immer weiter von ihren Versorgungsbasen entfernen, werden die Fehlbestaende in den Einheiten immer grosser. Ende **Okt 41** besitzt die **36 ID (mot)** nur noch **25%** ihres Munitionsbestandes, u. die **6 PD** hat die meisten ihrer Zugmaschinen verloren. (*Bauer, Panzerkrieg*, 133)
- **ca Late Oct 41 [31. ID]**: In Belew [on the Oka, about halfway between Orel and Kaluga] begann auch das grosse Abspecken der einzelnen Regimente u. Abteilungen der **31 ID**. Alles was nicht taeglich gebraucht wurde, wurde in den dort befindlichen Kasernen deponiert u. registriert. Die Artilleriebatterien wurden von vier [**4**] auf drei [**3**] Geschuetze verringert. Die schwere Abteilung der Division blieb zu zwei Drittel in Belew. Alle Truppenteile stellten ihre Versorgung um auf diese kleinen leichten Panjewagen mit einem Russenpferd davor, das im Kummer [*horse collar*] fuhr u. unverwuestlich schien. Auch die **14 PzJgKp** vom **IR 82** wurde hier umgeruestet von “Mot” auf “Hot.” Fahrzeuge blieben in Belew u. Kanonen wurden jetzt durch Pferdezug vorwaerts gebracht. (*Dr E. Bunke, Das Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, 465)³⁰⁶

³⁰⁵ **Note:** I believe this is inaccurate. Von Kluge’s **4 Army** was not even to attack initially, only tie down Russian forces on its front. In fact, it did not join offensive until early December, and then only for a day or two. Confirm!

³⁰⁶ **Note:** This entry must be fairly representative for what all the German infantry divisions had to do at this time to maintain some forward progress.

- **Late Oct 41:** By this time, with the Donbas overrun, Kharkov captured (**24 Oct 41**) and the Crimea threatened, German assault divisions had breached Moscow's first outer defense line, running from Kalinin some **90** miles NW of the Soviet capital to Kaluga **100** miles to the SW, and were jabbing into the second [defense line], curling from the southern shore of the Moscow Lake at Nove Zovidovskii, through Klin and Solnechnogorsk to Istra and thence to Zvenigorod on the river Moskva; following the line of the river Nara, the latter wound on to Serpukhov and Tula, its southern bastion, just a fraction more than **100** miles from the Kremlin. Where it bulged inwards at the centre, Moscow was only **43-7** miles away. Behind these outer lines lay the three belts of inner urban defenses, under the immediate control of the Moscow garrison, the VMZO. (*J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 250)

- **Oct-Nov 41** [winter clothing]: Trains w/ winter equipment have been standing in sidings near Breslau and Cracow since the end of **Aug 41**, but frozen engines and a shortage of wagons are among the reasons why supplies to the front cannot be sustained. (*Kershaw*, 951, f.n., 243; also, *E. Wagner*, 206n, 266-67; *Irving*, Hitler's War, 333, 851; *Leach*, 212)

- **1.11.41: 2 Armee** brach mit **XXXXVIII AK** in die Feindstellung 7 km noerdl. Kursk ein u. erreichte mit **9 PD** gegen zaeh kaempfenden Gegner den Nordwestrand von Kursk. **2 Pz Armee** schloss weiter nach Nordosten u. Osten auf. Teile **XXIV AK** erreichten Gegend 3 km westl. Dedilowo. (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 736)

- **1.11.41:** Es ist erschuetternd, in den Tagebuechern Bocks und Halders das Sinken des Stimmungsbarometers waehrend der Oktober/Novemberwende zu verfolgen. Es ist kein Resignieren gegenueber der hoeheren Gewalt der Natur, sondern ein Aufbaeumen bei der Suche nach Aushilfen. Mit Neid schaute Bock nach der Krim, wo es bei Sonnenschein u. trockenem Steppenboden rash vorwaerts ging. Der OB der **4 Armee** (Kluge) schilderte Hitler persoenlich die ungeheueren Wetter- u. Wegeschwierigkeiten, die dieser nach den schriftlichen Meldungen allein wohl *nicht recht geglaubt* hatte. . . *Hofmann*, "Schlacht von Moskau," 158-59)

- **2.11.41: 2 Armee:** **XXXXVIII AK** drang mit **9 PD** u. **95 ID** in den Morgenstunden von Westen u. Norden in Kursk ein. Bis zum Abend war die Stadt fest in eigener Hand. (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 737-38)

- **2.11.41:** In a "Zustandsbericht der Division" the **9 PD** reported on **2 Nov 41**: "The state of shoes is particularly alarming. . . **30%** are unwearable. . . **50%** in need of repair. . . all the socks have been used up. . . a shortage of underwear. . . has not been changed for **3-4** weeks . . . complete lack of any kind of winter clothing." (Quoted in: *K. Reinhardt*, Moscow – The Turning Point, 177, f.n. 11)

- **2.11.41 [9 AOK]:**³⁰⁷ Wenn man das KTB der **9 Armee** in den Wintermonaten **1941** durchgeht, kann die Lagebeurteilung nur als katastrophal bezeichnet werden:

Heute [2.11.41] steht fest, dass die Masse des roten Heeres u. die Masse seines Kriegsmaterials vernichtet oder in deutscher Hand ist. Heute ist es Tatsache, dass Leningrad unrettbar eingeschlossen [ist]. Die russ. Militaermacht ist weitgehend

³⁰⁷ **Note:** In other words, it was not simply Hitler, Halder, et al., "am gruenen Tisch" who tragically underestimated their opponent.

vernichtet u. zu einer Offensivoperation groesseren Stils auf laengere Zeit nicht mehr faehig. Die Winterbekleidung ist groesstenteils eingetroffen [?]. Der Russe hat nicht einmal in seinen staerksten Tagen, in denen er noch ueber gut bewaffnete Kerntruppen verfuegte, einen geschlossenen Angriff mehrerer groesserer Verbaende auf die Beine gebracht, mit seinen jetzigen zusammenge-wuerfelten u. schlecht ausgebildeten Einheiten wird es ihm noch weniger gelingen. (See also KTB AOK 9 for **24.11.42**)

(Source: *M. Stein, GFM Model*, 67; also, *BA-MA, RH 20-9/136*)³⁰⁸

- **2.-13.11.41** [Guderian]: Als sich am **2 Nov 41** die Anfaenge des **LIII AK** Teploje naeherten, stiessen sie ueberraschend auf den Feind. Es handelte sich um eine starke russ. Kraeftegruppe von **2 Kav.-Div.**, **5 Schuetzen-Div.** u. **1 Pz.-Bde**, die laengs der Strasse Jefremow – Tula mit der Absicht vorgingen, den vor Tula festliegenden Verbaenden des **XXIV PzK** in Flanke u. Ruecken zu stossen. Die Russen wurden durch das Auftreten des **LIII AK** ebenso ueber-rascht, wie wir durch das ihre. Es kam zu einer vom **3-13 Nov 41** dauernden Schlacht³⁰⁹ im Raume um Teploje, in der es dem **LIII AK** nach Verstaerkung durch die Panzer der Bde Eberbach gelang, den Feind zu schlagen u. unter Verlust von mehr als **3000** Gefangenen u. zahlreichen Geschuetzen in Richtung auf Jefremow zurueckzuwerfen. (Guderian, “*Vortoss auf Tula*,” 752)
- **3.11.41**: Das **XXXXVIII PzK** (Kempf) nimmt Kursk. (*A. Hillgruber, Chronik*, in: *OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 1234)
- **3.11.41**: Bei den Kaempfen um die Moskauer sch... (*unleserlich*) ... stellungen³¹⁰ sowie bei den Kaempfen um Kursk, Tula u. Kalinin wurden in der Zeit vom **19.10. bis 30.11.41**³¹¹ eingebracht: **87 144** Gefangene, **237** Panzerwagen, **570** Geschuetze, **104** Pak, **57** Flak, **12** Flugzeuge. (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, Bd. 4, 11)
- **3.-5.11.41**: During the night of **3-4 Nov 41**, there had been a frost and this made it easier for the troops to move. . . To defend the deep right flank of the Panzer Army in the Mzensk – Chern area and farther east, I employed the unarmored elements of **17 PD** which had recently arrived from Karachey. Engineers, construction btns and units of the Reich Labor Service were working w/o pause in an attempt to improve the Orel-Tula road. (Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, 245-46)
- **7.-9.11.41**: On **7 Nov 41** we suffered our first severe cases of frostbite. . . On **8 Nov 41**, **XXIV PzK** replused enemy attacks from Tula. On **9 Nov 41**, it was plain that the enemy was planning to attack both to the east and the west of Tula. As a result **XXIV PzK**, after having send Pz.-Bde Eberbach to support **LIII AK**, had itself gone over to the defensive. **17 PD**, less its tanks, was attached to **XXIV PzK** and moved forward to Plavskoie. Since fresh enemy formations were appearing to the east of Chern, the division responsible for protecting our flank in the Mzensk – Chern area was strengthened w/ further elements of **XLVII PzK**. As an example of how critical the situation in the Tula area was at this time, four [4] weak rifle

³⁰⁸ **Note:** Stein writes: “Eine Reihe von KTBern vermittelt einen Eindruck mangelnder Intelligenz u. fehlenden Verstaendnisses des Kriegstagebuchfuehrers – ein solches Beispiel findet man u.a. im KTB der **9 Armee**, als diese noch Generaloberst Strauss unterstand.” (6)

³⁰⁹ **Note:** No attempt during first half of **Nov 41** by Guderian to take Tula. (Confirm!)

³¹⁰ Most likely: “Moskauer Schuetzenstellungen.”

³¹¹ Must be “**3.11.41**.”

btns. of **4 PD** were responsible for a front of **20 miles** to the west of Dedilovo w/ the additional task of maintaining contact between **LIII AK** and the **3 PD** fighting outside Tula. (*Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 246-47)

- **ab 8.11.41** [Deployment of AGC]: In the second week of **Nov 41**, Army Group Center retained the *same general deployment* it had had at the beginning of the lull. **9 Army** held the line from the North-Center boundary, west of Ostashkov, to Kalinin. **3 PzGr** stood on the Lama River, **30 miles** west of Klin, w/ **4 PzGr** on its right in a sector north of the Smolensk-Moscow highway. Under GFM v. Kluge, **4 Army's** left flank straddled the highway and its right tied in w/ **2 Pz Army** on the Oka River. Guderian's main weight of armor was concentrated in a salient projecting eastward south of Tula. **2 Army** [General Weichs] covered the south flank east of Orel and Kursk. Against these, the Kalinin Front, West Front, and the right flank of Southwest Front had **12 armies**. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 49-50)
- **8.17.11.41**: Zhukov has ordered his **49 and 50 Armies** [latter now commanded by Lt-Gen I.V. Boldin] to attack Guderian's spearheads north and south of Tula. The newly arrived **413 RD** and **32 Tank Bde** do so beginning **8 Nov 41** in a running battle near Uslovaia south of Tula in conjunction w/ the newly arrived **239 RD** and other **3 Army** forces attacking from the south. While attack proves unsuccessful, it produces temporary consternation in Guderian's HQ and delays his advance. During the fighting on **17 Nov 41**, elements of German **112 ID** – whose AT wpns were ineffective against the attacking **T-34 tanks** – broke and ran and had to be rescued by the **167 ID**. The panicky retreat was almost unprecedented in the German Army.

Farther north, on **11 Nov 41**, the **49 Army's 238 RD** and **50 Army's 258 RD** and **31 Cav Div** mount a concentric attack against the **XXXXIII AK's 31 and 131 IDs**, which are attempting to envelop Tula from the north. In five [**5**] days heavy fighting, during which another Soviet rifle division joins the fray, the Soviet forces halt the German attacks short of the Moscow-Tula road, thwarting the German envelopment effort. . . (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 168-69; see also, *Halder KTB*)³¹²

- **11.11.41**: Bei **2 Armee** verliefen Marschbewegungen der H.Kdo **XXXIV u. XXXV AK** planmaessig. Maloarchangelsk wurde ohne Kampf besetzt. (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 752-53)
- **13.11.41**: By this time – **Nov 41** – German accounts beginning to include many references to Red Army use of “Stalin Organs.” For example: „Bei **4 Armee** gewann Angriff des **XIII AK** gegen sich zaeh in Erdbunkern verteidigenden Feind nach Osten Boden. Vor **XII AK** lebhaftes russ. Artl-Taetigkeit unter Einsatz von Raketengeschuetzen u. zusammengefasstem Feuer mehrerer Batterien. Auch vor **LVII AK** starkes Artl.-Feuer, auch schwerer Kaliber. . . **9 Armee**: In den Abendstunden auf Kalinin staerkeres Artl.- u. Granatwerferfeuer. Feuerueberfaelle mit Salvengeschuetzen. . .“ (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 755-56)

³¹² As Glantz observes: “Far more importantly, the failed operations ordered by Stalin and Zhukov between 11 and 16 November indicated that the Red Army was prepared to contest every inch of Soviet soil along the approaches to Moscow. . . Worse still, while the Wehrmacht was thinking tactically, Stalin, Zhukov and the *Stavka* were already thinking operationally. Within days the *Stavka* ordered the formation and forward deployment of three new reserve armies, the **1 Shock**, **20** and **10 [Armies]**.” (169)

- **Mid-Nov 41:** Mitte Nov 41 hatte die 2 Armee eine nach Sueden ausholende Frontlinie von fast **300 km** u. schloss mit ihren suedlichstn Verbaenden an den linken Fluegel der 6 Armee der H.Gr.Sued an. (*Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 131-32)

j) *The “Rasputitsa” (Schlammperiode)*

- **Crux:** The effects of the muddy season on conduct of battle were not felt immediately. It was not until after mid-Oct 41 that its disastrous consequences began to make themselves felt in the entire area of AGC, just when fighting on the Moscow defense line had started and would have necessitated substantial resupply of munitions and fuel for the assaulting divisions. The German High Command did not approach this period completely unsuspectingly. They thought they knew the effects of the “Rasputiza,” but did not have to take them into account, as according to their own plans the battle for Moscow should have been completed by mid-October, when it would begin. The German Command did not think it necessary to ask the experts, and the weathermen working for the OKH were not asked for reports either.³¹³ . . . The army command attempted thus to ascribe the blame for their own failure to a higher power. However, the level of rainfall in the months of **Oct-Nov 41** was in fact less than average for those months. . . The average rainfall in **Oct 41** amounted to **51mm** as against the normal October average of **59mm**. For **Nov 41**, it was only **13mm** more than the the normal November average of **45mm**. [Unclear; check German text!] . . . The entire muddy season was, therefore, “drier” than usual. . . (For more details see, . *K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 92-93; 116, f.n. 109; also, *Greiffenberg, et al., Schlacht von Moskau*, 79; **III:358**)
- Mit Einsetzen der Schlammperiode stockte . . . der Nachschub. Die Soldaten bekamen somit im Spaetjahr weniger u. qualitativ schlechteres Essen. Bei manchen Divisionen gab es wochenlang keine Kartoffeln, wenig Fett u. wenig Fleisch. Die Kalorienzufuhr, die der Koerper zu einer ausreichenden Waermeproduktion bei den fallenden Temperaturen brauchte, u. das Vitamin-Angebot verringerten sich. Dazu fuehrten die Erschoepfung durch Kaempfe, durch Schlafmangel u. koerperliche Anstrengungen bei manchen Soldaten zu einer Abstumpfung u. einem Nachlassen der Reaktionsfaehigkeit. (*K. Schneider-Janessen, Arzt im Krieg*, 66; **VIII:79**)
- **6.-9.10.41 [Rasputiza]:** The autumn rains came on **6 Oct 41** in the southern sector of AGC and on **7-8 Oct 41** in the remaining sectors, making the unpaved roads soggy and noticeably slowing down the offensive. On **8 Oct 41**, sorties by the supporting Luftwaffe had to be curtailed considerably owing to the danger of icing, poor visibility and snowstorms in the air, and soggy runways on the ground. (Luftflotte 2 still had **1030** acft in service on **6 Oct 41**, but this number fell to **559** on **8 Oct** and **269** on the **9th.**) Thus the pursuit was no longer rapid. Still, the German forces continued their advance to the east, for the worst consequences of the muddy season were not to be felt until after mid-October. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 88; 112, f.n. 64)
- Rain and mud had set in about **10.10.41**.
Preceded by first snow on **6.10.41**

³¹³ **Note:** Prof. Koelzer, chief army meteorologist, who was attached to **OKH**, confirmed that neither he nor his colleagues from the Luftwaffe had been called in for personal consultations on questions of weather and climate. (116, f.n. 105; see also, F. Hossbach, Infanterie im Ostfeldzug 1941-42, Annexe L, 210 ff.)

(For discussion of the “*Schlammperiode*”; good overview of myriad problems faced by troops, vehicles, weapons of H.Gr.Mitte see, *Alfred Philippi, et al., Der Feldzug gegen Sowjet-russland*, pp 90-93)

(Radfahrer mussten ihre Raeder durch den Schlamm tragen. Viele der treuen Pferden konnten einfach nicht mehr u. brachen erschöpft im Modder zusammen. Die Marschgeschwindigkeit der leichten Batterien betrug allerhöchstens 1 km pro Stunde, die schweren Geschütze lagen sowieso fest. *W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 143-45, 155)

- **Mid-Oct 41**: From mid-**Oct 41** onwards the worsening weather conditions slow the German rate of advance in front of Moscow, just as it had done that of Guderian's **2 Pz Army** in the area of Mtsensk, where the winter had broken 10 days earlier. (Note: For vivid description of impact of Rasputitsa in German **4 Army** sector (**98 ID**, etc.) see, *Seaton, Russo-German War*, 186-87)

- **16.10.41 [6 ID]**: 117. Tag, **16. Okt 1941**. Marschweg: Fjederowskaja - . . . - Medwedkino. **31 km**. Als ich um **6.00** Uhr aufstehe, bin ich noch sehr müde, ich habe noch nicht einmal **4 Stunden** geschlafen. Auf der Panzerstrasse ist ein furchterliches Gedränge: Auto hinter Auto, kilometerlang. Bei Pogoreloje Gorodischtsche stockt es furchterlich, sodass wir erst mittags um **14.00** Uhr weitermarschieren können. Panzerstrasse: 4 km = 7 Stunden!!! (*KTB Soeffker*; in: *Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 51*, S. 26)

- **16.-20.10.41 [6 ID]**: Infolge von Glatteis kam es am **16. Okt 41** zu derartigen Verkehrsstockungen, dass der Vormarsch in Richtung Staritz nahezu zum Erliegen kam. Nur Fuss-truppen, Bespannfahrzeuge u. leichte, motorisierte Fahrzeuge kamen durch eine gangbare Furt in der Gegend von Patroschnia. Die **6 ID** setzte den Vormarsch auf Staritz ueber die westl. Hauptstrasse am gleichen Tag fort. Das 1. Btn. erreichte diese Stadt am **18. Okt 41** gegen Mittag. Mit **21cm** Geschützen schoss der Russe aus **14 km** Entfernung Tag u. Nacht in die Stadt Staritz. Sie ist zum grossen Teil durch Granaten u. Feuer bereits zerstört. Am **19.10.41** marschierten Truppenteile des **IR 37** in Richtung Gorki – Kolipina. . . Die Vorbereitungen fuer den Wolgauebergang erfolgten am **20. Okt 41**. . . Kamerad Heinrich Stockhoff bestaetigt, dass vom **16.** bis zur Wolgauebersetzung am **20.10.41** schwerste Fussmaersche unter entkraefiteten Bedingungen abverlangt wurden u. dass aufgrund der mangelhaften Verpflegung eine Darminfektion durch infizierten Honig aufgetreten war. (*W. Buddenbohm, Das Leben des Soldaten*, 71-72)

- “In knietiefem Schlamm der Wege bleiben alle Bewegungen stecken. Der Mangel an Munition, Betriebsstoff u. Verpflegung *bestimmt in den naechsten Wochen die taktische u. operative Lage*.” (*Hoth, Pz.-Operationen*, 136)³¹⁴

- Impact of rain, mud and snow on German troop movements
 - Disputed by German/Soviet sources
 - Decisive in its effects in slowing German advance?
 - Effects on resupply (logistics); mechanized movement; infantry; *Luftwaffe*
 - Infantry able to maintain some forward movement (albeit only by leaving heavy vehicles and heavy weapons behind in the mud)

- For *Marschleistungen* of AGC from **19.10.-14.11.41** see, FMS **P-190**, in: **VI:115**)

³¹⁴ **Note:** According to Hoth, the German High Command was not justified in continuing the offensive following the Wyazma-Bryansk *Kesselschlachten*. See, pp 137-38.

Despite problems w/ weather, mud, etc., formations of AGC manage to cover ca. **80-200 km** in “Marsch u. Gefecht.”

- **23.10.41**: In a report of his tour of the eastern front,³¹⁵ Col Erwin Lahousen, one of Canaris’ aides, writes: „The Russian roads beggar description. They are frequently up to **100** yards wide and people use them as they choose. Their surface is a thick, cloying layer of slime of varying depth: if you drive slowly, it bogs your truck down, and if you drive faster, you start sliding and skidding; despite the width of the roads it is enormously difficult to take evasive action, for all the traffic in both directions tries to keep to the same beaten tracks; as these ruts are very difficult to get out of, collisions occur.“ (*Irving, Hitler’s War*, 324)
- Numerous *personal accounts* (See, **IV:204**, ff.)
- German advance had exhausted itself and ground to halt by end of **Oct 41**
- Total German losses since start of “Typhoon” (ground & air forces)
For detailed **OKW** accounting of personnel losses to **6.11.41** see, **I:425-26**)
For *daily losses of officers* see, **FMS P-190**, in: **VI:121**)
- **20.-31.10.41 (292. ID / “Schlammperiode”)**: This **12-day** period illustrates what the German divisions encountered during the muddy season – strung out on the march, heavy weapons (particularly the artillery) left behind, vehicles broken down along the way, supplies not getting thru to the front, communications disrupted, motorized elements transitioning from “mot. zu hot.,” etc. (**VIII:203-05**)
- **6.11.41**: Kampfkraft der H.Gr. Mitte see, **FMS P-190**, in: **VI:118**)
- **14.11.41 [292. ID/Partisanen]**: Im Hintergelaende nicht nur der Division, sondern auch der Nachbardivision,³¹⁶ Partisanenueberfaelle auf einzelne deutsche Soldaten, auf Fernsprechbautrupps u. Einzelfahrzeuge statt. Fernsprechleitungen werden zerschnitten, die abgeschnittenen Enden mit Minen verbunden, in ausgefahrenen Wegen immer wieder von neuem Tretminen verlegt. Jadgkommandos zur Partisanenbekaempfung werden gebildet. Es wird verboten die Unterkunft allein oder gar unbewaffnet zu verlassen. Die Evakuierung der Bevoelkerung, von der infolge der straefflichen Gutglaeubigkeit Vieler immer noch Teile in den Doerfern leben, wird bis zum Letzten ruecksichtslos durchgefuehrt. (*Ia KTB*, 292. ID; **VIII:207**)
- k) ***The Other Side of the Hill: Zhukov, Panic in Moscow, Tenacious Counterattacking, Reinforcements from Far East**, etc.*
- Soviets had been caught completely by surprise by “Typhoon”
Don’t really recognize danger until ca. **5.10.41**
- **2.10.41**: As Germans begin Operation „*Taifun*,” Churchill reads the German secret msgs giving details of the assault. „Are you warning the Russians of the developing concentrations?” he asks the head of the Secret Intelligence Service, and adds: „Show me the last five msgs you have sent.“ (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 239)

³¹⁵ **Note**: I believe Col Lahousen visited Hr.Gr.Mitte (confirm!).

³¹⁶ **7. ID**, I believe. Confirm.

- **2./6.10.41** [Diary of Soviet Major Shabalin]: A diary of a member of the war council of Soviet **50 Army** reveals the catastrophic situation during those days in the armies and in the command of the Bryansk Front. (For graphic quotations, both gleaned from KTB H.Gr.Mitte, see, *K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 80)

- **NKVD** “rear security units” checked panic thru the use of MG-gunners ready to keep the Red Army from any unauthorized withdrawals. . . Not only Russian POWs who had managed to escape from the Germans, but even whole Army units who – as so often happened in **1941** – had broken out of German encirclement, were subjected as suspects to the most harsh and petty interrogation by the O.O. (*Osoby Otdel* – Special Detachment) run by the **NKVD**. In Simonov’s novel, The Living and the Dead, there is a particularly sickening episode based on actual fact, in which a large number of officers and soldiers break out of a German encirclement after many weeks’ fighting. They are promptly disarmed by the **NKVD**; but it so happens that at this very moment the Germans have started their offensive against Moscow, and as the disarmed men are being taken to a **NKVD** sorting station, they are trapped by the Germans, and simply massacred, unable to offer any resistance. (*A. Werth, Russia at War*, 227-28)

- **5.10.41**: Due to breakdown in communications not only the front units but also the Soviet Supreme Command seemed until that day [**5 Oct 41**] to be in the dark about real situation at the front. Konstantin F. Telegin, then Politcommissar of the Moscow defence committee, painted a *drastic picture of the ignorance* and ensuing disbelief regarding the impending catastrophe. . . On morning of **5 Oct 41**, pilots from the **120 Fighter Rgt**³¹⁷ reported sighting a ca. **25** km-long column of German armor and motor vehicles advancing towards Yukhnov on the road between Spas-Demensk and Yukhnov. However, as no intelligence to this effect had been received from West Front, *nobody believed the reported sighting*. . . (For rest of story see, *K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 84-85; for additional accounts of this incident see, **III:286**)

- **5.-7.10.41**: On **5 - 6 Oct 41**, Stalin telephones Leningrad to order the return of Zhukov. He returns by air to Moscow on **7 Oct 41**. Communications w/ Konev’s West and Budenny’s Reserve Fronts have largely broken down and Stalin, who was suffering badly from influenza, was unable to obtain a picture of what was happening. Zhukov left hurriedly by vehicle for the west. (For details of Zhukov’s visits w/ Konev’s and Budenny’s HQs see, *Seaton, Russo-German War*, 183-84)

- **7.10.41**: Zhukov called back from Leningrad Front.
 Visits crumbling fronts outside Moscow
 Few troops to plug ca. **300** km gap in Russia line

- Soviets offer Germany a ***cease fire!*** (ca. mid-**Oct 41**) (**IX: Magenheimer, Hitler’s War**)
 (See also, *Edwin P. Hoyt, Stalin’s War. Tragedy and Triumph, 1941-1945*, who avers that, in **Oct 41**, Stalin suggested Beria find way to negotiate another Brest-Litovsk (like one signed by Lenin in **Mar 1918**, p 75)

- Das russ. Oberkommando in Moskau erkannte in diesen Tagen [i.e., only several days or more after the start of „*Taifun*”] die Schlappe, die ihre Armeen erlitten u. zog erste Konsequenzen.

³¹⁷ **Note:** Reinhardt (p 84) says it was a fighter rgt; R. Kershaw refers to a squadron.

Die O.B. der drei Fronten wurden abgelöst. (For details see, *W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 125)

- **7.-10.10.41:** General Zhukov is recalled from Leningrad and ordered to report to the capital. On **10 Oct 41**, he is appointed cdr of the Western Front, responsible for all the defenses west of the capital. His immediate priority is to stabilize the front. He requests Stalin to begin transferring large reserves toward Moscow. Troop movements began on **7 Oct 41**, reinforcing the concentric defense belts facing west. A total of **14** rifle divisions, **16** tank bdes and more than **40** artillery rgts are taken from the supreme HQ Reserve and adjoining fronts. They total some **90 000** men. Remnants of units that had cut their way out of the German encirclements are filtered into the same defense lines. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 192; see also, *Shukov, Erinnerungen*)
- General Zhukov, der neue O.B. der „Westfront“, gruppierte angesichts der sich bildenden zwei Kessel um Brjansk u. Wjasma seinen gesamten Frontabschnitt neu um. Er liess die bedrohten Truppen nach Osten ausweichen u. befahl foldende Aufstellungsraeume seiner Armee von Nord nach Sued: **16. Armee** (Raum Wolokolamsk), **5. Armee** (Raum Moshaisk), **43. Armee** (Raum Malojarslavez); **49. Armee** (Raum Kaluga). Die Truppen des Militaerbezirks Moskau unter Gen.Lt. Artemjew wurden mobilisiert . . . u. rueckten in das Gebiet beiderseits von Moshaisk vor, um hier Stellung zu beziehen. (See, *W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 125-26)
- **8.-10.10.41:** Stavka works frantically to strengthen defenses in the west. It orders the Western and Reserve Fronts' **110** and **113 RDs** to man the Mozhaisk Line and begins forming a new **5 Army** under Leliushenko, which consists of Stavka reserve units and forces already at the Mozhaisk Line. It also creates the Moscow Reserve Front, under Lt-Gen P.A. Artem'ev, the Military District cdr, and assigns to him control of all forces in the Mozhaisk Defense Line. Finally, it forms Lt-Gen G.G. Sokolov's **26 Army** under its control to defend the Orel – Tula axis. Two days later [**10 Oct 41**], the Stavka combines what little is left of the Western and Reserve Fronts into a new Western Front w/ Zhukov in command, and Konev as his deputy. (See, *Glantz, Barbarossa*, 151; **III:301-02**)
- **9.-14.10.41** [Defense of Moscow]: General Zhukov is appointed Konev's successor as cdr West Front. Stalin, angry at the way in which West Front was being commanded, wanted to dismiss the commanding officers and was prevailed upon by Zhukov to retain Konev as front representative and Sokolovsky as Chief of the General Staff. Along with relieving Konev, Stalin sends all available reserves to Mozhaisk at once. . . By **10 Oct 41**, there were **4** rifle divisions, members of different military schools, **3** reserve rifle rgts and **5** MG btns in the Mozhaisk defense line. On the same day, an additional **5** newly-formed MG btns, **10** AT rgts³¹⁸ and **5** tank bdes were brought up. . . However, these troops are simply too few in number to counter the threat of a German breakthrough. . .

On **10 Oct 41**, the entire Reserve Front was disbanded and its units incorporated into West Front. At same time, redeployment of troops from the Far East and Central Asia had already begun and they could be expected to be arriving from mid-October onwards. . . By **13 Oct 41**, it had been possible to set up a new 16 Army under Rokossovsky in the area around Volokolamsk; at Mozhaisk the **5 Army**; at Maloyaroslavets a new 43 Army under Golubev; at Kaluga a new 49 Army under Zakharkin; and at Naro-Fominsk the cadre for a

³¹⁸ **Note:** It is significant that Stalin simply renamed the **10** anti-tank btns that remained at the disposal of the High Command anti-tank rgts [!]. This was designed to boost the morale of the troops by the simple fact that **10** “new anti-tank rgts had been sent to the front.”

new 33 Army under Efremov. All these units were combined into a new West Front under Zhukov, whose task it was to bring the German advance to a standstill. . . From the Stavka reserve, the Soviet High Command was able to provide West Front w/ **8** tank bdes and **2** mech. bdes as well as a series of rifle units. The Bryansk Front received **2** tank bdes and a reinforced tank btn, so that by mid-October **12** rifle divisions, **16** tank bdes and **40** artillery rgts, as well as a series of smaller units, were defending Moscow. The strength of the air force was also increased by new formations and **2** long-range bomber divisions. Thus, by the time the German spearheads reached the Mozhaisk defense line and fighting resumed, the Russians had succeeded in constructing a narrow defense front, which was, however, concentrated on the main roads to Moscow and which had not been detected by German reconnaissance. . . (K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point, 89-91; 113, f.n. 75-76)

- **10.10.41:** On this day the Reserve Front was formally liquidated and incorporated into the Western Front, and the whole command assigned to General Zhukov, who had been rushed down from Leningrad. The total force which Zhukov had at his disposal when he took command was 90,000 men, the remnants of the Western and Reserve Fronts. . . The civilian population was mobilized by the GKO; a quarter of a million (**75%** women) Muscovites were drafted to dig trenches and AT ditches, and the “Moscow defense zone” (*Moskovskaya zona oborony*: MZO) was brought into existence. (More details see, J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad, 218-19)

- **10.10.41:** Bad as the Soviet situation looked, it was, for the moment, actually worse than either the Germans or the Western Allies imagined. Four months of war and territorial losses had reduced Soviet productive capacity by **63%** in coal, **68%** in iron, **58%** in steel, and **60%** in aluminum. In **Oct 41**, after having risen during the summer, Soviet war production also dropped drastically, probably by **60%** or more. During **Oct 41** the Moscow and Donets industrial complexes had to shut down and to begin evacuating. (Note: The decline would continue into **Nov-Dec 41**, during which months the Moscow and Donets basins would not deliver “a single ton” of coal, the output of rolled ferrous metals would fall to 1/3 that of **Jun 41**, and ball bearing output would be down by **95%**.) (Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad, 39)

- **ab 10.10.41** [Zhukov’s new tactics]: The Mozhaisk defense line was echeloned ca. **100** km deep and reinforced by a series of obstacles provided by the terrain and by tanks, which enabled the Russians to withdraw slowly eastwards. [Note: The Lama, Moskva, Kolotsa, Lusa, Nara, Oka, Protva, Upa, Plava & Sukhodrev ran across the direction of the German attack.] However, they did not merely take flight, but managed to *withdraw in controlled combat*, continuing to inflict casualties on the Germans. There were *good rail and road links* to these positions; they enabled the rapid deployment of troops to the focal points and the rapid transport of replacements, esp. since after mid-**Oct 41** they were hardly attacked at all by the Luftwaffe. Zhukov’s *new style conduct of battle* was necessitated by the deployment of smaller units, mainly assembled on an *ad hoc* basis, and the proximity to the capital. (See, K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point, 100-01; **III:308**)

- **10.-20.10.41:** Zhukov would later see the period from **10 - 20 Oct 41** – rather than November – as the most dangerous moment for the Red Army. This was when the road to the Soviet capital lay open. By **5 Oct 41**, the scale of the disaster at Viaz’ma-Briansk had sunk in. There was a belated attempt to hold a new line about **75** miles west of Moscow, but this Mozhaisk Line too was overwhelmed. One anchor of the Soviet position was temporarily lost when the enemy took Kalinin (Tver’) on **14 Oct 41**. On **19 Oct 41**, Zhukov proposed pulling

back to a position **35** miles further east, and only **40** miles from the centre of Moscow. Stalin gave his approval. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 105)

- **ca. 12.10.41** [Soviet refugees]: The situation was extremely serious. There was no continuous front any more. . . Together w/ the army, thousands of Soviet civilians were moving east. People on foot, or in horse carts, cattle, cars, were moving east in a continuous stream along all the roads, making troop movements even more difficult. (*A. Werth, Russia at War*, 231-32)
- **14.10.41**: By this time, Soviets have decided to put every formation or detachment which can be mustered on the Mozhaisk line in front of Moscow. These are to total no more than **14** rifle divisions, **16** tank bdes and **40** rifle rgts – in all **90,000** men. They began to concentrate on **14 Oct 41** under the HQs of **16, 43, 49** and the newly formed **5 Army**. Further armies are also being drawn into the area. Some thinning out of the troops in the Far East also began at about this time. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 184-85)
- **Mid-Oct 41**: By exhausting all capacities it proved possible, within a short time, to concentrate **11** rifle divisions, **16** armored bdes., and over **40** artillery rgts. – ca. **90 000** men – within the Mozhaysk defense line. (For more details on defenses of this line – Soviet order of battle – see, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 890-91)
- **15.10.41**: Aware of effects of muddy season on German ops, Zhukov realizes that the enemy advance could only continue along the hardened main roads. Thus, he concentrates the few units he has at his disposal on **15 Oct 41** on the approaches to Moscow at Volokolamsk, Ira [?], Mozhaisk, Maloyaroslavets, Podolsk and Kaluga, while the Bryansk Front concentrates its remaining forces w/ the point of main effort along the Orel-Tula road. . . (**Note**: Zhukov revealed that in mid-**Oct 41** he had over **14** rifle divisions, **16** tank bdes, and more than **40** artillery rgts, a total of about **90 000** men.) (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 93; 116, f.n. 110)
- **15.-19.10.41**: Early on Wednesday, **15 Oct 41**, Stalin signs a **GKO** decree ordering the evacuation of Moscow. The main government ministries (under Molotov) and embassies are ordered east **650** miles to Kuibyshev (Samara) on the Volga. The Red Army's Political Administration (GPU) is moved to Kuibyshev; most significantly, the General Staff is moved out, to Arzamas, **260** miles east of Moscow and halfway to Kuibyshev. On Thursday morning (**16 Oct 41**), the Metro stopped running. From the **16th** to **18th** there were unprecedented scenes of panic in the streets and railway stations of Stalin's capital. On Saturday, **18 Oct 41**, panzer spearheads break through the Mozhaisk Line, two hours drive west of the Kremlin. The following day, a state of seige is declared. Stalin instructs Beria, head of the **NKVD**, to prepare some **1000** locations in the Soviet capital for demolition. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 96-97)
- **15.-31.10.41**: In mid-**Oct 41** (exact date unknown), Stalin heard from Sorge in Tokyo that Japan will not help Germany against the USSR, but is heading south toward the Philippines and Indonesia. Soon one division from the Soviet Far East is arriving near Moscow by rail every two (**2**) days; by end of the month, an additional **13** rifle divisions and **5** tank bdes are present. German intelligence fails completely to identify this build-up. Rastenburg, **OKW** and **OKH** simply cannot believe that after Kiev, Viazma and Bryansk and all of its other disasters, that the Red Army has anything left to put in their path before Moscow. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 78)

- **16.-19.10.41: Panic in Moscow** (over this approximate time period)
Describe in detail / *personal accounts*
(See, **II:222**, ff.)

- **Defense of Moscow:** Von nun an zogen jeden Morgen, noch bei Dunkelheit, die ersten Trupps von Maennern u. Frauen aus den Betrieben u. von den Hausgemeinschaften – kuemmerlich bekleidet u. nur mit ueblichen Handwerkzeugen wie Spaten, Hacken u. Schaufeln ausgeruestet – hinaus um an diesen Stellungen zu bauen. Aus Moskau rueckten taeglich fast **70.000** Frauen u. Jugendliche, sowie **30.000** Arbeiter der Betriebe bis zur Stadtgrenze ihrer Hauptstadt aus. Hier entstanden in knapp drei [3] Wochen **361** km Panzergraeben, **366** km Panzersperren, **106** km Hoeckerhindernisse, **611** km Drahtverhau. Dieses Stellungssystem war so gegliedert, dass in erster Linie alle Bruecken zu Sprengungen vorbereitet waren; dass Fluesse u. Baeche vermint wurden; dass Panzerhindernisse durch Bodenwellen entstanden. . . Die Luftverteidigung von Moskau wurde rigoros verstaerkt. (For many more details see, Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau, 138-41; also, **VIII:62-63**)

- **19.10.41:** On **19 Oct 41**, General Zhukov declares Moscow to be under a state of siege and placed the capital and its population under martial law. Breakthroughs of the Mozhaisk line between Kalinin and Kaluga and another threatened breach in the Naro-Fominsk area, the third in-depth line in front of Moscow, were creating a bulge directly threateneing the Soviet capital. Zhukov repeated the emergency measures he had previously enacted in front of Leningrad. Extensive defenses were ordered to be constructed in depth, covering the main approaches to Moscow. Engineering work was already underway behind the first echelon of the West Front to erect AT barriers in all sectors potentially vulnerable to an enemy armored advance. Every morning and until it was dark, nearly **70 000** women and children and **30 000** factory workers marched out from the western suburbs, wretchedly clothed and equipped only w/ hand tools, to work on the outskirts of the city. Vera Evsyukhova dug AT ditches: (For her account and more details see, (R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands, 194; see also, A. Werth, Russia at War, 231)

- **24.10.41:** On this day, **GKO** set up a special railway command in Moscow (*Voenno-ekspluatSIONnoe upravlenie*) to handle reinforcement traffic; work had already begun on a new circular railway to link up the feeder lines, and more than **300 000** railway wagons were concentrated in the Moscow marshalling yards to shift men and supplies. . . Stalin was defending the capital and the most important traffic junction in the whole of the Soviet Union. (J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad, 251)

- **24.10.41:** Soviets creating new armies and moving up reinforcements from the military districts in Central Russia and Siberia. In order to move and concentrate these troops behind West Front the whole of the railway network was given up to the Red Army. On **24 Oct 41**, the Moscow railway complex was put entirely under military control. According to the Soviet account, large numbers of military trains ran from Tomsk, Omsk, Sverdlovsk and Kuybyshev w/o stopping to change locomotives or crews, covering between **500** and **600** miles per day. (Seaton, Russo-German War, 189)

- Soviets counterattack repeatedly (slow German advance)
Elucidate several examples

- Effective use of **mines** by the Russians! Slow German advance.
(Eg., H.-M. Welcker, Aufzeichnungen, in: Notebook #9, **11 Oct 41**; also, chilling tale from Dr. S.-Kehnert (**11. PD** / check his „*Ostkaempfer*“ file!)

- *Reinforcements from Far East*, etc. – Provide defenders of Moscow w/ at least **13** IDs and **5** TDs by end of **Oct 41**.
(Role of *Richard Sorge*, etc., see, **IX: Magenheimer, Hitler's War**; see also vital email to me from *E. Mawdsley* (**VIII:65-67**, etc.)
- **31.10.41**: By end of **Oct 41**, it has proved possible for Soviets to integrate into the front west of Moscow at least **13** rifle divisions and **5** armored bdes from the interior of the country. As a result, the situation in the lines east of Volokolamsk along the Nara and the Oka as far as Aleksin was temporarily stabilized. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 893)
- Soviet front stabilizing by end of **Oct 41**
Soviet losses high (list)

l) *Collapse of German War Economy*

- **Oct-Nov 41**: In **Oct 41**, as „*Taifun*“ ground to its first, muddy climax, the German war economy „began to *come apart at the seams*.“ The fuel situation, as long predicted by the *Wehrmacht* mil.-economic office [*OKW Wi Rue Amt*], was *rapidly approaching a critical point*. By early **1942**, it would not be the Russian mud but the exhaustion of Germany's petrol supplies that would ensure the „complete paralysis of the army.“ In the event, by dipping into the *Wehrmacht's* operational fuel reserve and by throttling consumption, the army retained its mobility. The navy was not so fortunate. In **Nov 41**, the fuel situation of both the Italian and German navies was described by the *Wehrmacht* as „catastrophic.“ By autumn, Germany's surface fleet was *confined to harbor*, not only by the British but also by the *chronic lack of fuel*. To meet the minimum fuel requirements of the navy and the merchant fleet of about **90,000** tons of heavy oil per month, Germany disposed of monthly production of only **52,000** tons plus stocks of only **220,000**. As the *Wehrmacht's* mil.-econ. office concluded: „It follows from this that we simply cannot wage war simultaneously w/ all three branches of the *Wehrmacht*.“ (*Tooze, Wages of Destruction*, 493-94)³¹⁹
- **Nov 41**: By this point, Germany facing acute shortages of raw materials, serious shortage of labor, etc. Problems made more acute by transport problems facing the *Reichsbahn*, which remained for the moment insurmountable. The concepts of Blitzkrieg and „armaments in breadth,“ which had led to a shortage of supplies, were now taking their revenge and revealing their limitations. . . . On account of the futility of the new overall strategic concept [i.e., having unexpectedly to concentrate most all resources on Russia in **1942**, as well as begin a war w/ America] there was *no revision of the war plan*, which continued to be based on the „Blitzkrieg“ theory. The idea of a continuous alternation between a Blitz campaign and a „strategic break“ had ultimately failed. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 259, 262)

³¹⁹ Tooze: „And it was not only the military who were worried. The pressures imposed by the *Barbarossa* armaments programme and the *Luftwaffe's* huge new schemes were threatening to destabilize the precarious fiscal and monetary balance of the entire German economy.” (See, Wages of Destruction, 494 ff.)

X: TO THE GATES OF MOSCOW – “TYPHOON” PHASE II (15 Nov – 5 Dec 41)

Quote: „*Tue, was du musst, sieg oder stirb u. ueberlass Gott die Entscheidung,*“ Ernst Moritz Arndt (Deutsches Soldatenjahrbuch, 1971, 12)

Quote: “*The moral strength of an army is impaired by every injustice.*” (Jonathan Shay, Achilles in Vietnam, 27)

Quote: “*Im Krieg ist alles unsicher, nichts gefahrlos, u. schwerlich wird man auf anderem Wege zu grossen Resultaten gelangen. Grosse Erfolge im Kriege sind aber einmal nicht ohne grosse Gefahren zu erreichen.*“ (H. Hinterhuber, Wettbewerbsstrategie, 44)

Note: According to H. Magenheimer, war in east had already reached its *culmination point* by mid-**Oct 41**; and Hitler, it should be noticed, did not exert any particular influence on the final attack on Moscow. His thesis is that, all things being equal, an attack date between **20-24 Sep 41** would have offered possibility of not only destroying forces before Army Group Center, but of taking Moscow as well before onset of autumnal rains. (**IX: Hitler's War**)³²⁰

a) *Historical Background:*

-- **mid-Oct 41:** By this time, the long-awaited evacuations of German and Austrian Jews had commenced. (**III:248**)

Note: For wonderful *atmospheric* description of life in Berlin in fall **1941** see, L. Liebovitz, Lili Marlene, 109-10; also, **I:783-84**)

Note: Jews [in Berlin] were now being corralled into what was in effect, if not in name, a ghetto. By the autumn of **1941**, over **2000** Berlin Jews had already *committed suicide*. . . That **Oct 41**, the first transports left the capital, carrying some **4000** Berlin Jews bound for the ghetto at Lodz. (*Moorhouse, Berlin at War*, 115; 160, ff.)

-- **7.11.41:** With the return of long nights, the British bombing of Germany resumes. On **7 Nov 41**, no fewer than **400** RAF bombers attacked Berlin, Mannheim, and half a dozen other targets. (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 340)

-- **7.-8.11.41:** Britische Bomber greifen Berlin, Koeln u. Mannheim an. **37** Abschuesse. (*A. Hillgruber, Chronik*, in: *OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 1235)

-- **9.-10.11.41:** Britische Luftangriffe auf Hamburg, Cuxhaven u. Emden. (*A. Hillgruber, Chronik*, in: *OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 1235)

b) *Status of entire Eastern Front*

³²⁰ Note: Thus, short delay of “Barbarossa” in **Jun 41** decisive to outcome! If campaign had begun **7-10** days earlier, it would in all probability have ended victoriously. However, military victories alone would not have defeated Soviet Union.

- Situations of all three army groups
 Total losses of *Ostheer*, etc. (**III:404**)
 Total losses of AGC since start of “Typhoon” as of **15.11.41** = **87,455**. (**III:404**)
- For frontline of AGC at beginning of **Nov 41** see, *W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 164-65; also, *Lage Ost* maps in, *Lageatlas*, K.-J. Thies)
- **6.11.41**: [German losses on eastern front]: For a breakdown of losses of “Ostheer” to this point see, KTB OKW, Teilband II (Studienausgabe), Anlage 106, pp 1074-75. Document is produced by Buhle’s Organisationsabteilung (I) and is called: “Beurteilung der Kampfkraft des Ostheeres (ohne die in Finnland eingesetzten Kraefte).” Buhle’s assessment of strength of German forces on eastern front includes following: . . . Hieraus ergibt sich folgende Gesamtstaerke des Ostheeres:

65 Inf.Div.
 8 Pz.Div.
 8 Inf.Div. (mot.)
 2 Inf.Rgter. (mot)

= Kampfkraft von **83** Verbaenden bei **136** vorhandenen Verbaenden.

(For more details see, *KTB OKW*, 1940-41, Teilband II, 1074-75; **III:254-55**)

- **6.-7.11.41**: Dann kam die Nacht vom **6.** auf den **7. Nov 41** – u. auf einmal sanken an der gesamten Ostfront die Temperaturen. Der Winter war urploetzlich da. . . Dauerfrost setzte in der Nacht ein. Das weite Land bedeckte sich in wenigen Stunden mit einer duennen Schneeschicht. Der Boden fror. Bewegung war wieder moeglich. . . Der Bericht einer Inf.-Div. ueber diesen ersten Wintertag, den **7. Nov 41**, lautete: (For details of this useful report see, *W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 167-69)
- **10.11.41** [German vehicle losses]: Vehicle losses [on eastern front] “had taken on catastrophic dimensions,” which severely restricted the mobility and speed of the army units. By **10 Nov 41**, following had been put “out of action:”

25 777 lorries
 19 242 cars
 30 423 motorcycles
 1729 prime movers
 4410 other vehicles (buses, motor-ambulances, tractors, etc.)

By mid-**Nov 41**, only **15% (75 000)** of the **500,000** vehicles which the eastern army had at its disposal at start of campaign were still in working order, because added to the ca. **80,000** vehicles that were out of action and could no longer be replaced were another **40%** requiring complete overhaul and therefore, having to be transported back home. A further **15%** could likewise not be employed immediately as minor repairs had to be carried out on them. . . Losses showed that previous levels of army motorization, which had not been high enough anyway, could “no longer be maintained.” (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 148-49)

- Historical analogy (World War I): “Die militaerische Gesamtlage wurde schon im **Nov 1914** von Falkenhayn pessimistisch beurteilt. Die Artl.-Munition begann knapp zu werden,³²¹ u. nach verlustreichen Kaempfen machte sich die Erschoepfung der Truppen bemerkbar. Falkenhayn bezeichnete das Heer as ein „zerbrochenes Instrument.“ Eine „voellige Besiegung u. Vernichtung unserer Gegner“ hielt er fuer „ausgeschlossen.“ Er draengte den Kanzler zu einem Sonderfrieden im Russland. . . Das Verhaeltnis zwischen Falkenhayn u. Bethmann Hollweg sowie zwischen ihm u. Hindenburg/Ludendorff wurde gespannt. Fuer die Einheitlichkeit der pol.-mil. Fuehrung waren diese Spannungen belastend. Sie hatten ihren Grund in einer tiefen Ratlosigkeit, die sich einstellte, nachdem die operative Grundplanung des Krieges, der Schlieffenplan, gescheitert war.“ (*Karl D. Erdmann, Die Zeit der Weltkriege*, Bd. 4, 1. Teilband, „Der Erste Weltkrieg, Die Weimarer Republik,“ Handbuch der dt. Geschichte, 68)
- **15.11.41**: On this day, the exact casualty figure for Army Group Ctr since the start of Operation „Typhoon“ was **87,455**. Between **16 Oct – 15 Nov 41**, there were about **40,000** casualties, a clear indication of the intensity of the fighting after the encirclement battles. These losses brought the total to almost **316,569** casualties for AGC since **22 Jun 41** (**12,852** officers / **303,717** NCOs and men) This was almost **50%** of all the casualties in the Ostheer. Although a whole series of measures were taken to reinforce units in Russia,³²² initially they made no difference to the front. Since the beginning of **Oct 41**, the army group had received no replacements and, in addition, had to transfer 4 divisions, so that of the **78** divisions they had when they started the Moscow offensive, only **73** divisions were left (as of **11 Nov 41**). . . At this time, the army group had only a single reserve division at its disposal behind the front, which was over **900** km long. [!]. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 201; 203, f.n. 19/20; see also, *KTB H.Gr. Mitte*, 16.11.41)
- **15.11.41** [**6. ID** / Zustand]: Vom **16 Sep - 15 Nov 41** waren folgende Offz.-Verluste zu beklagen: **14** Offiziere gefallen, **34** Offiziere verwundet. Verluste an Uffz. U. Mannschaften waehrend der Berichtszeit: **336** Gefallene, **1060** Verwundete, **43** Vermisste. . . Fehlstellen an Uffz. u. Mannschaften waren am **15.11.41** wie folgt vorhanden:

2096 Fehlstellen bei der Infanterie;

208 bei der Artillerie;

83 bei der AA 6;

34 bei der Pi Btn 6;

25 bei der Pz Jg Abt 6;

26 bei der NA 6

Die Fehlstellen bei den Inf.-Rgtern. machen sich besonders bemerkbar. So gibt es z.B. Schuetzenkompanien mit einer Kampfeinsatzstaerke im Durchschnitt von **50** Mann.

³²¹ **Note:** According to W. Hubatsch, “ein beengstiger Mangel an Feldartilleriemunition” was already apparent by **Sep 1914**. Total German losses by end of **1914** amounted to **840,000** men (ca. **150,000** KIA). See his, Deutschland im Weltkrieg 1914-18, pp 48-58.

³²² **Note:** The transfer of **5** divisions from the west, which had to be rendered “fit for service in the east,” did not start before **Oct 41**. These units were not employed in individual groups [army groups?] before the end of **Nov 41**. Activation from ranks of the Replacement Army (divisions of the **17** and **19** waves) began in **Oct 41**, and these divisions did not reach the eastern front before **Jan 42** and later either. (204, f.n. 21)

(*Taetigkeitsbericht der Abteilung IIa*; quoted in: *Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 51*, 12)³²³

c) *German assessment of strategic situation*

- **Note:** “Red Army resistance stiffened in late **Oct 41**, and to the west and south of Moscow it was bitter. Yet an examination of the evidence shows without doubt that the German advance, which at first promised to be as rapid and spectacular as any of those of the late summer, *abruptly petered out because of the weather and the terrain*. In the first fortnight of the *Typhoon* offensive [AGC] destroyed nearly **700 000** of the Soviet defenders at comparatively little cost to itself, and w/ another three [3] weeks’ dry, mild and clear weather, it would inevitably have been in Moscow.” . . . It would be entirely wrong, of course, to ascribe the German failure solely to the weather or to misfortune. The main failure was that of misjudgement and mistiming, since *Typhoon* was mounted too late in the year. . . A secondary cause was the lack of understanding of the special effects on mobile ops of the weather and terrain in Russia, and the third was the *ever present problem of the inadequacy of resources*. (A. Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 190-91)
- **Note:** For detailed insights into differing views of Hitler, **OKH** and Army Group Center on pros-cons of resuming the offensive on Moscow see, *Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 184-87; **III:360-61**)
(In essence, scope of operation Halder planning “went far beyond Moscow,” a strategy fully rejected by GFM v. Bock. Halder wanted Army Group Center to wait to attack until end of **Nov 41**, when all supplies assembled; v. Bock wanted to attack ASAP w/ much more limited objectives in mind. However, Bock was also “fired by great personal ambition,” which led him to neglect the real problems confronting his troops and ignore the opinions of his army commanders.)
- **Note:** [German assessment of situation]: Klaus Reinhardt enumerates „pros and cons“ of a resumption of German offensive on Moscow. Cons include: a) steady rise of the partisan movement; b) the shortage of supplies; c) exposed flanks of AGC; and, d) problems at front itself. One of the primary factors in the call from the military leaders for the resumption of the attack was an inaccurate assessment of the enemy situation. The general attitude can be summed up thus: „We are not doing too well, but the Russians are doing far worse!“ (For rest of analysis see, *K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 171-75)
- **Note:** According *Johannes Huerter*, decision to make final lunge toward Moscow was not Hitler’s. He was not “*die treibende Kraft*” behind the decision; in fact, he stayed relatively in the background during these weeks. Rather Franz Halder and GFM von Bock were driving forces. (See his, *Hitlers Heerfuehrer*, 305-6, 315; **IX:105**)
(**Strange role of Hitler:** “Der Diktator hatte im **Okt.-Nov. 41** kaum mehr in die Operations-fuehrung des **OKH** eingegriffen, sondern den Verlauf der *von Halder betriebenen letzten Offensive* geradezu fatalistisch abegwartet. . .” Huerter also notes that Hitler, in the six weeks

³²³ **Note:** The **6 ID** did receive over **1000** replacements in late **Sep 41** and in **Oct 41**. Most of these men (from a replacement battalion that had marched on foot from Wilna) arrived completely exhausted at the front. The report also noted: “Der Ersatz ist, wie die Truppe durchweg meldet, in Bezug auf Ausbildung u. innere Einstellung nicht so gut wie der Ersatz, den die Division zu fruheren Gelegenheiten bekommen hat.” For interesting details see, p. 12)

from the second half of **Oct. 41** until final suspension of offensive (**5 Dec 41**), “*erstaunlich passiv blieb.*” (315)

- **1.11.41:** German intelligence³²⁴ places Red Army strength at **160** divisions and **40** bdes, most at below **50%** strength. In reality, on **1 Nov 41**, the Red Army in the West fielded **269** divisions and **65** bdes in the field forces and the *Stavka* reserve, w/ an overall strength of **2.2** million men. These included **193** rifle, **5** cavalry and **6** tank divisions, **1** mot. rifle division, **3** fortified regions and **14** rifle, **5** airborne and **44** tank bdes in operating forces. Another **22** rifle and **8** cavalry divisions, **1** tank division and **2** tank bdes were in the *Stavka* reserve. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 161; 227, f.n. 4)

- **5.-11.11.41 [Weather]:** On **5 Nov 41** frost set in in the area of Army Group Ctr and continued, w/ snowfalls, until **7 Nov 41**. . . For the first time on **6.11.41**, the Volga had an unbroken covering of ice. . . On **8-9 Nov 41**, there was another thaw. The cold season finally began on **10 Nov 41**, and on the evening of **11 Nov 41** the temperature had already fallen to **-10** Celsius. (*Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 176, f.n. 1; also, *KTB, H.Gr.Mitte*, 5.-11.11.41)

- **7.11.41:** Army General Staff continues to persist in view that Red Army is on *point of collapse*, and greatly inferior in fighting power and leadership. Such views, despite all evidence to the contrary, still prevailing w/ Halder (and, indeed, largely shared by GFM v. Bock), underlay the *memorandum*, presented by the General Staff on **7.11.41**,³²⁵ for the second offensive. The hopelessly optimistic goals laid down – occupation of Maykop (a main source of oil from the Caucasus), Stalingrad, and Gorki were on the wish list – were the work of Halder and his staff. There was no pressure by Hitler on Halder. In fact, it was *quite the reverse*: Halder pressed for acceptance of his operational goals. These corresponded in good measure w/ goals Hitler had foreseen as attainable only in the following year. Had Hitler been more *assertive* at this stage in rejecting Halder’s proposals, the disasters of the coming weeks *might have been avoided*. As it was, Hitler’s *uncertainty, hesitancy, and lack of clarity* allowed Army High Command the scope for catastrophic errors of judgement. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 438; see, *Engel, Heeresadjutant*, 12., 16., 22., 24.11.41, for Hitler’s uncertainty)

- **7.-8.11.41:** On **7 Nov 41**, Hitler concedes to Brauchitsch that the German Army could not reach such vital objectives as Murmansk, the Volga River and the Caucasus oil fields during **1941**.³²⁶ Speaking in Munich the next day, the anniversary of the **1923** Beer Hall Putsch, Hitler called “*blitzkrieg*” an “idiotic word” and declared himself ready to carry the war into **1942** and beyond – to the “last battalion,” if necessary. The dream of a single-season victory had vanished. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 43)

d) *German buildup & resupply for resumption of offensive*

- **Note:** The first units of **Luftflotte 2** were withdrawn from sector of Army Group Ctr on **5 Nov 41**. Although GFM v. Bock did not lose any time in protesting vehemently to Halder, laying particular emphasis on the demoralizing effects of this withdrawal on his troops, the cdr of the air fleet, GFM Kesselring, informed Bock on **11 Nov 41** that his Staff and „a

³²⁴ **Note:** German intelligence – which consistently underestimated Red Army strength.

³²⁵ **Note:** Halder war der Ansicht, dass die Rote Armee durch die bisherigen Verluste “anscheinend nicht mehr in der Lage“ sei, „eine zusammenhaengende Front zu bilden.“ (**III:255-56**)

³²⁶ **Note:** Evidently, at this time Hitler’s perspectives were much more realistic than were Halder’s!

substantial number of units“ were to be withdrawn by **18 Nov 41** at the very latest, thus making them unavailable for the offensive. Thus Bock had to launch the attack w/ sections of his armies even before **18 Nov 41**, so as to be able to derive the greatest possible benefit from *Luftwaffe* support. (K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point, 199; also, *KTB H.Gr.Mitte*, 5.11.41)

- **Note** [Model w/ 41 PzK]:³²⁷ General Model arrived in Kalinin on evening of **14 Nov 41**³²⁸ to take command of **XLI PzK**. He immediately set to work reorganizing the defenses to his own satisfaction, as usual ignoring all niceties of chain of command and formal unit organization. All workshop coys, from whatever division, were ruthlessly conglomerated into one unit and ordered to begin repairing tanks – any tanks, friendly or enemy – around the clock. Support troops were „dragooned“ into the Kalinin textile mill to begin producing makeshift winter parkas for the front-line combat soldiers. In absence of white paint for winter vehicle camouflage, chalk from the city’s chalk factory³²⁹ was mixed with mud and smeared over tanks and half-tracks. Lacking antifreeze, Model ordered combat vehicles to be kept idling all night, regardless of fuel supply; if a tank would not start, he reasoned, then it did not matter how short the fuel supply was. (See, *Newton*, Hitler’s Commander, 149, 153)
- **Note** [Status of 2. PzArmee on eve of attack]:³³⁰ Ich selbst [G.] befand mich am **13. u. 14. Nov 41** an der Front. Am **13.** war ich mit dem Fieseler-Storch von Orel gestartet, geriet jedoch noerdl. von Tschern in einem Schneesturm, der mich zur Landung auf dem dortigen Feldflugplatz zwang. Bei starker Kaelte fuhr ich mit dem Wagen zum Gen.Kdo. **LIII AK** nach Plawskoje. Es war der letzte Tage der Schlacht um Teploje, und der Kom.Gen. berichtete ueber seine Erfahrungen. . .Beim **XXIV PzK**, das ich anschliessend aufsuchte, machte sich die Glaette unangenehm bemerkbar, weil die Panzer ohne Kettenstollen nicht mehr bergauf fahren konnten. Das Korps glaubte nicht, vor dem **19.** zum Angriff treten zu koennen. Es benoetigte dazu die Pz-Bde Eberbach u. Brennstoff fuer **4** Tage. Dieser Zeitpunkt schien mir mit Ruecksicht auf die Bewegungen des **LIII AK** u. auf die gegen das westl. Tula eintreffende **XXXXIII AK** gerichteten russ. Angriffe sehr spaet. Ich blieb die Nacht in Plawskoje u. besuchte am naechsten Tag die **167 ID** u. die **112 ID**. Die Gefechtsstaerken der Inf.-Kompagnien waren auf **50** Mann abgesunken. Das Fehlen der Winterbekleidung machte sich immer fuehlbarer. Ein grosser Teil der Maenner lief in Drillichhosen. Stiefel u. Struempfe waren in trostlosem Zustande. . .Was die **2 Pz Armee** an Bekleidungsreserven noch besass, ging unverzueglich an die Front. Es war bei dem grossen Bedarf allerdings ein Troepfchen auf den „kalten“ Stein. Eberbach hatte noch etwa **50** Panzer in seiner Bde. Die zusammengefassten Panzer von drei (**3**) Divisionen haetten **600** zaehlen muessen. Da die Kettenstollen noch nicht eingetroffen waren, machte die Glaette grosse Schwierigkeiten. Infolge der Kaelte beschlugen [*clouded over*] die Optiken; die Salbe, die diesen Ueberstand beheben sollte, war gleichfalls noch nicht eingetroffen. Das Oel wurde dick. Glysantin fehlte. (*Guderian*, „*Vorstoss auf Tula* [Schluss],“ 824; see also his, Panzer Leader, 247-48)

-- Men, machines, logistics (fuel, ammunition, etc.)

AGC receives virtually no reinforcements for this second phase of attack

³²⁷ **Note:** Illustrative of efforts at improvisation undertaken by German cdrs in the field faced w/ insurmountable supply difficulties.

³²⁸ **Note:** Confirm this date! Newton earlier states that Model left for Kalinin on **28 Oct 41**! (see p. 147)

³²⁹ „Chalk“ or „Kalk?“ The latter is a liquid solution.

³³⁰ **Note:** Illustrative of fact that the “Ostheer” by mid-Nov 41 was a mere “shadow” of what it had been on **22 Jun 41**.

Only reinforcements received in **Oct/Nov 41** = *Legion des Volontaires Francais (LVF)* and a few paratroop btns.³³¹

(Note: For background on French volunteer legion (**IR 638**) see, *W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 179-80)

AGC now losing **400** men a day to frostbite (**III:402**)

Resupply by rail began to disintegrate under freezing conditions (**III:400**)

- The second phase of offensive could not start until mid-**Nov 41** due to the requirements to:
a) replenish stocks of munitions, fuel, etc.; b) close up the divisions which had become strung-out during the muddy season; and, c) bring up the artillery & heavy wpns which had become bogged down, etc. (See, *Alfred Philippi, et al., Der Feldzug gegen Sowjetrussland*, pp 94-99).
- For logistical preparations of a German ID (**87. ID**), its general status, etc., see, *W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 183-84. "Doch trotz aller Anstrengungen der Quartiermeisterabtl. ist das Ergebnis wenig befriedigend. Nicht einmal die **1**. Munitionsausstattung konnte voll aufgefuellt werden. . .")
- **Oct-Nov 41: Resupply by rail**, vital to sustain any operational advance of consequence, began to disintegrate in freezing conditions. **9 Army** received only four [**4**] fuel trains between **23 Oct** and **13 Nov 41**; while **2 Army** gained only one [**1**] of three [**3**] required from late **Oct 41**. As temperatures plummeted to minus double figures, **70-80%** of German steam locomotives, whose water pipes – unlike Russian types – were outside their boilers, froze and burst. This provided the prelude to a transportation crisis that dwarfed all those that had preceded it. Virtually no trains reached **2 Army**³³² between **12 Nov** and **2 Dec 41**; and only one [**1**] fuel train reached **9 Army** between **9 – 23 Nov 41**. When the latter arrived, its contents could not be distributed because waiting lorries were also out of petrol. Also, GFM v. Bock complained as early as **11 Nov 41** that the number of trains reaching his army group was down to **23** per day. If the **30** promised could not be maintained, he assessed that stockpiling "even for an attack w/ limited objectives, cannot be contemplated before **11 Dec 41**; that means in my opinion the attack will not take place!" At the end of **Nov 41**, only an average of **16** trains per day were reaching the army group. The irony of v. Bock's protest over several logistics trains is that they had been held to the rear of the army group to give priority to an equal number transporting Jews from Germany to the same area.³³³ (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 198; *DRZW*, Bd. IV, 1163-4)
- **Nov 41**: Die H.Gr.Mitte haette taeglich von **31** Versorgungszuegen angelaufen werden muessen, wenn ihre derzeitige Kampfkraft konstant bleiben sollte. Doch trafen in Smolensk – dem Versorgungshauptstuetzpunkt – hoechstens bis zu **20** Transportzuege ein. Die Hoechstzahl wurde am **24. Nov 41** mit **24** Versorgungszuegen erreicht. (*W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 175)
- **10.11.41 [Guidelines for fighting in Winter]**: In spite of its continued advance eastward, the command of Army Group Ctr well aware that the bulk of its troops would have to spend the coming winter in open country and under constant threat of enemy attack. On **10 Nov 41** it

³³¹ **Note:** Found this "gem" in my notes, "*Barbarossa = Asymmetric War?*," in my "Introduction" file. But forgot to list source (p 25 of?) According to FMS **P-190**, Army Group Center received **18** "Marschbtl." at beginning of **Oct 41**. (**VI:119**)

³³² Confirm that Kershaw indeed means **2 Army**, and not **2 Pz Army**.

³³³ **Note:** Can this be accurate?

had therefore issued „*Guidelines for the conduct of fighting in winter and special characteristics of the winter war in Russia*.“ (More details see, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 697; **III:372**)

- **11.11.41**: While the armies and panzer groups had originally planned to resume the attack even before 11 Nov 41 in the event of early frost, there were such delays in the preparation of supplies for the limited objectives that **4 PzGr** was not ready to attack before **15 Nov 41**. The **9 Army**, w/ **3 PzGr** under its command, was not able to start its operations before **15 Nov 41** either, as they had to attack together w/ sections of **4 PzGr**. The **2 Pz Army** reported that it could not attack until **18 Nov 41** at the earliest, and the **2 Army** w/ a few sections on **19** or **20** and **21 Nov 41**. (*Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 189, f.n. 15; also, *KTB H.Gr.Mitte*, 5.11.41 ff.)

- **11.11.41**: GFM v. Bock lies sich telefonisch mit dem Hauptquartier des **OKH** im fernen Ostpreussen verbinden Ueber dieses Gesprach schrieb am Abend [Halder] in sein privates Tagebuch: “[Bock] hat seiner Truppe ein vorlaeufiges Ziel gegeben: Lauf der Moskwa durch Moskau u. Wolgakanal. Auf diese Linie ist die Bevorrattung beim Antreten berechnet. Z.Zt. ist die Munition fuer das Erreichen dieses Ziels *noch im Anlaufen*. Durch ‚Drosselung‘ des Munitions-Zulaufs ist neben dem taeglichen Kampfverbrauch eine Stapelung nicht mehr moeglich u. daher die Sicherstellung der Munition nicht mehr gewaehrleistet; bei Weiterlauf in einigen Tagen Bevorrattung abgeschlossen. . . .” (*Halder KTB*, 11.11.41)

- **14.11.41**: [*Guderian*]: An diesem Tage gelingt es nur noch, unter Befehl von Oberst Eberbach, eine Bde von **50** Panzer aufzustellen, in der alle Panzer des **XXIV PzK** zusammengefasst worden waren. Nun hatten aber die **3.** u. **4. PD** des Korps am **22.6.41** nahezu **350** Panzer besessen. (*Bauer, Panzerkrieg*, 133)
(Note: According to R. Kershaw, at start of second phase of „*Taifun*,“ Guderian’s panzer army numbered ca. **150** tanks in all. It had numbered **400** at the end of **Sep 41**. See his, *War Without Garlands*, 198; also, *KTB 2 Pz Armee*)

- **Mid-Nov 41**: Army Group Ctr receives no reinforcements to make up for its losses from combat and illness; meanwhile, the Soviets around Moscow receive **100,000** men, **300** tanks and **2000** guns during the first half of **Nov 41** alone. Among the new formations is an Engineer Army w/ **19** pioneer btns to help Zhukov dig in. Now, along the main front, **233,000** Germans, w/ **1880** guns, **1300** tanks and ca. **800** acft are facing **240,000** Red Army soldiers, **1254** guns, **502** tanks and **1238** acft. While Halder writes on **5 Nov 41** that “the *Luftwaffe* is slowly disintegrating” on its primitive frontline airstrips, most Red Army air force squadrons are operating from the well-equipped permanent airfields surrounding Moscow. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 81)

- **Mid-Nov 41**: By now, mud period over and frost heralded approach of winter. Both the roads and the open country were now passable for vehicles of all kinds. Tractors extricated the heavy artillery from the mud far behind the front and one gun after another was towed forward. It happened, however, that in the process of dragging these guns out of the ground into which many had become frozen fast, a number of them were *literally torn to pieces*. (*Blumentritt, Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 59)

- **Mid-Nov 41**: On top of the inability to organize the employment of POWs in Germany, in **Nov 41** “many armaments factories. . . lost considerable numbers of workers on account of the evacuation of the Jews.” Between **16.10.-13.11.41**, ca. **20 000** German Jews were transported out of the Reich to the Lodz ghetto. A further **30 000** Jews were deported to Russia in

mid-Nov 41. GFM v. Bock protested vehemently against these deportations, using military arguments. As soon as he learned “that several trains full of Jews were to be sent from Germany to the rear areas of the army group” he complained to Halder that “using trains to transport Jews meant that the same number of trains vital to operations would not be running.” (K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point, 266; see also, *KTB H.Gr.Mitte*, 12.11.41)

- **17.11.41:** Die H.Gr.Mitte verfügte am **17 Nov 41** fuer alle unterstellten Verbaende ueber einen Vorrat von:
 - M** = **100%** der ersten Munitionsausstattung
 - B** = **4** Betriebsstoff-VS (etwa **300** km)
 - V** = **6** TS Verpflegung (See, FMS **P-190**, in: **VI:126**)

d) *German plan of attack & Order of Battle*

- **Note:** For German plans for second phase of offensive see, **III:398-400**. Some of the accounts stress the limited objectives pursued by AGC in this attack. GFM v. Bock is eager to begin attack – due to lateness of the year and fact that the first units of **Luftflotte 2** had already been withdrawn on **5 Nov 41**. Ongoing problems w/ logistics are – so Kirchubel – responsible for the staggered start to the offensive.
- **Note:** GFM v. Bock’s army resumed his offensive on **15 Nov 41**, w/ a force *estimated by the Soviets* at: **233 000** men, **1880** guns, **1300** tanks and **600-800** acft. By this time, the Western Front’s forces, reinforced by the Kalinin Front’s **30 Army** on its northern flank, numbered **240 000** men, supported by **1254** guns and mortars, **502** tanks and **600-700** combat acft. Zhukov’s defenses are anchored on well-prepared defences extending from Kalinin in the north to Tula in the south. (Glantz, Barbarossa, 169)
- **30.10.41:** GFM v. Bock erliess [an diesem Tag] den Befehl zum letzten Angriff seiner H.Gr. auf Moskau. (Details see, *W. Haupt*, Sturm auf Moskau, 177-78)
- less ambitious than opening attack at start of **Oct 41**.
 - To begin w/ another double envelopment on flanks
 - GFM v. Bock marshals equivalent of some **38** Div. for offensive
 - Elements of **Luftflotte II** have already been withdrawn (contrasts w/ intense VVS activity) (**III:397**, ff, **IV:245-46**)
- **7.11.41:** On [this day], the decision is taken to resume the offensive towards Moscow, but the immediate intention is to close in nearer to the city. For German plans for this Phase II offensive see, *Seaton*, Russo-German War, 202)

e) *Halder’s Conference at Orsha w/ his chiefs of staff (13.11.41)*

Note: For many accounts of Orsha conference see, **I:166-70**; **III:376-78**, etc.)

Note: As I understand it, one of Halder’s primary reasons for the conference at Orsha was to ensure that all of his chiefs of staff (in armies, panzer groups, etc.) possessed a *unified vision* about the impending operations. This concept of a unified vision goes back at least to the era

of Scharnhorst at start of 19th Century. For details see, *H. Hinterhuber, Wettbewerbsstrategie*, 15)

Note: For an interesting interpretation of this conference – by someone obviously „in the know“ – see, *Marchicus*,³³⁴ „*Irrlichter des Erfolges.*“ in: *Allgemeine Schweizerische Militäerzeitschrift*. Feb/Mar 49.

- Halder's grandiose ideas decidedly rebuffed
Modest goals agreed to (i.e., improve positions for winter quarters)
- According to *Klaus Reinhardt*, at time of the Orsha conference, Hoepner recommended that the German troops be pulled back to the German border! (*Reinhardt, "Das Scheitern des deutschen Blitzkriegskonzepts vor Moskau,"* see my „Biblio file“ for additional details on source, 206)
- **Note:** For good accounts of conference see, **III:257-59**. (**Anecdote:** When the head of the field office [Aussenstelle] OKH/Quartermaster General, HQ Centre, Major Eckstein, who was in charge of supplies to AGC, pointed out that it would be impossible to provide Bock's armies w/ enough supplies for the attack as far as the Moskva, Halder replied: "Your calculations are certainly correct, but we [the **OKH**] should not like to stand in Bock's way, if he thinks he can succeed; you also *need a little bit of luck in war.*" . . . The conclusion that can be drawn from the meeting at Orsha was that the resumption of the offensive against Moscow would *no longer bring about a lasting "settlement"* of the situation in the east, but would really only be a question of improving the operational situation. However, even this looked doubtful.) (For details of of armies' objections and warnings see, *K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 191-94)
- **12.-13.11.41:** At nightfall on **12 Nov 41**, Col. Gen. Franz Halder, Chief of the Army General Staff, arrived in the small *Belorussian* city of **Orsha** aboard his special train. Also on board were officers from the operations, organization, intelligence, and supply branches of the General Staff. Beginning at **10:00** a.m. the next morning and continuing until late that night, Halder and his colleagues conferred w/ the chiefs of staff of the Army groups and Armies on the eastern front. . . At Orsha, Halder emerges as the heir to *Moltke* and *Schlieffen*, conducting a *grand review of strategy* and attempting to bring that fabled cohesive expertise of the General Staff to bear on an enterprise that at the peak of its success had started to go sour. (See, *E. Ziemke, "Franz Halder at Orsha,"* 173; **I:166**)
- **13.11.41 [Orsha]:** The Chiefs of Staff of the Army Groups North and South, as well as the commanding generals of the armies of Army Group Ctr, are all convinced that it would be absurd to continue offensive ops in Russia at this time. As reasons they give: weaknesses in the personnel and *materiel* fields, the enormous supply difficulties and the imminent winter along w/ the considerable resistance still being offered by the enemy. They advocate a withdrawal of German forces back to the start-line positions of the October offensive, and even to positions as far back as the borders of the Reich. (*K. Reinhardt, "Moscow 1941,"* 214)
- **13.11.41: [Orsha]:** Halder arrives for meeting unable to imagine that Red Army has any means left to stop v. Bock before Moscow; he hopes for six (**6**) more weeks of cold weather w/o much snow. His hopes are dashed by the men who have just come from the fighting front. Von Bock's chief of staff, v. Greiffenberg, echoes his cdr when he says that Moscow could

³³⁴ **Note:** "M." most likely a pseudonym for a high-ranking German officer.

only be taken frontally, and that Halder's grandiose encirclements were out of the question. Halder concedes, and allows the less ambitious army group plan to go forward. The **OKH** quartermaster representative says that they could not supply the army group; for ex., fuel deliveries are $\frac{1}{4}$ of requirements. Halder's response to this real problem is simply to announce that **OKH** was "not going to stand in v. Bock's way if he thinks he can succeed; you also *need a little bit of luck in war*." (Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941, 80-81)

- **13.11.41**: The Germans substantially underestimated Soviet strength. Estimates given to the chiefs of staff on **13 Nov 41** at Orsha conference put the totals of Soviet larger units at **160** divisions and **40** bdes and rated their combat effectiveness at below **50%** because more than half of those units' troops and officers were believed to be untrained. The actual numbers [as of **1 Dec 41**], according to Soviet sources, would be **279** divisions and **93** bdes. In part, these units, particularly those from the reserves, lacked training and experience. Interspersed among them, however, was a growing core of seasoned divisions. (Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad, 47-49)

- **13.11.41**: At conference, Halder receives a *totally negative answer* to the most important question in his memorandum: To what extent could next year's offensive be prepared for during the winter by further advances to „operationally valuable“ starting positions? . . . The chiefs of staff of the army groups and armies *rejected any further large-scale offensive*. . . In the discussion of Halder's ambitious aims in this circle there was no shortage of *sarcastic comment*. The chief of staff of AGC argued that only a direct thrust on Moscow was possible, w/o the broad envelopment of the city envisaged by Halder. In this respect, he was only presenting the views of his C-in-C (v. Bock). . . CRUX: Halder met considerable resistance to his plans in Orsha and agreed to a compromise according to which the large-scale offensive that he and Hitler wanted was to be replaced by a partial offensive adjusted to the available forces and directed against the outskirts of the city. . . (For many more details see, (GSWW, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 689-92)³³⁵

- German Army High Command has evidently *lost ability to assess what was feasible and what was not*. (**IX**: R.-D. Mueller, Hitler's War in the East)
 (Note: Like Napoleon, German High Command fatally underestimated the impending turn in the weather. Writes Zamoyski: "He [Napoleon] had studied weather charts, which told him that it did not get really cold until the beginning of December, so he did not feel any sense of urgency [i.e., to evacuate Moscow and retire]. What he did not realize, in common w/ many who do not know those climates, was *just how sudden and savage changes of temperature can be*, and how temperature is only one factor, which along w/ wind, water and terrain can turn nature into a viciously powerful opponent." (See his, Moscow 1812, 351-52)

- *Disconnect* between German High Command and soldier at front – eg., Halder on **23 Nov 41**, in a conference w/ Oberquartiermeistern on eastern front, avers that the "Militaermacht Russlands *keine Gefahr mehr fuer den Aufbau Europas*," sei. (See, **IX**: H.-M. Welcker, Aufzeichnungen, in: Notebook #9; also, Halder, KTB)

³³⁵ **Note**: For the Germans sober intelligence appreciation of the Red Army before Moscow, and Halder's rejection of it, see pp 691-92. Klink makes clear that German intelligence was well aware of the ongoing transfer of fresh Soviet units from the Far East, and that a large number of Soviet units remained in the Far East and Trans-Caucasus regions. How, under these circumstances, throwing the "last battalion" into the battle could be expected to tip the balance in favor of German army "will remain the secret of Halder and Bock." (692-93)

(For the decidedly different perspective of an officer at the front see, Welcker's diary entries of **Nov 41**, in Notebook #9)

f) *Soviet preparations to meet German assault*

- Granted "breathing space" to robustly reinforce front opposite Moscow
Describe preparations – incl. construction of defensive lines – in some detail
- Reinforcements arriving from Caucasus region, Siberia, Far East, etc.
New Armies being created and deployed³³⁶
One of the "keys" to ultimate Soviet victory
- **Note:** For more details on Soviet reinforcements of central sector see, **III:401-03**. According to one source, the Russian leadership was able to send **100-120** trains daily directly to the Moscow front.
- **Note:** As the German attack had come to a standstill, Russian troops immediately began to reinforce the Mozhaisk defensive position³³⁷ at the points of main effort known to the Germans, set up a defensive position behind the others [?] and lay a considerable number of mines. . . The Stavka had set up an engineer army from its reserves, which they employed in the main AT positions. In addition, they employed a number of workers' btns, the civilian population of the capital and its surroundings, and even the fighting troops to build positions. Thus, they were able to dig several hundred kilometers of AT ditches, infantry positions, several thousand bunkers, dugouts, artillery and field positions and various obstacles for tanks and infantry. If only on account of terrain, the area in which Bock's troops were to advance was advantageous to the defender. The *hilly and wooded terrain* lent itself well to the defense and could not but hamper the attacker. The proximity of the Moscow supply base and the intact railway links to the front, but esp. those at right angles to it, permitted rapid transport of supplies to Russian troops and swift deployment of troops to the focal points. The reinforced, well-placed airfields around the Russian capital provided Red Army w/ strong air support, even at times when German pilots could not take off owing to catastrophic conditions at airfields, which were either sodden or frozen stiff. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 205-06)
- **Nov 41 [VVS]:** Stalin concentrated the bulk of the Soviet air force around Moscow, so as to attain clear air superiority in this sector of the front. Despite losses, between **1 Oct – 15 Nov 41**, the number of available acft rose by **187** to a total of **1138**, a large number of which were fighters. . . Throughout **Nov 41**, German troops continually complained about the increasing employment of the Soviet air force, which was inflicting heavy casualties on them. . . According to Soviet sources, their air force flew **9400** sorties west of Moscow between **1-14 Nov** alone, while during the same period the *Luftwaffe* was, w/ the exception of a few sorties, unable to take off for days on end. Halder's laconic reaction to the employment of the *Luftwaffe* was „The *Luftwaffe* is slowly disintegrating.“ (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 206; 210, f.n. 8)
- **1.-15.11.41:** Soviet Western Front received **100,000** fighters and officers, **300** tanks, and **2000** guns as reinforcements (contrast this w/ what GFM v. Bock received in way of rein-

³³⁶ **Note:** For general discussion of ongoing force generation see, **II:22**, ff.

³³⁷ **Note:** I thought this line had been largely breached by the Germans in **Oct 41**.

forcements!). G. K. Zhukov, "The Battle for Moscow," in: Soviet Generals Recall World War II, Igor Vitukhin (ed.).

- **1.-15.11.41:** „All in all, the Western Front received reinforcements totaling **100 000** officers and men, **300** tanks, and **2000** artillery pieces in the first half of **Nov 41**. The other fronts operating on the Moscow axis were also reinforced.” (Sokolovsky, *Battle of Moscow*, in: Battles Hitler Lost, 53)
- Soviet Order of Battle
(See, **IV:245**)
- Soviet “spoiling” attacks (mid-**Nov 41**)
Stalin insists on these (ultimately futile) attacks; Zhukov acquiesces
- Stalin’s decisive leadership
Earlier decision to remain in Moscow
Decides to hold traditional Nov. parade in Red Square to celebrate Oct. Revolution, etc.
These initiatives of great psychological significance
- **7.11.41:** Early on the morning of the 7th, the 24th anniversary of the Communist Revolution, Stalin reviewed an impromptu parade for the occasion from his accustomed stand atop the Lenin mausoleum. In his address to the troops, most of whom would go directly from Red Square to the front, he called on them to emulate the old Russian national heroes – Alexander Nevskiy who had defeated the Teutonic Knights in the 13th Century; Dimitry Donskoi who had defeated the Tartars a century later; and Alexander Suvorov and Mikhail Kutuzov who had served the Tsars against the French Revolution and Napoleon. (Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad, 41; also, Notebook #2)
- **10.11.41:** The situation on the south wing seemed equally critical. On **10 Nov 41**, the Bryansk Front was disbanded and broken up. **50 Army** was placed under West Front, and **3** and **13 Armies** under command of S.K. Timoshenko on the South-West Front. ((K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point, 207)
- **11.-15.11.41** [Soviet spoiling attacks]: The Soviet leadership expected the Germans to pursue their attacks in latter half of **Nov 41**. Most of the German units had been detected by Russian radio reconnaissance [w/ exception of **11 PD** and **137 ID**, which according to Sokolovsky were only German units not detected by **13 Nov 41**]. As it became increasingly apparent that an operation was imminent, Stalin attempted to forestall Bock’s attack. Elements of **16 Army** carried out a counter-attack between **11-14 Nov 41** against **10 PD**, which seemed to Rokossovsky to pose the greatest danger, and forced them to abandon the bridgehead at Skirminova. On **13 Nov 41**, Stalin ordered counterattacks w/ forces of **16** and **49 Armies** as well as **2 Cav Corps** at Volokolamsk. Zhukov argued in vain against these attacks, and the two Soviet armies ordered to launch them responded w/ disbelief. Units from **4 PzGr** repulsed the thrusts of **16 Army** and inflicted heavy losses on the Russians. (Note: Rokossovsky’s advance hit the **V AK**, attacking in Operation „Volga reservoir,” and the **2 PD**. In this battle **Cav Corps Dovator** was almost encircled.) On the other hand, the attack against the **XII AK** and particularly against **XIII AK** of **4 Pz Army** [sic! **4 Army**] as well as against **XXXXIII AK** of **2 Pz Army** was more successful. In this sector, they succeeded in

inflicting heavy casualties on the Germans, thus *forestalling the attack by right wing of 4 Army*. (K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point, 208; 213, f.n. 41/42)³³⁸

- **12.11.41:** Bei **4 PzGr** steht **10 PD** in Abwehr heftiger Feindangriffe gegen den Brueckenkopf **15 km SW Nowopetrowskoje**, die durch Panzer, Artl. u. Raketengeschuetze³³⁹ unterstuetzt wurden. Nach harten Kaempfen wurde der Brueckenkopf aufgegeben, um weitere Verluste zu vermeiden. Die Div. vernichtete **15** Feindpanzer, darunter zwei **52-Tonner** u. beschaedigte vier **[4]** schwer. (KTB OKW, Bd. I, 754)

- **13.11.41:** The Soviet leadership expected the German offensive in the second half of **Nov 41**. Having until then focused its attention on reinforcing the two wings of the Western Front, it now tried to harass the Germans by swift counter-strokes. Against the opposition of Zhukov and the army cdrs, who were anxious not to fritter away their forces, on **13 Nov 41** Stalin and the chief of the general staff insisted on the immediate execution of counter-attacks along the sector of **16** and **49 Armies**. (Note: The attacks launched by Rokossovskiy against his own conviction and virtually w/o preparation would not improve the position of Soviet forces but made it worse. **16 Army** would suffer considerable losses, and Maj-Gen Dovator's 3 Cav Corps would barely escape encirclement. An attack launched by Lt-Gen Zakharkin w/ elements of **49 Army** against Serpukov would also be repulsed w/ heavy losses.) (GSWW, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 894)

- **14.11.41:** Only once, on **14 Nov 41**, was a counter-attack ordered by Stalin and Shaposhnikov and this, mounted against Zhukov's wishes by Rokossovky's **16 Army** and Zakharkin's **49 Army** on the German north and south flank in the areas of Volokolamsk and the lower Nara, achieved little except for pinning part of von Kluge's force. During the first fortnight in **Nov 41**, **100 000** troops, **2000** guns and **300** tanks arrived at the West Front. (Seaton, Russo-German War, 202-03)³⁴⁰

- **14.11.41:** Based on intelligence received on the eve of the German offensive, on **14 Nov 41** Stalin personally orders a reluctant Zhukov to mount multiple spoiling attacks to disrupt German offensive preparations. Although Zhukov objects that it is too late to do so, Stalin insists, and the Western Front cdr orders Rokossovky's **16** and Lt-Gen I.G. Zakharkin's **49 Armies** to attack the flanks of Kluge's **4 Army** north of Volokolamsk and east of Serpukhov, respectively. Zhukov's reservations are indeed correct. In addition to failing miserably, the "unjustified" attacks only serve to weaken and disrupt the Red Army defenses once the German offensive begins. (Glantz, Barbarossa, 167)

- **14.11.41:** Soviet **49 Army** – reinforced w/ a cavalry corps, a rifle division, a tank division and two tank bdes – hits the German **4 Army** right flank east of Serpukhov. At the last minute, because Zhukov expected the renewed German offensive any day, Stalin had insisted on "counterblows," which Zhukov believed could accomplish nothing other than to complicate

³³⁸ Note: The Russian attacks, though limited, still convinced GFM v. Kluge that it would no longer be possible for his entire army to attack (so Reinhardt). Initially, Kluge was forced to leave the south wing of his army on the defensive. . . The long-term psychological consequences for the **4 Army**, esp. for Kluge and his staff, "should not be underestimated." (214)

³³⁹ Note: Beginning in **Nov 41**, several references to Soviet use of rocket wpns – "Nebelwerfer" and here "Raketengeschuetze." Later, mention of "Salvengeschuetzen" (OKW KTB, **13.11.41**)

³⁴⁰ Note: Seaton provides German and Soviet orders of battle at the time of the resumption of the German offensive on **15 Nov 41** (203).

the defense. . . (Note: In 3 days of fighting, 4 Army would just barely repulse the Serpukhov “counterblow.”) (Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad, 50, 52)

- **14.11.41:** Auf dem Suedfluegel 4 Armee griff der Gegner unter Einsatz von Panzern u. starker Artl.-Vorbereitung die gesamte Front des XIII AK u. am rechten Fluegel des XII AK an. Der eigene Angriff des XIII AK wurde voruebergehend eingestellt. . . 6 km ostw. Tarutino brachen 30 fdl. Panzer in die eigenen Linien ein, wurden aber nach heftigen Gefechten im Gegenstoss durch Teile der 19 PD zurueckgeworfen bzw. vernichtet. Lage ist wieder hergestellt. . . (KTB OKW, Bd. I, 757)
- **Mid-Nov 41:** [Scorced Earth]: In mid-Nov 41, Stalin issued fierce orders for a policy of „scorched earth” behind the enemy: „Deprive the German army of the possibility to quarter itself in villages and towns, drive the German aggressors out of all inhabited places into the cold fields, smoke them out of all lodgings and warm shelters and force them to freeze under the open sky.“ All villages up to 25-35 miles behind the enemy front line, and 10-20 miles on either side of the roads were to be burned to the ground; this was to be done by acft & artillery, and teams of „hunters“ recruited from each rgt. If Soviet units had to retreat, they should take the population w/ them, and burn down the abandoned village. Two weeks later, Zhukov reported that in his Western Army Group [Front] nearly 400 villages had been destroyed. (E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East, 112)
- **15.11.41:** By mid-Nov 41, HQ [Stavka] had provided the Western Front w/ a number of further rifle and cavalry divisions, as well as armored bdes, totalling some 100 000 men, 300 tanks, 2000 artillery pieces, and additional AT guns, so that on 15 Nov 41 the Germans were eventually facing 84 divisions and 20 bdes, albeit weakened in their combat strength. From 1 Oct - 15 Nov 41 the number of tanks of the Western Front had increased from 450 to 700. In addition, 1138 acft, most of them new types, were stationed at airfields around Moscow. (GSWW, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 893-94)
- **1.12.41:** The individual principally, though indirectly, responsible for [the Red Army’s] increase in readiness was Soviet agent Richard Sorge. . . By the fall, Stalin had either become convinced of Sorge’s reliability or desperate enough (or both) to redeploy more troops from the east to the west. Some had appeared at the front in October, more in November. The Stavka had held most troops back from the front to stiffen the reserve armies being formed. (Note: By 1 Dec 41, it had transferred 70 divisions from the Soviet Far East and had brought another 27 divisions out of Central Asia and the Transcaucasus.³⁴¹ Together, these units constituted at least 30% of the total strategic reserves committed during the 1941 campaign.) (Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad, 47-49)

g) *Phase II Offensive (15 Nov – 5 Dec 41)*³⁴²

Note: For nice chronological overview of operations during this three week period see, *Robert Forczyk*, Moscow 1941, 76)

- Die allgemeine Frontlage Mitte Nov 41 zeigte etwa folgendes Bild der H.Gr.Mitte von Nord nach Sued. . . (Details see, *W. Haupt*, 180-81)

³⁴¹ **Note:** These figures seem too high; compare w/ those provided me by Ewan Mawdsley.

³⁴² **Note:** Add personal accounts were possible.

- Offensive's second phase begins on **15-16 Nov 41**
(Quote from Bock's KTB?)
- **Mid-Nov 41**: Spaetestens Mitte **Nov 41** sah Hitler den noch wenigen Wochen zuvor als sicher geglaubten Sieg „wie Sand durch die Finger rinnen“ – gegen einen Feind, der immer wieder in der Lage war, neue Divisionen an die Front zu werfen. Mit *den Nerven nahezu am Ende*, ueberliess er Generaloberst Halder die Initiative bei der Operationsfuehrung. (*Reuth, Hitler*, 545-46)
- **15.11.41**: On the “raw and misty morning” of **15 Nov 41**, w/ the “sun dim and red,” Soviet units were cramped into their defensive positions in the snow-covered fields and woods (snow as yet light and thinly spread) or were locked in the spoiling attacks which Zhukov had ordered a week ago. That morning, the first phase of the “final” German offensive on Moscow began. (*J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 257)
- **15.11.41**: As late as [this day], GFM v. Kluge had said to GFM v. Bock: „The [enemy] attacks . . . have so weakened the right wing of the army that they cannot be expected to carry out a forward attack. . .“ (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 195, f.n. 7; also, *KTB, H.Gr.Mitte*, 15.11.41)
- **15.11.41 [4 AOK]**: Am **15. Nov 41** teilte das **A.O.K. 4** mit, dass der Suedfluegel der **4 Armee (XIII AK)** stark angegriffen werde. Er sollte bei dem vorgesehenen Angriff mitwirken. Hierzu heisst es in einer Notiz: „Der Feldmarschall orientiert ueber den Einbruch beim **XIII AK** u. teilt mit, dass die Lage hier erst “ausgestanden“ werden muss, bevor der rechte Armeefluegel antritt. Antreten der Kraefte suedl. der Moskwa kommt daher am **18.1.41 nicht** in Frage. **PzGr 4** sollte jedoch an ihrem linken Fluegel, wie beabsichtigt, angreifen. . . .“ (For more details, including sharp criticism of GFM v. Kluge see, *de Beaulieu, Sturm auf Moskau*, Teil II, 424-25; **III:405**)³⁴³
- **15.11.41 [4 AOK]**: Der starke Feinddruck gegen die Front des **XIII AK** noerdl. der Protwa sowie gegen das **XII AK**. . . hielt auch am **15.11.41** an. Mehrere mit Panzerunterstuetzung vorgetragene Angriffe wurden abgewiesen, erkannte Feindansammlungen u. Batterie-stellungen vor **15 ID** wirksam durch eigene starke Feuerueberfaelle bekaempft. Bei **260 ID** wird HKL in der Nacht vom **15./16.11.41** zu Vermeidung weiterer Verluste auf die Ausgangsstellung zurueckgenommen. . . . Wetter: Tagsueber bedeckt, abends klar, leichter Frost, im Bereich der **4 Armee** vereinzelt Schneefall. Strassenzustand unveraendert. Tiefgespurte, festgefrorene Wege verursachten teilweise Kfz-Ausfaelle (Federbrueche!). (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 759)
- **15.11.41**: Die Russen haben alle Anmarschwege nach Moskau auf der gesamten **400 km** langen Front durch ein durchlaufendes Panzerhindernis von **14 km** Tiefe gesperrt. Es besteht aus Panzergraeben, Draht- u. anderen Sperren, die ueberall von Feuer der Artillerie u. Infanterie ueberwacht werden u. durch Minen, versteckte Ladungen u. Flammenwerfer mit Fern-zuendung verstaerkt worden war. Die dt. Pz.Div. u. die Infanterie brechen trotzdem Luecken in dieses Sperrsystem. (*Bauer, Panzerkrieg*, 134)

³⁴³ **Note:** De Beaulieu: „. . . der Bfh. der Pz.Gruppe [Hoepner] hatte sich im Stich gelassen gefuehlt. Er hatte von diesem Zeitpunkt an immer wieder das Antreten der 4 Armee, zumindest ihres noerdl. Fluegels, gefordert.“ (425)

- **ab 15.11.41:** Die **2 PD** der Pz.Gr. Hoth stiess bis Soletschnogorsk vor, u. die Pz.Gr. konnte nach Abschuss von **208** Feindpanzer die ca. **60 km** vor Moskau liegende Stadt erobern. Damit war der Weg zum Istra-Staubecken frei u. dem General Shukow blieb keine andere Wahl, als die Schleusen des Staubeckens zu oeffnen u. das Gelaende in einer Laenge von **50 km** mit einer **2,5 m** hohen Wasserschicht zu ueberschwemmen. Das Wasser gefror sofort u. bildete nun fuer die dt. Panzer ein unueberwindbares Hindernis. (*Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 132-33)

- **15.-18.11.41:** Resumption of German offensive started on **15 Nov 41** in clear and frosty weather. Reinhardt's **3 PzGr** and part of **9 Army** drove in Khomenko's **30 Army** on the left wing of Konev's Kalinin Front in an attack towards Klin. On Stalin's order, Khomenko was immediately relieved of his command by Lelyushenko. On following day [**16 Nov 41**], Hoepner's **4 PzGr** attacked Rokossovski's **16 Army** on the right wing of Zhukov's West Front, thrusting toward Istra; and, on **18 Nov 41**, Guderian's **2 Pz Army** took up the attack from the area of Tula. Meanwhile, v. Kluge's **4 Army** in the center was itself attacked. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 203-04)

- **15.-19.11.41:**³⁴⁴ On **15 Nov 41**, w/ temperatures between minus **6** and **8** Celsius, the **XXVII AK** of Strauss's **9 Army** launched the planned attack, so as to carry out Operation "Volga reservoir." The next day, **LVI PzK** of **3 PzGr** and sections of the **V** and **XXXXVI AK** of **4 PzGr** joined the successful advance. The reaches of the Volga were reached the same day, and **3 PzGr** advanced rapidly on the boundary between Kalinin and West Fronts, cut off the liaison between the two fronts and on **17 Nov 41** split the Russian **3 Army** [**30 Army?**] in three. As Rokossovsky's **16 Army** was at same time attacked in the middle by forces of **4 PzGr** and almost broken through, Stalin, to ensure coherent command of units in this area, was forced to place **30 Army** under command of Zhukov. . . Despite concentrated employment of Russian air force, and although the Russians had effectively mined the main roads and terrain on either side of them as well as the towns, on **18 Nov 41** the Germans forced a breakthrough south of the Volga reservoir and advanced towards Solnechnogorsk and Klin. There is no doubt that **3 PzGr** had found a weak spot in the Soviet defenses and thus managed to break through w/ relative speed. When **VII, IX, XL Corps** launched their attack on **19 Nov 41**, it looked as if Zhukov's right wing could be beaten. . . German units, however, were unable to take immediate advantage of the initial successes, as, owing to a shortage of trains, deliveries of fuel were so restricted as to cause manoeuvres to grind temporarily to a halt. The KTB of the Chief Quartermaster for **3 PzGr** had following entry for **18 Nov 41**: "Stocks are rapidly running out at Headquarters Centre. . . The army group has only been allocated two [**2**] trains today. . . The allocations are not enough. . . Impossible to renew fighting for the moment." (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 214-15; 230, f.n. 18)

- **16.11.41:** Rokossovsky [**16 Army**] attacks w/ his right flank on **16 Nov 41** in effort to exploit local victories he has achieved over previous five [**5**] days. His **126 RD**, **17** and **24 Cav Divs** and **58 Tank Div** strike the **14 ID (mot)** and **7 PD** at the junction of **9 Army's XXVII AK** and **LVI AK (mot)**, which are themselves preparing to attack. Even though attack bogs down w/ heavy losses after a meager **3-4 km** advance, on Zhukov's orders, Rokossovsky commits Maj-Gen L.M. Dovator's **20** and **44 Cav Divs** into combat to exploit. The consequences are

³⁴⁴ **Note:** This entry illustrates the piecemeal (staggered) start of the phase two offensive.

disastrous: The inexperienced **44** [Mongolian] **Cav Div**³⁴⁵ conducts a mounted charge across an open, snow-covered field during which it loses **2000** cavalry-men and their horses to artillery and MG fire of the German **106 ID**, which suffers no casualties. With his left flank under heavy attack and his right nearly surrounded, Rokossovsky orders his forces to withdraw to new defenses on **17 Nov 41**. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 167)

- **16.11.41**: For gripping account of fighting at Dubosekovo railway station beyond Volokolamsk see, *Dado Muriyev, The Rout of "Typhoon."*
- **16.11.41**: A GAF msg, sent by Enigma on **16 Nov 41**, and read at Bletchley by the British decrypters, was a complaint from a *Luftwaffe* liaison officer w/ the German troops in the Kursk sector, to the effect that *no German fighters had been seen for two weeks*. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 257)
- **16.11.41**: Bei **4 Armee**³⁴⁶ fuehrten im Abschnitt des **XIII AK** heftige Feindangriffe waehrend des ganzen Tages zu oertlichen Einbruechen. Gegenstoesse durch Stukaangriffe wirksam unter-stuetzt, konnten eingedrungenen Feind zurueckwerfen. Die Kaempfe der letzten Tagen waren im Bereich des Korps besonders erbittert u. zehrten durch erhebliche Offz.-Verluste u. Absinken der Gefechtsstaerken an der Widerstandskraft der Truppe. **45** Feindpanzer wurden vernichtet. . . **V AK** wies mit **35 ID** starke nach zweistueendiger Artl.-Vorbereitung in mehreren Wellen bis zu Rgt.-Staerke gefuehrte u. durch etwa **30** Panzer unterstuetzte Angriffe ab. **12** Panzer wurden vernichtet u. weitere beschaedigt. (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 761)
- **16.-20.11.41**: Along the Volokolamsk - Istra axis, Soviet forces struggle to hold back the advance by Hoepner's **4 PzGr**. While Reinhardt's forces advance steadily along the Klin axis, Hoepner's advance is slow and costly. His forces advance only **4-6** km in three [**3**] days against fierce resistance, but finally manage to penetrate Rokossovsky's main defensive belt. Discouraged by his slow progress, Hoepner commits all three [**3**] of his corps on **19 Nov 41**; he breaks through the stalemate and advances **18-23** km (**11-14** miles) by late on **20 Nov 41**. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 170)
- **16.-28.11.41**: Schaal's **LVI PzK** (**3 PzGr**) begins attack toward key crossroads town of Klin on **16 Nov 41**. By **20 Nov 41**, corps' offensive has reached the road between Reshetnikovo and the Volga Reservoir crossing. Schaal's attack made good headway. Klin fell to **6 PD** on **23 Nov 41**, and Major Hans v. Luck's Recon Btn **3** of **7 PD** pushed across the Volga at Yakhroma, just **25** km from Moscow, on **28 Nov 41**.³⁴⁷ When the attack stalled at Dmitov, however, Reinhardt shifted Schaal's and Model's areas of responsibility. The **LVI PzK** was given responsibility for the extended flank from Yakhroma thru Rogachev to the Moscow Reservoir, for which it was assigned **7 PD**, **14 ID (mot)** and **36 ID (mot)**. Model's **XLI PzK** took over the **1** and **6 PDs**, to which was later added **23 ID**, for the last push into Moscow. . . (*Newton, Hitler's Commander*, 155-56; also, *Goerlitz, Model*, 102-03)

³⁴⁵ **Note**: The Soviet **20** and **24 Cav Divs** had only recently arrived from Central Asia, and were not accustomed to operating in such broken and forested swampy terrain, during the winter. (See, *Glantz*, 227, f.n. 16)

³⁴⁶ **Note**: Seems clear that **4 Army** was under considerable pressure at this time. These vigorous Red Army attacks tied down Kluge's forces, so he was unable to support action on the wings. I believe they also allowed Zhukov to reinforce his hard-pressed armies on the flanks.

³⁴⁷ Newton: "The **LVI PzK** had hit a seam between Russian **16** and **30 Armies**, and von Luck's venture across the Volga into Yakhroma had so unnerved Stalin that he had immediately hauled Zhukov to his HQ and demanded, "Are you sure we'll be able to hold Moscow?" (159) (See also, *The Memoirs of Marshal Zhukov*, 1971, p 339.)

- **17.11.41** (Tagesbefehl Hoepners): Bei Hoepners grundsatzlichem Antibolschewismus ist es keine Ueberraschung, dass er seine Truppen zu einem letzten Vorstoss auf Moskau anfeuerte. In einem Tagesbefehl an seine Kommandeure heisst es: „Ruetteln Sie die Truppe auf. Beleben Sie ihren Geist! . . .“ (See, **VIII:112**)
- **17.11.41**: An diesem Tage meldet Guderian bei der **112 ID** den Ausfall von **400 Mann** pro Inf.-Rgt. durch Erfrierungen. (*Bauer, Panzerkrieg*, 133)
- Hoepner & Reinhardt advance on northern wing³⁴⁸
 - Make good progress on first **3** days of attack (**III:415**)
 - 4 PzGr** advances on Volokolamsk – Istra axis (**16.-20.11.41**)
 - Village of Istra – **30** miles from Moscow – reached on **23.11.41**.
 - Costly fighting at Istra (“**DR**” & **10. PD**); delay gains Zhukov time (**27.11.41**)
 - 3 PzGr** advances steadily along the Klin axis (**III:412**)
 - Reinhardt’s group fighting in Klin & Solnechnogorsk on **22.11.41**
 - Klin captured next day by **7. PD** (**23.11.41**)
 - 3 PzGr** reduced to **77** tanks by **23.11.41** (from **259** in mid-Oct **41**)
 - 27.11.41**: **7. PD** captures Yakhroma (Moscow-Volga Canal)
 - Withdraw the next day
- **17.11.41** [**4 Armee**]: Noerdl. der Protwa u. bei **XII AK** blieb die Lage weiterhin gespannt. Der Gegner wiederholte seine heftigen Angriffe mit Infanterie u. Panzern u. erzielte bei u. noerdl. Woronina Einbrueche. Im Gegenstoss konnte der eingebrochenen Feind unter Einsatz von eigenen Panzern u. Reserven zurueckgeworfen bzw. vernichtet werden. . . (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 762-63)
- **17.11.41** [**PzGr 3**]: Stiess mit **14 ID (mot)**, **7 PD** u. **6 ID** tief nach Osten vor u. bildete Brueckenkoepfe ueber die Lama. Teile der **86 ID** erreichten die Bahnlinie bei Redkino. Linker Fluegel nahm Gorodna an der Wolga. . . (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, Bd 4, 36)
- **17.11.41** [**112. ID**]: On **17 Nov 41**, we learned that Siberian troops had appeared in the Uslovaia sector and that more were arriving by rail in the area Riasan-Kolomna. The **112 ID** made contact w/ these new Siberian troops. Since enemy tanks were at same time attacking the division from the Dedilova area, the weakened troops could not manage this fresh enemy. Each rgt. had already lost some **500** men to frostbite, and as a result of the cold the MGs were not longer able to fire and their **37** mm AT guns were ineffective against the **T 34**. The result of all this was a panic, which reached back as far as Bogorodisk. This was the first time such a thing had occurred during the Russian campaign, and it was a warning that the combat ability of our infantry was at an end. By switching the **167 ID** to Uslovaia, **VIII AK** was able to rectify the situation in the **112 ID** sector w/o needing outside support. Meanwhile, the deep right flank of the Panzer Army had been secured by the arrival of units of **XLVII PzK**. (*Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 248-49)
- **17.11.41**: Soviet cavalry charge at Mussino (near Klin) on this day and destruction of Soviet **44. Cav. Div.** Terrific anecdote – of futility of eastern front and of utter resolve of Russian people to hold out and win!

³⁴⁸ **Note:** As a rule, cover combat activities from right to left; here, however, must begin on left flank, for Guderian did not move for several days.

(See, *Carell, Hitler Moves East*; also, recollections of veteran *W. Vollmer* (**106. ID**); also, *W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 182-83, for detailed report of **106. ID**; also *Robert Forczyk, Moscow 1941*, 74, for great summary of operation; also historical analogy from Churchill's *River War* (**IMPB:2**))

(*Kosakenangriff*: Suicidal charge of Soviet **44. Cav.Div.** at *Mussino* (south of *Klin*). (See, article in "*Kristall*," in: **106. ID** division file, etc.)³⁴⁹)

- **17.-19.11.41 [4 Army]**: In Bock's opinion, the situation on the right wing of **AOK 4** was „very serious and precarious." He thus rejected the proposal made by Halder, who no longer wished to see Kluge's units at a standstill and wanted Brauchitsch to give Kluge a direct order to attack, thereby forcing an attack. However, Bock thought the **XIII AK** so threatened, that he even felt it would be justified for the divisions located there to retreat behind the *Protva*. As **XII AK** was also badly hit in the fighting, and **XX AK** was not ready to attack, he thought he could not give the order to attack in this sector until the Russians had stopped their counter-attacks. As a result, the attack by **4 PzGr**, whose ultimate objective was the *Moskva-Volga Canal* and the western outskirts of *Moscow*, despite initial successes of **V** and **XXXXVI Corps**, which had penetrated the Russian positions on the boundary between the Russian **5** and **16 Armies**, was delayed by Red Army resistance and a shortage of fuel. In the south, the flank of **4 PzGr** had become even longer,³⁵⁰ as **XX AK** had not attacked. Hoepner therefore tried to urge Kluge to attack, and ultimately accused him, when he was unsuccessful, of abandoning 4 PzGr.

[German cdrs quarrel!]: Hoepner's reproaches illustrate to what extent the army cdrs had become nervous and aggressive as a result of the problems at the front. . . . Hoepner and Guderian accused Kluge of cheating them out of success, because the right wing of **4 Army** would not attack. **3 PzGr** accused the High Command of **9 Army** of leading them by the nose and not commanding them properly. In addition, Reinhardt objected to placing the „Schwerpunkt" of the **Nov 41** attack in Hoepner's area and not in area of his **3 PzGr**, while **2 Pz Army** observed that the point of main effort should not be in the north but in the south, in other words in their area. Kluge tried to shift the blame for not attacking to Guderian, while Bock complained to Halder that Kluge's command of the army left much to be desired. The **9 Army** complained about the indecisiveness of the High Command of the army group; while **2 Army** protested that, as the **6 Army** to the south of them was at a standstill, it would be dangerous for them to attempt to advance further. Even Bock accused Army Group South and also Army Group North, of not attacking together with Army Group Ctr, thus making his flanks increasingly longer and exposing them to greater danger. [!] (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 217-19, 231-33, f.n. 40-57)³⁵¹

- **18.11.41: Bock and Halder** exchange opinions late on the **18th** on "what prospects the whole operation still had." They conclude that both sides were *close to the end of their strengths*,

³⁴⁹ **Note:** For a history of **IR 240 / 106. ID**, prepared and published by Obst.Lt. and Rgt.Kdr. Ringenberg in **Jun 42**, see division file. This document includes a large number of useable photographs and amazing drawings.

³⁵⁰ **Note:** Compelling Hoepner to "bleed off" forces from his "Schwerpunkt" to protect his growing southern flank.

³⁵¹ **Note:** Avers Reinhardt: „The incessant quarrelling and recrimination illustrate how tense the situation had become, how unsettled German cdrs at the front now were, and also how little faith they had in their own chances. Practically every cdr began to make his neighbor or his superior the 'scapegoat' for his own problems and errors." (219)

and the victory would go to the one who had the most will. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 52; also, *Halder Tagebuch*)

-- **18.11.41**: Guderian again attacks toward Tula.³⁵²

112. ID had suffered panic the day before (**17.12.41**) when attacked by fresh Siberian division (**III:413**; also, *Robert Forczyk, Moscow 1941*, 79-83)

Initially makes good progress; but he soon comes up against new Siberian divisions (**III:416**)

On **21.11.41** Guderian telephones Halder to say his panzer troops “had reached their end.”

He also advances north toward Kashira via Venev

On **25.11.41** advance battle group of **17. PD** approaching Kashira

See, *Lageost* maps

By **23.11.41**, Guderian’s tank army reduced to **38** tanks (from **248** on **16.10.41**)

Guderian meets w/ GFM v. Bock on **23.11.41** (**III:428**)

See, both men’s accounts of meeting

Guderian’s right (eastern) flank becomes ever more dangerously extended

Supply problems (discuss); catastrophic road conditions

Enemy reinforcements + counterattacks on exposed eastern flank

Final attack on Tula fails (ca. **1.12.41**)

Briefly cut Tula – Moscow highway on **3.12.41**

(For final attack of **31. ID** in Tula sector on **5.12.41** see, *F. Hossbach, Infanterie im Ostfeldzug 1941/42* (Notes in **31. ID** division file.)

-- **2. Armee** advancing east from Kursk on Tim (**21.11.41**)

Brief account of operations of this army (axis of advance away from Moscow)

-- **4. Armee** beteiligt sich vorerst an diesem offensiven Vorgehen nicht.³⁵³ Die Armee stand Mitte **Nov 41** von rechts nach links in einer Front, die sich von NW Aleksin bis dicht westl. von Naro Fominsk erstreckte. Hier lagen: [See text for details.] Die „Rote Armee“ liess der Armee keine Zeit zur Entfaltung. Ihre Angriffe richteten sich vornehmlich gegen die Stellungen des **13. u. 12. AK**. Von der Art dieser Abwehrkaempfe mit „Gewehr bei Fuss“ berichteten Tagebucheintragungen von Soldaten der **260. ID**, die in einem Brueckenkopf SO Wysockinitshi in Stellung lagen. (For several soldier reports see, *W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 195-96)

-- GFM v. Bock soon comparing German situation to “Battle of the Marne” in WWI (**III:426**)

Others make references to Verdun (battle of attrition)

-- Hitler, Halder, others, emphasize vital significance of human will. Clausewitz had also stressed the importance of *personality*, *will* and the other *intangibles* of war. . . (See, *Theodore Ropp, War in the Modern World*, 158)

-- By late **Nov 41**, both German and Soviet rgts. have been reduced to size of coys!

Germans insufficiently supplied (searching for food and shelter)

German/Soviet losses (examples of) (**I:421**, ff.)

Personal accounts (weather, frostbite, lice, sickness, etc.)

³⁵² **Note:** For a terrific description of Guderian’s HQ in Orel in early **Dec 41** – from someone who was there – see, *Tagebuch, Gefr. A. Hermann (VIII:20)*

³⁵³ **Note:** Of course, much speculation as to why GFM v. Kluge failed to support offensive until it was too late – i.e., at beginning of **Dec 41**. In any case, Zhukov is able to shift numerous units (rifle, cavalry, tank) away from German **4. Army** to more endangered sectors. (196)

- **18.11.41:** GFM v. Bock's armor made good progress in the first three [3] days of the offensive. The ground was frozen hard and dusted w/ light, dry snow. The Germans had painted their tanks, trucks and guns white to blend w/ the landscape. Shortening days, low-hanging clouds, and snow flurries restricted air support, and temperatures **10 to 20** degrees below freezing were new to troops so far accustomed to campaigning in warmer seasons. On the other hand, the armor *could move across country as if it were on paved roads*. The fall mud, the summer's dust and the mosquitoes were gone. The scenery had also improved. The Belorussian forests and swamps had given way to the Moscow upland dotted w/ prosperous-looking villages clean under the new-fallen snow. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 51)
- **18.11.41 [17. ID / Anecdote]:**³⁵⁴ Bei XVII AK griff der Feind waehrend des ganzen Tages besonders heftig. **45** Feindpanzer wurden vernichtet. Ganz besonders erbittert waren die Kaempfe um den Ort des Div.Stabsquartiers der **17 ID**, die **17** Stunden andauerten gegen vorzueglich bewaffnete u. fuer den Winterkrieg ausgeruestete Sibirier. Hierbei fielen allein **13** dt. Offiziere. **400-500** tote Russen blieben auf dem Platz. Die Leistungen der gegen mehrfache Ueberlegenheit kaempfenden Div. sind besonders hervorzuheben. . . (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, Bd 4, 38)
- **18.11.41 [Guderian]: 2 Pz Army** attacks beyond Tula towards the NE in direction of Kolomna. [Guderian] expects great successes from his troops, who now had no more than **150** tanks and could only attack with three [3] corps. As early as **16 Nov 41**, **XXXXIII AK** had had to go over to the defensive, as continuing enemy attacks made it impossible to advance over the Tula – Aleksin road. While Tula itself thus constituted a danger to the left flank of Guderian's attack, and while the right flank towards the east was becoming increasingly longer, requiring more troops to protect it, these problems were not immediately apparent, as their opponent, Soviet **50 Army**, was particularly weak. On the first day of the attack, **2 Pz Army** broke through the Russian defensive front. . . Part of **XXIV PzK**, which still had more than **110** tanks, led the advance towards Veney. . . The strength of Russian **13 Army**, against which bulk of **LIII AK** and **XXXXVII PzK** were advancing, was even inferior to that of **50 Army**. The **13 Army** had to protect the front from Epifan to Uzlovaya, which was about **100** km wide, w/ **4** rifle divisions, **2** cavalry divisions, and **2** tank bdes. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 216; 230, f.n. 23/24)
- **18.-19.11.41:** While **3** and **4 PzGr** advanced early in the offensive, v. Kluge attacks w/ his left on **18-19 Nov 41**. However, according to v. Bock, the right wing of **4 Army** was "very serious and precarious." Von Kluge parades a series of excuses for his inaction, to the extreme annoyance of Halder and v. Bock. For over a year, the German Army has been anticipating the final assault against Moscow, and now that the moment has arrived the cdr of the main effort [?] would not move. (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 87-88)
- **18.-19.11.41:** At first the attack on the two wings of the army group made surprisingly good progress. In the sector of **9 Army**, **3 PzGr** and the parts of **4 PzGr** advancing with it achieved a breakthrough south of the Volga reservoir on **18 Nov 41**, which opened the way for a further attack on Klin and Solnechnogorsk on the Moscow-Kalinin-Leningrad railway line. When three [3] more army corps of **4 PzGr** began their advance, the prospects of a breakthrough on a broad front north of the Smolensk-Moscow highway seemed good. On right wing, **2 Pz Army** attacked past Tula on the right. **XXXXIII AK**, abutting **4 Army**,

³⁵⁴ **Note:** This event attest to absolute savageness of the combat.

came under vigorous attack by Soviet forces and had to go on the defensive. . . The situation on the right wing was similarly difficult. **2 Army** had to give its full attention to the situation on the northern boundary of Army Group South around Kursk and Tim, and advance on Voronezh. This left Guderian w/ only **XXIV PzK** for the spearhead of his attack on Kashira and Kolomna. Most of **XXXXVII PzK** was occupied w/ maintaining contact w/ **2 Army**. The weak LIII AK (two divisions) was to widen the base of the attack and protect the spearhead from threats to its flanks. . . Guderian also had supply problems. According to KTB of **2 Pz Army**, **317 m(3)** [cubic meters?] of fuel had been arriving daily since **1 Nov 41**, while four [4] times that amount was considered necessary to build up reserves. For the offensive it was therefore possible to create only three or four units of consumption [Verbrauchsätze] because the mot. divisions received no more allocation. On **18 Nov 41**, Brauchitsch felt the prospects of reaching Moscow were fading; Halder, however, still considered it a “question of will-power.” (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 693, f.n. 534; also, *KTB 2. AOK*, 16./18.11.41)

- **18.-21.11.41** [Hitler, Halder, Bock]: After first successes of the offensive on **18 - 19 Nov 41** on the wings, Hitler, Halder and GFM v. Bock were convinced that, w/ sufficient vigor, the envisaged objectives could be reached. Bock and Halder were profoundly convinced that one last great effort would destroy the enemy facing them and that “victory will go to the side that sticks it out longer.” As **4 Army** remained behind,³⁵⁵ the operation which **OKH** ordered Army Group Ctr to carry out on **20 Nov 41** seemed to be an envelopment in which the wings played the major role. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 695)
- **18-23.11.41** [Guderian]: Am **18. Nov 41** trat die **2 Pz Armee** zu dem am **13.** in Orscha befohlenen Angriff mit dem fernen Ziel an. Es gingen vor: [Note: For G.’s detailed breakdown of corps assignments – as well as results of first days of offensive – see, *Guderian*, „*Vorstoss auf Tula* [Schluss],“ 825-26; **III:418-19**)
- **18.-24.11.41** [Klin & Solnechnogorsk fall]: After Operation „Volga Reservoir“ had been completed the army group of the **9 Army** had ordered the entire army front to go over to the defensive. **3 PzGr** was placed under direct command of the army group and given the task of advancing southwards at once towards Klin „under cover to the east“ and cutting the enemy, who were retreating before the attacking **4 PzGr**, off from their retreat route [**19 Nov 41**]. . . As early as **18 Nov 41**, Rokos-sovsky had sent his second-in-command, General Zakharov, w/ part of his Staff to Klin to organize defense of the city. Zhukov thought Klin was such an important junction that he put Rokossovsky personally in charge of defending the city. Yet the Russian forces did not succeed in holding Klin and Solnechnogorsk, and on **23 Nov 41** the two cities were taken by **3 PzGr**. Counterattacks to win back these two important bastions in the defensive ring around Moscow also ended in failure. When **4 PzGr** had reached the Istra reservoir on the **24th**, thus threatening the Russians w/ a German breakthrough, the Russians opened the locks and flooded the land to the south in an effort to delay the Germans. In addition, Stalin sent all the reserves that were left in Moscow to the right wing of the West Front; moreover, the Soviet Air Force missions were almost exclusively concentrated in the northern sector. (*K. Reinhardt*, Moscow – The Turning Point, 222)

³⁵⁵ **Note:** Following fierce enemy attacks after **13 Nov 41**, **4 Army** did not begin its advance. . . GFM v. Kluge has been accused of using the heavy defensive fighting to avoid pushing the two corps on his right wing into attack and of leaving them in their positions, which had been developed over the weeks. The same accusation was made against C-in-C of **6 Army**. Both were subjected to sharp criticism by Halder, and both eventually began their attacks against their own better judgement. (See, 695, f.n. 540; 698)

-- **18-24.11.41** [Guderian]: On **18 Nov 41**, **2 Pz Army** launched the attack which had been ordered in Orel on the **13th**. All told, the Panzer Army has **12 ½ divisions** for the attack, arrayed in four corps (**XLVII PzK**, **LIII AK**, **XXIV PzK**, **XLIII AK**). [Note: For details of G.'s plan of attack, see his memoir, pp 250-51.]

- **18.11.41**: With the help of effective air support, **XLVII PzK** captured Yepifan and **XXIV PzK** Dedilovo;

- **19.11.41**: **XXIV PzK** reaches Bolochovo;

- **20.11.41**: **18 PD** attacked the industrial town of Yefremov, which was captured after violent street fighting on the **20th** and held against heavy counter-attacks;

- **20.11.41**: **XLVIII PzK** [of **2 Army**] takes Tim, where it is counter-attacked on the **23rd**;

- **21.11.41**: **LIII AK** secures Uslovaia;

- **24.11.41**: **XXIV PzK** takes Venev, destroying **50** Russian tanks while doing so.

- **XLIII AK** marches slowly toward the Upa.

While these movements were being completed, a strong new enemy force appeared: this was the Soviet **50 Army**, and it proceeded to attack the leading troops of **XLVII PzK**. The situation became critical once more. (*Guderian*, Panzer Leader, 250-51; see also, **III:418-20**)

-- **18-30.11.41** [Guderian / Summary]: For a good summary of Guderian's ops over this period see, (*Kirchubel, Draft*, 22-23).³⁵⁶ He writes, *inter alia*: The **2 Pz Army** still had not solved the riddle of Tula; the city blocked the road to Moscow and could not be taken frontally. Fairly large (pre-war population: **300 000**), it had many factories, elevations that offered good observation and fields of fire plus other features that favored the defense. . . Guderian launched his last attack at **0500** hours on **18 Nov 41**. Aiming at Kolomna, and with Stukas flying overhead, he split the Western and Southwestern Fronts. Some **3 PD** troops captured an **80** meter bridge near Kamenka. However, four days into his last offensive, Guderian wanted to quit due to an extended eastern flank, debilitating weather and mounting casualties. The next day, the **23rd**, von Bock even flew to his headquarters to urge the panzer general on to Kolomna. Everywhere the Germans made analogies to the Marne in 1914, and warned about the dangers of a premature halt to their attacks. The **17 PD** somehow staggered into Kashira on the Oka River (last natural obstacle before Moscow), opening the road to Stalin's capital and established a feeble defense of scattered outposts.

Boldin's **50 Army** was at the end of its endurance, which alarmed Zhukov. Stavka sent in the **2 Cav Corps** (renamed the **1st Gds Cav Corps** on the **26th**), which counterattacked under heavy Red Army Air Force CAS on the **26th**. This shock stunned the **17 PD** and marked the *beginning of the end* for Guderian's thrust. After over five months of campaigning, by the

³⁵⁶ **Note:** All material cited as "Kirchubel Draft" is gleaned from a draft (courtesy of author) of his new book: Hitler's Panzer Armies on the Eastern Front. 2009.

end of Nov 41, 4 PD strength had sunk to 21 operational panzers, 18 artillery pieces and 4 infantry battalions with an average bayonet strength of 600 each.³⁵⁷

- **19.11.41: 2 Pz Armee:** . . . 112 ID durchbrach die fdl. Stellungen u. erreichte noerdl. Epifanden Don. 4 PD u. 3 PD zum Angriff angetreten u. hat im Vorgehen die Strasse Djedelowo – Tula erreicht. Mit 3 PD steht sie im Kampf gegen die Hoehe ostw. Tula. . . Die Lage bei 17 ID ist wieder hergestellt. [Note: See, 18.11.41 entry above, re: 17. PD] (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, Bd 4, 40)
- **19.11.41 [Stalin & Zhukov]:** On the 19th, Stalin asked Zhukov, „Are you sure we will be able to hold Moscow? It hurts me to ask you that. Answer me truthfully as a communist.“ Zhukov replied that Moscow would be held „by all means“ but said he would need at least another two [2] armies and 200 more tanks. Stalin agreed to provide the two armies, but not the tanks, and said the armies would not be ready until the end of the month, which left the situation around Moscow unlikely to improve anytime soon, unless relief came from ops about to being elsewhere. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 51)
- **19.-21.11.41:** General Halder remarks on 19 Nov 41 that „this has been a good day again,“ and “heartening progress” was being made the following day. Reports about poor condition of the German troops were *not taken too seriously*. Optimism clouded objective reasoning once again. “Guderian had someone call up in the afternoon to report that his troops are on their last legs,” Halder recorded [in his diary] on 21 Nov 41, but w/ the strategic objective in sight the Chief of Staff did not take the concern seriously: [See, *Halder Tagebuch*]
- **20.11.41: 4 Armee:** . . . VII, IX u. XXXX AK traten zum Angriff gegen die fdl. Stellungen an u. machten etwa 5-10 km Gelaendegewinn nach Osten.³⁵⁸ (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, Bd 4, 42)
- **ca. 20.11.41:** About 20 Nov 41, the weather suddenly broke and almost overnight the full fury of the Russian winter was upon us. The thermometer suddenly dropped to 30 degrees frost. This was accompanied by heavy snowfall. . . (*Blumentritt, Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 59-60)
- **ab 20.11.41 [2 Army]:** Only part of the 2 Army commenced the attack towards the east on 20 Nov 41. Towards end of the month the slow progress of the army, before which the enfeebled Russian 3 and 13 Armies were fleeing, made good ground relatively quickly. Even if they managed to send on small advanced detachments as far as Tim, Yelets and Yefremov, Hitler’s intention to advance to Voronezh was now impossible to realize, as the only suitable panzer division [9 PD] had only one [1] tank left as of 23 Nov 41. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 226; 238, f.n. 126)³⁵⁹
- **20.-23.11.41 [Guderian]:** By 20 Nov 41, the Soviets *no longer have any reason to fear a German breakthrough* [in sector of 2 Pz Army]. That day, Guderian informs army group that the attack by XXIV PzK northeastwards over the Shat would have to be suspended for several reasons: the serious threat to its flank in the east, casualties and fuel shortages. He

³⁵⁷ Erickson, *ibid*, p. 260; Glantz, *ibid*, p. 172; Haywood, *ibid*, p. 167; Haupt, *Center*, p. 104; Neumann, *ibid*, pp. 379, 383; Reinhardt, *ibid*, pp. 224-25; Richter, *ibid*, p. 209.

³⁵⁸ Note: This must be the left wing of 4 Army. Did this signify a general offensive on this wing? Was it just the right wing of his army which Kluge refused to budge? Check “Lageost” maps!

³⁵⁹ Note: By this point – late Nov 41 – a large gap had opened up between 2 Army and Army Group South.

also noted the serious problems experienced by the tanks on account of the terrain – as they were not fitted w/ studs they were sliding on the icy inclines and getting stuck. However, Bock urges Guderian to pursue the attack. (For more details see, *K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 216-17; see also, *KTb H.Gr.Mitte*, 23.11.41; and *KTb PzAOK 2*, 24.11.41, for Guderian's conversation w/ Bock)

- **20.-23.11.41 [53 AK]**: Losses suffered by **112** and **167 ID** were so heavy that their total exhaustion had to be expected. According to report by **LIII AK** on **22 Nov 41**, the two divisions suffered losses of about **200** dead and **500** wounded within three [3] days. On **23 Nov 41**, **112 ID** reported **20** rifles as the average fighting strength of its companies. Yet Guderian's army was still attacking successfully. On **21 Nov 41**, **XXIV PzK** was able to capture the rail junction of Uzlovaya on the Moscow-Rostov line and, after crossing the Shat, secured its freedom of movement towards Veney. These reports evidently gave Halder the impression that the offensive was proceeding well and that alarming reports about the condition of the troops *need not be taken too seriously*. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 694, f.n. 536)

- **ca. 21.-30.11.41**: GFM v. Bock compared the fighting w/ the Battle of the Marne in the First World War, and believed he would have to send the last available reserves into battle to force a decision. . . Bock withdrew the **255 ID** from the rear area of the army group and sent it to the front, as he had no other reserves. In doing so, he consciously exposed the hinterland, where it was now practically impossible to control the partisans. . . At this time **OKH** was planning to pursue the offensive in **1941** “until we have succeeded in gaining a suitable position from which to resume the offensive next year.” While it was now impossible to neutralize enemy forces completely in **1941**, extensive and lasting damage would have to be inflicted on them and unrelenting pressure put on them. It is clear from this that there were no longer any clear objectives for 1941, and they were now simply trying to thrust eastwards “as far as possible” to annihilate Russian forces or at least contain them. . . Toward end of **Nov 41**, he [v. Bock] became increasingly worried about the orders given by **OKH** and their ideas, which *no longer reflected the reality of the situation*. When on **30 Nov 41**, Heusinger repeated that Hitler wished the enemy on the south wing of **4 Army** be “encircled” and stated that despite all previous objections of the army group the thrusts towards Yaroslavl and Voronezh were not to be abandoned, Bock felt he had to move quickly. He telephoned Brauchitsch and told him he was “shaken” by Heusinger's ideas. He pointed out orally and in writing that *his forces could not go on any longer*. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 220-21; 233-34, f.n. 61/64; also, *Bock Tagebuch*, 21./23.11.41)

- **21.-24.11.41 [Guderian]**: **2 Pz Army** was making very slow progress. It consisted of only **12** divisions, half of which were marching infantry [**24 & 47 PzK** and two inf. **AKs**]. Guderian had lost **48 PzK** to **2 Army** and this moved on Kursk.³⁶⁰ **2 Pz Army** received little flank protection from v. Weichs since he was being pressed to advance due east in the direction of Voronezh near the Don. On **21 Nov 41**, however, Guderian took Uzlovaya and three days later [**24.11.41**] **24 PzK**, advancing northwards towards the Oka in the direction of Moscow, took Veney. On the afternoon of **23 Nov 41**, Guderian visited v. Bock to stress the tired condition of his troops. (For details of meeting see, *Seaton, Russo-German War*, 206; also, *Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 252)

- **22.11.41**: Nach Meldung des Kdr. der SS „R“ waren die Kaempfe am **19. u. 20.11.41** die schwersten u. verlustreichen seit Beginn des Feldzuges. (*KTb OKW*, Bd. I, 771)

³⁶⁰ Note: Kursk was captured by **2 Army** in early **Nov 41**.

- **22.11.41: XXXX AK** gewann weiter nach Osten Gelaende u. gelangte mit SS „DR“ in Gegend **10 km** westl. Istra. . . Die Div. des **V AK** stiessen bis in die Gegend **10–15 km** westl. Klin vor. (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 46)
- **22.11.41:** Reinhardt's **3 PzGr** fights in Klin and Solnechnogorsk. Soviet **16 Army** is unable to hold the German attacks. Late in the day, **4 PzGr**, pushing between **5** and **16 armies**, enters Istra, threatening to unhinge Soviet defenses west of Moscow. Lead units of **3 PzGr** are now only **30 miles** north of Moscow, while **2 Pz Army** is fighting near Venev and Tula as it attempts to dislodge **50 Army**. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 169-70)
- **23.11.41:** Zustandsbericht bei der **2. u. 3. Pz Armee**: a) **2. Pz Armee: 248 Kampfwagen (16 Okt 41)**; noch **38 (23.11.41)**; b) **3. Pz Armee: 259 (16.10.41)**; noch **77 (23.11.41)**. (*W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 223)
- **23.11.41 [Klin]:** The Landser, insufficiently supplied, fell upon the populace like a horde of ravaging locust. Valentina Judelewa Ragowskaja remembers the Panzers clattering into Klin on **23 Nov 41**. Germans demand food, slaughter a cow, steal felt boots, etc. (For details see, *R. Kershaw*, 210; *P. Kohl, Ich wundere mich*, 174-75)
- **23.11.41 [Guderian meets w/ GFM v. Bock]:** During the afternoon of **23 Nov 41**, I decided personally to visit the cdr of Army Group Ctr and to request that the orders I had received be changed, since I could see *no way of carrying them out*. Guderian explains to v. Bock the gravity of his army's situation. Bock eventually speaks on the telephone w/ Brauchitsch at Rastenburg, giving G. an ear-piece so that he can listen in on the conversation. (For details see, Panzer Leader, 252; also, **III:428-29**)
- **23.-26.11.41 [Istra]:** Istra – **30 km** from Moscow – was captured by the **4 SS Rgt** „Der Fuehrer“, alongside infantry and tanks from **10 PD**. Fighting raged against elements of the Siberian **78 [RD?]** and Manchurian units between **23-26 Nov 41** thru Istra cathedral, situated west of the river, and around a surrounding complex of six [6] large ecclesiastical buildings ringed by a stout **5m-high** wall. The „Der Fuehrer“ companies were reduced to **25-man** companies in the process. **16-year-old** Ludmilla Romanowna Kotsawa described the impact on its hapless inhabitants. „Many had already fled into the woods“, she said, „and they stayed in holes dug in the ground in ice and snow w/ temperatures at **-20 C** for days and nights.“ Istra typified what could happen to a town in this theater of ops. It remained occupied for only two [2] weeks before it was back again. [?] Only **25** children were found in its cellars from a former population of **7000**. During **Dec 41** and **Jan 42**, its ruins were infested w/ wolves. A rebirth did not occur until the re-establishment of its school in **1943**. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 210; also, *O. Weidinger, Comrades to the End*, 99-100; *P. Kohl, Ich wundere mich*, 178)
- **23.-28.11.41 [Iakhroma]:** The slow but steady German advance against fierce resistance leads to a “seesaw” battle that decimates both sides. By late **Nov 41**, both German and Soviet regiments have been reduced to the size of companies, w/ only **150 to 200** riflemen left in each. Late that night [**28.11.41**], the **14 ID (mot)** and **7 PD** reach the western bank of the Moscow-Volga Canal at and south of Iakhroma, the latter capturing several small bridgeheads on the canal's west bank, less than **35 km (21 miles)** from the Kremlin. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 172)

- **23.-28.11.41:** After the **OKH** had decided on **23 Nov 41** that Guderian should resume the attack, on **24 Nov 41** the **2 Pz Army** still managed, surprisingly, to capture Venev and Mikahilov. To capitalize on this success, Guderian immediately sent some of his units on towards Kashira, which had to be kept out of Russian hands at all costs, as it provided Tula w/ power supplies. The large increase in the number of tanks lost by **XXIV PzK** and the stranding of the remainder through a shortage of fuel now proved advantageous to the defending Russians. [**Note:** The **6, 35** and **39 PzRgts**, which had been consolidated into “**Group Eberbach**” and which had started the attack on **18 Nov 41** w/ **110** tanks, were left w/ only **32** tanks on **24 Nov 41**. In the evening of the same day, **17 PD** had only **5** tanks left.] (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 224-25)

- **23.-29.11.41** [**Stavka builds reserves**];: The *Stavka* had first began to contemplate a counter-offensive in early **Nov 41**, after the German advance faltered temporarily against the Mozhaisk Line in the fall rains. From **21 Oct - 2 Nov 41** the *Stavka* had ordered the formation of nine [9] reserve armies and, simultaneously, **9** tank bdes, **49** separate tank btns and more than **100** ski btns by **1 Dec 41**, along w/ **90 000** individual replacements for the Western and Kalinin Fronts. However, when AGC resumed its offensive in mid-**Nov 41**, the *Stavka* temporarily postponed the counter-offensive and employed its existing reserves to slow and then halt the German advance, particularly after Solnechnogorsk fell on **23 Nov 41**. With German forces only **40-45 km** from Moscow, in the next two days the *Stavka* orders the **10, 26** and **61 Armies**³⁶¹ to deploy forward to Riazan, Riazhsk and Ranenburg, respectively, „to prevent the enemy advance.“ In addition, it reinforces **30, 5** and **16 Armies** and, on **29 Nov 41**, inserts **1 Shock** and **20 Armies** from the *Stavka* reserve into the gap between **16** and **30 Armies**. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 185)

- **23.-29.11.41** [**German northern wing**]: In course of the fighting since **23 Nov 41**, when the road between Moscow – Leningrad was cut, the attack by **3** and **4 PzGr** had made only slow progress against stubborn enemy resistance. In the end, the spearhead of **4 PzGr** would advance to about **30 km** from the Kremlin [i.e., early **Dec 41**]. In addition to supply problems, the separation from the corps of **4 Army** *extended the right flank of the armored group and deprived it of the necessary strength*.³⁶² Developments on the evening of **27 Nov 41** were decisive, when **3 PzGr** had to abandon the bridgehead over the Moskva canal near Yakhroma, which had been captured by **7 PD**; and thus the belief, which had sustained the German forces, that the collapse of the north-western defenses of Moscow was imminent, disappeared. On **29 Nov 41**, GFM v. Bock reported to Halder that the attack would have to be halted unless a decision was achieved within the next few days. . . (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 700; also, *Bock, Tagebuch*, 29.11.41)

- **23.-30.11.41:** Klin and Solnechnogorsk fell to the Germans on **23 Nov 41** and Istra on **27 Nov 41**. The exceedingly critical situation on the right wing of Western Front in sector of **16** and **30 Armies** forced the GOC to throw in all available forces, including the AA artillery of the Moscow defenses, at the threatened points. HQ [*Stavka*] moreover, during the final days of **Nov 41**, reinforced the Western Front w/ **8** rifle divisions, **7** cavalry divisions, **4** rifle bdes, **1** airborne corps, and independent armored and other specialized units. But it was only w/ the intervention of the **1 Assault Army** under Lt-Gen Kuznetsov and of the **20 Army** (formed only recently) under Maj-Gen Vlasov (the defender of Kiev, whose name is omitted from Soviet accounts of the fighting for Moscow) – i.e., the intervention of reserve armies assembled in strictest secrecy as the second echelon east of Moscow – that the exhausted

³⁶¹ **Note:** These were all Reserve Armies. See, Glantz, p 228, f.n. 4.

³⁶² **Note:** This was the outcome for Hoepner of Kluge refusing to participate in the offensive!

German forces were halted at Yakhroma on the Moskva-Volga Canal and at Krasnaya Polyana NW of Moscow at the beginning of **Dec 41**. (GSWW, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 894-95)

- **24.11.41**: German troops suffered greatly as a result of enemy air superiority. On **24 Nov 41**, the KTB **2 PzGr** read as follows: „Intense enemy air activity. Attacks by bombers and low-flying acft occasioning casualties. The troops regret the absence of our own acft. . .“ (K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point, 234, f.n. 84)
- **24.11.41** [**4 Armee**]: Auf ganzer Front rege Artl.-Taetigkeit u. vereinzelt starke Angriffe. Auf linkem Fluegel gewann die Div. gegen staerkere fdl. Angriffe etwa **5-10** km Boden. . .³⁶³ (Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte, 50)
- **24.-25.11.41**: Am **24. u. 25. Nov 41** hatten auch die **35 ID**, die **10 u. 11 PD** sowie die **2 SS „DR“** die Istra erreicht. Eine Kampfgruppe unter Obst.Lt. Dr. Mauss, zu der auch das **K-Btn** der Division „Reich“ gehoerte, konnte Istra im Nahkampf erobern.³⁶⁴ (Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam, 133)
- **24.-25.11.41** [**2 Pz Armee**]: On **25 Nov 41**, Major Smirnov, using his AA guns w/ their barrels fully depressed, was engaging the lead tanks of **17 PD** approaching the southern limits of Kashira. . . Venev fell on **25 Nov 41** and Soviet units fell back NE. Kashira was under attack. . . . Kashira, w/ its important electric power station, its rail bridge over the Oka, its major rail junction and above all the gaping hole from Kashira to Kolomna where there was not a single Soviet formation. If Kashira fell, the road to Moscow was open. . . (J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad, 259-60)
- **24.-29.11.41**: **3** and **4 PzGr** on the north flank have some success against Soviet **30** and **16 Armies**, taking Klin on **24 Nov 41**³⁶⁵ and Solnechnogorsk on **25 Nov 41**.³⁶⁶ Three days later [**28 Nov 41**] the panzer groups were immediately to the north of Moscow at Dmitrov and Yakhroma and had actually crossed the Moskva-Volga Canal, being less than **25 miles** from the NW outskirts of the city. Zhukov had been urging that Kuznetsov's **1 Shock Army**³⁶⁷ and Golikov's **10 Army** should be allocated to him from the High Command Reserve and the command of these armies was transferred to him on **29 Nov 41**. The armies, however, were very incomplete and most of the rank and file were hastily levied recruits who had never been in action before. The method by which **10 Army** was raised is informative as to its readiness for war. . . **10 Army** consisted of **100 000** men – **11 000** each to the rifle and **3000** to the cavalry divisions, but only a quarter of the rank and file were under 30 years of age, and quite a number were over **40**. (For details on creation of **10 Army**, its equipment shortages, etc. – one of its rifle divisions was short **7500** rifles and two of its cavalry divisions had no saddlery – see, Seaton, Russo-German War, 204-05)

³⁶³ **Note:** In other words, appears Kluge is actually attacking on his left wing.

³⁶⁴ **Note:** GSWW Vol. IV states Istra captured by Germans on **27 Nov 41**. (See, pp 894-95.)

³⁶⁵ **Note:** Reputable sources very often give different days for the capture of key towns and cities by the Germans. Be careful!

³⁶⁶ **Note:** According to Istoriya, Vol. 2, p. 260, Lelyushenko's **30 Army** had only **20** tanks and **200** guns left. This may be true since it consisted of only a motor rifle and a rifle division, a tank bde, a motor rgt., and a reinforcement rgt. (Seaton, 204, f.n. 37)

³⁶⁷ **Note:** A "shock army" was a rifle army w/ greatly increased organic artillery. (204, f.n. 39)

- **24.-29.11.41** [Kluge/Hoepner]: Inzwischen war weiter suedl. die **4 Armee** noch immer nicht angetreten. Am **23.11.41** wurde ihr Angriff fuer den **26.11.41** in Aussicht gestellt. Am **24.11.41** traf der O.B. der **4 Armee** auf dem Gefechsstand der **4 PzGr** in Wjedjenskoje (15 km noerdl. Moshajsk ein. Ein persoenliche Aussprache war dringend erwuenscht, da der Pz.Gr. das weitere Abwarten der **4 Armee** nicht mehr verstaendlich war. Auf das staendige Draengen des Bfh. hin waren fuer den **24.11.41** „Taeuschungsangriffe“ bei der **4 Armee** angeordnet worden, um den Gegner zu binden, der vor ihrer Front Kraefte wegzog. Was sollten „Taeuschungsangriffe“? fragte man sich. . . Entweder wird angegriffen oder verteidigt. Auch diese Handlungsweise fand aber eine gewisse Erklaerung in der Haltung des O.B. der **4 Armee**. . . Er [Kluge] wollte seine **4 Armee**,³⁶⁸ um deren Angriff es ging, ungern aus ihren guten Abwehrstellung, in denen sie nun schon mehrere Wochen lag, angreifen lassen. . . (For more details see, *de Beaulieu*, „*Sturm auf Moskau*,“ Teil II, 426-27)³⁶⁹
- **25.11.41** [**4 Armee**]: . . . Die Div. des **IX, XXXX u. XXXXVI AK** hatten Gelaendegewinn von **5 bis 10 km**. . . Auch die **6 PD** konnte etwas nach Osten Boden gewinnen. (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 51)
- **25.-27.11.41** [Guderian]: On **25 Nov 41**, in compliance w/ the directive³⁷⁰ received from the army group, Guderian ordered the preparation of a forward line along the Don, Shat & Upa rivers. The “objective Kashira,” the principal purpose of which was the severing of the railway line between Moscow – Rostov, was downgraded to effective destruction of the line by a demolition party, although this did in fact not succeed. The only operationally important objective remained the capture of Tula, esp. because the flanks of the attacking spearheads were becoming exposed due to failure of **4 Army** to advance rapidly [to advance at all!] and [due to] the diverging direction of **2 Army**, which was moving primarily towards Kursk and Voronezh. In addition to eliminating the threat to the exposed inner flanks of **2 Pz Army** and **4 Army**, the capture of Tula would provide Guderian not only w/ a jumping-off point for future attacks but also w/ a resupply and maintenance base.
- Having reached the most forward point of the attack of **2 Pz Army** just south of Kashira on **25 Nov 41**, Guderian halted his advance in that direction because of fierce enemy counter-attacks. Again he asked for **296 ID** so that, together w/ **XXXXIII AK** and **XXIV PzK**, he could encircle Tula. On **27 Nov 41**, he thus demanded the immediate start of the attack by the right wing of 4 Army,³⁷¹ when it became evident that the attack by **XXXXIII AK** was hardly making any progress. GFM v. Bock, however, ordered Guderian to fight the battle of Tula alone and then, renouncing the objectives of reaching the Oka and Kashira, ordered his panzer army to cover its position towards the north and east. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 698-99)
- **25.11.-2.12.41**: Die Berichte des **OKW** gaben der dt. Bevoelkerung kaum Kenntnis von der Schwere der Schlacht. Nur karge Saetze vermittelten den Angehoerigen der Millionen von Soldaten das Geschehen vor Moskau. So brachten die **OKW**-Berichte die lakonischen Meldungen: (Details see, *Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 211-13)

³⁶⁸ **Note:** This is a key point: Failure of Kluge to attack allowed Zhukov to shift forces from front opposite **4 Army** to his threatened flanks.

³⁶⁹ **Note:** In his communication w/ **4 Armee**, Hoepner also refers to “die dauernden Angriffe aus der Luft. (427)

³⁷⁰ **Note:** I believe this was the directive of **10 Nov 41** re: “Guidelines for the conduct of fighting in winter...” (see p 697)

³⁷¹ **Note:** Kluge’s failure to move w/ his right wing also affecting Guderian’s advance.

- **26.11.41: LIII AK** (Weisenberger) erobert Stalinogorsk (suedl. Moskau). (*A. Hillgruber, Chronik*, in: *OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 1237)
- **26.11.41:** Teile der **4 PzGr** gelang es, in schwerem Kampf von Sueden, Westen u. Norden in Istra einzudringen. . . (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 777-78)
- **26.11.41 [4 Armee]: 268 ID** stiess gegen die fdl. Stellungen vor, erledigte **50** Erdbunker u. machte **200** Gefangene. . . Das **XXXXVI AK (mot)** ging mit SS „R“, **10, 5** u. **11 PD** bis an die Istra vor u. bildete z.T. Brueckenkoepfe. Hinter der Istra staerkere Feind. . . (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 53)
- **26.11.41:** Fierce fighting at Istra, as SS “DR” and **10 PD** attack the enemy **78 RD** in the town. **10 PD** is operating w/ just **7** tanks. On Guderian’s front, **17 PD** pushes toward Kashira amid running battles w/ **2 Cav Corps**. **53 AK** reaches the Don and encircles a *Siberian* division against the river near Donskoye. The isolated force fights on, the weakness of **53 AK** preventing its destruction. Boldin’s **2 Cav Corps** is elevated to Guards status, now renamed as the **1 Guards Cav Corps**. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 171)
- **27.11.41:** At Krasnaya Polyana, **PzGr 3**³⁷² stood only **18** miles from Moscow. The **4 Army**, w/ its outposts at Burtsevo, was only **25** miles from the city. Guderian’s **2 Pz Army** was **60** miles away to the south. Yet after **25 Nov 41**, Guderian makes no further advance, having failed to take **Kashira** on the main southern rail line; on **27th**, he ordered a halt. (*Keegan, Second World War*, 202)
- **27.11.41: 4 Armee** unterstuetzte mit Teilen des **XIII AK** – in erster Linie durch Artl. – den Angriff des **XXXXIII AK**.³⁷³ . . . **2 PD** erreichte im kuehnen Vorstoss mit Anfaengen Gegend westl. Krasnaja Polnaja, **22** km nordwest. Moskau, u. bildete ueber die Klijasma einen Brueckenkopf. **3 PzGr** fuehrte mit **LVI AK** gegen zaeh kaempfenden Gegner Angriff nach Osten fort. Vorderste Teile **1,5** km suedwestl. St. Jachroma . . . (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 779-80)
- **27.11.41:** Soviet Kalinin Front begins a series of counterstrokes against left flank of Army Group Ctr. **9 Army** repels repeated enemy attacks but has to divert forces from support of **3 PzGr** to address the threat. Heavy, hand-to-hand fighting in progress at small town of Istra. In the south, fighting at Kashira escalates as **Guard’s Cav** counterattacks, halting the northward march of **17 PD**. **53 AK** is unable to prevent the escape of the encircled enemy unit at Donskoye. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 172)
- **27.11.41:** When on **27 Nov 41** Reinhardt [**3 PzGr**] demanded that he should be sent all the reserves to capture a “springboard to the east” on the other side of the Moskva-Volga canal, GFM v. Bock had to order the panzer group to advance w/o delay west of the canal towards Krasnaya Polyana, so as to assist the attack by **4 PzGr**, which had come to a stand-still. Hoepner’s spearheads were continuously being reduced, as he had to keep on sending more forces southwards to protect the flank – forces which he needed for the attack. . . The thrust southwards by **3 PzGr** did not have the desired effect, as their forces had become so feeble and the Russians were continuously providing their units w/ reinforcements. (*Note:* See entry

³⁷² **Note:** **2. PD** I believe. Check “Lagost” maps.

³⁷³ **Note:** Guderian had asked for support from Kluge to assist drive of Heinrici’s **43. AK**.

on tank strength of **3 PzGr** below, **30 Nov 41.**) (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 223)

- **27.11.41 [29. ID (mot.)]**: Am Morgen des **27.** erfuhr ich [Guderian] in Jepifan durch General Lemelsen, dass es waehrend der Nacht bei der **29 ID(mot)** zu einer Krise gekommen sei. Die Masse der eingeschlossenen sibirischen **239 [RD]** war unter Zuruecklassen ihrer Geschuetze u. Fahrzeuge nach Osten ausgebrochen. Die duenne Einschliessungslinie der **29 ID (mot)** hatte den Durchbruch nicht verhindern koennen u. schwere Verluste erlitten. . . (See, *Guderian, „Vorstoss auf Tula [Schluss],“* 827-28)
- **27.11.41**: This day is one of acute crisis in the Soviet Moscow defense. North of the capital, the advances of **3** and **4 PzGr** past Klin and Solnechnogorsk have opened a 27-mile-wide gap between Dimitrov, on the Moscow-Volga Canal, and Krasnaya Polyana, 12 miles north of Moscow. . . For the moment, Soviet **30 Army** could do nothing to block German progress to the east and south. Soviet **16 Army** had, since the front had broken open between Klin and Solnechnogorsk, been having to stretch its flank east to cover Moscow and to take the whole shock of the enemy's sweep toward the Soviet capital. [In the south], the **17 PD** thrust toward Kashira was beginning to form a deep pocket around Tula and was putting a **2 Pz Army** spearhead w/in 65 miles of Moscow in the south. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 57)
- **27.-28.11.41**: At Tula, Boldin's men hold on grimly, and on **27-28 Nov 41** Guderian sends what remains of **3** and **4 PD** on a counterclockwise sweep north of the city. Their armor is consolidated in **KpGr Eberbach**, which numbers **110** tanks on the 17th, but only **32** a week later. He likewise orders **XLIII AK** to come clockwise from the south in an attempt to encircle this obstacle. Guderian personally leads the advance. The **340 RD** and **112 Tank Div** hold open Tula's last corridor to the outside despite Guderian's efforts. On **27 Nov 41**, Guderian adds his voice to the growing chorus of v. Bock's generals frustrated at v. Kluge's inactivity. Guderian says he cannot continue attacking "if the right wing of **4 Army** for its part does not assume the offensive w/o delay." But v. Bock tells Guderian's chief of staff that such an attack is "out of the question."³⁷⁴ (*Kirchubel, Barbarossa 1941*, 87)
- **27.-28.11.41 [Yakhroma Raid]**: At dusk on **27 Nov 41**, Kampfgruppe Von Manteuffel reached the Astrezowo – Jakowlewo area, 4 km NW of a bridge spanning the Moscow-Volga Canal. A raid was ordered to capture it intact. The canal was the last defense obstacle before the city itself. Roads marked on maps would not be used, to avoid the likelihood of bumping into Russian resupply convoys. Von Manteuffel approached the bridge, detouring thru surrounding woodland and bypassing villages en route. Engineer troops equipped w/ motorized saws were at the head of the column to cut pathways thru the trees sufficiently wide for Panzers, half-tracks and heavy wpns to transit. Dismounted infantry moved either side of the column for security as it snaked its way thru forest areas. Once clear, they accelerated along icy paths and across snow-covered fields toward the SE. Shortly before darkness, the head of the column penetrated thick woods and came out in the village of Astrezowo. (For rest of this detailed account see, (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 206-07; *Manteuffel, 7. Panzer-Division*, 233-36; *Bock Tagebuch*; *P. Kohl, Ich wundere mich*, 176)
- **27.-29.11.41 [Tula]**: Our most urgent task now was the capture of Tula. Until we were in possession of this communications centre and its airfield, we had no hope of continuing to advance either northwards or eastwards. I had visited the corps cdrs to help in preparing for

³⁷⁴ **Note:** Appears that GFM v. Bock consistently supported Kluge's refusal to attack w/ his right wing.

the assault, an operation concerning the difficulties of which I cherished no illusions. We wished to capture the town by a double envelopment, by **XXIV PzK** from the north and east and **XLIII AK** from the west. . . The ability of the troops, even of **XXIV PzK**, to attack had suffered heavily as a result of the months of fighting. The corps artillery could now muster only eleven [11] pieces. (*Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 255)

- **27.-29.11.41 [7 PD/Yakhroma]**: Die Kp.Gr. Manteuffel erreicht am **27 Nov 41** in entschlossenem Vorgehen, Strassen u. Doerfer meidend, bis kurz vor Einbruch der Dunkelheit den Raum Astrezowo – Jakowlewo westl. der Bruecke ueber dem Volga-Moskau Kanal. Am fruehen Morgen des [28?] November wird in kuehnem, ueberraschendem Vorstoss die Bruecke erstuermt, sie faellt unversehrt in unsere Haende. Mit Unterstuetzung durch Teile des Pz.Rgt kann rasch auf dem Ostufer ein Brueckenkopf gebildet werden. . . Das verstaerkte Rgt. musste jetzt gegen den ungestuem andraengenden u. zunehmend ueberlegeneren Feind hart kaempfen, ohne jedoch Boden aufzugeben. Die hoehere Fuehrung verlangt jedoch am **29. Nov 41** die Zuruecknahme des Brueckenkopfes u. den Ausbau einer Verteidigungstellung am westl. Kanalufer. . . (*Manteuffel, 7. Pz.-Div.*, 89)
- **28.11.41 [GFM v. Bock commits final reserve]**: During the day, the **4 Pz Gr** spearhead, the **2 PD**, comes almost to a standstill **20** miles to the south [of Yakhroma apparently], west of Krasnaya Polyana, and **12** miles north of Moscow. Echeloned in a **15-mile** line on the **2 PD**'s right, Hoepner's **4 PzGr** has **11 PD**, **5 PD**, **10 PD** and SS „**DR**“ all aimed toward Moscow but barely moving as they crunched head-on into the minefields & fiercely defended earthworks ringing the city. Kluge's **4 Army left flank** was inching ahead, but not enough to keep Hoepner's forces from having to stretch to maintain contact. . . On the night of the **28 Nov 41**, Bock, while *changing the plan again*, at least symbolically, committed his „last regiment.“ Giving **3 PzGr** the Lehrbrigade 900 (actually one btn), the only reserve he had, he ordered Reinhardt to forget about the Yakhroma bridgehead, turn south along the west bank of the canal, and join Hoepner's push toward Moscow. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 53)
- **28.11.41 [Istra]**: At Istra, Beloborodov's Siberian troops fought hand-to-hand w/ SS infantry of SS-“**DR**,” the young Aryans who died icy and bare-footed in their boots. Istra fell and on **28 Nov 41** Beloborodov's men fell back. (*J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 261)
- **28.11.41: 2 Armee**: . . . **95 ID** hat Brueckenkopf ueber Tim Abschnitt **6** km NW Lipowskoje auf **4** km erweitert. . . (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 57)
- **28.11.41**: With **7 PD** and **14 ID (mot)** barely **20** miles north of Moscow at Yakhroma, Soviets deploy **1 Shock Army** from the reserve. The advance has cost the *Wehrmacht* its last ounce of strength. After a difficult struggle, **SS-DR** and **10 PD** capture Istra. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 172; also, *Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 261)
- **28.11.41**: The **3** and **4 PzGr** pushed eastward through the towns of Klin and Istra to the line of the Moscow-Volga Canal. The canal runs **60** miles south to north, from the capital to the Volga River. Early on Friday, **28 Nov 41**, the German units nearest Moscow established a bridgehead over the canal at Iakhroma, only **35** miles north of the Kremlin. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 106)
- **28.-30.11.41 [Hoepner & Kluge]**: On **28 Nov 41**, Col-Gen. Hoepner asked v. Kluge to attack towards Moscow w/ **4 Army** along the Nara. Such an attack, he said, would relieve pressure

on the two panzer groups. After considering this request w/ his chief of staff [Blumentritt] Kluge issued orders for the attack on the **29th**: it was launched the next day, on the **30th**. The *Schwerpunkt* lay on either side of Naro-Fominsk. . . (Blumentritt, *Moscow*, in: Fatal Decisions, 60)

-- **28.11.-4.12.41** [2 PD reaches outskirts of Moscow]:

- **30.11.41**: A combat group of tanks, infantry, artillery and engineers commanded by Oberst Rodt of **IR 304** occupies the villages of Krassnaya Polyana, Putschki and Katjuschki on **30 Nov 41**. Another btn (2nd) from the same rgt u. Major Reichmann secures Gorki nearby. A small salient has been driven into the area of Soviet **16 Army** – 17 km from the outskirts of Moscow and only **27 km** from the Kremlin. (212)
- **1.12.41**: As Kampfgruppe „Decker“ rolls into Oserezkoje on **1 Dec 41**, soldiers remark on the appearance of Moscow Omnibus line stops. (212)
- **2.12.41**: The **2 PD** was the closest unit to the Kremlin on **2 Dec 41**. On (or about) this day, motorcycle patrols from the division's **Pz Pi Btn 62** – hunched behind their BMWs and MG-mounted sidecars – encounter no opposition until reaching Khimki, a small river port in the NW suburbs of Moscow. They are within 8 km of the city and **20 km** of the Kremlin. (for details see, 211-12)
- **3.12.41**: The **1** and **2 PD**, w/ the **23 ID** in between, are the nearest German units to Moscow on this day. (210) . . . The forward triangle of villages and towns around Krassnaya Polyana occupied by **2 PD** was the nearest Keil that had been driven toward the Moscow suburbs. Katjuschki, held by Kp.Gr. Buck (**I/304 IR**), formed part of an integrated defense position mutually supported by Gorki, held by Kp.Gr. Decker to its NW and Putschki to the rear. ObLt Georg Richter's battery from **AR 74** was in Putschki w/ Kp.Gr. „Rodt“ from 2nd Rgt. Richter proudly writes in his diary that they „were the furthest forward“ of all the divisions operating on the *Ostfront*. (214)
- **4.12.41**: Soldiers from **2 PD** occupying the villages of Katjuschki and Gorki near Krassnaya Polyana on **4 Dec 41** soon found „it was possible to observe everyday life in the capital using scissor-telescopes.“ The distance as the crow flies to the edge of the city was 16 km. Much to their frustration, they were unable to engage Soviet soldiers daily disembarking at Lobnya station in sight, because their supporting artillery was out of ammunition. Kampfgruppe Buck from **IR 304**, in taking these villages had placed themselves w/in „cannon range“ of the Moscow city limits. (213)

(Source: *Kershaw*, War Without Garlands)

-- **29.11.41: XXIV AK: 17 PD**³⁷⁵ nahm ihre vordersten Teile suedl. Kaschira gegen staerkeren Feinddruck planmaessig in eine Aufnahmestellung zurueck. . . **XXXXIII AK** griff mit **131 ID** nach Nordosten an u. nahm Aleksin. Vor rechtem Fluegel u. Mitte **4 Armee** Spaehtrupptaetigkeit u. Stoerungsfeuer. **XIII AK** unterstuetzte mit Teilen der **52 ID** den

³⁷⁵ **Note:** 17. PD had been shifted from 47 to 24 PzK.

Angriff des **XXXXIII AK** u. bildete Brueckenkopf ueber die Oka 7 km noerdl. Aleksin. . . (KTB OKW, Bd. I, 783-84)

- **29.11.41** [11 PD]: Foto: Angriff der **1/15 PzRgt** – gemeinsam mit den Grenadieren – am **29 Nov 41** auf Alabuschewo (Kampfgruppe Fricke). Damit hatte man sich bis auf ca. **20 Km** der sowj. Hauptstadt genaehert. (G. Schrodek, 11. Pz.-Div., 284)
- **30.11.41**: For status of H.Gr.Mitte (line reached) see, Alfred Philippi, et al., Der Feldzug gegen Sowjetrussland: 1941 bis 1945, pp 91-92)
- **30.11.41**: Reinforcing its assault, Hoepner's **4 PzGr** smashes Rokossovsky's resistance at Solnechnogorsk and Istra and pushes on toward the capital. By **30 Nov 41**, his **2 PD** captures Krasnaia Poliana w/in artillery range of Moscow. German officers claim they can see the spires of the city thru their field glasses. Heavy fighting then ensues from Kriukovo to Dedovsk SE of Istra, as the remainder of Hoepner's **XXXXVI** and **XXXX Mot Corps** and Reinhardt's **V AK** close on Rokossovsky and Lt-Gen L.A. Govorov's [Cdr **5 Army**] defenses NW of Moscow. In an effort to stem the tide, on **30 Nov 41** the Stavka releases its strategic reserve, Kuznetsov's **1 Shock** and **20 Armies**, to Zhukov's Western Front and orders Zhukov to hold the Moscow-Volga Canal. Zhukov immediate inserts the two armies into the breech between **30** and **16 Armies**. He also orders Kuznetsov to throw German forces back across the canal near Iakhroma. **20 Army** is to protect the Krasnaia Poliana sector. (Glantz, Barbarossa, 172)
(Note: For personal accounts involving German units at edge of Moscow see, *inter alia*, H. Haape (**6. ID**); Dr. S.-Kehnert (**11. PD**), etc.)
- **30.11.41** [Suedfluegel]: Bis Ende **Nov 41** hatte sich die Lage folgendermassen entwickelt: Auf dem Suedfluegel hatte die **2 Pz Armee** am **25 Nov 41** den Feind in Stalinogorsk eingeschlossen u. war bis Gonowo – Michailow vorgestossen, waehrend die nach Norden zielende Angriffsspitze (**17 PD**) suedl. Kaschira durch neu auftretenden Feind zum Stehen gebracht wurde. Die Angriffe der Russen, zunehmend auch gegen die Flanke, verstaerkten sich immer mehr, als frische sibirische Truppen herankamen, die die duennen dt. Panzerkraefte in kritische Lagen brachten. Die Einnahme von Tula war immer noch nicht gelungen. . . Der Wunsch der **2 Pz Armee**, dass die **4 Armee** unverzueglich ueber die Oka nach Osten angreifen u. so dem Angriff Guderians Luft machen sollte, war unerfuellbar: sie stand in schwersten Abwehrkaempfen! Die H.Gr. befahl daher am **28 Nov 41** der **2 Pz Armee**, den Angriff nach Norden einzustellen u. zuerst Tula zu nehmen. Der Versuch, durch Bahnsprengungen sich die erkannten Ausladungen des Russen an der Strecke Ryasan – Kolomna vom Hals zu halten bzw. zu verzoegern, war missglueckt. Die **2 Armee** erreichte gegen Monatsende die Gegend ostw. Kursk; auch hier verstaerkte sich der fdl. Druck fuehlbar. (Hofmann, "Schlacht von Moskau," 161-62; also, Guderian, Erinnerungen, 231)
- **30.11-2.12.41** [Guderian]: On **30 Nov 41**, the OKW expressed doubts as to whether my forces were sufficiently concentrated for the attack on Tula. They could only have been strengthened by the withdrawal of troops from **XLVII PzK**, which would have lessened the protection to our flank. In view of the ever-growing threat from the east this seemed to me too dangerous a step to take. . . We set up our advanced HQ at Yasnaya Polyana, the estate of Count Tolstoi, and I visited it on **2 Dec 41**. Yasnaya Polyana was located immediately behind the HQ of **IR „GD**," 4 miles to the south of Tula. (Note: Guderian goes on to explain the steps he took to preserve Tolstoi's estate – its furniture, books, etc. And responds to post-war Soviet claims to the contrary. See, Panzer Leader, 256-57)

- **ca. 30.11.41**: Die operative Schlacht verlor sich immer mehr in taktische Einzelkaempfe³⁷⁶ bei frontalem Abringen. Alle Reserven waren eingesetzt, die H.Gr.Mitte hatte keine Moeglichkeit zu helfen. Von **34** neuen [sowjet.] Divisionen waren allein **21** vor der Front der H.Gr.Mitte aufgetreten. (Hofmann, "Schlacht von Moskau," 162; Bock Tagebuch, 18.11.41)
- **Late Nov 41 [4 Army to join offensive]**: At end of **Nov 41**, w/ the situation equally critical north and south of Moscow, GFM v. Bock decides to unleash **4 Army** for an attack on Moscow directly from the west. He did so, at least in part, because in late **Nov 41** Zhukov had ordered all divisions defending west of Moscow to send one platoon to reinforce Rokossovsky's beleaguered **16 Army**. Driven by a combination of apprehension and confidence that Soviet defenses west of the city had been weakened, Bock believed that the time had come for a decisive assault on Moscow. Hence, he orders Kluge's **4 Army** to strike Soviet defenses south of Zvenigorod and at Naro-Fominsk and to envelop Govorov's **5 Army** and Efremov's **33 Army** by advancing concentrically to Kubinka and Golitsyno. Subsequently, Kluge's forces are to advance into Moscow along the Minsk and Kiev highways. (Glantz, Barbarossa, 174)³⁷⁷
- **Nov-Dec 41 [2 Armee]**: Der **2 Armee** gelang es langsam [i.e., in late **Nov 41**], die stark geschwaechte russ. **13 u. 3 Armee** zurueckzudraengen u. mit ihren Vorausabteilungen bis Efremov, Jeletz u. sogar bis Tim vorzustossen, aber eine Verbindung zur **6 Armee** der H.G.Sued war nicht moeglich. Der von Hitler gewuenschte Vorstoss der **2 Armee** auf Woronesch scheiterte einfach daran, dass die hierfuer noch in Betracht kommende **9 PD**, die in der Gegend von Tim stand, nur noch ueber einen einsatzbereiten Panzer verfuegte. [!] Die **6 Armee** hatte vom **OKH** Befehl erhalten, die **2 Armee** mit „Jagdkommandos“ zu unterstuetzen. Die **6 Armee** war jedoch nicht in der Lage, den starken Gegner mit „Jagdkommandos“ zu beeindrucken. Ein Antreten mit staerkeren Kraefte sei erst moeglich, so hiess es, „wenn die unbedingt noetiger Versorgung sichergestellt ist.“ An eine Unterstuetzung der **2 Armee** durch die **6 Armee** war also nicht zu denken, u. somit ein Schliessen der Luecke zwischen beiden Armeen nicht moeglich. Der Widerstand der russ. Truppen vor der **2 Armee** verstaerkte sich in einem solchen Umfang, dass General Schmidt am **1 Dec 41** in einer Beurteilung der Lage der H.Gr.Mitte schrieb:
- Die Lage ist im Armeebereich so, dass auch der Schaden, den wir der russ. Kampfkraft noch zufuegen koennen, den Einsatz nicht mehr lohnt. . . Es sind jetzt nur noch Kaempfe vertretbar, welche dem Schaffen einer guenstigen Winter-Sicherungslinie dienen. gez. Schmidt.
- Die **2 Armee** wurde von GFM v. Bock daher angewiesen, nicht weiter vorzugehen, mit dem rechten Fluegel bei Tim stehen zu bleiben u. nur Aufklaerung nach Woronesch voranzutreiben. (Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam, 134)
- **Nov-Dec 41 [Logistics]**: Der taegliche Bedarf der H.Gr.Mitte belief sich auf **26** Versorgungszuege, von denen aber in dieser spannungsgeladenen Zeit nur **8 – 10** ankamen. Denn die an sich nur geringe Leistungsfahigkeit der Bahnen war durch Zerstoeungen der Bahnen, Partisanen u. durch Ausfaelle der Lokomotiven infolge Kaelteschaden noch weiter gesunken.

³⁷⁶ **Note:** This is vital point: By end of **Nov 41**, the German advance no longer had any higher operational purpose.

³⁷⁷ **Note:** For details of this operation see, Seaton, Battle for Moscow, pp 165-66.

Die grossen Entfernungen von den Ausladebahnhöfen zur Truppe mussten mit den schwer dezimierten Versorgungskolonnen, oft behelfsmaessig mittels Schlittenkolonnen ueberbrueckt werden. Die Aushilfe mit Luftversorgung war nur ein Tropfen auf den heissen Stein. Die Versorgung war in eine schwere Krise geraten. . . (Hofmann, Schlacht von Moskau, 167)

- **Nov-Dec 41** [Intensity of combat]: Panzer thrusts were in reality probing raids. Progress was characterized by a series of short, confused, hotly contested meeting engagements w/ the enemy. Both protagonists had scant knowledge of the overall situation. . . These skirmishes fought in the wooded areas on the outskirts of Moscow were conducted w/ pitiless ferocity. . . Russian resistance in German eyes alternated between the fanatical and the bizarre. An infantry officer w/ **7 PD**, breaking into fortified villages near the Llama River, described „resistance of such bitter intensity, it can only be seriously comprehended by those who had been through it themselves.” During these **3 PzGr** battles in third week of **Nov 41**, „Red Army soldiers *continued to shoot from blazing houses even when their clothes were on fire*.” Such intense fighting was costing the Germans their best NCOs, the very men who led from the front in order to keep the lesser-motivated going. . . (For details, R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands, 205-06)
- **Nov-Dec 41** [AGC lack of leadership]: One of the more remarkable aspects of the loss of German initiative in front of Moscow and the retreat was the leaderless state in which AGC found itself during the months of **Nov-Dec 41**. It was “almost entirely w/o purposefull direction.” Von Brauchitsch had long since avoided responsibility, since he knew that anything he ordered would probably be countermanded by the dictator, and this gave rise to a paralysis of will w/in OKH, a paralysis which spread to v. Bock. Other than by urging on his formations, v. Bock had exercised little personal control over the final offensive in late **Nov 41**; and had been unable to compel v. Kluge to get forward. Von Kluge had eventually called off his own belated, almost half-hearted, three-day attack, and he did this on his own initiative. Hoepner and Guderian, on the outer flanks, had followed his lead. It was only at Hoepner’s suggestion that **3** and **4 PzGr** made their tactical withdrawals north of Moscow; w/o his initiative, they would have been left where they were by the High Command. Near Tula, Guderian was already giving ground of his own volition. All this time GFM v. Bock remained passive awaiting a lead from the Fuehrer. (A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow, 208-09)
- **Dec 41**: The German army’s meagre winter supplies are still bottled up by the chaotic railroad system at Minsk and Smolensk far to the rear. German locomotives are not only the wrong gauge, but their external “gossamer” of plumbing and pipework made them easy prey for the sub-zero temperatures. The retreating Russians had methodically wrecked the water towers, bridges, and railroad installations as well as the rolling stock. Instead of **17** supply trains a day, each army on the Leningrad front was lucky to get one (**1**). Instead of **18**, Guderian’s **2 Pz Army** was getting only three (**3**). It became apparent that the German railroads “had unloaded their most infuriatingly feckless and inept staff members onto the Polish and Russian networks.” (Irving, Hitler’s War, 347)³⁷⁸

³⁷⁸ **Note:** “When at last winter clothing did reach the fighting troops, it was useless against the Russian winter. Many weeks earlier Brauchitsch had paraded before Hitler a dozen soldiers outfitted w/ the army’s special new winter gear. Only now did Hitler learn that those dozen outfits were all the army had. The blame for this fraud lay squarely on the General Staff.” (348)

- **Dec 41** [GFM Keitel]: In first days of **Dec 41**, even Keitel “had enough sense” to see that a general withdrawal around Moscow was necessary to avert disaster. But when he gets up enough courage to say so to Hitler the latter turns on him and gives him a tongue-lashing, shouting that he is a “blockhead.” Jodl finds the unhappy **OKW** chief a little later sitting at a desk writing out his resignation, a revolver at one side. Jodl quietly removes the wpn and persuades Keitel – apparently w/o too much difficulty – to stay on and to continue to swallow the Fuehrer’s insults. (*Shirer, Rise and Fall*, 866; also, *Goerlitz, History of the German General Staff*, 403)
- **Dec 41**: At beginning of month, **6 PD** stood but **14** km from Moscow and **24** km from the Kremlin. (*Newton, Panzer Ops Raus*, 90)
- **Dec 41**: At beginning of month, **78 ID** had reached position **38** km west of Moskau, having marched some **2000** km since the beginning of Operation “Barbarossa.” (*F. Vetter, 78. Inf.-u. Sturm-Div.*, 58-61)
- **Dec 41**: In einem KTB heisst es: „Morgens **32** Grad Kaelte. Panzertuerme eingefroren. Erfrierungsschaeden am Mann. Artillerie schiesst nicht mehr regelmaessig, da Pulver anscheinend anders abbrennt.“ (*Reuth, Hitler*, 546)
- **1.12.41**: [Halder diary]: Army Chief of Staff’s diary over period from **3 Nov** – **9 Dec 41** mirrors decline in moral component of Ostheer’s fighting power. On **3 Nov 41**, Halder had admitted that Army Group South is „pessimistic“ and losing drive, and that „some energetic persuading would be in order to kick them.“ On **22 Nov 41**, he had assessed that the troops on the southern wing and centre of **4 Army** „are finished.“ On **1 Dec 41** he observes: The cdr of **13 PD** „and one of his ablest rgt. cdrs have had complete nervous breakdowns. On **9 Dec 41**, he would comment on Guderian’s „serious breach of confidence“ in the field commands, and that the „commanding general of the **XXVII AK** is said to have failed completely.“ (See, *Halder Tagebuch*)
- **1.12.41**: On evening of **1 Dec 41**, GFM v. Bock,³⁷⁹ now suffering severe stomach cramps, telephones Halder to say that he can no longer “operate” w/ his weakened troops. The General Staff Chief tries to cheer him on: “One must try,” he says, “to bring the enemy down by a last expenditure of force. If that proves impossible then we will have to draw new conclusions.” (*Shirer, Rise and Fall*, 864; *Halder KTB*)
- **1.12.41** [**2 Army**]: The decisions of **2 Army**, to the right of **2 Pz Army**, were to a considerable degree dependent on the left wing of Army Group South – **6 Army** under Reichenau. Because of the need to protect Kursk and to capture Voronezh, the weak **2 Army** could neither provide dependable flank cover for **2 Pz Army** nor close the gap between itself and Army Group South. On **1 Dec 41**, w/ the consent of the army group command, it therefore abandoned all further attacks. The day before, Bock had warned against advancing too far on Guderian’s right flank, where enemy resistance was slight. Thus **2 Army** halted its advance on **1 Dec 41** and began to prepare defensive positions. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 699-700)
- **1.12.41** [**4 Army attacks**]: Clearly reacting to accusations from neighboring armies that he was failing to support them and was preventing a successful attack on Moscow, GFM v. Kluge finally decided to start the attack of the corps on his right wing. Bock agreed and reported

³⁷⁹ **Note:** Check GFM v. Bock’s Tagebuch for first days of **Dec 41** for material (quotes?).

that the enemy was withdrawing forces from the central and southern front of **4 Army**. He believed that the high command attached great importance to the attack, “even if it means risking the last strength of troops completely.” Halder confirmed that “that is also the view of the Army High Command.” With the attack by **4 Army**, Hitler again saw the possibility of encircling large enemy formations near Moscow. This shocked Bock, who, like Guderian and other C-in-Cs, *doubted that the OKH had properly submitted his reports on the condition of his troops to Hitler*. (GSWW, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 700-01; see also, *Bock, Tagebuch*, 1.12.41)

- **1.-2.12.41 [4 Army attacks]**: IAW orders from v. Bock, Kluge attacks on **1 Dec 41**. For the attack he has formed three [3] shock groups: **267 ID** southwest of Zvenigorod; **258** and **292 ID** and **3 ID (mot)** north of Naro-Fominsk; and the **183 ID** and **20 PD** and one rgt of **15 ID** south of Naro-Fominsk. All three groups attack toward Golitsyno on **1 Dec 41**, but the attack has only limited armored support and runs directly into a carefully planned Soviet AT defensive region. The **5 Army** repels thrust of **267 ID** and drives it back to its starting positions. To the south, the systematic defense by Col. V.I. Polosukhin’s **1 Gds Mot RD** at Naro-Fominsk becomes a legend of tenacity. The **258 ID** and **3 ID (mot)** manage to penetrate **4-9 km** north and south of the **1 Gds Mot RD** defenses at Naro-Fominsk and reach positions just south of Golitsyno. This prompts v. Bock to inform his army cdrs on **2 Dec 41** that the enemy is close to breaking. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 175-76; for more accounts of Kluge’s attack see, **III:459-62**)
- **1.-2.12.41**: Motorized patrol from **62. Pz.-Pi.-Btl.** slipped unobserved thru a gap in Rokossovsky’s line; around dawn the next day (**2.12.41**) the patrol reached the train station in the village of Khimki, only **19 km** from the Kremlin. (For more great details see, *Robert Forczyk, Moscow 1941*, 82)
- **1.-3.12.41**: GFM v. Kluge (**4. AOK**) finally joins attack.
 Kluge’s unwillingness to join attack (despite pleas of Guderian/Hoepner) an enigma
 Advances finally in sector of Naro-Fominsk
 Attack fails after initial gains; Kluge withdraws to jump-off positions (**3.12.41**)
- **1.-4.12.41 [Kluge’s attack]**: Between **05.00** and **09.00** on **1 Dec 41**, preceded by a surprise artillery barrage and air attack, and at the centre of the Soviet defense covering Moscow in the area of **33 Army**, GFM v. Kluge threw **XX AK** into one final, furious and dangerous bid to seize the shortest route to the Soviet capital, along the Minsk-Moscow highway. . . [Kluge’s attack has some initial success; Zhukov, however, is prepared and launches swift counterthrust.] In a deep and terrible freeze-up, w/ ***German soldiers screaming in the snow that they could not go on***, Yefremov attacked on **2 Dec 41** in the Yushkovo – Burtsevo area, in whose villages the Soviet **T-34s** hunted and themselves were hunted by German SP guns. By the evening of **4 Dec 41**, w/ German units falling back or being trapped by raiding Soviet groups, the situation was practically restored to what it had been four [4] days ago; **32 RD** was in complete possession of Akulovo, **1 Gds Mot RD** was pushing the Germans back across the Nara. The last German bid for Moscow had failed. (*J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 266-67)
- **2.12.41 [4 Army]**: Die **4 Armee** ist am **1 Dez 41** auch mit **LVII** u. **XX AK** planmaessig zum Angriff in NO Richtung auf Moskau angetreten u. hat Gelaendegewinn bis zu **8 km** erzielt. Die **258 ID** hat mit Unterstuetzung von **2 Stug-Bttr.** Kutmjenowa (**16 km** Bodengewinn) genommen. (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 64)

- **2.12.41** [Tula]: Guderian's panzer army, now blocked from advancing on Moscow proper by a blizzard and Belov's cavalry corps, is still trying to find a way to encircle **50 Army** at Tula. To do so, Guderian combines all of his army's remaining armor into two small shock groups [Kampfgruppen?]³⁸⁰ under **XXIV Mot Corps** control. The two shock groups, formed from **3** and **4 PD** and **IR "GD,"** are to attack westward north of Tula to sever the Moscow-Tula road. There, they are to link up w/ a third shock group formed from **XXXXIII AK's 31** and **296 ID**, which are to attack eastward NW of the city. Together, these three groups are to encircle **50 Army** at Tula. Attacking early on **2 Dec 41**, the panzer shock groups manage to cut the vital road, but then encounter heavy counterattacks by **112 Tank Div** and **340 RD**, the **31 Cav Div** and several rifle and tank rgts. At the same time, the **194** and **258 RDs** repel the German **31 ID** attack, bringing the entire venture to an abrupt end and forcing Guderian to withdraw his exhausted forces and go over to the defense. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 176-77)

- **2.-3.12.41**: On [these two days] **6 PD** of **3 PzGr** reported a total of **80** "cases of fainting owing to exhaustion." . . . On **2 Dec 41**, Chales de Beaulieu, Chief of **4 PzGr** reported to Army Group Ctr: "**10 PD** under a great strain. The division is no longer fit for attack." He wrote of the other forces of the panzer group: "The men are so torpid that nothing can be done w/ them; this is mainly due to the great cold, bad accommodation and continuous attacks." (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 236, f.n. 95/97; (*KTb H.Gr.Mitte*, 2 Dec 41; see also, *H. Baumann, 35. Inf.-Div.*, 120)

- **2.-3.12.41**: Bock's optimism [about start of Kluge's attack on **1 Dec 41**] is unwarranted. A scratch force consisting of **18 Rifle Bde**, **5** and **20 Tank Bdes**, and the **23** and **24 Ski Btns** from Efremov's **33 Army** strike the penetrating German force in the flanks, nearly encircling it near Aprelevka. The next day [**3 Dec 41**], **258 ID** and **3 ID (mot)** manage to fight their way back to **4 Army** lines along the River Nara, ending Kluge's gambit. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 176)

- **3.12.41**: The **1 PD** captures Bely-Rast w/ a tank/infantry attack. They are **32 km** from the Kremlin. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 209; *W. Paul, Brennpunkt. Geschichte der 6. PD*, 170-71)

- **3.12.41**:³⁸¹ **1 PD** has advanced **5 km** east of Bely-Rast, placing it **32 km** north of Moscow. Below them, the bulge created by **2 PD** and **23 ID** was creeping south-eastward toward the Moscow suburbs. The **SS „DR,"** w/ its **4 SS Rgt „Der Fuehrer,"** was further south of the Istra-Moscow road and had reached the western outskirts of Lenino, **17 km** from Moscow. Russian Workers' Militia volunteers are thrown against them. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 211; *O. Weidinger, Comrades to the End*, 100)

- **3.12.41**: The combat diary of **87 ID** reports its **173 IR** was manning positions in temperatures of **-30 C** on **3 Dec 41** on the edge of the forest of Masslovo, at the confluence of the Istra and Moskva rivers. They were „no more than **20 km** from the outskirts of Moscow, whose towers are already in sight." About the same time, **23 ID** sought, w/ steadily declining strength, to continue its advance to the Moscow-Volga Canal. They labored forward in more than knee-deep snow, **35 km** from Moscow. (*R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 213; *W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 210; *Nayhauss, Zwischen Gehorsam u. Gewissen*, 192, 201-02)

³⁸⁰ **Note:** Because David Glantz is a Russian language specialist – and covers the war mainly from the Soviet side – I think he prefers the term "shock groups." The German term would of course be "Kampfgruppen."

³⁸¹ **Note:** Confirm date of **3.12.41**.

- **3.12.41: 2 Pz Armee** gewann mit **LIII AK** gegen schwächeren Feind. . . nach Norden gut Boden. **XXIV AK** erreichte im Angriff nach Westen mit rechtem Flügel die Strasse Serpuchow – Tula 27 km nördl. Tula. Die Mitte des Korps musste vor fdl. Gegenangriffen mit Panzern vorübergehend zur Abwehr übergehen. . . **4 Armee: LVII u. XX AK** konnten die Angriffserfolge der Vortage infolge der heftigen Gegenangriffe des Feindes (insbesondere gegen **15 ID**, **20 PD** u. **3 ID (mot)**) nicht erweitern. Wegen des zunehmenden Feinddruckes u. der absinkenden Gefechts-stärken (**1 Rgt der 15 ID** verlor am **3.12.41** **8** Komp.-Chefs u. **160** Mann) wurde die Zurücknahme aller Teile auf das Westufer der Nara befohlen. . . Ebenso musste der Befehl zur Zurücknahme der beiden Flügel des **VII AK** hinter die Nara gegeben werden. . . (KTB OKW, Bd. I, 790-91)

- **3.-5.12.41 [Guderian]:** The **XXIV PzK** tried to complete the encirclement of Tula, but only managed to cut rail and road connections to Moscow by **3 Dec 41**. Guderian personally marched with the “*Landsers*” of **XLIII AK** in order to share the hardships of his troops. The enemy only got stronger. At **0140** hours on **3 Dec 41**, Army Group Center ordered its units to assume the defensive. The next day, **OKH** joined **2 Army** and **2 Pz Army** together as Armeegruppe Guderian.³⁸² (*Kirchubel, Draft*, 23-24)

- **3.-5.12.41:** All of Bock’s attacks are now floundering. Hoepner, trying in vain to pry the **16** and **20 Armies** from their defenses NW of Moscow, reports that his panzer group’s strength is “*in the main exhausted*.” On his left flank, Reinhardt’s **3 PzGr** is now struggling against **1 Shock Army** at Iakhroma, slowing giving ground SW of the town. By early on **5 Dec 41**, the advance of both tank groups “inexorably and finally ground to a halt” astride the Leningrad, Piatitskoe and Volokolamsk roads, **15-28 km (9-14 miles)** from Moscow’s main defense lines. The incredibly cold weather, which sets new records, does not help matters. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 176)

- **4.12.41:** Während von Bock in den ersten Dezembertagen die Lage immer pessimistischer beurteilte, herrschte im **OKH** bei Halder u. von Brauchitsch noch keineswegs Alarmstimmung. Doch hätte die Entwicklung im Bereich der H.Gr.Sued [i.e., Räumung von Rostov] Anlass zum Umdenken gegeben. . . Nun zeigte sich Halder auch gegenüber den enormen Schwierigkeiten von Bocks aufgeschlossener u. erteilte ihm – viel zu spät – am **4 Dez 41** die Freiheit, den Angriff einzustellen. Doch die Gefahr einer sowj. Gegenoffensive erfasst er nicht, u. er zieht auch nicht den Übergang zur Abwehr in verkürzten Stabsabschnitten in Erwägung. (*H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 207)

- **4.12.41 [Guderian]:** Early on **4 Dec 41** I drove to the HQ of the **31 ID** and thence to its **IR 17** and to that regiment’s III (Jaeger) Btn; this was my old Goslar Jaeger unit, where I had started my military career and whose 11th Coy I had commanded in **1920-22**. In lengthy conversation w/ the coy cdrs I raised the serious question of whether the troops still possessed enough offensive strength for the task that lay ahead of them. The officers did not attempt to hide their anxieties, but in answer to my question whether the troops could attack successfully they replied that they could. “We can knock the enemy out of his positions once more.” . . . The impressions I gained from this btn. decided me to try the attack once again. The drive back was endless and, on account of the drifting snow and icy inclines, dangerous as well. Finally, my armored command tank drove into an abyss, one of those well-known chasms

³⁸² Erickson, *ibid*, p. 260; Glantz, *ibid*, p. 172; Haywood, *ibid*, p. 167; Haupt, Center, p. 104; Neumann, *ibid*, pp. 379, 383; Reinhardt, *ibid*, pp. 224-25; Richter, *ibid*, p. 209.

that the autumn rains cut deep into the clay soil. There was no hope of extricating the vehicle in the darkness. Luckily, on the far side of the gorge I came upon a signals truck from my HQ which took me to Yasnaya Polyana, where I arrived during the course of the night. (Panzer Leader, 257-58)

- **4.12.41**: Die Schlacht um Moskau steht auf dem Hoehepunkt. Staerkste beiderseitige Verluste. *Es handelt sich darum, wer laenger die gegenseitige Belastung aushaelt.* Angriff der . . . **4. Armee** nicht durchgeschlagen. Die weit durchgebrochenen InfDiv mussten nach Verlusten bis zu 50% (1 Rgt **15. ID** verlor am **3.12.[41]** **8** KompChefs u. **160** Mann) wieder hinter die Nawra zurueckgenommen werden. „Vereinzelt zeigt die Infanterie bei starkem Mangel an Unterfuehrern keine Haerte u. Widerstandskraft mehr.“ (*Tagebuch Thilo*)
- **4.12.41** [Soviet losses]: Since the start of Operation “*Taifun*,” the Soviet Western Front has suffered **254,000** casualties, while the Reserve Front has lost **127,000** and the Bryansk Front **103,000** men. In its brief period of operations to date, the Kalinin Front has lost **28,000** killed and missing and **21,000** wounded. The Soviets also lost **2785** tanks, **3800** artillery pieces and **290** acft. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 179; also, *Kirosheev, Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses*, Table 75)
- **4.12.41**: . . . Gefangene u. Beute: **4 Pz Gr** hat seit dem erneuten Antreten auf Moskau in der Zeit vom **16.11** – **3.12.41** einschl. vernichtet bzw. erbeutet: **449** Panzer, **264** Geschuetze aller Art u. **21 860** Gefangene gemacht. (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 792-93)
- **4.12.41** [**1. PD**]: Am Vormittag des **4 Dez 41** griff der Feind 7 mal die Stellungen der **1 PD** in starken Kolonnen u. mit Pz.-Unterstuetzung an. Mehrere Panzer erledigt. Nach dem Angriff etwa 1000 Tote vor der Front. . . (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 68)
- **4.12.41**: Die **2 Armee** (v. Weichs) erobert Jelez (suedoestl. Orel). (*A. Hillgruber, Chronik*, in: *OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 1239)
- **ca. 4.12.41**: Elements of **106 ID** manage to make it as far east as Lunewo, einem kleinen Oertschen, 17 km vor Moskau. It’s as far as they would go. Soviets counterattack. “Lunewo wurde uns **4** Tage zur Hoelle. Fast eingeschlossen von einer erdrueckenden Uebermacht . . . Nur etwas ueber **100** Mann waren wir noch, doch Lunewo wurde gehalten. . . *Die heldische Kraft des Rgmts. war noch nicht gebrochen, die Elemente nur geboten Halt!* (Note: This report demonstrates German contemporary view, that weather played decisive role in defeat at Moscow.) (*Bericht Ringenberg*, 240 IR/106. ID)
- **4.-5.12.41** [Guderian / Final attack of **31. ID**]: For a detailed and graphic account of final push by this division’s **IR 17** – in effort to link up w/ **4. PD** and close ring around Tula – see, *Dr. E. Bunke, 31 ID, Das Osten blieb unser Schicksal*, 487-93)³⁸³ He writes, *inter alia*: “Das Korps [XXXXIII AK] hatte den Auftrag, mit rechtem Fluegel Richtung Kostrowa anzugreifen u. dort Verbindung mit **PzBde Eberbach** herzustellen. Die westl. Tula nach Norden vorstossende **296 ID** sollte die offene Flanke des Korps durch ihren Vorstoss decken u. den Kessel von Westen schliessen. . . Als in der Nacht von **5./6.12.41**³⁸⁴ die **31 ID** antrat, brachte der aufdaemmernde Tag unerhoerten Frost- minus 35 Grad. Menschen u. Waffen

³⁸³ Note: Dr Bunke: „Jeder Vergleich hinkt, doch wir haben spaeter diese wichtige Schlacht um Tula u. Moskau mit der Marneschlacht im ersten Weltkrieg **1914** verglichen. Die erste Schlacht **1914** wurde zu frueh abgebrochen u. die zweite **1941** vor Moskau u. Tula wurde zu spaet abgebrochen.” (490)

³⁸⁴ Note: **5-6 Dec 41** or was it **4-5 Dec 41**? Guderian says attack took place on **5 Dec 41**. See below.

wurden dadurch in ihrem Einsatz auf das Allerschwerste beeinträchtigt.³⁸⁵ . . . Die bei Kostrowa **10** Kilometer vor unseren Angriffsspitzen kämpfenden **4 PD** musste ihre Panzer u. Fahrzeuge verlassen, weil sie nicht mehr betriebsbereit waren. Das Öl in den Motoren war eingedickt, der Dieselmotortreibstoff war geklumpt, die Maschinen liefen nicht mehr. Das Gewehröl in den MGs u. Kanonen erfror. Die Verschüsse liessen sich nicht mehr betätigen. . . Es gelang zwar der tapferen **131 ID** die bedeutende Stadt Alekssin einzunehmen u. zu halten. Es gelang trotzdem auch dem tapferen **IR 82** unter Oberst Hossbach mit seiner Angriffsspitze bis auf **8** Kilometer an Kostrowa heranzukommen, doch einen Gefechtslärm aus Kostrowa hörten sie nicht mehr. Die Reste der **4 PD** war schon im Rückzug begriffen. Dieser letzte Angriff nach Osten der **31 ID** in eisiger Kälte bei **40** Grad unter Null u. hohen Schneeverwehungen war *eine einzige Traagede*.

- **4.-5.12.41:** All leading German commanders suspend attacks.
Casualties in Phase II (**IV:248**)
Condition of forces (no. of tanks remaining, combat troops, etc.)
- **5.12.41:** GFM v. Bock, at urging of the armies, had ordered the preparation of a line in the rear on **5 Dec 41**. **4 Army** had already constructed a winter position before the second phase of Operation „Taifun“ and, to judge by reproaches from its neighboring units and from Halder, was reluctant to leave it. Most of the army group, however, had neither the forces nor the material to build winter positions capable of withstanding enemy counter-thrusts, let alone a large-scale attack. GFM v. Bock thus concluded that a withdrawal over a large area was not possible. There was thus no alternative to standing fast. But this was feasible only if replacements were provided immediately. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 707-08; also, *Bock, Tagebuch*, 5.-6.12.41)
- **5.12.41:** The final offensive on Moscow, begun on **15 Nov 41**, has come to a complete halt. Although v. Bock's AGC has advanced **80-110 km** (**48-66** miles) in **20** days, and has reached the very threshold of the Soviet capital, its strength has ebbed to dangerously low levels.³⁸⁶ (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 177)
- **5.12.41 [1. PD]:** . . . Nach Herankommen des **41 PzK** griff die Division am **1 Dez 41** Richtung S/SO dann gegen den Kanalübergang bei Lobnja an. Tle. **IR 67** u. **AA 23** freigekehrt (?), gewann sie über Nikolskoje - Bely Rast u. stand am **5 Dez 41** nachts mit verst. **K 1** bei Kusjaevo **1** km vor den Kanalübergängen – ca. **30 km** nördl. vom Kreml. . . (*R. Stoves*, 1. Pz.-Div., 110)
- **5.12.41:** For Marschleistungen of AGC from mid-Nov to **5 Dec 41** see, FMS **P-190**, in: **VI:116**)

³⁸⁵ **Note:** Die wiederholten Angriffe des Jägerbtlns. [der Goslarer Jäger vom **IR 17**] scheiterten am starken Widerstand. . . Die angreifenden Soldaten mussten auf freier Ebene im Schnee sich einbuddeln u. dort ausharren. Sie waren bei der grimmigen Kälte ausserstande, ihre Gewehre mit den klammen Fingern zu bedienen. Auch die MGs versagten völlig, weil durch die Kälte das Öl in den Schloßern gefror. Das Artilleriefeuer lag wegen der grossen Kälte ebenfalls ungenau, weil die Richteinrichtungen bei dieser Kälte anders funktionierten. Fortwährend kamen Verwundete u. Soldaten mit Erfrierungen zurück. (491-93)

³⁸⁶ **Note:** On **30 Nov 41**, Stabschef Halder had noted in his diary that “the eastern army has a shortage of **340 000** men, i.e., **50** percent of the combat strength of the infantry. Company combat strength is **50** to **60** men.” (See, Halder KTB)

- **5.12.41**: For the frontline positions on outskirts of Moscow reached by elements of the **2. PD, 106. ID, 35. ID, SS "DR," 87. ID, 252. ID**, Heerespionier-Btl. **62**, see, *W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 202-10) They reached areas less than **20 km** from Moscow. (Note: See p 227 for report of SS "DR:" "Eine vorgezogene **10-cm-Kanonen-Batterie** schiesst Stoerungsfeuer in die Stadt hinein.")
- **5.12.41 [260. ID]**: Auch die Divisionen, die weit ab die Flanken der auf Moskau vorge-
drungenen Verbaende sichern mussten, zahlten ihre Einsaetze mit schweren Verlusten. So
meldete die **260. ID** allein in der Zeit zwischen dem **16. Okt – 30. Nov 41** den Ausfall von
334 Gefallenen, **1.181** Verwundeten, **44** Vermissten u. **811** Erfrierungen. Die Staerke der
einzelnen Kompanien an diesem **5.12.41** . . . beliefen sich im Durchschnitt auf einen Offizier,
11 Uffz. u. **56** Mannschaften. (*W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 227)
- **5.-6.12.41 [Guderian]**: On **5 Dec 41**, **XLIII AK** attempted to attack but could make no progress
beyond certain initial successes by **31 ID**. . . The threat to our flanks and rear in the area north
of Tula, together w/ the fact that **XXIV PzK** had been almost immobilized by the frost, which
was now – **68** degrees [?!], raised the question of whether it would be right to continue the
attack. It could only be so if **4 Army** were attacking at the same time – and successfully.
But unfortunately this was not the case. . . On account of the threats to our flanks and rear
and of the immobility of our troops due to the abnormal cold, I made the decision during
the night of **5-6 Dec 41** to break off this unsupported attack, and to withdraw my foremost
units into defensive positions along the general line Upper Don – Shat – Upa. (*Panzer Leader*,
258-59)

h) *Role of air power – Nov/Dec 41*

- For role of *Luftwaffe* see, *inter alia*, Notebook #I, "*Luftwaffe, Chronology of Events*."
(For example of difficulties now faced by *Luftwaffe* due to weather, declining strength, etc.
see, report of Major Hozzel (**St.G. 2**) covering period **30.10.-30.11.41** in: *W. Haupt, Sturm
auf Moskau*, 76-77)
- Diary of **AOK 9** corroborates other sources, which record a major increase in activity of Red
Air Force in fall of **1941** (see, **14.11.41**). In fact, in **Nov-Dec 41**, the Army faced a growing
enemy superiority in the air (Kalinin sector, etc.) due to lack of *Luftwaffe* fighter protection.
Entry for **17.11.41** indicates what the Army thought of the recon reports of **8. Fl.Korps**:
They were not always completely reliable! (See my, Notebook #7)
- **Mid-Nov 41**: Masse der **Luftflotte 2** wurde ploetzlich von der Ostfront abberufen u. nach
Italien, Sizilien u. Nordafrika befohlen. . . GFM Kesselring ging selbst mit seinem Luft-
flottenkommando u. dem gesamten **II. Fliegerkorps** nach Italien. (See, *W. Haupt, Sturm auf
Moskau*, 77)
- Die **Luftflotte 2** hatte vom **22.6.-30.11.41** abgeschossen bzw. vernichtet: **6.670** Flugzeuge,
1.900 Panzer, **26.000** andere Fahrzeuge u. **2.800** Eisenbahnzuege – u. trotzdem wurde die
sowj. *Luftwaffe* immer staerker u. staerker. Das **VIII Fliegerkorps** hatte im **Dez 41** noch zur
Verfuegung . . . (Details see, *Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 82)
- **24.11.41**: Die STAVKA setzte alle erreichbaren Kampffliegergeschwader ein, denen sich kaum
mehr ein dt. Jagdflugzeug entgegenstellte. Das KTB der **2. Pz Armee** meldete deshalb [an
diesem Tag] u.a.: "Starke feindl. Lufttaetigkeit. Bomben- u. Tieffliegerangriffe, die zu

Verlusten fuehren. Die Truppe bedauert *das Fehlen der eigenen Flieger*.“ (W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau, 199)

- For Soviet VVS see, Hardesty, v., Red Phoenix: The Rise of Soviet Air Power, 1941-1945; also, Kozhevnikov, M.N., The Command and Staff of the Soviet Army Air Force in the Great Patriotic War 1941-45, etc.)

(**Note:** Key details from these and other sources – total sorties flown, types of missions, etc. – can be found in my “*Biblio* file.”)

- VVS in Battle of Moscow; facing critical shortages of day bomber and ground-attack acft, etc. (64 ff.); g) Soviet sources candidly record “serious shortcomings” of VVS, particularly in coordinating air/ground actions (68); h) outlines problems created by freezing weather for GAF operations (70-71); i) **15.11.-5.12.41:** VVS, says Soviet sources, flew **15,840** sorties [in Moscow sector?] vs. **3500** GAF sorties; also claim Luftwaffe lost **1400** acft in Moscow sector during this time (clearly an exaggeration!) (71) (*Hardesty, Red Phoenix*)
- During the defense of Moscow (**Oct-Dec 41**) the VVS logged some **51,300** sorties of all types (*Ray Wagner* (ed.), The Soviet Air Force in World War II, p 79)
(**86%** of these sorties were CAS. See, *Kenneth R. Whiting, “Soviet Air Power in World War II,”* in: Air Power and Warfare. The Proceedings of the 8th Military History Symposium United States Air Force Academy 18-20 October 1978.)
- **28.11.41:** KTB **OKW** on this day notes animated Soviet air activity virtually all across the extended front of AGC. (See, KTB, Bd. I, 781-82; **III:443**)
- **ca. 30.11.41:** Ab Ende **Nov 41** konnten dann [i.e., after most of **Luftflotte II** shifted from front of Hr.Gr.Mitte to Italy] die sowjet. Luftstreitkraefte erstmals die Luftueberlegenheit im Operationsraum um Moskau erringen. (*Ueberschaer, Scheitern des Unternehmens „Barbarossa*,” 160)
- **Nov-Dec 41:** Gen.Lt. Baron v. Richthofen assumed command of AGC’s air support when GFM Kesselring was withdrawn, along with all [all?] his **Luftflotte 2** units, to Italy, to shore up the Axis effort in North Africa and the Mediterannean. Von Richthofen’s CP moved from Smolensk and was eventually established at Jemelyanovo, **125** km west of Moscow. Resupply became so critical that long-distance communication cable was flown forward by air transport. Aircraft fuel, bombs and ammunition requirements were not being met. Additional Junkers **Ju 52** transports were brought in from Norway to fly air supply sorties in support of the army group.

Winter weather applied its own peculiar attrition rate thru adverse conditions and accidents, which resulted in a decline in the sortie rate. The **2 StG** reported in **Nov 41**: „Winter weather; sleet; only dive-bombers fly at **100m** altitudes against a Sovet tank counter-attack into the flank of **110 ID**.“ On **7 Nov 41**, the temperature fell below **-20** and the **Ju 87** Stuka engines failed to start. Major Hozzel, the Geschwader cdr, wrote in his diary that „in spite of the efforts of all personnel, we can only sortie on a few days.“ As a result, only one [**1**] dive-bombing attack was mounted on **13 Nov 41**, another on **18 Nov 41** and some others on the **26th** and **28th**, when four [**4**] sorties were flown. At the end of the month, another sortie³⁸⁷ was mounted in support of **4 PzGr** about **20km** NW of the outskirts of Moscow. Support

³⁸⁷ **Note:** By “sortie,” I doubt he means only a *single acft* was airborne. I assume by “sortie” Kershaw means “mission.” Check W. Haupt.

deteriorated almost completely at the beginning of **Dec 41**, when temperatures plummeted to **-30**. ObLt. Hans Rudel, a Stuka pilot, declared, „a sudden cold snap of **-40** freezes the normal lubricating oil. Every [MG] jams. He ruefully commented: „The battle w/ the cold is tougher than the battle w/ the enemy.“ (R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands, 202; also, W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau, 75-77; H. Rudel, Stuka Pilot, 48; see also, Hozzel study, Richthofen diary, etc.)

- **2.12.41: Air attacks increased.** On **2 Dec 41**, the **7 PD** staff ominously reported: „**16** air attacks today!“ (R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands, 210-11; Manteuffel, 7. Panzer-Division, 240-42)

i) *Status of Army Group Center & entire Ostfront*

- **Note:** Erst diese letzten Angriffskämpfe [i.e., ab **15 Nov 41**] unter schwierigsten winterlichen Verhältnissen haben den deutschen Kämpfer ins freie Gelaende gezwungen,³⁸⁸ meist einem abwehrbereiten Gegner gegenüber. . . Nur die **4 Armee** verfügte z.T. ueber [Stellungen]; alle anderen Fronten waren aus der Vorwaerts- in die Rueckwaertsbewegung uebergangen u. in ihr bislang verblieben. . . (*de Beaulieu, „Sturm auf Moskau,“* Teil II, 432-33)
- **24.11.41:** Der Befehlshaber des Ersatzheeres u. Chef der Heeresruestung, Generaloberst Fromm, informierte Halder schon am **24.11.41** ueber die katastrophale Verschlechterung der ruestungswirtschaftlichen Lage. Fromm dachte dabei an „Friedensnotwendigkeiten.“ (*Ueberschaer, Scheitern des Unternehmens „Barbarossa,“* 160)
- **27.11.41:** Erklärte der Generalquartiermeister, General Wagner, gegenüber Halder: „Wir sind am Ende unserer personellen u. materiellen Kraft.“ (*Ueberschaer, Scheitern des Unternehmens „Barbarossa,“* 160)
- **28.-29.11.41:** Even an ardent Nazi such as Fritz Todt, Reich Minister for Armaments, was under no illusions about Germany's situation. In **Nov 41**, Todt dispatched Walter Rohland (head of the Main Committee for tank production) and a team of armaments industrialists to the very front of the German advance, to visit General Guderian at his HQ in Orel.³⁸⁹ They returned *deeply depressed*. For leading representatives of German industrialism, the picture presented by the *Ostheer* in **Nov 41** was *deeply shocking* ... Upon his return, Rohland (and others) confronted Todt in a conference on **28.11.41** which ended, according to Rohland, w/ the conclusion that „the war against Russia cannot be won!“ The next day, Todt and Rohland met w/ Hitler at Fuehrer HQ in the presence of Brauchitsch. Rohland recounted his experiences in Russia and combined them w/ his intimate knowledge of British and American industry to *paint an apocalyptic picture*. Once the USA entered the conflict, there would be no way of winning the war. Todt then drove the point home by insisting: „This war can no longer be won by mil. means.“ Hitler listened calmly before asking „How then shall I end this war?“ To which Todt replied w/ the obvious conclusion: „It can only be ended politically.“ (*Tooze, Wages of Destruction*, 507)

³⁸⁸ **Note:** This is a very good point – if accurate. And surely from end of first phase of “Taifun” to start of second phase, AGC would have had time to begin to “dig in.”

³⁸⁹ **Note:** This mission, I believe, was in response to the setbacks suffered in early **Oct 41** at Mtsensk, when **4. PD** badly bloodied by well-led Soviet tank unit w/ **T-34s**.

-- **30.11.41:** Army Group Ctr will soon be forced, not least by their own casualties, to go over to the defense. Most of the divisions have now shrunk to half their original strength. From the launch of the attack on **15 Nov 41** [second phase of „Typhoon“] to end of month, AGC has lost **33,295** men; all told, in Operation „Typhoon“ there were **120,996** casualties by end of **Nov 41**. Since **22 Jun 41**, the army group has incurred a total of **350,000** casualties (**14,034** officers / **335,830** NCOs and men) by **30 Nov 41**. This was nearly **50%** of the total losses of the Ostheer, which came to **753,046** men as of **30 Nov. 41**. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 243; 248, f.n. 1/2)

-- **30.11.41 [3 PzGr]:** On this day, Reinhardt's **3 PzGr** still had the following panzer strength:

1 PD: 37 tanks;

6 PD: 4 tanks;

7 PD: 36 tanks;

A total of only **77** tanks, against the **259** they still had on **16 Oct. 41**. (*KTB PzGr3*, quoted in: *K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 236, f.n. 95)

-- **30.11.41:** Total casualties sustained by Ostheer as of **30 Nov 41** = **753,046**. Between **15-30 Nov 41** a further **300** tanks were lost, bringing total number of panzers lost in the east to **3290**. In the same period [**15-30 Nov 41**], **533** more acft were lost, bringing total number of acft lost by the Luftwaffe in the east to **5585**, of which **3189** were completely destroyed. Losses of horses brought the total number of horses unavailable for service to **151,251** (there were **120,494** dead and **30,757** sick horses). Since **11 Nov 41**, the number of vehicles had fallen by a further **12,000**. However, the *psychological repercussions* and the *effects on German morale* were much more serious than losses of materiel. Counter-attacks by the Red Army had already spread panic among the **2 Pz Army** and **4 Army**. The command was forced to recognize that the *troops could not be relied up as before*. (*K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 243; 248-49, f.n. 1, 6-8)

-- Front line (*Lage Ost* map) / Total losses (**I:421**, ff.)

Waehrend nun im Norden der Stellungslinie loser Anschluss zur H.Gr.Nord bestand, klaffte im Sueden eine Luecke von fast **80** km Breite bis zur H.Gr.Sued. Die Armeen der H.Gr.Mitte hatten seit Beginn der Offensive am **2.10.41** bis zum **5.12.41** folgende Wegstrecken im Kampf gegen einen ueberlegenen Gegner u. gegen Schlamm u. eiskaltes Winterwetter zurueckgelegt:

9. Armee = **220** km

4. Armee = **260** km

3. Pz Armee = **490** km

2. Pz Armee = **410** km

4. Pz Armee = **380** km

2. Armee = **350** km

-- Doch die gerade am **5. Dez 41** erreichten Frontlinien der beiden Pz.-Armeen (**3.** u. **4.**) waren ausgesprochen unguenstig. Sie wiesen lange u. ungeschuetzte Flanken auf. (*W. Haupt, Sturm auf Moskau*, 223-24)

-- For status of **10. PD** in **Dec 41**, see letter from divison **Ia** to Major i.G. Claus v. Staufenberg, (dated **4.12.41** & offering real insight into horrific status of divison at that time). Losses due

to combat, frostbite, sickness, etc., from just **Okt - Dec 41** amounted to **4146**. (For details see, *Albert Schick, Die 10. Pz.-Div. 1939-43*, in: Notebook #7)

- Impact of weather on men, vehicles and equipment
Arctic temperatures; weapons malfunction; vehicles fail to start
Men begin to suffer severely from frostbite, sickness, etc.
(Note: These topics examined in more detail below)
- **Dec 41**: [As the temperatures fell to well below freezing] the breechblocks of rifles froze solid;³⁹⁰ oil in the sumps of tanks and trucks had the consistency of tar, and the drag on the dynamos made it impossible to start their engines; battery plates were warped, cylinder blocks were split open, axles refused to turn. GFM v. Bock himself *could rise from his bed for only 3-4 hours a day*. [Accurate?] Less than a month before he had reminded his staff of the Battle of the Marne, which was given up for lost when it might yet have been won. "Both opponents are calling on their last reserves of strength, and the one w/ the most determined will should prevail." Now he had lost heart. On **1 Dec 41** he reported to **OKH**: "... it is only possible to gain local successes." (*Alan Clark, Barbarossa*, 179-82; **VIII:112**)
- **5.12.41**: The entire attack of AGC was now suspended and the army group had to go over to the defense where it was. There was now no getting away from the fact that *neither the army group nor the OKH had made any provision for the eventuality of an unsuccessful attack*. Bock had not even been told how the Army Command intended to proceed. He did not know how the army was to survive the winter "in readiness for defense," whether reserves would be sent to them or whether they would have to withdraw to a shorter line. Still, despite the suspension of operations, the High Command of the army group *did not consider themselves to be in any real danger*, as both they and the **OKH** believed that the enemy "was completely drained and now incapable of mounting a counter-attack." (For final assessment of Russian situation on **4 Dec 41** see, *K. Reinhardt, Moscow – The Turning Point*, 228)³⁹¹
- **ca. 5.12.41**: Gen.Obst. Reinhardt, **PzGr 3**, schätzte den Gefechtswert seiner acht [8] Divisionen auf nur noch 7 Kompanien u. General Guderian meldete ueber den Zustand seiner **2. PzArmee**: "Wir haben einfach vielfach nur noch bewaffnete Trosse, die nun langsam zuruecktrudeln." (*Klaus Reinhardt, "Das Scheitern des deutschen Blitzkriegskonzepts vor Moskau,"* 207).
- **5.12.41** [Overall Status]: German officers perched in church steeples in the villages of Katiushka, Puchki and Krasnaia Poliana can observed the traffic in Moscow's streets thru binoculars. The victorious *Wehrmacht* has advanced **900-1200 km (540-720 miles)** deep into Russian territory, occupied **1.5** million square km of its soil, enslaved **77.6** million of its inhabitants and deprived it of well over half of its economic base and one third of its agriculture. According to official Russian figures, since **22.6.41** the Red Army has lost over **20 000** tanks, **17 000** combat acft, **60 000** guns and mortars and **20%** of its ammunition and fuel. At the same time, the number of workers decreased from **31.5** to **18.5** million, and its

³⁹⁰ **Note**: This is most likely an error; virtually all primary accounts note that the rifles (Karabiner **98k**) were among the very few reliable weapons, even at **40-50** below.

³⁹¹ **Note**: A similar attitude from the front is revealed in a letter from the then war diarist of **AOK 4**, Major von Wienskowski, to the president of the former *Kriegsgeschichtlicher Forschungsanstalt des Heeres*, General W. Foerster, of **13 Dec 41**, in which he informed Foerster of the situation after the attack by the **4 Army** had been suspended on **3 Dec 41**: "We all thought then that we would now have a peaceful winter sleep." (Reinhardt, 240)

industrial production decreased by over **50%** and metallurgy by **68%** to **1931-32** levels. In addition, the government uprooted and evacuated **10** million workers and **1523** industrial plants to the country's interior. Understandably, arms production fell between **30** and **80%**. (Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 185; 228, f.n. 2)

-- **5.-6.12.41**: The decline in fighting strength, lack of any hope of receiving replacements in time, and the exhaustion of the troops, which was approaching apathy in heavily attacked sectors, *required immediate decisions*. On **5 Dec 41**, therefore, Army Group Ctr informed **4 Army** and the panzer groups of the envisaged withdrawal line. The withdrawal, which it was estimated would require two nights, should be possible, upon receipt of a special order, as of **6 Dec 41**. The start of this "preparatory measure" was made dependent on a new directive from Hitler. On **5 Dec 41** the **2 Pz Army** too received approval from the army group for a withdrawal behind the Don-Shat line. Thus, in sector of AGC, preparations had already been made even before Halder discussed the war situation in detail w/ Hitler on **6 Dec 41**. (GSWW, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 702-03. For details of **6 Dec 41** conference w/ Hitler, see Section 6:2 above)

j) *Why did "Barbarossa" fail?*

-- Discuss in detail see, **IX:71-75**.

(See, my detailed notes in "Introduction" files, "IMPB," also, Barry A. Leach, *German Strategy against Russia 1939-41*, etc.)³⁹² See also my detailed comments in "Key Perspectives concerning Operation 'Barbarossa,'" p 4, in: "Introduction File."

Note: Russo-German War **1941-45** an *asymmetric* war? Not in sense used today – i.e., tactics of *al Qaeda*; China's preparations for war with U.S., etc. – but certainly in sense that the war involved an *asymmetry of effort*. Soviet Union under Stalin ruthlessly mobilizing for war with Germany even during the **1930s** – forced collectivization, industrialization, etc., and the terrible sacrifices they entailed all served to ready Russia for war. . . Conversely, Hitler's Germany – despite prevalent myths – prepared for war at much more leisurely pace from **1933-39**.³⁹³ As late as early **1941** (that is, on the eve of *Barbarossa*) Germany only producing ca. **200** tanks per month! (For more details, **IX:102**)

Note: Finally, in the last analysis, the most significant factor in the Red Army's ability to defeat Operation Barbarossa was its ability to raise and field strategic reserves, a fact unknown to all those who postulated the "what ifs" mentioned above. As slow and cumbersome as it was and as poorly trained and ill equipped the forces it generated were, the mobilization system produced a seemingly endless array of armies and divisions. Furthermore, it served as the trigger mechanism for mobilizing the full power of the massive multi-ethnic Soviet state. (D. Glantz, *Barbarossa*, 213)

Note: „Wie ist diese *blinde Ueberschaetzung* der eigenen Kraft u. die unglaubliche *Fehleinschaetzung* der mil. u. ruestungswirtschaftlichen Faehigkeiten der Sowjetunion seitens der dt. Fuehrung zu erklaren? Die Antwort auf diese Frage ist wohl kaum in mangelhaften Informationen, sondern vielmehr in einer durch *rassistische Voreingenommenheit* verblendeten

³⁹² **Note:** For example, "Introductory Material, Projekt 'Barbarossa,'" 36 pp.

³⁹³ **Note:** And major rearmament – if I recall correctly – did not begin until **1936**.

Selbstueberschaetzung der politischen u. mil. Fuehrer des Deutschen Reiches zu suchen.“ (G.R. Ueberschaer, Unternehmen Barbarossa, 18)³⁹⁴

Note: “Most of the immortal victories of history” were *psychological rather than physical*, “with the actual fighting a secondary influence. For the profoundest truth of war is that the issue of battles is usually decided in the *minds of the opposing commanders*, not in the bodies of their men.”³⁹⁵ Basil Henry Liddell Hart, quoted in: J. L. Wallach, Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation, 7)

Note: The German victories at Bialystok and Minsk were *each* comparable to the German victory over the combined French and British armies in **May 1940**. . . In the first six (6) months of fighting, the German army achieved **12** – repeat, **12** – great encirclements on 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. . . The Germans didn’t have a way to win the war if the Russians were willing to keep fighting. (R. Messenger, German Way of War, 32)

Note: Putting aside a plethora of other deliberations – all no doubt deserving of consideration – the failure of *Barbarossa* was, simply put, a *matter of arithmetic* – too few men, too few planes, too few tanks and weapons, and munitions; too little oil, too little rubber, etc. All of this imposed a *tyranny of numbers* on the *Wehrmacht* which it could never overcome. The problem of „too few of these, too little of those“ was, in broadest terms, the outcome of the failure of the German war economy to gear itself up in time for a long war of attrition. Which, in turn, was the outcome of misplaced optimism and outright arrogance and *hubris*. (IX:72-73)

Note: Historians blame Hitler and the German High Command for making two [2] quite different mistakes [resulting in ultimate failure of „Taifun“]. First of all, the Ostheer failed to advance on Moscow in **Oct 41** after the great victory at Viaz’ma-Briansk. Secondly, it rashly advanced on Moscow five or six weeks later, and drove on in the teeth of increasing Russian resistance. The failure of the Germans to take Moscow in late October and early **Nov 41** had several explanations. First of all, the German attack at Viaz’ma-Briansk had been less deep than the earlier penetration in Belorussia and the Ukraine.³⁹⁶ Viaz’ma was only about **75** miles from the nearest point on the German front line. It needs to be compared to Minsk, which had been **200** miles away from the start point of the **Jun 41** battle. . . The Germans also needed to digest the huge number of Red Army formations that had been swallowed up at Viaz’ma and Briansk. The second German mistake was to continue on towards Moscow in **Nov 41**. . . Halder followed through to the point of exhaustion what had been his idee fixe throughout **1941**. Hitler did not impose a strategy on the OKH. (See, E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East, 109-10)

³⁹⁴ **Note:** This simply has to be considered a key cause of Germany’s defeat in Russia.

³⁹⁵ **Note:** In opening weeks & months of “*Barbarossa*,” the *Wehrmacht* was, of course, unable to gain such a decisive psychological victory over their opponent (in contrast to France **1940**!).

³⁹⁶ **Note:** This is a good point. The Vyaz’ma-Briansk encirclements were much narrower than those of summer **1941** and, perforce, less ambitious. This was due to the putative “lesson learned” out of the summer campaign – i.e., that the deeper encirclements were impractical – and less successful – because they resulted in the motorized forces advancing too far ahead of the foot infantry, compelling the former to hold down the pockets until the latter arrived at the front to relieve them. The results were thinly-held pockets which badly attrited the motorized units and from which too many of the enemy were able to escape.

Note: Der Generalstab zoegerte noch immer, die befohlenen Auftraege im Norden u. im Sueden [i.e., Leningrad, Ukraine im Sommer '41] moeglichst rasch in die Tat umzusetzen, u. unterliess es, der H.Gr.Nord rechtzeitig die wenigen verfuegbaren Verbaende zuzufuehren, die sie zur Loesung ihrer Aufgabe benoetigt haette. Das fuehrte zu einem Zeitverlust von rund einer Woche. Dieser Zeitverlust war der Grund fuer die sehr spaete Eroeffnung der Schlacht um Moskau u. sollte sich bei Einbruch der Rasputiza als ***fatal*** erwiesen. . . Die Sieges euphorie nach der gewonnenen Kesselschlacht bei Wjasma Anfang **Okt 41** verfuehrte das **OKH** zur Verzettelung seiner ohnehin knapp bemessenen Kraefte, indem es eine Armee u. eine Pz.Gr. nach Norden einschwenken liess, um eine Nebenaufgabe im Bereich der H.Gr.Nord zu loesen. Anstatt alles Greifbare zur Verfolgung in Richtung Moskau aufzubieten, rueckte die H.Gr.Mitte in exzentrischen Stossrichtungen vor.

Obendrein fuehlte sich das **OKH** so siegessicher, dass es ein Armeekorps [**8 AK**] aus der Front zog u. in den Westen verlegte. . . Obwohl die Truppe nahezu Uebermenschliches leistete, um trotz Schlamm, Regen u. Schnee dem schwer geschlagenen Gegner auf den Fersen zu bleiben, konnte sie die guenstige Zeitspanne, als ihr nur mehr schwache Feindteile gegenueberstanden, nicht nutzen. *Es fehlte nur eine Woche trockenen Wetters, u. die deutschen Pz.-Spitzen haetten die Einschiessung Moskaus vollzogen.* . . Wenn es der Kardinalfehler des deutschen Generalstabes war, den Kulminationspunkt des Angriffs, der in der Oktobermitte lag, nicht zu erkennen. . . (*H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 226-29)

Note: In planning *Barbarossa*, the Germans had assumed that after the initial onslaught and the destruction of the Red Army along the frontier, the Soviets would *not be able to field substantial reserve forces* – certainly not in any coherent fashion. In late July and August, the Germans learned the folly of such ill-founded optimism. By end of **Jun 41**, the Soviets had called up **5.3** million reservists. **13** field armies (a Soviet army roughly equivalent to a German corps) were deployed in July; **14** in August; **1** in September; and **4** in October. Units from Siberia and the Far East would allow the Soviets to move **8** more armies forward in the defense of Moscow, w/ **10** more arriving in spring **1942**. All told, the Soviets deployed **97** existing divisions to the west over summer **1941** and created no less than **194** new divisions and **84** separate brigades. The sheer weight of numbers began to wreck German plans. (*W. Murray, War to be Won*, 125)

Note: The weather was not the basic reason for the Moscow turnaround. Soviet reserves and resistance were the critical factors. Political will was part of this. Stalin's presence in the capital. . . carried great moral weight. . . Soviet ruthlessness played a part. In mid-**Nov 41**, Stalin issued fierce orders for a policy of „scorched earth“ behind the enemy. . . The backbone of the resistance, however, was the Red Army. . . The accumulation of „strategic reserves,“ raising and organizing fresh formations in the hinterland, had been the main activity of the Soviet High Command in **Oct-Nov 41**. . . Soviet forces equivalent to **99 new divisions** were brought up into the central theatre in **Oct**, **Nov**, and early **Dec 41**. . . (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 111-13)

Note: It is now clear that Soviet strategic reserves raised and deployed IAW *Stavka* orders of **24-25 Nov 41** played a decisive role in the defeat of German forces at Moscow. During the **67-day** advance of v. Bock's AGC along the Moscow axis, the **OKH** and **OKW** were *unable to provide the army group w/ a single reinforcing division*. During the same period, however, the *Stavka* raised and deployed **75** division-equivalents, including **24** division-equivalents assigned to **10**, **26** and **61 Armies**, which were concentrating in the Riazan, Noginsk and Rzhev regions. Counting the **271,395** Red Army soldiers sent to the front as individual

replacements, the *Stavka* formed and committed to combat in early **Dec 41** a new strategic grouping whose strength was at least equivalent to the entire Red Army force that had been attacked by AGC on **1 Oct 41**. Worse still for the Germans, the Red Air Force was able to achieve air superiority by early **Dec 41**.

Unlike in early **Oct 41**, by early **Dec 41** the *Stavka*, *front* and army commands had sorted out and corrected the chaotic C2 systems that had contributed to the **Oct 41** disaster. The chain of command from *Stavka* thru Western Front to individual armies was now crisp and clear, and these improvements helped the Red Army to first slow, and then stop, the German advance. Finally, Red Army counterstrokes at Tikhvin [sector of AGN] and Rostov [AGS] deprived Bock of any reinforcements from those army groups on the strategic flanks. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 177-79)

Note: “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.” (*W. Dunn, Stalin’s Keys to Victory*, 4-5)

Note: Clausewitz regarded war as a *form of human intercourse*. . . [Hence] the *moral elements* played a vital part in C.’s analysis [of war]. . . If we aim, therefore, to destroy the enemy’s power, this should not only be limited to the physical forces, but should also be directed principally against moral ones [eg., will power]. This explains the tremendous impact of a great victory in paralyzing the still remaining, sometimes even intact, forces of the enemy. [i.e., France **1940**] Sometimes, while the decision is still in the balance, victory comes to the side that has a small additional amount of moral power and is, as a matter of fact, *not much affected by real losses or gains*. [My note: This insight goes far to explain Soviet victory.] (*J. L. Wallach, Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation*, 18)

Note: Historical Analogy: In Vietnam, the enemy initiated **90%** of all engagements but “lost” them all. Even battles like Dak To and Ap Bia Mountain (“*Hamburger Hill*”) were American victories in sense that Americans held the ground when the last shot was fired. The *paradox* was that we “lost” the war while “winning” every battle. (*Jonathan Shay, Achilles in Vietnam*, 8). The same insight is germane to first six months of “*Barbarossa*.” Germans won nearly every major battle – as Gen. Nehring stated ca. **Aug 41**, “we are victoring ourselves to death” (“*Totsiegen*”) – yet lost the campaign.

Note: During the winter of **41/42** German generals suddenly started studying Caulaincourt’s (1773-1827) memoirs of Napoleon’s retreat from Moscow. It would, perhaps, have been much wiser if the “Fuehrer” and his military advisors had recognized that in Clausewitz’ writings they could find *not only the impulse to annihilate the enemy*, but also some clever remarks and references concerning an invasion of Russia. (Details see, *J. L. Wallach, Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation*, 28)

Note: Sun Tze nennt fuenf [5] Faktoren u. sieben Bedingungen, die jedem General vertraut sein sollen. Wer sie kennt, wird siegen; wer sie nicht kennt, wird scheitern. Unter den **5** konstanten Faktoren: „Himmel bedeutet Nacht u. Tag, Kaelte u. Hitze, Tageszeit u. Jarheszeit“; „Erde umfasst grosse u. kleine Entfernungen, Gefahr u. Sicherheit, offenes Gelaende u. schwache Paesse. . .“ Unter den **7 Bedingungen**: „Bei wem liegen die Vorteile, die Himmel u. Erde bieten?“ (Sun Tze, Die Kunst des Krieges, quoted in: H. Hinterhuber, Wettbewerbsstrategie, 6)

Note: Die zentralen Erfolgsfaktoren der Strategie des roemischen Reiches sind . . . Abgesehen von seltenen Ausnahmen, war das Verhalten derjenigen Personen, die das Schicksal Roms bestimmten, von einem ausserordentlichen Sin fuer Realitaet gepraeagt. . .“ : H. Hinterhuber, Wettbewerbsstrategie, 9-10)

Note: Der bedeutendste Kriegsschriftsteller des sinkenden roemischen Kaiserreichs ist Vegetius. . . . Einige seiner Grundsaeetze sind noch von Interesse: . . . (6) „Wer die eigenen Kraefte u. die des Gegners richtig zu schaeetzen weiss, wird selten geschlagen werden.“ Dieser Grundsatz findet sich bereits bei Sun Tze. (H. Hinterhuber, Wettbewerbsstrategie, 10)

Note: Niccolo Machiavelli: „Ueberaus wichtig ist es, den Charakter der gegnerischen Feldherren u. ihrer Umgebung richtig zu wuerdigen.“ (H. Hinterhuber, Wettbewerbsstrategie, 11)

Note: For role of the German military leaders in planning and their responsibility for the failure of „Barbarossa” see, Barry A. Leach, German Strategy against Russia 1939-41 (in “Leach file”) He states, *inter alia*, that the “most remarkable features of the German Army leaders’ role in the planning for the East was [sic] not their willingness and optimism, but their *inefficiency and errors*.”

Note: Dez 41: Die Gruende des Erfolges gleichen denen des Misserfolges; das Vabanquespiel, das uebersteigerte Zutrauen zur eigenen Kraft, die Verachtung des Gegners u. vor allem der Zauber, den man der Ultrahaerte beimass. Das war das Mal des Ersten Weltkrieges, in dem man sich hatte erweichen lassen. (Joerg Friedrich, Das Gesetz des Krieges. Das dt. Heer in Russland 1941-45, 464)

Note: Had mass surrenders of Red Army units occurred rapidly at Bialystok – Minsk, at Smolensk – Yelnia, and at Kiev [not to mention Vyaz’ma – Briansk], blitzkrieg tactics could have produced the desired results. But mass surrenders occurred only after prolonged resistance [unlike France in **1940**, in contrast]. (Fugate & Dvoretzky, Thunder on the Dnepr, 336)

-- “Die dt. Wehrmacht trat in den Krieg als ‘armer Mann.’ . . . Zu dieser Begriff der ‘Armut’ gehoert auch die Erkenntnis, dass die Zahl der dt. Panzer- u. mot.-Divisionen nicht genuegte . . . “³⁹⁷ (See, FMS **P-190**, in: **VI:107-08**)

-- Luftwaffe given virtually no support. J. Prien, et al., address the „unzureichende Zuweisung neuer Maschinen.“ See table in Prien, according to which **Luftflotte 2** received a total of **342** new fighters from **Jun-Sep 41**, but only **9** in Oct and *none* in Nov or Dec! (Jagdflieger-verbaende 6/1, 26-27; **I:477**)

³⁹⁷ **Note:** “Barbarossa” fatally *underpowered*!

- **Dec 41:** German officers perched in church steeples in the villages of Katiushka – Puchki – Krasnaia Poliana could observe the traffic in Moscow's streets through binoculars. The *Wehrmacht* had advanced **900-1200 km (540-720 miles)** deep into Mother Russia, occupied **1.5 million sq.km.** of its soil, enslaved **77.6 million** of its inhabitants and deprived it of well over ½ of its economic base and **1/3** of its agriculture. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 185)
- First question: Why did Germans keep pushing well past the *culmination point* (Clausewitz), which was most likely reached by end of **Oct 41**? Because “conventional wisdom” was that, no matter how bad the German situation was, *it was worse over there!*)
(See also, author quotes: **III:478 ff.**; also Book **IX**)
- What did this failure *signify* to the average German soldier?
Morale? Conviction war is lost? (See, *G. Zirk, Red Griffins over Russia*, who says he and his men still believed in victorious outcome as late as early '44 (**IMPB:2**); also, my “*Antworten auf Barbarossa Fragekomplex*” (prepared **14 Jan 05**)).
- What would capture of Moscow in fall of **1941** have signified in terms of prospects of ultimate German victory? (**IX: Magenheimer, Hitler's War**, etc.)
- See my “*Gedankengaenge ueber Barbarossa*” (elicited from J. Huerter's Hitlers Feldherren), for discussion of “Barbarossa's” failure and other topics. (My Book **IX**)
- General Gotthard Heinrici, commander of **4. Army's 43. AK** at Moscow and, by war's end, the *Wehrmacht's* premier defensive specialist, cogently assessed the reasons for the German failure [at Moscow]. (See, *Heinrici, The Campaign in Russia*, Vol. I, quoted by *Glantz, Barbarossa*, 211-12)
- Decisive role of Soviet *force generation*!³⁹⁸
Some **50** armies created between **22.6. – 31.12.41**
(See, my *Festvortrag* (Bad Wimpfen); *W. Dunn, Glantz*, etc)
The Red Army would raise and deploy three “rows” of armies along the Moscow axis from **Jul – Dec 41** (**25** armies in all) (See, *Glantz, Barbarossa Derailed*, Vol. I, 577, 581)
- Failure of German logistics support
(For **9. Army** see, **FMS P-201** in: **VI:131**, ff.; also, **I:546**, ff.; see also, my “basic facts on logistics” in Chapter **I**)
(Note: According to *Clausewitz*, one of the primary reasons for Napoleon's failure – beside “the late period at which the campaign had opened,” etc., was the “lack of due care for . . . supply . . . and his line of retreat. *Clausewitz, On War*; quoted in: (*Theodore Ropp, War in the Modern World*, 135))
- Mussten nicht die Planer von Barbarossa sich fragen lassen, ob sie nicht durch die Vernachlaessigung der vollen Auffuellung der Verbaende im Osten eine hohe Mitschuld an der absehbaren militaerischen Misere trugen? Das gilt vor allem auch fuer den OQu I,

³⁹⁸ **Note:** Anecdote involving Tsar Alexander: After leaving the Russian Army to return to St. Petersburg in mid-**Jul 1812**, he said to General Barclay de Tolly (C-in-C **1. Army**): “Farewell, General, once more farewell, *au revoir*. I commend my army to your keeping. Do not forget that it is *the only one I have*.” While a bit of an exaggeration, he clearly could not have afforded to lose his **1. and 2. Armies** (his primary fighting forces) to Napoleon. In **1941**, Stalin was able to sacrifice dozens of armies and still eek out a victory. (*Zamoyski, Moscow 1812*, 172-73)

Friedrich Paulus, der schon bei den Planspielen besonders darauf hingewiesen hatte, dass der *Erfolg des Feldzuges in hohem Masse davon abhaenge, dass es gelaenge, den Nachschub zu sichern*, dann aber nichts getan hatten, um diese voellig zutreffende Erkenntnis planerische Realitaet werden zu lassen. (See, *Torsten Diedrich, Paulus. Das Trauma von Stalingrad*, 190; VIII:251)

--"A final theme to emerge is a failure of German command, a lack of **OKW** [**OKH** as well?] perception. This was firstly its *misappreciation of the Russian foe*, and secondly its inability to recognize the effect the campaign was having on the very fabric of the *Ostheer* itself. Russian casualties during the first six months, at [3-4 millions], dwarfed the imagination. Stupendous though they were, they were *never sufficient* to persuade the Soviet regime to sue for peace. As a consequence, Russia had only to weather the initial shock of invasion to survive. In time it could exploit its superior demographic and economic resources to win [w/ help from Anglo-Americans]. . . The second failure of German Command was **OKW's** inability to recognize the extent to which German fighting power had actually eroded by **Sep 41**. The force fighting on the approaches to Moscow was *tangibly different* from the one that had crossed the demarcation line in **Jun 41**. . . The very 'Verdun' that v. Bock sought to avoid at the gates of Moscow occurred before he arrived. . . Between **9-11 May 42** the **7 PD** was relieved in the line and sent back to France to recuperate. In **Jun 41** one of its units, **IR 6**, had been transported from the Cologne area to East Prussia in **12** trains in preparation for the invasion. One [1] train was sufficient to achieve the move less than one year later." (R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands, 241)

-- Lack of *Luftwaffe* support (precisely when it was needed most)
Most of *Luftflotte II* had been withdrawn to Mediterranean theater, etc.

XI: THE RED ARMY STRIKES BACK – FIRST PHASES OF SOVIET COUNTEROFFENSIVE (5 Dec 41 – Jan 42)³⁹⁹

Quote: "*Der Blick ist kaum mehr in die Zukunft gerichtet. Denn welche Zukunft gibt es fuer uns jetzt.*" (Brief, H.-M. Welcker, **28.12.41**, in: Notebook #9)

Quote: „*Die Offiziere des ersten Weltkrieges sagen alle, dass das, was unsere Truppen in diesem Feldzug, besonders in der letzten Zeit, durchmachen, die Anforderungen des ersten Weltkrieges weit uebertrifft.*“ (Brief, H.-M. Welcker, **5.1.42**, in: Notebook #9)

Quote: „*Ist die Verteidigung eine staerkere Form des Kriegsfuehrens, die aber einen negativen Zweck hat, so folgt von selbst, dass man sich ihrer nur solange bedienen muss, als man sie der Schwaeche wegen bedarf, u. sie verlassen muss, sobald man stark genug ist, sich den positiven Zweck [i.e., die Offensive] vorzusetzen. . . so ist auch der natuerlichen Gang . . . , mit der Verteidigung anzufangen u. mit der Offensive zu enden.*“ (Clausewitz, Vom Kriege, quoted in: H. Hinterhuber, Wettbewerbsstrategie, 23)

³⁹⁹ **Note**: For more interesting details see my, **IMPB:29-31**.

Note: Bernd Wegner:⁴⁰⁰ *Facing the Global War*: Second week of **Dec 41** saw a series of events in world that, from German point of view, signaled a fundamental change in the war, for two reasons: a) the winter offensive by the Red Army; and, b) the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and Germany and Italy's declaration of war on America on **11.12.41**, together w/ the entry of China and most of Latin America into the war, marked the transition from a European war to a *world war*. This two-fold spread of the war, both *temporal and spatial*, destroyed the basis of the calculation which, despite repeated setbacks, had *determined Hitler's strategy for 2 ¼ years* of war on the Continent and in the Atlantic. This calculation assumed that, w/ a *series of limited wars against one enemy at a time*,⁴⁰¹ if possible, the Reich could be provided w/ an unassailable starting-point in its attempt to become a world power. . . (611) (**IMPB:32**)

Note: Finally the tide turns, the aggressor is exhausted, and his superior strength is diminished. [He has reached what Clausewitz called the "*Culminating Point*."] This is the moment for the defender to fall on him from a well-chosen position and to attempt his complete destruction ("*the flashing sword of vengeance*" in Clausewitz' own colorful wording). (See, J. L. Wallach, Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation, 24-26)

Note: For a wonderfully descriptive "picture" of Berlin at beginning of **Dec 41** see first pages of, Charles B. Burdick, An American Island in Hitler's Reich.

Note: For total French (+ allied) and Russian losses from **Jun – Dec 1812** in men and horses see, Adam Zamoyski, Moscow 1812, 535-40.

Note: For details of Napoleon's retreat from Moscow, see, Adam Zamoyski, Moscow 1812. Summary: Napoleon began retreat ca. **17-18 Oct 1812** w/ "no more than **95,000** [men] and probably less." Retreat began w/ troops in relatively high spirits (several weeks in Moscow, w/ good food, repair of boots, uniforms, etc., had revived them); weather initially good for most part, but changed dramatically for worse in early **Nov 1812**; movements impeded "at every step" by huge amounts of booty taken by the troops; movement also impeded by some **50,000** civilian hangers-on; night of **4-5 Nov 1812** brought a "sharp drop in temperatures, and on **6 Nov** the retreat entered a new phase" ("it is from this point that our misery began"); gloomish stories of men found frozen stiff and dead in morning around their campfires ("this sight became commonplace"); no such thing as winter uniforms (in those days armies did not fight in winter); misuse of wood and clay stoves in Russian huts ("stove would catch fire and the hut would go up in flames as they slept"); misery of having no shelter at night compounded by lack of food (men sprinkled *gunpowder on horsemeat* to make the taste more palatable!); men ate cats as well as horses for meat; prisoners caught by Russians often treated brutally; French prisoners taken mostly by *Cossacks*, then handed over or sold to local peasants, who would "massacre them w/ varying degrees of sadism" (some would be burned alive, others tied to trees and used for target practice, others would have their ears, noses, tongues and genitalia cut off, etc.); French forced to shoot the several thousand

⁴⁰⁰ **Note:** "*Facing the Global War. Germany's Strategic Dilemma after the Failure of 'Blitzkrieg,' in: From Peace to War: Germany, Soviet Russia and the World, 1939-41*, B. Wegner (ed.), 611-27. Article includes good discussion of Hitler grappling w/ problem of America. Hitler also fully aware of the new dimensions of a global war. (For more from Wegner see, **IMPB:32-33**)

⁴⁰¹ **Note:** This was the "geo-strategic" component of Hitler's "Blitzkrieg" strategy, which, as B. Kroener makes clear, did not become an operational and tactical reality on the military plane until the invasion of Russia in **Jun 41** (see entries in this "study.") Yet this strategy was also simply what made good sense from a strategic perspective for a "middle" ranking power like Germany.

Russian POWs they had taken along on the retreat. Despite all this, the troops “rallied to [Napoleon] and took comfort in his perceived greatness.” (For many more details see, Zamoyiski, Moscow 1812, 358, ff.)

Note: More on Napoleon’s retreat: Remnants of his army pulling back toward Smolensk, spiking guns, abandoning *caissons*, wagons, carriages and cannon along the way; men dying of hunger and hypothermia (their faces filthy, blackened w/ smoke and smeared w/ the blood of the animals they ate), harried by the ubiquitous *Cossacks* at every turn; roadways littered w/ dead bodies, dead horses, weapons and *impedimenta* of every sort. “Estimates of the forces at Napoleon’s disposal in Smolensk vary wildly, but most sources agree that he had *lost at least 60,000 men* since leaving Moscow three [3] weeks earlier, and that there were no more than about **40,000** left w/ their colours.” (Note: For harrowing example of Prince Eugene at the Vop see, pp 409-11.) By mid-**Nov 1812**, Napoleon – who could not rule out being taken prisoner and had already had one close encounter w/ the *Cossacks* outside Maloyaroslavets – had taken to wearing a dose of poison around his neck in a small black silk sachet. Marshal Ney, bringing up the rear w/ his handful of remaining men and barely avoiding capture, told his men: “Those who get through this will show they have *their b---s hung by steel wire!*” (Zamoyiski, 406-501)⁴⁰²

Note: For following see, See, H. S. Orenstein (trans.), Soviet Documents on the Use of War Experience. Vol. II: The Winter Campaign 1941-42: a) introduction by D.M. Glantz (points out, *inter alia*, Soviet recognition that *logistics* was an *Achilles heel* for her forces); b) operational / tactical lessons of Winter Campaign **41/42** (i.e., shortcomings in troop control; insufficient co-operation between and w/in armies; improper use of air power, ski units, etc.); c) features of offensive actions in winter (Germans unable to create a continuous and tight defense; Germans had many automatic weapons, etc.); d) combat use of ski troops (basic missions of, etc.); e) combat use of large cavalry formations (cavalry has high operational and tactical mobility; cavalry should be directed against operationally important targets on the enemy flanks, in his rear, and on his lines of communication); f) key examples of cavalry actions in winter 41/42 (Belov’s **1st Gds Cav Corps**; destruction of German **34. AK**; rout of the German **78. ID** by Gen Dovator’s **2d Gds Cav Corps**; use of large cavalry units in German rear); Red Army, including cavalry, *significantly inferior to Germans in supply of mortars (esp. heavy mortars), sub-machine guns, and AT defense means*, giving Germans “tremendous superiority over ours w/ respect to fire (p 83));” g) use of non-toxic smoke by Soviet ground forces for camouflage.

Note: Michael Parrish (ed.), Battle for Moscow: The 1942 Soviet General Staff Study: This is an extremely valuable study, prepared by Soviet General Staff in **1942**. Study was not intended for mass consumption, and thus is not distorted by propaganda and imbalance. Book contains many insightful points, among them: a) one of the major reasons for “incomplete results” of winter campaign of **41/42** was the “major shortcomings in troop leadership,” including insufficient cooperation among fronts, armies, divisions, etc. (1); b) study repeatedly emphasized importance of roads for both offensive and defensive operations; c) despite problems posed by cold and weather, mobile formations were capable

⁴⁰² **Note:** For issues of frostbite, lice – even Napoleon was tormented by them! – treatment of French prisoners (appears very few survived their ordeal) see, 443-57. Yet through it all, the faith of the French and allied soldiers in their Emperor was unshaken. For Napoleon crossing the Berezina in late **Nov 1812** see, 458-80. (The river crossing was a “magnificent feat of arms,” but the French during the three days lost up to **25,000**, including up to **10,000** non-combatant stragglers.) After crossing the Berezina, for the survivors, the “worst was still to come.” (481-501)

of carrying out independent operational missions (6); d) notes that in winter combat the Red Army had a “substantial advantage” over the Germans (7-8); e) the main battles took place for the defense and seizure of populated places (10); f) stresses importance of using *incendiary rounds and bombs* in connection w/ combat for populated places (12); g) points out success of Soviet night attacks and that Germans “rarely held off night attacks” (13); h) *ski troops* mentioned on virtually every page (!), their importance was clearly paramount (for missions of ski battalions see, pp 31, 41); i) report admits that Germans were well led during this phase of the war (18, 24); j) a snow cover of over **30cm** slows down movement of foot soldiers and rapidly exhausts their strength, if deeper than **75cm** it will prohibit the movement of tanks except along roads (23); k) study admits **superiority of German weapons**: the Germans had **automatic weapons**, while the Red Army infantry still relied on rifles (25); l) in discussing Soviet offensive tactics, it seems that Hitler’s decision to hold on to fortified areas – the so-called “island” defense – was basically correct (25); m) having limited personnel, Germans were not able to set up a *solid and continuous defensive line*; as a rule, their defense consisted of strong points jointed together in centers of resistance (26); n) study states that Germans used draconian measures – including *chaining soldiers to their MGs!* – to shore up resistance (27); o) deep snow cover cuts down effectiveness of tanks markedly (30); p) **T-34** tank could negotiate a snow depth of **.70-.80** meters (33); q) Red Army *artillery* did not acquit itself well during Battle of Moscow (43 ff.); r) “precise methods of target designation and correction were used rarely in divisional artillery” (for preparation and conduct of Soviet artillery fires see, pp 53-54).

a) **World Events (and impact on eastern front)**

- **16.12.41**: Mitte **Dez 41** kam es beim Besuch des brit. Aussenministers Eden in Moskau zu einer ersten Abstimmung der gemeinsamen Kriegsziele. Stalin konnte nunmehr unabhaengiger u. selbstbewusster auftreten als bei den ersten Kontakten mit London u. Washington im **Juli 1941**. Er fuehlte sich bereits so siegesgewiss, dass er mit Eden die Grenzen Nachkriegs-europas u. die Aufteilung Deutschlands festlegen wollte. (Ueberschaer, Scheitern des Unternehmens Barbarossa, 170)
- **16.12.41**: Die sowj. Fuehrungsspitze durfte zum Jahresende **1941** mit dem Erfolg ihrer Gegen-offensive durchaus zufrieden sein. Auch auf politischer Ebene konnte man einen beachtlichen Erfolg verzeichnen. Der britische Aussenminister Anthony Eden war am **16 Dez 41**, kurz nach Beginn der Gegenoffensive, in Moskau zu Verhandlungen mit Stalin eingetroffen. (For details see, H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten, 214)
- **Dec 41–Jan 42**: Die Lage um die Jahreswende **1941/42** war durch drei [3] Ereignisse gekennzeichnet, die den bisher im wesentlichen noch europaeischen Krieg zum Weltkrieg ausweiteten u. ihm damit gerade auch von der Warte der dt. Obersten Fuehrung voellig neue Dimensionen gaben: a) das Scheitern der dt. Offensive an der Ostfront; b) der fuer die dt. Fuehrung ueberraschende Kriegseintritt Japans mit dem anschliessenden Siegeszug in Suedostasien u. im Westpazifik; c) die Kriegserklaerung Hitlers an die USA am **11.12.41**. . . Zu einer somit unumgaenglichen Neukonzeption des dt. Kriegsplanes hat sich Hitler indessen nicht aufgeafft. . . So stand das Jahr **1942** „im Zeichen des Trotzes,“ kam es zu einer Kette von „improvisierten Entschluessen,“ die allesamt nicht der voellig veraenderten strategischen Gesamtsituation Rechnung trugen. . . Auf strategischem Gebiet blieb Hitler auch unter den veraenderten Verhaeltnissen bei seinem Entschluss, zunaechst die Sowjetunion als mil. Faktor auszuschalten. . . So erklarte er bereits am **3.1.42** dem japanischen Botschafter

Oshima. . . „Sein Ziel sei die Offensive an der Suedfront.“ Er sei „entschlossen. . . die Offensive in Richtung Kaukasus wieder aufzunehmen, sobald das Wetter guenstig wuerde. Diese Stossrichtung sei dei wichtigste; man muesse an das Oel u. an Iran u. den Irak herankommen. Wenn man erst einmal dort stuende, so hoffe er, dass man auch der Freiheitsbewegung der arabischen Welt zum Durchbruch helfen koenne. . .“ (More details see, *OKW KTB*, Bd II, *Einfuehrung*, 3-5)

- **1.1.42:** Insgesamt festigte der Sieg der Sowjetunion die Antihitlerkoalition u. verbesserte zugleich *das internationale Ansehen* der UdSSR, die dann auch als Erstsignatarmacht im Kreise **26** weitere Staaten am **1.1.42** die Deklaration zur Gruendung der Vereinten Nationen mitunterzeichnete. Die Ende **1941** demonstrierte mil.-pol. Unabhaengigkeit von den Westmaechten hat die UdSSR auch im weiteren Verlauf des Krieges geschickt fuer sich ausnutzen koennen. (*Ueberschaer*, Scheitern des Unternehmens Barbarossa, 170)

aa) *Origins of Stalin's decision to strike*

- When was decision made; by whom
The STAVKA first began contemplating a counteroffensive in early **Nov 41** (for details see, *Glantz*, Barbarossa, 185)
29.11.41: Zhukov requests the STAVKA authorize him to commence the counter-offensive (See, *Glantz*, 186)
30.11.41: Stalin billigt den Entwurf fuer eine Gegenoffensive seines Chefs des Generalstabes Marschall Schaposchnikow (*lexicon-der-wehrmacht.de/Chronik/1941*)
- **29.11.41:** On **29 Nov 41**, Zhukov requests the *Stavka* authorize him to commence the counter-offensive, stating: [see text] . . . The *Stavka* accepted Zhukov's advise and assigned the Western and Southwestern Fronts their respective missions later that evening. . . (Note: For details of attack plan see, *Glantz*, Barbarossa, 186-87)⁴⁰³
- **ca 30.11.41** [Shaposhnikov]: In Moscow, the central direction of the campaign was confused by the health of Marshal Shaposhnikov. At the end of **Nov 41** [exact date?], he had temporarily to be replaced by his deputy, Vasilevskii. (*E. Mawdsley*, Thunder in the East, 447, f.n. 82)
- **4.12.41** [Decision to Strike]: Stalin, the Popular Scientific Sketch [?] says, kept in close communications w/ Zhukov in the first days of **Dec 41**, calling him several times a day to inquire about the progress of the fighting. "In the complicated situation. . . , it was very important to time the *shift from the defensive to the counteroffensive correctly*. The most favorable moment for the shift to the counteroffensive presented itself when the enemy was forced to stop his attack but could not yet go on the defensive because his troops were not yet properly regrouped, no reserves had been created, and the defense lines were not prepared." While most Soviet accounts do not specify a day, according to Sokolovskiy [Zhukov's chief of staff at the time] the decision was made to shift to the counterattack on **4 Dec 41**. n that day, he says, the West Front troops had brought the enemy near Moscow to a standstill, and it

⁴⁰³ **Note:** On the Western Front's right wing attacking north of Moscow, Zhukov will be able to achieve a better than **2:1** superiority over the Germans in personnel and lesser superiority in artillery and mortars; but Germans are superior in armor. (188)

then became “urgently necessary” to go over to the counteroffensive “w/o any pause.”
... (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow and Stalingrad*, 63-65)

b) Buildup of forces for offensive

- New armies created; forces shifted from Far East, etc.
These moves missed by German aerial reconnaissance
Stalin patiently husbands newly created reserves
(See, *Glantz, III:507-08*)
- The Red Army’s serious handicap in winter **41/42** was a shortage of transportation; there were only **8000** trucks available on the Moscow front, a totally inadequate number. (*Edwin P. Hoyt, Stalin’s War. Tragedy and Triumph, 1941-1945*, 96)
- **Oct-Dec 41**: Stalin methodically built up a reserve for the coming counterattack: **4** divisions were in reserve in **Oct 41**; **22** in **Nov 41**; and **44** in **Dec 41**. Despite the severe dislocation and the devastating losses inflicted by the *Wehrmacht* in the first six (**6**) months, the Soviets created a second new Red Army. In **Nov 41**, the Red Army stood at **3.4** million men and **1954** tanks at the front. (*Dunn, Stalin’s Keys to Victory*, 90)
- **30.11.41**: At end of **Nov 41**, the Red Army has in reserve **9** armies (**10, 26, 28, 39, 57, 58, 59, 60** and **61st**), w/ **59** rifle divisions and **17** cavalry divisions. At the front the Red Army has **219** divisions w/ **4,196,000** men, **32,194** artillery pieces, **1984** tanks and **3688** acft. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 174; *Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 161)
- **ca. 30.11.41**: In late **Nov 41**, Stalin gave West Front **9** rifle divisions, **2** cavalry divisions, **8** rifle bdes, **6** tank bdes, and **10** independent tank btns. . . Additionally, as the Germans were passing Klin, Stalin and the Stavka had begun setting up two [**2**] reserve armies to cover the gap that would be developing farther east. [Note: These reserve armies were, **1 Shock Army** and **20. Army**. See text for details.] . . . In the last week of **Nov 41**, the Stavka also began bringing **5** of the newly formed reserve armies forward from the line of the Volga River. Three – **24, 26** and **60 Armies** – were stationed east of Moscow, and one, **61 Army**, behind Southwest Front’s right flank. The other, **10 Army**, was deployed west of the Oka River, downstream from Kashira in position to block **2 Pz Army** thrusts toward Kolomna and Ryazan. The **10 Army**, under Golikov, was very typical of the ten [**10**] reserve armies. (For details see, *Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 59-60)⁴⁰⁴
- **Nov-Dec 41**: While the *Wehrmacht* conducted Operation „Taifun,“ the Stavka was frantically raising and deploying fresh reserves to counter the German onslaught. Straining every available resource, it fielded **10 additional field armies** during **Nov-Dec 41**, **6** of which were committed to combat in or adjacent to the Moscow region (**10, 26, 39, 1 Shock, 60** and **61 Armies**) during its **Nov 41** defense or during its **Dec 41** and **Jan 42** counteroffensives. Even though these fresh armies were only pale reflections of what Soviet military theory required them to be, their presence would prove the adage that *quantity has a quality of its own*. (*D. Glantz, Soviet-German War: Myths & Realities*, 21)
- **Nov-Dec 41**: The Russian Supreme Command inserted forces sufficient only to hold the line while they amassed forces for a counter-offensive immediately behind the front. Zhukov was

⁴⁰⁴ **Note:** Be careful – details differ from author to author on Soviet OOB, reserve armies, etc.

a master of military deception. He applied measures similar to those he had conducted as cdr of the First Mongolian Army Group in **1939** after the Japanese invasion of Mongolia. The formation successfully encircled and destroyed a Japanese force in a surprise assault on the River Khalkhin Gol. . . Zhukov transposed this Mongolian experience to camouflage preparations for the pending counter-offensive:

- Transport movements from the interior were cloaked in secrecy.
- Extensive reconnaissance was conducted alongside meticulous planning to enable the passage of large formations from their assembly areas to attack points.
- Strict security was applied to briefings on a „need to know basis.“
- Bogus signals, radio traffic and other disinformation methods were used to cloak the intent of the operation.
- Concentrations and all regrouping activity were conducted by night; officers carried out recon dressed in soldiers' uniforms and used lorries rather than distinctive cars and jeeps.
- Tanks, heavy wpns and other equipments were painstakingly camouflaged and dispersed.
- Artillery barrages were fired to disguise the noise of marching units and other methods employed to dampen engine noise.
- Applying barely sufficient and piecemeal resources to counter local German penetrations contributed to the overall deception; as a result, the steady Soviet build-up was misinterpreted as „last-ditch“ efforts to retain key ground.

(Sources: *R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 212-13; also, *Shukov, Erinnerungen*, Vol. 1, 186-90)

-- **Dec 41:** Die Rote Armee wurde gruendlich umgebaut u. diszipliniert, Fuehrungspersonal ruecksichtslos ausgewechselt. Entgegen deutschen Erwartungen gelang es ihm, die Kraefte des Landes zu mobilisieren. Bis zum Jahresende wurden ueber **300** Divisionen neu aufgestellt u. ausgeruestet. Mit ihnen wurden wankende Fronten gestuetzt, tiefgestaffelte neue Verteidigungslinien besetzt u. Reserven gebildet. Der strategisch bedeutsamste Schachzug war die Verlegung von **97** kampfstarken Divisionen aus dem Fernen Osten,⁴⁰⁵ die unter groesster Geheimhaltung eine Gegenoffensive vorbereiteten. (*R.-D. Mueller, Der letzte deutsche Krieg*, 101-03)

-- **Dec 41:** In early days of **Dec 41** a threat to Moscow at the two wings of the Western Front had finally ceased to exist – even though this result was achieved only by the employment of Soviet strategic reserves originally assembled for the execution of a counter-offensive. . . Nevertheless, by beginning of **Dec 41**, HQ [*Stavka*] had a strong strategic reserve at its disposal, despite the fact that great difficulties had been encountered in staffing the troops,

⁴⁰⁵ **Note:** This figure of **97** is clearly an exaggeration!

esp. w/ officers, in furnishing them w/ wpns, equipment, and transport, and in raising the standard of training to the requisite level. . . At beginning of **Dec 41**, **15** armies, **3** cavalry corps, and **1** airborne corps – in all **104** divisions – stood ready for attack. . . (Note: For new armies raised since **Oct 41**, totals of new divisions raised, transferred from interior, the Far East, etc., see, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 896-97).

- **1.12.41**: Between **Jul - 1 Dec 41**, the Red Army has mobilized **143** new rifle divisions and replaced **84** rifle divisions that were destroyed in combat. The Moscow Military District is the greatest source of recruits, supplying **26** divisions. Hence, the Red Army mobilization system is a „staggering success.“ (C. *Winchester*, Hitler's War on Russia, 60)
- **1.12.41**: By this date, Stalin has transferred **70** divisions from the Far East to the Moscow region [accurate?]; this after Soviet spy Richard Sorge in Tokyo had reported in mid-**Oct 41** that Japan is going to strike against US and UK interests in the Pacific, not against Russia. (*Kirchubel*, Barbarossa 1941, 70)
- **1.12.41**: Total strength of Red Army has risen to **343** divisions and **98** bdes, whose strength w/ replacements has increased to over **4** million men. Red Army operating forces include **230** rifle, **43** cavalry and **5** tank divisions, **1** mot. rifle division and **38** rifle, **5** airborne and **47** tank bdes. By now, the *Stavka* reserve includes **44** rifle and **14** cavalry divisions, **7** rifle bdes and **1** tank bde. (*Glantz*, Barbarossa, 161; 227, f.n. 4)
- **ca. 1.12.41**: Red Army forces along the entire eastern front and in reserve close behind would grow from **269** divisions and **65** bdes totaling **2.2** million men at beginning of **Nov 41**, to **343** divisions and **98** bdes w/ over **4** million men a month later – and most of these new troops man the Moscow sectors. (*Kirchubel*, Barbarossa 1941, 78)
- **5.12.41** [Correlation of forces]: It is clear that, even w/o [inclusion of] the reserve armies, the Soviet forces opposing AGC were relatively stronger on **5 Dec 41** than they had been in **Oct 41** when Operation „*Taifun*“ had begun. While AGC had not been able to replace its losses in troops and equipment, the Soviet armies in the Moscow sector had acquired a third more rifle divisions, five [5] times more cavalry divisions, twice as many artillery rgts, and two-and-a-half times as many tank bdes by **5 Dec 41** than they had had on **2 Oct 41**. (*Ziemke & Bauer*, Moscow to Stalingrad, 66)
- **5.-6.12.41**: According to official Soviet count, by **6 Dec 41** the three *fronts* (Kalinin, Western, Southwestern) had received **27** additional divisions, bringing their strength up to **1.1** million troops supported by **7652** guns and mortars, **774** tanks and **1000** acft. However, this count clearly overestimates Soviet strength.
In fact, formerly classified Soviet studies estimate Red Army effective combat strength on **5 Dec 41** at **388,000** combat troops supported by **5635** guns and mortars and **550** tanks opposing **240,000** German troops equipped w/ **5350** artillery pieces and **600** tanks. This documents the stark reality that *both sides were at the end of their tether*, and the opposing forces were often mere skeletons of their former selves.⁴⁰⁶ (See, *Glantz*, Barbarossa, 187-88)

⁴⁰⁶ **Note:** This is a key – and overlooked – reality of the Soviet winter counteroffensive: The relatively small number of troops involved in a struggle of such magnitude and importance to the outcome of the Second World War.

c) *Battle Plan and Objectives*

- Planning/objectives surprisingly modest (later to grow exponentially, to Russians detriment)
Goals were to clear the flanks – in south and north – to remove most immediate threat to Moscow (**III:507**; also, *Glantz, Barbarossa*, 187)
- Zhukov makes clear that the *original objectives* of the Soviet counter-offensive were really *quite modest* (given shortages of troops, tanks, etc.): “The best we could do at the time was to beat back the enemy as far as possible from Moscow and to inflict on him the greatest possible losses;” and again, “our idea was to reestablish the position which these fronts [i.e., Western, Kalinin, Bryansk Fronts] had held before the beginning of the ‘Typhoon’ operation. . .” (*G. K. Zhukov, “The Battle for Moscow,”* in: Soviet Generals Recall World War II, Igor Vitukhin (ed.),
- Soviet plan of attack: The plan for the offensive, laid down in outline by Supreme Command HQ, or more accurately by the general staff under Marshal Shaposhnikov, since **20 Nov 41**, then worked out in detail and endorsed by the commands of the three fronts, envisaged simultaneous attacks by the right and left wings of the Western Front, in co-operation w/ the Kalinin Front and the right wing of the Southwest Front. Its first, still limited objective was the routing of the enemy’s assault groupings threatening Moscow from the north and south. According to how the situation developed, an attempt was then to be made to force the enemy back frontally, and eventually to defeat him decisively. (For details of Soviet plan see, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 898-99)
- **30.11.41**: Using his reserves, Zhukov intends to strike at the flanks of Army Group Ctr, bringing about its encirclement and destruction. The northern wing, comprising **30, 1 Shock, 20 and 16 Armies**, is tasked w/ isolating and destroying **3 and 4 PzGr**. These armies are then to push west to Smolensk,⁴⁰⁷ where the southern pincer would also have penetrated the German front. This southern attack is to consist of **10 and 50 Armies**, whose task is to destroy **2 Pz Army**. In the centre, **4 Army** is to be pinned down on the Nara and prevented from transferring forces to the flanks by the attacks of **5, 33, 43 and 49** armies. The Soviets bring together **718,000**⁴⁰⁸ men on the Moscow axis, w/ **7985** artillery pieces and **720** tanks against the exhausted forces of Army Group Ctr. At this point, GFM v. Bock’s army group has been reduced to **801,000** men, **14,000** artillery pieces and **1000** tanks, many being inoperable due to the intense cold. There were also **615** acft, but again most are grounded due to weather and lack of supplies. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 172; also, *Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 272)
- **4.12.41**: This new concept [for the offensive] was more to Stalin’s liking. The offensives to be made by the two flanking fronts were to be carefully coordinated w/ that of West Front. In this way the plans for a much more ambitious counter-offensive were quickly built up. On **4 Dec 41**, Stalin told Zhukov that Konev and Timoshenko would definitely be taking part in the offensive, these flanking attacks to start on **5 and 6 Dec 41**, and he allocated to West Front additional air formations from the PVO (Anti-Acft Command) and the High Command Reserves. He had no further tank formations left. Yet Zhukov has stressed that, even at this point in the planning, far from being the grandiose master-stroke so often portrayed by historical writers, the offensive was still limited in its extent and had no aim other than that of

⁴⁰⁷ **Note:** I don’t believe Zhukov’s initial plan was this ambitious.

⁴⁰⁸ **Note:** Glantz – using previously classified Soviet accounts – puts actual size of Soviet force of all three fronts on Moscow axis at **388,000**. (See above.)

making Moscow safe by pushing the enemy back and gaining room for maneuver; at the most it was hoped to gain **40 miles** of territory; the flanking attacks were intended simply to threaten the enemy's communications and force him to withdraw. No one at that time would considered the destruction of AGC as even a remote possibility. Nor did Stalin, Zhukov or the General Staff expect the remarkable success which was to follow. (*A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 193-94)

d) *Deployment of forces / Order of Battle*

-- Discuss

Paucity of artillery and armor

(See, **III:496**, for detailed list of Soviet equipment captured by Germans from **22.6.-20.12.41**; includes over **25,000** artillery pieces!. According to Mawdsley, Soviets began the war w/ **33,200** artillery pieces, and lost **24,400** in six months. See, Thunder in the East, 194)

Disparate quality of attacking forces

Lack of training and experience, poorly equipped (in some cases), commanders wanting in tactical/operational arts

These realities would create immediate problems.

-- **1.12.41**: The battle for men, as opposed to that for machines, Stalin appeared to have won: on **1 Dec 41**, there were **219** Soviet rifle divisions on the entire front (as opposed to **213** in **Oct 41**). In addition to the two armies already committed at the front (**1 Shock** and **20 Army**), the Stavka had nine [9] new armies (including **10 Army**) assigned to Zhukov on **1 Dec 41** – the **26, 28, 39, 57, 58, 59, 60** and **61**, a grand total of **59** rifle divisions and **17** cavalry divisions, deployed or concentrating in a great arc running from Vyterga – Kostroma – Gorkii – Saratov – Stalingrad – Astrakhan. Machines and equipment were not in such abundance (and even the great surge in totals of formations was misleading: **10 Army** w/ its **10** divisions was only **80 000** strong, the reinforced divisions of **3 Army** amounted to **2190** men and in **13 Army** to **2850** men, while the **11** divisions of the right wing of South-West Front totaled no more than **60 000** men).

The refurbished divisions of the Red Army just about equaled the decimated formations of Army Group Centre. The large tank formations which Zhukov needed to make the breakthroughs he envisaged [i.e., during the impending Soviet counter-offensive against AGC] were almost totally lacking; **3** tank and **3** mot. rifle divisions attached to Western Front had almost no armor. . .

Of all the shortages, that of time itself was of fundamental importance. There were only hours in which to assemble large formations, as the margins narrowed critically at the beginning of **Dec 41**. There was not enough time to train all the forces engaged. . . All armies had to rely on their divisional artillery, which had been drastically reduced in the recent heavy fighting; those w/ even half left were lucky. Zhukov's command had **9** engineer and **5** bridging btns subordinated to it, but many more were needed. . .

Strength and equipment of the Soviet forces of the three [3] fronts committed to offensive operations as from **5-6 Dec 41**, was this: [see text for breakdown of forces of the three fronts] The margins were, on this inspection, fearfully narrow. . . (For more details see, *J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 269-73)

e) **German intelligence wanting (FHO)**

- **Dec 41:** Analysis of radio intercepts gave the Germans a clear picture of the Russian order of battle. (*G. Blau, German Campaign in Russia*, 99)
- **2.12.41:** During late **Nov-Dec 41** Stalin was desperately trying, in his efforts to save Moscow, to wrest the initiative from the enemy wherever Soviet troops were in contact, from Lake Ladoga in the north to the Straits of Kerch in the south. It came as an unpleasant discovery to the **OKH** when irrefutable intelligence was received that even the enemy in the flanking theaters was being reinforced, for on **2 Dec 41**, **29** troop-trains were counted on the move westwards towards Tikhvin, while three [3] new armies from Iran had arrived on the shores of the Straits of Kerch ready to make a sea-borne landing on the Crimea.⁴⁰⁹ (*A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 176)
- **4.12.41:** *Fremde Heere Ost* assessment of this day – Red Army too exhausted to attack!
Germans preparing to go into winter quarters
 4. Army one of few (only?) major front line units in good shape in this respect
 Well-prepared positions along Nara River, etc.

f) **Soviet Counteroffensive begins**⁴¹⁰ (**first phase – 5.-16.12.41**)

Miscellaneous Notes / Summaries:

- Begin w/ “*Stimmungsbild*” for some “color?:” World events; Berlin & Moscow, etc.

Note: For brief (ca. **10 pp.**) overview see, *Glantz, Barbarossa*, 189, ff.; for another good overview see, *J. Huerter, Hitlers Heerfuehrer*, 319-20; **IX:106**)

Note: For another good overview see, **FMS P-190**, in: **VI:116-17**)
(With this source see also, *Marschleistungen AGC* in **Dec 41**)

- **Note:** Very good overview from second phase of German “*Taifun*” offensive (from **15.11.41**) thru Soviet winter counteroffensive; lots of key dates/events noted; average daily rate of movement of Soviet Western Front from **6 - 25 Dec 41** ranged from about **4-15 km/day** (*H. S. Orenstein* (trans.), Soviet Documents on the Use of War Experience. Vol. III: Military Operations 1941 and 1942)

Note: For details on theoretical German *unit frontages* – which I can compare w/ *actual* frontages – see, *Wilhelm Necker, The German Army of To-Day, 1943*, 175-76)

Crux: Firrst phase of Soviet counteroffensive (ca. **5.-16 Dec 41**)

Succeeds in banishing German threat from both flanks enveloping Moscow
Succeeds beyond expectations of Stalin, Zhukov, STAVKA
Soviet gains (outline)
(See, **III:517**, ff.)

⁴⁰⁹ **Note:** How can one reconcile intelligence such as this w/ FHO assessment of **4 Dec 41**?

⁴¹⁰ **Note:** For summaries of Soviet counteroffensive (**Dec 41 – Mar 42**) see, **III:509-11**).

Note: The Soviet winter counteroffensive has been “distorted w/ images of warmly clad Siberian troops riding into battle on hundreds of **T-34** tanks but in fact, it was the *Soviet cavalry* that played the most significant role in the initial phase of the counteroffensive.” Only *small amounts of armor* committed to first phase of attack, and most of these were light tanks. (See, *Robert Forczyk, Moscow 1941*, 88)

Note: In their counteroffensive, Soviet forces operate in familiar terrain, close to their bases, on interior lines. Before the first of the year [1942], Army Group Center is forced back generally to the line from which it had launched its final offensive late in **Nov 41**. . . Too weak to maintain a continuous line, the Germans pull back their units into a series of hedgehog defenses around key communications ctrs. Despite the deep enemy penetrations and the dropping of a number of Soviet airborne detachments in and behind German lines, the fiercely held German strong points deny important areas to the Soviets and force them to spread their offensive strength thin. Several of the hedgehogs are cut off for weeks at a time and can only be supplied from the air, but all are held. Thus, a disaster is averted. (*Howell, Soviet Partisan Movement*, 34-36)

Note: In reality, the **Dec 41** counteroffensive, which ended in early **Jan 42**, consisted of a series of consecutive and then simultaneous multi-army ops whose cumulative effect was to drive German forces back from the immediate approaches to Moscow. During initial phase of this counteroffensive, right wing and center of Zhukov’s Western Front (spearheaded by the new **1 Shock Army** and a cavalry corps) drove **3** and **4 PzGr** westward from the northern outskirts of Moscow thru Klin to the Volokolamsk region. Soon after, Konev’s Kalinin Front seized Kalinin and advanced to the northern outskirts of Rzhev. To the south, Western Front’s left wing (including the new **10 Army** and a cavalry corps under General P.A. Belov) sent Guderian’s **2 Pz Army** reeling westward in disorder from Tula. Subsequently, the Western and Southwestern Fronts (including new **61 Army**) nearly encircled major elements of German **4 Army** near Kaluga, split this army away from **2 Pz Army** by a deep thrust to Mosal’sk and Sukhinichi, and pushed German **2 Army** southward toward Orel. . . (*D. Glantz, Soviet-German War: Myths & Realities*, 22)

- In south, Red Army forces would experience even greater success [than in north]. There Zhukov’s left flank armies attempt to carry out similar pincer movement against Guderian’s **2. Panzer Army**. (Details see, *Glantz, Barbarossa*, 199, ff.)
- German withdrawal for most part orderly & w/o panic on both flanks
Most German units manage to avoid – often just barely! - encirclement
Some panic (“Tross” mostly)

Chronology of Events:

- **Note:** For the effective Soviet combat strength as of **6 Dec 41** – based on previously classified Soviet documents – see, *Glantz, Barbarossa*, 187-88; 229, f.n. 19. Glantz illustrates that previous Soviet studies had dramatically overestimated both Red Army and German strength along the Moscow axis. As Glantz writes: “This documents the *stark reality that both sides were at the end of their tether*, and the opposing forces were often mere skeletons of their former selves.” He provides many examples of just how depleted the opposing Soviet-German forces were.
- **5.12.41:** Die sowjet. „Kalininfront“ (Konjew) beginnt ihre Gegenoffensive. Konjew verfuegt ueber die **22, 39, 31 u. 29 Armeen**. Der OB der H.Gr.Mitte befiehlt den **PzGr 2 u. 3** die Ein-

stellung ihrer Angriffe u. den Rueckzug auf eine von Istra bis ostwaerts Klin verlaufende Linie. Er billigte den Entschluss Guderians, den Angriff auf Tula einzustellen u. den vorspringenden Frontbogen zu räumen. Der **ObdH** [Brauchitsch] reicht seinen Abschied ein. (A. Hillgruber, *Chronik*, in: *OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 1239)

- **5.-6.12.41:** On same day the German offensive “irredeemably broke down,” the Soviet counterattack begins. By the following day (**6.12.41**), **100** divisions along a **200**-mile front have fallen upon the exhausted soldiers of Army Group Ctr. (Kershaw, Hitler, 442; Irving, Hitler’s War, 350)

- **5.-6.12.41:** On the night of **5 Dec 41**, Konev’s Kalinin Front attacked across the frozen upper Volga. At first resistance was fierce except in front of Maj.-Gen. Yushkevich’s 31 Army which, moving forward rapidly, penetrated Strauss’s **9 Army** and took Turginovo 20 miles in the German rear. The next day, the right flank of Zhukov’s West Front took up the offensive and, after heavy artillery and aerial bombardments in which **700** tactical support acft took part, attacked Reinhardt’s and Hoepner’s **3** and **4 PzGr** immediately to the north of Moscow. Kuznetsov’s **1 Shock Army**, Rokossovsky’s **16 Army** and Lelyushenko’s **30 Army**, recently reinforced by six [6] Siberian and Ural divisions, began to move across the Kalinin-Moscow railway. To the surprise of the attacking troops, the Germans fell back about **15 miles** to the west. . . (A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow, 194-95)

- **5.-6.12.41:** The Red Army counteroffensive before Moscow begins at first light on **5 Dec 41** in the Kalinin Front’s sector and, over the next two [2] days, spreads inexorably across the entire front from Kalinin southward to Kastornoe. The counterattack began in the north early on Friday, **5 Dec 41**, when the temperature was minus **15** degrees Fahrenheit (**-26 C**) and the snow more than a meter deep. The **29** and **31 Armies** of Konev’s Kalinin Front attack the northern flank of the Klin bulge and are joined by **5 Army** at **1600** hours. Attacking west and east of Kalinin at **0330** hours, **29** and **31 Armies** make only limited progress against prepared defenses of **9 Army**. The next day [**6 Dec 41**], **30**, **1 Shock** and Vlasov’s **20 Armies**⁴¹¹ strike from positions north and south of Dmitrov on the Volga-Moscow Canal. Penetrating **3 Pz Gr** defenses, **8 Tank Bde** and **365 RD** [both **30 Army**] advance **13 km** and approach Klin from the NE.

- German resistance at Klin is fierce, for control of its road junction is vital to Reinhardt’s ability to withdraw forward elements of his panzer group from Dmitrov and Solnechnogorsk, where they are under heavy assault by **1 Shock** and **20 Armies**. Therefore, after notifying Bock of his intentions, at noon on **6 Dec 41** Reinhardt orders his **1**, **2**, **6** and **7 PDs** and **14 ID (mot)** to conduct a fighting withdrawal back to Klin against the advancing **1 Shock** and **20 Armies**. But this means that the left flank of Hoepner’s **4 PzGr** will soon be uncovered. (Glantz, Barbarossa, 189)

- **5.-13.12.41:** The counter-offensive at Moscow was opened on **5 Dec 41** by the two armies of the left wing of the Kalinin Front; on following two days they were joined by the attacking armies of the right and left wings of the Western Front and the right wing of Southwest Front. While the Soviet assault formations . . . succeeded in breaking into the German defenses almost everywhere, the development of the attack did not at first fulfill HQ’s [Stavka’s] expectations. The pace of advance was generally slight, and the Soviet cdrs still had *little experience of executing offensive ops*. Thus, until **13 Dec 41**, when Western Front command expressly prohibited that kind of operation, they would *mostly attack frontally along the*

⁴¹¹ **Note:** These are armies of Zhukov’s Western Front.

roads, failing to realize that what mattered was to bypass points of enemy resistance and drive as deeply as possible into the enemy's flank and rear.

Yet by the middle of the second week of **Dec 41**, they had achieved some appreciable success at several points of the **500-km** front between Kalinin and Yeletz. In the northern sector, **31 Army** crossed the Kalinin-Turginovo road; on **9 Dec 41**, **30 Army** reached Klin; **1 Assault Army** recaptured Yakhroma; **20 Army** recaptured Krasnaya Polyana and on **10 Dec 41** reached the approaches of Solnechnogorsk, while **16 Army** took Kryukovo. On the southern sector, where preparations for the offensive could not be completed in time, **10 Army** succeeded at the first attempt in capturing Mikhaylov and Serebryanye Prudy, thereby cutting the Kashira-Pavelets railway line; on **8 Dec 41**, **1 Gds Cav Corps** took Mordves and Venev; **13 Army**, attacking on both sides of Yelets in co-operation w/ General Kostenko's mobile group, succeeded in encircling German forces in that area and in capturing Yelets on **9 Dec 41**. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 899-900)

- **6.12.41: Wetter:** Starker Frost, zum groessten Teil klar, bis zu **38** [Grad] Kaelte. (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 796-97)
- **6.12.41:** Die sowjet. „Westfront“ (Shukow) tritt zum Gegenoffensive an. Shukow verfuegt ueber **47** Schuetzen-Div., **36** Schuetzen-Brig., **10** NKWD-Brig., **3** Kav.-Div. u. **15** Pz.-Brig.: **30**, **1** Stoss, **20**, **16**, **5**, **33**, **43**, **49**, **50** Armeen, **1** Garde-Kav-Korps u. **10** Armee. (Die meisten Armeen entsprechen in ihrer Staerke deutschen Armee-Korps. (*A. Hillgruber, Chronik*, in: *OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 1239)
- **6.12.41:** The Red Army's counterblow, when it came, was not elegant. The main Soviet effort on **6 Dec 41** was a head-on attack by four [4] armies of the Western Front: **16**, **20**, **1 Shock** and **30 Armies**. In the south, **10** and **50 Armies**, supported by the Belov Group, were thrown against Guderian. *There seems to have been no formal overall plan*, although Zhukov sent the Stavka a map outlining what he wanted to do with Western Front, and Stalin approved that. . . The important thing is that the Germans were caught by surprise. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 116; 447, f.n. 82)
- **6.12.41:** The **30**, **1 Shock** and **20 armies** begin to counterattack north of Moscow along the Moscow – Volga Canal and near Krasnaya Polyana. Elements of **30 Army** penetrate forward positions of **3 PzGr** and push eight (8) miles along the road to Klin from the NE. Further attacks by **1 Shock** and **20 armies** at Dmitrov and Solnechnogorsk hit **3 PzGr** hard. Elements of **1 Shock Army** fight their way into Yakhroma. Under intense pressure, the **1**, **2**, **6**, and **7 PD** and **14 Mot** of the panzer group begin a fighting withdrawal to Klin, threatening to expose the left wing of **4 PzGr**. Heavy fighting at Krasnaya Polyana, where **20 Army** also attacks **3 PzGr**. In the south, **10 Army** marches directly into battle, striking Guderian's panzer army on its southern wing and pushing towards Michailov and Novomoskovsk. **17 PD** struggles to hold off Soviet attacks south of Kashira, but by end of the day is threatened as **2 Gds Cav Corps** cuts the Mordves – Venev road. With the collapse of his right wing imminent, Guderian orders his army to fall back to defensive positions on the Don, Shat and Upa rivers. South of **2 Pz Army**, Soviet **13 Army** hits **2 Army** near Yelets. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 181-82)
- **6.-7.12.41:** Having received a request during the night of **6 Dec 41** to approve **3** and **4 PzGr**'s and **2 Pz Army**'s withdrawals then in progress, Hitler agrees on the morning of the **7th** to let **3** and **4 PzGr** straighten their lines but says nothing about **2 Pz Army** or the AGC situation in general. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 69)

- **6.-8.12.41:** The Soviet **30**, **1 Shock** and **20 Armies** join the battle north of Moscow on **6 Dec 41**, while the **10** and **13 Armies** go into action against Guderian's forces south of the city the same day. The forces in the center and on the right flank of Rokossovsky's **16 Army** and Kostenko's Operational Group far to the south attack on **7 Dec 41**; and, finally, Rokossovsky's remaining forces, Operational Group Belov and the **3** and **50 Armies** join the fray on **8 Dec 41**. By that time, combat is raging along the Kalinin, Klin, Solnechnogorsk, Istra, Tula and Elets axes. The Stavka's highest priority goal at this time [early **Dec 41**] is to eliminate the threatening German pincers north and south of Moscow. (*Glantz*, *Barbarossa*, 189)
- **6.-8.12.41:** [**3 PzGr** at Klin]: Zhukov has assembled **3** armies (**1 Shock**, **20** and **30 Armies**) for a concentric attack toward Klin. Even allowing for the depleted state of divisions on both sides, these **3** Soviet armies outnumber **3 PzGr** by at least 3:1 in manpower and 2:1 in tanks. The Soviet soldiers, moreover, were warmly clad in quilted parkas and snow boots, while many of the tanks were the formidable **T 34s**. The heaviest blow fell initially on **36 ID (mot)**, north of Klin in **LVI PzK** sector; the overstretched German lines there buckled in less than **36** hours, w/ Soviet troops on snowshoes and skis breaking thru between Rogachev and Borshchevo on **7 Dec 41**. A morning attack on Schaal's HQ at Bolshoye-Shchapovo on **8 Dec 41** was barely beaten back, and „the general himself was lying behind a lorry w/ his carbine firing aimed single rounds,“ according to Paul Carell.

About noon the same day, Red Army troops retake Spas-Zaulok and Yamuga, just **5** miles north of Klin. The only major road thru which the **3 PzGr** could hope to retreat out of danger ran directly thru Klin. The Soviets were now well w/in artillery range, although the relative weakness of the Red Army's artillery park around Moscow ruled out effective interdiction fire. For several days, it appears Reinhardt's two corps (**XLI** and **LVI PzK**) might be encircled („bagged“), but Reinhardt read the situation correctly and made the only choice that could possibly stave off disaster. . . The **XLI PzK** now controlled exactly four [4] tanks [!]. (For more details – and comments on Model's effective albeit brutal leadership – see, *Newton*, Hitler's Commander, 159-62; *Reinhardt*, Wende vor Moskau, 317; also, *Goerlitz*, Model, 104-05)

- **6.-12.12.41:** Am **6. Dez 41** begann die russ. Grossoffensive mit dem Ziel der Vernichtung der H.Gr.Mitte. Es gelang den Russen die Front der **2 Pz Armee** zu durchstossen. An beiden Fluegeln der **2 Pz Armee** drangen die sowj. **50** u. die **10 Armee** mit schnellen Verbaenden ins Hinterland der Frontlinie vor. . . **2 Armee:** Die Sowjets warfen die **95** u. **45 ID** nach Norden zurueck, erzielten den Durchbruch u. standen ploetzlich nur **12** km vor Livny. Die Gegenangriffe der **2 Armee** auf die sowj. Spitzengruppen, um sie abzuschneiden, misslang. Die **2 Armee** wie auch die **2 Pz Armee** lief nun Gefahr, von allen Versorgungs- u. Rueckzugswegen abgeschnitten zu werden. Am **10. Dez 41** war die Lage fuer die **2 Armee** so kritisch, das General Schmidt sich in einem Hilferuf an die H.Gr.Mitte wandte u. um die sofortige Unterstellung von mindestens vier [4] Divisionen bat, da er sonst mit seinen sieben [7] schwachen Divisionen, deren Kampfkraft er auf hoechstens vier [4] Divisionen veranschlagte, den Frontabschnitt von 300 km nicht halten koenne. . .

Da aber an allen Abschnitten der Ostfront kritische Lagen herrschten, waren Reserven nicht vorhanden. . . Auch alles Versuche der **2 Armee** die Verbindung zum **XXXIV AK** der **2 Pz Armee**, welches durch den schnellen Vorstoss der Sowjets unter Kostenko eingeschlossen war, herzustellen, blieben erfolglos. So wurde ein ganzes Armeekorps mit **3** Divisionen zum groessten Teil zerschlagen. Die Folge solcher niederschmettender Ereignisse fuehrte in der

2 Armee voruebergehend zu einem Absinken der Moral. Laut KTB des **AOK 2** vom **12.12.41** sah sich der sonst so human agierende General Schmidt als O.B. der Armee schliesslich zu dem Befehl veranlasst: „Einzelne Leute, die defaitistische Reden fuehren, herauszugreifen u. exemplarisch umzulegen.“ Ein solcher Befehl hoert sich zwar hart an, war aber in diesem Falle eher als Warnung gedacht. (*Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 137-39)

- **7.12.41 [Klin]**: Kuznetsov's **1 Shock** and Vlasov's **20 Armies** press westward in the Iakhroma and Krasnaia Poliana sectors early on **7 Dec 41**. Although they make only slow progress (**1 to 1.5 km** per day), they generate a massive traffic jam among Reinhardt's forces which, under the most trying conditions, are struggling to reach Klin before Soviet troops cut off their withdrawal routes.⁴¹² To increase Reinhardt's misery, Rokossovky's **16 Army** also goes into action on **7 Dec 41**; by nightfall, the most serious threat to Reinhardt's panzer group is Leliushenko's **30 Army**, whose lead elements are only **8 km** from Klin. That night Bock puts out a call for „even for the last bicyclist“ to assist Reinhardt. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 190-91)

- **7.12.41: Front vor Moskau**: An der Suedfront bis zur Autobahn nur Spaehtrupp u. Artl.-Taetigkeit.⁴¹³ Auf der ganzen uebrigen Front Angriffe des Feindes, die er mit Artl.- u. Raketengeschuetz-Unterstuetzung durchfuehrte. Auch Bomben- u. Schlachtflieger setzte er mehrfach ein. Noerdl. Moskau setzten sich eigene Teile in die Linie **10 km** westl. des Moskwa-Kanals ab. . . Wetter: Nachlassen des Frostes, **15-20 Grad** Kaelte, strichweise Schnee. (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 798)⁴¹⁴

- **7.12.41 [4 Armee]**: Suedlich Moskau beschraenkte sich die Kampftaetigkeit wegen des strengen Frostes **-33 Grad** auf Artl.-Feuer, kleinere oertliche Angriffe u. Zerschlagen feindlicher Panzeransammlungen. Noerdlich Moskau war die Kampfhandlungen lebhafter. . . (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 72)

- **7.12.41 [11 PD]**: Nachdem die sowj. Truppen am **7. Dez 41** genau **9.00 Uhr**, nach vorangegangener Artillerievorbereitung u. mit Unterstuezung von Flugzeugen auf breiter Front in rollenden Einsaetzen angriffen u. von der **11 PD** *nur noch unter Einsatz letzter Reserven* an Panzern, Pionieren u. Schuetzen abgewehrt werden konnten, wurde ab **17.00 Uhr** des **7. Dez 41** die Zuruecknahme der Front befohlen. Nahezu hohnvoll lautete das Stichwort fuer den ersten Rueckzug der **11 PD**: WEIHNACHTSURLAUB – ERSTER REISETAG! (*G. Schrodek, 11. Pz.-Div.* 291)

- **7.-8.12.41 [Klin]**: The battle of the Klin bulge w/ the attempt to destroy **3 and 4 PzGr** was fully engaged by **7 Dec 41**, when at noon Soviet units from Lelyushenko's **30 Army** suddenly burst out to the NE of Klin, right on top of **56 PzK** HQ. Klin, much more a townlet

⁴¹² **Note:** A great passage in *Ziemke & Bauer* (p 70) addresses Reinhardt's attempt to withdraw on this day, 7 Dec 41. Notes that, due to weather, his panzer group has already abandoned **15 tanks**, **3 heavy howitzers**, a half-dozen AA guns and dozens of trucks and passenger cars – “more material than would ordinarily be lost in a weeks heavy fighting. Troops could not tow the guns out of their emplacements. The motors of some vehicles would not start; the grease on the bearing[s?] and in transmissions in others froze while they were running.”

⁴¹³ **Note:** I believe this is **4 Army** sector, which Zhukov, while pinning, won't attack until mid-**Dec 41**. See “Lageost” maps.

⁴¹⁴ **Note:** From this point thru end of 1941, the entries in OKW KTB are, more specifically, “OKW Lageberichte.” See, p. 797, f.n. 1.

than a town, assumed significance out of all proportion to its size, for it was the linch pin of **3 PzGr** and the *hinge of the entire left wing of AGC*. The following noon (**8 Dec 41**), the danger of **3 PzGr** being cut off grew visibly, w/ Lelyushenko sweeping past Klin to the north, severing the Moscow – Kalinin highway, pressing down on Klin itself from Yamuga: only one road lay open to the west and the river Lama line. (*J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 274)

- **7.-9.12.41 [2 Army]**: German **2 Army** held a front of **180** miles, which was longer than that held by any other army in the east. It had **7** divisions w/ **25** miles of front for each, nearly **2** miles for every company [!]. [Yet it was] all that was standing before Kursk, its chief (and only) railhead, and Orel, **2 Pz Army**'s chief (and only) railhead. On **7 Dec 41**, **2 Army** stopped after taking Yelets, the last town of any consequence within **50** miles. The army's cdr, General Schmidt, proposed in the next several days to devastate a 10-mile strip parallel to his entire line and then pull back behind that ready-made no-man's-land to settle in for the winter. The next day [**8 Dec 41**]. . . at the **2 Army** centre south of Yelets, in snow and rain that froze when it hit the stone-cold ground, a half-dozen Soviet tanks created a hole between **45** and **95 ID**, and a Soviet cavalry division galloped through. The two German divisions' SP assault guns could barely negotiate the ice, and by next morning after heavy fresh snow had fallen and blown in drifts during the night, they could not move at all, which was almost immaterial since both divisions had by then also run out of motor fuel. In another day [**9 Dec 41**], two [2] more cavalry divisions and a rifle division had opened the gap to **16** miles and had driven a **50-mile** deep wedge NW toward Novosil and Orel. . . Schmidt told Bock that **2 Army** was about to be cut in two and driven back on Kursk and Orel, leaving an **85-mile** gap in between. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 74)
- **8.12.41 [2 Armee]**: **9 PD** erreichte im Vorgehen Marmyschi. . . Staerkere fdl. Angriffe suedl. u. noerdl. Welez mit Fliegerunterstuetzung, die noch anhalten. Bei **XXXV** Hoeh.Kdo. nur Spaechtrupptaetigkeit. Durch starken Frost bis **-38** Grad Ausfaelle an Frosterkrankten. Bei einem Rgt. allein **215**, davon **103 Amputationen**. Einige Verwundete auf Ruecktransport erfroren. . . (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 74)
- **8.12.41**: In the absence of any meaningful reinforcements, over Reinhardt's objections, v. Bock has no choice but to subordinate **3 PzGr** to **4 PzGr** (and thus **4 Army**) since, as he reasons, it will make both Hoepner and Kluge more responsive to Reinhardt's needs. For the moment, however, the priority task of all three cdrs is to *extract Reinhardt's panzer group from the Klin region* so that Hoepner can withdraw and, in turn, protect Kluge's right flank. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 192-93)
- **8.12.41**: On **8 Dec 41** enemy attacks became so strong that Bock had to consider a withdrawal on the left wing and as far as the centre of **4 Army** to a shortened line from Ruza via Volokolamsk to Staritsa, which would involved great losses of material and equipment. All armies reported that the envisaged positions could not be held w/ available infantry forces. They – and esp. **2 Army**, whose C-in-C, General Schmidt, was aware that *his position was the most critical point of the entire front* – demanded the immediate bringing up of reserves and replacements. . . In addition to this extremely weak point on the front [i.e., **2 Army**], the area around Kalinin, where strong enemy penetrations had to be expected, was important for the Luftwaffe because of the large quantity of immobile material and non-airworthy acft there. But even at this point help could be provided only in the form of an *ad hoc* MG Btn of **255 ID**. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 708-09, f.n. 583; also, *KTb H.Gr.Mitte*, 8.12.41)

- **8.12.41:** On [this day], when the Russians passed westward across the Klin-Kalinin railline and bore down to within **2 or 3 miles** of the Klin road junction that was crowded w/ miles-long columns of **3 PzGr** vehicles, Bock began trying to scrape reserves out of the front. All he could get from **3 PzGr** was a single inf. btn. **OKH** told him not to expect replacement btns before mid-**Jan 42** because the railroads could not handle them until then. When he asked Halder for trained divisions not replacements, Halder replied that **OKH** did not have any. Such divisions would have to come from the Western Theater that was under **OKW**. Desperate to do something, Bock put **3 PzGr** under **4 PzGr** that was itself under **4 Army**. **3 PzGr** saw this action as an *abdication of the army group's responsibility* for the panzer group; Bock said he thought it would make Hoepner and Kluge more inclined to help **3 PzGr**. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 71-73)
- **8.12.41:** Bock did not know it yet on [this day], but he was about to have greater trouble on his south flank. Guderian's **2 Pz Army** had started the complicated job of reducing the bulge east of Tula, which in just two days cost **2 Pz Army** many vehicles and guns which had to be abandoned. One corps alone had **1500 frostbite cases**, **350** requiring amputations. Supplies were not getting to the panzer army's railhead at Orel because, as was happening all up and down the front, only the insulated Soviet-built locomotives could hold steam in the below-zero cold. The army group had promised to fly in diesel oil and gasoline on the **8th**, but had to divert the airplanes to **3 PzGr**. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 73)
- **8.12.41:** By late **8 Dec 41**, Red Army forces have advanced from **3** to **20** km along a **290** km (**174-mile**) front, but the advance is uneven [highlights]:
- Leliushenko's **30 Army** hung threateningly over Reinhardt's left flank, and, with it Klin, while
 - Kuznetsov's **1 Shock**, Vlasov's **20** and Rokossovsky's **16 Armies** are compressing German forces back toward Klin and Istra from the east and south.
 - To the north, Konev's forces have achieved only mixed success.
 - Attacking east of Kalinin, Iushkevich's **31 Army** has achieved significant success. His forces have captured a bridgehead over the Volga and penetrated **10-12** km, severing the Kalinin-Turginovo road and threatening to envelop German forces in Kalinin from the east. So serious is the threat that Strauss, **9 Army** cdr, shifts two [2] divisions SE of Kalinin to contain Iushkevich's advance.

(Source: *Glantz, Barbarossa*, 194)

- **8.-9.12.41:** Guderian had hoped to hang his right wing on the Upper Don – Shat river line, which was at least fortified, but this hope was literally blown to pieces w/ the offensive mounted by the right wing of South-Western Front, when Soviet **13 Army** and Moskalenko's operational group smashed in the front of German **2 Army** on both sides of Yelets to Guderian's south. Moskalenko took Yelets on the morning of **9 Dec 41**. Kreizer's **3 Army** to the north, exploiting **13 Army** successes further south, jumped off on **8 Dec 41** for Yefremov: the **3** and **13 Armies** co-operated in reducing the Yefremov – Yelets area, while German **34 AK** was crushed in the Yelets – Livny region. . . With his right flank flopping in the air, Guderian was obliged to pull back to the Plava **50** miles to the west, a movement which

unhinged Guderian's panzer army from the German **4 Army** to the north, leaving a gap of some 20 miles staring out between Kaluga and Belev. The Soviet success at Yelets had opened up the possibility of a drive on Orel. . . (*J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 275-76; for early successes vs. Guderian see also, **III:524**)

- **8.-11.12.41** [Klin]: Klin schien hier das Ziel zu sein. Ging es verloren, war der Masse der **3 PzGr** der Rueckzug abgeschnitten. Ueber Klin fuehrte der einzigste Weg nach Westen. Am **8.12.41** war der Gegner an der Strasse von Klin zum Wolga-Staubecken, etwa **20** km von der Stadt, ueber die Strasse nach Westen vorgekommen. Am **9.12.41** stand er, von Norden kommend, gemaess Meldung des Bfh. der **3 PzGr** „vor den Toren der Stadt.“ Der versuchte Lufttransport nach Klin scheiterte sehr bald ganz, da der Flugplatz unter Artillerie- u. Granatwerferfeuer kam. . . Im Lauf des **11.12.41** gelang es, die Strasse westl. Klin freizukaempfen. Noch immer standen zu diesem Zeitpunkt aber die Hauptteile der **3 PzGr** ostw. Klin. (*de Beaulieu, „Sturm auf Moskau*,” Teil II, 429-30)
- **9.12.41**: Die **13** sowjet. **Armee** (nur **11 000** Mann u. **72** Geschuetze) erobert Jelez zurueck. (*A. Hillgruber, Chronik*, in: *OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 1241)
- **9.12.41**: Problems in tactical execution of Soviet offensive
On **9 Dec 41** Zhukov issues new directive, demanding better tactics (i.e., strike at German flanks, don't simply attack head on! See, **III:536**)
(For Zhukov's complete order see, *Glantz, Barbarossa*, 194; for more details on tactical execution see, Parrish, Michael (ed.), *Battle for Moscow: The 1942 Soviet General Staff Study*) (summary in my “*Biblio*”)
- **9.12.41**: On this day, it became clear that **2 Pz Army** would be able to hold the envisaged line between the Don and the Shat for a short time only and that a withdrawal to a line from Korovinka via Dedilovo and Tula to Aleksin would then have to be planned. The focus of the defense in sector of **4 Army** was Klin, where a counter-attack by **2 PD** was to bring the situation under control on **11 Dec 41**.⁴¹⁵ . . . (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 709)
- **9.12.41**: Gegen den fdl. Durchbruchversuch noerdl. Klin hatte ein Gegenangriff⁴¹⁶ anfaenglich Erfolg u. warf den Feind ueber die Sestra zurueck. Vor ueberlegendem Feinddruck musst aber die Angriffsgruppe anscheinend wieder auf Klin zurueckgenommen werden. Eine Wiederholung des Gegenangriffs wurde eingeleitet. Seit dem Nachmittag ist der Feind im Angriff bis zum Strassenknie **15** km suedl. Kalinin durchgestossen. . . Gegen Kalinin fuehlt der Feind nur mit schwachen Kraefte vor. Wetter: Zwischen minus **5** u. **0** Grad. Teilw. Tauwetter, Glatteis. (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 805-06)
- **9.12.41**: In south, Russians are menacing Guderian's main line of supply – the Orel – Tula highway by this day. Guderian's Tula position forms a salient; on its opposite face Soviet **50** and **10 Armies** succeed in separating Guderian from Kluge's **4. Army** and driving both away from Moscow's approaches – a displacement widened after **16.12.41**, when Soviet **33 & 43 Armies** join in (**III:530**)

⁴¹⁵ **Note:** Did counterattack by **11. PD** restore the situation?

⁴¹⁶ **Note:** German doctrine was to counterattack at once to recapture lost ground and restore HKL. Germans counterattacked constantly w/ any forces they could scrape together.

- **9.-12.12.41:** Over these several days, Zhukov's right flank armies tighten the noose around Klin, as an increasingly desperate Reinhardt struggles to extract his forces from the looming trap:

Discipline was breaking down. More and more soldiers are heading west on foot w/o wpns, leading a calf on a rope or pulling a sled loaded w/ potatoes. The road is under constant air attack. Those killed by bombs are no longer being buried. All the hanger-ons (corps troops, Luftwaffe, supply trains) are pouring to the rear in full flight. Without rations, freezing, irrationally they are pushing back Vehicle crews that do not want to wait out the traffic jams in the open are drifting off the roads and into the villages. Ice, inclines and bridges create horrendous blockages. Traffic control is working day and night and barely maintaining some movement. The panzer group has reached its most dismal hour.

By late on **12 Dec 41**, the **30** and **1 Shock Armies** are closing in on Klin from the north and east, while **20 Army** captures Solnechnogorsk and **16 Army** [captures] Istra. German forces blow up the dam at the Istra Reservoir, „inundating man, beast and equipment“ and forming a **60-metre (65-yard)** wide water barrier in Hoepner's sector that stops the **16 Army's** forward progress in its tracks. At the same time, Reinhardt's **1, 6** and **7 PDs** and **14 ID (mot)** cling desperately to their shrinking defense lines east of the town, while **2 PD** attempts to hold open the road to the west. Reinhardt's goal is to extract his forces to the safety of the new Volokolamsk – Russa defense line, then under construction to the west. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 194; quote from *Ziemke & Bauer*, 77)

- **9.-12.12.41 [2 Army / Livny gap]:** In the distant south, Schmidt's **2 Army** was still responsible both for the protection of the right flank of AGC and for keeping contact w/ AGS. Because Schmidt's extended formations had great gaps between them, they were unable to counter the probes and infiltrations of the three **[3]** opposing armies which, on **18 Dec 41**, became Cherevichenko's Bryansk Front. In response to Schmidt's urgent appeals, the **OKH** had transferred to **2 Army** the **56 ID** from Guderian's panzer army. When on **12 Dec 41**, v. Oven, the Cdr of **56 ID**, reported to the saturnine Schmidt in Orel to receive his orders, he was instructed to close a gap about **30** miles wide near Livny. . . The formations flanking this great Livny gap, **45 ID** and **134 ID**, were noted by Halder that same day [**12 Dec 41?**] as being unfit for battle as their supply had failed. [Note: **45. ID** encircled; has to fight its way out, losing half its guns and most of its vehicles and suffering serious casualties.] (For attack by elements of **56. ID** see, *A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 211-13; see also, *Gschoepf, Mein Weg mit der 45. ID*, 211)
- **10.12.41:** Sowjetischer Durchbruch durch die deutsche **2 Armee** (Schmidt) bei Liwny. Die **20** sowjet. **Armee** besetzt Solnetschogorsk. (*A. Hillgruber, Chronik*, in: *OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 1241)
- **10.12.41 [2 Armee]:** . . . Zwischen **95** u. **45 ID** bis **12** km suedostw. Liwny durchgebrochener Feind, wurde durch **VIII Fl.Korps** erfolgreich bekaempft u. angehalten. . . (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 78)
- **10.12.41 [Kalinin]:** Feindteile konnten bis an die Strasse **15** km suedl. Kalinin heran vorstossen. Die Abriegelung war im Gange. . . Wetter: Im Sueden behinderte Schneetreiben Kampf u. Maersche. Im Norden zwischen **0** u. minus **5** Grad, Strassen glatt, z.T. Schneeverwehungen. (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 809-10)

- **10.12.41:** The Russians cut the road out of Klin, **3 PzGr**'s single route to the west. **3 PzGr** described the scene on the road east of Klin: „discipline is breaking down. More and more soldiers are heading west on foot w/o wpns. . .“ (See, *Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 77)

- **10.12.41:** Sowjet. Durchbruch durch die dt. **2 Armee** (Schmidt) bei Livny. Large gap opening around Livny. Russians cut road out of Klin (in north), **3 PzGr**'s single route to the west. (III:539-41)
 Guderian succeeds in bringing his **53 AK** and **24 PzK** back to line of the Don – Shat – Upa rivers (III:540-41)⁴¹⁷
 Gap between **2 Pz Army** & **2 Army** has widened to **85 miles**. **95 ID** suffers **50%** losses, **45 ID** all but destroyed.⁴¹⁸ (III:541)

- **10.12.41:** Heavy fighting around Klin and Solnechnogorsk as the German panzer groups fight to escape the developing Soviet pincers. **3 PzGr** is fighting in operational isolation around Klin. On the southern flank, **47 PzK** falls back upon Yepifan. With his lines crumbling, Guderian manages to extricate **53 AK** from its near disastrous battle around Livny, having brought this corps and **24 PzK** back to the line of the Don, Shat and Upa rivers. During the heavy fighting, **95 ID** has suffered **50%** casualties, while **45 ID** has been all but destroyed. Heavy fighting along the river lines brings attack by **10 Army** to a complete halt. However, the gap between **2 Pz Army** and **2 Army** has widened to **85 miles**, elements of **2 Army** being cut off from the body of their force w/ **2 Pz Army**. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 185)

- **10.12.41:** On [this day] an **OKH** promise of **2 or 3 fresh divisions** gave GFM v. Bock a slim excuse for deferring talk of retreat. However, these divisions would not start leaving the Western Theater until the **16th**, and could not be expected on the eastern front for at least a month. Although he would scarcely have imagined it, Bock's situation could have been much worse. Soviet tactical performance in the first four [4] days of the counteroffensive had been disappointing. (See, *Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 77)
 (Note: According to *GSWW*, Vol. IV, p 710, Hitler released **3 divisions** from the West for Army Group Center; while a handful of convalescent battalions, and so-called “battalions in waiting” were to be sent to the front immediately.)

- **11.12.41:** Soviet forces have recaptured **400** towns and villages in less than six (**6**) days, including Istra, on the Moscow-Volokolamsk highway; and driven the Germans back from the Moscow-Volga canal. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 278)

- **11.12.41:** Der Feinddruck nordwestl. Klin haelt weiter an. Gegenstoesse mit **2 PD** u. **255 ID** sind im Gange, ebenso ein Gegenstoss der **251 ID** suedostw. Kalinin. (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 79)

- **11.12.41:** Guderian is worried about the widening gap between his army and **2 Army**, realizing that if it is not closed there is the real danger that the enemy would push forces through and effect a junction w/ those attacking north of Moscow, isolating Army Group Ctr. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 185)

⁴¹⁷ **Note:** For overview of fighting on **2 Pz Army** front see, *Glantz, Barbarossa*, 199-200.

⁴¹⁸ **Note:** For overview of fighting on **2 Army** front see, *Glantz, Barbarossa*, 200-01.

- **11.12.41**: The increasingly critical situation or **2 Army** required the intervention of parts of **2 Pz Army** on **11 Dec 41**. GFM v. Bock therefore decided to place **2 Army** temporarily under command of **2 Pz Army** and thus to make Guderian responsible for holding the area. This „army group“ was given the task of halting the enemy along the general line from Kursk to the areas around Novosil and Aleksin, if not sooner. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 710)

- **11.-20.12.41** [**4 PzGr** / Rueckzug hinter Lama]: Weiter suedlich [i.e., south of **3 PzGr**] was das Ausweichen der Korps [der **4 PzGr**] hinter die vorgesehene Linie beiderseits des Istra-Staubeckens in der Nacht vom **11-12 Dez 41** wie vorgesehen vollzogen. . . Ein neuer Gefahrenpunkt, dem die Sorgen der **4 PzGr** schon seit Beginn des Rueckzuges galten – die Suedfront an der Moskwa – wurde nun aber akut. Am **12 Dez 41** spannte sich die Lage auf dem Nordufer der Moskwa weiter an. . . . Am **14 Dez 41** wurden Istra u. Klin aufgegeben. Die Bewegungen liefen nicht immer planmaessig. Der Gegner draengte u. brach hier u. da durch. . . . Am **20 Dez 41** etwa war die von der **4 PzGr** als neue Abwehrstellung vorgesehene Linie vom Narskie Teich ueber Rusa – Wolokolamsk hinter die Lama von den Truppenteilen der Pz.Gruppen [both Pz.Gr?] eingenommen. Aus einer fast unmoeglich scheinenden Lage u. unter ungunstigsten Wetter-verhaeltnissen waren die Bewegungen, wenn auch unter Verlusten, gelingen. Die Verluste, vor allem die Geraetsausfaelle waren erheblich u. nicht zu ersetzen. Infolge Betriebstoff-mangel, Fehlen von Zugmitteln oder unueberwindbaren Wegeschwierigkeiten mussten viele Geschuetze u. Kfz stehengelassen u. gesprengt werden. So meldete am **18 Dez 41** ein Korps den Verlust von **51** le.F.H. u. **16** s.F.H.; am **19 Dez 41** ein anderes Korps den Ausfall von **60** le.F.H., **29** s.F.H., **40** Pak, **100** s. Granatwerfer, **300** MG. Auch die personellen Verluste, vornehmlich durch Erfrierungen, wurden immer fuehlbarer, sie stellten die Sanitaetsdienste vor unloesbare Aufgaben. (*de Beaulieu*, „*Sturm auf Moskau*,“ Teil II, 430-31)

- **12.12.41**: **30** and **1 Shock Armies** closing in on Klin; **20 Army** captures Solnechnogorsk⁴¹⁹ and **16 Army** captures Istra.⁴²⁰ German forces blew up the dam at the Istra Reservoir, inundating man, beat and equipment and forming an **60-meter (65-yard)** wide water barrier in Hoepner's sector that stopped **16 Army's** forward progress in its tracks. (**III:538**; also, *Glantz*, Barbarossa, 194)

- **12.12.41** [Kalinin]: Nordfront der H.Gr: Zahlreiche – insgesamt **11** – Angriffe von Nordosten u. Norden gegen Kalinin wurden abgeschlagen. Gegen wiederholte Angriffe **10** km westl. Kalinin konnte nach voruebergehendem Einbruch unter Einsatz der letzten Reserven die **HKL** wiedergewonnen werden. (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 816)

- **12.12.41** [Hoepner]: In den naechsten Tagen [i.e., nach ca. dem **8 Dez 41**] jagte eine ueble Nachricht die andere. Waehrend die Truppen um ihr Ueberleben kaempften . . . fielen die meisten Befehlshaber der Niedergeschlagenheit, ja gar der Resignation anheim. Hochbewaehrte Armeefuehrer, wie Guderian, Reinhardt u. Hoepner, wussten nicht, wie sie dem immer groesser werdenden Unheil begegnen konnten. So schrieb z.B. Hoepner am **12 Dez 41** an seine Frau: „Es kommen nur noch Hiobsbotschaften. Man erschrickt, wenn man ans Telefon geht. Und das steht ueberhaupt nicht mehr still.“ (*H. Magenheimer*, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten, 208)

⁴¹⁹ **Note:** Date of this town's capture may also be **11.12.41**. (**III:543**)

⁴²⁰ **Note:** Be careful w/ such dates. They sometimes differ by a day or so, depending on the source!

- **12.12.41:** Meanwhile, situation on the right flank [of AGC] continues to deteriorate as **2 Army** is separated from **2 Pz Army**. Yefremov is evacuated as **2 Army** falls back. To the left of **2 Army**, Guderian's panzer army is prised away from **4 Army** to the north, leaving both flanks of his army exposed.⁴²¹ (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 186)
- **12.12.41:** Guderian had received Bock's permission on **5 Dec 41** to withdraw east of Tula to the line of the Shat & Don rivers. Hitler neither approved, nor specifically disapproved, the withdrawal. Before the army reached the rivers, Guderian came to believe that he could not stop there, and on the **12th**, while giving him command also of **2 Army**, Bock authorized him to take his center and right flank another **50 miles** west to the Plava River. By then he had two gaps in the front to contend with: the one at Yelets in **2 Army's** center. . . and the one west of Tula that steadily widened as his left flank corps, **XXXXIII AK**, holding fast to the **4 Army** flank, fell back westward and slightly northward toward Alexsin and Kaluga, while **XXIV PzK** on the south side of the gap withdrew SW along the Orel-Tula road. For his part, Guderian, by the **12th**, apparently considered it pointless to try either to close the front or to stop east of the Oka and Zusha rivers along which **2 Pz Army** had built some field fortifications in October before launching the attack past Tula. . . (See, *Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 95-96)⁴²²
- **12-15.12.41 [3 PzGr to Lama River]:** Reinhardt again shifts Schaal's (**LVI PzK**) and Model's (**XLI PzK**) command responsibilities. Schaal [previously fighting battle for Klin] now takes over eastern flank in the Krasnaya Polyana area, while Model and Roettiger [his chief-of-staff] inherit responsibility for the defense of Klin. Maj-Gen Franz Landgraf, cdr **1 PD**, reports to Model that situation around town was growing increasingly critical. Lelyushenko's **30 Army** had recovered from the minor check delivered by **1 PD** on **9 Dec 41** and was now attacking hard in final attempt to cut off the panzer group's retreat. . . The „trench“ strength of the division [**1 PD**] had been whittled down to fewer than **2000 men**,⁴²³ and there were nearly **1000** wounded in a makeshift hospital in center of town. Under these conditions, Landgraf and Lt Col Walther Wenck (Ia of **1 PD**) told Model they might be able to hold the town for another **36 to 48 hours**, but that to do so would risk the division being cut off by Red Army divisions moving around their flanks.

Model, having no choice, told them to hold Klin at all hazards, because if they did not, the entire eastern wing of **3 PzGr** – a force of more than **5 div.** – would lose its last line of retreat. By continuing to enforce draconian traffic discipline, Model funneled the major elements of **2** and **6 PDs**, **14** and **36 (mot)**, and **23 ID** past the Klin bottleneck between **12 – 14 Dec 41**. Often directing traffic himself, Model grimly ordered any vehicle that stalled or died on the main road would simply be pushed to the side and abandoned. But time ran out for the defenders of Klin: Just as the last jumbled trains of **23 ID** shuffled down the road toward Nekrasino, Soviet **30 Army** slipped in behind them, isolating 1 PD. With the bulk of **3 PzGr** scrambling back to an improvised defense line on the Lama River, neither Reinhardt nor Model had anything available w/ which to help extract the encircled division. Left to their own devices, Landgraf and Wenck did not panic. Instead, after rejecting a Soviet surrender ultimatum, they [devised a clever plan to mislead the enemy and managed to extract the remnants of their **1 PD** and escape] [for details see, Newton, p 164]. At **7.00 a.m.** on **15 Dec 41**, Wenck triumphantly radioed Model: „All fighting men behind cover forces of rearguard

⁴²¹ **Note:** This is key point – by this time, both flanks of Guderian's army were up in the air.

⁴²² **Note:** Apparently, Guderian had hitherto done nothing to help Schmidt and his **2 Army**, although he was “obligated morally” to do so. (96)

⁴²³ **Note:** Apparently, **1 PD** no longer had any tanks under its control.

1 PD!“ Wounded but still fighting, **3 PzGr** had slipped out of the Russian trap. The line that Army Group Ctr now directs Reinhardt to occupy runs roughly along the Lama River; if held, it would secure the right flank of the equally hard-pressed **9 Army**. (For more details see, *Newton, Hitler’s Commander*, 163-68; also, *Stoves, 1. Pz.-Div.*, 114-15)

- **12.-16.12.41** [Klin & Kalinin fall]: Urged on by Zhukov, **30** and **1 Shock Armies** try to envelop German forces defending Klin. While both armies attack the town from all sides, the former commits a mobile group (**18** and **82 Cav Divs & 107 (mot) RD**) under command of Col P.G. Chanchibadze, to cut German escape routes to the west. Chanchibadze’s force manages to penetrate to Diatlovo, **35** km west of Klin, by late on **14 Dec 41**, but is blocked just short of the Klin – Volokolamsk road by the withdrawing **6 PD** and **14 ID (mot)**. During the dramatic attempt to cut German withdrawal routes, at **0200** hours on **15 Dec 41**, elements of **30** and **1 Shock Army** capture the town. The fall of Klin also settles Kalinin’s fate and the next day [**16 Dec 41?**] Strauss’s forces abandon the city to Konev’s forces. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 195-96)
- **12.-16.12.41** [Kalinin falls]: Stalin and Shaposhnikov displayed considerable annoyance at the relatively slow advance of the Kalinin Front, more esp. of its **29 Army**, whose leadership had in fact revealed substantial shortcomings. . . On **12 Dec 41**, he was reproved for not yet having taken Kalinin, which evidently, after all, was of more than mere local significance. Suddenly, Col-Gen Konev, who tried in vain to justify himself, received strict orders from HQ [Stavka] to take the city ASAP. To that end, Maj-Gen Shvetsov was put in command of **29 Army**, while Maj-Gen Maslennikov took over command of **39 Army**. . . In point of fact, the forces of Kalinin Front, reinforced by individual units, recaptured city of Kalinin on **16 Dec 41**. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 900)
- **12.-20.12.41** [**4 PzGr / 3 PzGr**]: By **12 Dec 41**, Hoepner was back on the Istra line formed by the river and the great **15-mile-long** reservoir which ran from north to south; he had suffered equipment losses, for only ½ of the artillery could be moved due to the lack of gun towers and horses. The remainder was abandoned or destroyed; numbers of tanks were left behind, broken down or out of fuel. There was still no continuous front but Hoepner had managed to shorten his defensive perimeter and so was able to take **2 PD** into reserve. . . The field cdrs reported that the men’s morale was good in spite of the sudden reversal and the orders to withdraw. To the north Reinhardt was in difficulties, however, in his efforts to hold on to Klin; and, as it appeared as if his troops there were in danger of encirclement, Hoepner was forced to hand over **2 PD**, the only reserve he had, to extricate them. . .

Having arrived on the Istra line, Hoepner found that he could no longer defend it. The left, held by Reinhardt, was in the air and in danger of envelopment, and Hoepner decided he would have to withdraw further to the line of the River Ruza. **3 PzGr** and the left flank of **4 PzGr** gave up the little cities of Klin and Istra, over which they had fought so fiercely, and dropped back to the line Ruza – Volokolamsk – Lama which they reached on **20 Dec 41**.⁴²⁴ The withdrawal of **9 AK**, holding the north bank of the Moskva as part of Hoepner’s right flank had, however, nearly met w/ disaster. [Note: Here the narrative addresses the disastrous experiences of the the corps’ **78 Sturm Div** which, for example, on **16 Dec 41**, its position appearing desperate, made the decision to abandon heavy equipment and wpns and break out by regiments westwards to the Ruza. On **20 Dec 41**, the division arrived on the Ruza; its

⁴²⁴ Note: By **20 Dec 41**, both panzer groups on northern wing of AGC had managed – albeit barely – to avoid encirclement and destruction and to retire in relatively good order to a new defensive line along the Ruza and Lama Rivers, losing lots of weapons and equipment in the process.

equipment had gone (including its artillery), but all the wounded had been brought out.] (See, *A. Seaton*, The Battle for Moscow, 206-08; see also, *Merker*, Das Buch der 78. Sturm Division, 122-42)

- **13.12.41:** To the south, near Tula, Guderian's panzer army had already begun to with-draw towards the upper Don, closely followed by Golikov's **10 Army** which had been ordered to take Stalinogorsk and Epifan. Further to the south, shock formations of tanks, cavalry and infantry had been formed by Soviet **13 Army** on the right of Timoshenko's South-West Theater, for deep penetration tasks in German **2 Army** rear. These thrusts, beginning **13 Dec 41**, blocked the main withdrawal route from Elets to Livny and encircled and dispersed part of German **45 ID** and caused severe losses to the withdrawing **95** and **134 ID**. For the first time, substantial quantities of German booty fell into Soviet hands, much of it broken down or bogged down in deep snow, and this included many guns and motor vehicles. (*Seaton*, Russo-German War, 224-25)
- **13.12.41:** On [this day], **2 Army** continued to withdraw. In these circumstances, **2 Pz Army**'s intention to hold a line Stalinogorsk-Shat-Upa became impracticable. The withdrawal had to be resumed to a line behind the River Plava. (*Guderian*, Panzer Leader, 262)
- **13.12.41:** To the south, **2 Pz Army** falls back to the Plava, but is threatened on both flanks as Soviets press home their attacks. On the northern wing, **43 AK** becomes separated from **24 PzK** by more than **25** miles. Guderian's flanks are uncovered. (*Taylor*, Barbarossa to Berlin, 187)
- **14.12.41:** On [this day], one of Brauchitsch's last acts as C-in-C of the Army is to place the **2 Army** under control of **2 Pz Armee** [i.e., Guderian] and to authorize Guderian to withdraw so long as he held Orel. Ordered to stand fast, Guderian will fly back to Rastenburg [**20 Dec 41**] to explain his desperate situation to Hitler. (*Glantz*, Barbarossa, 203)⁴²⁵
- **14.-15.12.41 [1 PD]:** Kampfgrp. der **1 PD** konnten bis zum **14 Dez 41** Klin u. die einzige Rueckzugstrasse fuer **3-4 Korps** (**3** u. **4 PzGr**) zusammen mit **2 PD** offenhalten. Als die **1 PD** am **15 Dez 41** mit allen Teilen hinter den Auffanglinien des **41** u. **56 PzK** focht, dabei alle Waffen u. Verwundeten mit zurueckgebracht hatte, war die schlimmste Krise des Ostfeldzuges von **1941/42** ueberwunden. Bis Anfang **1942** stand die Division unter **41 PzK** mit festem Anschluss an **36 ID (mot)** u. **2 PD** hinter dem Ruza-Abschnitt. Sie konnte daran-gehen, ihre Verbaende mit zugefuehrtem Ersatz einzuordnen. (See, *R. Stoves*, 1. Pz.-Div., 110)
- **15.12.41 [Kalinin]:** Germans (**9. Army**) forced back into Kalinin. Fierce street battles there. Town to be evacuated. Klin falls to Red Army. German **9 Army** is ready to evacuate Kalinin, having set demolition charges throughout the city and particularly on the Volga River bridge. **3** and **4 PzGr** are retreating in -15 F. weather and snow that Hoepner predicts would cost **4 PzGr** most of its artillery. Bock urges him to „consider every step back a hundred times.“ . . . At noon on the **15th**, OKH ops branch chief, Colonel Heusinger, telephoned advance notice of a Fuehrer order he said would follow. Under it, he said, **9 Army** and **3** and **4 PzGr** could withdraw **30** to **40** miles to Staritsa and the line of the Lama and Ruza rivers. The army group, Heusinger added, would also be free to withdraw

⁴²⁵ **Note:** See Ziemke & Bauer (pp 80-84) for details of German high-level discussions at this time.

„gradually“ to the Rzhev-Gzhatsk-Orel-Kursk line.⁴²⁶ (Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad, 80)

- **15.12.41:** Urged on by Zhukov, **30.** and **1. Shock Armies** try to envelop German forces defending Klin. . . During the dramatic attempt to cut German withdrawal routes, at **0200** hours on **15 Dec 41**, Soviets capture the town. The fall of Klin also seals fate of Kalinin which Strauss abandons the next day. (Glantz, Barbarossa, 196)
- **Mid-Dec 41:** Normally, each German army had enough transport to move between **2500** and **3000** tons of supplies each day. Because of snow, cold, breakdowns and losses, **2 Pz Army** could manage no more than **360** tons a day, and the others were no better off. . . Trucks, tanks, and other vehicles, run down after six [**6**] months in the field, could not take the strain of being driven thru snow and over ice. The Germans were having to abandon some every day, and others were simply worn out or had vital parts broken by the cold. Lubricants froze in crankcases, on bearings, in artillery recoil mechanisms, even in the lightly oiled works of MGs. **2 Pz Army** had **70** tanks in running order and another **168** in repair out of **970** tanks which it had or had received since June.⁴²⁷ **3 PzGr** would, by the time it reached the Lama River, have destroyed or abandoned **289** tanks. . . Against the Soviet tanks, the armies were having to rely more and more on their field artillery, most of which was not mobile or powerful enough to cope w/ the **T-34s**.

In the fall, the Germans had tested what they called **Rotkopf** („redhead“) ammunition – a hollow-charge artillery shell that could penetrate the Soviet armor; but Hitler had recalled the shells in **Nov 41**. The thought had struck him that if the Russians learned the secret, the hollow-charge would be vastly more effective against his own lightly armored tanks. Almost daily pleading by the army group and armies had not persuaded him to release the **Rotkopf** ammunition.⁴²⁸ (Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad, 91-92)

- **ab 15.12.41** [Northern wing / AGC]: The crisis on the AGC left flank unexpectedly eased in the week after 15 Dec 41. **9 Army**, after giving up Kalinin, was falling back toward Staritsa w/ Soviet **22, 29, 31** and **30 Armies** close behind, but **39 Army** was slow in preparing to move, and Konev would be unable to bring it to bear until late in the month. Despite earlier forecasts by Generals Reinhardt and Hoepner, **3** and **4 Pz Gr** came to a complete stop along the Lama and Ruza rivers by the **19th**. After evacuating Klin and Solnechnogorsk, they had moved fast enough to break contact w/ the Russians and reach the river ahead of them. The troops then had time to settle into the villages and organize them as strongpoints, get a night or two of sleep, and eat a few hot meals. . . The Russians became aware that the pursuit had ended on the **19th** when Dovator, the cdr of **5 Army**’s mobile group, **II Gds Cav Corps**, was killed on the Ruza River trying to force a crossing w/ dismounted cossack cavalry. . . Five [**5**] Soviet armies (**30, 1 Shock, 20, 16** and **5**) (from north to south), closed to the rivers and were stopped. . .

On the north at **9 Army**, General Strauss’ situation was less acute but in the longer run more dangerous. Strauss went back slowly from Kalinin, a few miles a day, which enabled him to hold his front together but gave his troops no opportunity to break contact w/ the Russians,

⁴²⁶ **Note:** Yet by next day, Hitler has abruptly changed his mind (Halt Order!). Was it Schmundt’s report, following his visit to AGC, which accounted for Hitler’s about face?

⁴²⁷ **Note:** According to Ziemke’s notes, the source for this is: “Pz. AOK 2, Panzer-Lage, **19.12.41**.” (92, f.n. 11)

⁴²⁸ **Note:** In **Dec 41**, Hitler finally released the **Rotkopf** ammunition for use at the front. See, **I:375-76**.

get some rest, and dig in as the two panzer groups had done. Moreover, he had no river line on which to fall back. Between Kalinin and Rzhev, **9 Army** would be moving parallel to the Volga. Staritsa, Hitler's choice as **9 Army**'s stopping point, was nothing more than a spot on the map and on the ground only a small break in the wilderness of forest and swamp flanking the Volga from Rzhev to Kalinin. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 92-94)

- **ab 15.12.41** [Southern Wing / AGC]: While the AGC left flank appeared after **15 Dec 41** to have passed the first crisis, the same could hardly be said for the right flank. There **2 Pz Army** and **2 Army**, now loosely joined in the so-called Armeegruppe Guderian, were beset by **5** Soviet armies, by the winter, and by the rigidity in the higher HQs that denied them even the little leeway to maneuver that the left flank armies had. In his decisions culminating in the standfast order, Hitler had demanded that Armeegruppe Guderian close the gaps in its front west of Tula and north of Livny. When he issued the order on the **18th**, the **2 Pz Army** north flank was already several miles west of Alexsin. Dubna was in the center of the **10-mile-wide** gap west of Tula, and Livny, at the southern end of a **15-mile** gap in the **2 Army** center, was half surrounded.

2 Army, holding Armeegruppe Guderian's south flank and covering both its own and **2 Pz Army**'s main bases, Kursk and Orel, had succeeded in screening Novosil and Livny after the Soviet breakthrough at Yelets. But to defend **50** miles of front from Livny to NE of Novosil, which included the **15-mile** gap north of Livny, Schmidt had only **3** divisions. . . On the morning of the **19th**, Schmidt asked AGC for two [2] more divisions because the Russians were **40** miles from the Kursk-Orel railroad, he said, and the divisions were needed because: „**2 Army**'s fate hangs on holding railroad. . . If the railroad cannot be held then what happens to **2 Army** will undermine the entire eastern front and everything will be set to rolling in the midst of winter.“ . . . (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 94-95)

- **16.12.41**: Räumung von Kalinin hat planmaessig begonnen. (**III:561**)
- **16.12.41**: In a period of **11** days (since **5 Dec 41**), the armies of Zhukov's right flank have advanced **30 – 65** km at a rate of almost **6** km/day. Konev's armies have covered **10 – 22** km at a much slower rate. While limited in its scope, the Red Army's offensive had cleared German forces from the northern and NE approaches to Moscow and forced **3 & 4 PzGr** to withdraw in unprecedented disorder. (**III:560, 565** (great details))
- **16.12.41** [First phase over]: The first phase of the Soviet counteroffensive ended on **16 Dec 41** w/ the German spearheads, which had been aimed at Moscow, eliminated⁴²⁹ and the majority of the original Soviet objectives taken. **20 Army** had entered Solnechnogorsk on the **12th**, and **10 Army** was in Stalinogorsk the next day. A mobile group set up by **30 Army** took Klin on the **15th**, and **31 Army** troops marched into Kalinin on the **16th**. The armies had advanced over **30** miles on the north flank and better than **50** miles on the south. . . (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 88-90)
- **16.12.41**: The Western Front counterattacks, which had begun on **6 Dec 41**, had the relatively modest objective of driving back the invaders **20-30** kilometers. But they began the very night that Guderian issued an order to withdraw to defensive positions on the Upper Don, the Shat, and the Upa – ca. **80** kilometers SW of Moscow. Hoepner also began to retreat. . . Considering the condition of the invaders and the fact that the Red Army had been reinforced since the German thrust on Moscow began in **Oct 41**, the *initial Soviet gains were modest*.

⁴²⁹ **Note**: “Neutralized” might be better term.

But by **16 Dec 41**, the left wing of the Front had driven Guderian's **2 Pz Army** back almost **130** kilometers. The German armored strike forces had also yielded Solnechnogorsk, Klin and Kalinin. Zhukov later admitted that at the start of their offensive actions he and his staff did not expect the successes that these counterattacks achieved. (*W. J. Spahr, Zhukov*, 80-81)

g) *Role of air power in winter battles*

-- **Dec 41**: For an excellent outline of results of Soviet counteroffensive see, *Hardesty, Red Phoenix*. Author avers that the VVS deployed **1376** acft (**859** operational) in western sector alone at start of **Dec 41** (74 ff)

-- **Dec 41** [Tula sector]: In the Tula area, where **2 Pz Army** had been breached the Red Army advance was rapid and the Red Air Force was very active. In a **20-day** period at beginning of **Dec 41**, the Red Air Force flew **10 000** sorties in this area. Of these, **50%** were in tactical close support of ground forces, **26%** reconnaissance and only **10%** were on interdiction or rear area targets. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 235, f.n. 32)

-- **6.12.41**: Die dt. *Luftwaffe* verlor seit dem **22. Jun 41** an der Ostfront:

758 Bomber
568 Jaeger
767 sonstige Flugzeuge
(darunter ueber 170 Stuka
rund 130 Fernaufklaerer u.
200 Nahaufklaerer)

Beschaedigt wurden:

473 Bomber
412 Jaeger
475 sonstige Flugzeuge

(*A. Hillgruber, Chronik*, in: *OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 1240)

-- **12.12.41**: Red Air Force has achieved a decisive air superiority in Moscow sector. German air strength at low ebb. (See, **III:544**)

-- **12.12.41**: Staerke der *Luftwaffe* an der Ostfront. Mitte = 7 Kampfgruppen, 3 Stuka-Gruppen, 1 Zerstoeerer-Gruppe, 5 1/3 Jagd-Gruppen. Wenn man eine Gruppe zu 30 Flugzeugen rechnet, ergibt sich folgender Vergleich mit den Staerken des Feindes: Mitte: Jagdfl. 160, Kampffl. 330 vs. 88 russ. Jagdfl., 67 russ. Kampffl. u. 55 sonst. Flugzeuge. („*Unterstuetzung des Heeres im Osten 1941 durch die Luftwaffe*“, **KDC**, Microfilm „E;“ also, *Halder KTB*)⁴³⁰ (**I:478**)

-- **Dec 41-Jan 42**: By beginning of **Dec 41**, VVS had “attained *firm operational air supremacy* in the Moscow sector.” (60); **Dec 41**: Soviet counteroffensive (VVS strength about **1200**

⁴³⁰ **Note:** Revealing figures – demonstrate just how small the operating German and Soviet air forces were at this time.

combat acft) (60 ff); **Dec 41-Jan 42:** In first **33** days of counteroffensive, Soviets fly ca. **16,000** combat sorties. (62) (*M. N. Kozhevnikov, The Command and Staff of the Soviet Army Air Force in the Great Patriotic War 1941-45.*)

- **Jan-Mar 42:** VVS flew by its own account total of **49,000** sorties against H.Gr.Mitte; German accounts, however, suggest a *much lower level* of combat activity by VVS in early months of **1942**.

(**CruX:** Despite its heroism and achievements, “the role of the VVS at Moscow had been *peripheral* in deciding the outcome;” “failure of the VVS to systematically apply air power on the retreating *Wehrmacht* at Moscow stood out as a *major tactical error* in the minds of German observers.” (See, *Hardesty*, v., Red Phoenix: The Rise of Soviet Air Power, 1941-1945; also, *Kozhevnikov, M.N., The Command and Staff of the Soviet Army Air Force in the Great Patriotic War 1941-45*, etc.)

- For role of *Luftwaffe* see, *inter alia*, Notebook #I, “*Luftwaffe, Chronology of Events*.”

h) *German reaction to Soviet strike*

Note: *Johannes Huerter* repeatedly stresses that it was not Hitler, rather Halder and v. Bock who were most responsible for maneuvering the “*Ostheer*” into its catastrophic situation by beginning of **Dec 41**. (See his, *Hitlers Heerfuehrer*, 322-24; **IX:106**)

(*Huerter* also points out that the reaction of the *Heeresleitung* and the eastern generals to the catastrophe was one of “*Ratlosigkeit, ja nicht selten Kopfllosigkeit*.” See, for example, his comments on GFM v. Bock and his paralysis.)

- Hitler and High Command fail for several days to appreciate danger they faced
Hitler issues *Weisung 39* on **8.12.41** (calling for suspension of fighting during winter, etc.)
(See, **III:492**; also Notebook #1, “*Hitler, Chronology of Events*”)
- **Dec 41:** There was a useful airfield at Maloyaroslavets where transport planes from Smolensk, Orsha or Warsaw occasionally arrived. They brought small numbers of replacements, but these were quite inadequate to compensate for our daily casualty lists. The replacements often wore long trousers and laced boots, w/o so much as an overcoat or a blanket. The replacements were rushed forward to the front; they would often be sent into the front line that same night. Thus, men who, two days ago, had been living in well-appointed barracks in Warsaw often found themselves, w/in **48** hours, thrown into the crumbling front outside Moscow. (*Blumentritt, Moscow*, in: Fatal Decisions, 62)
- **5.-12.12.41:** From entries in Obst.Lt. v. Gyldenfeldt’s diary, it seems clear that **OKW/OKH** were well-informed of the *desperate conditions* at the front, in sector of H.Gr.Mitte, etc. He makes repeated references to fact that the troops were at the end of their tether – worn out, cold, no winter clothing, no replacements, food/equipment reaching the front, etc. (See, *Gyldenfeldt Tagebuch* entries in Notebook #1)
- **6.12.41:** On this day, Halder discusses the war situation in detail w/ Hitler. The conference was held primarily to discuss organizational and personnel questions concerning the preparations of the army for new ops in the spring of **1942** [!].⁴³¹ . . . In the sector of Army

⁴³¹ **Note:** In other words, Hitler and his High Command had no idea what was about to hit them in form of a Soviet counteroffensive! As Ernst Klink writes: “It is remarkable that, although this conference took

Group North, the full encirclement of Leningrad was to be completed; in the south the Don was to be crossed near Rostov while the winter weather permitted. In the centre, Hitler had *no objections to shortening the front*, i.e., to a limited withdrawal, after new positions had been prepared. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 703-04; also, *Halder, Tagebuch*, 6.12.41; also, **III:491**)

- **7.12.41**: Halder notes in his diary that v. Brauchitsch is nothing but the Fuehrer's postman and that Hitler now *deals directly w/ the army groups*. The worst aspect is that no one in the Supreme Command (and by this Halder meant Hitler) understood the true condition of the troops. There, in **OKW**, it was believed that the position could be restored by a little patching here and a little cobbling there, whereas in fact some far-reaching and grave decisions were required. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 209; also, *Halder, KTB*)

- **7.-11.12.41**: For background on U.S. entry into the war – and Hitler's and German High Command's reaction to – see, **III:486-88**)
(The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor apparently took the Germans by surprise; they had not prepared any joint plans or military agreements. In fact, they had no clear concept of what Japan's entry into the war really meant. Characteristic of German unpreparedness was Jodl's request for a staff study on the question of whether the USA would give priority to the European or Far Eastern theater which was made only after Hitler had declared war on **11 Dec 41**. At that time, most German military men felt that the Axis had gained more strength than its opponents. Few, if any, Germans were able to visualize the extraordinary proportions the military conflict had suddenly assumed or the preponderance that the U.S. would eventually achieve. It was also believed that *Japan's entry would greatly relieve the pressure borne by the Germans in different theaters of war, particularly in Russia*. . . (For more details see, *G. Blau, German Campaign in Russia*, 93-94)

- **8.12.41** [Fuehrerweisung Nr. 39]: This directive was based on an *already outdated assessment* of the situation, thus it was basically „illusory“ when it was issued. The withdrawals on all fronts [e.g., Tikhvin and Rostov] had been begun under enemy pressure and on orders from army HQs, and had only subsequently been approved by the army group commands and the **OKH**, or by Hitler. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 706)

- **8.12.41**: On this day, Hitler issues what purported to be a directive for the winter campaign. Because the cold weather had come early, he announced, all „larger offensive ops“ were to cease – which they had already done. But there would be no withdrawals except to prepared positions. Ignoring the events then taking place at the front, he ordered **OKH** to start recalling the panzer and motorized divisions to Germany for refitting.⁴³² (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 74)

- **8.12.41**: To better execute the withdrawal, Reinhardt's **PzGr 3** placed under command of Hoepner (**PzGr 4**). (See, *A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 204-05)

- **8.12.41**: Guderian expresses his „point of view“ of situation in a long letter he wrote on this day. Among other things he writes:

place at a time when the most alarming reports were being received from the eastern front, the actual situation and urgency of taking a decision were not mentioned.” (704)

⁴³² **Note:** This directive illustrates just how very little Hitler and his high command knew about the true situation at the front.

We are faced w/ the sad fact that the Supreme Command has overreached itself by refusing to believe our reports of the increasing weakness of the troops and by making ever new demands on them. . . I would never have believed that a really brilliant military position could be so b. . . .d up⁴³³ in two months. . . I am not thinking about myself but rather about our Germany, and that is why I am frightened. (For rest of this extraordinary letter see his memoir, Panzer Leader, 260-61)

-- **8.12.41** [HQu OKH /Weisung fuer die Aufgaben des Ostheeres im Winter 1941/42]: This is a long document (ca. 6 pp) w/ topic headings including:⁴³⁴

- I. Ergebnis des russ. Feldzuges im Jahre **1941**
- II. Feindlage [no text]
- III. Absicht des **OKH**
- IV. Aufgaben der H.Gr.
- V. Eisenbahnnetz u. Widerstandslinien
- VI. Befehlsgliederung
- VII. Richtlinien fuer die Kampffuehrung, Organisation u. Ausbildung
- VIII. Die Versorgung waehrend des Winters
- IX. Luftwaffe
- X. Absichten u. zeitlicher Ablauf fuer die Fortfuehrung der Operationen im Fruehjahr **1942**
- XI. Meldungen

(For details see, *KTb OKW*, Bd. I, 1076-82)

-- **9.12.41**: Bock has futile phone conversation w/ Halder [see text]. . . After that Bock instructed the army commands to plan to take the entire army group back **60 to 90** miles to the Rzhev-Gzhatsk-Orel-Kursk line. But he did not believe that would help either, because it would take weeks to prepare the new line and to start back before then would be „an excursion into nowhere.“ Furthermore, the equipment losses sustained in the small withdrawals undertaken so far would be multiplied by the hundreds. At best, the potential relief would probably be negligible. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 76)

-- **9.12.41** [Winterstellung]: Es war klar, dass es infolge Fehlens jeglicher Reserven nunmehr das Bestreben der Fuehrung sein musste, durch *weitere Rueckfuehrung in eine kuerzere u. geeigneter Frontlinie im Rahmen der H.Gr. die Kraefte zu gewinnen*, die fuer die notwendigen Abloesungen benoetigt wurden. Diesem Gedanken entsprang ein Befehl der H.Gr., der bereits am **9.12.41** die Vorbereitungen einer „Winterstellung“ in einer allgemeinen Linie – Verlauf der Oka u. Ugra – westl. Medyn – ostw. Gshatsk—ostw., noerdl. u. nordw. Rshew – Verlauf der oberen Wolga bis zum Wolga-See anordnete. (*de Beaulieu, “Sturm auf Moskau,”* Teil II, 431)

-- **12.12.41** [Halder]: On [this day], during an interval when the telephones were working [Note: Ice and snow were tearing down telephone lines in all directions], Halder heard some of the army group’s troubles and, *changing his opinion of 2 days before*, pronounced the situation „*the worst crisis in the two world wars*.“ (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 77-78)

⁴³³ **Note**: Check German text for his actual language!

⁴³⁴ Document signed by v. Brauchitsch.

- **12.12.41:** Auf Guderians Antrag unterstellte GFM v. Bock auf Weisung des **ObdH**, GFM v. Brauchitsch, die **2 Armee** am **12 Dez 41** der **2 Pz Armee**, weil man die Fuehrung der Truppen zwischen Tula u. Tim als "Panzergruppe Guderian" in einer Hand vereinigen wollte.⁴³⁵ Die Panzergruppe hatten den Auftrag, den Feindeinbruch in ihrem Abschnitt spaetestens "in allgemeiner Linie ostw. Kursk-Gegend Nowossil-Gegend Alekssin zum Stehen" zu bringen. (*Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 139)
- **12.12.41:** An diesem Tag verhaengte GFM v. Bock, aufgrund der angespannten Lage, eine sofortige Urlaubssperre ueber alle seine Verbaende. (See, *Reinhardt, Wende vor Moskau*, 210)
- **13.12.41:** Bock recommends to Brauchitsch that Hitler should make a decision on whether Army Group Ctr should stand fast and fight, or retreat. In either eventuality, Bock openly states, there is the danger that the army group would collapse "in ruins" (*in Truemmer*). Bock makes no firm recommendation, but does indicate the disadvantages of retreat: the discipline of the troops might give way. . . The implication is plain – the retreat might turn into a rout. Bock's evaluation, remarkably, is not passed on to Hitler at this time; he only receives it on the **16th**, when Bock tells Schmundt what he had reported to Brauchitsch three days earlier. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 450-51; *DRZW*, 610; *Bock Tagebuch*, 16.12.41; for more details of Brauchitsch's meeting w/ Bock in Smolensk see also, **III:548-49**)
- **13.-14.12.41:** Der **ObdH** erkannte [die Gefahrenpunkte] klar, als er am **13 Dez 41** bei der H.Gr. in Smolensk eintraff. Er liess sich ueberzeugen, dass ein allmaehliches Ausweichen auf die „Winterstellung“ unvermeidlich geworden war; er fuehlte sich aber nicht befugt, den Rueck-zugsbefehl selbstaendig zu geben, sondern holte am **14 Dez 41** die Entscheidung Hitlers ein. Dieser war wohl mit oertlichem Absetzen der **3 u. 4 PzGr**, der **9 Armee** im Raum Kalinin sowie mit dem Ausweichen Guderians einverstanden,⁴³⁶ verbot aber im uebrigen jede Freigabe von Gelaende, solange nicht die rueckwaertige Stellung ausgebaut sei. Das bedeutete fuer die H.Gr. den Befehl, mit der Masse ihrer Kraefte stehen zu bleiben. Es scheint, dass Hitler nach der Rueckkehr Brauchitschs von der Front sich ein Bild von der tatsaechlichen Lage u. dem Zustand der Truppe gemacht u. nun die toedliche Gefahr erkannt hatte, die sich fuer das Herr anbahnte. (*Hofmann, "Schlacht von Moskau"*, 170)
- **13.-16.12.41:** Front visits of GFM v. Brauchitsch and Hitler's adjutant Schmundt Awakens Hitler to grave danger at front! (See, **III:492-93; 550-51**) Approves some withdrawals. On **16 Dec 41** Hitler orders dispatch of fresh divisions to eastern front (See, **III:561**)
- **14.-16.12.41:** [Reinforcements for AGC]: After receipt of the earlier alarming reports, on **14 Dec 41** Hitler had himself briefed by his adjutant, who had accompanied Brauchitsch during the latter's visit to AGC. Col Schmundt informed Hitler that he had the impression

⁴³⁵ **Note:** Thus, by **12 Dec 41**, AGC has made at least two major command reorganizations: a) Reinhardt's Panzer Group (**3 PzGr**) placed under Hoepner (**PzGr 4**); and, b) **2 Army** placed under Guderian's Panzer Army.

⁴³⁶ **Note:** In other words, Hitler was not completely inflexible when it came to permitting local withdrawals at the front. As explained in GSWW, Vol. IV (**III:550**), Hitler's decision "clearly permitted local withdrawals under enemy pressure, but not unless a new line to the rear had been prepared." Yet his decision was meaningless, for there was no line in the rear.

that there was no time to lose, and Hitler reacted immediately w/o waiting for the report of the C-in-C of the Army or consulting w/ the chief of the general staff. That same night he summoned the cdr of the replacement army and demanded a report on units that could be flown to the front immediately. Goering was also including in the consultations so as to speed up the organizational preparations for the entire transport sector. (For more details, including *Luftwaffe* units to be dispatched to AGC see, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 713-14; **III:552-53**)

- **Mid-Dec 41:** Guderian's relationship w/ Halder and v. Bock is by no means good and he attempts to bypass both and bring his plight and views to the Fuehrer's attention by sending written reports by way of the younger Keitel and Schmundt. Von Brauchitsch, only three [3] days before his dismissal, meets w/ Guderian at Roslavl and gives him permission to fall back to the rivers Susha and Oka, nearly **80** miles behind the upper Don. But Hitler countermands the order after the retreat has already begun, and promises **500** reinforcements by air to stop the advance of what are, in effect, **6** Soviet armies and an cavalry corps [!]. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 234; *Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 261-63)

- **Mid-Dec 41** [AGC has no reserves]: Der GFM verfuegt nur mehr ueber ein Pionierbataillon als letzte Reserve [!], das er an die Lama als „Sicherungsbesatzung“ verlegt. . . Er greift auf zwei Polizeibataillone zurueck, die er aus dem Hinterland heranholt. Auf dem Nordfluegel wird der **9 Armee** die bisher zur Sicherung eingesetzte **SS-Kav. Bde** unterstellt. Schliesslich soll auch eine Luftlandedivision an die Front bei Klin geflogen werden, ein Unterfangen, das an den Wetterverhaeltnissen scheitert. v. Bock, der bereits gesundheitlich schwer angegriffen ist, fasst eine rueckwaertige Winterstellung ins Auge, die entlang der ungefaehren Linie Kursk – Orel – Medyn – Gschatsk – Rschew – Wolgo-See [sic!] suedlich Ostaschkow verlaufen soll. Diese Stellung soll durch Baukraefte, Polizei u. auch Einheimische so weit ausgebaut werden, dass sie als Rueckhalt im Falle eines sowj. Durchbruches dienen koenne. Die Armeen werden von dieser Absicht in Kenntnis gesetzt, die Erkundungskommandos entsenden. (*H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 209-10; also, *KTb.Gr.Mitte*, 13-14.12.41)

- **Mid-Dec 41:** In view of situation, not surprising that Hr.Gr.Mitte should have considered a planned withdrawal of the whole reinforced **4 Army** westward. This was all the more logical, since **2 Pz Army** to the south had been compelled to retreat behind the Oka – on both sides of Velev [Belev?]. A line was therefore designated on the map, running roughly from Velev through Yukhnov on the Ugra to Gzhatsk and then north, into which **4 Army** was to withdraw. Orders to reconnoitre this line had been issued. One mot. division was already on the march to Yukhnov. GFM von Kluge and his staff were still, deliberately, in Maloyaroslavets, though that town was now seriously threatened. In mid-**Dec 41**, he summoned his corps cdrs and their chiefs of staff to a conference in the *wooden cottage* which was his HQ for the purpose of discussing in detail the withdrawal of those units of **4 Army** located south of the Moscow-Smolensk highway. All seemed perfectly clear. Then a telephone call came through from General v. Greiffenberg (Chief of Staff, Army Group Ctr); he wished to speak w/ the Chief of Staff, **4 Army**. I went to the telephone: Greiffenberg was a *close personal friend* of mine. He now said: „You'd better make yourself comfortable where you are. A new order has just arrived from Hitler. **4 Army** is not to retreat a single yard.“⁴³⁷ (*Blumentritt, Moscow*, in: Fatal Decisions, 65-66)

⁴³⁷ Blumentritt: „According to every calculation, [this order] could only mean the destruction of the **4 Army**. Yet this order was obeyed. Units already moving westward were turned about and brought back to the front.“ (66)

- **15.-16.12.41:** On **15 Dec 41**, Army Group Ctr received permission to withdraw **3** and **4 PzGr** and the right wing of **9 Army** to the position Ruza-Volokolamsk-Staritsa. There was no *dispute about this decision*, as it had been agreed upon after numerous telephone conversations. But *Hitler still had not taken a decision* about a further withdrawal to the line from Kursk to Orel - Kaluga - Gzhatsk - Rzhev.

While the withdrawal of the left wing of the army group had now been definitely decided upon, Hitler did not take a corresponding decision about its right wing until **16 Dec 41**,⁴³⁸ as the latter's retreat would significantly affect the position of Army Group South. Still, Kluge and Bock were agreed that **XXXXIII AK** should be withdrawn to the west, but in no case beyond the Oka. At **1:10 p.m.** on **15 Dec 41**, however, Guderian reported that the corps had to withdraw to a position west of Aleksin beyond the Oka and then to the line Begatkov-Pastove. This retreat exposed the right flank of **4 Army** and forced it to withdraw too. . . Up to this point, Army Group Ctr had been able to direct evacuations and withdrawals required by local tactical necessity in such a way that serious losses through encirclement of troops left behind after enemy penetrations had been avoided. . . (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 712)

- **16.12.41:** Hitler no longer trusts Brauchitsch's judgement. On **16th**, he has his chief adjutant, Schmundt, flown to the Moscow front;⁴³⁹ and that afternoon Schmundt returned w/ an accurate account of Guderian's litany of worries, told him in an hour-long conference on Orel airfield. *At last the truth was reaching Hitler*.⁴⁴⁰ (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 357)

- **16.12.41:** After Schmundt had been sent to Army Group Ctr to discuss the situation first hand (**14.12.41**), Hitler responded *immediately*, neither awaiting the report from Brauchitsch, who had accompanied Schmundt, nor involving Halder. Col-Gen Fromm, Cdr of the Reserve Army [Ersatzheer], was summoned and asked for a report on the divisions that could be sent straight away to the eastern front. Goering and the head of the *Wehrmacht* transport, Lt Gen Rudolf Gercke, were to arrange the transport. Four and a half (**4 1/2**) divisions of reserves, assembled throughout Germany at breakneck speed, were to be rushed to the front. Another nine (**9**) divisions would be drummed up from the western front and the Balkans. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 450; *DRZW*, Bd. 4, 610)

- At "grass roots" level, the reaction of the average German "Landser" to this abrupt change in fortune would include shock, bewilderment, etc. Morale would be adversely affected, and there would be a serious "crisis in confidence" vis-à-vis their leadership (from which Hitler, for the most part, would be excluded). However, unlike the German Army of the summer of **1918**,⁴⁴¹ which began to collapse and disintegrate after four years of war, the "*Ostheer*" – or what remained of it at this time – despite some "*Aufloesungserscheinungen*" (mostly in rear area units), would find a way to hold together.⁴⁴²

⁴³⁸ **Note:** In other words, Hitler's famous – infamous? – "Halt Order" only pertained to the right wing of Army Group Center?

⁴³⁹ **Note:** I believe actual date of Schmundt's visit to AGC in Smolensk was **14 Dec 41**. Confirm!

⁴⁴⁰ **Note:** Apparently, the litany of bad news from the „front“ – dispatched to **OKW** and **OKH** – was not always relayed to Hitler.

⁴⁴¹ **Note:** At end of WWI, even the German military leadership collapsed: "Die sich aufdraengende Vermutung, Ludendorff sei Ende **Sep [1918]** nicht mehr voellig Herr seiner Nerven gewesen, ist von Augenzeugen bestaetigt worden." (Walther Hubatsch, Deutschland im Weltkrieg, 156)

⁴⁴² **Note:** Concerning **1918**: "So mediocre was the performance in battle of German regiments during this period [summer] that one historian has concluded that the German armed forces were in the grip of a

- **ab 18.12.41** [Winterhilfsspende]: Sogleich nach seiner Rueckkehr aus dem F.H.Qu. am **18 Dez 41** konzipierte Goebbels im Rahmen seiner vergeblich vorgetragenen Vorstellungen eines „sozialistisch“ gefuehrten Krieges, eben des Konzepts der Totalisierung des Krieges, eine Propagandaaktion, die er mit Hitler abgestimmt hatte: Die Winterhilfsspende, eine Sammlung von Winterbekleidung fuer die Soldaten im Osten, ein „Weihnachtsgeschenk der Heimat fuer die Front.“ . . . Ziel der spaeten Aktion . . . sollte es sein, die “Heimatfront” zu mobilisieren, die Menschen neu zu motivieren. . . Dieses neue Situationsbild vom Ernst der Lage ebenso wie das von den „vertierten Horden“, die im Begriff gewesen seien, den Westen dieses Erdteils zu „ueberfluten“, mobilisierte tatsaechlich die Spendenbereitschaft der Deutschen. Der Andrang war so gross, dass die Sammlung, fuer die prominente Filmschauspieler u. Sportler warben, ueber die Weihnachtswoche hinaus bis zum **11 Jan 42** verlaengert werden musste. In den mehr als **67.000.000** zusammengetragenen Kleidungsstuecken sah Goebbels dann – wie er in seiner Ansprache am **14 Jan 42** ueber die Reichssender verkuendete – einen „ueberzeugenden Beweis fuer die Entschlossenheit, mit der die deutsche Nation bereit ist, diesen Krieg bis zum Siege durchzufuehren.“ Goebbels’ Kalkuel schien aufgegangen zu sein, konstatierte doch ein schwedischer Beobachter, dass die Sammlung die Moral der Bevoelkerung definitiv gehoben habe. Sie war aber viel zu spaet gekommen u. zu schlecht vorbereitet gewesen, um der kaempfenden Truppe noch wirklich zu helfen. (*R.G. Reuth, Goebbels*, 494-95)
- **20.12.41**: Hitler publishes an appeal to the German people to send warm winter clothing for the troops in the east – another sign of the crisis. Goebbels lists all the items of clothing to be handed in during a lengthy radio broadcast that evening. (*Kershaw, Hitler*, 453; also, *Domarus*, 1815)

i) *Nature of German withdrawal*⁴⁴³

Note (Historical analogy): Sometimes what appeared to be minor mistakes or oversights could have oversized outcomes. In **1812**, for eg., Napoleon had not bothered to see to it that his horses were properly shod for the winter; this resulted in thousands being lost because they could not gain their footing on the icy surfaces, fell, perished, etc. This oversight helped to undo Napoleon’s cavalry, led to loss of artillery, etc. Also, during final stages of retreat from Moscow, just beyond Vilna, the Governor of Vilna, General Dirk van Hogendorp, had neglected to see to it that *sand was sprinkled* on the Kovno road where it went up a long incline; result was that vehicles could not gain traction and many had to be left behind. As a junior artillery officer recalled: if only Hogendorp or some other official had sprinkled a little sand on the slope, the French would have saved the entire treasury, several batteries of guns, the papers of the general staff, and hundreds if not thousands of wounded officers and men. (For details see, *Zamoyski, Moscow 1812*, 512-14)

Note: For graphic account see, the diary of *Gefreiter Rehfeldt* (**8.(MG)/II./IR „GD“**). Entry in diary for **8.12.41** offers vivid mental picture of “Rueckzug vor Moskau.” On Christmas Day,

‘covert military strike,’ arguing that as a result of exhaustion, discontent, and hunger, soldiers had decided that they would not throw their lives away in a conflict that could not be won. German soldiers . . . were exhausted and apathetic. Lax discipline reigned supreme. . . Soldiers were either abandoning their positions and making their way home on their own, or were surrendering to enemy troops in droves.” (See, Thomas Weber, *Hitler’s First War*, 219)

⁴⁴³ **Note**: Many original accounts by former German officers in my FMS Notebook (VI).

1941, Rehfeldt's company received packages filled with everything imaginable – from chocolate to dried fruit – from Volksdeutschen out of the Banat region of Yugoslavia. One entry (7.-14.1.42) provides classic description of effects of a brutal Russian snowstorm! In mid-Jan 42, suffering virtually unbearable pain from his injuries (Frostbite- and Louse-related), he goes to the “Krankenstube” in Bolchow. Appears he stays here for several weeks. By early Feb 42, the IR “GD” – what's left of it – is relieved from its positions on the Oka and after a couple of days' rest is back in action – this time “im Wald von Karatschew noerdlich Orel.” (Details in my Notebook #7)

- For a highly instructive example of nature of winter fighting on cusp of Soviet counter-offensive see, “*Gefechtsbericht J. Moeller*, **6.12.41 (14./IR 167/86. ID)**, at: Notebook **VIII:186-93**; see also, *Dr. H. Haape (Moscow Tram Stop) & Dr. W. Heinemann (23. ID)*, *Feldpostbriefe*, etc.)
- For graphic account of withdrawal of **258. ID** – its participation in “scorched earth” policy, etc. – see, *Kurt Hempel*, “*Als uns der Winter besiegte. Vom Rueckmarsch aus dem Raum Moskau Jan 42*,” (unpublished story in “**258. ID division file**”); see also, Hempel profile in Notebook # 5.)
- Describe characteristics of withdrawal
 - Arctic cold, road conditions, lack of winter clothing, lack of air cover, frostbite, sickness, etc. (See, **IV:425**, ff., “*Bericht des Rgts.-Stabarztes Dr. Knoer fuer die Zeit vom 1.-26.12.41*,” **17. PD**)
 - For German medical service and doctor's account of frostbite during this period see, *K. Schneider-Janessen*, *Arzt im Krieg*, at: **VIII:232**, ff.)
 - Faith in leadership (but not in Hitler & not in self!) shaken
 - Many other *personal accounts*
- Wounded soldiers: For treatment and transport of German wounded in **Dec 41-Jan 42** see, **I:653-57**.
 - (These few pages from Notebook #I include several terrific yet chilling eye-witness accounts, including those by *H. Haape*, *Dr Karl Brandt*, etc. Care of wounded improved in mid-Jan 42, when **133** medical officers and **290** enlisted men were airlifted into area of Army Group Center.)
- Anecdote: For incredibly touching story of a soldier w/ frostbite see, report of Dr. Heinz Ott (Reserve-Kriegslazarett in Brest-Litowsk). After a few days at home on leave over Christmas, Dr. Ott returned to his hospital, where he treats many soldiers w/ frostbite. One of those he treated – a mere lad of **16** from the Waffen-SS – shook him to the core. He writes, *inter alia*: “Vor der Abfahrt habe ich ihn dann auch noch einmal verbunden. Und waehrend ich dem Bueble – ich kann nicht anders sagen – seine mumifizierten Zehen verbinde, da fragt der mich doch: ‘Doktor, wachsen die Zehen wieder nach?’ In mir ist ein richtiges Grauen emporgestiegen, u. die Sinnlosigkeit eines Krieges ist mir nie deutlicher zum Bewusstsein gekommen als durch dieses Ereignis. . .”) (**VIII:235**)
- Anecdote: **7.PD** began general withdrawl on **7.12.41** – ironically called “*Weihnachtsurlaub – Erster Reisetag*!” (**III:527**)
- Anecdote: Juchnow, **9.12.41**: Priest describes in chilling detail the condition of the wounded inside a field hospital. Also describes in graphic detail his journey deep inside Russia in a

Lazarettzug from Brest-Litowsk ueber Minsk – Smolensk – Roslawl to Juchnow. (*J. Perau, Priester im Heere Hitlers*, 41-44)

- Anecdote: Very last tank of **6. PD**, named “Anthony the Last,” broke down on **10 Dec 41** near Klin. (See, FMS study by *Hans Roettiger*, in: *Steven H. Newton, German Battle Tactics on the Russian Front 1941-1945*. (For comparative tank strength of **3. PzGr** on **16.10** and **1.12.41**, see p 55, f.n. 14).
- Example (IR 508 / 292. ID): Beurteilung des Zustands des Rgts. Excellent report on condition of regiment as of **8 Dec 41 (VIII:210)**
(For the withdrawal of entire **292. ID** to the Istra, see detailed report of the division commander, **VIII:227-31**)
- Example: Withdrawal of **296. ID** as characteristic of withdrawal actions: “Unter Einsatz der letzten Kraefte,” u. Verlust von ueber 1000 Mann, ueber **8%** ihres personellen Gesamtbestandes, konnte sich die Div. bis Ende [**Dez 41**] so weit vom Gegner loesen, dass sie etwa **120 km** westl. von Tula eine Auffanglinie aufbauen konnte, die „Wyra-Stellung.“ (See, **IX: C. Hartmann, Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg, Kapitel III**; see also, „Rueckblick u. Erinnerung an den Einsatz der 296. ID im Osten aus der Sicht des II./IR 521.“ (Detailed summary of latter document in my „*Biblio* file.“)
- Example: Withdrawal of **45. ID**. Div. lost over 1000 Men from **5-17 Dec 41**. “Der Rueckzug der [Div.] hatte eher einer *Flucht* geaehnelt, als einer mil. Operation.” Ueber diese Zeit verlor die **45. ID** folgendes an Waffen. . . (See, **IX: C. Hartmann, Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg, Kapitel III**; see also, **MA 1621: „Gefechtsbericht ueber die Kampfhandlungen der 45. ID vom 5.12.-17.12.41.“ (Abt. Ia)** (Detailed summary of this „*Gefechtsbericht*“ in my „*Biblio* file.”)⁴⁴⁴
- Example: Withdrawal of **35 ID**.⁴⁴⁵ Um einer Einschliessung zu entgehen, begannen am **7. Dez 41** die Rueckzugskaempfe. Durch die einsetzende Kaelte bis zu **40 Grad**, versagten die MG-Schloesser, Panzer froren ein um Motoren erhielten Frostrisse. Am **5. Dez 41** ging das grosse Strassenkreuz Leningrad-Moskau bei Matuschkino verloren. Am **7. Dez 41** musste **IR 111 Krjukowo** aufgeben. . . Die Truppe hoffte, die Rueckzugskaempfe beendet zu haben, aber die Verteidigungslinien waren so duenn geworden, dass Mitte **Jan 42** eine rueckwaertige Kampflinie ostwaerts Gshatsk bezogen werden musste. Obwohl die Division seit Beginn des Rueckzuges [**6. Dez 41**] **80 Offiziere, 2047 Uffz.** u. Mannschaften verloren hatte, dazu viele Ausfaelle durch Erfrierungen, war der Widerstandswille u. das innere Gefuege der Truppe ungebrochen. (*Kameradendienst 35 e.V., 35. Inf.-Div., 103-04*)
- Example: For lots of terrific details on nature of winter fighting involving **IR 82 / 31. ID** see, *Friederich Hossbach, Infanterie im Ostfeldzug 1941/42*. (My notes from this book located in **31. ID** files.)
- Example [98. ID]: For a graphic and detailed account of withdrawal of this division of **4 Army** thru early **Jan 42** see, *A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 216-27; also, *Gareis, Kampf u. Ende der 98. ID*, 169-92; **III:528-31**)
(Authors note, *inter alia*, that the division was plagued by uncertainty; confidence in higher command severely shaken, in part by constant changing and repeated counter-manding of

⁴⁴⁴ **Note**: Also information hear on physical and mental health of **45. ID**.

⁴⁴⁵ **Note**: Good example of German division slowly giving ground over period of weeks, but not collapsing.

orders; yet faith Fuehrer remained boundless, and when he took over Army a “new wave of optimism spread over the troops.” Division eventually withdraws thru the “dark, primeval, almost trackless forests,” losing horses, guns, wagons in process, etc. They left their positions w/ “heavy hearts,” for over the past ca. two months, “they had managed to develop their wpns pits into little bunkers w/ overhead cover, giving some protection from cold and snow. They knew the ground and had improved the defenses; most had some contact w/ their neighbors. Life had become a routine, particularly as the sector had been relatively quiet over the past few weeks.” . . . Times of great stress and crisis were to follow. The enemy seemed to be everywhere. German units and detachments on the line of march were overrun. The plight of the wounded and sick was desperate for these, together w/ the medical staff who volunteered to remain w/ them, were often butchered by the oncoming enemy. . . At night, all around could be seen the glare of blazing villages in which bitter and bloody hand-to-hand fighting took place. In the hours of daylight, there were frequent air attacks. Losses were heavy and the confusion such that all ranks knew instinctively of the imminent danger of disintegration. The division cdr, who had led the formation w/ distinction, no longer felt able to cope w/ the situation and, like many others, asked to be replaced by a younger and fitter man. . . At **3:00 a.m. on 30 Dec 41**, in an icy wind and a temperature of **-35** centigrade, the last organized parties [of **98 ID**] still in touch crossed over the Protva, and the order was given to the engineer demolition party to blow the bridge. . . Btns. were down to less than **80** men. The troops had had no hot food for days. . .” **98 ID**, which by then formed part of General Kirchner’s **57 PzK**, continued to withdraw. . . **19 PD**, **15 ID** and **98 ID** had to converge on, and pass thru, the town of Maloyaroslavets on their way back to Medyn. . . Btns., even rgts., were frequently overrun or encircled, but they appeared again days later further weakened by losses in missing, wounded and sick. Much of the heavy equipment had by now been left behind. . . On New Year’s Eve, the Soviet enemy began to infiltrate thru the brickyards and railway repair shops into the main town of Maloyaroslavets, which was still full of German wounded. The defenders were mainly engineer and signal troops. In **-40** centigrade weather, in the glare of burning houses, there was close hand-to-hand fighting of the fiercest and most brutal kind. There was no quarter. Many of the enemy troops, fortified w/ Vodka, *massacred the German wounded or flung them out of the upper windows*, the drunken hordes roaming around the suburbs of the town hurraing and screaming, and killing everyone in their path. Amid this inferno, **98 ID**, which was scattered over the surrounding area, had to defend the town. It was itself almost encircled. . . Maloyaroslavets was lost on **2 Jan 42**. . .”)

- Large amounts of guns, vehicles, equipment, horses, etc. sacrificed during withdrawal. Eg. – So meldete am **18.12.41** ein Korps den Verlust von **51** le.F.H. u. **16** s.F.H.; am **19.12.41** ein anderes Korps den Ausfall von **60** le.F.H., **29** s.F.H., **40** Pak, **100** s.Gr.W., **300** MG (Note: Both corps belong to **4.PzGr**. See, **III:543-44**)
(See also, **IX:99**, *H.-M. Welcker*, Aufzeichnungen, for material losses of **251. ID** from **5.-25.12.41**)
- **12.12.41**: An diesem Tage verhaengte GFM v. Bock . . . eine sofortige *Urlaubssperre* ueber alle seine Verbaende. (**III:544**)
- Just how cold was winter of '41? (comparative study)
- Thesis: Handful of low-ranking German officers & NCOs, supported by handful of hvy wpns, averted total annihilation. (See, **IV:376**, ff.)
Vital protective role of German artillery (eg., **296. ID** in **Dec 41**, see: **IX: C. Hartmann**, Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg, *Kapitel III*)

- Role of hvy wps: During winter **1941/42**, Army flak units sometimes signified the only heavy wps available to the infantry along the front (in addition to Luftwaffe Flak units). For example, the **Fla-Btl. 605**, defending in sector of **36. ID (mot.) (41. PzK)** played a major roll in parrying the relentless Soviet attacks and securing intact the withdrawal of the infantry – in the process expending **42,000** rounds of 2-cm ammunition over a **10-day** period! Apparently, at the time, these Army Flak units were outfitted only w/ 2-cm wps. (See, *Hermann Freter*, Fla nach vorn, in my Notebook #7; see also reports of more flak units for winter **1941/42** in: **VII:18-19**)
 - Theme: German soldiers' faith in competency and superiority of their leadership shaken by its unsteady and inconsistent actions in response to the Russian winter counteroffensive (vacillations between attack and retreat; orders followed by counter-orders, etc.). This had a bewildering and demoralizing impact on the troops. As *Hossbach* writes: "Der Glaube an die Ueberlegenheit der dt. Fuehrung ist in der Truppe kein unbedingter mehr." . . . "Je mehr sich die Lage zuspitzte, um so mehr drueckte sich Unsicherheit in den Massnahmen der oberen Fuehrung aus." (*F. Hossbach*, Infanterie im Ostfeldzug, 191, 198; see also, example of **292. ID** in **Jan 42**, **VIII:217-19**)⁴⁴⁶
- j) *German & Soviet tactics & behavior in winter 41/42 – characteristics of winter combat, effects of arctic cold on men, weapons, equipment*
- Note: For the worst part of Napoleon's withdrawal from Russia – i.e., early **Dec 1812**, when temperatures reached **-37.5 C.** – see, *Adam Zamoyski*, Moscow 1812, 481-501. Numerous parallels to German withdrawal in **Dec 41**; and also some features (eg., cannibalism) which were not duplicated by the Germans. Some French shot themselves, others literally struck dead by the cold. Conversely, many factors – *inter alia*, sheer determination, a shared sense of solidarity (noted one participant, "Nothing binds people together like a *community of suffering*"), scrupulous observance of discipline, devotion to one another, even the keeping of a diary – enabled the stronger among them to survive the ordeal. By this point, "a skeleton of the Army of Moscow, probably fewer than **10,000** men, nevertheless remained operational." Note: For impact of this arctic cold on Napoleon's soldiers – ice literally sealed a man's eye-lids shut; sun a "globe of fire, but of a fire that gave no warmth;" men had difficulty buttoning pants in the intense cold (also had to take care lest their penis froze while urinating, which happened in some cases); hundreds (thousands?) froze to death; conditions induced apathy, state of real dementia, a kind of stupor, etc.
 - Note: Many of the experiences and conditions which characterized the winter of **41/42** in Russia were, of course, common in most wars. For example, in World War I, soldiers on both western and eastern fronts suffered from the elements, sickness, lice, and other torments; their lot was worsened by failures in planning, of logistics, etc. In the first winter of WWI in **1914/15** men suffered from *rheumatism*, *enteritis*, *typhus* and other infirmaries; they also endured *frostbite*, *lice*, and other plagues. The men of Hitler's Bavarian regiment (**RIR 16**) in Flanders found that their winter coats were too thin to afford any protection against the chilly and wet weather; their woollen blankets were equally useless as they had no means of keeping the blankets dry; moreover, they had to eat wet bread, as their bread bags had turned out not to be waterproof. . . The men had to alternate between spending

⁴⁴⁶ Note: This sudden lack of faith in German leadership did not, however, reach Hitler himself. Faith in the "Fuehrer" remained for the most part unshaken. Regardless, faith of the average "Landser" in his superiors was rapidly restored (by early **1942**).

generally **3-4** days in the mud-filled filthy trenches, where they only received food after nightfall, followed by four days [just behind the front]. (See, *Thomas Weber, Hitler's First War*, 55-56)

-- **Note:** Example of **253. ID** from ca. **Dec 41**: Mit dem Beginn des Stellungskrieges wechselte die Formation von der keilfoermigen Offensiv- zur polygonen Defensivgliederung. Die Division wurde nun horizontal zum Baustein der HKL u. vertikal zu einer Schicht der militaerischen Struktur des Operationsgebiet. . . Flaeche u. Struktur des nun von einer Division eingenommenen Raumes variierten stark. Anstelle der vorgesehenen **20 mal 20** km waren Abschnittsbreiten zwischen **40 u. 90** km bei einer durchschnittlichen Tiefe von **15 bis 25** km nicht selten. Im Gefechtsgebiet, das die Front bildete u. meist eine Tiefe von etwa **5 km** hatte, verliefen die Stellungen u. fanden die militaerischen Auseinandersetzungen statt. (See, *Christoph Rass, „Verbrecherische Kriegfuehrung an der Front. Eine Infanteriedivision u. ihre Soldaten,“ (IX:82)*

--**Note:** Again **253. ID**: Hinweise auf eine mit der Brutalitaet der Institution einhergehende Radikalisierung der Soldaten finden sich in den Akten des Gerichts der **253. ID**. In der zweiten Haelfte des Jahres **1941** stieg die Zahl derer, gegen die das Gericht Strafmassnahmen verhaengte, stetig an. Mit **97 Angeklagten** im **Dez 41** wurde schliesslich die hoechste Zahl von Verfahren erreicht, die das Gericht der **253. ID** je in einem Monat abwickelte. [**Note:** Im **Jul 41** wurden **19** Soldaten angeklagt; im **Aug 41** **47**, im **Sep 41** **21**, im **Okt 41** **32**, im **Nov 41** **57**, im **Dez 41** **97** u. im **Jan 42** **51**.] . . . Aber auch untereinander wurde in der Krise des Winters **1941/42** der Kampf um ueberlebenswichtige Ressourcen haerter. Militaerischer Diebstahl war in den Krisenmonaten **Nov 41** bis **Jan 42** das mit Abstand am haeufigsten vorkommende Delikt. Es handelte sich vor allem um Diebstaehle, bei denen sich Soldaten Ausruestung oder Lebensmittel aus dem Besitz, insbesondere auch der Feldpost ihrer Kameraden aneigneten, um ihre eigenen Ueberlebenschancen zu verbessern.“ (See, *C. Rass, Menschenmaterial*, 345-46; **IX:87**)

-- **Note:** The health of the [German] soldiers deteriorated to an alarming degree. An assessment by the senior medical officer serving w/ the **167 ID** highlighted concerns at the beginning of **Jan 42**:

Something like **80%** of the fighting troops are undergoing medical treatment especially for stomach and bowel, catarrh, frostbite, skin diseases and fever. The level of health and overall condition is extremely bad, lowering the body's resistance in coping w/ illness and wounds. Death is often resulting from slight wounds w/ blood loss. Total physical and psychological collapse threatens not only the NCOs and men but the majority of officers as well. (*KTB Ia, 167 ID, Anlagen*, 4 Jan 42; quoted in: *R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 235)

-- **Note:** During the evacuation of positions, many German wounded froze to death because of shortages of blankets. The care for the wounded improved on **13 Jan 42**, when **133** medical officers and **290** enlisted men were airlifted into the Army Gp Ctr area. In the Zone of Interior, the number of hospital beds proved insufficient, and schools had to be used as emergency hospitals. (*G. Blau, German Campaign in Russia*, 103)

-- **Note:** For terrific insights into Soviet tactics, tactical and operational shortcomings, effect of weapons, etc., see, Parrish, Michael (ed.), *Battle for Moscow: The 1942 Soviet General Staff Study*.

(Key details from this study in my “Bibliography.”)

- **Note:** For several useful details concerning Soviet conditions and behavior in winter of 1941/42 see, **II:61-62**)
- **Note:** *Dennis Showalter* stresses role of German *battle groups* as “*force multipliers*” in winter battles. (*Hitler’s Panzers* 199)
- **Note:** German doctrine basically ignored fighting in a withdrawal. German Army received virtually no training in defensive forms of warfare. (Historical comment: Whereas Clausewitz had carefully examined the relationship between attack and defense (and found the latter the strongest form of war), Schlieffen completely rejected every thought of the defensive. Schlieffen maintained that even the inferior, or only the inferior, has to attack – *always and everywhere*. His disregard of defense led, during his turn of office, to a complete neglect of any defensive training in German Army, a fact that bore grave consequences in the future.) (*J.L. Wallach, The Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation*, 75-76)
- In contrast to summer (where towns largely avoided) winter fighting becomes existential struggle for *control of villages*.
No continuous front!
- German *tactical approach* is to cling to key points – towns, villages, major road crossings, etc. (See, *Maj. T. Wray, Standing Fast: German Defensive Doctrine*; also, *Dr. A.F. Chew, “Fighting the Russians in Winter”* (Chew file)
- German *defensive tactics* – the vital significance of the immediate *counter-stroke* (“*Gegenstoss*”).
(Clausewitz himself had emphasized *again and again* the importance of *offensive action* in connection w/ the general defensive. (See, *J. L. Wallach, Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation*, 23-24)
- *Brutal nature of winter combat* – Der permanente Konfrontation mit dem Tod liessen die Soldaten nicht nur stumpf werden, sondern mitunter auch **hart u. brutal**. Berichtet wird von einem Btl.-Kdr der **4. PD.** . . (For chilling anecdote see, **IX: C. Hartmann, Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg, Kapitel II**)
For “influence of winter climate“ on German soldiers see, *James Lucas, War on the Eastern Front*, 78, ff.)
Some soldiers suffer *nervous breakdowns* (eg., GFM v. Weichs in **1951**; again **IX: C. Hartmann, Kapitel II**)
- Evacuation of wounded: Often most difficult in winter weather. Even minor wounds in sub-freezing temperatures could result in shock and death if soldier not immediately evacuated to a dressing station behind front; also danger of frostbite.
(Eg. – *H. Stockhoff (9./IR 37/6.ID)* on **24.-25.12.41**: “Die Komp. [9./37] liegt [am Heiligabend] vor Sresnewo [zwischen Kalinin – Staritz]. Zugfuehrer Lt. Stibor sagt: ‘Jungens, fertigmachen, wir muessen heute abend noch durch die Doerfer, die teils schon vom Feinde besetzt sind!’ Es ist bitter kalt. Winterbekleidung ist kaum vorhanden. Kurz vorher sind Kopfschuetzer verteilt worden, Handschuhe sind selbst genaecht. Der **1.** Zug hat den Rueckzug zu decken. Dem Dorf vorgelagert ein Waldstueck. Vor dem Wald beziehen die **4 MGs** des **1. Zuges** Stellung in tiefen Schnee. Als der Russe angreift, sind die MGs *eingefroren*. Das Dorf muss aufgegeben werden. *Heinrich Stockhoff* erhaelt einen Schuss durch das rechte Wadenbein. Hinter dem Dorf wird gesammelt. Es geht

weiter zurueck auf das schon feindbesetzte Bukontowo. . . Der Angehoerige der 2. Gruppe der 9./37, Stockhoff, wird in Bukontowo erneut verwundet (Oberschenkel-durchschuss rechts) u. muss weggefahren werden, wobei durch das 8stuendige Liegen noch die Fuesse erfrieren. Am 26.12.41 gegen Mittag beim Verladen in Pferdeschlitten sieht er noch einmal seine Gruppe.“) (See, „Rundbrief Nr. 19“, **IR 37/6.ID**, Dez 77, pp 21-22, in: **6.ID** division files.)⁴⁴⁷

-- Burial of dead not possible in winter – when ground often frozen to depth of a meter or more. (See graphic photos of dead soldiers belonging to **129. ID** lined in several rows “in der Kirche von Romanowo, wo fuer den Heiligen Abend 1941 schon ein Weihnachtsbaum aufgestellt war.“ (Heinrich Boucsein, Halten oder Sterben, after p. 192)

-- Impact of arctic cold, *hypothermia*, etc., on soldiers

Medical diagnosis of frostbite/hypothermia (terrible effects of, etc.)

Other cold-related illnesses (See, *inter alia*, **VIII:232**, ff.)

Dulled senses; ability to feel/think; basic muscular and mental reactions, etc. (See anecdote involving soldiers – **6. ID** – who behave in almost psychotic fashion when caught in heavy artillery barrage.) (**IV:319**; also, H. Haape, Moscow Tramstop, 247-48)

(*personal accounts*; my materials on frostbite, hypothermia, etc.; see anecdote re: comatose Russian soldiers at the Rshew salient in, James Lucas, War on the Eastern Front, 91-92)

-- **Impact of cold weather on weapons, vehicles, equipment, etc.**⁴⁴⁸

(**IX**: R. Steiger, Armored Tactics; also, F. Frisch, Condemned to Live. A Panzer Artilleryman's Five-Front War, for excellent details on impact of Russian winter on weapons, vehicles, equipment (pp 84-88); also, James Lucas, War on the Eastern Front, 93-99, for discussion of German Army 1942 handbook on winter warfare. Whole sections from this 372-pg. handbook were translated and reprinted in the winter survival handbooks of the British and American armies and the techniques which were advised have become *standard practice* in NATO forces.)

(Equipment failure: The tools of the soldier's craft, his weapons and armor, are more richly invested w/ *emotion and symbolism* than any other material objects he is ever likely to use. His life, his honor, and the fulfillment of his purposes depend upon them in combat. . . . Equipment failure in combat can mean death. The terror aroused by breakage or malfunction of arms or armor has not changed in three millennia. In Vietnam, American soldiers were *demoralized* by the failure of their equipment to function properly. For the most part, they did not experience equipment failure as simply another manifestation of luck or of God's will, but as *culpable human betrayal*.)⁴⁴⁹ (See Shay, Achilles, 141-43)

⁴⁴⁷ **Note:** Stockhoff eventually landed in a military hospital in Warsaw in **Jan 42**. For interesting details of his journey there see, **V:68-69**.

⁴⁴⁸ **Note:** Key sources: „Erfahrungsberichte ueber den Winterkrieg“ (**Pz AOK 3**). (**IV: 399**, ff.); see also, E. Hager, War Diaries of a Pz. Soldier, for a terrific summary of impact of cold on men, weapons and equipment. (64); and, **IV:376**, ff.

⁴⁴⁹ **Note:** I don't recall, in all accounts I've read, of German soldiers responding in the same fashion as the Americans did in Vietnam. But this is not clear to me.

k) *Hitler's "Haltebefehl"*⁴⁵⁰ (16.-18.12.41)

Note: For several useful accounts – and good background – on Hitler's "Halt Order" see, **III:493-96, 562-65**)

Note: For "A Week in the Life of the High Command," from **15-21 Dec 41** (i.e., when Hitler's "Halt Order" made) see, **I:175-82**)⁴⁵¹

Note: For Halder's post-war perspective – "in these anxious weeks Hitler's dictatorial will ran riot" – see his, *Hitler as War Lord*, 51-52; **IX:89-90**)

Note: [*Origins of Haltebefehl*]: According to Albert *Seaton*, Hitler's „stand and fight“ order [i.e., the famous *Haltebefehl*] emerged from conversations Hitler had w/ GFM v. Bock – and from appreciations of v. Bock relayed to Hitler from his adjutant, *Schmundt* – in mid-**Dec 41**. (For details see, *A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 182-83; also, *Bock Diary*, 14-16 Dec 41; *KTb H.Gr. Mitte*, 16 Dec 41; **III:492-93**)

Note: "Hitlers Haltebefehl trug Mitte **Dez 41** wohl entscheidend dazu bei, dass die deutschen Truppen vor Moskau sich nicht in heilloser Unordnung absetzten u. zu einer leichten Beute der vorstuermenden Roten Armee wurde. Das starre Beharren auf diesen Befehl in den folgenden Wochen fuehrte allerdings immer wieder zu oertlichen Krisen u. Verlusten, die durch eine bewegliche Abwehr vermutlich vermieden worden waeren." (*J. Huerter, Hitlers Heerfuehrer*, 344-45; **IX:108**)

Note: The possibility of [Army Group Center] being totally routed, driven into a demoralizing general retreat on the scale of *Napoleon's* catastrophe, and losing most of its equipment in the process, led Hitler to order the army group to hold in place, *risking the loss of the whole force*. Whatever reinforcements could be found would be rushed forward on whatever trains could be spared from the *higher priority assigned to carting Jews to be slaughtered* in the occupied territory.⁴⁵² (*G. Weinberg, Global History of WWII*, 293)

Note: "As despair gripped the German foot soldier and a trembling paralysis afflicted his commanders, one man – the *Fuehrer* – rose to the occasion. . . As for Hitler, it was his *finest hour*. He had done more than save the German Army; he had achieved *complete personal ascendancy over its ruling class*." (*A. Clark, Barbarossa*, 182-83; **VIII:113-14**)

Note: It seems clear that, in days leading up to Hitler's "Halt Order" decision, he had not always been adequately and responsibly informed by his staff about the *true situation at the front*. For example, "*Schmundt* established that the **OKH** had *not sent the alarming reports on to Hitler*. Bock therefore retransmitted the text."⁴⁵³ The question as to the extent to which reports from the army group and the armies went directly to Hitler cannot be answered conclusively. It should be remembered that **OKH** tried to keep control of the army; at the same time, there was proven co-operation between Halder and Jodl, and it was *Jodl* who selected the reports to

⁴⁵⁰ **Note:** For an intimate inside look at the functioning of Hitler's High Command during this period (**15.-21.12.41**) see, **I:175**, ff.

⁴⁵¹ **Note:** Glimpse of how the German High Command functioned in detail. Source: *Inside Hitler's High Command*, G.P. Megargee, 2000. (142-69)

⁴⁵² **Note:** This is a bold statement – and it might well be *accurate*.

⁴⁵³ **Note:** GFM v. Bock had already reported the "relevant developments" to Brauchtisch on **13 Dec 41**. Apparently, Brauchtisch's report was not passed to Hitler.

be submitted. Hitler also received information from the Luftwaffe operations staff.) (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 714; **III:563**)

- Discuss in detail (reasons for, reactions too, historical assessment of, etc.)
(See, **I:182-85**; **III:492-94**, **562-64**; **IMPB:8**; also, my Notebook #1, “*Hitler, Chronology of Events*”)
- **14.-16.12.41**: The 16th was a „day of decisions“ at Fuehrer HQs. . . Hitler tended to „vacillate near lethargy“ while making crucial decisions. On **14 Dec 41**, he had given Bock and Brauchitsch a „no“ that sounded like a „yes.“ [Note: See entry „Brauchitsch at AGC HQ,“ 13.-14.12.41, **III:550-51**]. On **15 Dec 41**, he had been unable to decide about Tikhvin after more than 7 hours but *apparently agreed to a far more extensive withdrawal for Army Group Ctr.* A day later, however, this thinking too would change.⁴⁵⁴ In a morning interview w/ Leeb on **16 Dec 41**, Hitler, barely protesting, agreed to let Army Group North give up the Tikhvin salient. . . Having made this decision on Tikhvin, Hitler considered the questions pertaining to Army Group Ctr. . . (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 80-82)
- **15.-16.12.41**: As his special train leaves Berlin in the evening, Hitler drafts his first Halt Order to the eastern front. The **4 Army** is ordered not to fall back one foot. This controversial order was hotly debated during the night. Its critics argued that what mattered now was not clinging to frozen territory but preserving the army’s fighting power for **1942**. Others, among them Jodl, replied that only such a holding order made sense. It was **11:00 a.m., 16 Dec 41**, when Hitler arrived back at the Wolf’s Lair. His Halt Order was dictated to Bock over the telephone by Halder at **12:10 p.m.** (*Irving, Hitler’s War*, 357)
- **16.12.41** [Fuehrerhauptquartier]: *Mitternacht* zum Fuehrer befohlen: **ObdH, ich, Op.Chef.** Befehl: *Von Absetzen kann keine Rede sein.* Nur an einigen Stellen tiefere Feindeinbruecke. Rueckwaertige Linien aufzubauen, ist *Phantasie*. Die Front krankt nur an einem: Der Feind ist zahlreicher an Soldaten. Er hat nicht mehr Artillerie. *Er ist viel schlechter als wir.* (*KTB Halder, Echlot*, 489; **I:182**)
- **16.12.41**: An diesem Tage erlaesst Hitler den ersten „Haltebefehl,“ der aber noch beschraenkte Ausweichbewegungen an den Flanken der H.Gr. gestattet. Bock gibt daraufhin Befehl, dass jedes Absetzen von der Division an aufwaerts von seiner Genehmigung abhaenge. In der darauffolgenden Nacht schaerft Hitler telefonisch von Bock nochmals ein, dass es besser sei, die Front unbedingt zu halten, als auf eine unvorbereitete Linie auszuweichen, auch auf die Gefahr hin, dass die Front zerreißen wuerde. (*H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 210)
- **16.12.41**: Innerhalb der Operationsabteilung [des Heeres] wurde Hitlers Halte-Befehl „mit dem *Entschluss Friedrichs des Grossen bei Leuten* [1757] *verglichen*. Es geht um Sieg oder Niederlage.“ Das Halten der erreichten Linien, also „*fanatischer Widerstand*“ u. nicht ein „*napoleonischer Rueckzug*“ der abgekaempften Truppe sollte die drohende Zertruemmung der Hr.Gr.Mitte abwenden. Dabei nahm Hitler bewusst die Opferung von Mensch u. Material in Kauf. (*J. Foerster, Wehrmacht im NS-Staat*, 177)
- **16.12.41** [Haltebefehl]: Daher befahl Hitler am diesem Tage den „fanatischen Widerstand.“ Die wichtigste Ziffer des Befehls lautete: [see text] . . . In einer der folgenden Ziffern kuendigte er die sofortige Zufuehrung von Ersatzbataillonen fuer besonders geschwaechte

⁴⁵⁴ Note: Why the abrupt change? Because of Schmundt’s report?

Divisionen, teilweise im Lufttransport, an. Ferner stelle er die Zufuehrung von **5** Divisionen im Laufe des **Jan 42** in den Raum Witebsk in Aussicht, weitere **2** Divisionen u. **2** Ersatzdivisionen sollte bis Mitte **Jan 42** an der oestl. Reichsgrenze bereitgestellt werden. Gleichzeitig befahl er dem Ob.d.L., **4** Kampf-, **1** Zerstoerer- u. **6** Transportgruppen dem **VIII Fliegerkorps** als Verstaerkung zuzufuehren. Mit diesem Befehl war jede freiwillige Rueckzugsbewegung unterbunden; so *primitiv* diese Massnahme war, sie trug der augenblicklichen Gefahr Rechnung. Und *die Truppe u. ihre Fuehrung gehorchten.*⁴⁵⁵ (Hofmann, “Schlacht von Moskau,” 170-71)

- **16.12.41** [Guderian responds]: When the advanced briefing on the content of Hitler’s expected directive reached **2 Army**⁴⁵⁶ at **1.30** p.m., Guderian observed that that order could not be carried out; the army was no longer capable of mounting more than limited thrusts. He thus *ordered a further withdrawal*. The Upa position, reached on the evening of **16 Dec 41**, could be held for a day or two, but on the whole a withdrawal beyond the Susha-Oka sector was necessary. He informed C-in-C of the army group of his views and the measures he’d taken and received from him a confirmation that Hitler insisted on his order being carried out in spite of Schmudt’s report. Hitler himself contacted Guderian during the night. He acknowledged the difficulty of Guderian’s situation, but the front had to be held under all circumstances. The panzer army should attempt to reach a new position that could be reinforced. [?] He assured Guderian he would do everything to help the army. Replacements, three [**3**] twin-engine fighter Gruppen of the *Luftwaffe*, and fresh divisions from the West would be brought up. . . Only **35** minutes later, GFM v. Bock ordered [to Guderian?] that in future any withdrawal from division level upward would require his personal approval. (GSWW, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 715, f.n. 602)
- **ab 16.12.41**: Despite Hitler’s Haltebefehl, and in spite of its desperate defense, AGC hardly held any of its positions for more than a few days and was to be forced back everywhere in the next five [**5**] weeks between **100** and **200** miles. Large numbers of guns and vehilces were to be lost, and exposure rather than fighting was to bring quite heavy casualties. For example, cdr and historian of **98 ID** relates how his division, w/in **2-3** days of the standstill order, began a series of piecemeal withdrawals over the course of the next two months. **6 ID**, despite proposing to withdraw in one bound (the proposal was not approved), was ordered to fall back in short bounds (in kleinen Etappen) only **3** miles at a time, so that, as it complained, contact [w/ enemy] could never be broken. (Seaton, Russo-German War, 228; Grossmann, Geschichte der 6. Inf.-Div., 92, 94, 99)⁴⁵⁷
- **18.12.41**: Order reached AGC on **18 Dec 41** (came over the *teletype*) (**III:569-71**)
Order includes promises of major ground & air reinforcements
- Plans of AGC to fall back to a “*Winterstellung*” are first casualty of Hitler’s halt order. (**III:567**)

⁴⁵⁵ **Note:** Perhaps w/ the exection of Guderian!

⁴⁵⁶ **Note:** Confirm that author indeed means “**2**” Army and not “**2 Panzer**” Army. Guderian at this time was in command of both armies.

⁴⁵⁷ **Note:** This entry helps put Hitler’s “standstill order,” as Seaton calls it, in perspective – i.e., it is something of a myth that units of AGC simply stood their ground and did not – or were not allowed – to fall back. As experiences of **6** and **98 ID** exemplify, German units were either given permission (however grudgingly) on occasion to withdraw, or simply fell back on their own because they had no other choice.

-- **18.12.41** [OKH Op.Abt. Fernschreiben]:

An H.Gr.Mitte:

1. Der Fuehrer hat befohlen: „Groessere Ausweichbewegungen koennen nicht durchgefuehrt werden. Sie fuehren zum voelligen Verlust von schweren Waffen u. Geraet. Unter persoenlichem Einsatz der Befehlshaber, Kommandeure u. Offiziere ist die Truppe zum fanatischen Widerstand in ihren Stellungen zu zwingen, ohne Ruecksicht auf durchgebrochenen Feind in Flanken u. Ruecken. Nur durch eine derartige Kampffuehrung ist der Zeitgewinn zu erzielen, der notwendig ist, um die Verstaerkungen aus der Heimat u. dem Westen heran-zufuehren, die ich befohlen habe. . .

2. Aufgabe der H.Gr. Sued. . .

3. OKH wird der H.Gr.Mitte unter Ausschoepfung aller Transportmoeglichkeiten sowie unter Einsatz des gemaess Ziffer **6** zur Verfuegung gestellten Lufttransportraumes Verstaerkungen in groesstmoeglichster Zahl zufuehren. Das Wichtigste ist die Zufuehrung von Gewehrtraegern (Ersatzbataillone) zu den besonders geschwaechten Divisionen. Der Antransport von Panzern tritt dem-gegenueber zurueck.

Es werden ferner der H.Gr. zugefuehrt:

216 ID voraussichtlich bis zum **1.1.42** nach Witebsk

208 ID voraussichtlich bis zum **8.1.42** nach Witebsk

246 ID voraussichtlich bis zum **16.1.42** nach Witebsk

211 ID voraussichtlich bis zum **24.1.42** nach Witebsk

205 ID voraussichtlich bis zum **1.2.42** nach Witebsk

Zur Beschleunigung der Zufuehrung dieser Kraefte werden von den vorgenannten Divisionen nur die fuer sofortigen Einsatz unbedingt notwendigen Teile (Infanterie, Pioniere, eine Artl.-Abt., Panzerjaeger) nach Witebsk zugefuehrt. . .

Ferner werden **2** Inf.Div. u. **3** Ersatz-Div. bis Mitte Januar zur Verfuegung OKH an der Ostgrenze bereitgestellt.

4. 339 ID wird der H.Gr. mit Eintreffen der im Antransport befindlichen Landesschuetzen-Batl. zur Verwendung in der Front freigegeben.

5. Die Aufstellung von winterbeweglichen Jagdkommandos in Batl.-Staerke mit Schi- u. Schlittenausruistung im Heimatbereich ist angeordnet. Ueber ihre Zufuehrung wird rechtzeitig Befehl ergehen.

6. a) ObdL fuehrt dem **VIII Fliegerkorps** sofort an Verstaerkungen zu:

4 Kampfgruppen u.

1 Zerstoeerergruppe, ferner

1 Transportgruppe von **Luftflotte 4** u.

5 Transportgruppen aus der Heimat

b) Die von **Luftflotte 4** zu verlegende Transportgruppe ueberfuehrt **1** Ersatz-Bataillon der H.Gr.Sued zur H.Gr.Mitte (bereits befohlen).

2 Transportgruppen ueberfuehren ab **18.12.41** groessere Teile der **SS-Standarte 4** zur H.Gr.Mitte.

Die restlichen **3** Transportgruppen werden bei ihrer Verlegung aus dem Reich zur H.Gr.Mitte einzelne Ersatzbataillone ueberfuehren. . .

(Source: *KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 1084-85)

l) ***Hitler assumes Command of German Army (19.12.41)***

Note: For several accounts – and interpretations – of Hitler’s assumption of Army command see, **III:495-96**.

Note: For Col.Gen. Halder’s *clearly dishonest* post-war perspective see his, Hitler as War Lord, at: **IX:89**)

Note: After GFM v. Kluge took over as C-in-C of Army Group Center, Hitler was constantly on the phone w/ him, sometimes for hours at a time. And there is the notorious incident (which I cannot seem to locate in my records) of **31 Dec 41** (confirm date!), when Hitler remonstrated w/ Kluge for some **3** hours over the location of several MGs in a cemetery! All this reminds one of GFM v. Moltke’s admonition: “Am ungluecklichsten ist aber der Feldherrn, der . . . einen Telegraphendraht im Ruecken [hat].“ (See, *H. Hinterhuber*, Wettbewerbsstrategie, p 41)

-- For interesting analysis from *GSWW*,⁴⁵⁸ Vol. IV, see: **III:575**)

-- GFM v. Brauchitsch

Weak man; ineffective; loathed by Hitler; heart problems

-- Impact of Hitler assuming command of Army

He wants *operational* control only (**OKH** administrative tasked passed to Keitel)

Halder, many in command structure, pleased w/ this change

Halder believes w/ direct access to H., he’ll have more control over events!

(See, **III:503-04**)

-- Henceforth, division of war effort between **OKW** and **OKH**

Latter responsible for Russian front; former for all other theaters

-- Germans also consider replacing **Jodl** w. **Manstein** (as Chef WFSt) and **Halder** w/ **Jodl** (as Army Chief of Staff) (See, **R 14/4D**, “*Tagebuch Chef des Stabes BdE*”)

-- GFM v. Bock replaced by GFM v. Kluge at AGC (ca. **18.12.41**)

Bock had stomach ailments (see, his KTB, etc.)

(For background on Kluge, see biographical details in Notebook #1; “GFM v. Kluge fuehrte die Denkwuerdigkeiten des Grossstallmeisters Coulaincourt, des Adjutanten des Kaisers, stets mit sich. ‘*Es war seine Bibel.*’” (See, *Joerg Friedrich*, Das Gesetz des Krieges. Das dt. Heer in Russland 1941-45, 452-53)).

-- **19.12.41:** Hitler takes over at C-in-C of the Army. Decision is formally announced on this day. A case can be made that the as yet *unshaken confidence* of the soldiers in Hitler contributed

⁴⁵⁸ **Note:** For an excellent analysis of this German quasi-official history of WWII by Omar Bartov see, **IMPB:28-29**.

to their rallying to him as the new C-in-C of the Army and halted what might otherwise have been a collapse of morale. (G. Weinberg, Global History of WWII, 282-84; also, Domarus, 1813-15)⁴⁵⁹

- **19.12.41:** Hitler fires von Brauchitsch and takes over directly as C-in-C of the Army. The Fuehrer saw his chance to *blame the emerging debacle in the east on Brauchitsch* and the **OKH** (and on the three army group cdrs and other senior officers he would relieve during this period), while he could appear as the savior of the situation. (Megargee, 138)⁴⁶⁰
- **19.12.41:** From the beginning of the war against the Soviet Union, the German Army C-in-C's operational responsibilities had been confined to the Eastern Front, not including Finland. All other fronts became **OKW** theaters, in that they were controlled by Hitler thru Jodl and the Wehrmachtsfuehrungstab. This direct control by Hitler applied, however, only to the German Army in the **OKW** theaters, since all formations and units of the Luftwaffe and the Navy, whether in the East or the West, came directly under their own C-in-Cs. The **OKH** therefore, unlike the **OKL** and **OKM**, had already suffered a serious diminishing of its operational authority. When Hitler stated his intention of taking over the post of C-in-C of the German Army [**Dec 41**], he sought *direct operational, even tactical, control* over the cdrs of the army groups in the East. In v. Brauchitsch's many other important duties Hitler had no interest, and these he transferred to Keitel, head of **OKW**. . . (For more details see, Seaton, Russo-German War, 212)
- **20.12.41:** On [this day], Hitler gave Halder orders on how he wanted the war in the East conducted. A „fanatical will to fight“ would have to be instilled in the troops by „all, even the most severe, means.“ Soldiers had no „contracts“ restricting them to specific duties. Those in support positions, such as bakers, could defend their own positions, and all troops would have to learn to „tolerate breakthroughs.“ Rifle pits were to be dug by blasting holes in the ground or by blowing them in w/ artillery fire. The Germans could take winter clothing from Soviet civilians. And, he demanded, „Every man must defend himself where he is.“ Halder transmitted a summary of these orders to the army groups as an „elucidation“ of the standfast order. (Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad, 84-85)

-- **21.12.41** [Fernschreiben OKW an OKH]:

An **OKH** (Op.Abt.)

Nachstehend Zusammenstellung der vom Fuehrer am **20.12.41** dem Chef des Generalstabes des Heeres erlaeuerten Aufgaben des Heeres fuer die naechste Zeit. 1.) Halten u. kaempfen bis zum Aeussersten. Kein Schritt freiwillig zurueckgehen. . . 4.) Alle in der Heimat u. im Westen verfuegbare Verbaende nach dem Osten bringen: [see text]; 5.) Gefangene u. Einwohner ruecksichtslos

⁴⁵⁹ **Note:** What Hitler really thought of the man he himself had named to head the Army, he told Goebbels three months later (**20.3.42**): „The Fuehrer spoke of him [Brauchitsch] only in terms of contempt. A vain, cowardly wretch . . . and a nincompoop.“ To his cronies Hitler said of B.: “He’s no soldier; he’s a man of straw. If Brauchitsch had remained at his post only for another few weeks, things would have ended in catastrophe.” (Goebbels diary, quoted in: Shirer, Rise and Fall, 866; also, Hitler’s Secret Conversations, 153)

⁴⁶⁰ **Note:** According to David Irving, it was Col. Rudolf Schmundt “who [had] persuasively urged Hitler to become his own Commander in Chief, issuing orders directly through Halder to the army. Hitler said he would think it over.” (Hitler’s War, 351)

von Winterbekleidung entbloessen; 6) Alle aufgegebenen Gehoeft niederbrennen. [For more details see, *OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 1085-86]

- **23.12.41:** Vortrag des Chef H Ruest u. BdE beim Fuehrer: (See text for details; fascinating discussion re: strategies for increasing weapons production; need to dramatically raise Army's allotments of raw materials, weapons production, etc., vis-à-vis Luftwaffe and Navy; efforts to raise additional troops; "*Walkuere-Div.*";⁴⁶¹ Hitler's concern that new troops going to front have winter clothing; etc.) (**R 14/4D:** Tagebuch Chef d. Stabes der Heeresruestung (H. Ruest.) u. Befehlshaber des Ersatzheeres 18-26; also, **III:497-98**). (Note: About the date of this meeting, "Hitler, worried about a loss of prestige at Leningrad, discussed w/ Halder the possibility of using poison gas to end the resistance in the city fast.") (See, *Ziemke & Bauer*, Moscow to Stalingrad, 87)
- **6.1.42** [Mission Tactics]:⁴⁶² The effects of Hitler's assumption of direct command of the army on Halder's position and work soon became evident. Halder's daily oral report to Hitler – together w/ the head of the Wehrmacht transportation department, the head of Wehrmacht communications, and the general-staff officer in charge of supply and administration – was not only extremely time consuming: in the case of direct orders it left almost no time for consultation or for the collection of the necessary data. Halder shared his first insights into the new style of leadership w/ the chiefs of staff of the army groups and armies, who were to pass them on to their C-in-Cs. IAW Hitler's will, the senior commands (high commands of the army, army groups, and armies) were to conduct their ops w/ stricter discipline. The principle of simply issuing orders to subordinate units and leaving the execution to them, it was argued, had sometimes led to circumstances in which the intentions of the higher command had been jeopardized w/ serious effects on the situation as a whole. Therefore it was again necessary to issue clear, unequivocal orders. . . . This represented the formal confirmation of the end of one of the most basic German military principles, „mission response-ability.“ In effect the principle of providing every cdr w/ all necessary support and equipment needed for him to carry out his mission independently w/in the framework of the relevant directives and orders, trusting in his sound training, character, and ability, had been abandoned ever since the offensive drive by the German army in the east had come to a halt. In fact, however, this principle of command had already become a „pious myth“ w/ the development of modern communications⁴⁶³ and the increasing dependence of armies on air support. . . . (See, *GSSW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 723-24)⁴⁶⁴

m) *Soviet Counteroffensive (second phase – 16.12.41 – 5.1.42)*

Key Milestones:

⁴⁶¹ **Note:** For catastrophic experiences of one of these so-called "Walkuere" divisions in Russia in **Jan 42** see, "Ohne Ruecksicht auf Verluste: Die 'Walkuere-Divisionen' als letzte Aushilfe in der Krise im Mittelabschnitt der Ostfront im Winter **1941/42**: Dargestellt am Beispiel der **330. I.D.** an Hand von Dokumenten u. Kriegstagebuechern," (unpubl. manuscript by Gunther Rathke, 1995). For summary of this document see my „Biblio file.“

⁴⁶² **Note:** Confirm date! Check Halder KTB.

⁴⁶³ **Note:** The teleprinter, telephone, wireless, etc. The whole concept of "Auftragstaktik" has to be seen in a much different light when the telephone, for example, enables Adolf Hitler to remonstrate for hours w/ GFM v. Kluge over the placement of several MGs in a cemetery, etc!

⁴⁶⁴ **Note:** Hitler, too, had demanded absolute honesty in reports in his first „basic order“ after assuming direct command of the army. (724, f.n. 625)

- Zhukov had issued an initial second phase directive on **13 Dec 41**. (See, **III:565**)
- Soviet gains (outline)
- South sector: Dangerous gap soon opens between German **4. Army** and Guderian's **2. Pz Army**. Soviet troops pour through.
- **15.-25.12.41**: Klin had been enveloped from both sides by units of Maj-Gen Lelyushenko's **30 Army** and of Lt-Gen Kuznetsov's **1 Assault Army**. The town was recaptured on **15 Dec 41**, after an airborne unit dropped in the German rear had vainly tried to cut off the garrison's line of retreat. Simultaneously, Maj-Gen Vlasov's **20 Army** along w/ Lt-Gen Rokossovskiy's **16 Army**, covered in the south by Lt-Gen Govorov's **5 Army**, took the town of Istra [on same day?], crossed the Istra river, and occupied the area of the Istra reservoir. Teryaeva Sloboda fell on **18 Dec 41**, and Volokolamsk on **20 Dec 41**. By **25 Dec 41**, when the offensive came to a temporary halt, the armies of the right wing of the Western Front had forced back the opposing German troops as far as the Lama and Ruza rivers and inflicted heavy losses on them. As Marshal of the Soviet Union Sokolovskiy, then Western Front chief of staff, observes, the threat to Moscow from the NW had been eliminated. What had not been accomplished, however, was the annihilation (planned in conjunction w/ the Kalinin Front) of the German forces confronting them or the development of the right prong into a pincer movement enveloping the main forces of Army Group Ctr. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 901)
- **16.12.41** [Guderian]: He meets, at his urgent request, w/ Schmundt at Orel airfield. They talk for an hour. (Details see, Panzer Leader, 263; **III:560**)
- **16.12.41**: In a period of **11** days, the armies on Zhukov's right flank have advanced **30** to **65** km (**18** to **39** miles) at a rate of almost **6** km (**3.6** miles) per day. Konev's armies have covered **10** to **22** km (**6** to **13** miles) at a much slower rate. While limited in scope, the Red Army's offensive has cleared German forces from the northern and northeastern approaches to Moscow and forced the **3** and **4 PzGr**'s to withdraw in unprecedented disorder to new defenses farther west. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 198-99)
- **16.-26.12.41**: The Soviet **31 Army**, from Konev's army group [front], threw the German **9 Army** out of Kalinin (**16 Dec 41**). It gradually pushed the enemy back to the outskirts of Rzhev. The recapture of Klin and Kalinin was vitally important, as these victories re-opened the direct Soviet rail link from Moscow to the Volkhov front. Meanwhile, Guderian's **2 Pz Army** had been pushed back from the bulge SE of Tula by General Golikov's new **10 Army**. Here an important part was played by the **1 Gds Cav Corps** under General Belov. By **26 Dec 41**, the Germans had been driven back west of the city of Kaluga. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 106)
- **16.-31.12.41**: On **16 Dec 41**, the Red Army offensive had only just begun. By end of the month, Zhukov has committed his remaining armies (**33** and **43 Armies**) into the maelstrom west of Moscow.⁴⁶⁵ During the same period, the *Stavka* commits its fresh **39** and **61 Armies** into combat on the northern and southern flanks. Having liberated Kalinin and breached the German's Volga defenses, Konev's armies approach Staritsa and Rzhev, and Zhukov's right flank armies (**30**, **1 Shock**, **20** and **16 Armies**) are driving the shaken **3** and **4 PzGr**

⁴⁶⁵ **Note:** That is, against Kluge's **4 Army**. These attacks against Kluge's **4 Army** began on **18 Dec 41**. See below.

inexorably west toward the Lama and Russa rivers north and south of Volokolamsk. Having already retreated **100-125 km (60-75 miles)**, German forces are hard-pressed to retain control of positions from which they had begun their mid-Nov 41 offensive.

While Kluge's **4 Army** held firm against the **33** and **43 Armies** in Zhukov's center, Guderian's **2 Pz Army** is struggling to hold onto its defenses north and south of Kaluga against Group Belov and the **49**, **50** and **10 Armies**. Further south, Schmidt's decimated 2 Army tries frantically to cover a yawning gap between his and Guderian's army. South of Moscow, German forces have withdrawn **250 km (150 miles)** westward, well beyond the positions from which they had begun their offensive in mid-Nov 41. (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 203)

- **16.12.41**: Forced to withdraw on this day, **267 ID** has no choice but to leave all its artillery behind. (*Bock Tagebuch; KTB H.Gr.Mitte*)
- **17.12.41**: Die Absicht der H.Gr.Mitte, die Vorbereitung einer "Winterstellung" in der allgemeinen Linie westl. Medyn – ostw. Gshatsk – ostw. Rshew vorzusehen, u. der dazu von ihr am **9 Dez 41** an die **4** u. **9 Armee** erteilte Befehl wurde bereits erwahnt. Den „*Armeebefehl fuer die Vorbereitung des Ausweichens in eine rueckwaertige Stellung*“ erliess das **AOK 4** hieraufhin unter dem **17 Dez 41**. Er wurde nun ein erstes Opfer des Hitlerischen Haltebefehls. Noch am **17 Dez 41** erreichte die **4 PzGr** ein Spruch, der diesen Befehl ausser Kraft setzte u. alle entsprechenden Bewegungen einzustellen befahl. . . Die vorgesehene „Winterstellung“ war eine grundlegende Planung, die durch Verkuerzung der jetzigen Fronten um beinahe die Haelfte die Moeglichkeit zur nachhaltigen Verteidigung mit den verfuegbaren Kraeften geben sollte. (*de Beaulieu, "Sturm auf Moskau,"* Teil II: 435-36)
- **17.-20.12.41** [Guderian's „insubordination“]: On **20 Dec 41**, Guderian reported that he was not prepared to transmit Hitler's „hold-on order“ verbatim to his units. (Already on **17 Dec 41**, Guderian had flatly refused to obey Bock's order to withdraw units at division level or above only w/ his approval.) Several factors were involved in this decision. [*Note: See, p. 719*]. . . At same time Guderian transferred **4 PD** to area of Orel and **3 PD** south of Mtsensk as a reserve. He seems to have reported neither action to the army group, for on **20 Dec 41** the group ordered that such rest and rehabilitation measures were to be reported in advance. In the further planning of withdrawal movements Guderian, while under the command of GFM v. Bock, *refused to be deflected from his purpose* and, in the face of all Hitler's orders, referred to Brauchitsch's consent of **13 Dec 41**. As he agreed w/ Guderian and also enjoyed Hitler's confidence, Bock had shown generosity and had even managed to cope w/ the difficulties presented by the team of Guderian and Kluge, w/o having to resort to hard, direct orders in dealing w/ either of the two men. . . The situation changed w/ Kluge's appointment as C-in-C of the army group.⁴⁶⁶ (*GSWW*, Vol. IV, 715, f.n. 602)
- **18.12.41** [Partisanen]: Im rueckw. H.Gebiet Ueberfaelle, Sabotageakte u. Kaempfe mit Partisanen. (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 90)
- **18.12.41** [Zhukov hits 4 Army]: In pursuit of his main plan to tie down the German **4 Army** at the centre, and under orders from Stalin, Zhukov now committed his own centre armies on **18 Dec 41**, the left flank of Govorov's **5 Army**, Yefremov's **33 Army**, Golubev's **43 Army**,

⁴⁶⁶ **Note:** Good point – GFM v. Bock had tolerated Guderian's – shall we say – “stubbornness,” Kluge would not.

Zakharkin's **49 Army** right flank and centre. (For details of these attacks see, *J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 281)

- **18.12.41**: The West Front launches a series of frontal attacks aimed at pinning **4 Army** and preventing the transfer of reinforcements from the centre to the flanks. The **5, 33, 43 and 49 Armies** attack, but **33** and **43 Armies** are soon bogged down along the Nara River and at Naro-Fominsk. Zhukov orders **50 Army** to thrust toward Kaluga. . . (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 188-89)
- **18.12.41** [Kluge C-in-C AGC]: Kluge leaves **4 Army** to take over Army Group Ctr. He believes that he can still exercise direct personal control over his old army by telephone and wireless from Smolensk. He therefore sent me, as his former chief of staff, orders and instructions which I then had to carry out entirely on my own responsibility. That state of affairs went on until **26 Dec 41**, when the new army cdr, General of Mountain Troops Kuebler arrived at **4 Army** HQ. For a time, the army had been temporarily under command of General of Panzer Troops Stumme. (*Blumentritt, Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 66)
- **18.12.41**: During the night on the **18th**, AGC transferred **XXXXIII AK** from **2 Pz** to **4 Army** and thereby converted what had been a gap in the **2 Pz Army** front to one between the two armies. Henceforth, there would be fewer prospects for closing the front than before. Kluge, whose replacement had not yet arrived, was still commanding **4 Army** as well as the army group, and relations between Kluge and Guderian were anything but cordial. (See, *Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 96-97)
- **ab 18.12.41**: Now, on **18 Dec 41**, Supreme Command HQ decided to create once more a Bryansk Front from the armies of the right wing [of SW Front], and to place it under command of Col-Gen Cherevichenko. This reconstituted Bryansk Front was composed of the mobile Kostenko group, of **13 Army**, and of the newly formed **61 Army**, whose command Lt-Gen Popov had to take over a few days later from Col-Gen Kuznetsov, who at time was over-fond of alcohol.

The restoration of the Bryansk Front, along w/ the reinforcement of the Kalinin Front by two [2] armies, was to create favorable conditions for the encirclement of the main forces of Army Group Ctr by means of a large-scale pincer movement – an objective which, on the strength of the current successes – HQ [Stavka] considered feasible. The armies of Bryansk Front, attacking in a NW direction from **18 Dec 41**, did in fact manage to gain further ground. However, after reaching the Belev-Mtsensk-Verkhovye line in the first days of **Jan 42**, their strength was spent. The hoped-for routing of German forces on the southern wing of AGC, planned in co-operation w/ the neighboring Western Front, was not achieved. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 902-03)

- **18.-23.12.41**: During the day on the **18th**, complying w/ Stavka orders for the second phase of the counteroffensive, **33, 43 and 49 Armies** hit the whole length of **4 Army** front. The army's line of trenches and dugouts on the Nara River stopped the **33** and **43 Armies**, but **49 Army** drove **XIII AK**, **XXXXIII AK**'s neighbor on the north, back on both sides of Tarusa, while **50 Army** began working its way around and behind **XXXXIII AK**'s open flank. . . After having watched the gap in the German front widen for almost two weeks to a width of almost **30 miles** by the **18th**, Boldin [**50 Army**] had decided to exploit it. He assembled a mobile force of a tank, a cavalry and a rifle division under his deputy army cdr, Gen-Mayor V.S. Popov, and sent it that night around the **XXXXIII AK**'s open flank in a sneak attack on

Kaluga,⁴⁶⁷ **4 Army's** railhead and supply base. . . By nightfall on the **20th**, Popov's group was fighting south of Kaluga. . . On Boldin's left, several **10 Army** divisions had also come thru the gap and were driving toward Belev on the Oka. . . On the night of the **20th**, Soviet tanks broke into Kaluga. . . Hitler promised AGC „every available acft on the whole eastern front“ for the defense of Kaluga.

The next two days were desperate ones for **4 Army**. On the **22nd**, in a driving snowstorm, Soviet **49 Army** broke thru the **4 Army** front at Tarusa, splitting off **XXXXIII AK** from the army's main body. This action put the Russians in the position to disrupt **4 Army's** center and at same time encircle **XXXXIII AK** which already had the Popov group standing behind it at Kaluga. . . The next afternoon [**23 Dec 41**], Hitler gives Kluge the „liberty to issue the order to withdraw.“⁴⁶⁸ Kluge assured him he would only use the authority „if I see no other way out of the dilemma.“ [Within hours] the corps has orders to retreat. (See, *Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 97-98)

- **18.-27.12.41** [Guderian relieved of command]: The day before, Hitler ordered **2 Pz Army** to plug the gap between **XXIV PzK** and **XLIII AK**. The latter formation had stubbornly stuck to **4 Army** and had therefore swung northwest, while **XXIV PzK** and the mass of **2 Pz Army** fell away to the SW down the Tula-Orel road. Boldin's advanced units occupied Kaluga and the **10 Army** reached Belev, both on **20 Dec 41**. In his vanity, Guderian still believed he had significant influence with Hitler, so on that same day flew to Führer headquarters on his own initiative (and over von Kluge's head). There, instead of showing the expected fighting resolve, he presented withdrawal plans, and for his pains received a viscous dressing down for his 'insane scheme.'

The general saw no way out; his men were forced into making due with a mere **360** tons of supplies per day. His panzer strength had dropped from **970** (initial issue plus reinforcements) to **70** machines in running order and another **168** in various stages of repair. Unbeknownst to the Germans, this mid-**Dec 41** crisis coincided with the end Phase I of the Soviet counter-offensive (*Stavka* now considered Moscow out of immediate danger). To complicate matters, Zhukov recreated the Bryansk Front, and in Phase II, planned to smash through Guderian's right, and cut off Army Group Center near Mstensk.⁴⁶⁹ Guderian's problems were not over.

A change of organizational boundaries on **21 Dec 41** made Kaluga the **4 Army** and von Kluge's problem. But Guderian's personal crisis neared its finale. He spent all day on the **22nd** with the **296 ID**, the front of which had been penetrated in many places. On the following day, he unilaterally pulled the division behind the Oka River. Within **24** hours, von Kluge told him that Hitler would not allow such a retreat. The army group commander in turn telephoned Halder, explaining that Guderian had begun to withdraw the entire **2 Pz Army**, and if that formation pulled back, the neighboring **2 Army** would have to as well. Halder recommended a court martial for Guderian. By Christmas Day, Hitler had had enough, and gave von Kluge permission to 'do what is necessary' with the panzer expert. The field

⁴⁶⁷ **Note:** Kaluga = **4 Army** railhead & supply base.

⁴⁶⁸ **Note:** Hitler gives Kluge permission to withdraw **43 AK** – another indication that his “Halt Order” was not “etched in granite!”

⁴⁶⁹ *Ziemke & Bauer, ibid*, pp. 85-86, 88, 90-91, 95-97. Acknowledging the situation on the ground, von Kluge officially transferred **XLIII AK** to **4 Army** on the **18 Dec 41**.

marshal cashiered Guderian that same day, while Hitler prohibited a farewell message to the panzer army.⁴⁷⁰

Armeegruppe Guderian became Armeegruppe Schmidt on **26 Dec 41**, named after acting **2 Army** commander, General of Panzer Troops Rudolf Schmidt. Schmidt tried to accomplish Hitler's orders to his predecessor but had only one division, **4 PD**, even remotely capable of closing the gap with **4 Army**. It duly attacked toward Belev on the **27th**, got stuck in the deep snow and had to turn back having accomplished nothing. Making better progress than Zhukov expected, the **10** and **50 Armies** continued west toward Sukhinichi. In view of these Soviet successes, it looked for a while as though Schmidt might have to give up both Orel and Kursk. (*Kirchubel, Draft*, 25-26)

- **18.12.41-4.1.42** [Western Front]: Within the framework of the large-scale enveloping maneuver of the wings of the Western Front, along w/ the troops of the Kalinin and Bryansk Fronts, the four [4] armies at the centre of Western Front were now also ordered to go over to the attack to tie down and break up the enemy forces.⁴⁷¹ However, Lt-Gen Yefremov's **33 Army** and Maj-Gen Golubev's **43 Army**, both attacking south of the Moscow-Mozhaysk railway line, had not received the slightest reinforcements of personnel or material, and made only slow progress. Not until **26 Dec 41** did the **33 Army** take Naro-Fominsk, situated near the front line, and not until **2 Jan 42** did **43 Army** take Maloyaroslavets. On **4 Jan 42**, **33 Army** succeeded in breaking into the German defenses at Bobruysk. Lt-Gen Zakharkin's **49 Army**, which had captured Tarusa, also gained ground and by the end of **Dec 41** advanced to a line from Maloyaroslavets to Kaluga. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 903)
- **19.12.41**: **56 PzK** reports a combat strength of **900** men; **41 [PzK?]** has only **1821** men combat-ready. **PzGr 3** has only **63** light and **21** heavy howitzers at its disposal. (*W. Murray*, *War to be Won*, 138)
- **19.12.41**: Fdl. Kav.-Teile stiessen westl. St. Chanino nach NW durch u. erreichten die Gegend **27 km** suedostw. Kaluga. . . (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 840)
- **19.12.41**: On [this day], **XLVII PzK** and **LIII AK** withdrew to the line of the Plava. I decided to bring **XLVII PzK** back to a line from Oserki to the NW of Podissiniiovke and to assemble **XXIV PzK** in the Orel area as army reserve so as to give the units of that corps a short rest and to create an operational, mobile force at my disposal. (*Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 264)
- **19.-20.12.41**: On **19 Dec 41**, new C-in-C of Army Group Ctr, GFM v. Kluge, briefed Halder in detail on the situation, including the threatening penetration on right wing of **4 Army**. . . Moreover, on this very day Hitler repeatedly ruled that no line was to be abandoned voluntarily until he had been informed that behind that line new positions had been prepared. . . (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 719-20)
- **19.-21.12.42** [Hoepner / **4 PzGr**]: Betr. Stellungsnahme Hoepners in einer Notiz ueber „das Misslingen der Operationen auf Moskau.“ Nach Schilderung der Entwicklung lautet ihr Schlussenteil:

⁴⁷⁰ Ziemke & Bauer, pp. 97-100. Guderian claims to have issued the prohibited 'Order of the Day' anyhow.

⁴⁷¹ **Note:** Zhukov's Western Front hit German **4 Army** on **18 Dec 41** (see above).

Wenn man nach der Ursache des Misslingens forscht, muss man die oberste befehlende Stelle zuerst kritisieren. Man hat den Angriff auf Moskau mit unzureichenden Kraefen gemacht, weil man den Gegner unterschaezte. Man hat nach der Wjasma-Schlacht Divisionen in die Heimat geschickt, bevor die endgueltige Entscheidung vor Moskau gefallen war. Man hat der angreifenden Truppe weder Personal- noch Geraetz-Ersatz zugefuehrt, weil man diese fuer Neuaufstellungen verwenden wollte. Man hat die Versorgungsmoeglichkeit falsch beurteilt u., antreten lassen, bevor sie geschaffen war. Die Versorgung der Truppe war vom Beginn der Operation Mitte Oktober an ganz unzureichend auf allen Gebieten. Man hat den russischen Winter ueberhaupt nicht in Rechnung gestellt, weder fuer taktische Bewegungen noch fuer die Versorgung.

Die Heeresgruppe hat nach dem ersten Ansatz nicht mehr gefuehrt. Das A.O.K. hat nur mit Mittelchen⁴⁷² gearbeitet. Die **4 PzGr** ist durch Unterstellung unter **AOK 4** nicht im grossen Rahmen geleitet worden.

Das war die Ansicht des Generaloberst Hoepner! (Quoted in: *de Beaulieu*, „*Sturm auf Moskau*,“ Teil II, 439)⁴⁷³

- **20.12.41**: Unter sowjet. Angriffen gehen die **2 Pz Armee** u. die **2 Armee** auf die Linie westl. Tim – Mzensk – suedl. Belew zurueck. („Winterstellung“). (*A. Hillgruber, Chronik*, in: *OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 1242)
- **20.12.41**: An diesem Tag etwa war die von der **4. PzGr** als *neue Abwehrstellung* vorgesehene Linie vom . . . ueber Rusa – Wolokolamsk hinter die Lama von den Truppenteilen der Pz.Gruppen [**3.** u. **4. PzGr**] eingenommen. (Losses in weapons, vehicles was considerable; due to lack of fuel, prime movers, etc., many guns and vehicles had to be destroyed during the withdrawal.) (**III:543**)
- **20.12.41**: Etwa um den **20 Dez 41**. . . festigten sich im Bereich der **3** u. **4 PzGr** die Linien so weit, dass von einer Front gesprochen werden konnte. Wenn auch bei allen Korps laufend russ. Angriffe erfolgten, sie konnten abgewiesen werden. Nur auf dem Sued- u. Nordfluegel der Pz.Gr. machten sich noch staerkere Druckpunkte bemerkbar, die besonders beim **V AK** kritische Lagen brachten u. staendige Aushilfen erforderten. . . (*de Beaulieu*, „*Sturm auf Moskau*,“ Teil II, 434-35)
- **20.12.41** [**4 Armee**]: Auf der ganzen Front der **4 Armee** fuehrte der Feind starke Angriffe, die bei der mehr oder weniger schwachen eigenen Besetzung der Front zu einigen Einbruechen fuehrten, die z. groessten Teil im Gegenstoss wieder ausgeglichen wurden. Da nur geringe Reserven vorhanden sind, wurde auf dem Luftwege nach Orscha u. Witebsk Unterstuetzung herangeholt. . . (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 93)
- **20.12.41**: Volokolamsk falls to Groups Remizov and Katukov, while **2 Gds Cav Corps** of **5 Army** pushes towards Zvenigorod. The Soviets have drawn up to the Lama, Ruza and Moskva rivers, but are being held by **78 ID**, **46 PzK**, **11 PD** and **7 AK**. Group Popov is in sight of Kaluga, **43 AK** having fallen back to the NW and **2 Pz Army** to the SW. Elements of

⁴⁷² **Note:** That is, with very little of anything – men, guns, fuel, etc.

⁴⁷³ **Note:** This “Notiz” prepared by Hoepner from **19.-21.12.41**. Appears he is critical of both GFM v. Bock and v. Kluge.

10 Army push west toward Odoyevo and Livny, having crossed the Plava. **39 Army** joins the Kalinin Front. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 189)

- **20.12.41**: By [this date], the main forces of Zhukov's right wing were on the three river lines – the Lama, Ruza and Moskva, all of which proved impossible to seize off the march, for here was a German line held tenaciously; to the rear, Soviet units finally cracked open German formations pinned in this welter of fighting – **78 ID**, **46 PzK**, **11 PD**, **7 AK**, a great litter of abandoned and shattered equipment, snowdrifted bodies of men and animals. . . (*J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 281)

- **20.12.41** [Guderian at Rastenburg]: “Little monk, little monk, you are taking a hard road!” These words of Fruntsberg to Dr. Martin Luther before the Diet of Worms of **1521**, were quoted to me by my comrades when they learned of my decision to fly to Hitler's HQ. At **15.30** hrs. on **20 Dec 41** I landed at Rastenburg airfield. I was to confer w/ Hitler for 5 hours, w/ only two breaks of half an hour each, one for the evening meal and one for the general weekly briefing which Hitler always attended personally. I was received by Hitler at about **18.00** hrs. (**Note**: When it was all over and as G. left, Hitler said to Keitel: “I haven't convinced that man!” For G.'s dramatic account see, Panzer Leader, 264-68.)⁴⁷⁴

- **20.12.41**: Die vorspringende Nase der **2 Pz Armee** mit ihrer tiefen Flanke bis hinunter zur H.Gr.-Grenze bot der russ. Fuehrung genuegend Ansatzmoeglichkeiten. Mit **3** Armeen stuerzte sie sich auf die **2 Pz Armee**, mit **2** weiteren auf die **2 Armee**; in die Luecke zwischen **2 Pz** u. **4 Armee** schob der Russe starke Kraefte nach (**50 Armee** u. **3 Kav.-Div.**) Am **20 Dez 41** wurde der Russe in der Linie Tim – Liwny – Oitojewo zum Stehen gebracht, nachdem sich die **2** umgangen dt. Divisionen nur mit Truemmern – beide Div. zaehlten nur noch je **7** Kompanien u. hatten fast die ganze Artillerie verloren – hatten durchschlagen koennen. Man rechnete mit einem grossen Durchbruch in Richtung Orel, nachdem von Jeletz her neue Feindkraefte in **3** Kolonnen nebeneinander im Anmarsch gemeldet waren. Zum Nordfluegel der H.Gr.Sued (**6 Armee**) bestand nur lockere Verbindung; die von der H.Gr.Sued zugesagten Verstaerkungen kamen nur sehr langsam heran u. waren zudem zu schwach (**1** Gen.Kom. mit nicht ganz **2** Inf-Div.). So sah es uebel aus, als nach dem **20 Dez 41** der Russe erneut zum Angriff antrat. (*Hofmann, “Schlacht von Moskau,”* 172-73)

- **20.12.41** (**292. ID / Zustandsbericht**): Excellent report. Two key points: a) Bei Berechnung des Fehlens des dritten aufgelosten Inf.Rgts. (i.e., **IR 509**) betraegt der Gesamtfehlbestand der Division: Offz. (**96**), Uffz./Mannsch. (**5940**); b) Werturteil: . . . Die kaempfende Truppe ist infolge des fast pausenlosen Einsatzes koerperlich u. seelisch stark ermuedet, die Stimmung abgestumpft. . . Die bisherige Zuverlaessigkeit u. Zaehigkeit in der Abwehr feindlicher Angriffe ist infolge der Ausfalles fast aller guten Unterfuehrer u. ihres Nachwuchses nicht mehr vorhanden. . . Die *Division ist nicht mehr voll einsatzfaehig*. (**VIII:210-12**)

- **20.12.41**: Beute im Osten an Waffen, Geraet, Munition, Kfz, usw. von **22.6.-20.12.41**: (nach OKH/GenQu/Abt. I):

Gewehre = **191 137**
Autom. Gewehre = **21 242**
l.MG. = **3 276**
s.MG. = **2 913**

⁴⁷⁴ **Note**: For a colorful account of this meeting see also, Kershaw, Hitler, p. 454.

MG. = **22 904**⁴⁷⁵
 Geschuetze (einschl. Pak u. Flak) = **25 696**
 Panjewagen = **17 055**
 Kfz., versch. = **52 221**
 Panzer = **13 935**
 Schlepper = **3532**
 Pferde = **141 646**

(Source: *KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 1107-08)

- **20.12.41**: Guderian's insubordination⁴⁷⁶ – reports that he is not prepared to transmit Hitler's "hold order" verbatim to his units. Just one example of his general recalcitrance which would soon get him fired. (**III:568**)
 (Gen.Obst. Guderian: "Es gibt keine verzweifelten Lagen, es gibt nur verzweifelte Menschen." (Source unclear, may be **1998** issue of „*Soldatenkalender Jahrbuch*.“) In any case, as Obst.Lt. v. Gyldenfeldt observes in his diary for **14.12.41**, after he and GFM v. Brauchitsch meet w/ GFM. v. Kluge and Guderian in Roslavj: "Nach der Besprechung essen wir noch zusammen eine Kleinigkeit. Die beiden Armeefuehrer verabschieden sich dann, von denen uebrigens GFM v. Kluge einen durchaus frischen, Gen.Obst. Guderian dagegen als mit *seinen Nerven ziemlich fertigen Eindruck* machten." (See, *Tagebuch Gyldenfeldt* in his personal file.)⁴⁷⁷
- **20.12.41**: In south, Kaluga falls to Soviets.⁴⁷⁸ Guderian flies to Rastenburg to meet w/ Hitler (For details see, **III:574, 77**; also, Guderian's memoirs, 264-68)
- **ab 20.12.41** [Juchnow]: Nach dem **20. Dez 41** trat der Russe erneut zum Angriff an. Gegen die Pfeiler Liwny u. Werschoje (**50** km noerdl. Liwny) rannte **22** russ. Schuetzen-Div. u. **5** Bde gegen **8** schwache dt. Divisionen an. Unter diesem Druck gingen die **2 Pz Armee** u. die **2 Armee** auf die Linie westl. Tim – Mzensk – suedl. Belew zurueck („Winterstellung“), die unter verzweifelten Anstrengungen zunaechst gehalten werden konnte. Der russ. Durchbruchversuch auf Orel war abgeschlagen, aber auf dem Nordfluegel sah es umso bedrohlicher aus. In die dortige Luecke stroemte der Russe mit starker Kavallerie (**Grd Kav Korps**) u. mit winterbeweglichen Ski- u. Schlittentruppen u. nahm Kosielsk; der von der **2 Pz Armee** vorgeschlagene Angriff des **XXIV PzK** in die fdl. Suedflanke wurde von der Obersten Fuehrung zu spaet genehmigt u. blieb am **27 Dez 41** bei Belew haengen. Der Russe nutzte die Gelegenheit, sich nun auf Suchinitschi u. Juchnow freie Bahn zu schaffen. Mit seinem Stoss auf Juchnow suchte er den Suedfluegel der **4 Armee** zu umfassen, eine prekaere Situation! Die herangeholten, urspruenglich zur Schliessung der Luecke vorn an der Okafront bestimmten dt. Kraefte mussten nun aus der Eisenbahn heraus ins Gefecht treten. Das **XXXXIII AK**, nunmehr der **4 Armee** unterstellt, bog seinen Fluegel bei Kaluga nach Nordwesten ein, um die Umgehung durch die russ. Kavallerie zu verhindern. Am **26. Dez 41** wurde dann das Pz.-Generalkommando **XXXX** an der allmaechlich **60** km breiten Luecke eingesetzt, um spaeter die Verbindung zwischen den beiden Armeen wieder herzustellen. Die Truppen (**10 PD** u. **10 ID (mot)**) kamen nur langsam heran; sie waren in ihrem Kampfwert auf etwa je **1** Rgt einzuschaetzen. Der Besitz von Juchnow war von ausschlaggebender Bedeutung, weil hier die „Rollbahn“ als Lebensader der **4 Armee** durchlief; es

⁴⁷⁵ **Note:** How does this figure relate to statistics on I.MG and s.MG?

⁴⁷⁶ **Note:** Ongoing disputes about the withdrawals of Guderian's army.

⁴⁷⁷ **Note:** Gyldenfeldt was adjutant (**Ia**) to GFM v. Brauchitsch at this time.

⁴⁷⁸ **Note:** A. Seaton says Kaluga fell to Soviets on **30.12.41** (*Russo-German War*, 235).

wurde daher zu deren Schutz mit rasch greifbaren, teilweise improvisierten Kleinverbaenden, mit der aus der Front geholten **19 PD** u. einem mit Lufttransport vorgebrachten Marschbataillon eine duenne Abwehrfront suedl. Juchnow aufgebaut. (Hofmann, "Schlacht von Moskau," 173)

- **20.-21.12.41** [Kaluga – Belev]: Zhukov's attention, like that of the German command, was riveted on the Kaluga – Belev sector. On Zhukov's left, where Guderian's panzer army had been torn away from German **4 Army**, Zhukov wanted Kaluga tight in his graps: Kaluga led to Vyazma and then [to] the Moscow-Smolensk motorway, straight into the rear of **4 Army**. Boldin of **50 Army** was assigned to the Kaluga operation; Shaposhnikov himself telephoned Boldin to give him the news and to impress on him the importance of taking Kaluga. . . Boldin put his deputy, Maj.-Gen. V.S. Popov, in command of a "mobile group." Popov's orders were simple: to penetrate into the gap between German **43 AK** and Guderian's panzer units, and to cover the **45** miles to Kaluga (**30** of them deep in the German positions) at top speed, to approach Kaluga from the south and seize it. . . By the evening of **20 Dec 41**, Popov's group⁴⁷⁹ was in sight of Kaluga to the SE. . . On the morning of **21 Dec 41**, Popov's riflemen tried to storm Kaluga. . . First into Kaluga was the **31 Cav Div** which ran straight into the furious resistance of the German **137 ID**. To support Popov, Boldin ordered his left flank **217** and **413 RDs** to race for Kaluga, where Popov was encircled. It was a fight for every house and every yard of each street. The Soviet troops were to take the town at all costs and give no quarter. . . To get Kaluga, Boldin had to take it apart in a week of fighting at close quarters. (J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad, 282-83)

- **ca 20.-31.12.41**: Enemy penetrations during these days repeatedly confronted AGC w/ the same situation, in which decimated divisions had to be withdrawn by the corps or were simply lost, and the armies were requesting authorization from the army group for retrograde movements already begun, w/ GFM v. Kluge arguing w/ Halder and Hitler, who finally relented in every instance when operational encirclements seemed inevitable. These disputes w/ Hitler's HQ, the results of which were constantly confronting the cdrs in the field w/ serious conflicts of conscience, even extended to tactical movements, e.g. in the case of Guderian, who refused to obey the order forbidding him to withdraw **LIII AK** and **XXXXVII PzK** behind the Susha-Oka line. (GSWW, Vol. IV, 722)

- **21.12.41**: At this time, Halder still confident that Soviet offensive will soon lose momentum, due to Red Army's poor training, equipment, etc. (See, **III:581-82**)

- **21.12.41** [**4 PzGr**]: An [diesem Tag] war die **4 PzGr** der H.Gr.Mitte endlich unmittelbar unterstellt worden.⁴⁸⁰ (de Beaulieu, "Sturm auf Moskau," Teil II: 435)

- **21.12.41**: [Kalinin Front]: The Soviet inner right encircling pincer provided by Konev's Kalinin Front is based on **39 Reserve Army** (a force of **6** rifle and **2** cavalry divisions), supported on its right and left by **22** and **29 Armies**. (On **21 Dec 41**, the Kalinin Front consisted of **24** rifle and **5** cavalry divisions and **3** tank bdes.) This flanking arm moved from the areas of Kalinin and Torzhok towards Rshev, a town about **120** miles due west of Moscow. Soviet progress in this sector is steady but slow, as the German **9 Army** falls back [i.e., toward Staritsa] fighting desperately and sowing mines as it goes. (Seaton, Russo-German War, 234)

⁴⁷⁹ **154 RD, 112 TD, 31 Cav Div**, a Tula militia regiment and **131 Independent Tank Btn.** (282)

⁴⁸⁰ **Note: 4 PzGr** had, I believe, hitherto been under **4 Army** for some time.

- **21.12.41:** Popov Group storms Kaluga, **31 Cav Div** penetrating into the town only to be thrown back by **137 ID**. This division has received strict orders to hold Kaluga, and following the Soviet attack, counterattacks and encircles Group Popov. **50 Army** attempts to push thru to Kaluga but is held back by the Germans. Group Belov attacks toward Odoyevo and Yukhnov, while elements of **10 Army** push toward Kozelsk and Sukhinichi. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 190)
- **21.12.41 [34 AK destroyed]:** After **10 Dec 41**, Kreizer's **13 Army**⁴⁸¹ and Lt-Gen K.P. Podlas's **40 Army** join the offensive north and south of Elets [against German **2 Army**]. The fighting reaches an ever-higher intensity when the **XXXIV AK**, already encircled, manages to encircle Soviet **5 Cav Corps**. By **21 Dec 41**, the attacking Soviet forces have decimated the encircled German corps, prompting **OKH** to disband the unit. A German account vividly confirmed the **XXXIV AK** defeat: [See text for details.] (*Glantz, Barbarossa*, 201-02; quote from: *Ziemke & Bauer*, 74)
- **21.12.41:** On the morning of the **21st**, when his **9 Army** was about halfway between Kalinin and Staritsa, Strauss flew to AGC HQ in Smolensk, where he tried to persuade GFM v. Kluge to let the withdrawal continue by small stages, as it was doing,⁴⁸² past Staritsa to the **K-Line** (KOENIGSBERG Line). The **K-Line** was the Rzhev-Gzhatsk-Orel-Kursk line that Bock had proposed and that the armies continued to talk about as the „winter line.“ Kluge, in reply, cited Hitler's „definitive“ order to the army to hold when it reached Staritsa that he said he was determined to execute.⁴⁸³ (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 94)
- **21.12.41:** At this time, Halder still believed that the attacks of the Red Army, whose poor training & equipment he had repeatedly stressed (on the assumption that the Germans were superior and that Soviet successes were due only to sheer numbers), would lose momentum and that it was necessary to hold out for only two [2] weeks or so. He based his view on a tactically vague assessment of the enemy situation, as aerial reconnaissance provided no clear results and available infantry forces were not able to carry out significant reconnaissance because of poor weather. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 721-22; *KTB H.Gr. Mitte*, 21.12.41)
- **22.12.41:** By now, both **4 & 3 PzGr** had become separated from **4 Army**, which was now entirely on its own; nor could it exercise command powers over the two panzer groups north of the Moscow-Smolensk highway. (*Blumentritt, Moscow*, in: *Fatal Decisions*, 68)
- **22.12.41 [Rshev]:** Kalinin Front prepares to launch a new offensive w/ **22, 39, 29, 31** and **30 Armies**, the aim being to destroy German forces around Rzhev. The front deploys **30** rifle and **5** cavalry divisions and **2** tank bdes. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 190)
- **22.12.41 [Rotkopfgranate]:** Der seelische u. koerperliche Zustand der dt. Soldaten hatte einen Tiefpunkt erreicht. Dazu kam die Furcht vor den sowj. Panzern, denen die dt. Panzerabwehr nichts anhaben konnte. Die bereits entwickelte panzerbrechende „Rotkopfgranate“ wurde von Hitler trotz laufenden Draengens der Truppe angeblich aus Geheimhaltungsgruenden zurueckgehalten u. erst am **22 Dez 41** zur Frontverwendung freigegeben. (*Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 139)

⁴⁸¹ **Note:** Page before (200), Glantz refers to Gorodniansky's **13 Army**. So, some mistake here.

⁴⁸² **Note:** As it was doing – in spite of Hitler's so-called “Halt Order.”

⁴⁸³ **Note:** Despite his sympathy for the plight of his subordinate cdrs, Kluge was determined to fully implement Hitler's “Halt Order.”

- **22.12.41** [Panzer Status]: The tank strength reported by the 16 Pz.-Div. in Army Groups North and Centre on this day amounted to:

	<u>Pz II</u>	<u>Pz 38(t)</u>	<u>Pz III</u>	<u>Pz IV</u>
Operational:	66	84	180	75
Repairable:	188	202	254	136
Total:	254	286	434	211

(*T.L. Jentz, Panzertruppen*, 209)

- **22.12.41**: XXXXVII, LIII u. XXIV AK [i.e., **2 Pz Armee**] gingen in die Linie Sabino, Gorbotschewa – Odojewo zurueck. Feind folgte ohne anzugreifen. . . (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 95)

(Note: This entry typical of those in these „Geheime Tagesberichte,“ or in the daily reports in diary of **OKW**. In the south, Guderian and Schmidt appear to be withdrawing westward little by little every day, often severely pressed by the enemy.)

- **22.-26.12.41** [Rshev]: Stalin's personal order about the full activation of the flanks brought Koniev's Kalinin Front an independent strategic role after mid-**Dec 41**. When in mid-**Dec 41** Shvetsov and Yushkevich had fought their way into Kalinin itself, and the eastern wing of the German **9 Army** had been pulled back. . . To smash the German right wing, and to break in even further the flank of **3 PzGr**, Koniev decided to use his brand-new **39 Army** and to drive on Rshev. . . Koniev's orders . . . called for his main attack to be made against Rzhev from the north and NE, thereby encircling the main body of **9 Army** and cutting its escape route to the west and SW. Five [**5**] Front armies – **22, 39, 29, 31** and **30 Armies** – would be committed, w/ Maslennikov's 39 Army co-operating w/ **31** and **30 Armies** in the destruction of German forces in the Rshev – Staritsa area.

The offensive was timed for the morning of **22 Dec 41**, even though **39 Army** had not finished concentrating and could put only **2 divisions (220 and 183 RDs)** into the first phase of the attack. . . Zhukov's right and Koniev's left had by the evening of **25 Dec 41** moved up to the Kotlyaki – Ostashevo line, where all formations ran into the resistance offered by German units on Lama – Ruza river line; the northern flank units of Koniev's front were pressing down on the **9 Army** on the Volga bend, where this great overhanging cliff of Soviet armies seemed likely to fall right on AGC's very northern flank, which *screens of machine-guns, Panzerjaeger units, Luftwaffe AA troops using their guns depressed to fire at ground targets*, fighting in numbing cold in the murk and snow flurries, were desperately trying to prop up. As long as the Panzer Groups held on the Lama-Ruza line, the **9 Army** also had to hold its positions.

At Torzhok, meanwhile, most of **39 Army** had now formed up and on **26 Dec 41** this formation, w/ its full complement of **6 divisions**, jumped off on its drive to Rshev. . . Koniev had to order Maslennikov to speed things up, though the **39 Army** was considerably hampered by having to commit its units to the offensive in bits and pieces. Nevertheless, Maslennikov began to grind his way to Rzhev, spilling into the Volga bend and smothering the German defense sector by sector. What was to become the giant crisis of Rshev was already in the making. (*J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 284-85)

- **23.12.41**: On this day, **LIII AK** reported that the **167 ID** was also being heavily attacked now. The **296 ID** fell back on Bielew. The defensive power of the corps could by this time only be rated poor. Between its left wing and the **XLIII AK** a great gap still existed which could not be closed on account of the almost total immobility of the troops once they were off the roads; the countryside was, in fact, impassible. (*Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 269)
- **23.12.41** [Kursk – Tula]: Die Angriffe des Feindes, die mit besonderem Schwerpunkt gegen Liwny gefuehrt wurden, wurden saemtlichst abgeschlagen. . . Im eigenen Angriff⁴⁸⁴ wurden Ortschaften **10** km suedl. u. **2** km suedostw. Werchowje genommen. Eine andere Div. erzielte **10** km noerdl. Werchowje oertl. Gelaendegewinn. Weiter noerdl. wurden einzelne Angriffe abgewehrt u. eingebrochener Feind aufgerieben. . . Die eigenen Truppen setzten sich nach Abwehr einzelner Feindangriffe seit Einbruch der Dunkelheit auf die Linie **8** km nord-westl. Monajenki – **5** km suedostw. Mischnewo ab. In Kaluga wurden um einige Haueserblocks gekaempft. Der ueber die Tarussa eingebrochene Feind stiess bis in die Gegend **20** km suedostw. Malojaroslawe nach. . . (*KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 853-54)
- **23.12.41** [**2 Armee**]: Allgemeiner Eindruck: Gegenueber den seit **3** Wochen auf **200** km Breite heldenmuetig kaempfenden **8** schwachen Div. der Armee sind beim Gegner **22** Div. u. **5** Brig. festgestellt. In ununterbrochenem Strom fuehrt der Feind seine Angriffstruppen auf den Strassen von Woronesch u. Jelez heran. Angesichts dieser Lage u. wegen Fehlens jeglicher Reserven muss die Armee oertl. Absetzen vorbereiten. Angriffe besonders im Sueden u. Mitte hielten den ganzen Tag ueber an u. wurden unter aeussersten Anstrengungen abgewehrt. . . Auch bei **2 Pz Armee** griff Feind wiederholt die sich absetzenden Truppen an u. brach bei **167 ID** ein. Abriegelung noch im Gange. . . (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 96)
- **23-24.12.41**: On **23 Dec 41**, having been broken through in several places, **296 ID** [**LIII PzK**] falls back to the Oka River at Belev after its neighbor, **167 ID**, was almost totally destroyed. **2 Pz Army** then reported that it would have to take its entire front behind the Oka and Zusha rivers w/in the next two or three days. The army group pointed out that the **296 ID** withdrawal that day had not had Hitler's approval, and that one to the Oka and Zusha could not be made „under any circumstances“ unless he agreed.
- In the morning on the **24th**, Kluge tells Halder that Guderian had let **296 ID** go back farther the day before than had been reported, had also taken **XXXXVII PzK**, his right flank corps, back w/o prior authorization. . . Halder then declared that Guderian should be court-martialled. Kluge, however, could not make up his mind. . . The **OKH** then tried sending a direct order to Guderian in Hitler's name again forbidding any withdrawals. . . and requiring him to report his dispositions directly to **OKH** before midnight that night. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 98-99)
- **24.12.41** [Kluge vs. Guderian]:⁴⁸⁵ It has come to serious tensions between both men, w/ Guderian refusing to obey orders to stop pulling back while Kluge is trying to execute Hitler's "Halt Order." Kluge is ready to report G's behavior to Hitler, and tells G. just that. (For details see, *Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 140-41; **III:588**)

⁴⁸⁴ **Note:** Also clear from **OKW KTB**, Mehner "Geheime Tagesberichte," etc., that the Germans counter-attacked furiously at every opportunity w/ everything they had.

⁴⁸⁵ **Note:** "Bad blood" had existed between the two generals for sometime – if I recall, going back at least to the French Campaign of **1940**.

-- **24.12.41:** The **2 Army** withdraws from Livny and Chern as Soviet **10 Army** piles pressure on the exposed German southern flank. The Bryansk Front becomes officially operational, but is well below its regulation strength, many of its divisions having as few as **4000** men. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 191)

-- **24.12.41:** Diary of Admiral Canaris graphically portrays atmosphere of the times. It states, *inter alia*:

A grave crisis is looming up on the eastern front, particularly for Army Group Ctr. If the Russians keep up their pressure it may end in catastrophe. Fateful consequences are now arising from the *fundamental errors* made in planning the operations of **October 15** (*no single point of main effort*) and in allocating our forces (*no tactical reserves anywhere*, let alone strategic), and above all from our downright criminal *underestimation* of the enemy. General Schmundt is drawing comparisons w/ **1812** and talks of the “moment of truth” for National Socialism. The equipment losses are horrifying: trucks, guns, and acft have to be destroyed or abandoned because we lack the fuel to bring them back. . .

(Quoted in: *Irving, Hitler’s War*, 363; **III:498**)

-- **24.12.41:** Der Fuehrer hat befohlen⁴⁸⁶ (Bestaetigung muendlich getroffener Entscheidungen):

1) Wenn sich die Lage zwischen Oka u. Protwa so bedrohlich weiter entwickelt, dass auch das roem. **13 u. roem. 12 AK** im Ruecken u. in ihren lebenswichtigen Verbindungen ernsthaft bedroht wuerden, so ermaechtige ich den GFM v. Kluge, den rechten Fluegel u. die Mitte der **4 Armee** soweit nach Westen abzusetzen, als er zur Beseitigung dieser Gefahr unbedingt notwendig ist. . .

2) ObdL zieht Fliegerkraefte aus dem Kampf gegen England ab u. bereitet ihren kurzfristigen Einsatz in der Ostfront, je nach der Lage bei H.Gr.Mitte oder Nord vor. – (*OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 1086)

-- **24.12.41:** Whether Guderian could be made to stop or not, **2 Army**, which was tied in on his right flank, had to move along w/ it. During afternoon of the 24th, **2 Army**’s Schmidt tells army group that he is issuing orders to give up Novosil and Livny and to go to the winter line, and he could not wait for approval. Because of low visibility in blowing snow, he did not know where Guderian’s flank was or where the Russians were, but in another day he would be unable to make any kind of orderly retreat and maybe no retreat at all from Livny, which was almost encircled. During the day and much of the night Kluge is alternately on the phone to Guderian and Halder, warning Guderian against any further withdrawals w/o Hitler’s explicit approval and telling Halder that Chekalin is in flames, the Russians have crossed the Oka, and the Kaluga defense is crumbling. Before midnight, he calls Halder once more, apologizing for „disturbing your Christmas spirit which probably was not very rosy anyway,“ to tell him Guderian had asked to be relieved and court-martialed, and the whole Oka line from Belev to Kaluga was in danger. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 99-100)

⁴⁸⁶ **Note:** Another example that his “Halt Order” was not so inflexible as often portrayed by historians of the period.

- **24.12.41** [Bryansk Front reactivated]: Koniev disposed of **30** rifle, **5** cavalry divisions, and **2** tank bdes – a third of the infantry strength of Red Army troops operating on the “western axis” – totaling in all **93** rifle, **23** cavalry divisions, **30** rifle bdes (including **2** parachute bdes) and **16** tank bdes. For his **180-mile** front, running from Chekchino – Volokolamsk – Ruza - river Nara – Kaluga – river Oka and to the east of Belev, Zhukov had **45** rifle and **11** cavalry divisions. To the south of Zhukov, Stalin had interposed the Bryansk Front, reconstituted on **18 Dec 41** and made operational on **24 Dec 41**, put under the command of Cherevichenko and assigned **61**, **3** and **13 Armies**, plus Kostenko’s operational group, a force numbering **18** rifle, **7** cavalry divisions, **2** tank, **1** rifle and **1** mot. rifle bde, committed to a drive on Orel – Bolkhov. These were formidable forces, but the counter-offensive had already cost the Red Army dear. Divisions were down in many cases to between **3000** and **4000** [men] brigades to less than **1000**, tank bdes reduced to one **T-34** tank apiece. Ammunition was short, transport grossly deficient. (*J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 285)
- **24.12.41: 2 Armee**: Die Lage bei **9 PD**, wo der Feind am Vortage durchgebrochen war, wurde durch Gegenangriff wieder hergestellt. . . Nach den schweren Abwehrkaempfen der letzten Tage unternahmen **45 ID** u. **56 ID** ihrerseits einen Vorstoss u. warfen den Gegner aus seinen neuen Stellungen zurueck. . . Bei **LIII AK** stiess der Feind bei **167 ID** durch, konnte aber durch schnell herangefuehrte Teile am weiteren Vordringen verhindert werden. . . **4 Armee**: Bei Kaluga gelang es im Gegenstoss den eingebrochenen Gegner etwas zurueckzudruecken. Noerdl. Aleksin wurde ein Durchbruch des Gegners bei **260 ID** im rueckwaertigen Gelaende durch ein herangefuehrtes Pi.Batl. zum Stehen gebracht. . . Durch die stark. Schnee- verwehungen wurden die Kampfhandl. stark behindert. Bei Kalinin u. westl. davon wurde fdl. Angriff abgeschlagen u. erkannte Ansammlungen beim Feind durch eign. Artl. Feuer bekaempft. . .⁴⁸⁷ (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 98)
- **24-25.12.41: 24 Dec 41**, the **2 Army** lost Livny. To the north of that place the enemy crossed the Oka. By order of the **OKH**, the **4 PD** was sent off to Bielev to check the enemy advance. The unified counter-attack by **XXIV PzK** which I had planned thus seemed likely to become impossible on account of the dispersal of the corps’ forces. During the night of **24-25 Dec 41**, the **10 ID (mot)** lost Chern as a result of a Russian enveloping attack. The Russian success became unexpectedly great, because the elements of the **LIII AK** fighting on the left of **10 ID (mot)** were unable to hold and the enemy thus achieved a breakthrough. Parts of **10 ID (mot)** were encircled in Chern. I immediately reported this misfortune to Army Group. GFM v. Kluge accused me in violent terms, saying that I must have ordered the evacuation of Chern and, what is more, must have done so at least **24** hours before. The exact contrary was the case. I had, as already mentioned, personally given Hitler’s orders according to which the town was to be held. I therefore angrily denied the unjust accusations that GFM v. Kluge had made against me. On **25 Dec 41**, the elements of **10 ID (mot)** which had been encircled succeeded in breaking out and reaching our lines w/ several hundred prisoners. I ordered a withdrawal to the Susha-Oka position. In the evening I had another sharp argument w/ v. Kluge, who accused me of having sent him an incorrect official report. He hung up w/ the words: “I shall inform the Fuehrer about you.” (*Guderian, Panzer Leader*, 269-70)
- **24.-26.12.41** [Kluge vs. Guderian]: On Christmas Eve, v. Kluge, newly in command of AGC, accuses Guderian of disobeying both his and the Fuehrer’s orders by continuing to retreat. Von Kluge maintains that Guderian has of his own volition evacuated Chern, in the conse-

⁴⁸⁷ **Note:** This entry illustrative of how German Army in East responded to the Soviet counteroffensive of winter **1941/42** – by counterattacking at every opportunity. Also use of artillery to destroy enemy assembly areas and assaults. These are points I will surely stress!

quence causing a gap between **43 AK** and the main body of **2 Pz Army**. Whatever the cause, a 25-mile gap has appeared between the formations and thru this gap the Red Army poured into the German rear and advanced rapidly in the direction of Smolensk and Vyazma. For this, on the day after Christmas, Guderian is placed on the retired list, being replaced as cdr of **2 Pz Army** by Rudolf Schmidt, the temporary cdr of **2 Army** and former cdr of **39 PzK**. (Seaton, Russo-German War, 234; Guderian, Panzer Leader, 270)

- **24.-31.12.41** [Status of AGC]: The difficulties Guderian had foreseen in bringing up **4 PD** as a result of road conditions – deep snowdrifts which could not be kept cleared for long – prevented this unit from closing the gap in the front east of Likhvin. Other troops that had been brought up had to withdraw to Sukhinichi. By end of the year, **LIII AK** also had to abandon Belev. This development created a broad opening for a thrust towards Sukhinichi by the attacking Soviet **49** and **50 Armies**. The way seemed to be open for the southern arm of the planned large-scale encirclement operation against AGC.

On **24 Dec 41**, Hitler had already authorized Kluge to withdraw the centre and the right wing of **4 Army** westwards until the danger of **XIII** and **XII AK** being cut off had been eliminated. . . On the left wing of the defensive front of AGC, **9 Army** had come to a temporary halt in the Staritsa position. From **25 Dec 41**, however, the threat became so clear that Kluge considered separating the armored units from **3** and **4 PzGr** to create a mobile reserve. In area of **VI** and **XXIII AK** especially there was increasing indications of an imminent attack. . .

Starting on **26 Dec 41**, a major Soviet attack w/ strong armored forces was directed against the sector held by **V AK**. Penetrations were achieved, and Col-Gen Hoepner expressed his doubts as to whether it would be possible to hold the position there. On **26 Dec 41**, Col-Gen Strauss also reported that the enemy was in a position to penetrate his left wing. On **29 Dec 41** pressure on **XXXXIII** and **LVII AK** became so strong that the army group wanted to withdraw **4 Army** and the corps of **4 PzGr** on the right wing to a line from Vereya to west of Kaluga to shorten the front and create reserves. The bulk of **VI AK** was wiped out near Staritsa; as of **31 Dec 41**, here too a wide gap had opened in the German front for the enemy's thrust to Rzhev. (GSWW, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 725-26)

- **25.12.41**: Der Feind drang in den Ostteil von Kaluga ein. Gegenangriffe von Osten u. Westen waren im Gange. (OKW KTB, Bd. I, 859)
- **25.12.41**: By this date, when Soviet offensive *came to a temporary halt*, the armies of the right wing of Western Front had forced the Germans back as far as the Lama & Ruza rivers and inflicted heavy losses on them. . . What had not been accomplished was the annihilation (in conjunction w/ Kalinin Front) of the German forces confronting them. . . (III:559)
- **25.12.41** [Guderian's dismissal]: The final disputes arose on [this day] on the question of the withdrawal of **47 PzK** and the evacuation of Chern, and because of Guderian's statement that he *commanded his army as his conscience dictated*. Kluge, who shared this view of a cdr's responsibility, saw between it and the duty to carry out orders such a fundamental incompatibility that he informed Halder that „either he or I [must go].“ (For more details, GSWW, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 722-23; III:591)⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁸ **Note:** The next day, Guderian said good by to his staff and issued a short “order of the day” to his troops. By New Year's Eve, he was back in Berlin (appears he traveled by train). Guderian was so

- **25.12.41:** By [this day], the Russians had eliminated the threat to Moscow. Their counter-attacks had pushed Army Gp Ctr to the *line from which it had launched its offensive on 15 Nov 41*. The continuity of the German front was threatened when the Russians opened a gap between **2 Pz Army** and **4 Army** to the north and south of Kaluga [on the Oka]. A critical situation began to develop in this area, because the Germans, whose movements were restricted to major roads, were unable to seal off the Russian penetration. . . (G. Blau, German Campaign in Russia, 99-101)

- **25.-26.12.41:** Guderian finally “cashiered” by GFM v. Kluge, for not following orders to hold his ground. Precipitating factor is Guderian’s evacuation of town of Chern. The two men did not like each other! Had been at each other’s throats for days. For details see, **III:574, 588-91**)⁴⁸⁹

- **25-31.12.41:** In Tula sector where **2. Pz Army** had been breached Red Army advance rapid and Red Air Force very active. Peremyshl was taken on Christmas Day and Kaluga on **30 Dec 41**. Soviet thrust continued toward Yukhnov, not **70** miles from Vyaz’ma, butchering German wounded and stragglers as it went. (For more details and Soviet order of battle in this area see, (A. Seaton, Russo-German War, 235)

- **26.12.41:** The Germans evacuate Kaluga. (Gilbert, Second World War, 283)

- **26.12.41:** After breaking through the German defenses on the Nara River, units of Yefremov’s **33 Army** capture the town of Naro-Fominsk. (Sokolovsky, Battle of Moscow, in: Battles Hitler Lost, 59)

- **26.12.41:** General Kuebler, „a tough soldier,“ takes over command of **4 Army**. Within a few weeks he realized that he was incapable of mastering the situation. (During second half of **Jan 42**, he was replaced by Gen Heinrici, who commanded the army successfully for a long time.) (Blumentritt, Moscow, in: Fatal Decisions, 69)

- **26.12.41: 2 Armee:** XXXXVIII AK starke Feindangr. mit erheblicher Artl. Unterstuetzung auf Suedfl. abgewehrt. Feind ist von schweren u. schwersten Panzern unterstuetzt, bei Uspenskoje Nabelom Kolodes u. Pokrowskoje durchgebrochen. Das hier bis zum letzten kaempfen den **Schzt Rgt 156** wurde zerschlagen. Vor der Durchbruchsluecke befinden sich keine eigenen Kraefte mehr. Hoeh.Kdo. XXXV Gruppe v. Oven. Suedostw. Werchowje wurde fdl. Kp. durch Sturmgeschuetze zersprengt, erhebliche Feindangriffe abgeschlagen, unter erheblichen Verlusten. (Auch eigene). Neuer Angriff im Gange. Gefechtsstaerke der Btl. der **134 ID** teilweise auf **80** Mann gesunken. **2 Pz Armee:** XXXXVII AK hat sich auf die Linie **8** km nordostw. Schuschmina – Lobanowo – Shertowa, **LIII AK** auf Westufer des Oka unter Belassung von Nachhuten abgesetzt. Gruppe Sieber: Stadt Lichwin⁴⁹⁰ nach langem Kampf vom Gegner genommen. **XXIV AK**. Gruppe Eberbach: Schisdra von Partisanen besetzt. Kraefte zur Wiederbesetzung fehlen. **4 Armee:** XXXXIII AK. Feind geht westl. [Kaluga] ueber Oka nach Norden vor. . . **4 PzGr:** Auch am heutigen Tage Verlauf des Tages ruhig. **3 PzGr:** . . . **VII, IX u. XXXXVI AK** heftige Feindangriffe. Laufende Angriffe mit Panzern. **5 PD** gelang es trotz fanatischen Widerstandes in die fdl. Stellungen einzubrechen. Unter

embittered by his treatment that he requested in early **Jan 42** that a military court of inquiry be set up to examine his past conduct. See his, Panzer Leader, 270-71.

⁴⁸⁹ **Note:** See also remarks of General Lemelsen (**24. PzK**) to firing of Guderian. (**IV:321-22**)

⁴⁹⁰ **Note:** Lichwin = Likhvin. On the Oka between Kaluga and Belev.

erheblichen eigenen Verlusten u. unter Einsatz letzter Reserven⁴⁹¹ konnte der Gegner geworfen werden. . . (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 101)

- **27.12.41:** Dr. Todt, just returning from eastern front, has a gloomy conversation w/ Speer. Among other depressing facts, Todt tells Speer he has seen „*stalled hospital trains in which the wounded had frozen to death*, and had witnessed the misery of the troops in villages and hamlets cut off by snow and cold.“ (For details see, *Gilbert, Second World War*, 283; **III:498-99**)
- **27.12.41:** The southward drive of Soviet **39 Army** toward Rzhev began in full strength on this day. It would still be obscured four [4] days later by the wild fighting along the entire **9 Army** front. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 122)
- **27.12.41:** . . . **47 AK** ging planm. in die allgemeine Linie Nowosil – Mzensk, Westufer Oka zurueck. . . (i.e., covering Orel) (*Mehner, Tagesberichte*, 103)
- **27.12.41:** At **2 Pz Army**, elements of **4 PD** heading north along the Oka from Belev were stopped by snow and had to turn back, leaving the Oka open to Soviet **10** and **50 Armies**, and they were beginning to push west another **40** miles to Yukhnov and the Sukhinichi railroad junction. . . Hoepner's **5 PzK [AK?]** was barely surviving west of Volokolamsk, and he had to throw in a replacement btn newly arrived by air from Germany armed w/ pistols and wearing laced shoes. Soviet **39 Army** finally got all of its divisions into action against **9 Army** during the day. **9 Army** repelled the developing thrust toward Rzhev, and at the end of the day Strauss reported: "I will resume the battle tomorrow, but if this mode of fighting is continued, the army will bleed to death." (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 101-02)
- **28.12.41:** Hitler begruendet in einem Befehl an das Ostheer die Notwendigkeit der Verteidigung bis zum letzten Einsatz u. gibt „*Richtlinien fuer die Kampffuehrung*“
- **28.12.41:** **2 Armee:** Am Suedfluegel der Armee hat Feind erneut zum Angriff mit Unterstuetzung schwerer Panzer angesetzt. . . Vor dem Nordfluegel der Armee hat Feind, wie schon seit einigen Tagen vermutet wurde, die schwachste Stelle in der Armeefront erkannt u. am Trudy-Bogen noerdl. Droskowo die **SS Brig** durchstossen. Es ist zu erwarten, dass er von hier aus sowohl zum Durchbruch auf Orel, wie ueber Droskowo auf Maloarchangelsk ansetzen will. . . **LV AK. 95 ID.** Feind ist ueber Tim-Fluss vorgestossen u. hat Gegend **3** km nordwestl. Dubrowka erreicht. . . Fuehrer **SS Brig** gefallen. . . Hoeh.Kdo. **XXXV** Ausweichbewegungen des Korps auf die Winterstellung ist bisher planmaessig verlaufen. **2 Pz Armee:** . . . Wetter: **20** Grad. Durch die Kaelte fielen Teile der Artl. aus. **4 Armee:** **XXXXIII AK. 31 ID** hat Feindangr. abgewiesen u. Lage Kaluga wieder hergestellt. . . *Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 104)
- **28.12.41** [Hitler vs. Kluge]: In den taeglichen telefonischen Abendgespraechen mit Hitler bemuehte sich Kluge [ab **19 Dez 41** OB der H.Gr.Mitte] immer wieder, diesen davon zu ueberzeugen, dass die an mehreren Stellen zerrissene Front sich nur durch elastisches Ausweichen an den Einbruchstellen halten liesse; je laenger man damit warte, desto hoeher wuerden die Verluste an Menschen u. an Material. Nur bei verkuerzter Front koenne die H.Gr. sich wieder Reserven schaffen, um spaeter das Loch bei Juchnow zu schliessen. Die

⁴⁹¹ **Note:** "Einsatz letzter Reserven" and similar statements commen in these "Tagesberichte" and **OKW** War Diary for this period.

Gegenargumente Hitlers waren: auch ein taktisch begrenztes Ausweichen koennte die ganze Front nach rueckwaerts ins Wanken bringen, was gleichbedeutend mit ungeheuren Materialverlusten sei. Mit dem Kampf um jeden Fussbreit Boden dagegen wuerde der Russe zum Ausbluten gebracht. Hitlers Wille siegte. In einem Befehl vom **28. Dez 41** begruendete er die Notwendigkeit der Verteidigung bis zum letzten Einsatz u. gab Richtlinien ueber die Kampffuehrung auf der Erde u. in der Luft. ie kampferfahrene Front hoerte solche „Richtlinien“ mit gemischten Gefuehlen, aber sie gehorchte. (Hofmann, „*Schlacht von Moskau*,“ 176)

- **28.12.41:** Army Group Center was „disintegrating“.⁴⁹² On the 28th, all the armies reported sharply declining strengths owing to combat casualties and frostbite. Schmidt said **2 Army** was „blind“ because its aerial reconnaissance had failed completely. The *Luftwaffe* planes could not start at low temperatures, and they were not equipped to take off or land in deep snow. Kuebler at **4 Army** was having to consider how to defend his own HQ. Soviet cavalry had crossed the Sukhinichi-Kaluga railroad and were coming toward Yukhnov w/ nothing in between to stop them. Hoepner said his troops, particularly **V Corps**, could not go on beating off Soviet attacks much longer.

The most alarming reports came from the **9 Army**’s **6** and **26 ID** which were defending the front NW of Staritsa against Soviet **39 Army**. The commanding general of **6 ID** said the following:

Today I was in Novaya [sic] w/ the counterattack regiment all day. I saw the men. I can only say they are physically and psychologically finished. Today I saw men whose boots were frozen to their frozen feet. These men would rather let themselves be beaten to death than attack in this condition.

Command general, **26 ID**, stated:

IR 78 [one of **26 ID**’s rgts] can no longer be considered a regiment. It has only **200** men. The Russians have cut its communications. Its radios are frozen and its machine guns are frozen; and the machine gun crews are dead alongside their weapons.

(Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad, 102)

- **28.-31.12.41:** Great drama between Hitler & GFM v. Kluge, as latter begs former for permission to make tactical withdrawals.⁴⁹³ (See, **III:596-99**)
Hitler categorically refuses permission to pull back to “**K-Linie**.”⁴⁹⁴ (**III:599**)

⁴⁹² **Note:** For example, on **25.12.41**, **2 Pz Army** had fewer than **40** serviceable tanks. As early as early **Dec 41**, the inf. coys of **4 Army** were down to **50-60** men; artillery organic to **4 Army** had been reduced to a fraction of its authorized strength. By mid-**Jan 42**, **9 Army** has been reduced from an assigned strength of **262,000** to less than **60,000**; it also has but **369** artillery pieces, **4** Stugs, and **1 Pz III**. By mid-**Dec 41**, entire **56 PzK** down to **1821** fighters! (For many more examples, **I:433**, ff.)

⁴⁹³ **Note:** In one of my notebooks (**IV?**), I have dramatic account of Hitler speaking for hours w/ Kluge about placement of several **MGs** in a cemetery. Priceless!

⁴⁹⁴ **Note:** The “K-Linie” was some **50-75** miles west of the German high water mark of early **Dec 41**; the line stretched from Rzhev south thru Gzhatsk (east of Viaz’ma) to Iukhnov. Hitler and Halder opposed this withdrawal, and w/ some justification. Little work had been done to prepare the “K-Linie.” (E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East, 121.)

- **29.12.41:** Die im Zentrum der H.Gr.Mitte stehende dt. **4 Armee** (Kuebler) die bereits im Sueden den Anschluss an die **2 Pz Armee** verloren hat, wird an ihrem Nordfluegel (**LVII AK**) durchbrochen. (*A. Hillgruber, Chronik*, in: *OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 1243)

- **29.12.41: 4 Armee:** . . . Feind griff mit starken Kraeften das **LVII** u. **XX AK** – unterstuetzt von Panzern u. Artl. an. Angriffe wurden abgeschlagen, eine Anzahl Panzer vernichtet. Rege fdl. Fliegertaetigkeit, Bombenwurf u. Tieffliegerangr. auf Rollbahn. **4 PzGr:** . . . Vor mittl. u. Nordabschn. hielt der Feinddruck an u. fuehrte erstmalig auch vor **XXXXVI AK** zu einem staerkeren planmaessig gefuehrten Angriff. Feindangriffe konnten abgewehrt werden unter hohen Verlusten fuer den Gegner. . . (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 106)

- **29.12.41 [AOK 9 KTB]:** A selection of quotations from the diary in late **Dec 41** – addressing Army's struggle for survival – would make for compelling reading! For example: „Der heutige Tag zeigt wieder mit aller Krassheit, dass die **9. Armee** in einem *Abwehrkampf auf Leben u. Tod steht*.“ (**29.12.41**) Diary also indicates that Army on at least two occasions in late **Dec 41** (eg., **29.12.41**) conducted short tactical withdrawals in apparent contravention of Hitler's "stand fast" order of mid-**Dec 41**. This supports my view that it is something of a myth that German commanders responded to the "stand fast" order like robots, w/ absolute obedience. Diary entries for final few days of **Dec 41** quite dramatic, as O.B. Strauss pleads w/ GFM v. Bock for permission to save his army and retire to the "K-Stellung." (For details see my Notebook #7)

- **29.-30.12.41:** Having mulled over his predicaments for **3** days, Kluge phoned Hitler in the afternoon on the **29th**. Hoping to make a partial retreat palatable to Hitler, he proposed giving up Kaluga, letting Strauss at **9 Army** go into the K-Line „gradually,“ and taking the whole **4 Army** front back **10** to **15** miles to shorten the line and release **3** divisions to defend Yukhnov and Sukhinitchi. All **4 Army** then had at Yukhnov, he said, were a replacement btn and an SS btn, and **4 Army** supplies depended on these two supply points. Hitler, after long hesitation and repeated questions as to how much material and supplies would be lost, agreed to let **4 Army** evacuate Kaluga, which, in fact, was all but lost already. He forbade any other withdrawals.

- 24** hours later, Kluge tried again to secure permission for **4 Army** to withdraw. The Russians had in the meantime smashed and broken through two [**2**] of **4 Army**'s divisions in the centre of its front. [**Note:** What follows in text is fascinating account of this discussion between Hitler and Kluge]. . . Kluge had talked to Hitler in the middle of the day on the **30th**, before the armies reported to him. When they did, there was more bad news. At **9 Army**, Staritsa was almost encircled, and **39 Army** was bearing down on Rzhev. Strauss said his army was close to collapse. . . (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 102-03)

- **30.12.41 [Kaluga lost]:** Das Gesamtbild des Feindes ist im allgemeinen unveraendert. Fdl. Aufklaerungsvorstoesse stiessen bis ostw. Suchinitschi u. bis in die Gegend **20** km S u. SO Juchnow vor. . . Kursk – Tula: . . . Der rechte Fluegel der Pz.Armee [**2 PzArmee**] wehrte beiderseits Mzensk einen fdl. Angriff ab. Der Gegenangriff gegen die Suedflanke der Einbruchsstelle NO Bolchow brachte erheblichen Gelaendegewinn u. drueckte den Feind etwa **5** km tief aus der Einbruchsstelle zurueck. Der Feind fuehrte weitere Kraefte an die Einbruchsstelle heran. . . Front vor Moskau: In der tiefen rechten Flanke der Armee [**4 AOK**] wurde ein Vorstoss des Feindes auf Suchinitschi abgewiesen. In der Gegend S u. SO Juchnow bestand Gefechtsberuehrung mit fdl. Spaehtrupps. Kaluga wurde planmaessig geraeumt. . . Im Abschnitt der Pz.Gr. [**4 PzGr**] fuehrte der Feind weitere Verstaerkungen an die Einbruchsstelle nordwestl. Wolokolamsk vor, deren Bereinigung angesichts der ueber-

legenen Kraefte bis zum Abend noch nicht gelungen war. Bei der noerdl. Pz.Gr. [3 PzGr] Artl.- u. Spaehtrupp-Taetigkeit. . . Wetter: Klar, -25 bis -35 [Grad]. (OKW KTB, Bd. I, 871-72)

- **31.12.41:** By this date, northern flank of German Moscow force (3 PzGr) had w/drawn only about 50 miles. The southern wing, however, had to pull back 150-175 miles from the bulge created by Guderian. (III:598)
- **31.12.41:** Declining Soviet strength! Cost of the counter-offensive continues to show in commanders' reports. (Details see, III:600-01)
- **31.12.41:** Declining German strength! Figures on total losses (+ examples of particular units), see, I:420, ff.)⁴⁹⁵
(For key OKW statistics on personnel losses (including officer losses), vehicle losses, losses of artillery, etc., see, VIII:79-80)
- **31.12.41:** The Red Army and Navy lost 1,007,996 killed and missing and 648,521 wounded during the final quarter of 1941. (Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin, 194; see also, Kirosheev, Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses, Table 67)
- **31.12.41:** Throughout the day, Kluge is on the phone to Halder, begging for permission to withdraw the 4 Army, the right wing of Hoepner's 4 PzGr, and 9 Army into a new line. Hitler flatly refuses. Any strategic retreat was bound to touch off a general collapse; he demands a fight to the finish to win time until the reinforcements arrived. Kluge phoned Halder soon afterward: if General Strauss's 9 Army stood fast, it would be wiped out in the next two or three days . . . Supper is served late [at Wolf's Lair]. Hitler dozes off afterward, exhausted. But at 11:30 p.m., Kluge phones urgently from the front, and for the next *three hours* – the time is graven in the diaries of Bormann, Hewel, and the army group itself – Hitler wrangled w/ the field marshal,⁴⁹⁶ arguing and cajoling – stopping only for a 1/2 hour debate w/ Halder – on the need to stand fast. Kluge argues for a compromise; he asks Hitler to trust him. Halder, however, supports Hitler completely. The Fuehrer refuses outright to grant Kluge freedom to withdraw what amounts to a 90-mile section of the front over 20 miles. Again, Kluge is order to stand fast. Not until 2:30 a.m. does Hitler arrive for tea w/ his intimate staff. (See, *Irving, Hitler's War*, 364-65, for more details; see also, *KTB H.Gr.Mitte*; also, *Kershaw, Hitler*, 455; also, III:599)
- **31.12.41 [Red Army Gains/Losses]:** By end of the year, the „frenzied“ Soviet mobilization effort had produced a total of ca. 285 rifle divisions, 12 re-formed tank divisions, 88 cavalry divisions, 174 rifle bdes, and 93 tank bdes. In total, counting initial Red Army forces on 22 Jun 41 and those mobilized to 31 Dec 41, during the first six [6] months of the war the Red Army fielded ca. 483 rifle, 73 tank, 31 mechanized, and 101 cavalry divisions (total of 688 divisions). If bdes are tallied in the total on basis of 2 bdes (rifle/tank) per division, another 133 divisions can be added for a grand total of 821 division-size formations [!]. Of this number, 447 were in the field by 1 Aug 41. One must bear in mind, however, that the mobilized strength of these divisions was roughly half that of their more experienced German counterparts. . . Total Red Army losses suffered during first 6 months of war amounted to at

⁴⁹⁵ **Note:** Of interest is fact that Ostheer's total losses were higher in **Jul-Aug 41** than in **Nov-Dec 41**.

⁴⁹⁶ **Note:** If I recall correctly, this was the occasion when Hitler remonstrated w/ Kluge for hours over the positioning of several MGs in a cemetery! Confirm!

least **229** division equivalents (**147** rifle, **40** tank, **11** mechanized, and **10** cavalry, plus **21** rifle and tank bdes). (*D. Glantz, Red Army Ground Forces*, 11-12)

- **31.12.41**: By end of **Dec 41**, Soviet forces had recaptured much of the territory lost since **Oct 41**. Enraged by the perceived failure of his subordinates, Hitler replaced nearly **40** army, corps, and division commanders during a five-day period. Guderian was relieved of his command on **26 Dec 41**; Hoepner on **8 Jan 42**. (*David T. Zabecki* (ed.), WWII in Europe. An Encyclopedia, Vol. II, 1590)
- **ab 31.12.41** [*Borowsk*]: Bis zum Jahresende hatte sich der fdl. Einbruch auf dem Nordfluegel der **4 Armee** durch Erreichen der wichtigen Stadt Borowsk (von Sueden her!) so weit vertieft, dass suedlich der Stadt eine Luecke klafft. In seiner Not – auf dem Suedfluegel der **4 Armee** bestand zur **2 Pz Armee** das noch weit tiefere „Kaluga Loch,“ . . . – wandte sich der O.B. der H.Gr.Mitte jetzt an den O.B. der **4 Pz Armee** [i.e., Hoepner] u. unterstellte ihm das nach Norden abgesplitterte **XX AK** der **4 Armee** mit dem zusaetzlichen Auftrag, die entstandene Luecke zu schliessen. Es war eine Not- ja militaerisch falsche Loesung, da gruendsaetzlich eine einheitliche Befehlsfuehrung fuer das Schliessen von Luecken notwendig ist. Die soll auch die Entwicklung zeigen. . . Die **4 Pz Armee** warf an die ihr neu zugeteilte Front alles, was verfuegbar gemacht werden konnte. Es waren die Restteile der **10 PD**, die in einem schwachen Rgts.-Verband zusammengefasst worden waren, die gerade in der Neugliederung befindliche **267 ID** u. ein Rgt. der **3 ID (mot)**. Es gelang auch, mit diesen Kraeften westl. Borowsk nach Sueden Boden zu gewinnen. Jedoch der Nordfluegel der **4 Armee** bog immer weiter nach Sueden u. Westen zurueck, die einmal schon fast geschlossene Luecke vergroes-serte sich weiter. . . (*de Beaulieu, Sturm auf Moskau*, Teil II, 436-37)
- **Late Dec 41** [**4 AOK sector**]: Something in the „*nature of a miracle*“ occurred on the southern flank of **4 Army**. Inexplicably, the Russians, despite the local supremacy they here possessed, failed to occupy the Yukhnov – Maloyaroslavets road and thus cut **4 Army’s sole supply route**. Night after night, Below’s **Cav Corps**, which was causing us great anxiety during the second half of **Dec 41**, pushed on deep in our rear towards Yukhnov. Indeed, it actually reached the vital road, but remarkably failed to close it. The *Cavalry Corps* continued to advanced westward and disappeared into the great Bogoroditskoie Marshes. (*Blumentritt, Moscow*, in: Fatal Decisions, 67-68)
- **Late Dec 41** [**11 PD**]: Die der **11 PD** noch verbliebenen Panzer hatte man in der verfestigten Frontlinie bei Gshatsk zurueckgelassen, wo sie als Bunker eingegraben wurden. (*G. Schrodek, 11. Pz.-Div.*, 306)
- **Late Dec 41** [Declining Soviet strength]:⁴⁹⁷ The most sensitive part of Stalin’s personal control of Soviet operations was the assignment of particular objectives to individual armies. . . Much more fundamental, however, was the question of utilizing the present resources of the Red Army which for all the arrows and dots of rifle divisions on the battle maps were not so abundant. The cost of the counter-offensive continued to show in the commanders’ reports. Rokossovskii submitted at the end of **Dec 41** that his battalions were down to “less than a dozen men” in strength; on the Bryansk Front, which was stalled south of Belev in its drive for the river Oka, **3 Army** reported that its **5** rifle divisions had only **16 028** men between them and **138** guns, while the **5** rifle divisions of **13 Army** amounted to **11 833** men all told,

⁴⁹⁷ **Note:** Would make sense in narrative to contrast Soviet situation at this time w/ that of the “Ostheer” outside Moscow. (See entry for **28.12.41** above – “Wehrmacht disintegrating.”)

w/ **82** guns left. This was not promising for the operational assignments prescribed for the Bryansk Front, which on **24 Dec 41** included moving into the Orel – Kursk area (in co-operation w/ the right wing of the South-Western Front) – by **5 Jan 42**. Koniev's front alone had divisions up to the **10 000**-man mark, but he had only **4** of these, and that comparative wealth in men was counterbalanced by a drastic poverty in mobile formations. The only real military magnate was Col.-Gen. Yeremenko, whose **4 Shock Army – 382, 358, 334 and 360 RDs** – had divisions up to strength under the revised establishment. . .

Stalin at this critical juncture, between late **Dec 41** and early **Jan 42**, when the fate of Army Group Centre seemed to hang in the balance . . . had **3 reserve armies** at his disposal – **24, 26 and 60 Armies**. . . The Red Army, for all the fantastic straining of its resources, enjoyed no decisive superiority on any particular front or conjunction of fronts, the offensive was running on a logistical shoe-string, casualties had already been heavy, and equipment was in drastically short supply. . . Most serious was the over-all lack of mobile formations, which Zhukov was now trying to compensate for by earmarking and preparing parachute troops (independent airborne units, air-lifted rifle regiments and **4 Para Corps**) for rapid strike operations in the German rear. (*J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 286-87; 291-92)

- **Late Dec 41-2.1.42 [4 Armee]**: By end of 1941,⁴⁹⁸ both flanks of **4 Army** are “up in the air” as result of Red Army breakthroughs. See details under section below “*Col-Gen Hoepner summarily relieved of his command.*”
- **Dec 41-Jan 42 [Tula sector]**: In the Tula area, where **2 Pz Army** had been breached the Red Army advance was rapid and the Red Air Force was very active.⁴⁹⁹ **1 Gds Cav Corps** spear-headed the advance, together w/ Boldin's **50 Army** and Golikov's **10 Army**, later to be joined in their movements westward by **16, 49 and 33 Armies**. Peremyshl was taken on Christmas Day and Kaluga on **30 Dec 41** and **1 Gds Cav Corps** continued its thrust toward Yukhnov, not **70 miles** from Vyazma,⁵⁰⁰ *butchering German wounded and stragglers* as it went. However, by the New Year, the Red Army formations were beginning to complain of the effect on ops of the heavy frosts and of the great difficulties of supply. The German strong points, too, were troublesome, particularly along the main railways. In general, however, from Soviet High Command point of view, the progress of the left enveloping thrust from the Tula area was very satisfactory, and it ordered Kurochkin's North-West Front to begin its deep encirclement on the right, from Ostashkov to Vitebsk. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 235)
- **Jan 42**: Altogether, by the beginning of **Jan 42**, Soviet troops had thrown back the Germans along the Moscow front by between **100 and 250 kilometers** and inflicted heavy losses on them. Yet despite the tactical breakthroughs at Rzhev and Kaluga, they had *failed to accomplish the grand strategic encirclement* – a fact that has been skillfully concealed by Soviet historiography behind the conspicuous success of the counter-offensive at Moscow. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 903)

⁴⁹⁸ **Note:** This is outcome of Zhukov's stepped-up pressure on German **4 Army**, against which he had begun major assaults on **18 Dec 41**.

⁴⁹⁹ **Note:** In a **20-day** period at beginning of December, the Red Air Force flew **10 000** sorties in this area. Of these, **50%** were in tactical close support of ground forces, **26%** reconnaissance and only **10%** were on interdiction or rear area targets. (235, f.n. 32)

⁵⁰⁰ **Note:** Unclear, was **1 Gds Cav Corps** at this time just **70 miles** from Vyazma, or is author saying that Yukhnov was **70 miles** from Vyazma? (According to my Glantz wall map Y. seems much closer to V. than **70 miles**.)

- **Winter 41/42 [Partisanen]:** Die Gegenoffensive der Roten Armee im Winter **1941/42** sorgte insbesondere im Heeresgebiet Mitte fuer einen Abzug starker Besatzungskraefte. Jetzt konnten die inzwischen gut ausgebildeten u. bewaffneten Partisanen hinter den dt. Linien *ganze Gebiete unter ihre Kontrolle bringen* u. den dt. Armeen militaerisch zusetzen. Deshalb versuchten einzelne Wehrmachtsbefehlshaber, die pauschale Terrorpolitik zu aendern und die „kollektiven Gewaltmassnahmen“ gegen die Zivilbevoelkerung einzugrenzen, um sie nicht in die Arme der Partisanen zu treiben. Hitler dagegen draengte darauf, den Kampf gegen die Partisanen weiter mit den „allerbrutalsten Mitteln“ zu fuehren. (<http://www.verbrechen-der-wehrmacht.de>)

- **1.1.42: 3 & 4 PzGr** both elevated to army status. (**III:604**)

- **1.1.42:** During the final third of **Dec 41**, the right wing of Kalinin Front, w/ **22** and **39 Armies**, also went over to the offensive, although at first this developed but slowly. By beginning of [**Jan 42**], however, the troops of Kalinin Front had reached Staritsa and the approaches to Rzhev and Zubtsov. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 900)

- **1.1.42: Allgemeine Lage:** H.Gr.Mitte wehrt sich verzweifelt gegen die Zertruemmerung Ihrer ueber **1000 km** gespannte Front u. die fortschreitende Einkreisung. . . Von Sueden her ueber den Einbruchsraum von Suchinitschi, in der Mitte im geraden Stoss nach Westen u. von Norden an Rshew vorbei in den Ruecken der H.Gr. erstrebte er deren Zusammendraengung im Gebiet um Wjasma. **20** russ. Armeen mit mehr als **190** Verbaende (**165 Div.**) standen Anfang **Jan 42** nur **68** abgekaempfte Div. der H.Gr.Mitte gegenueber. Die Krise trieb bis Mitte **Feb 42** dem Hoehepunkt zu.“ (*Philippi u. Heim, Der Feldzug gegen Sowjetunion*, 109; quoted in: *OKW KTB*, Bd II, 40; **III:604**)

- **1.1.42 [3 & 4 Pz Armies]:** These armies still stood on the Lama and Ruza positions, virtually undisturbed since the third week of **Dec 41**. **3 Pz Army** continued under command of the **4 Pz Army**, although Reinhardt's HQ was to be shortly withdrawn to the area of Vitebsk, the **3 Pz Army** formations – **41 PzK** and **56 PzK** – remaining in the line and being transferred to command of Strauss's **9 Army**. The pressure of Konev's Kalinin Front on Strauss had been very heavy and, by the New Year, **9 Army** had already fallen back nearly **50** miles from Kalinin to Staritsa. All the indications were that Konev could not be held. (*A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 241)

- **1.1.42 [russ. Schwerpunkte]:** So zeichneten sich um die Jahreswende neben den zahlreichen oertlichen Gefahrenzonen die beiden russ. Schwerpunkte ab, an denen der Feind einen operativen Erfolg anzustreben suchte. Der Suedliche fuehrte ihn bei einer Erweiterung des Einbruchsraums ueber Suchinitschi auf Wjasma oder Smolensk; der Noerdliche zielte nach dem Aufreissen der Hr.Gr.-Naht in den Ruecken der **9 Armee**, um auch hier zu einer toedlichen Umklammerung zu kommen. Bezeichnenderweise hatte der Russe gerade an diesen beiden Schwerpunkten die Masse seiner frischen Truppe eingesetzt. (*Hofmann, "Schlacht von Moskau,"* 175)

- **1.1.42:** Der Einbruch auf Naht H.Gr. Sued/Mitte ist abgeriegelt. Feind ging nicht weiter vor. Noerdl. von Tim wurde ein Angriff auf **16 ID (mot)** unter schweren Verlusten fuer den Feind (**800** Tote) zurueckgewiesen. . . Bei **2 Armee** wurden Angriffe bei u. suedl. Bjelow abgewiesen. Durch den starken Frost **-30 Grad**, traten besonders bei **296 ID** starke Erfrierungen ein. **4 Armee:** Bei Ssuchinitschi griff der Feind mit starken Kraeften an, Angriffe noch im

Gange. Auch westl. Kaluga Abwehr starker fdl. Angriffe. (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, Bd. IV, 112)

- **1.-2.1.42:** At Bletchley, where **1500** British scholars and academics are now decrypting and analysing the German Enigma msgs, the first day of **Jan 42** brings a *remarkable success*, the breaking of four (4) separate Enigma keys: „Pink,“ used by the GAF command for msgs of the highest secrecy; and „Gadfly,“ „Hornet,“ and „Wasp,“ used by three of the German air corps. The next day (**2.1.42**), a fifth key is broken – known at Bletchley as „Kite,“ it carries the German Army’s most secret supply msgs from Berlin to the eastern front. (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 287)
- **1.-3.1.42:** From **1 Jan 42**, both the **3** and **4 PzGr** were designated armored armies. **3 Pz Army** was placed under **9 Army** on **3 Jan 42**. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 726, f.n. 630)
- **1.-7.1.42:** Gradual envelopment of Rshew.⁵⁰¹ Threatening flank of German **9. Army** on upper reaches of the Wolga. (**III:605**)
- **2.1.42:** The Russians recapture Maloyaroslavets on this day. (*Sokolovsky, Battle of Moscow*, in: Battles Hitler Lost, 59)
- **2.1.42:** Hitler forbids **9. Army** to make further withdrawals. At same time, **4 Army** was having its right flank turned by enemy envelopment in the south, pressure of Efremov’s **33 Army** on Kuebler’s left flank increasing in area of Maloyaroslavets. (**III:606-07**)
- **2.1.42:** Ostw. Kursk gelang es dem Gegner am linken Fluegel **16 ID (mot)** durchzubrechen, sowohl von Kursk aus, wie von Norden sind Teile **88 ID** u. **9 PD** gegen den durchgebrochenen Feind angesetzt. . . Bei Suschinitschi wurde fdl. Angriff zurueckgeschlagen. . . Auf der Front westl. Moskau kam es zu wiederholten starken fdl. Angriffen auf fast saemtliche A.K.’s, die in den meisten Faellen unter schweren Verlusten fuer den Gegner zurueckgewiesen wurden. Nur auf dem suedl. Teil bei Marojaroslawez musste die Stellung der **263 ID** bis an den Westrand der Stadt zurueckgenommen werden. . . (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 113)
- **2.1.42 [Maloyaroslavets]:** At same time **4 Army** was having its right flank turned by the enemy envelopment in the south, the pressure of Efremov’s **33 Army** on Kuebler’s left flank was increasing in area of Maloyaroslavets. By probes and infiltrations the Red Army attackers had, by **29 Dec 41**, penetrated Kirchner’s **57 PzK**, making a **15-mile** wide breach between Maloyaroslavets and Borovsk. While Kuebler had been ordered to do so, it was beyond strength of **4 Army** to close the gap. On **2 Jan 42**, v. Kluge, being intensely worried about the situation of **4 Army** in area of Maloyaroslavets, asked Halder for permission to withdraw a number of formations. But when the Chief of Staff took the request to the Fuehrer it caused an angry outburst; the front line, said the dictator, would stay exactly as it was w/o regard to the consequences. For Hitler was not in the best of moods since an unauthorized withdrawal by Strauss’s **9 Army**, which had come to light during the morning briefing, had led to a violent scene in which he had raged against Halder and the Army High Command. . . (*A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 241-42)

⁵⁰¹ **Note:** See detailed section on Rzhev in following chapter.

- **2.-8.42 [4 Army]:** At turn of the year, AGC's newest crisis was at **4 Army**, which having lost contact w/ **2 Pz Army**, was practically cut adrift. (See, **III:608**)
Maloyaroslavets gap. (III:610)
 (Note: After **XX AK** passed from **4 Army** to **4 Pz Army** [on **2 Jan 42**], **4** of **4 Army's** **5** remaining corps, outflanked on the north and south, were caught in a detached loop of the front touching the Oka River west of Kaluga and reaching north **35** miles not quite to Maloyaroslavets, which Soviet **43 Army** had taken on **2 Jan 42**. . . The danger [to these corps] was greater at the moment on the south, because Soviet **50 Army** spearheads NW of Sukhinichi were **40** miles behind the eastern face of the loop and less than 10 miles from the Rollbahn, the highway used by **4 Army** as its one good road.⁵⁰² (See, Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad, 128-29)

- **3.1.42:** GFM Model takes over at **9 Army**. (**III:610**)

- **3.1.42:** Elements of the Soviet **10 Army** encircle **4000** men of **216 ID** in Sukhinichi. The beleaguered force, only recently arrived from the west, is attacked by tank and infantry forces and brought under sustained artillery fire. Despite its inexperience, the division holds, compelling the Russians to divert forces from their westward drive. (Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin, 195)

- **ab 3.1.42:** On southern flank, Red Army cavalry and tanks rapidly approaching the great depot area of Sukhinichi. There, the advanced elements of German **216. ID** had just arrived from France. . .
 On this day, Soviet **10 Army** traps ca. **4000** German troops in S. Hitler refuses to allow garrison to break out. (**III:610-11**)

- **5.1.42:** Belev falls to Soviet **10 Army**. (Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin, 196)

- **6.1.42 [2 Armee]:** Auf ganzer Front der Armee fdl. Fliegerangriffe mit Bomben u. Bordwaffen. Die russ. Luftwaffe ist in den letzten Tagen vermehrt in Taetigkeit getreten u. greift bis zu **10** mal am Tage Unterkuenfte u. Marschkolonnen mit Bomben u. Bordwaffen an. Nicht unerhebliche eigene Verluste. . . (Mehner, Tagesberichte, 121)

- **6.1.41:** The month-long offensive in the centre has cost the Red Army dear. Western Front has lost **102,000** men killed and missing and **160,000** wounded; the Kalinin Front **27,000** and **55,000**, respectively. The South-West Front's **3** and **13 Armies** have lost **10,000** killed and **12,000** wounded; and the Bryansk Front **1300** killed and **4200** wounded. Equipment losses have also been heavy, the fronts losing **429** tanks, **13,000** artillery pieces [!?] and **140** acft. (Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin, 196; also, Kirosheev, Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses, Table 75)

- n) *Col-Gen Hoepner summarily relieved of his command (4 PzGr) (8.1.42)*⁵⁰³

- Quote: „Keine Ruecksicht kann maechtig genug sein, einen Mann zu veranlassen, sich von seiner Pflicht zu entfernen,“ Friedrich der Grosse (Deutsches Soldatenjahrbuch, 1971, 24)⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰² **Note:** On the night of **5 Jan 42**, General der Infanterie Gotthard Heinrici, **43 AK** Cdr, called **4 Army** chief of staff and asked whether the army was being deliberately sacrificed.

⁵⁰³ **Note:** This entire episode illustrative of moral bankruptcy of German officer corps.

- Hoepner biography
Great integrity; great soldier; fervid anti-Nazi
(See his "bio-file.")
- **Note:** For more background see, outline entry "**ab 31.12.41** [Borowsk]" above.
- Lay out tactical situation as of late **Dec 41** beginning of **Jan 42**
Hoepner had been given control over **20 AK** (had belonged to **4 Army** but had become separated from this army)
In first week of **Jan 42**, Efremov's **33 Army** had started to drive a wedge between **4 Pz Army** and **4 Army** in the area of Medyn, and Hoepner was dismissed for ordering a withdrawal to escape this encirclement. (*A. Seaton, Russo-German War*, 237)
- **Late Dec 41-2.1.42** [**4 Armee**]: Die **4 Armee** hatte auf ihrem Suedfluegel nicht nur die Sorge um ihre tiefe Flanke, auch in der Front drueckte der Gegner mit aller Macht; durch einen schweren Stoss auf die Naht zwischen **XXXXIII AK** u. **XIII AK** durchbrach er die Front, trennte das **XXXXIII AK** ab u. drehte auf Malojaroslawez ein. Hitler billigte der Armee nach langem Draengen nun eine begrenzte Handlungsfreiheit auf dem rechten Fluegel u. in der Mitte zu, so dass sich die Armeemitte langsam auf den Protwa-Abschnitt suedl. Malojaroslawez absetzen konnte. Aber der russ. Druck liess nicht nach! Am **29 Dez 41** wurde die Front des **LVII AK** durchbrochen (Nordfluegel der Armee), nun *hingen beide Fluegel der 4 Armee in der Luft*, sie drohte aus den Angeln gehoben zu werden. Gegenueber den ununterbrochenen Antraegen der H.Gr., sich auf der ganzen Front absetzen zu duerfen, blieb Hitler taub. Er befahl am **1 Jan 42**, dass die Nordfront der **4 Armee** unter allen Umstaenden halten muesse, u. dass der Durchbruch am Nordfluegel auszubuegeln sei. Dazu hatte aber die schwerbedraengte **4 Armee** keine Kraefte mehr. Darum befahl die H.Gr. am **2 Jan 42** der **4 Pz Armee**⁵⁰⁵ den Angriff von Norden her, um so die Luecke zum **LVII AK** zu schliessen. Aber der guenstige Moment hierzu war verpasst. (*Hofmann, "Schlacht von Moskau,"* 173-74)
- **2.-3.1.42:** At the turn of the year, AGC's newest crisis was at **4 Army**, where on **2 Jan 42** the Soviet **43 Army**, after punching at the **XX AK – LVII PzK** boundary for several days, opened a **10-mile** gap between Borovsk and Maloyaroslavets. Therewith, **4 Army**, having already lost contact w/ 2 Pz Army, was practically cut adrift. . . **4 Pz Army** was hardly better off. . . When Hoepner asked the army group, on afternoon of the 2nd, to review the latest standfast order in light of his conditions, he received an expression of „the Fuehrer's greatest trust in the **4 Pz Army** and its leadership," a „categorical“ refusal to permit any kind of withdrawal, and an order to transfer **2** inf. rgts. and an artillery btn. to help **XX AK**. Kluge then also gave Hoepner command of **XX AK**. . . The corps had contact w/ Hoepner's panzer army but no longer any w/ Kuebler's **4 Army**. Thus, Hoepner could give it support; Kuebler could not. On **3 Jan 42**, Kluge ordered Hoepner to stage an attack from his side to close the gap between Borovsk and Maloyaroslavets. . . (For more details see, *Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 127-28; **III:608**)
- **2.-8.1.42:** On **2 Jan 42**, Hitler insisted that **9 Army** should remain where it was [despite its increasingly desperate situation]. The front of **XX AK** near Borovsk had to be held under all

⁵⁰⁴ **Note:** May be useful quote in context of Hoepner's disobedience and failure to follow Fuehrerbefehl in **Jan 42**. Hoepner's ultimate duty was to his men.

⁵⁰⁵ **Note:** Die 3 u. **4 PzGr** waren am **1 Jan. 42** in "Panzer-Armeen" umbenannt worden. (174)

circumstances; **4 Pz Army** had to transfer units for this purpose even if that endangered its own front.

Borovsk was lost, and all attempts to close the gap failed. By this time the enemy had already achieved a breakthrough in the front of **9 Army** NW of Rzhev and the army was in danger of having its rear lines of communication cut. But that danger was considerably greater for **XX AK** north of the penetration near Borovsk, which was threatened w/ encirclement by enemy forces turning north. That would have represented a successful breakthrough on a broad front of a thrust aimed directly at Vyazma; even more serious, an inner arm for the planned great envelopment of AGC would have been able to achieve the desired objective.

On **6 Jan 42**, Col-Gen Hoepner requested permission to withdraw the corps [**XX AK**], but in vain. After waiting until **8 Jan 42** for authorization of the decision, which he considered absolutely essential, he ordered the break-out of his corps, which had been cut off from its supplies, at noon that day on his own responsibility. Neither Kluge nor Halder agreed w/ this step. That same night Hitler relieved Hoepner of his duties and demanded that he be discharged dishonorably from the army. The chief of staff of Hoepner's panzer army, Colonel Walter Chales de Beaulieu, was also relieved of his duties. (Note: Hoepner was dishonorably discharged from the army only after **20 Jul 44**.) Hoepner's successor was General Richard Ruoff, until then cdr of **V AK**. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 726)

-- **3.1.42:** Since **4 Army** was unable to close the Maloyaroslavets gap, Hitler instructed that the inter-army boundary between Hoepner's **4 Pz Army** and Kuebler's **4 Army**, should be moved southwards, so that Hoepner would become responsible for closing the breach. **20 AK** to the north of the gap was transferred from Kuebler's to Hoepner's command. This decision did not please Hoepner. His troops were well dug-in on the line of the Rivers Lama and Ruza. (Note: For the status of Hoepner's panzer army, his concerns at time – i.e., problems w/ v. Kluge,⁵⁰⁶ he was about to be enveloped on both flanks, etc. – see, *A. Seaton*, The Battle for Moscow, 243-44)

-- **8.1.42:** Da Hitler ein Absetzen des vom **20 u. 7 AK** gehaltenen Frontbogens an der Nara u. der Moskwa verweigerte, droht Anfang **Jan 42** weiter westlich bei Borowsk der sowj. Durchbruch nach Nordwesten unter Umfassung der tiefen rechten Flanke der **4 Pz Armee**. GFM v. Kluge reagierte u. wahlte den fuer ihn einfacheren, aber risikanteren Weg: Er unterstellte das abgesplitterte **20 AK**, das noerdlich der Einbruchsstelle stand, Hoepner mit dem Auftrag, die Luecke durch Angriff wieder zu schliessen.

Hoepner ging zwar gegen die Einbruchsstelle vor, doch die Aktion schlug fehl. Als der Gegner die Luecke erweiterte, beantragte Hoepner schliesslich am **8 Jan 42** die Ruecknahme des **20 u. 7 AK** in eine erheblich kuerzere Sehnenstellung. Nach Ruecksprache mit von Kluge bereitete Hoepner um die Mittagszeit dieses Tages die Rueckfuehrung der schweren Artillerie u. rueck-waertigen Dienste beider Korps vor. Kluge stimmte dem grundsuetzlich zu, wobei er das noch einzuholende Einverstaendnis Hitlers fuer den Rueckzug als ziemlich sicher in

⁵⁰⁶ Note: Relationship between Hoepner and v. Kluge had been strained since former's violent outburst at end of **Nov 41**, when Hoepner bitterly reproached v. Kluge for leaving him in the lurch. Von Kluge had never again visited **4 Pz Army** HQ. Communication between the two men was now usually conducted thru their chiefs-of-staff. (244-45)

Aussicht stellte. Da im Laufe des Abends keine Antwort entraf, befahl Hoepner den Rueckzug, da er ihn fuer unaufschiebbar hielt.

Doch kurz vor Mitternacht erhielt Hoepner telefonisch die Mitteilung von Kluges, dass Hitler ihn, Hoepner, seines Kommandos enthoben haette. Wie sich bald herausstellte, hatte Hitler bereits die Genehmigung zum Absetzen erteilt, als ihm von Kluge den Rueckzug Hoepners meldete. Offenbar hatte der schwankende Feldmarschall nicht den Mut aufgebracht, Hoepners Handeln zu decken. (*H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 216-17)

- **8.-9.1.42:**⁵⁰⁷ Der grosse nach Osten vorspringende Bogen noerdl. Borowsk musste aufgegeben werden! Der O.B. der Pz.Armee hatte am **8.1.42** frueh das Einverstaendnis des GFM's v. Kluge, der zwar die sofort einsetzenden Vorbereitungen genehmigte, aber eine unwichtig erscheinende Einschraenkung machte, eingeholt: „Der Chef des Generalstabes des Heeres [Halder] sei zum Fuehrer unterwegs zum Vortrag; es koenne aber mit Einverstaendnis gerechnet werden. Und nun zeigten sich die unberechenbaren, jegliche Fuehrung hemmenden, ja ausschliessenden Folgen des Haltebefehls. Am **8.1.42** um **12.45** Uhr ergingen die vorbereitenden Befehle der Pz.Armee, nachdem Gen.Ob. Hoepner nach vergeblichen Anrufen bei der H.Gr. sich zu dem Entschluss durchgerungen hatte, dass die Rettung des XX AK das primaere sei, die Zuruecknahme in die Sehnenstellung trotz der noch nicht vorliegenden, aber in Aussicht gestellten Genehmigung eingeleitet werden muesse. Bei spaeterer Ausgabe des Befehls haette die ganze Bewegung um **24** Stunden verschoben werden muessen. Dann war aber das XX AK nicht mehr zu retten. (For rest of story see, *de Beaulieu, "Sturm auf Moskau,"* Teil II, 436-38; **III:643**)
- **8.-13.1.42:** On **8 Jan 42**, the Soviets appeared on the point of breaking through near Sukhinichi, and v. Kluge was demanding from Halder that the standstill order be rescinded and that he, as army group cdr, be given freedom of action to move his troops as he thought fit. Halder could only refer the matter to the Fuehrer; but then it was learned that Hoepner, cdr of **4 Pz Army**, had taken the Fuehrer's law into his own hands and had begun to withdraw to escape encirclement. This resulted in the immediate dismissal of Hoepner, whom Hitler at first wanted to cashier w/o trial. Wiser counsels prevailed however and Hoepner continued to receive full pay and retired pay. He was replaced by Ruoff, former cdr of **5 AK**. (**Note:** In first week of **Jan 42**, Efremov's **33 Army** had started to drive a wedge between **4 Pz Army** and **4 Army** in the area of Medyn, and Hoepner was dismissed for ordering a withdrawal to escape this encirclement. Ruoff, his successor, could not hold the line and on **13 Jan 42** Hitler was forced to agree to what had already taken place.) Meanwhile, elements of **1 Gds Cav Corps** and **33 Army** had succeeded in separating 4 Pz Army in the north, from **4 Army** to the south, and had thrust into the open neck of the pocket to the south of Vyazma, where they were to be joined by partisans and airborne troops. . . (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 236-37; also, *de Beaulieu, Erich Hoepner*, 253)
- Hoepner's subsequent experiences (**1942-44**)
Executed in **Aug 44**.

⁵⁰⁷ **Note:** See "de Beaulieu" entry (**ab 31.12.41**) for background. In this entry, de Beaulieu links Hoepner incident to Hitler's Halt Order. (437)

o) *Christmas Eve & Christmas 1941*⁵⁰⁸

Note: For large numbers of graphic Christmas Eve and Christmas stories see, **IV: 314-20**. Among them, *H. Stieff, Briefe*, 146-47)

Note: For Christmas **1914** in Hitler's Bavarian **RIR 16** (the "List Regiment") see, *Thomas Weber, Hitler's First War*, 51-52, 60-66)

(Author notes that men of the List Rgt. – the survivors of the 1st Ypres – were thrilled they could spend Christmas not in the trenches but in the Belgian village of Messines, south of Ypres. . . Author also states the Christmas eve was "for Germans . . . the *most important day* of their Christmas celebration. . . The men, *inter alia*, sang Silent Night and prayed for peace. . . The men also celebrated on "Boxing Day" (**26 Dec**), which Germans still considered part of Christmas. Hitler's regiment also took part in the widespread and spontaneous fraternization which occurred over Christmas **1914**. It was said by the "soldiers serving in the first line that the Frenchmen often throw cigarettes to the Germans, while the Germans throw chocolates back in return. . ." Hitler himself was enraged by the truce.)

-- Describe *historical significance* of Christmas traditions to the German people. (See my "German Christmas" folder.)

(For examples from World War I see, *Stanley Weintraub, Silent Night. The Story of the World War 1 Christmas Truce*. Weintraub offers some unique insights into the vital importance of Christmas – and *Weihnachtsbaeume*! – to the German soldier (and culture as a whole). Thousands of Christmas trees were stocked in the depots, then transported to the front, the Germans planting them atop their parapets. Many terrific anecdotes and quotes.)

(25.12.39: Those [civilians] w/ contacts, and sufficient funds, would have got hold of a carp – the *traditional Christmas eve fare* – which would be baked or filleted and fried. For some children, therefore, one of the *great excitements* of Christmas was having the live carp swimming in the family bath for a couple of days, so as to cleanse the fish and keep it fresh. For the *vast majority*, however, carp was not on the menu, and the *ration allowance* scarcely allowed for any festive spirit. . . *Christmas trees* remained a priority, and were eagerly sought across [Berlin]. "No matter how tough or rough or pagan a German may be," *William Shirer* noted, "he has a childish passion for Christmas trees." Restrictions imposed by *rationing* had a profound effect on people's buying habits: "Germans usually give *wearing apparel* and *soaps* and *perfumes* and *candy* to one another for Christmas," wrote one commentator, "but this year [**25.12.39**] w/ these articles rationed, they must find something else."⁵⁰⁹ (Christmas in **1939**, see, *Roger Moorhouse, Berlin at War*, 52-56)

-- Describe soldiers' experiences in some detail, using several of the wonderful accounts I have collected from German veterans. (Eg., **IV:314-20**; also, **IX: Rudel, Stuka Pilot; J. Peraus, Priester im Heere Hitlers**, 46-48 (see also *M. Jones'* treatment of this material in his book: The Retreat. Hitler's First Defeat)).

(**Note:** For Hitler's Christmas at Rastenburg see, Notebook #1, "*Hitler, Chronology of Events*," etc.)

⁵⁰⁸ **Note:** This topic potentially incredibly rich and human. Not sure exactly where I want to integrate it into the text.

⁵⁰⁹ **Note:** Might not more of such items – perfumes, soaps, wines, etc. – have been available at least for the next Christmas in **1940**, as a result of "looting" of France!

- Das **OKH** hatte bereits fuer das Weihnachtsfest vorgesorgt (i.e., sweets, fruit, wine, candles, etc. to be given to each soldier at the front). (**IX: C. Hartmann, Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg, Kapitel III**)
- **24.-25.12.41**: I spent **24 Dec 41** visiting a number of hospitals to see the Christmas festivities. I was able to bring a little good cheer to many a brave soldier. But it was a heart-rending business. I spent most of the evening working alone; later Liebenstein, Buesing and Kahlden came to see me and we spent a short time together in comradely fashion. (*Guderian, Panzer Leader, 269-70*)
- **24.-25.12.41**: On Christmas Day **1941**, the staff of **4 Army** was still in Maloyaroslavets. On Christmas Eve there had been fighting all through the night very close to our HQ. The **19 PD**, which had been pulled out of the front, was all that now lay between us and the Russians, and the division had only **50** serviceable tanks left. On **25 Dec 41**, the HQ of **4 Army** was transferred at the last possible moment to Yukhnov. (*Blumentritt, Moscow, in: Fatal Decisions, 68*)
- **25.12.41**: “My chief, v. Kluge, had gone on the **15th** to replace v. Bock, who was sick, and I was left in charge of the army.⁵¹⁰ I and my staff spent Christmas Day in a small hut – our HQ in Malo Yaroslavits [sic] – w/ *tommy guns* [i.e., *Machinenpistolen*] on the table and the sounds of shooting all around us. Just as it seemed that nothing could save us from being cut off, we found that the Russians were moving on westward, instead of turning up north astride our rear. They certainly missed their opportunity.” (*Blumentritt, quoted in: B.H.L. Hart, German Generals Talk, 142*)
- Christmas combat: For graphic account of fighting at Christmas ’41 see, “*Gefechtsbericht des II. Btl. zu den Kaempfen um Bukontowo in der Nacht vom 24./25.12.41*,” in: „*Rundbrief Nr. 19*,” **IR 37/6. ID**. In this account, **IR 37** fights off its impending annihilation by up to a regiment of attacking Red Army troops. “Der Rgt.-Kdr. wurde, mit der Waffe in der Hand, in vorderster Linie, die Abwehr organisierend, durch zwei Kopfschuesse verwundet. Ungeachtet dessen verblieb er in vorderster Linie.“ (Details of this combat in: **III:589**) (See also, **IV:314-19**; *H. Haape, Moscow Tram Stop, 247-48*; *Grossmann, Geschichte der 6. ID, 95-96*)

p) *Status at beginning of Jan 42*

- Results of first two phases of Soviet counter-offensive
 Recap: By **1 Jan 42**, Soviet forces had retaken Kalinin in the north and Kaluga in the south and were besieging a series of German strongholds, some of which had already been bypassed and surrounded (i.e., Demiansk [in sector of AGN], Rzhev – Mozhaisk – Maloiaroslavets – Iukhnov and a number of other comm. centers were crowded w/ mixture of German combat and support troops trying to survive weather and Soviet attacks). (*D. Glantz, When Titans Clashed, 91*)
- German lack of reserves leads to *improvisation* – combing out of rear area services, etc. For example see, **P-190**, in: **6:120**)
- Trace frontages of all three army groups

⁵¹⁰ **Note:** i.e., **4 Army**.

- For “*Ostheer*” order of battle on **2 Jan 42** see, “*Die Gliederung des dt. Heeres 1942*,” in: *KTB OKW* (in my “*Orders of Battle*” file).
- Losses of *Ostheer* and Red Army
 (**III:499**, for losses of Red Army thru **31.12.41**)
 (German losses of motor vehicles & wpns see, FMS **P-190**, in: **VI:129**)
- Soviet objectives becoming much more ambitious.
 As addressed in following chapter.
- According to Jodl’s post-war statement, Hitler fully aware war could no longer be won by beginning of **Jan 42** (**XI:59**)
- **20.12.41** [Beute Zahlen]: For **OKH** statistics on weapons captured as of this date from beginning of Russian campaign see, *KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 1107-08. The astounding figures include: **25,696** guns of all types (from PAK to heavy howitzers), **13,935** tanks, **141,646** horses. (See, *KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 1107-08)
- **20.12.41** [Kriegsgefangene]: According to **OKH** statistical data, the Germans had also taken **3,350,639** prisoners as of **20.12.41**. (See, *KTB OKW*, Bd. I, 1106)
- **Jan 42**: By this time, **OKH** has authority to mobilize **500 000** trained men for the eastern front by the end of **Apr 42** and had two programs, code named Walkuere and Rheingold underway. The first would produce four [4] divisions from troops in the Replacement Army that could possibly be ready by late **Jan 42** or early **Feb 42**. The second would draw previously deferred men from industry to make up six [6] divisions, and those would take longer to outfit and train. Walkuere, Rheingold, and the additional men to round out the half million would cut into the German workforce and thus mitigate one shortage, while aggravating another. The **OKH** did not know where it could find the wpns, particularly artillery, mortars, and MGs, to equip the Walkuere and Rheingold divisions. Current production of these was insufficient to cover recent losses on the front.

The **OKH** also had two movements going: Elefant and Christophorus – the first to provide **1900** trucks and the second to supply **6000** vehicles of other kinds for AGC; and the Reichpost was assembling **500** buses to transport troops to Russia. But the vehicles were having to be collected from all over Germany and as far away as Paris and driven east, and most would probably need repairs by time they reached Warsaw. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 120)

XII: AGC FACING ANNIHILATION – STALIN UNLEASHES A GENERAL OFFENSIVE (JAN-FEB 42)⁵¹¹

- **Note:** Im **Jan 42** versuchte die sowjet. Fuehrung durch eine *allgemeine Offensive an der gesamten Front* von der Ostsee bis zum Asovschen Meer das dt. Ostheer zu zerschlagen u. insbesondere die Hr.Gr.Mitte durch grossraeumige Einschliessung zu vernichten. Ohne

⁵¹¹ **Note:** In this chapter, after laying out basic operational details, I might want to focus primarily on the German relief of Suchinichi and Model at Rzhev.

Schwerpunktbildung konnte jedoch dieses weitgesteckte Ziel nicht erreicht werden, zumals es auch der sowjet. Verbaende bei der Aufrechterhaltung ihrer Offensivkraft an weiteren Reserven, Waffen u. Munition mangelte. Nachdem Hitler Mitte **Jan 42** schliesslich doch einen Teilrueckzug der Hr.Gr.Mitte in die „Winterstellung“ genehmigt hatte schwaechte sich die Angriffskraft der Roten Arme Ende **Jan 42** ab. Ein moeglicherweise kriegsentscheidender Durchbruch der Roten Arme u. die strategische Umfassung der Hr.Gr. Mitte konnten dadurch verhindert werden. (*Ueberschaer*, Scheitern des Unternehmens „Barbarossa“, 164)

- **Note:** At one moment of panic, some of the German High Command officers suggest that perhaps the situation could be retrieved by the employment of *poison gas*. “Colonel Ochsner tries to talk me into beginning gas warfare against the Russians,” Halder notes in his diary on **7 Jan 41**. Perhaps it was too cold. At any rate, nothing came of the suggestion. (*Shirer*, Rise and Fall, 869; *Halder KTB*)

a) *World Events (and impact on eastern front)*

- **Note:** Many of the events described in this section contributed to an increase in morale on the German side. Japanese victories in the Far East, Rommel’s successes in North Africa, etc., also deflected attention from the on-going crisis in the east.
- **Jan 42** [Evakuierung der Berliner Juden]: Dem ersten „Evakuierungstransport“ von Berliner Juden nach Lodz [**Okt 41?**] folgten bis Ende **Jan 42** noch neun [9] weitere nach Lodz – Minsk – Kowno – Riga. In diesem Monat wurden nach wochenlangen vergeblichen Bemuehungen der Wehrmacht um die Transportkapazitaeten die Deportationen vorerst eingestellt. Der Grund dafuer war die sich dramatisch zuspitzende Lage an der Ostfront seit Ende **Nov 41**. (*R.G. Reuth*, *Goebbels*, 491)
- **10.1.42:** The new directive on the armament program issued on **10 Jan 42** marks German recognition of fact that the whole concept of a *blitzkrieg*, a lightning war, had failed. (*G. Weinberg*, *Global History of WWII*, 282-84)
- **10.1.42:** Am **10 Jan 42**, bestimmte ein neuer Ruestungserlass Hitlers „in Anpassung an die veraenderte Kriegslage“, dass der seit Sommer **1941** beabsichtigte staerkere Ausbau von *Luftwaaffe* u. *Kriegsmarine* zurueckgestellt u. das Heer bei der Ruestungsproduktion zunaechs wieder bevorzugt werden sollte. (*KTB OKW*, Bd. 2, 1265 ff.)⁵¹²
- **12.1.42:** On this day, the British merchant ship *Cyclops* is torpedoed off the eastern seaboard of the United States. She had been steaming independently and unescorted along the regular coastal route. Her sinking marks the start of Operation „Drum Roll“ („Pauckenschlag“) – a new, and for the Allies, disastrous phase of the war at sea. The American east coast towns are all well lit; the coastal resorts illuminated. Taking advantage of this, the German U-boat cdrs lay on the bottom by day, then surface at dusk to pick off their targets silhouetted against the lights of the coastal towns. By the end of the month, **46** Allied merchant ships have been sunk off the American coast, a total of **196,243** tons of ships and supplies. (*Gilbert*, Second World War, 290.

⁵¹² **Note:** Diese besondere Fuehrerweisung war vom Wehrwirtschafts- u. Ruestungsamt (Gen. Thomas) seit **Dez 41** dringend gefordert worden, vgl. Reinhardt, Wende, 266 ff., u. *DRZW*, Bd. 4, 1024 (Beitrag Mueller).

- **Feb 42:** In the Far East, the final Japanese assault on Singapore, bastion of the British Empire there, had just begun. It looked like the end in India, too. In North Africa, Rommel's corps, nourished w/ fresh tanks and men, had gone over to the counteroffensive and thrown the British back 300 miles and out of Cyrennaica. (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 371)
- **7.-8.2.42** [Death of Dr Todt]: On **7 Feb 42** at the Wolfsschanze, Hitler discussed w/ Dr. Todt the armaments production program. Todt had arrived at Rastenburg in a **He 111** bomber which he had obtained for his own use at the end of **Dec 41**. It was his intention to fly out in it early the next morning. There was a Fuehrerbefehl in effect that all high functionaries were forbidden to fly in any acft having less than **3** engines. I explained the order to Todt and banned his flight. He was beside himself w/ rage and informed me that Hitler's order did not apply to him. (For rest of story see, v. *Below, At Hitler's Side*, 126-27)
- **11.2.42:** An diesem Tage kapitulierten die britischen Verteidiger Singapurs. . . Der Fall Singapurs u. auch Rommels Vormarsch hatten nach der grossen Depression der zurueckliegenden Monate ueberall, ob im Auswaertigen Amt, in der Heeresfuehrung, oder bei der Seekriegsleitung, eine *geradezu befreiende Wirkung*; man war begeistert, schien sich doch das Blatt endlich zugunsten des Reiches zu wenden. (*Reuth, Hitler*, 562-63)
- **13.2.42:** By the early hours of **13 Feb**, the German *fleet's strategic withdrawal* from the Atlantic to northern waters has been successfully completed. [The battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisenau had been bottled up at Brest on France's Atlantic coast since the spring and regularly crippled by bomb damage ever since.] The Scharnhorst had reached Wilhelmshaven, despite minor damage from two mines. The Gneisenau had reached Kiel, also dented by a mine. The Prinz Eugen had got thru completely unscathed. In the belated air battles, the British had lost **20** bombers, **16** fighters, and **6** torpedo planes; Galland had lost only **7** fighters. [Galland had given the ships air cover during their Channel dash.] (*Irving, Hitler's War*, 368-72)
- **Feb-Mar 42:** Wurden Albert Speer zum Reichsminister fuer Bewaffnung u. Munition ernannt sowie Gauleiter Sauckel zum Generalbevollmaechtigten fuer den Arbeitseinsatz bestellt. Insofer bedeutete die Niederlage der dt. Truppen vor Moskau fuer die dt. Kriegswirtschaft eine deutliche „Zaesur“, da man auch auf kriegs- u. ruestungswirtschaftlichem Gebiet vom Blitzkriegskonzept Abstand nahm. (*Ueberschaer, Scheitern des Unternehmens Barbarossa*, 169)

aa) ***Planning & objectives for the general offensive***

- origins of; objectives (See, *D. Glantz, When Titans Clashed*, 91)
Note: **Jan 42** to experience utterly brutal arctic conditions
Average temperatures; lowest temperature(s), etc. (**III:638**)
- **Mid-Dec 41:** Stalin calls for major offensive operations on other sectors of the front. Now that the Red Army had retaken Tikhvin (**9.12.41**), a large-scale effort was to be mounted to relieve Leningrad and encircle a major portion of Army Group North; moreover, big drives were to be launched into the Ukraine as well as the Crimea, even as thrusts into the deep flanks of Army Group Center were supposed to cut it off in a huge encirclement battle. Rejecting contrary advice of several Red Army cdrs, Stalin orders this series of offensives to begin in the first **10** days of **1942**. (*G. Weinberg, Global History of WWII*, 295)

- **Mid-Dec 41:** The early successes of the Soviet counter-offensive fired Stalin's enthusiasm and imagination. The counter-offensive plans were extended even further and the sector of operations was widened to a frontage of **600** and a depth of **200** miles. For he had decided that AGC was to be destroyed by an attack on each shoulder of the German salient, one wedge being made by Konev's Kalinin Front from the area of Kalinin towards distant Smolensk, over **200** miles away; the left flank of Zhukov's front in the south, together w/ the Bryansk Front, was to drive in a great arc from Stalinogorsk to Sukhinichi and then on to Vyazma and Smolensk. In addition, Kurochkin's North-West Front had to make a secondary [accurate?] and yet deeper right encircling thrust, to the west and outside than made by Konev, from the area of Demyansk and Ostashkov roughly along the boundary between the German AGC and AGN. The whole counter-offensive was designed to encircle a great German pocket, nearly **200** miles in depth, stretching almost from Moscow to beyond Smolensk, using one left and two right pincers one outside the other. (*A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 197)

- **5.1.42:** Shaposhnikov makes presentation outlining a proposed general offensive along entire front. (**III:501-03**)

- **5.1.42:** [Soviets plan general offensive]: On the evening of **5 Jan 42**, the Stavka assembled for a fateful meeting: on the agenda was the scope, form and timing of the Red Army's offensive operations, the transition to a general counter-offensive, which, w/ the *Wehrmacht* now reeling and shocked, could be of immense significance for the course of the war both on the Eastern Front and farther afield. . . The plan for offensive operations was cast on a grandiose scale. [For details see, *J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 297-98; for other accounts, **III:501-03**)

- **5.-7.1.42:** On the strength of the successes of **Dec 41**, Stalin believed that the time had come to bring about the collapse of the entire German eastern front and to rout the main forces of the German army in the east by massive offensive ops from Lake Ladoga to the Black Sea. On **5 Jan 42** he informed the members of the State Defense Committee, Supreme Command HQ, and the general staff of his intention to go over to the offensive simultaneously in all strategic directions to encircle and annihilate the German Army Groups North and Centre, and to inflict a crushing defeat on Army Group South as well. Objections by Army General Zhukov, the GOC Western Front, who argued in favor of transferring the available reserves – **14** divisions and **7** bdes – to the Western Front, and of seeking a decision in that sector alone, rather than dissipating the forces, were rejected, even though Deputy People's Commissar Voznesenskiy supported the creation of such a point of main effort. Stalin, who as usual was supported by Marshal Shaposhnikov, chief of the general staff, as well as by Malenkov and Beriya, persisted in his decision. The Soviet command, therefore, was about to do what it had always accused its enemy of – pursue an adventurous and totally unrealistic OPlan. The underestimation of the German enemy reflected in that decision is the more striking as, according to data in the Soviet historical literature, the ratio of strength at that time was about equal, w/ only a slight superiority on the part of the Red Army.

The order for the attack of **7 Jan 42** assigned to the troops of the Leningrad Front, the Volkhov Front, and the right wing of the Northwest Front the task of routing the armies of German Army Group North and lifting the siege of Leningrad. The formations of the left wing of the Northwest Front, the Kalinin Front, the Western Front, and the Bryansk Front – which were to conduct the main strike at the centre – were to encircle and annihilate the bulk of Army Group Ctr. The South-west and Southern Fronts, finally, were to rout Army Group

South, while the Transcaucasus Front was to annihilate **11 Army** and occupy the Crimea. . . (GSWW, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 919-20)

- **7.1.42:** Stalin orders general offensive along entire [eastern] front . . . Zhukov and other cdrs oppose on grounds that it would *dissipate available forces* over too wide a frontage. In Moscow region, Stalin ordered Kalinin and Western Fronts to encircle German forces by attacks on Viaz'ma from N, E and S. (For details see, D. Glantz, When Titans Clashed, 91-93)

To supplement this already imposing offensive effort, **3.** and **4. Shock Armies**, on left flank of Col-Gen Kurochkin's NW Front, were ordered to strike from the forests near Ostashkov toward Toropets – Smolensk, while Col-Gen Cherevichenko's Briansk Front launched attacks toward Orel – Briansk. (Glantz, 92-93)

- **7.1.42:** In a general directive, Stalin formally sets out his plan to drive on Vyazma from the north, south and east w/ Kalinin and West Front forces, while the left wing of NW Front would strike SW to cut the German escape route to the west. (**III:613**)

- **7.1.42:** Zhukov's Western Army Group and Konev's smaller Kalinin Army Group are ordered to destroy "the Mozhaisk – Gzhatsk – Viaz'ma enemy group," essentially the German **3** and **4 Panzer Armies**, eliminating at same time the group around Rzhew (German **9. Army**) . . . Two new shock armies (**3.** & **4.**) were transferred to Konev's command from NW Army Group on **19 Jan 42**. Konev was ordered to use them for very ambitious task off cutting off Smolensk from the west; Smolensk was **95** miles from Viaz'ma. (See, E. Mawdsley, Thunder, 122)

- **7.1.42:** In his general directive of **7 Jan 42**, Stalin formally set out the plan to drive on Vyasma from the north, south and east w/ Kalinin and Western Front forces, while the left wing of North-Western Front would strike southwestwards to cut the German escape route to the west. Stalin's directive prescribed: (See text for details of directive.) . . . The Soviet offensive was to open in stages from **7-10 Jan 42** and even later. . . [Re: Stalin's unrealistic expectations and demands for the general offensive]: Stalin never visited the front (despite of the many fictions that he did). And since commanders who were summoned to him had to face also his "entourage" (who, according to Admiral Kuznetsov, advised officers "not to make trouble"), the chances of Stalin being persuaded of reality – stiffening German resistance, decimated Soviet formations, over-extended fronts, dangerous multiplicities of objectives – vanished almost completely from the horizon of decision-making. In all this airless artificiality, caverned in the bunker in the Kremlin, the doctrine of Stalinist infallibility prevailed in war, just as it had come to prevail in peace. . . (J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad, 301-03)

b) *Deployment of forces / Order of Battle*

- **5.1.42:** Insgesamt sollte die Generaloffensive mit neuen [9] Fronten unternommen werden, die gemeinsam mit der Karelischen Front u. der Moskauer Verteidigungszone ueber folgende Verbaende verfuegte:

275 Schuetzendivisionen
77 Schuetzenbrigaden
1 Skibrigade
2 mot. Schuetzenbrigaden

- 48 Kavalleriedivisionen
- 3 Panzerdivisionen
- 48 Panzerbrigaden
- 2 Luftlandebrigaden

Da die Stavka zwei [2] Armeen ihrer Reserven zur Verstaerkung anderer Fronten einsetzte u. eine weitere zu einer „Stossarmee“ umgliederte, standen noch zwei [2] Armeen mit 9 Schuetzen- u. 6 Kavalleriedivisionen sowie 7 Schuetzen-, 9 Panzer- u. 4 Luftlandebrigaden zu ihrer Verfuegung.

Vergleicht man die zahlenmaessige Staerke der Roten Armee an der deutsch-sowj. Front am 1 Jan 42 mit ihrer Staerke vom 1 Nov 41, so faellt ein Zuwachs von 52% ins Auge. [!] Demgegenueber konnten die Deutschen, so lange die angekuendigten Verstaerkungen nicht eingetroffen waren, keinen eigenen Zuwachs in die Waageschale werfen. (*H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 215)

- **Jan – Apr 42:** In the Soviet Rzhev – Viaz'ma operation 1 059 000 forces are involved (at the start of operations); they will suffer 272 000 “permanent” military losses during this period (i.e., KIA, missing, POWs).⁵¹³ (**III:684**)

c) *Offensive begins (7-9 Jan 42)*⁵¹⁴

-- Brief summary of initial results:

- **Note: [Dec 41-Jan 42]:** An drei [3] Stellen kam es vor allem zu tiefen Einbruechen in die stuetzpunktartige Front der H.Gr.: a) Zwischen der 2 Pz Armee u. der 4 Armee; b) zwischen der 4 Armee u. der 4 Pz Armee u., c) – seit Beginn der sowjet. Grossoffensive aus dem Raum Ostaskow im Waldai-Gebiet am 9.1.42 – an der Naht zur H.Gr.Nord. Hier drangen die sowjet. Angriffsspitzen ueber Toropez bis nach Cholm (seit 22.1.42 eingeschlossen), Welikije Luki, Welish u. Demidoff weit in den Ruecken der im Raum um Rshew haltenden 9 Armee vor, deren OB., Gen.Oberst. Strauss, am 16.1.42 von Hitler durch Gen. d. Pz.Tr. Model ersetzt wurde. „Die inneren Fluegel der H.Gr. Mitte u. Nord hingen in der Luft.“ Erst am 15.1.42 genehmigte Hitler nach langen Auseinandersetzungen mit dem OB der H.Gr.Mitte [i.e., GFM v. Kluge] den Rueckzug auf die „Winterstellung.“ (*OKW KTB*, Bd II, *Einfuehrung*, 40)
- **7.-9.1.41:** Kalinin and Western Fronts begin the wider offensive w/ a phased series of attacks from 7 thru 9 Jan 42. (*D. Glantz, Titans*, 93)
- **9.1.42:** Soviet High Command ordered Kurochkin's NW Front to begin its deep encirclement on the right, from Ostashkov to Vitebsk, this being the outer right flanking pincer over 200 miles deep into the German rear. . . On 9 Jan 42, Purkaev's 3. **Shock Army** and Eremenko's 4. **Shock Army** (both of NW Front), began their offensive from the area of the Ostashkov Lakes, making very little progress until the town of Peno was taken. (*A. Seaton, Russo-German War*, 235)

⁵¹³ **Note:** Figures for West and Kalinin Fronts only.

⁵¹⁴ **Note:** According to Glantz, terrain “especially important in this battle.” (*Titans*, 93)

d) *Overview of events*

- **Note:** *Wetterlage*, etc. for each day can be found in entries under “*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*)
- Soviet spearheads able to thrust thru gaps in the thinly held German lines.
- Within days after the offensive commenced, Belov’s cavalry group race thru the gaping hole in German defenses south of Kaluga into the Germans’ rear and toward Viaz’ma. (See, *D. Glantz, When Titans Clashed*, 93)
- **Dec 41-Feb 42:** Den 117 neuen Verbaenden, die der Russe in **3** Monaten in diese Schlacht warf, stand die ausgeblutete Front der H.Gr.Mitte mit insgesamt 9 Neuzufuehrungen von Divisionen gegenueber:

Neuzufuehrungen zu den beiden Fronten
(**Dez 41** bis **Feb 42**):

a) Zur H.Gr.Mitte:

Dez 41: **0**
Jan 42: **4** Div.
Feb 42: **5** Div.

b) Zur russischen Front:⁵¹⁵

Dez 41: **30** Div., **33** Brig., **6** Pz.-Brig., **3** Kav. Div.
Jan 42: **11** Div., **5** Brig., **5** Pz.-Brig., **2** Kav. Div.
Feb 42: **10** Div., **6** Brig., **6** Pz.-Brig., **0** Kav. Div.

(Source: *Hofmann*, “*Schlacht von Moskau*,” 181)

- **Jan 42:** Mix of Soviet airborne forces and cavalry sent deep behind German lines. Two cavalry corps – the **11. Cav Corps** coming from north and Belov’s **1. Gds Cav Corps** coming from SE – ordered to meet behind Viaz’ma, cutting German communications. On **26-26 Jan 42**, horsemen from **11. Cav Corps** briefly cut the railway between Smolensk and Viaz’ma, while **1. Gds** harassed the Warsaw-Moscow highway south of Viaz’ma.
- **Jan 42:** Die Transportleistungen der Eisenbahn sanken erschreckend ab. Im **Sep 41** ueberschritten neben den Zuegen fuer Truppentransporte, Lazarettzuegen u. der stets hohen Zahl an Zuegen zur Aufrechterhaltung des Eisenbahnbetriebs (Kohle u. anderes Material) noch **2093** Nachschubzuege die Reichsgrenze nach Osten. Diese Zahl sank bis zum **Jan 42** auf **1420** ab. Im **Jan 42** wurde wegen der kritischen Lage an der Front u. aus Transportgruenden Urlaubssperre verhaengt, die ab **23.3.42** etwas gelockert werden konnte, um erst am **1.7.42** wenigstens fuer H.Gr.Mitte u. Nord wieder ganz aufgehoben werden zu koennen. (*Mueller-Hillebrand, Das Heer 1933-45*, Bd. III, 30)
- **Jan 42** [Vyaz’ma]: By comparison w/ the center and left flank armies, AGC’s right flank armies – **2 Army** and **2 Pz Army** – were, nevertheless, in a virtually ideal situation.⁵¹⁶ The

⁵¹⁵ That is, across entire Russian front? Or just along Moscow axis?

storm of the Soviet offensive was passing away from **2 Army** and **2 Pz Army** as it mounted assaults of greater intensity against **4 Army** and **4 Pz Army** in the center and **9 Army** and **3 Pz Army** on the left. While the armies on the right faced threats, those of the center and left confronted outright destruction. . . .

Soviet Kalinin and West Fronts are aiming at Vyazma – a small city on the Moscow-Smolensk road and railroad, some **125** miles west of Moscow and **90** miles east of Smolensk. It was a railroad junction from which lines ran due north and south to Rzhev and Bryansk, NE to Moscow, and SE to Kaluga and Tula. The line to Rzhev carried all the supplies for **3 Pz Army** and most of those for **9 Army**. The Vyazma-Moscow line and road sustained **4 Pz Army**, and **4 Army** depended on the Vyazma-Kaluga line for its supplies. At the turn of the year, Kalinin Front's right flank armies were **90** miles from Vyazma. West Front's left flank operating in the gap between **4 Army** and **2 Pz Army** had about **55** miles left to get there via Yukhnov. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 124-25)

- **ab 8.1.42** [Soviet Phase II]: Swept away by a burst of optimism born of his army's sudden and unexpected success, in early **Jan 42** Stalin ordered the Red Army to commence a general offensive along the entire front from Leningrad region to the Black Sea. This second stage of the Red Army's Moscow offensive, which began on **8 Jan 42**, consisted of several distinct front offensive ops whose overall aim was to complete the destruction of Army Gp Ctr. The „almost frenzied“ Soviet counteroffensives placed enormous pressure on defending German forces; they also resulted in immense losses among Soviet forces, which by late **Feb 42** had lost much of their offensive punch. By this time, Red Army Forces had reached the approaches to Vitebsk, Smolensk, Viaz'ma, Briansk, and Orel and had carved huge gaps in the *Wehrmacht's* defenses west of Moscow. (*D. Glantz, Soviet-German War: Myths & Realities*, 22)
- **8.1.-2.2.42** [Summary / NW Front]:⁵¹⁷ The offensive of the left wing of Northwest Front, the Kalinin Front, the Western Front, and the Bryansk Front, which began at the centre on **8 Jan 42** and aimed at splitting and routing AGC, created a precarious situation for some of the German divisions but ultimately failed to obtain its strategic objective. Formations of **3 Assault Army** (until then the **60 Reserve Army**), of **4 Assault Army** (until then **27 Army**), which at the beginning of the offensive still came under the Northwest Front but from **22 Jan 42**, in order to simplify chains of command, was placed under Konev's Kalinin Front,⁵¹⁸ had been advancing rapidly in a south-westerly direction since **9 Jan 42**. While elements of **3 Assault Army** reached Kholm on **20 Jan 42** and encircled the town, and on **2 Feb 42** were already fighting at the approaches of Velikie Luki, **4 Assault Army** had taken Andreapol and Toropets and driven its spearheads in a new surge as far as the Usvyaty-Velizh-Demidov line; indeed, Maj-Gen Tarasov's **249 RD** even reached the area NE of Vitebsk. However, a further advance towards the important transport triangle Vitebsk-Smolensk-Orsha proved impossible because the forward movement of **3 Assault Army** had got stuck on the right wing and because **22 Army** of the Kalinin Front, operating on the left wing, was likewise unable to make any further progress once it had taken Olenino. Yeremenko's **4 Assault Army**, whose flanks were thus exposed and whose attacking strength was exhausted, proved unable to exploit the success achieved at the boundary between AGN and AGC and was increasingly forced on to the defensive. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 923)

⁵¹⁶ **Note:** Hence, by **Jan 42** “action” moving away from AGC's southern wing?

⁵¹⁷ **Note:** For more background on **Jan 42** offensive of NW Front see, **III:647-48**.

⁵¹⁸ **Note:** Just **4 Assault Army** was placed under Konev's command?

-- **9.-20.1.41** [Summary / NW Front]: Lt.-Gen. Kurochkin's other great drive, to the SW, opened effectively when almost **10** divisions and a dozen rifle bdes of the two shock armies – **3** and **4 Shock Armies** – erupted between **04.00** and **10.30** hours across the ice of Lake Seliger on **9 Jan 42**. . . Yeremenko [**4 Shock Army**] planned to drive straight into the junction of two German armies, **16** and **9 Armies** (and the junction of AGN and AGC) along the Peno – Andreapol – Toropets line. . . In chest-high snow, after a two-hour artillery bombardment and a few flights by the small force of LAGG-3 fighters for “show,” Yeremenko's shock troops plunged forward across the ice straight into the German MGs covering Peno. Peno was taken, Fegelein's SS cavalry was swamped and Yeremenko punched his first hole in the German line. Pukayev's **3 Shock Army** made little progress at first, which prompted a rebuke from Kurochkin. . . Aiming first at Kholm, Pukayev got hung up in the German defenses . . . but after a few days both armies began to roll forward. . . After an attack from three sides, Andreapol was stormed on **16 Jan 42**, Maj.-Gen. Tarasov's crack **249 RD** scooping up the German stores as it went along; four days later [**20 Jan 42**] the storming of Toropets began, where even vaster German stores were housed [here, in addition to large quantities of wpns and ammunition, **40** food dumps fell to Yeremenko's famished men]. . .⁵¹⁹ (*J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 304-05)

-- **ca. 10.-20.1.42** [Summary Western Front]:⁵²⁰ Zhukov's Front, locked in continuous fighting, had a triple part to play in the encirclement of Army Group Centre. [See text for details.] While his right was driving in the Volokolamsk – Gzhatsk direction, Zhukov's centre, which had hitherto operated to hold German reserves from any movement to the wings (a successful but terribly costly method), struck out directly for Vyazma. Govorov, the “unsmiling” but highly capable commander of Soviet **5 Army**, took Mozhaisk on **20 Jan 42**; his units moved along the motor highway, advancing now to a depth of some **45** miles; but his rifle divisions fell below **2500** men in strength and **5 Army** could not burst thru the German defensive positions. Late in **Jan 42**, **5 Army** was also running out of steam. Yefremov's **33 Army** took up the running, w/ its **7** rifle divisions. . .

As **5 Army** went for Gzhatsk and **33 Army** for Vyazma, Zhukov's left wing rushed to exploit the Kaluga–Belev gap, which now *menaced the very existence* of German **4 Army**, separated as it was from **2 Pz Army** to the south and in danger of being sliced away from **4 Pz Army** to its north, holding from Yukhnov to Gzhatsk. The gash ripped out between the **4 Army** and **2 Pz Army** now stretched for more than **70 miles**. . . Medyn, a key German strongpoint on the motor highway, fell on **14 Jan 42** [to elements of Soviet **43 Army**]. (*J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 312)⁵²¹

-- **Mid-Jan 42**: By this time, tactical and operational crisis on all fronts of three German army groups had reached point where a total collapse of entire eastern front had become a distinct possibility. (**IX: Magenheimer, Hitler's War**; Bock KTB, etc.)

⁵¹⁹ **Note:** As I recall, the two armies attacking on NW Front began their offensive w/ little in way of provisions; they were ordered to take them from the Germans!

⁵²⁰ **Note:** For GSWW summary of Western Front activities (**10 Jan – 2 Feb 42**) see, **III:650-51**. Impetus of attack on Zhukov's right wing – Volokolamsk axis – was broken when, on orders from Stalin, **1 Assault Army** and staff of **16 Army** were withdrawn and inserted in sector of NW Front and on the left wing. This was the result of Stalin's gross underestimation of the enemy.

⁵²¹ **Note:** The motor highway, however, would remain in German hands, and what Chief of Staff of German **4 Army**, General Blumentritt, feared most of all, the closing of the Yukhnov – Malojaroslavets road, the nightmare which Belov's cavalry almost turned into dreadful reality, failed to materialize. (314)

- **18.1.42** [Soviet losses to date]: Die fuehrenden Militaers, aber auch Hitler, fanden noch immer *keine Erklaerung dafuer*, wie eine Armee, die innerhalb von **5** Monaten unerhoert hohe Verluste an Menschen u. Material hatte hinnehmen muessen, innerhalb kurzer Zeit zu einer derartigen Gegenoffensive faehig war. Am **18 Jan 42** lagen der deutschen Fuehrung folgende Gefangenen- u. Beutezahlen fuer **1941** vor:⁵²²

Gefangene	3.355.499 (Mann)
Panzer	21.973
Art.-Geschuetze	23.917
PAK	6.230
Flak	2.638
Gr.Wr.	3.013
Kraftfahrzeuge	60.342
Flugzeuge	2.319
M.G.	24.085

Wenn mitunter auch Angaben firmieren, die von Gesamtverlusten in der Hoehe von nur **4.5** Millionen Mann sprechen, so kann man mit Sicherheit eine Mindestzahl von **5.5** Millionen Gefangenen, Gefallenen, Vermissten u. Schwerverwundeten, die nicht mehr einsatzfaehig waren, in Rechnung stellen. Da die Rote Armee im **Jun 41** ein Potential von zirka **5.4** Millionen Mann gehabt hatte, war dieses bis zum Jahresende voellig vernichtet worden. Fast die Haelfte [**50%**] der offiziell bis Kriegsende **1945** anfallenden Gesamtverluste in der Hoehe von **11.94** Millionen Mann entfielen somit auf das Jahr **1941**.

Die materiellen Verluste der Roten Armee erreichten bisher unvorstellbare Ausmasse, wobei die beiderseitigen Angaben nicht sehr voneinander abweichen. So verlor die Rote Armee ueber **101 000** Geschuetze u. Granatwerfer, **17 900** Frontflugzeuge sowie knapp **6.3** Millionen Gewehre. Das der Roten Armee anhaftende Geheimnis – wenn von einem „Geheimnis“ ueberhaupt gesprochen werden konnte – lag in der bereits vor dem **22 Jun 41** vorbereiteten u. danach mit aeusserster Konsequenz ungehemmt betriebenen Mobilmachung, die zu einem Dauerzustand wurde. (*H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 218-19)

- **21.1.-15.2.42** [Situation transformed]: In mid-Feb 42, the whole situation was once more suddenly transformed. On **21 Jan 42**, the Soviet High Command had prematurely withdrawn **1 Shock** and **16 Armies** from the area to the west of Moscow in order to reinforce the north and south flanks, and this causes Vlasov's **20 Army** offensive, which was attempting to roll up the German pocket from east to west, to peter out. This relieved the eastward pressure on **4 Pz** and **9 Army**, both of which were inside the pocket. Efremov's **33 Army** and **1 Gds Cav Corps** which, together w/ airborne troops and partisan units, were trying to seal the pocket between Yukhnov and Vyazma, were suddenly counter-attacked violently by Ruoff's **4 Pz Army**, which re-established contact w/ **4 Army** on the outside of the pocket on **3 Feb 42**, and cut off the Soviet troops from their rear. On **5 Feb 42**, Model's 9 Army, together w/ encircled German pockets near Olenino and Rzhev, attacked the encircling Soviet **29 Army** from east and west and separating it from its neighbors, encircled it in its turn and destroyed it. Only **5000** survivors are said to have escaped to the south and joined **11 Cav Corps** and **39 Army**, by then themselves almost encircled. Hitler had meanwhile been compelled to agree to a general withdrawal to the Winter Line and brought Reinhardt's **3 Pz Army** and elements of

⁵²² **Note:** The Germans actually captured over **20 000** tanks?!?

9 Army out of the pocket to Vitebsk and Smolensk to form a reserve in depth. **3 Pz Army** soon contained the enemy thrusts toward Vitebsk and Demidov, all the more easily since Eremenko's **4 Shock Army**, which was by then having great supply difficulties, was moving very slowly and w/ great uncertainty. A German division thrusting NE from Smolensk reached Byelyi and separated Soviet **39** and **22 Armies**. The encircled German garrison at Sukhinichi, w/ the Goslar bandsmen, had already been extricated on **25 Jan 42**. The key to the battle lay, however, in the area of Vyazma, in the mouth of the pocket. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 238)

- **24.1.42**: Withdrawal of **53. AK** to the Oka-Stellung, was completed in late **Dec 41**. On **24 Jan 42**, the corps occupied front of **70 km**, w/ its weak battalions (less than **200** men on average) holding frontages of **3.2 km** on average. At same time, the corps only had **62** light and **20** medium guns ready for action! (See, Notebook #7)
- **31.1.42**: By [this date], casualties of the Ostheer have reached a total of **917,985** men, including **28,935** officers. Army Group Ctr alone is short **396,000** men at this time. (For many more details see, *K. Reinhardt, "Moscow 1941,"* 216-17; **III:624-25**)
- **31.1.42**: Die Ausfalle des Ostheeres beliefen sich am Ende **Jan 42** auf **920.000** Mann, davon **29.000** Offiziere. Allein im Bereich der H.Gr.Mitte fehlten zu diesem Zeitpunkt etwa **400.000** Mann. Eine Studie des **OKW** stellte zum gleichen Zeitpunkt fest, dass eine "*volle Auffuellung der Verluste des Winters nicht mehr moeglich ist.*")
(Note: For details of German personnel, equipment, vehicle losses from ca. **Nov 41 – Feb 42** see, *Klaus Reinhardt, "Das Scheitern des deutschen Blitzkriegskonzepts vor Moskau."* (Details in my „Biblio file.“)
- **Late Jan 42**: By this time, AGC was in dire straights – deeply enveloped, fighting enemy airborne forces, partisan, etc., in its rear areas; lines of communication and supply often cut, etc. (For status of AGC at this time see, **III:681-82**)
The encirclement of AGC was w/in "an ace of being completed."
- **Jan-Feb 42**: During these months, **9** Red Army fronts w/ **37** armies and over **350** divisions smashed German defenses on a front of **600** miles (Staraia Russa to Belgorod) and drove the Germans back **80 – 120** miles before the Germans stabilized their defensive front in **Mar 42**. (*D. Glantz, Soviet-German War: Myths & Realities*, 21)
- **Jan-Feb 42** [Soviet Phase II: Summary]: Phase II of Soviet counteroffensive opens in first two [2] weeks of **Jan 42**. It is much more ambitious than Phase I of **Dec 41**. The second phase includes: a) another attempt to raise the seige of Leningrad; b) an offensive of both South and Southwest fronts; c) amphibious landings mounted by the Caucasus Front in the Crimea; d) in central sector, Kalinin, West and Bryansk Fronts attempt a double envelopment from Rzhev in the north and Sukhinichi from the south to close on the main Moscow highway at Vyazma. . . (For more details see, *R. Kershaw, War Without Garlands*, 235; **III:510-11**)
- **Jan-Feb 42**: Russians also mount their first parachute operation – they drop into the rear of AGC south of Viaz'ma. Their objective was to secure strong points for the advancing Soviet ground troops.
(Operations also included bde-strength drops (**2000** men) from **4. Air Landing Corps**, and then flying in reinforcements to improvised airfields in the captured zones. Yet Soviets

lacked sufficient transport a/c and means of coordinating the elite parachute troops on the ground.) (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder*, 123)

(For more details of large Soviet parachute ops in Viaz'ma region in **Jan-Feb 42** in attempt to break the *stalemate* see, (*D. Glantz, Titans*, 95-96)

- **Jan-Mar 42:** Between **Jan-Mar 42**, a further 17 German divisions arrived in the East against an exchange of burned-out divisions. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 233)
- **Jan-Mar 42:** The latest figures [as of 2005] give total Red Army losses [„permanent“ losses?, ie., dead, missing, POW?] from **Jan-Mar 42** as 620 000. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 147)
- **Feb 42:** At beginning of **Feb 42**, German High Command began to restore situation. It did this partly by dismissing exhausted cdrs and inserting energetic, able, and self-confident replacements, such as Model. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder*, 123)
- **1.2.42 [Rote Armee]:** Die permanente Mobilmachung der Roten Armee lief auf vollen Touren, so dass die erlittenen Verluste ab **Dez 41** nicht nur wettgemacht werden konnten, sondern dass man sogar einen Zuwachs an Staerke verzeichnete. So umfasste die Rote Armee an der deutsch-sowj. Front am **1 Feb 42** – jedoch ohne die Reserven der STAWKA – **46** Armeen, **5** operative Gruppen, eine Verteidigungszone u. eine Pionierarmee. Diese Streitmacht gliederte sich in:

- 268 Schuetzendivisionen
- 74 Schuetzenbrigaden
- 49 Kavalleriedivisionen
 - 1 Skibrigade
 - 2 Skiregimenter
 - 1 Panzerdivision
- 51 Panzerbrigaden
- 4 mot. Schuetzenbrigaden
- 14 selbststaendige Regimenter
- 11 Schuetzenbrigaden im Pionierdienst

(*H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 225)

- **12.2.42 [Crisis averted!]: H.Qu.OKH:** „Die winterlichen Abwehrkaempfe im Osten scheinen ihren Hoehepunkt ueberschritten zu haben. Dank der unuebertrefflichen Leistungen u. des harten Kampfwillens der Truppe ist der feindl. Ansturm zum Stehen gebracht. Das Ziel der russ. Fuehrung, durch die Winteroffensive unsere Front zu zerschlagen u. unsere Kampfmittel zu vernichten, wird nicht erreicht werden. Leistung u. Haltung der Truppe waehrend der Winterschlachten im Osten werden als *grosse soldatische Tat in die Kriegsgeschichte eingehen*.“ („*Weisung fuer die Kampffuehrung im Osten nach Abschluss des Winters*“, *Gen St.d.H./Op.Abt.(Ia)*, 12.2.42, KDC, Microfilm „E.“)
- **12.2.42: [OKH Weisung fuer die Kampffuehrung im Osten nach Abschluss des Winters]:** This long document (5+ pp) includes following sections:
 - 1. *Vorbemerkungen:* Die winterlichen Abwehrkaempfe im Osten scheinen ihren Hoehepunkt ueberschritten zu haben. ank der unuebertrefflichen Leistungen u. des harten Kampfwillens der Truppe ist der feindliche Ansturm zum Stehen gebracht. . .

2. *Allgemeine Auswirkungen der Schlammperiode:*
3. *Allgemeine Folgerungen:*
4. *Absicht des OKH*
5. *Aufgaben der Hr.Gr. waehrend der Schlammzeit:*
6. *Richtlinien fuer die Kampffuehrung*

In Anlage 3 to this document, under „5,“ it states: „Zur *personellen Auffrischung* aller Einheiten wird angestrebt,

H.Gr.Sued = **140 000**
H.Gr.Mitte = **260 000**
H.Gr.Nord = **100 000**

Ersatzmannschaften bis Ende [**Apr 42**] zuzufuehren. . .

(Source: *OKW KTB*, Bd. I, 1093-98)

- **Feb-Mar 42:** The density of Soviet artillery in **Feb-Mar 42** ranged from 3.1 to 29 artillery pieces per kilometer. (*Michael Parrish* (ed.), Battle for Moscow: The 1942 Soviet General Staff Study, p 48)
- With the front aflame for a distance of over **800** km, the struggle reduced to individual unit heroics, complex off-road maneuvers, and simple *battles of attrition* on both sides. The Soviets often held the impenetrable countryside, while the Germans clung fast to the cities, villages and key arteries. Try as they might, neither side was able to budge the other until nature gave the *more mobile Germans* the advantage in **Jun 42**. Nowhere was this frustrating process more clear than in Viaz'ma region. (*D. Glantz, Titans*, 94)

e) *Key milestones:*

- For succinct summary of fighting in **Jan-Feb 42** across central front see, (*D. Glantz, Titans*, 93-94)
- **Jan 42:** Elements of **1 Gds Cav Corps** and **33. Army** succeed in separating **4 Pz Army** in the north from **4 Army** to the south, and thrust into the open neck of the pocket to the south of Vyaz'ma, where they are joined by partisans and airborne troops. A further threat to Germans came from north of the pocket where Shvetsov's **29** and Maslennikov's **39 Armies**, together w/ **11 Cav Corps**, had advanced rapidly S and SW from Rzhev toward Vyaz'ma and Yartsevo, right across the rear of German **9 Army** and **4 Pz Army**. German situation appeared critical, since the entrance to the great pocket was nearly closed. . . (*A. Seaton, Russo-German War*, 237)
- **1.1.-7.2.42 (292 ID):** Von der Nara bis zur Istra – **100** km Rueckzug. With this entry the objective is not to trace meticulously the activities of **292 ID** during this two-month period; rather it is to illustrate the nature of the tough winter fighting – the plunging temperatures, the frostbite, the constant crises (breakthroughs!), the lack of infantry, the decisive role played by the artillery, the terrible Soviet losses, etc. Over this period, the division pulls back in phases – first to the Protwa, then to the Schanja and finally to the Istra-Stellung. Key points: „Die neue HKL an der Istra, die ab **7.2.** bezogen wurde, war guenstig; wir sollten sie nahezu sieben [7] Monaten innehaben. . . Der 100-km-Rueckzug von der Nara bis zur Istra war eine

einmalige unerhoerte Leistung! Ein besonderes Lob soll hier der Artillerie ausgesprochen werden; nicht nur, dass sie der Infanterie, die es ja noch viel schwerer hatte, mehrfach das Leben rettete, sondern sie hat, was wohl in keiner anderen Division in unserem naeheren Bereich der Fall war, von ihren 36 Rohren 33 an die Istra zurueckgebracht. (*G. Nitz, Die 292. Inf.-Div.*, 81-97; **VIII:214-17**)

- **ca 6.-15.1.42** [AGC Right Wing]:⁵²³ On AGC's right flank, circumstances were changing the Soviet plan. Zhukov's left flank armies, **10** and **50 Armies**, were moving faster and in better position to pursue an envelopment from the south than was Bryansk Front. Of the latter's **3** armies, only **61 Army** attained some momentum. **3** and **13 Armies** were becoming „exhausted“ by the end of **Dec 41**. Thus, AGC's right flank was being left outside the southern arm of the projected encirclement, which would bring quick changes for Armeegruppe Schmidt and its two armies (**2** and **2 Pz**).

In late **Dec 41**, **2 Army** was straining to hold onto its „new winter line“ on the Zusha and Tim rivers, **30-35** miles west of the vital Kursk-Orel railroad. . . Bryansk Front, however, could not accomplish a breakthrough to force **2 Army** into another retreat, and by end of the first week of **Jan 42** all its armies were stopped. Bryansk Front's part in the counteroffensive ended at the Tim and the Zusha, leaving Mtsensk, Kursk and Orel in German hands. By mid-**Jan 42**, the new winter line was solid, and to reduce Kluge's span of control Hitler then transferred **2 Army** to Army Group South. . . During the first week in **Jan 42**, **2 Pz Army**'s front facing east also stabilized. But at same time, the army was acquiring a long and acutely unstable north front. The gap between **4 Army** and **2 Pz Army** was **50** miles wide and had become the mouth of a great bulge ballooning westward past Sukhinichi and arching NW almost to Yukhnov and SW toward Bryansk. **2 Pz Army** was having to stretch its left flank west from Belev across **70** and more miles of roadless country. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 122)

- **8.1.42**: The **4 Army** HQ requested permission to withdraw in order to gain enough forces to protect the threatened main supply route from Roslavl to Yukhnov. Hitler approved a withdrawal⁵²⁴ between Ugra and Luza; along the line Zubovo-Tavarkovo-Medyn a new front was to be established and secured. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 726-27; *Halder, Tage-buch*, 8.-9.1.42; *KTb AOK 4*, 8.1.42)
- **9.-18.1.42**: Crisis on AGC front! Hitler finally agrees to a withdrawal behind the so-called Winter Line:

- **9.10.41**: Halder speaks repeatedly to v. Kluge, Jodl and Hitler about the rapidly deteriorating situation. An immediate withdrawal of AGC was necessary to the Winter Line, thought Halder. . . The Fuehrer, as usual, could not come to a decision and wanted first to have a meeting w/ v. Kluge. . . Von Kluge was due to fly to Rastenburg to see Hitler the next day, but due to bad flying weather, the meeting was delayed **48** hours;

- **10.1.42**: The long-threatened attack by Kuznetsov's **1 Shock** and Vlasov's **20 Armies** against Reinhardt's **3 Pz** and Ruoff's **4 Pz Armies** developed near Volokolamsk; the day before, **3 Shock** and **4 Shock Armies** had begun their

⁵²³ **Note:** Thus, by mid-**Jan 42**, the German right wing had largely solidified. However, the great gap between **2 Pz Army** and **4 Army** remained a huge problem.

⁵²⁴ **Note:** Once again, Hitler agrees to a tactical withdrawal.

long march from area of Ostashkov towards Velikiye Luki and Vitebsk, deep in the German rear. By the second week of **Jan 42**, it was apparent, even in Rastenburg, that the inner Soviet pincers from **Rzhev** and Sukhinichi were about to close in the area between Vyazma and Smolensk, encircling the larger part of AGC;

- **11.1.42** [confirm]: That Sunday, v. Kluge and Halder spent the whole day in the dictator's office. Hitler talked incessantly. . . Halder did not get back to his own office until early hours of Monday morning, tired and depressed, having achieved nothing. Kluge returned to AGC HQ;

- **13.1.42**: Halder called this day another difficult day. There were many desperate appeals from v. Kluge. The Roslavl-Yukhnov Rollbahn, which was the main supply artery for **4 Army**, was under attack and there was a crisis in the fighting near Medyn, enemy pressure being so great that v. Kluge begged for permission to evacuate the town. This limited tactical withdrawal was agreed only reluctantly by the dictator. Von Kluge reported that **5 AK**, part of **4 Pz Army**, had been penetrated and that the enemy movement against **9 Army** in area of Rzhev was gaining momentum. A great gap had been forced between **6 AK** and **23 AK** and the enemy **39 Army** had got behind the Winter Line and had broken into the railway town of Sychevka, about **30** miles due south of Rzhev. The only supply line to **9 Army** and the two [2] corps of **3 Pz Army** had now been broken;

- **14.1.42**: Von Kluge reports a still rapidly deteriorating situation. There was a real danger the German defenses in area of Volokolamsk were about to give way; and the position SW of Rzhev was perilous since he had **3-4** enemy divisions in his rear. Unless he got authority to pull back the whole of AGC, he could not possibly accumulate a reserve to deal w/ the Rzhev break-in. Still, Hitler was reluctant to sanction a withdrawal;

- **14.1.42**: Later this day, Hitler did finally agree that AGC should withdraw to the Rzhev-Zubtsov-Gzhatsk-Yukhnov line, after it had succeeded in closing the gaps near Rzhev and Medyn. This *proviso* was to prove impossible of fulfillment;

- **15.1.42**: On this day, Strauss, cdr **9 Army**, asks to be relieved of his duties – the same day as the cdrs of Army Groups North and South were replaced. Model, former cdr **41 PzK**, replaces Strauss;

- **18.1.42** [approx. date]: Konev's Kalinin Front was not yet close to Smolensk, but Maslennikov's **39 Army**, w/ **11 Gds Cav. Corps**, were on the line of the Rzhev-Vyazma railway near Sychevka, about **20** miles west of the Winter Line position. Maslennikov's movement southwards had cut 9 Army into three [3] segments, leaving four [4] German divisions enveloped in area of Olenino, other troops encircled south of Rzhev, while the rump of the army lay between Rzhev and Zubtsov. Sychevka, the point reached by the northern pincers, was **40** miles north of Vyazma;

- **18.1.42**: In an effort to complete the encirclement of AGC and close the entrance to the pocket, Soviet airborne troops were landed from **18 Jan 42**

onwards to reinforce and co-ordinate the activities of large numbers of partisans in the German rear near the open mouth of the great cauldron, roughly in the triangle Smolensk – Vyazma – Roslavl. . .

(A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow, 250-53)

- **10.1.42** [Durchbruch bei 3 Pz Armee]: Schukow erkannte rasch die Gunst der Stunde u. wollte seinerseits mit heftigen Angriffen gegen die **3 Pz Armee** den Nordteil der H.Gr. zum Einsturz bringen. Nachdem er Ende **Dez 41** die **3 Pz Armee** hinter die Lama zurueckgeworfen u. tiefe Einbrueche erzielt hatte, schien ein Durchbruch in Reichweite zu liegen. . . An diesem Abschnitt stand naemlich Wlassows **20 Armee** im Begriff, einen weitraeumigen u. folgenreichen Durchbruch westlich von Volokolamsk zu erzielen. Als Wlassow on **10 Jan 42** nach einem eineinhalbstuendigen Vorbereitungsfeuer, unterstuetzt vom **2 Gds-Kav.-Korps**, gemeinsam mit Teilen der **1 Stossarmee** zum Angriff schritt, gelang ihm nach tagelangem Kampf fast der Durchbruch durch die auch in ihrer Nordflanke schwer bedrohte **3 Pz Armee**. *Nolens volens* sah sich Hitler gezwungen, General Reinhardt den Rueckzug zu genehmigen, damit er nicht den Anschluss an den Ostfluegel der schwer ringenden **9 Armee** verlor. (H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten, 216)

- **10.-20.1.42**: While his right was driving in the Volokolamsk – Gzhatsk direction, Zhukov's centre, hitherto operating to hold German reserves from any movement to wings, struck out directly for Vyazma. . . Zhukov's left wing rushes to exploit the Kaluga – Belev gap, which now menaced very existence of German **4 Army**, separated as it was from **2 Pz Army** to the south. The gash ripped out between **4 Army** and **2 Pz Army** now stretched more than **70 miles**. . . Medyn, a key German strongpoint on the motor highway, falls on **14 Jan 42** to elements of Soviet **43 Army**.⁵²⁵ (**III:649**)

- **10.-25.1.42** [**4 Pz Army**]: For withdrawal of **4 Pz Army** from Lama-Stellung to the winter line by Gzhatsk see, A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow, 253-56; for condition of German troops see, Baumann, Die 35. ID, 141-45; and, Merker, Das Buch der 78. Sturm Division, 145-54] (Note: The Soviets show great ingenuity in infiltrating thru the German defenses; yet Soviet troops remain, for most part, *indifferently trained and unimaginatively led*. Attacking Soviet forces include Vlasov's **20 Army** and **1 Shock Army**. . . German units also now mere skeletons of themselves: "From **6 Dec 41** . . . [**35 ID**] had lost **80** officers and over **2000** men, ½ of these thru frostbite; and, on **10 Jan 42**, the weakest inf.-rgt. had a strength of **270** men, while the strongest numbered no more than **390**. Yet compared w/ other formations these strengths were not low [!]. Although the troops were exhausted, the efficiency and morale of the division remained tolerably good." (For details see, **III:649-50**)

- **10.1.-2.2.42**: Western Front, in co-operation w/ Kalinin Front, intends to encircle German forces in area of Gzhatsk. . . Soviet attacking strength broken when Stalin, grossly underestimating German strength, withdraws **1 Shock Army** and command staff of **16 Army** and inserted in sector of NW Front and on the left wing. Thus no longer possible to approach Gzhatsk. . . Western Front had expected to smash German forces at Yukhnov and link up w/ assault formations of Kalinin Front near Vyazma. Stubborn German resistance at Yukhnov – tying down several Soviet armies – helps to thwart Soviet plans. The grand encirclement operation ends in failure. Key Soviet forces eventually cut off by German counterstrokes. Crux: Soviet Supreme Command HQ had continued to cling stubbornly to its

⁵²⁵ Note: For **98. ID** at Medyn see, **III:652**. (Good story.)

encirclement and annihilation plans, revealing a *complete misjudgement* of the situation as well as the ratio of strength. (III:650-51)

- **11.-12.1.42:** GFM v. Kluge visits Hitler's HQ in East Prussia on **11 Jan 42**. [Note: Nothing „definitive“ comes from meeting apparently, see p 132.] Kluge arrived back in Smolensk on afternoon of the **12th**. A few hours later, Hitler reinforced his previous day's remarks via teletype to AGC: „Every day of continued stubborn resistance,“ the msg read, „is decisive. It provides the possibility of bringing reinforcements into action to buttress the front. Therefore the break-ins must be eliminated.“ . . . **4 Pz Army** would be allowed to take its front back about **10 miles** on the condition that in doing so it released enough units to restore contact w/ **4 Army**. **9 Army** would have to strip the rest of its front to get troops to counterattack and close the gap at Rzhev. Yet Hitler's effort to uphold the standfast doctrine was now „hopelessly at odds w/ reality.“ . . . (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 133)

- **11.-14.1.42:** Due to serious weather problems (heavy snow, snow drifts, etc.), German Luftaufklaerung in AGC sector essentially grounded. (III:652)

- **11.-14.1.42 [98 ID at Medyn]:** **98 ID** had fallen back to hold the town of Medyn on the main road to Yukhnov and the area had been fortified by what the div.-cdr. was ironically to call his three [3] coys (so reduced were the inf.-rgts. in strength) and two independent **SS btns**. No sooner had the division taken up its positions in Medyn than the Bolshevik was on it. At **2:00** that afternoon of **11 Jan 42**, the enemy was in contact, this becoming closer as the Red Army men actually began to shovel their way towards the defenders' wpn pits, coming thru the deep snow like moles. The temperature was still down to **-30** centigrade, but in the clear warm sunshine and windless air, the conditions seemed mild. The battle around the town raged for three whole days. . . On **14 Jan 42**, the division was ordered to fall back to the Shanya position, based on a small river SW of Medyn, which, the Fuehrer had decided, was to be its final defensive line. [Note: The division, of course, did not remain on this line; w/ bulk of enemy passing by to the north, by late **Jan 42**, the division began to withdraw westwards once more, to the area to the north of Yukhnov.] (*A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 256-57)

- **ca. 12.1.42:** **2 Army**, in whose sector the situation had unexpectedly stabilized – the feared offensives against Orel & Kursk had not taken place – was placed under Army Group South. . . . (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 727-28)

- **13.1.42:** A specially reinforced Soviet **20 Army**, together w/ **1 Shock Army** and **2 Gds Cav Corps** break through near Volokolamsk and move eastwards. (III:655)

- **13.1.42:** Heavy fighting around Rzhev as **29** and **39 Armies** press deeper into the positions of **9 Army**, while **20** and **1 Shock Armies**, w/ **2 Gds Cav Corps** in support, overcome German defenses around Volokolamsk. Furious fighting ensues as the Soviet units press into and thru the town, pushing back **4 Pz Army**. The **4 Pz Army** loses contact w/ **4 Army** to its south, the Soviet **33 Army** cuttings its lateral communications as it advances upon Vyazma. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 201)

- **13.1.42:** Die Ausschaltung der **T-34** ist die entscheidende Frage fuer die erfolgreiche Durchfuehrung der Abwehr. Rein *infanteristische Angriffe* des Gegners, wenn sie auch mit starken

Kraefte gefuehrt wurden, wurden fast immer unter hohen blutigen Verlusten fuer den Feind abgewiesen.⁵²⁶ (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 135)

- **14.1.42:** German **4 Army**, disorganized and disoriented, reels back towards the west under pressure from Soviet **33**, **49** and **50 Armies**. (**III:655**)
- **14.1.42 [4 AOK]:** Kuebler's **4 Army** was still disorganized and disoriented, reeling towards the west under the pressure of Efremov's **33 Army**, Zakharkin's **49 Army** and Boldin's **50 Army**. The encircled Heinrici's 43 AK did not finally break into the open until **14 Jan 42** and Heinrici continued to fall back westwards towards Yukhnov, an area which had been outflanked from the south three [3] days before by Soviet cavalry posting forwards towards Vyazma. . . (*A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 249-50)
- **15.1.42:** German **4 Army** finally begins to withdraw toward the Koenigsberg-Stellung. For details, see pertinent section below.
- **15.1.42: Fazit:** Der Druck an beiden Einbruchstellen – Suchinitschi u. Rshew – in die der Russe immer wieder neue Kraefte hineinfuehrte, zeigte um Mitte **Jan 42** klar die Absicht, die H.Gr.Mitte im Raum um Wjasma einzukesseln. (See, **III:657**)
- **15.1.42:** . . . In den Abwehrkaempfen der **2 Armee** in der Zeit vom **6.12.41** bis **15.1.42** wurden **3448** Gefangene gemacht, **13.425** tote Russen vor den Stellungen, **15** Geschuetze, **35** I.G. u. Pak, **39** Pz., **99** MG, **8** Granatwerfer [erbeutet?] . . . (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 148)
- **15.1.-3.2.42 [4 AOK / 4 Pz AOK]:** Der Feinddruck bei der **4 Armee** wurde, besonders auf ihrem Suedfluegel, immer staerker, die in ihre Front eingerissenen Loecher zunehmend tiefe, da Reserven zum Stopfen fehlten u. Kraefte unter Verkuerzung der Fronten gemaess der vorherigen Schilderungen stets erst freigemacht werden durften, wenn es zu spaet geworden war. Dadurch wurde die Armee weiter zurueckgedraengt, so dass alle Bemuehungen zur Herstellung einer durchlaufenden Front ergebnislos bleiben mussten. . . Am **15 Jan 42** abds. teilte die H.Gr. mit, dass das Ausweichen in die „Winterstellung“ grundsaeztlich genehmigt sei. Jedoch auch hier wieder die Einschraenkung: „Zeitpunkt wuerde jedoch noch befohlen!“ Am **18 Jan 42** war es soweit. Ueber die vorgesehenen Zwischenlinien durfte zurueckgegangen werden, so dass die Truppen am **25.1.42** in der „Winterstellung“ standen. Das Ausweichen der **4 Pz Armee** vollzog sich planmaessig. Nur im Sueden war der Gegner beim Nachbarn wieder nach Westen vorgedrungen. Ende **Jan 42** stand der Suedfluegel der **4 Pz Armee (20 PD)** an der Strasse Gshatsk – Juchnow, nur noch knapp **30** km noerdl. Juchnow. *So weit nach Sueden hatte er sich bereits verschoben*. Trotzdem klaffte dort wieder eine Luecke von etwa **10** km. Erst am **3.2.42** gelang es, die Verbindung mit dem Nordfluegel der **4 Armee** herzustellen u. gegenueber dem Feinddruck auch zu halten. Damit war an dieser Stelle die Kampffront nach Nosten wieder gebildet. Es war die Hauptkampffront. . . (See, *de Beaulieu, „Sturm auf Moskau,“* Teil II, 438-39; for **4 AOK** sector over this period see also, *GSWW*, Vol. IV, 733; **III:668**; also, *J. Huertter, Ein dt. General an der Ostfront. Briefe u. Tagebuecher des Gotthard Heinrici 1941/42*;⁵²⁷ **VII:560**, ff.)

⁵²⁶ **Note:** Good example of parrying repeated Soviet attacks – and destruction of hundreds of Soviet infantry – follows (sector of **6 ID**). (**III:654**) In fact, in these pages, several daily entries for **6 ID** which offer insight into nature of the winter battle.

⁵²⁷ **Note:** Heinrici assumed command of **4 AOK** on **20 Jan 42**.

- **17.1.-3.2.42** [Durchbruch bei 4 AOK]: Ein weiterer Krisenherd entstand, als es der sowj. **33 Armee** ab **17 Jan 42** glueckte, im zentralen Abschnitt der Westfront noerdlich von Medyn durchzubrechen, den urspruenglich als „Winterstellung“ vorgesehenen Abschnitt an der Schanja zu ueberschreiten u. in der Folge weiter in Richtung Wjasma vorzudringen. Damit war die uebergrosse Gefahr entstanden, dass die Masse der **4 Armee**, deren Fuehrung ab dem **20 Jan 42** bei General Gotthard Heinrici lag, von Norden her umfasst wuerde, waehrend von Sueden her ebenfalls starke sowj. Verbaende um den Durchbruch kaempften, um die Einschliessung zu vollenden.

Selbst der genehmigte Rueckzug in die festgelegte Winterstellung gemeinsam mit der ebenfalls schwerbedraengten **4 Pz Armee**, die nun von General Richard Ruoff gefuehrt wurde, bot keine Gewähr dafür, diese Stellung auf die Dauer zu behaupten. Die im Raum Juchnow zusammengedraengten Hauptkraefte der **4 Armee**, naemlich **3 Armee-** u. **1 Pz.-** Korps, insgesamt **12 Divisionen**, konnte nur mit Muehe ihre Einschliessung verhindern. Inzwischen stiess die sowj. **33 Armee** (Jefremow) mit **3 Divisionen** an der Spitze weiter auf Wjasma vor u. drohte, diesen zentralen Verkehrsknotenpunkt zu erobern.

Erst am **3 Feb 42** gelang es der durch Frontverkuerzung freigewordenen **20 PD**, die Verbindung mit den Verteidigern der „Frontbeule“ von Juchnow von Norden aus herzustellen u. eine „Bruecke“ zwischen der **4 Pz Armee** u. der **4 Armee** zu bilden. Im Zuge dieser Operation wurden die bereits in die Naehue von Wjasma vorgeprellten Teile der sowj. **33 Armee** abgeschnitten, schliesslich eingekesselt u. bis Mitte **Apr 42** vernichtet. . . Schliesslich begnadigte die **4 Armee** zur Gewinnung von Reserven ihre Front unter Aufgabe der „Frontbeule“ von Juchnow. Damit war die operative Krise im zentralen Abschnitt der H.Gr. ueberwunden. (*H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 219-20)

- **18.1.42**: Die fuehrenden Militaers, aber auch Hitler, fanden noch immer keine Erklaerung dafür, wie eine Armee, die innerhalb von **5 Monaten** unerhoert hohe Verluste an Menschen u. Material hatte hinnehmen muessen, innerhalb kurzer Zeit zu einer derartigen Gegen-offensive faehig war. Am **18 Jan 42** lagen der dt. Fuehrung folgende Gefangen- u. Beutezahlen fuer **1941** vor. (For details see, **III:623**)
- **18.1.42**: On central front, Red Army now embarks upon a new and decisive tactic. Beginning on this day – and continuing for six (6) straight days – a total of **1643** Soviet parachute troops are dropped behind German lines SE and SW of Vyazma. Linking up w/ partisan units, they begin to harass and disrupt German lines of communication and supply. . . (*Gilbert, Second World War*, 291; **III:663**)
- **18.-21.1.42**: Soviets make another attempt to disrupt the rear of Army Group Ctr by landing **450** paratroops between Yukhnnow and Vyazma, near Znamenka-Zhelanie. Two btns of **201 Airborne Bde**, totalling **1600** men, land **25** miles south of the town over the next four (4) days. The majority of the men are lost during the drop, fewer than **400** surviving to fight on. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 204)
- **18.-22.1.42** [**3 & 4 Pz AOK**]: Determined to retreat to the K-Line in as „worthy“ a manner as Hitler desired, Kluge held **3** and **4 Pz Armies** back for **3** days. He waited until after **1200** on **18 Jan 42** before giving their cdrs – Generals Reinhardt and Ruoff – permission to start the withdrawal. And he then stipulated that it was to be done in **4 stages of 5-8 miles** w/ a day's pause at each phase line. The main forces were to move at night, the rear guards in the daytime, w/ the final line to be reached on the morning of the **24th** by the main forces and „if

possible“ not before the morning of the **25th** by the rear guards. Again, as they had on their march to the Lama and Rusa Rivers in **Dec 41**, the armies would have to fight their way back w/o breaking contact w/ the enemy and in the open in below-zero weather.

The first night and day of the withdrawal showed that what was a tactical masterpiece on paper was working out as a near disaster. The Soviet infantry followed their every step, and it had tanks, **T 34s**, and some **52-ton KVs**. . . Among the German infantry, many of whom were replacements, or men combed out of the rear echelons, the sight or sound of tanks was often enough to raise a panic. But the tanks were not the troops' most pervasive enemy; the cold was. Frozen hard as iron, [the earth] *drew heat from a man's body faster than the air did*. . . . The cold destroyed the will to survive. Officers frequently had to drive their troops w/ pistols and clubs. The soldiers did not become cowards; they became apathetic, indifferent to what was going on around them and to their own fate. Growing losses in men and equipment and the expressed concern of the army cdrs that the troops would be too few and too exhausted to hold the final line when they reached it persuaded Kluge at last to let the retreat be completed on the night of **22 Jan 42**, two days earlier than originally ordered. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 164-66)

-- **18.1.-3.2.42: 4 AOK** in danger of being encircled. . . On **3 Feb 42**, the situation was improved and a continuous front restored by closing the gap between **4 Army** and **20 AK** of **4 Pz Army**. . . **Note:** The most prominent feature of this phase of the winter battle of **4 Army** was the necessity not only to *defend itself on pocket-like front sectors in all directions*, but, at the same time . . . (See, **III:668**)

-- **19.1.42** [Stalin's decision saves AGC?]: Ausgerechnet jetzt, in der zweiten Januarhaelfte, als es darauf angekommen waere, Schukov's Truppen zu verstaerken, befahl die STAWKA das Gegenteil: Stalin sah bereits den Sieg an der Westfront zum Greifen nahe u. beschloss am **19 Jan 42** die Abgabe der 1 Stossarmee zur Verfuegung der STAWKA, die diese Armee auf einem Nebenkriegsschauplatz, naemlich zur Abschnuerung der deutschen Kraefte auf den Waldai-Hoehen, verwenden wollte. Trotz scharfen Protests Schukows wurde ihm die wertvolle **1 Stossarmee** entzogen. Auch die **16 Armee**, die an Wlassows Durchbruch durch die Lama-Stellung beteiligt war, musste herausgezogen werden. Die STAWKA setzte sie nach Sueden zum grossen Frontvorsprung bei Suchinitschi – Kirow in Marsch, offenbar um den dort errungenen Erfolg zu erweitern.

Diese Entscheidung Stalins brachte aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach Schukow um den Sieg u. bewahrte die Deutschen vor einer vernichtenden Niederlage. Haette man die beiden Armeen auf dem rechten Fluegel Schukows belassen, haette dieser hoechstwahrscheinlich die **3 Pz Armee** durchbrochen, aber zumindest deren Festsetzen in der sogenannten „Koenigsberg-Stellung“, die zugleich die Winterstellung darstellte, verhindert. Ob es unter diesen Umstaenden der **9 Armee** gelungen waere, eine feste nach Osten gerichtete Abwehrfront zu errichten u. gleichzeitig die Angriffe gegen ihren Ruecken aufzufangen, ist stark zu bezweifeln. (*H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941*, 218)

-- **19.-21.1.42:** Kuebler reports himself sick and gives up command of **4 Army** to General Heinrici. (**III:670**)

-- **19.-22.1.42** [Stalin decides!]: Between **19-22 Jan 42**, Stalin made decisions of fundamental and far-reaching importance, all intended to reinforce his intention of encompassing the destruction of the two German Army Groups – North and Centre. . . A Stavka directive, issued at **21.15** hours on **19 Jan 42**, embodying Stalin's orders about handing over two Shock

Armies to Koniev,⁵²⁸ and in which Stalin personally assigned the objectives to the various armies, clearly envisaged the capture not only of Rzhev but also of Smolensk. (See text for details of directive, *J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 306-07)

- **19.-22.1.42 [4 AOK]:** On the morning of the **19th**, General Kuebler went to Fuehrer HQ to report himself sick and to give up command of **4 Army**. Kuebler departed quietly on the **21st**, and Heinrici took command of the army, also quietly. Nevertheless, the day brought a change of mood to the army. Heinrici, as cdr of **XXXXIII AK**, had been a prophet of catastrophe but had never yet failed to bring his corps out of the tightest spot. The staffs and troops obviously hoped he would do the same for the whole army. . . On the **21st**, the temperature was **-40 F.** all day, and the fighting stopped. The next day, in weather **-10 F.**, **LVII PzK** took the Russians by surprise and reduced the gap to 4 Pz Army to 5 miles. After **XXXX [PzK?]** also cleared the Rollbahn and kept it open for **24 hours**, Heinrici told Kluge the situation was „beginning to turn.“ (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 163)
- **20.1.42: Mozhaisk** falls to Soviet **5 Army** as Western Front pounds the centre of German **4 Army**. (III:671)
- **20.1.42 [Heinrici to 4 AOK]:** Auch Komm. Gen. mussten, mitunter nur von ihren Fahrern begleitet, zur Durchfuehrung ihrer dienstlichen Aufgaben durch Gebiete fahren, die bereits von russ. Truppen kontrolliert wurden. So ging es auch dem Kom. Gen. des **43 AK**, General Heinrici, der am **20 Jan 42** den Befehl erhielt, den Oberbefehl ueber die **4 Armee** zu uebernehmen. Doch dazu musste er den Weg, allein mit seinem Fahrer im VW-Kuebelwagen, mitten durch die vormarschierenden russ. Truppen nehmen, um das HQu. der **4 Armee** zu erreichen. (*Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam*, 145-46)
- **21.1.42: A Key Soviet operational error:** On **21 Jan 42**, the Soviet High Command prematurely withdraws **1 Shock** and **16 Armies** from the area to the west of Moscow in order to reinforce the north and south flanks, and this caused Vlasov's **20 Army** offensive, which was attempting to roll up the German pocket from east to west, to peter out. This relieved the eastwards pressure on **4 Panzer** and **9 Army**, both of which were inside the pocket. (III:672)
- **22.1.42:** The **59 AK**⁵²⁹ digs in before Velikiye Luki to secure the junction of Army Groups North and Centre. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 206-7)
- **22.-27.1.42 [260 ID]:** Abwehrkaempfe beiderseits Ostroschnoje [i.e., south of Medyn and east of Juchnow]. **Pz Jaeg Abt 559** mit **100 Mann** dem **IR 470** unterstellt. Russe greift mehrmals taeglich unsere Schneestellungen an. . . Der in Grebnewo am **26.1.42** eingedrungene Feind (**30 Mann**) wird durch letzte Reserve der Division zwei [**2**] Kilometer westl. in Grigrewka von einer Gruppe bestehend aus einem Wachtmeister, neun [**9**] Mann mit einem MG sowie einigen Meldern des **IR 470** vernichtet. Die Stellung wird befehls-gemaess am **27.1.42** nachts geraeumt. Gefechtsstaerke des **IR 470** = **5 Offz.** u. **100 Uffz.** u. Mannschaften. (*Kameradenhilfswerk, 260. ID e.V.*, 90)⁵³⁰

⁵²⁸ **Note:** Kurochkin, Commander of North-Western Front, was to lose **3** and **4 Shock Armies**, which were to be subordinated to Koniev's Kalinin Front. (306)

⁵²⁹ **Note:** I believe simply the corps HQ was brought in as command organ for whatever units the Germans had scraped together in this sector. Confirm!

⁵³⁰ **Note:** Example of tiny reserves often scraped together to thwart enemy breakthroughs.

- **25.1.42:** Soviet forces close upon Velikiye Luki, but **59 AK** has established blocking positions, albeit w/ less than adequate forces. Heavy fighting along approaches to city as Germans struggle to prevent disintegration of Army Group Ctr's northern wing. **3 Pz Army** continues to withdraw from Rzhev sector as **9 Army** takes over responsibility for the tip of the salient. **3 Pz Army** redeploys⁵³¹ onto the left flank to prop up the front between **16** and **9 Armies**. (Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin, 208)
- **26.1.42:** The winter of **1941/42** was most severe in European Russia. In the area NW of Moscow, the mean temperature during **Jan 42** was **-32 F.**, and on **26 Jan 42** the same area saw the lowest recorded temperature of the entire Russian campaign: **-63 F.** (*Rauss*, Effects of Climate, quoted in: *Tsouras*, Fighting in Hell, 172)
- **26.1.42:** The **4 Shock Army** throws screening forces around Velizh, isolating the garrison and increasing threat to northern wing of Army Group Ctr. **11 Cav Corps** reaches the Moscow highway NW of Vyazma but is unable to take the town and is forced onto the defensive. (Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin, 208-9)
- **26.-27.1.42:** The newly revived Soviet cavalry arm was to play a prominent role that winter. Zhukov, it will be recalled, was a cavalryman. In an operation reminiscent of the Russian Civil War, massed cavalry was sent around the flanks. Two cavalry corps, the **11 Cav Corps** coming from the north, and Belov's **1 Gds Cav Corps** coming from the SE, were ordered to meet behind Viaz'ma, cutting German communications. On **26-27 Jan 42**, horsemens from **11 Cav Corps** briefly cut the railway between Smolensk and Viaz'ma, while the **1 Gds** harassed the Warsaw-Moscow highway south of Viaz'ma. . . (*E. Mawdsley*, Thunder in the East, 121-23)
- **26.-30.1.42:** [During this time], **4 Army's** Rollbahn was closed completely, and the army, which had for a long time not been getting enough supplies, began rapidly to sink into starvation. On the other hand, the Russians were not altogether better off; their radio traffic indicated that some of the units behind **4 Army** were actually starving. (*Ziemke & Bauer*, Moscow to Stalingrad, 171)
- **27.1.42:** The Soviets concentrate for an all-out assault upon Vyazma, **11 Cav [Corps]** moving from the north, Group Belov from the SW and **33 Army** from the east. As a prelude to the attack, the **4 Airborne Corps** begins to drop west of Vyazma. (Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin, 209)
- **27.1.42** [Soviet pincers closing]: By this day, Popov's **61 Army** of the Bryansk Front, together w/ Golikov's **10 Army** and Rokossovsky's **16 Army** on the left flank of West Front, were hardly more than **100** miles east of Smolensk. The north and south pincers were closing like the upper and lower teeth of a great gaping jaw, w/ the German **9 Army** and **3** and **4 Pz Armies**, and part of **4 Army** inside the great horse-shoe shaped pocket. Only **2 Pz** and **2 Armies** had escaped the encirclement. (*A. Seaton*, The Battle for Moscow, 237)
- **ab 27.1.42** [Soviet airborne ops]: Zhukov proposed a major airborne operation using the full strength of Maj-Gen A.F. Levashov's **4 Parachute Corps** to assist w/ the Vyazma encirclement operation; but first the corps had to be shifted from its base in Moscow to

⁵³¹ **Note:** Actually, I believe it was the **3 Pz Army HQ** which actually redeployed at this time. Confirm!

airfields at Kaluga – an unfortunate choice, because these were the fields well-known and accurately pinpointed by the Germans who had so recently used them, and Soviet air cover was weak. . . Exactly on time on the evening of **27 Jan 42**, though not quite on target, **4 Corps** made its first drops west of Vyazma from a considerable altitude in one great stick which scattered men over a **15-mile** radius; **476** of the **638** men dropped managed to collect into their units. . .

On the night of **28 Jan 42**, German bombers went for the old familiar Kaluga airfields from which **4 Corps** was operating, knocking out **7** acft and blowing up a fuel dump; more acft were damaged. Under these conditions, only **8 Bde** got on to the ground in any strength, dropped over a period of six **[6]** days and over a wide area, **2232** men of whom only **1320** managed to form up into units. [Soon] German air activity over the dropping zones had ruled out further drops. (*J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 315-16)

- **29.1.42:** Soviet forces encircle Velizh. Fierce artillery fire and air strikes hit Group Sinzinger, which is cut off inside the town. Sinzinger has **3000** men to **30,000** Soviets. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 210)
- **29.1.42 [Kaluga]:** Sehr dramatisch gestaltete sich die Lage im Raum Kaluga, das am **29 Dez 41** geraeumt werden musste, um Reserven fuer das Schliessen der suedwestlich gelegenen, breiten Frontluecke zu gewinnen. Diese Luecke war dadurch entstanden, dass Guderians Nordfluegel, das **43 AK**, es nicht geschafft hatte, die sowj. **50 Armee** am Vordringen ueber die Oka zu hindern, u. Guderian seine wenigen Reserven zur Stabilisierung seines Suedfluegels benoetigte. . . (See, (*H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 216-17))
- **30.1.42:** . . . Suchinitsche wurde von Gr. Gilsa nachdem die dort liegenden **954** Verwundeten abtransportiert waren, nachhaltig zerstoert u. geraeumt. (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 168)
- **30.1.42:** By end of **Jan 42**, Soviet forces are attacking Vyazma from three (3) different directions. On **26 Jan 42** they cut **4 Army** supply lines, which the Germans were not able to reopen until end of the month. But the Germans held the roads and the supply centers, and slowly they regained their equilibrium. The great sweeping movement the Red Army was attempting was beyond its capabilities. (*W. Murray, War to be Won*, 139)
- **30.1.42:** Threat to northern flank of Army Group Center grows as Soviet units, having bypassed Velizh, advance toward Demidov.⁵³² **59 AK** throws units out along an increasing line in order to shore up the flank of the army group and prevent enemy forces from flooding into the rear. Heavy fighting continues around Velizh, as **4 Shock Army** attempts to storm the town. Sinzinger holds out against the odds, repulsing each new attack. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 210)
- **ca. 30.1.42:** By now, the situation of German forces at the boundary of Army Groups North and Centre has deteriorated considerably. A gap of almost **120** miles yawns between Bely – Kholm. . . Despite improvement near Sukhinichi, the overall position of AGC became almost untenable. (See, *G. Blau, German Campaign in Russia*, 105; **III:681-82**)

⁵³² **Note:** Demidov is ca. **60** km N/NW of Smolensk.

- **31.1.42:** By end of **Jan 42**, the German position is serious. Far from holding the original defensive line ordered by Hitler, the formations of v. Kluge's AGC have been driven back between **100** and **150** miles to the SW. Model's **9 Army** and Ruoff's **4 Pz Army** were deep in the almost closed pocket. **4 Army**, under Heinrici [since **20 Jan 42**], is holding open the entrance to the pocket, trying to delay the left enemy pincer which was slowly closing the gap from the south. The **2 Pz Army**, commanded by Schmidt, and **2 Army** have escaped the envelopment and are to the south in the area of Orel. The Soviet High Command then attempts to close the entrance of the cauldron by the use of airborne troops and partisans. **8** and **201 Airborne Bde** and other units of **4 Airborne Corps**, in all about **4000** men, are landed to the SE and SW of Vyazma [date?] having the task of cutting the Smolensk – Vyazma railroad and closing the great gap at the mouth of the pocket. . . (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 236-37)
- **31.1.42:** Soviet NW Front: After capture of town of Peno (see above), **3 Shock Army** moved westward on Kholm and Velikiye Luki, while Eremenko advanced to SW towards Vitebsk. The country was heavily wooded w/ few tracks and, as the armies were moving on divergent axes, great gaps appeared between them and Vostrukhov's **22 Army** on their left. Control and supply became difficult. In spite of this, Andreapol was reached on **15 Jan 42**, and by the end of the month Red Army troops were near Velikiye Luki – Vitebsk – Demidov, having accomplished a largely unopposed advance of nearly **200** miles over very difficult terrain.⁵³³ Kholm, w/in the boundaries of AGN, could not be taken in view of its desperate defence by German **281 Sec. Div.** (*A. Seaton, Russo-German War*, 235-36; see also, *GSWW*, Vol. IV, etc., **III:644-48, 687-89** for more overviews)
- **Late Jan 42:** The situation in the diamond-shaped area bounded by Smolensk–Vyazma–Yukhnov–Roslavl was becoming increasingly confused, w/ intermingled German and Soviet units fighting it out amongst the partisans, the battle there changing rapidly in kaleidoscopic fashion. (*A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 258)
- **Late Jan 42:** The recapture of Viaz'ma, an important rail and highway center, was the major Soviet objective of the counteroffensive. In late **Jan 42**, an operation utilizing parachute units, cavalry, and **3** divisions of **33 Army** led by the army commander, M.G. Efremov, attempted to take the city by coup de main. As units of **33 Army** approached the city, the Germans closed what had been a gap in their defenses behind the attacking Soviet units and reestablished a strong defensive position thru which the Soviets could neither return to the main forces nor be reinforced or resupplied (except by air). The encircled Soviet troops joined forces w/ partisan detachments in the area, managing to disrupt German rear area operations for two months. Some of the cavalry and parachute troops were able to fight their way out of the encirclement by taking an indirect route back to their own lines. Efremov, against Zhukov's strong protest, attempted to break out over a more direct route. He was cut off and eventually committed suicide to avoid capture. . . Lt.-Gen. Efremov shot himself on either **17** or **18 Apr 42**.⁵³⁴ . . . (*W. J. Spahr, Zhukov*, 83-89)

⁵³³ **Note:** Yet here, I believe, Germans cobbled together enough forces (under control of **3 Pz Army** headquarters) to eventually contain the Soviet advance. In part, because Eremenko's **4. Shock Army** was by then having great supply difficulties and moving very slowly. (*Seaton*, 238)

⁵³⁴ **Note:** For fascinating account of the plight of Efremov's **33 Army** – including article written in early 1990s by Efremov's son, now retired Col. M. M. Efremov, criticizing Zhukov's "rash" decision to throw the army into the gap in the German position – see, pp 86-87. Survivors and their relatives (who call themselves Efremovites – *Efremovtsy*) over the years have combed the areas south of Viaz'ma for artifacts and the bodies of their colleagues, friends and loved ones in efforts to reconstruct the epic of the **33 Army**.

- **Late Jan 42** [Status]: Off the **9 Army** left flank, where no front existed at all over a **100-mile stretch** on either side of the Army Group Center-North boundary, **4 Shock Army** was pushing south from Toropets toward Velizh, **60 miles** north of Smolensk. Closer in on **9 Army** flank, Soviet units were bearing toward Belyy, behind **XXIII AK**. Between **4 Pz Army** and **4 Army**, Soviet units were pouring thru the gap and disappearing into the wide expanse of forest south and west of Vyazma. Four [4] of **4 Army's** five [5] corps were squeezed into a **20-by-20-mile pocket** around Yukhnov.

The Rollbahn was closed more than it was open, and when it was open, which was usually no more than an hour or two at a time, the Russians could bring it under MG and mortar fire. The telephone lines were out between the army HQ in Spas-Demensk and the pocket, and to keep the command functioning, Heinrici and his ops officer commuted by airplane to Yukhnov. West and south of Spas-Demensk, the army's front was paper thin and shot through w/ holes, the largest of which was the **20-mile-wide** Kirov gap on the boundary w/ **2 Pz Army**. . . Having reached Sukhinichi, **2 Pz Army** was embroiled in an exposed salient. . . The army wanted to evacuate the garrison and fall back; Hitler demanded the town be held. Finally, however, Hitler consented to let the garrison be evacuated, but ordered the army to keep within artillery range. . . On the map, Vyazma was **40 miles** behind the front, yet, much closer by, Soviet forces were boxing it in from **3 directions**. . . The Russians „seemed to be everywhere,“ and all converging on Vyazma. The encirclement of Army Group Ctr was within „an ace of being completed,“ and the Stavka had almost readied its two final moves. (See, *Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 169-70)

- **Late Jan 42** [H.Gr.-Naht]: In den weiten offenen Raum von fast **100 km** Breite an der Heeresgruppennaht stiessen die russ. **3 Stoss-Armee** in westl. Richtung auf Weliki Luki u. die **4 Stoss-Armee** nach Sueden auf Welisch u. Demidow vor; beide gehoerten urspruenglich der russ. Nordwestfront an u. waren am **21 Jan 42** der Kalininfront unterstellt worden. Links gestaffelt hinter der **3 Stoss-Armee** folgte die russ. **27 Armee**. Die Absicht dieser Kraefte war zweifellos, den noerdl. Umfassungsarm weiter nach Sueden zu druecken, die dt. Verbindungen abzuschnueren u. mit dem Stoss auf Weliki Luki sich selber in der Westflanke zu sichern. – Die dt. Fuehrung hatte schon Ende **Jan 42** die Masse der **246 ID** auf Bieloj angesetzt, das am **27 Jan 42** eingeschlossen wurde; aber am **29 Jan 42** gelang es bereits, Bieloj zu entsetzen u. dann fest in die Hand zu nehmen. Die herangebrachte **83 ID** wurde auf Welisch u. Weliki Luki angesetzt, die **330 ID** ueber Rudnia auf Demidow, dahinter die **205 ID**. Diese Verbaende u. sonstige Splitter im weiten Raum uebernahm das am **16 Jan 42** eingesetzte **59 AK**, das damit die wichtigen Bahn u. Strassen im Raum Witebsk – Weliki Luki locker sichern konnte. Am **1 Feb 42** wurden alle diese tropfenweise eingetroffenen u. eintreffenden Verbaende dem **Pz-AOK 3** unterstellt, mit dem Auftrag, den feindlichen Vorstoss nach Sueden aufzuhalten; Weliki Luki musste dabei sich selbst ueberlassen werden. (Hofmann, „Schlacht von Moskau,“ 178-79)

- **Jan-Feb 42** [Soviet **33 Army** fails to reach Vyazma]: Efremov's **33 Army**, moving from Medyn and keeping Yukhnov on its right, struck directly westwards towards Vyazma. In doing so, it severed the communications between Heinrici's 4 Army, which was battling to hold the neck of the cauldron open, and his neighbor to the north, Ruoff's 4 Pz Army. At the end of **Jan 42**, Heinrici and Ruoff both counter-attacked Efremov's flanks in the area to the north of Yukhnov, one to the north and one to the south, to re-establish contact between them

Among relatives, a prime motivation is to remove the stigma of “missing in action” from their loved one’s name. (86-87)

and, at same time, cut of Efremov's spearheads. [Note: Here, the narrative addresses the combat involving **98 ID**, which sustained **210** casualties in barely two days' fighting.] . . . For first time since the long retreat had begun, the Luftwaffe was active once more, operating from local airfields, bringing in supplies and taking out wounded, and keeping up a round-the-clock bombing of 33 Army. . . (For more details see, *A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 258-60, 263-64; **III:682-83**)

- **Feb 42:** The situation at the beginning of **Feb 42** was such that the assault formations of the Kalinin Front, in co-operation w/ **22 Army** operating at Belyy, had temporarily encircled **7** German divisions at Olenino and driven a deep wedge in the rear of **9 Army** and **4 Pz Army**, but owing to ceaseless and eventually successful German counter-attacks at the penetration point near Rzhev, found its own rearward lines under threat. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 923-24)
- **1.2.42:** Alle im Raum Wel. Luki – Welisch versammelten eigenen Kraefte werden unter dem Befehl der **3 Pz Armee** zusamamengefasst. (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 170)
- **1.-4.2.42:** Soviet **33 Army** fails to reach Vyazma. . . On **1 Feb 42**, Stalin orders Efremov (**33 Army**) to storm and capture the important road and railway junction of Vyazma, on which German **9 Army**, **4 Pz Army** and **4 Army** depended for their supplies. . . Luftwaffe once more active w/ round-the-clock bombing. . . Bloody combat involving **98 ID**. . . Germans strike at Efremov's vulnerable supply lines w/ intent of cutting its lines of communication to the east. . . On **4 Feb 42**, Efremov was no more than a few miles from the outskirts of Vyazma, but his situation already critical. (**III:682-83**)
- **3.2.42:** Efremov's **33. Army** and **1. Gds Cav Corps** which, together w/ airborne troops and partisan units, were trying to seal the pocket between Yukhnov and Vyaz'ma, were suddenly counter-attacked violently by Ruoff's **4 Pz Army**, which re-established contact w/ **4 Army** on the outside of the pocket on **3 Feb 42**, and cut off the Soviet troops from their rear. (*A. Seaton, Russo-German War*, 238)
- **14.2.42:** Ammunition stocks had been reduced to the point where the *daily expenditure of rounds per artillery piece was one or two*. [!] As early as **14 Feb 42**, the Western Front reported to the Supreme High Commander [i.e., Stalin] in writing, that the shortage of ammunition was causing the attacking Red Army troops to suffer "very heavy losses" while not achieving corresponding successes. . . (*W. J. Spahr, Zhukov*, 83-89)

f) *Role of air power in winter battles*

- **Jan 42:** . . . At the end of **Jan 42**, Heinrich and Ruoff both counter-attacked Efremov's flanks in the area to the north of Yukhnov, one to the north and one to the south, to re-establish contact between them and, at same time, cut of Efremov's [i.e., **33 Army's**] spearheads. For first time since the long retreat had begun, the Luftwaffe was active once more, operating from local airfields, bringing in supplies and taking out wounded, and keeping up a round-the-clock bombing of 33 Army. . . (For more details see, *A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow*, 258-60, 263-64; **III:682-83**)
- **Jan-Mar 42:** VVS flew by its own account total of **49,000** sorties against H.Gr.Mitte; German accounts, however, suggest a *much lower level* of combat activity by VVS in early months of 1942.

(**CruX**: Despite its heroism and achievements, “the role of the VVS at Moscow had been *peripheral* in deciding the outcome;” “failure of the VVS to systematically apply air power on the retreating *Wehrmacht* at Moscow stood out as a *major tactical error* in the minds of German observers.”) (See, Hardesty, v., *Red Phoenix: The Rise of Soviet Air Power, 1941-1945*; also, Kozhevnikov, M.N., *The Command and Staff of the Soviet Army Air Force in the Great Patriotic War 1941-45*, etc.)

- For role of *Luftwaffe* see, *inter alia*, Notebook #I, “*Luftwaffe, Chronology of Events*.” (Also, **IX**: *Rudel, Stuka Pilot*)
- **Jan-Apr 42**: The attrition in **1941** forced the *Luftwaffe* to operate w/ considerably less effectiveness in **1942** because of *less well-trained crews* than it had in **1941**. Overall, the *Luftwaffe*’s attrition rates for the year showed an *alarming rise over those in 1941*. From **Jan-Apr 1942**, *Luftwaffe* losses (all types) amounted to nearly **30 percent** (see, Table XXVI, etc., in: *W. Murray, Strategy for Defeat*, 115) (**I:483**)
- **1.3.42**: **4 Armee**: Versuche des Gegners nordostw. Demenskoje, die Rollbahn zu erreichen, wurden mit Unterstuetzung von Stukas unter hohen Feindverlusten abgewiesen. . . (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 215)⁵³⁵

g) *H.Gr.Mitte retires to the “Koenigsberg Linie”*

- **Note**: **6 ID**, for example, had already moved back into the “K-Linie” by beginning of **Jan 42**. (See below)
- **Note**: Retreat to the „K-Linie.“ Details. (**III:659, 664**)
- **13.-15.1.42**: GFM v. Kluge relays his mounting troubles to **OKH** in a series of *desperate telephone calls*. He tries to extract small concessions from Hitler, who finally makes agonizing decision to pull back to “K-Linie.”⁵³⁶ . . . On **15 Jan 42**, Hitler had to order AGC to withdraw **4 Army** and the two northern panzer armies to a line east of Yukhnov – Gzhatsk – Zubtsov – north of Rzhev. . . The Russian advance was to be definitely stopped along this line. (**III:654, 656-57**)
- **13.-15.1.42**: In the morning, **1 Gds Cav Corps**, pressing north toward Vyazma, crossed the Rollbahn on **4 Army**’s right flank. By nightfall, the army was having to evacuate Medyn, its anchor on the left and **4 Pz Army**’s intended target for its attempt to close the gap [between Borovsk and Maloyaroslavets]. During the afternoon, Strauss and the **9 Army** staff could see as well as hear the battle then being fought in the Sychevka railroad yards. . . Strauss sent part of his staff south to Vyazma before **1200**, but stayed in Sychevka w/ his chief of staff until late in the afternoon to keep contact w/ **V PzK** [sic; it is **V AK**, I believe] and **XXIII AK**, both of which reported themselves near collapse.

The **OKH** wrote up two „solutions“ to the Vyazma-Rzhev problem for Hitler. The one, to have AGC stand fast as it had been doing. . . The other, to order the retreat to the

⁵³⁵ **Note**: In these “*Tagesberichte*” references to German *Luftwaffe* ops become more and more common after beginning of **1942**.

⁵³⁶ **Note**: Other German units – eg., **6 ID** – had pulled back to “K-Linie” at beginning of **Jan 42**. Perhaps just units of **9 AOK** withdrew at that time.

KOENIGSBERG Line, which would give **4 Army** and **4 Pz Army** a chance to eliminate the gap between them and yield three [3] divisions for a counterattack at Rzhev. . . On the **13th**, Kluge relayed his mounting troubles to **OKH** in a succession of desperate telephone calls. For the next two days, he did the same, making himself the instrument for imposing the Fuehrer's will on the armies, while trying to extract small concessions from Hitler. On the afternoon of the **14th**, he talked at length to Hitler about the necessity for holding Rzhev as the army group's northern bastion to prevent a lateral collapse of the front.

Hitler said he wanted to wait another day. Later, after the day's situation conference, Halder observed that Hitler knew a retreat was necessary but simply could not bring himself to make the decision. What came finally, transmitted by Halder **24** hours later, was a grudging „agreement in principle“ to a general retreat to the KOENIGSBERG Line. As the **3 Pz Army** war diary put it: „A sign of relief swept the whole front.“ . . . It was „undoubtedly for him [Hitler] the most difficult order he had yet given.“ (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 134)

- **15.1.42:** Hitler finally relents to Kluge's relentless pleas.
Describe withdrawal / *personal accounts* / *H. Stieff letters*, etc.)
- **15.1.42:** Hitler hatte sich nach wiederholten Bemuehungen Halders u. von Kluges endlich am **15 Jan 42** durchgerungen, der H.Gr.Mitte den Rueckzug auf die Winterstellung zu genehmigen. . . Wenn man durch diese Massnahme auch eine Frontverkuerzung von mehr als **150 km** u. das Freiwerden von Reserven erreichte, so ging die Abwehrschlacht in voller Haerte weiter. (*H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941*, 219)
- **15.1.42:** Permission for AGC to commence retrograde movements could no longer be avoided. The reserves from Germany that Hitler had assumed would be available did not reach the front in time or in sufficient strength, and the approved measures to shorten the front did not yield the envisaged units capable of offensive ops. On **15 Jan 42**, after *permission had already been given in isolated cases*, Hitler had to order AGC to withdraw **4 Army** and the two northern panzer armies to a line east of Yukhnov, Gzhatsk, and Zubtsov and north of Rzhev. The road between Yukhnov and Rzhev was to be secured as a lateral connection. This line was to be held against all attacks. This order was due not only to the urging of AGC and the armies on the left wing; it also took into account Halder's ideas aiming at an "active solution," i.e. offensive actions to improve the situation at Rzhev. . . As a condition for the withdrawal to this winter line, Hitler accordingly demanded that the gap west of Rzhev should be closed, which would cut off the northern arm of the Soviet encirclement operation against Vyazma. The two other offensive tasks in the directive of **12 Jan 42**, securing the gap north of Medyn and reopening the supply-route between Roslavl and Yukhnov, were not abandoned, nor was the order for **2 Pz Army** to relieve Sukhinitchi. The withdrawal was to be carried out in easy stages; material losses were to be kept to a minimum and all transport facilities and possible lodging for the enemy destroyed. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 728-29; also, **III:656-57**)
- **ab 15.1.42:** The retreat to the KOENIGSBERG Line, according to Hitler's order of **15 Jan 42**, was to be made „in small steps“ and accomplished „in a form worthy of the German Army.“ The gap at **9 Army** west of Rzhev was to be closed as was the one between **4 Army** and **4 Pz Army** west of Maloyaroslavets, and Yukhnov was to be held „under all circumstances.“ The troops to carry out these missions were to be acquired by thinning out the front as it came back. . . **4 Army** was an „island“, the remains of **4** corps jammed into a **25-by-20-mile** space east of Yukhnov, w/ a fifth corps struggling to hold open **40** miles of the Rollbahn west of

Yukhnov. The gap between **4 Army** and its neighbor on the north, **4 Pz Army**, was **15** miles wide at the mouth and ballooned westward behind both armies to an unknown extent. . . After having been cut on the **13th**, the Rollbahn was open again on the **15th**, but the situation maps showed the front almost on the road, and in places on the ground the Russians were only an easy rifle shot of **400** yards away. Kluge's permission for **4 Army** to go back brought no sense of relief. The army chief of staff told **OKH** that the army was fighting for its „naked existence“ and all decisions were too late. (See, *Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 161-63)

- **15.-24.1.42:** Der Druck an beiden Einbruchstellen – Suchinitschi u. Rschew – in die der Russe immer wieder neue Kraefte hineinfuehrte, zeigte um Mitte **Jan 42** klar die Absicht, die H.Gr.Mitte im Raum um Wjasma einzukesseln. Ohne weitere Reserven war die Lage unhaltbar geworden; sie aus dem Reich oder aus dem Westen zu holen, wuerde viel Zeit kosten, bei der schlechten Transportlage kaemen sie sicher zu spaet. Also blieb als *ultima ratio* nur die Moeglichkeit, durch Verkuerzung der Front sich selber Kraefte frei zu machen. Nach endlosen Gespraechen Kluges mit Hitler gab dieser endlich am **15 Jan 42** sein Einverstaendnis dazu, das Zentrum der Front schrittweise auf die „Winterstellung“ zurueckzufuehren. Vorbedingung Hitlers war dabei, dass noch vor dem Ausweichen die Luecke zwischen **4 Armee** u. **4 Pz Armee** geschlossen werden muesse. Die weitere Absicht war dann, vordringlich den Durchbruch bei Rschew zu schliessen, im Sueden die Rollbahn so lange frei zu halten, bis durch offensiven Auftrag der feindl. Einbruch beseitigt werden koenne. Durch Unterstellung der **2 Armee** unter die H.Gr.Sued sollten einmal der H.Gr.Mitte die dortigen Sorgen abgenommen, zum anderen die nun verantwortliche H.Gr.Sued gezwungen werden, von sich aus etwas zu tun, um den Druck aus dem Raume Woronesch zu parieren. Am **15 Jan 42** gab die H.Gr.Mitte den Befehl, zuerst die vorspringenden Nasen bei Kaluga (**4 Armee**), bei Rusa (**4 Pz Armee**) u. bei Wolokolamsk (**3 Pz Armee**) aufzugeben, um zwischen **18-24 Jan 42** ueber mehrere Zwischenlinien mit der ganzen Front in die „Winterstellung“ zurueckzugehen. (*Hofmann, „Schlacht von Moskau,“* 177-78)

h) *German 6 ID as exemplary of winter combat*⁵³⁷

Note: For background on **6 ID** – its origins, formation, combat in Russia up to **Jan 42** – see my **6 ID** file folders (incl. notes gleaned from Grossmann's divisional history); also, *W. Haupt, Die deutschen Inf.-Div., etc.*)

Note: **6 ID** by beginning of **Jan 42** had pulled back to the „Koenigsbergstellung“ in the embattled Rzhev sector.

- **1.1.42:** **6 ID** withdrew in **Dec 41** from Tma River west of Kalinin to so-called „K-Linie“ (NE of Rzhev) Finds little there in way of defensive preparations. (**Note:** For details and maps see, *Grossmann, Geschichte der 6 ID*, etc.)
(See, Notebook #3 for **Jan 42** for daily accounts of division's combat.)

- **2.-3.1.42:** Die Winter Koenigsberg-Stellung wurde am **2 Jan 42** zwischen Krupzowo u. Nemzowo besetzt, sie war **17 km** lang u. war eine *bittere Enttaeuschung*. (**Note:** Grossmann describes how inadequate the prepared positions were. With inf. btns. all but wittled down to

⁵³⁷ **Note:** See my Notebook #4, „Vormasch u. Rueckzug,“ for personal accounts involving **6 ID**; see also my „Ostfrontkaempfer“ materials! Finally, there are my detailed notes gleaned from Grossmann's history of **6 ID** (located among my **6 ID** file folders).

nothing (**III/IR 18: 1 Offz., 4 Uffz., 20 Mannsch.**), units formed out of the artillery, signals bns., “Trossen,” rear services, etc., and placed in the line. Engineers also put in the front line. Division finally receives meaningful reinforcement w/ arrival on **3 Jan 42** of the **Fallschirm-MG-Btn.** and the **10./Lw. Sturmrgt.** (Grossmann, Geschichte, 103; also my notes in **6 ID** file folder)

- **2.-8.1.42:** Auf der Strasse in Richtung Rzhew rollten end- u. pausenlos die deutschen Wehrmachtsfahrzeuge, die vordringlich in Sicherheit gebracht werden mussten. Am **2 Jan 42** frueh morgens hoerte das Rollen auf, alle Kolonnen waren abgeflossen. Um **4 Uhr** befahl die Division [**6 ID**] das Absetzen in die “Koenigsberg-Stellung.” Diese Stellung wurde am gleichen Tag zwischen Krupzowo u. Nemzowo besetzt. Sie war **17 km** lang [und] war fuer die Soldaten eine bittere Enttaeuschung. Nur in den wenigen, in der **HKL** liegenden Ortschaften befanden sich einige Verteidigungsanlagen. Aber auf freiem u. vor allem in den Waldabschnitten, von den Russen besonders bevorzugte Angriffspunkte, war nichts vorhanden. . .

Bereits am **3 Jan 42** begannen die russ. Angriffe u. dauerten bis in den **Mar 42** hinein. Bereits am **4 Jan 42** erzielten die Sowjets einen tiefen Einbruch in die Armeefront. Eine Luecke von **15 km** entstand, u. die russ. Spitzen naeherten sich westl. u. suedwestl. Rshew auf **8 km**. Die Stadt Rzhew selbst konnte gehalten werden. Am **8 Jan 42** setzte eine neue Kaeltewelle ein u. liess die Zahl der Erfrierungen erschreckend ansteigen. In diesen Tagen setzte der Russe erstmals die gefuehrtete Stalinorgel ein. Brennpunkte im Kampf der [**6 ID**] blieben an allen Punkten der Frontlinie. (*W. Buddenbohm, Das Leben des Soldaten*, 77-78)⁵³⁸

- **ab 3.1.42:** Russian attacks on the Koenigsberg-Stellung begin on **3 Jan 42** and will continue into **Mar 42**. On **4 Jan 42**, Russians begin “Grossangriff” against **256 ID (23 AK)**, the left neighbor of **6 AK**. They tear a 15 km gap in front of division and close in on Rshew from W and SW (**8 km** from the town). Penetration into Rshew prevented by rear units and “Tross” of **6 ID**, supported by handful of PAK and Stugs. . . Munitionsmangel by **6 ID**. On **28 Jan 42** “musste die Brotration” von **5** Tagen auf **8** Tagen (je Tag **375 gm.**) gestreckt werden.“ The division works feverishly to build up its defenses. Schneewaele established. Kampfstaende. Astverhaue mit Schreckladungen angelegt. Und um die Stuetzpunkte verlegten die Pioniere Minen. Hwy wpns and artillery play major role in coming days supporting the division. (Note: Division apparently possessed following medium (*schwere*) artillery units: **1./AR 42**, **3./AR 808 (Mrs.)**, **2./AR 848 (s.F.H.)**) Russians attack repeatedly, despite horrific losses – esp. at night – “getarnt in ihren Schneeanzuegen.” They frequently break thru thin line of the division. Handfuls of German troops repeatedly counterattack to restore local situations and recapture **HKL**. “Brennpunkte im Kampf der Division waren u. blieben Krupzowo – Gutschina – Ranimza – Sobakino – Gridino – Klipukowo – Nemzowo u. die Stuetzpunkte dazwischen, kurz gesagt die ganze Div.-Front. Beispielsweise wurden vom **3 Jan – 5 Mar 42** gegen Sobakino **34** Feinangriffe abgewehrt. (Grossmann, 104-05)

- **13.1.42 [Koenigsberg-Stellung]:** . . . In Sobakino wurden in der Zeit von **7.00 – 11.00 Uhr** rund **400** Artillerie- u. Granatwerfer-Einschlaege gezaehlt. Unter dem Schutz des heftigen Feuers versuchte der Gegner immer wieder, sich an die **HKL** heranzuschieben. Lage insofern bedenklich, da eigene Artillerie aus Munitionsmangel die fdl. Artillerie nicht bekaempfen kann. . . Die derzeitigen Ausfalle durch Artilleriebeschuss sind so hoch, dass die Verteidi-

⁵³⁸ Note: Allein bei der Ortschaft Sobakino wurden bis zum **5.3.42** ueber **30** Feindangriffe abgewehrt. In Gridino, Ranimza, u. a. war es nicht anders. (78; also Anlage 11)

gung der **HKL** bei Anhalten des Feinddruckes in kurzer Zeit nicht mehr moeglich ist. Im ganzen wurden abgewehrt: **1** Angriff auf Krupzowo; **4** Angriffe auf Guschtschino; u. **6** Angriffe auf Ranimza. . . Beim letzten Angriff brach der Feind mit **2** Kompanien in den Waldstuetzpunkt hart SO Ranimza ein. Ein Gegenstoss aus Ranimza blieb ohne Erfolg. . . Es wurde beabsichtigt, durch **III/IR 18** mit **10/Sturm-Rgt** am **14 Jan 42** die **HKL** im Gegenangriff wieder in eigene Hand zu bringen. An Feindverlusten wurden bei den Angriffen des heutigen Tages **400 Tote** gezaehlt. . . Divisions-Gef.St.: Malachowo (Vorgeschobener). Verluste: Offz. **1** gef., **5** verw. Uffz. u. Mannschaften: **36** gef., **113** verw., **1** verm. Die **6 ID** meldet am **13 Jan 42** an das Gen.-Kom. **VI AK**, dass infolge Betriebsstoffmangels Verpflegung ab **14 Jan 42** nicht mehr heran-gefuehrt werden kann. . . (*KTb 6. ID*; quoted in: *Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 58*, S. 9)

-- **14.-15.1.42**: Nach den Angriffen in der Nacht verhielt sich der Gegner infanteristisch ruhig, waehrend das Artilleriefeuer in unverminderter Staerke anhielt. Die Division versuchte mit letzten verfuegbaren Reserven. . . den in der Nacht vom **14./15.1.42** in den Stuetzpunkt suedostw. Jrusha eingebrochenen Feind zu werfen. Die Abriegelung war noch in der Nacht durch schwache Teile **IR 18** u. **IR 58** gelungen. In den Vormittagsstunden des **15.1.42** wurde nicht beobachtet, dass der Gegner aus der Einbruchsstelle weitere Versuche machte, nach Suedwesten durchzubrechen. Der Gegenstoss verzoegert sich. . . Angriffsbeginn **13.00** Uhr. Nach anfaenglichen Erfolgen blieb eigener Angriff infolge zu schwacher Infanteriekraefte etwa **100** m vor ueberlegenem Feind liegen. . . Die Division verfuegte ueber keine Reserven, die Lage wieder herzustellen. . . Verluste: Offz.: **3** verw. Uffz. u. Mannschaften: **12** gef., **48** verw., **6** verm. (*KTb 6. ID*; quoted in: *Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 58*, S. 10-11)

-- **15.1.42**: Zustandsbericht nach dem Stande vom **15.1.1942**:

Fehlbestand: **122** Offz. u. **5538** Uffz. u. Mannschaften.

Verluste vom 16.12.41-15.1.42:

Tot:	20 Offz. / 347 Uffz. u. Mannsch.
Verwundet:	46 / 1394
Vermisst:	3 / 429
Krank: ⁵³⁹	23 / 1793
Sonstige Abg.	1 / 89

In der gleichen Zeit eingetroffener Ersatz: **8** Offz., **12** Uffz., **231** Mannsch.

Werturteil des Kdrs (Grossmann):

Die Stimmung der Truppe ist gut. Sie ist durch die Erfolge bei den schweren Abwehrkaempfen in der „**K**“-Stellung noch zuversichtlicher u. gefestigter. Der koerperliche Zustand der kaempfenden Truppe einschl. Fuehrer ist schlecht. Es gibt wohl keinen Mann in der **HKL**, der nicht an Frostschaeden zu leiden hat. Ausserdem treten sehr zahlreiche Erschoepfungerscheinungen u. eine grippen-aehnliche Erkrankung auf. Ein Teil der kaempfenden Truppe war seit Wochen nicht in der Lage, sich zu waschen oder die Waesche zu wechseln. . . Der Ausfall

⁵³⁹ **Note:** Mostly frostbite cases, no doubt.

an Spezialisten⁵⁴⁰ ist ausserordentlich hoch. . . Der Pferdezustand ist wegen Fehlen jeden Futters bedenklich. . . Da Betriebsstoff nur in unzureichenden Mengen verfuegbar ist, sind bisher Pferd u. Schlitten die einzigen Mittel, Verkehr u. Nachschub aufrechtzuerhalten. . . Personell u. materiell ist die Division nur zur Verteidigung einsatzfaehig. . . Grossmann.

(Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 58, S. 11)

- **16.1.42:** Gegen **2.00** Uhr griff der Feind mit etwa **150** Mann den Nordteil Guschtschino an. Der Angriff brach **150** m vor der **HKL** zusammen. Durch wirksame Artillerie-Bekaempfung wurde der Russe zum Rueckzug gezwungen. . . Bereitstellungen in dem vom Gegner besetzten Stuetzpunkt suedostw. Jrusha, wo sich der Feind verstaerkt hat, wurden wirkungsvoll durch Artillerie bekaempft. . . Verluste: Offz.: **1** verw. Uffz. u. Mannschaften: **6** gef., **34** verw., **7** vermisst. (KTB 6. ID; quoted in: Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 58, S. 12)
- **16.1.42:** Die Division hat seit dem **2 Jan 42** morgens auf eine Frontbreite von etwa **17 km** die Angriffe mehrerer russ. Divisionen unter blutigsten Verlusten fuer den Feind abgewiesen u. eine kaum vorbereitete **HKL** in grimmigster Kaelte gehalten [i.e., the „K“-Stellung]. Die Leistung ist um so eindeutiger, als die Division seit dem **22.6.1941** ohne Unterbrechung u. Ruhe in beispiellosem Einsatz gekaempft u. den Gegner beherrscht hat. Vor der Division sind seit dem **2 Jan 42** aufgetreten: die **174, 243, 246** Schuetzen-Division u. mit Teilen die **369, 375, 119** u. **5** Schuetzen-Division. Die Division wurde am **13 Jan 42** wegen ihrer Abwehrleistung im Heeresbericht genannt. (6. ID, Abt. Ia, in: Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 58, S. 13)
- **19.1.42:** Feind vor Front der Division seit **16 Jan 42** nur mit schwaecheren Kraeften. . . Die Division muss bei den schwachen Kampfstaerken der Verteidigung auf Vorschieben kampfkraeftiger Gefechtsvorposten verzichten. . . Die unmittelbar an die West- u. Nordwestflanke von Sobakino u. Ost- u. Suedostflanke von Gridino sich heranschiebenden Waldteile u. – Raender sind durch Verstaerkungsarbeiten wie Baum- u. Drahtverhaue, Schreckladungen, Minen zu sperren u. Horchposten zu sichern. . . (Fernspruch No. 104, 6. ID, Ia, quoted in: Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 58, S. 17-18)
- **22.1.42:** Korps-Tagesbefehl: „Die **6 ID** hat seit Anfang **Jan 42** ueber **60 Feindangriffe** in etwa Btn.-Staerke unter hohen Feindverlusten abgeschlagen u. damit ihren ausgezeichneten Kampfwillen erneut bewiesen. Ich spreche der tapferen Division meine Anerkennung aus. gez. Bieler, General der Infanterie.“ (Traditionsverband Inf.-Rgt. 37, Rundbrief No. 58, S. 25)

i) *Relief of Suchinichi (late Jan 42)*

- **Dec 41:** Das OKW hatte schon im **Dez 41** die **216 ID** von Frankreich nach Suchinitschi befohlen. Doch kaum angekommen, wurde Teile der **216 ID** von den russ. Truppen eingeschlossen. Die deutschen Soldaten kaempften zwar tapfer u. waren auch gut ausgeuestet, aber sie waren die Kaelte nicht gewohnt – die Temperatur lag bei **-40 Grad** – u. sie konnten nur notduertig aus der Luft versorgt werden. Dem deutschen Generalstab blieb nichts anderes

⁵⁴⁰ **Note:** Apparently, these specialists included MG and GrW troops, as is noted in another document in this Rundbrief. (6 ID / Abt. Ia, 22.1.42, S. 24)

uebrig, als Streitkraefte von Orel abzuziehen u. nach Suchinitschi zu werfen. Zu Hilfe eilen sollte vor allem die **208 ID**, die ebenfalls von Frankreich eingetroffen war.⁵⁴¹ (K. Schneider-Janessen, Arzt im Krieg, 83; **VIII:114**)

- **Jan 42:** Im **Jan 42** gelang der russ. **10 Armee** ein **80 km breiter Durchbruch** ueber den Fluss Oka zwischen den Staedten Kaluga u. Belew. Die Stadt Suchinitschi wurde eingeschlossen. Der Sitz des Oberkommandos der deutschen **4 Armee**, die Stadt Juchnow an dem Fluss Ugra, wurde ploetzlich Frontbereich.
- **3.1.42:** In S. about **4000** German troops remained by order of the Fuehrer, and having been cut off on **3 Jan 42**, had to be supplied by air. (See, **III:640**)
- **ab 3.1.42** [Sukhinichi garrison]: On southern flank, Red Army cavalry and tanks were rapidly approaching the great depot area of Sukhinichi. . . There the advanced elements of **216 ID**, just arrived in-theater from France, were clambering down from the train. The new arrivals consisted of nothing more that the divisional HQ and HQ coy, including the div.-cdr, Freiherr v. u. zu Gilsa, the band, **2 ½** btns. of infantry (all from three [**3**] different regiments), a heavy MG platoon, and an engineer coy. None of the men had seen Russia and *most had never been in action before*. The temperature stood at **-30** centigrade. The Sukhinichi garrison, known as the Gilsa Group, totalled **4000** German troops and about **1000** Russian Hiwi auxiliaries. There was no lack of ammunition because of the great munition dump in the area; rations were not so plentiful. . . As Golikov's **10 Army** and Belov's **Gds Cav Corps** closed in, a Fuehrer Order was received ordering the Gilsa Group to *hold its ground at all costs*. Von Gilsa had only four [**4**] doctors, one of them a surgeon. . . On **3 Jan 42**, the Russians closed in fast, driving in the small perimeter. Yet, unused to battle and conditions in Russia though these troops were, the fighting soon became fast and furious, w/ much hand-to-hand combat and no quarter given by either side. Despite the lack of AT wpns, the Red Army attacks were all held; but in the first **10** days German casualties mounted frighteningly to **250** dead and over **1000** wounded, from an original fighting strength of **4000**. Von Gilsa's appeals for medical aid brought in only one more surgeon who arrived by night in a glider. (For more of Sukhinichi see, A. Seaton, The Battle for Moscow, 247-49; also, Jenner, Die 216./272. ID, 47-53)
- **3.-9.1.42:** On **3 Jan 42** Soviet **10 Army** traps ca. **4000** German troops in Sukhinichi. Hitler refuses to let the garrison break out and demands the town be defended to the last man „as the Alcazar had been held during the Spanish Civil War.“ . . . A breakout from Sukhinichi had become impossible after **9 Jan 42**, when **10 Army** reached Kirov, **40** miles to the west, and Zhizdra, **35** miles to the SW. Having such distances to go, a relief also appeared impossible. (Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad, 122-23; see also, Hofmann, MS P-114b, Vol. III, 45)
- **3.-25.1.42:** Der Russe suchte im Raum um Suchinitschi nach allen drei Richtungen hin seinen Einbruch zu erweitern. Am **3 Jan. 42** hatte er den Ring um Suchinitschi geschlossen, wo sich die etwa **4000** Mann starke Besatzung – Gruppe Gilsa – zaeh verteidigte. Den Hauptdruck richtete der Russe nach Westen u. Sueden, er drohte den Nordfluegel der **2 Pz Armee** zu umfassen. Hier war im Augenblick die gefaehrlichste Stelle. Am **4 Jan 42** entschloss sich die dt. Fuehrung, die Einbruchsstelle durch Angriff von Sueden u. Norden her einzuengen. (For details of the German relief attack see, (Hofmann, „Schlacht von Moskau,“ 176-77; **III:640-41**)

⁵⁴¹ **Note:** Of course, **18. PD** took major role in relieve attack on Suchinitschi.

- **6.1.42:** Die sowj. Westfront griff im **Jan 42** im Raum Kaluga – Belew die dt. Linien zwischen der **4 Armee** u. der **2 Pz Armee** mit starken Kraefte an u. erzielten ein Durchbruch, durch den sie mit **14** Divisionen u. einer Pz.Bde. auf Juchnow vorstiess. Damit war zwischen den beiden dt. Armeen eine Luecke entstanden, in deren Mitte sich die **216 ID** unter ihrem Kommandeur Gen-Maj Werner Frhr. von u. zu Gilsa, von der sowj. **10 Armee** eingekesselt, ihrer Haut wehren musste. (Die Division war gerade im **Dez 41** aus Frankreich an die Ostfront verlegt worden.) Gen.Obst. Schmidt erkannte die sich anbahnende Gefahr der Einschliessung des **XXXXIII AK** (General Gotthard Heinrici) u. musste aus seinem Armeebereich Kraefte finden, die in der Lage waren, diese Luecke zu schliessen, um die in Suchinitschi eingeschlossene Division zu befreien.

Am **6 Jan 42** befahl Schmidt den Kdr. der **18 PD**, Gen-Maj Nehring, zu sich ins HQu. der **2 Pz Armee** nach Orel. Dort angekommen wurde Nehring vom Chef des Generalstabes der **2 Pz Armee**, Oberst v. Liebenstein, mit einer heissen Huehnerbruehe aus seiner Konservendose empfangen u. sogleich ueber die Lage zwischen Belew u. Kaluga informiert. Gen.-Obst. Schmidt war bereits zur schwerbedraengten **4 Armee** gefahren, um mit General der Geb.-Tr. Ludwig Kuebler zu beraten. Schmidt hatte seinen Chef des Stabes schon angewiesen, General Nehring mit seiner bewaehrten **18 PD** aus der hart umkaempften Orelfront abzuziehen u. zu beauftragen, die Verbindung mit der eingeschlossenen **216 ID** herzustellen, um die dortige Abwehrfront zu staerken. Nehring war ueber den Auftrag keineswegs erfreut, hatte aber die Notwendigkeit eingesehen. Er musste nun mit seiner Division vom Orelabschnitt bei **40** Grad Kaelte ueber Brjansk u. Ordschonikidsegrad bis in den Versammlungsraum Schisdra rund **200** km zuruecklegen. Der **18 PD** wurde noch das **SR 12** der **4 PD** u. die **208 ID**, die auch erst vor wenigen Tagen aus Frankreich eingetroffen war, unterstellt. (*Woche, Zwischen flicht u. Gehorsam*, 142-43)

- **7.1.42:** . . Teile der **208 ID** im Marsch auf Eisenbahntransport in Schisdra angekommen. Im weiteren Vorgehen auf Suschinitsche. Ein russ. Parlamentaeer forderte die Uebergabe von Suschinitsche. Er wurde als Kriegsgefangene behandelt. (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 123)
- **8.1.42:** On [this day], the Soviets appeared to be on the point of breaking through near Sukhinichi. Part of **216 ID** was moved hurriedly from France by rail to secure Sukhinichi, which was one of **4 Army**'s main ammunition and supply bases. Only one and a half btns. of **396 IR** and one btn. of **348 IR** w/ the div. HQ coy and band arrive before the area is surrounded. With other detachments and Russian volunteers, the garrison numbers **5000** men. (*Seaton, Russo-German War*, 236-37; 237, f.n. 39)
- **15.1.42:** Hitler orders S. rescued. (See, **III:659-60**)
- **15.-29.1.42:** Despite Stavka's exhortations that German resistance at Sukhinichi "at all costs had to be broken down," the **216 ID** managed to survive on hard fighting and random airdropped supplies. On **15 Jan 42**, Hitler ordered Sukhinichi rescued, originally in a combined **2 Pz Army** and **4 Army** operation (but the **4 Army** was otherwise occupied and did not participate). A day later, Schmidt gave **XXIV PzK** the mission of relieving the beleaguered garrison. At Zhizdra, von Schweppenburg assembled portions of **18 PD** (fresh from chasing down rampaging Red cavalry and partisans near the city of Bryansk, but down to only a dozen [**12**] panzers) and **208 ID** to attack NE along the rail line to Moscow. This tiny task force took the **323 RD** by surprise and in general, the Soviets reacted slowly. By the **24th**, the *Kampfgruppe* had opened a **50** km corridor and managed to evacuate **1000**

German wounded. Even Zhukov panicked over the possible threat to his hard-won salient and ordered Rokossovsky to retake the town with his **10** and [newly created] **16 Armies**. Initially Hitler insisted on keeping Sukhinichi, but later relented, requiring only that Schmidt keep it within artillery range. Red Army troops liberated the town on the **29th**.⁵⁴² (*Kirchubel, Draft, 26-27*)

-- **16.-17.1.42:** Role of **18. PD** (General Nehring)

Am **16.-17 Jan 42** trat die verstaerkte **18 PD** von Schisdra aus zur Aktion Suchinitschi. . . (See, **III:662-3**; *personal accounts*, etc.)

-- **16.-24.1.42:** In Schisdra wurde die **18 PD** dem **XXIV PzK** unterstellt, welches zur **2 Pz Armee** gehoert. Am **16 – 17 Jan 42** trat die verstaerkte **18 PD** von Schisdra aus zur Aktion Suchinitschi. Die Stadt Suchinitschi war ein sehr wichtiger Eisenbahnknotenpunkt fuer die Versorgung der H.Gr.Mitte. Von Schisdra aus stiess die **18 PD** in zwei Kampfgruppen auf Suchinitschi vor. Bei Kaeltegraden zwischen **20** u. **30 Grad**, einer Schneehoehe von **80** Zentimeter, immer noch ohne ausreichende Winterbekleidung, ohne Winteroeel fuer Waffen u. Fahrzeuge, ging es nur muehsam aber stetig vorwaerts. Die Spitzenkompanien mussten sich buchstaeblich durch den tiefen Schnee wuehlen. Endlich, am **24 Jan 42**, treffen die Befreier von der **18 PD** auf die Verteidiger der **216 ID** westl. von Michalewitsch. Die Verbindung ist hergestellt. General Nehring sucht General von u. zu Gilsa in Suchinitschi auf u. erfahrt von ihm, dass ein weiteres befohlenes Halten der Stadt in Anbetracht der sowj. Uebermacht u. der mangelnden Versorgung der eigenen Truppe nicht mehr moeglich ist. Die Stadt muss geraeumt werden. Noch am gleichen Abend begann man mit dem Abtransport der Verwundeten u. Kranken. In der Nacht, um **3.30** Uhr, traf ein Fuehrerbefehl ein, wonach Suchinitschi wie bisher zu halten sei. Aber es ist zu spaet, eine weitere Verteidigung des Ortes war eine Unmoeglichkeit, u. so liess General v. Gilsa seine Kampfgruppe weiter nach Westen marschieren. Der Abtransport der ueber **1000** Verwundeten u. Kranken war eine hervorragende Leistung der rueckwaertigen Dienste, die **410 Panjeschlitten** mit russ. Fahrern (Hiwis) bereitgestellt u. in vier Transportmaerschen vom **25-28 Jan 42** ihren Auftrag erfolgreich abgeschlossen hatten. Auf dem Rueckmarsch erreichte die Kampfgruppe v. Gilsa erschoept eine Unterkunft im Raum Pokowo, **12** km westl. Suchinitschi. Hier erhielt sie einen neuen Fuehrerbefehl, wonach sie sich in der Naehue von Suchinitschi so festsetzen solle, dass sie eine Benutzung des Eisenbahnknotenpunktes durch die Russen unmoeglich machen koenne. Aber auch dieser Befehl hat nichts mit den vor Ort herrschenden Realitaeten zu tun. Am **24 Jan 42** ist die Rueckzugsaktion beendet. (*Woche, Zwischen Pflicht u. Gehorsam, 143-44*)

-- **18.-28.1.42:** Sukhinichi relieved. See below.

(See also, *P. Carell, Barbarossa*, 335-40; *W.K. Nehring, "Die Befreiung von Ssuchinitschi durch die 18 PD,"* in: **18 PD** division file; divisional *strength reports*, in: **18 PD** division file; *Nehring personnel file*, etc.)

-- **18-28.1.42** [Sukhinichi relieved]: **XXIV PzK**, which had regrouped after receipt of Hitler's order on **13 Jan 42**, was given the task of breaking the encirclement of Sukhinichi on the southern wing of the army group. The corps now had **4** and **18 PD**, **208 ID**, newly

⁵⁴² Roger Edwards, *Panzer: A Revolution in Warfare*, Arms & Armor, 1989, p. 172; Erickson, *ibid*, pp. 316-17; Ziemke & Bauer, *ibid*, pp. 164, 169-70, 175. In mid-**Jan 42**, von Weichs returned from sick leave to take the helm of **2 Army** freeing Schmidt to command **2 Pz Army** only.

arrived parts of **339 ID**, and three “groups.”⁵⁴³ After the preparatory attack by the panzer corps caught the enemy by surprise on **18 Jan 42**, it was instructed to advance rapidly on Sukhinichi. From the very start it was not assumed that the town could be held, but it was necessary to await Hitler’s decision. . . . Owing to heavy losses and a temperature of **-44 C**, **2 Pz Army** was by no means certain that it would be able to hold the town or, as ordered on **22 Jan 42**, decisively defeat the enemy there. Because of heavy counter-attacks on the flanks of the thrust it was possible to advance only w/ a pointed wedge of two [2] btns [each?] of **216** and **208 ID**. On **24 Jan 42**, they and several tanks of **18 PD** were able to link up w/ the point of the break-out effort by the “Group von Gilsa.” Losses in securing the narrow corridor to the town, estimated at **200** dead and wounded per day, forced the abandonment of the town on **28 Jan 42**, after the wounded had been evacuated and demolition, mainly of the railway facilities, had been prepared. Even an order from Hitler to hold the town if at all possible, using artillery if necessary, thereby relieving pressure on **4 Army**, did not change the situation, any more than a later appeal by Halder, who considered that abandoning Sukhinichi after the great moral victory of relieving it would be too great a loss. GFM v. Kluge ordered the annihilation of the enemy forces which had penetrated the area west and NW of Bolkhov to be given priority over the tying down of forces at Sukhinichi. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 730-31)

- **21.1.42:** . . . **18 PD** erreicht im Vormarsch auf Briny-Sawod etwa **20** km SW Suchinichi. Auch Gruppe Doelle (**70** km westl. Suchinitsche) konnte nach Osten Boden gewinnen. . . . (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 150)
- **24.1.42:** On the afternoon of the **24th**, w/ just two btns still in motion, **18 PD** made contact [w/ garrison at Sukhinichi]. **208 ID** had supported the attack, but **18 PD** had gone the last **10** miles alone. [Note: On **20 Jan 42**, the garrison had passed to the control of General Schmidt’s **2 Pz Army**.] (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 164)
- **24.1.42:** At Sukinichi, the German garrison was completely encircled; the garrison was a scratch force fighting furiously to hold the town, a „hedgehog“ which the German command decided to relieve by driving into Golikov’s **10 Army**, so that **2 Panzer Army** could once more link up w/ 4 Army. (Note: Rzhev – Yuhnov – Sukinichi formed one arc of German resistance which had at all costs to be broken down.) . . . Already on **24 Jan 42**, the German **338 IR** had linked up w/ von Gilsa’s garrison at Sukinichi, a **40-mile** lifeline, narrow but usable, enough to start moving out the **1000** wounded men huddled in the cellars of the smashed houses. The Zhizdra–Sukinichi counter-blow by **2 Pz Army** had rocked not only Soviet **10 Army** but the whole of Zhukov’s left wing. (*J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 316-17)
- **24.-25.1.42:** Encircled German garrison extricated. (**III:675-76**; see also, *GSWW*, Vol. IV, p.730)
- **30.1.42:** . . . Suchinitsche wurde von Gr. Gilsa nachdem die dort liegenden **954** Verwundeten abtransportiert waren, nachhaltig zerstoert u. geraeumt. (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 168)

j) *Decision at Rzhev (Jan-Feb 42)*

⁵⁴³ Note: No formation had all its established units left. Divisions were broken up according to need: this was the origin of the “groups” named after their cdrs. (730, f.n. 642)

Note: See also the “Milestones” section above for more details + context. See also, section above on battles of **6 ID** in the “Koenigsbergstellung.”

Note: GFM Model (biography)

(See, **I:251**, ff., for overabundance of details!; also, his personnel file)

Note: For **251. ID** in “Abwehrschlachten bei Rshew” see, **IX: H.-M. Welcker**)

Note: In den ersten Monaten der Rschew-Schlachten war Model den Befehlshabern der Roten Armee, die ihm gegenueberstanden u. die durch seine Operationen ueberrascht in zunehmender Konfusion agierten, weit ueberlegen. (*M. Stein, GFM Model*, 154-55)

Crux: Die in der ersten Haelfte **Jan 42** westl. Rshew nach Sueden durchgebrochenen beiden Feindarmeen (**29 u. 39 Armee**) wurden vom **21.1.42** an . . . in vierwoechigen harten Kaempfen angegriffen, wobei die Masse der **29 Armee** u. starke Teile der **39 Armee** vernichtet wurden. Der Plan des Gegners, den Eckpfeiler Rshew auszubrechen, im Ruecken der [dt.] **9 Armee** gegen die Autobahn vorzustossen u. die dt. Mittelfront im Zusammenwirken mit einer von Sueden vordringenden Angriffsgruppe einzuschliessen u. zu zerschlagen, wurde dadurch zunichte gemacht. . . Am **20. Feb 42** erreicht die Winterschlacht um Rzhew ihren Abschluss. Sie stellt einen Wendepunkt im Winterkampf der Ostfront dar. Zum ersten Mal hatte sich die dt. Ueberlegenheit wieder im Angriff erweisen koennen. . . Die Masse zweier russ. Armeen wurden angeschlagen oder vernichtet; im einzelnen wurden **6** russ. Schuetzen-Div. vernichtet, **4** Divisionen zerschlagen, **9** weitere u. dazu **5** Pz.-Bde angeschlagen. Dazu kamen **1.883** Gegangene, **26.360** tote Russen, **167** vernichtete bzw. erbeutete Panzer, **343** Geschuetze, **255** Pak-Geschuetze, **7** Flak-Geschuetze, **1.148** Gr.Wr. u. MG, hunderte von Kfz, Schlitten u. zahlreiche andere Geraete. Darueber hinaus haben die Verbaende des **VIII Fliegerkorps** in dieser Schlacht **51** Flugzeuge abgeschossen, **17** Maschinen am Boden zerstoert sowie **4** Panzer, **2** Batterien, **28** Geschuetze, mehr als **200** Kfz, etc. (See pamphlet, „*Die Winterschlacht von Rshew*“, prepared if I recall correctly by the German **9. Army** in early **1942**)

-- Vital strategic significance of the city

Historical context: fighting would rage here for some **18** months (till final withdrawal from the city at beginning of **Mar 43** (w/ Hitler listening on telephone as bridge over the Wolga blown!); Soviet failure here concealed by Soviets for decades; only came to light in **1990s**, w/ great work of D. Glantz, etc. For devastating physical impact of the fighting on the city itself see, *Oleg A. Kondratjew, Die Schlacht von Rshew*, 55, ff.)

-- **Late Dec 41-2.1.42:** Die nach Westen zurueckgebogene Front der **9 Armee**, deren geschwaechte Divisionen Frontbreiten zwischen **15 u. 35 km** zu decken hatten, verlockte die russ. Fuehrung zu einem Stoss nach Sueden, der in den Ruecken der gesamten H.Gr. fuehren u. damit diese zu Fall bringen sollte. Mit **4** Armeen, dabei zahlreiche frische Divisionen, glaubte der Gegner dieses Ziel erreichen zu koennen. Zunaechst konnte der rechte Fluegel der **9 Armee** nach Freigabe von Kalinin in kleinen Spruengen ausweichen u. den Zusammenhalt der Front u. die Fuehlung mit dem rechten Nachbarn aufrechterhalten. Aber dann trafen die russ. Angriffe mit voller Wucht den rechten Fluegel u. die Mitte der **9 Armee**. Die laufenden Antraege der H.Gr., auf die „Winterstellung“ ausweichen zu duerfen, wurden von Hitler starr abgelehnt; er erlaubte nur „vom Feind erzwungene Ausweichbewegungen“ u. verlangte die zaehe Verteidigung jeder Ortschaft u. jeden Stuetzpunktes. Auch sein am **2 Jan 42** eintreffender Befehl: „**9 Armee** geht *keinen Schritt mehr zurueck*,“ konnte die Geschehnisse nicht

aufhalten: die Front in Richtung auf Rschew war durchbrochen. Und dazu tauchte eine weitere Gefahr auf: an der Naht zur H.Gr.Nord, im Raum um Ostaschkow, schien sich eine neue Feindgruppe zu versammeln. Hier standen auf den inneren Fluegeln der beiden H.Gr. nur ganz lose u. duennere Sicherungen, auf die sich – deutlich erkennbar – der neue Stoss des Russen richtete. (Hofmann, “*Schlacht von Moskau*,” 173)

-- **1.-7.1.41:** By the beginning of the new year, the troops of Kalinin Front had reached Staritsa and the approaches to Rzhev and Zubtsov. The attacking armies, some of whom had gained **150** kilometers on the ground, were able by **7 Jan 42** to envelop Rzhev from three sides and to threaten the flank of German **9 Army** on the upper reaches of the Volga. (GSWW, Vol. IV: *Attack on Soviet Union*, 900)

-- **1.-8.1.42 [Rzhev]:** In the order put out on New Year's Day, Hitler attempted to rivet AGC's left flank tight where it stood: **3 Pz Army** facing east on the Lama River and **9 Army** in a **120**-mile-long line running almost due west past Rzhev along the upper reaches of the Volga River to the junction w/ Army Group North south of Ostashkov. Rzhev was AGC's northern corner-post. Lying on the Volga at the junction of a north-south and east-west railroad, it gave the army group left flank something to hang onto in what was otherwise a wilderness of forest and swamp in all directions for many miles.

The sector north and east of Rzhev was the most threatened spot on the left flank. There German **VI AK** was being battered by the Soviet **39, 29, and 31 Armies** and being made an example of by Hitler. On **29 Dec 41**, after some airplane pilots had drawn a much more favorable picture of the situation around Staritsa than had **VI AK** reports, Hitler had dismissed the corps cdr and appointed in his place for several days General der Flieger Wolfgang v. Richthofen.

During the night on **1 Jan 42**, Hitler forbade any except „local evasive movements,“ and in the morning he ordered the words „KOENIGBERG Position“ abolished because they represented a „dangerous myth.“ **24** hours later, he commanded **9 Army – VI AK** and its neighbor on the left, **XXIII AK**, in particular – not to retreat a „single step“ for any reason. . . General Strauss, having been promised **300 Ju 52** transports to fly in reinforcements for **9 Army**, passed on Hitler's order to **VI** and **XXIII AK** w/ his own emphatic endorsement. Privately, he and his staff believed **9 Army** was „on the razor's edge“ and that it could not stand where it was more than a few days. (See text for many more details. (Ziemke & Bauer, *Moscow to Stalingrad*, 129-32)

-- **6.-8.1.42:** Die sowj. **39 Armee**, die **7** Divisionen u. **5 Skibataillone** umfasste, stiess am **6 Jan 42** ueber die Volga nach Sueden vor u. fasste das deutsche **6 AK**, das auf einen grossen Brueckenkopf bei Rschew zurueckwich, mit vier [**4**] Divisionen im Ruecken. Da es gleichzeitig frontal von zwei weiteren Armeen gefesselt wurde, konnte es die **20 km** breite Luecke nach Westen zum abgespalteten **23 AK** aus eigener Kraft nicht schliessen. Der Gegenangriff einer Kampfgruppe scheiterte am **8 Jan 42**, waehrend ein furchtbarer Schneesturm wuetete.

Rschew sollte unbedingt als “Eckpfeiler” behauptet werden, nicht zuletzt wegen der dort befindlichen **3000 [deutschen] Verwundeten**. Die Lage nahm katastrophale Zuege an. Die Divisionen schmolzen zu Regimentern, viele Soldaten fielen vor Erschoepfung schlicht u. einfach um oder brachen nervlich zusammen. . . Da Gen.Obst. Strauss [**9 Armee**] ueber keine nennenswerten Reserven verfuegte, um den moeglichen Durchbruch in die Tiefe aufzufangen, drohte nicht nur die Einkesselung des **23 AK**, sondern eine Zertruemmung des

gesamten Nordfluegels der H.Gr.Mitte. (H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten, 216)

(**Note:** Date of Soviet attack might be **4 Jan 42**. For background on origins of Soviet offensive in Rzhev sector see, *Kondratjew, Rshew*, 11)

-- **7.1.-1.2.42:** Kalinin Front (Rshew), etc. Germans fighting for Vyazma – Sychevka – Rzhev railway line, for if this were completely cut, German **9. Army** was doomed. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV, in: **III:642**; also, **III:651-52**)

-- **9.1.42:** . . . Westl. Rschew gelang es die durchgebrochenen Kraefte der Russen zu vernichten. Die **SS Kav Bde** versucht die Luecke westl. Rschew zu schliessen. Eigene Stuka beteiligten sich hervorragend an der Bekaempfung der Feindangriffe in der Einbruchsstelle. (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 127)

-- **11.1.42:** Rzhev was another of those breakwaters⁵⁴⁴ against which the Soviet offensive dashed in vain, producing a long and costly struggle in this battle of the Volga bend. West of Rzhev, the Soviet divisions had hammered out a 9-mile gap, through which infantry, armored and sledge columns moved southwards; **39 Army** of Kalinin Front swept west of Rzhev, which fell into the area of **29 Army**. On **11 Jan 42**, as **11 Cav Corps** was passed thru the gap torn by **39 Army** and moved southwards towards the motor highway west of Vyazma, the Stavka ordered Koniev to take Rzhev on **11 Jan 42** [i.e., that very day] – “and under no circumstances later than [**12 Jan 42**]” – using two or three rifle divisions from **39 Army** and the whole of **29 Army**; Rzhev pointed like a dagger at the flank of Koniev’s assault force and had to be eliminated at all costs and w/ all speed. South at Sychevka Soviet units had already broken into the railway depots, where major German stores were located. . . What the German troops had to fight for, jammed in as emergency units⁵⁴⁵ as they were, was the Vyazma – Sychevka – Rzhev railway line, for if this were completely cut, the German **9 Army** was doomed. (*J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 307)

-- **16.1.42:** Model is given command of **9 Army** on this day; after quick visit to Rastenburg,⁵⁴⁶ he arrives at **9 Army** HQ on **18 Jan 42**; develops plan of attack.

(For useful account of Model’s operations as C-in-C of **9 Army** during this period of **Jan-Feb 42** see, chapter on Model in *Michael Jones* new book, The Retreat – Hitler’s First Defeat.)

-- **ab 16.1.42:** Am **16 Jan 42** uebernahm General Model als neuer O.B. der **9 Armee**. Model sicherte zunaechst den Raum Sytschewka mit Hilfe der **1 PD** u. schloss dann bei **-22 Grad Celsius**, mit je einer Kampfgruppe von Westen u. Osten angreifend, wirksam unterstuetzt von den Stukas des **8 Fliegerkorps**, am **23 Jan 42** die Frontluecke westlich von Rschew. Damit hatte man die Verbindung zum **23 AK** wiederhergestellt, waehrend die starke sowj. **39 Armee** mit **9 Divisionen** u. **1 Pz.-Bde.** sowie grosse Teile der **29 Armee** suedwestlich von Rschew von ihren rueckwaertigen Verbindungen abgeschnitten waren.

Dann bereitete Model einen konzentrischen Angriff gegen die Masse der **29 Armee** vor, die verzweifelt versuchte, den Korridor ueber die Wolga wieder zu oeffnen. Model erhielt dazu die **6 PD** u. die **SS „DR“** unterstellt; nun fuehlte er sich stark genug, um zum Angriff

⁵⁴⁴ **Note:** “Breakwater” – terrific term to use to describe German bastions which held up Soviet advance in winter 1941/42!

⁵⁴⁵ **Note:** Emergency units = “Alarmeinheiten” in German.

⁵⁴⁶ **Note:** Accurate? Did Model make two trips to Rastenburg?

anzutreten. Waehrend Model die Riegelstellung an der Wolga **15 km** westlich von Rschew verstaerkte, schlossen die dt. Stossverbaende suedlich davon die **29 Armee** bei hoher Schneelage am **6 Feb 42** ein. Zwei Wochen lang dauerten die aufreibenden Kaempfe, waehrend der Gegner verbissen gegen die Riegelstellung Sturm lief, um die Eingeschlossenen zu entsetzen, hierbei jedoch entsetzliche Verluste erlitt.

Am **21 Feb 42** hatte Model, der jeden Tag die meiste Zeit bei der Truppe an den Brennpunkten der Schlacht verbrachte, die Schlacht gewonnen: **32 000** sowj. Soldaten waren gefallen u. gefangengenommen, waehrend **187** Panzer u. ueber **600** Geschuetze zu den materiellen Verlusten zaehlten. Die **29 Armee** trat zwar weiter in der sowj. Kriegsgliederung auf, zaehlte aber nur noch **6000** Mann.

Dieser Erfolg erlaubte es Model, die Innenfront der **9 Armee** schrittweise nach Westen vorzuverlegen, wenn sich auch ein grossraeumiger Umfassungsangriff gegen die **39 Armee** u. das **11 Kav-Korps** aus Kraeftemangel verbot. Im Laufe der naechsten Wochen konnte man auch die katastrophale Verkehrslage . . . einigermassen entschaeufen. Einen wesentlichen Beitrag zur Versorgung der **9 Armee** leistete ein improvisierter Panzerzug, der die Bahnstrecke Wjasma – Rschew sicherte u. die Nachschubzuege eskortierte.

In Anerkennung seiner Verdienste wurde Model am **28 Feb 42**⁵⁴⁷ von Hitler in dessen Hauptquartier zum Generaloberst ernannt u. mit dem Eichenlaub zum Ritterkreuz ausgezeichnet. Beim anschliessenden Gespraech entspann sich eine Kontroverse ueber die beste Dislozierung der gepanzerten Reserven hinter der Front der **9 Armee**. Hitler u. Model gerieten zunehmend in Erregung. Schliesslich rief Model: „Fuehren Sie die **9 Armee** oder ich?“⁵⁴⁸ Als Hitler, offenbar brueskiert, den Einsatz der Reserven gemaess seinen Vorstellungen befehlen wollte, entgegnete Model laut: „Das muss ich mir verbitten!“ Alle Umstehenden erwarteten eine heftige Reaktion Hitlers, doch dieser lenkte ueberraschenderweise ein u. gab Model freie Hand. (*H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 221-22)

-- **18.1.42**: General der Panzertruppen Walter Model had been commanding general **XXXXI PzK** [**3 Pz Army**] until the afternoon of **14 Jan 42**, when he had been summoned to army group HQ „to receive a new assignment.“ . . . After a fast trip to Fuehrer HQ to receive his charge from Hitler, Model arrived at **9 Army** HQ in Vyazma on **18 Jan 42**, stopped long enough to issue a characteristic order of the day expressing his „unshakable confidence and determination to withstand this crisis shoulder to shoulder w/ my troops,“ and headed north to Rzhev to take personal charge of the attack preparations.

The breach west of Rzhev was two weeks old, and three [**3**] large Soviet formations – **39, 29 Armies** and **XI Cav Corps** – had already passed through. **39 Army** was engaged at Sychevka; **XI Cav Corps** was aiming for Vyazma; and **29 Army** was inside the gap, SW of Rzhev. Fortunately for the Germans, the Soviet commands were, as the **9 Army** staff observed, „almost lamentably slow“ in exploiting the breakthrough. They appeared to be having supply troubles and heavy casualties from the cold and to be short on initiative and experience at all levels. While the Russians were within **4 – 6** miles of the Vyazma-Rzhev railroad over the whole stretch from Sychevka to Rzhev, they did less to stop traffic

⁵⁴⁷ **Note:** Is this date accurate? Newton (below) states it was **31 Jan 42** when Model went to Rastenburg and received Oak Leaves.

⁵⁴⁸ **Note:** This confrontation between Hitler and GFM v. Kluge occurred, I believe, on **19 Jan 42**, not at end of **Feb 42**. (See below; see also, M. Stein's Model biography.)

than the cold did. [Note: General Strauss, hitherto **9 Army** cdr, had quarrelled w/ Kluge over **XXIII AK**- Strauss had wanted to shorten its front on the west and use it to close gap at Rzhev – and asked to be put on sick leave. Kluge appears to have obliged him willingly.] (For more details of the Strauss/Kluge „dustup“ see, *Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 166-68)

-- **18.1.42**: Model arrived at **9 Army** HQ in Sychevka on **18 Jan 42**. Once again, he had been plunged into a crisis, and this one was so severe that failure to master it could lead to loss of not only his own army but of AGC in its entirety: [see text for details] . . . In **9 Army** sector the situation had deteriorated so precipitously that the Russians were attacking the Sychevka switching station just a few kilometers from army HQ. Telephone and telegraph communications had been lost w/ the encircled **XXIII AK** at Olenino, while the **VI** and **XXVII AK** were facing **16** Soviet divisions in the Rzhev area. Of the **9 Army**'s assigned strength of **262,215** men, **864** guns, and **165** AFVs, there remained only **59,582** men, **369** guns, **4** assault guns, and a single **Pz III** [!]. . . The Rzhev-Sychevka area, Halder insisted, was „the most decisive spot on the Eastern front.“ If the Russians shattered what was left of **9 Army**, they would be in position to roll down thru the rear of **3 Pz**, **4 Pz** and **4 Armies**. Preventing this from happening would become Model's job. (*Newton, Hitler's Commander*, 175-76)

-- **18.-19.1.42**: As new **9 Army** cdr, Model gets down to business of addressing army's options. Finally alive to danger of a completely inflexible no-retreat policy, Hitler had grudgingly accepted Halder's strategic assessment and decided to permit the other three [**3**] armies to conduct a short retreat to the so-called Koenigsberg position in order to free enough troops to retrieve situation around Rzhev. This decision had been taken prior to Model's appointment and had already resulted in the transfer from **3 Pz Army** of **1 PD** (admittedly, only as strong as a mot. regimental Kampfgruppe, w/ no tanks and little artillery) to secure the Sychevka area. This was to be followed in days by reassignment of the equally depleted **6 PD** and, at end of **Jan 42**, of the somewhat stronger **7 PD** – both from the **3 Pz Army**. The **4 Pz Army** had received orders to release the **XLVII PzK** HQ,⁵⁴⁹ along w/ **5 PD** (one of the strongest Pz.-Div. left to AGC) and the **SS „DR“** Mot. Div. Heinrici's 4 Army was required to relinquish **403 Sec Div** and elements of **219 ID**, while AGC coughed up a rgt. of **339 ID** from its own meager reserves, as well as allocating Model the **246 ID** which was arriving by rail from garrison duty in southwestern France. Moreover, the Luftwaffe provided **Flak Rgt Staff 125** and the equivalent of five [**5**] btns of heavy AA guns [**88 mm?**]. Most all of these units, of course, were far understrength and would only arrive in bits and pieces over the course of two-and-one-half weeks.

Model and Lt-Col Blaurock [**Army Ia?**] discuss plan of attack. Blaurock tells his new cdr that Strauss had assembled modest forces in east end of **XXIII AK** pocket and the western flank of **VI AK** position for a proposed attack between **20-22 Jan 42** to close the Rzhev-Olenino gap. Model ends up expanding scope of planned attack and sets its opening day for **21 Jan 42**. . . In fact, he would commit „everything he had“ to a three-pronged attack. As soon as their conference was over, Model left for Rzhev to supervise **VI AK** preparations personally. (Note: For details of Model's meeting w/ Hitler, his planned assault see, *Newton, Hitler's Commander*, 177-82)

⁵⁴⁹ Note: This cannot be accurate! **47 PzK** w/ **2 Pz Army**. I believe the actual HO belonged to **46 PzK**. Confirm!

- **19.1.42:** Model flies back to Rastenburg on this day to contest Hitler's interference w/ his (M.'s) arrangements. Terrific anecdote! As noted above for details see, Newton, Hitler's Commander, 177-82; **III:667**)

- **19.1.-8.2.42: SS-"DR"** – The Winter Fighting at Rzhew: Offensive ops NW of Sytschewka. (Very detailed account from Otto Weidinger, Das Reich, Vol. III, in: **7:494-504**. This should be a *major focus* of my narrative on Rshew!

Throughout **Feb 42**, the Kalinin Front launched a series of fierce counterattacks to reopen communications [to Soviet forces encircled by Model's counteroffensive in Rzhev – Olenino sector. Repeatedly, the Red Army attempted to break through **9 Army's** northernmost front, which still ran along the frozen Volga.⁵⁵⁰ (See text for more details of actions of Kampfgruppe Krumm (SS Rgt "DF") (**III:678-79**)

- **21.-23.1.42** [Model Counteroffensive]: The **VI** and **XXIII AK** both attack on schedule at **10:30 a.m. on 21 Jan 42**, w/ the mercury reading **-42 F**. German soldiers advanced w/ their uniforms stuffed w/ newspapers in attempt to insulate their summer-weight clothing against temperatures so severe that men froze to death on short watches in their foxholes even during daylight hours. Infantry officers had remonstrated w/ Model to postpone the operation until there was a break in the weather, but **9 Army** cdr brushed their objections aside. From Olenino, dismounted SS cavalymen of Kampfgruppe Zehender followed in the wake of **Assault Gun Btn 189's** four [4] remaining **StG IIIs**, rolling thru Russian positions that lacked armor-piercing shells for their guns. Gruppe Recke, created to control the hodgepodge of btns. pushing out of Rzhev, had not tanks or assault guns but enjoyed close air support. Nearly frozen themselves, the Russians fail to react quickly enough to this counteroffensive, and in little more than **48 hours** contact has been reestablished w/ the isolated **XXIII AK**. (For more details, (Newton, Hitler's Commander, 182-83; **III:672**)

- **21.1.18.2.42:** Erst in sehr schweren, dramatischen u. wechselvollen Kaempfen zwischen dem **21 Jan** u. **4 Feb 42** gelang es, die Luecken in der Nordfront von Rshew zu schliessen u. die beiden in die Waelder SW der Stadt vorgedrungenen russ. Armeen einzuschliessen. In der Kesselschlacht vom **5-18 Feb 42** konnten diese Truppen weitgehend vernichtet u. die Befreiungsoffensive des Oberbefehlshabers der russ. Kalininer Front, Gen.-Oberst Konjew, zum Scheitern gebracht werden.

Dieser Erfolg war ganz wesentlich der Fuehrungskunst u. Entschlossenheit des Generals der Pz.-Tr. Model zu verdanken. . . *Ein Mann eiserner Nerven!*

Taeglich kam er an die Front. Im „Storch“, im Auto, im Schlitten, auf Ski, zu Pferde oder zu Fuss besuchte er die Truppe. Seine koerperliche u. geistige Beweglichkeit waren einmalig. Es gab keinen Brennpunkt, an dem er nicht in entscheidender Stunde ploetzlich auftauchte. Mit Anteilnahme lag er neben dem mit Lehm beschmierten Schuetzen u. hoerte sich dessen Noete u. Sorgen, auch ueber die Familie zu Hause, an. Seinen Soldaten gehoerte sein Herz. Von ihnen musste er in den schweren Kaempfen das Leben fordern. Seine eigene Person setzte er ruecksichtslos ein u. gab hierdurch seiner ganzen Armee ein leuchtendes Beispiel.⁵⁵¹

⁵⁵⁰ **Note:** "Everything depended on the *heavy weapons*," recalled one young SS officer, "because the front was so thinly held." (**III:678**)

⁵⁵¹ **Note:** This quote gleaned from: Grossmann, Rshew, 36-37.

(*E.M. Rhein, Das Inf.-Rgt. 18, 157*)

- **22.-23.1.42:** German **VI AK** begins the attack west from Rzhev on **22nd**⁵⁵². . . At the start in the morning, Model was in Rzhev until full daylight and from then on „hedgehopped“ along the front in a light plane, landing at CPs and looking for „hot spots“ where he made it a point to appear in person to lend encouragement „in word and deed.“ Taking the enemy by surprise, the attack got off to a fast start in clear weather with well-directed air support and with some tanks, and more SP assault guns. The short winter's day ended before the **XXIII AK** and **VI AK** spearheads pushing along the Volga River were in sight of each other, but in the morning a coy of **189 SP Assault Gun Btn** shot its way across the remaining several miles to make contact shortly after **1200**, and **9 Army** had a continuous front again. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad, 168-69; also, III:674*)

- **23.1.42:** German **6** and **23 AK** link up, cutting the Kalinin Front in two. The **22, 30, 31** and part of **29 Armies** are north of the Volga, while **39** and remainder of **29 Army**, together w/ **11 Cav Corps**, are encircled south and SW of Rzhev, between Chertolino and Sychevka. The **22, 30** and **31 Armies** launch strong attacks, almost succeeding in isolating Rzhev. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin, 207*)

- Soviets mount furious counterattacks from the outside in effort to relieve their surrounded armies.
Terrific *personal accounts*
(Note: New book by *M. Jones, The Retreat – Hitler's First Defeat*, has some good material on Model.)

- **Crux:** Within weeks Model would close the gap in his front, cutting off much of the Soviet **29 Army** west of the Rzhev – Viaz'ma railway.
(Meanwhile, General Heinrici, new C-in-C of **4 Army**, re-sealed his eastern front and cut off Efremov's **33 Army** and Belov's **1 Gds Cav Corps** deep behind his lines south of Viaz'ma.) (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder, 123*)

- **ca 25.1.-5.2.42:** Model had begun his offensive on **21 Jan 42**. He now had to reorient his forces. Because **1 PD** attack did not make headway, he had decided to break off the action long enough to assemble the bulk of **XLVII PzK**.⁵⁵³ [See pp 183-84 for details of Model's moves.] Von Vietinghoff laboriously concentrated his forces for a larger-scale attack out of Sychevka, the objective of which would be to seal up all possible escape routes that Maslennikov might try. For this purpose he would employ elements of **3 divisions**: **1 PD**, **SS "DR,"** and **5 PD** [see p 184 for detailed breakdown of forces]. The latter formation provided Vietinghoff's corps w/ its main striking power. Withheld from the early stages of "Barbarossa" (for refitting after its participation in Balkanfeldzug), Maj-Gen Gustav Fehn's 5 PD had taken considerably less "wear and tear" in Russia than almost any other PD. Even late in **Jan 42** the division still boasted over **1500** mot. infantrymen, its artillery rgt. retained **27** functioning guns, and its **PzRgt 31** could put **70** operational tanks into the battle. By standards of mid-winter, therefore, v. Vietinghoff's corps represented a potent striking force.

Establishing his HQ at Sychevka on **25 Jan 42**, v. Vietinghoff immediately receives orders to attack **3** days later. The reserved 54-year-old Prussian certainly remembered from his

⁵⁵² **Note:** Apparently, Model's offensive actually began the day before – **21 Jan 42**.

⁵⁵³ **Note:** This is a much-repeated error in Newton's book. Von Vietinghoff commanded the **XLVI PzK**!

experience in France (where his **XIII AK** had briefly been assigned to **16 Army**) that when Model specified a jump-off date, he intended it to be met. However, as temperatures dropped even lower and isolated Russian divisions engaged in local counterattacks, even the impatient Model had to agree to postpone the attack for 24 hours, simply because v. Vietinghoff needed the extra day to get his troops into position.

Attacking [on **29 Jan 42?**] thru snowdrifts that often loomed above the soliders' heads [!], **XLVII PzK** [sic] pushed slowly but relentlessly into the defensive positions of Soviet **29** and **39 Armies**. Initially, the only tanks available were a handful of obsolete **Pz II**s and some captured **T 34**s (w/ German swastikas incongruously mounted on all sides of the turrets to avoid misidentification), controlled by **2/PzRgt 1** of **1 PD**. By **2 Feb 42**, roughly **20** more tanks from **PzRgt 31** [**5 PD**] had been committed. The attack was no blitzkrieg: Detachments of two or three tanks spearheaded company-sized Kampfgruppen, composed of what-ever mix of armored cars, half-tracks, motorcycles, marching infantry, and combat engineers could be assembled. . .

Red Army troops defended their village strongpoints tenaciously, but fought at a critical disadvantage: Soviet artillery lacked the ammunition for anything other than sporadic shelling, and AT munitions were practically nonexistent. The Germans seized Cherdino on **5 Feb 42**, cutting off communications between the two Russian armies and their front HQ on the east bank of the Volga and effectively reversing the tactical situation Model had faced when he took command. The price had not been cheap: less than two weeks of fighting cost **9 Army** nearly **5000** casualties (almost **10%** of the army's combat strength on **19 Jan 42**). But the results had been worth it. Model's officers counted over **26 000 Russian dead** on the battle-field, processed nearly **5000** prisoners, knocked out **187** enemy tanks, and captured **343** artillery pieces. The magnitude of this accomplishment had become evident to Hitler and Halder even before the **XLVII PzK** [sic] offensive had reached its objective, and they summoned Model to East Prussia on **31 Jan 42** to receive the oak-leaf cluster to his Knight's Cross and a promotion to colonel general. (*Newton, Hitler's Commander*, 183-86)⁵⁵⁴

- **26.1.-17.2.42** [**SS "DF" Rgt.** vs. Soviet **30 Army**]: Thru **Feb 42** the Kalinin Front launched a series of fierce, albeit generally uncoordinated counterattacks to reopen communications [to Soviet forces encircled by Model's counteroffensive in the Rzhev – Olenino sector]. Repeatedly, the Red Army attempted to break thru the **9 Army**'s northernmost front, which still ran along the frozen Volga. To muster the troops for v. Vietinghoff's offensive and the long, meandering front held by his understrength divisions, Model had to rely, even for this critical sector, on an improvised blocking force (Sperrverband) to hold the line. Designated Gruppe Recke – for Maj-Gen Heinrich Recke, cdr of **161 ID** – this unit consisted primarily of Kampfgruppe de Monteton (built around **IR 169**) and Kampfgruppe Krumm (centering on **SS "DF" Rgt.**)

⁵⁵⁴ **Note:** Newton also discusses General Raus' contribution to Model's success. Raus and his **6 PD** HQ were defending the **65-km-long** Sychevka-Vyazma supply line from the still numerous Siberian infantry and Russian cavalry units threatening it. He had to scrape together whatever "flotsam" he could to fulfill his mission: construction troops, bridging columns, Luftwaffe service units, etc. In this manner, he had managed to assemble nearly **35,000** men by the start of v. Vietinghoff's attack. Writes Newton: "Without [Raus'] ready willingness to accept the thankless responsibility for the rear area and his innate ability to improvise, none of the **9 Army**'s attacks could have been carried out at the same strength. Model was quite aware of this. . ." (186-87)

Standartenfuehrer Otto Krumm's Der Fuehrer had entered the Soviet Union w/ nearly **2000** men, but seven [7] months later barely mustered **650**, and many of these had begun the campaign in other divisional units, only to be transferred into the ever-diminishing ranks of the inf. coys as losses mounted. Initially supported only by its own infantry guns and a scattering of **37 mm** AT guns, the regiment deployed along a four [4]-mile front that wound back and forth across the Volga river, running thru village strongpoints at Solomino, Klepenino, Opjachtino and Kokosch. . . From **26 Jan – 17 Feb 42**, the Soviets threw every man, tank, and shell available into a nearly continuous attempt to breach Kumm's outpost line on the Volga. „Everything depended on the heavy wpns,“ recalled one young SS officer, „because the front was so thinly held. We sat in snow bunkers and during the day lay in heavy artillery fire. A pause in the artillery bombardment meant that the Russian attack was coming.“ Kumm himself reported: „Every attack is broken [only] at the cost of fearful casualties, often in close combat w/ grenades and side arms. Mounds of enemy dead pile up in front of the company positions. Most horrible of all are the attacks by enemy tanks.“ Der Fuehrer's stand became the stuff of legend, first in the **9 Army**, then among the soliders of the Waffen SS, and finally among military history enthusiasts across six [6] decades after the war. (For many more details, as well as great anecdote see, *Newton*, Hitler's Commander, 188-92; **III:678-79**)

- **30.1.-5.2.42:** **46 PzK** covers **30** miles in **6** days, making contact w/ **23 AK** on **5 Feb 42** and sealing Soviet **29 Army** in a tight pocket SE of Rzhev. (**III:681**)
- **ca. Feb 42** [Schnecken Offensive]: Nach Wiederherstellung der Verbindung zum **XXIII AK** fuhrte Model die mit dem Namen „Schnecken-Offensive“ bezeichnete Operation durch, die in ihrer Form ohne Praezedenz war u. die auch spaeter nicht wiederholt wurde. Sie wurde eine Konsequenz der Lage der verschiedenen Verbaende der **9 Armee**. In einem Brief an dem Vf. vom **13 Jun 00** gibt Reichhelm folgende Beschreibung: „. . . Hier setzte nun Model die „Schnecken-Offensive“ ein, u. zwar aus zwei [2] wesentlichen Gruenden. Man merkte auf dt. Seite schnell eine mangelnde Koordination in der russ. Fuehrung. . .“ (For remainder of Reichhelm's analysis see, *Stein*, GFM Model, 159-60)
- **5.2.42:** Model's **9 Army**, together w/ encircled German pockets near Olenino – Rzhev, attack the encircling Soviet **29 Army** from east and west and separate it from its neighbors, encircling it in its turn and destroying it. Only **5000** survivors are said to have escaped to the south. . . (*A. Seaton*, Russo-German War, 238)
- **17.2.42:** Model succeeds in encircling Soviet **29 Army** west of Rzhev. (**III:697**)
(Model cuts off and eventually is able to annihilate Soviet **29** and **39 Army**) (**III:664-67, 672-73; 676-77; 683-84**)
- **21.2.42:** Der Kessel westl. Rschew ist gesaeubert.⁵⁵⁵ Feind bis auf kleine Reste vernichtet. Damit ist der erste Teil der Winterschlacht bei Rschew abgeschlossen. Ab **21 Jan 42** betrugen die Feindverluste: im Bereich der Armee des Gen. d. Pz.Tr. Model [**9 Armee**]: **4833** Gefangene, **26 657 Tote**, **185** Panzer, **343** Geschuetze, **265** Pak, etc. Es wurden in den Kaempfen um Rschew **6** Schuetzendiv. vernichtet, **4** Schuetzendiv. zerschlagen, **9** Schuetzendiv. u. **5** Pz.Brig. angeschlagen. . . (*Mehner*, Geheime Tagesberichte, 204)

⁵⁵⁵ **Note:** This victory appears to concern mostly the Soviet **29 Army**. The Soviet **39 Army** was still not defeated. At this time – ca. **21 Feb 42** – Model unleashes his so-called “Snail offensive” against **39 Army**, which Hitler ordered destroyed on **1 Mar 42**. (**III:698-99**)

- **ab 21.2.42** [“Snail offensive”]: About this time [confirm date!] **6 PD** began pushing the Soviet **39 Army** away from the Vyazma-Sychevka section of the [Vyazma-Rzhev] railroad by what it called a “snail offensive” – namely, by occupying villages one by one at random along a 25-mile front wherever doing so was easiest. The **6 PD** found that it could advance a mile or two a day w/o much effort, and **39 Army** appeared to be becoming progressively more nervous and uncertain. After almost daily exchanges between the army, army group, **OKH**, and Hitler, Kluge and Hitler gave **9 Army** a “basic order” on **1 Mar 42** to encircle and destroy 39 Army. The operation had to be completed before the rasputitsa. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 185)⁵⁵⁶
- **May 42**: Logic dictated that **9 Army**’s bulging front around Rzhev, which marked the closest German outpost to Moscow, be significantly shortened. Both Model and v. Kluge recommended this on several occasions, but Hitler consistently overruled them. The Fuehrer argued that such a withdrawal would hurt Germany’s international prestige and that the **9 Army**’s mere continued existence so near Stalin’s capital would force the Russians to maintain large concentrations of troops around the city – troops therefore unavailable to resist the summer drive toward the Caucasus and the oil fields. In **May 42**, Hitler’s arguments had merit: Turkey remained open to German influence, but only so long as the Soviets appeared to be losing the fight, while subsequent events south of Kharkov would prove that Stalin’s generals had in fact kept too many troops near Moscow. (*Newton, Hitler’s Commander*, 196)
- **Jul 42**: The last act was the destruction of Maslennikov’s **39 Army**, which had ended up stranded NW of Viaz’ma. For months this force had been supplied through forest trails back to the rest of the Kalinin Front. The Germans finally cut the link and in early **Jul 42**, in Operation „Seydlitz,” they eliminated the pocket. Army cdr Maslennikov, an **NKVD** general, escaped, but thousands of Soviet troops were captured. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 124)

k) *Status at end of Jan beginning of Feb 42*

- Status of Osheer on **31 Jan 42** see, **III:624/25**)
- Status of Rote Armee (**1 Feb 42**): Die permanente Mobilmachung⁵⁵⁷ der Roten Armee lief auf vollen Touren . . . So umfasste die Rote Arme an **1 Feb 42** . . . (details see, **III:625**)
- **Dez 41 – Jan 42**: Die Ausfaelle des Ostheeres beliefen sich am Ende **Jan 42** auf **920.000** Mann, davon **29.000** Offiziere. Allein im Bereich der H.Gr.Mitte fehlten zu diesem Zeitpunkt etwa **400.000** Mann. Eine Studie des **OKW** stellte zum gleichen Zeitpunkt fest, dass eine “*volle Auffuellung der Verluste des Winters nicht mehr moeglich ist.*” Auch die Verluste an Material u. Ausruestungsgegenstaende waren nicht mehr auszugleichen. . . Ende **Dez 41** betrugen die Verluste an Panzern u. Stugs **3.730**; Ende **Jan 42** **4.240**. Diese Ausfaelle waren bei einer monatlich durchschnittlichen Panzerproduktion von nur rund **250** Panzern kurzfristig nicht mehr zu ersetzen. . . Darueber hinaus war die Beweglichkeit des Heeres durch den hohen Ausfall an Kfz eingeschraenkt worden. Von den rund **500.000** Kfz bei Feldzugbeginn waren Ende **Nov 41** **100.000** ausgefallen, weitere **250.000** mussten repariert werden. Dazu kamen die enormen Pferdeverluste, die sich Ende **Jan 42** auf **210.000** beliefen. . . .

⁵⁵⁶ **Note**: Apparently, the “Sneckenoffensive” of **6 PD**, etc., continued at least thru **Mar 42**, see p. 185 (bottom).

⁵⁵⁷ **Note**: This was the key to Soviet victory!

Die Flugzeugverluste der *Luftwaffe* hatte Ende **Jan 42** die Gesamthöhe von **6.900** Flugzeugen erreicht. Mitte **Jan 42** meldete die *Luftwaffe*, dass sie ihre Verluste im Osten nicht mehr decken konnte. (K. Reinhardt, "Das Scheitern des deutschen Blitzkriegskonzepts vor Moskau," in: *Kriegswende Dezember 1941*, J. Rohwer u. E. Jaeckel (herausg.), 207-08)⁵⁵⁸

- Summary: By end of **Jan 42** the German position was "serious." Far from holding the original defensive line ordered by Hitler, the formations of AGC had been driven back between **100** and **150** miles to the SW. Model's **9 Army** and Ruoff's **4 Pz Army** were deep in the *almost closed pocket*. **4 Army**, under Heinrici, was holding open the entrance to the pocket, trying to delay the left enemy pincer which was slowly closing the gap from the south. **2 Pz Army** and **2 Army** had escaped envelopment and were to the south in the area of Orel. The Soviet High Command then attempted to close the entrance to the cauldron by use of airborne troops and partisans. (A. Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 236-37)
- By **1 Feb 42**, Red Army forces were too weak either to close the pocket [around AGC] or destroy the partially encircled enemy. **11 Cav. Corps** and part of Soviet **39 Army** had been cut off by Model's **9 Army**. A part of Soviet **33 Army** together w/ **1 Gds Cav Corps**, part of **4 Airborne Corps** and partisan units, had been encircled in the mouth of the pocket when **4 Pz Army** and **4 Army** re-established contact, and these Red Army troops were being supplied by air. (A. Seaton, *Russo-German War*, 238)
- By second week of **Feb 42**, GFM v. Kluge could finally make a more positive report about the situation of the five armies of his AGC.
The worst of the ten-week crisis was over.
(E. Mawdsley, *Thunder*, 123-24)

l) *Reasons for Soviet failure*

- Soviet counteroffensive of ***41/42** might well have destroyed AGC had Stalin not tried to do *too much too fast*. In **Jan 42**, Stalin was "incredibly overambitious and optimistic." (D. Glantz, *When Titans Clashed*, 91)
- The Soviet operations in the central theater had not been a success. Said Zhukov: "If you consider our losses and what results were achieved, it will be clear that it was a Pyrrhic victory." (E. Mawdsley, *Thunder*, 127)
- The maximum goal, destruction of AGC, had not been achieved, and neither had the more practical goal of getting back to the line held in **Sep 41** at the start of the German Operation "Typhoon." (For more details see, E. Mawdsley, *Thunder*, 127)
- Crux: It probably would have been impossible to trap German AGC, given the weather and the overall quantity and quality of Soviet forces. (*Thunder*, 129)

⁵⁵⁸ **Note:** In other words, the Wehrmacht never completely recovered from first **9-10** months of the Russian campaign.

XIII: STABILIZATION OF THE GERMAN FRONT (Feb-Apr 42)

Quote: “*April is the cruelest month, breeding lilacs out of the dead land; mixing memory and desire; stirring dull roots w/ spring rain.*” (T.S. Eliot)

Quote: “*Mein Gott, was waren das fuer Tage! . . . Das Menschen so etwas ueberhaupt ueberstehen! Selbst wir fassen das jetzt schon garnicht mehr. . .*“ (W. Heinemann, FPB, 14.2.42)⁵⁵⁹

Quote: „*Niemals wird man in Zukunft von deutschem Heldentum sprechen koennen, ohne mit an erster Stelle dieses barbarischen Winters am Wolchow u. bei Demjansk, bei Juchnow u. Rshew, am Donez u. bei Kertsch zu gedenken; u. durch die Jahrhunderte wird leuchten der Name, unter dem es sich bewaehrte: die Ostfront.*“ (Goebbels, Mar 42; R.G. Reuth, Goebbels, 499-500)

a) World Events (and impact on eastern front)

- **Mar 42:** This month brought the opening of the British bomber offensive. On the night of the 3rd the RAF bombed a Paris factory, leaving **800** dead. The next raid occurred on the night of **28 Mar 42** when **234** bombers dropped about **300** tons of incendiaries and high explosive on Luebeck. The old city centre was devastated; **320** civilians were killed. Luebeck was the first German town subjected to carpet bombing. Hitler said that the terror must be answered w/ terror but would not go so far as to accede to Jeschonnek's request to transfer acft from East to West. As a reprisal, Luftwaffe bombers based in northern France embarked on a series of attacks on English towns such as Exeter – the so-called Baedeker raids – but, lacking numbers, they failed to achieve an appropriate impact. (v. Below, At Hitler's Side, 145)
- **19.3.42** [Mobilisierung der Heimatfront]: An diesem Tage ging es zwischen Hitler u. Goebbels nicht nur um die Ostfront . . . sondern auch um die von Goebbels verfochtene totale Mobilisierung der „Heimatfront“. Vieles wurde zwischen beiden Maennern eroert, etwa die Einfuehrung der „Frauenarbeitspflicht“, in vielem stimmte Hitler seinem Minister zu, ohne dass es jedoch zu konkreten Schritten gekommen waere. . . Fuenf [**5**] Wochen nachdem Goebbels . . . das Hauptquartier verlassen hatte, um nach Berlin zurueckzukehren, liess sich Hitler am **26 Apr 42** vom Reichstag hierfuer eine Blankovollmacht geben. (R.G. Reuth, Goebbels, 500)
- **21.3.42:** On [this day], Hitler gave to Gauleiter Sauckel of Thuringia – ignoring Speer's preference for Karl Hanke, Gauleiter of Lower Silesia – the job of organizing the armaments workforce. As General Plenipotentiary for Industrial Employment responsible to the General Plenipotentiary for the Four-Year Plan, he had extensive powers to seek out, pool and distribute the workforce throughout the armaments industry. Sauckel's principal source was foreign forced labor, mainly workers from the East. What had originally been designed as a co-operative effort for Speer's benefit developed increasingly into a rivalry, since Sauckel, one of the oldest Gauleiters, knew that Hitler smiled kindly upon him. (v. Below, At Hitler's Side, 128, 145)

⁵⁵⁹ **Note:** W. Heinemann's FPB in early **Feb 42** illustrative of stabilization of front. Heinemann also illustrates another theme: feeling that the terrible experiences of the winter of **1941/42** had fundamentally changed those who survived it. (See his, *FPB*, 2.-3.2.42, latter passages.)

- **Mar-Apr 42:** By this time, Hitler and German High Command are already in planning stages for summer offensive in the east designed to bring the war to a successful conclusion. (See below; also, **III:630-31**)
- **7.5.42:** The British cabinet formally agrees that RAF Bomber Command was to destroy **58** of Germany's largest towns and cities, „dehousing at least **22** million people.“ (*Tooze, Wages of Destruction*, 510)

b) Status of the Combattants (Ostheer vs. Red Army)

Note: Eine besondere Rolle spielten in dieser Zeit die Erkrankungen durch Erfrierung, die im Winter **1941/42** die hohe Zahl von **228.000** erreichten. . . Die Sterblichkeit lag bei **1.55%**. (For more details, *Mueller-Hillebrand*, Bd. III, 28)

Note: Bei den Pferden setzte im **Jan 42** „das grosse Sterben“ ein. Vom **1.10.41** bis zum **15.3.42** gingen **179.609** Pferde verloren, waehrend nur **20.012** nachgeschoben werden konnten. Die Truppe half sich zwar durch die Aushebung von Pferden aus dem Lande. Diese sehr genuegsamen aber koerperlich schwachen Tiere konnten nur leichte Lasten ziehen u. kamen als Zugpferde fuer schwere Waffen u. Lasten nicht in Betracht. (*Mueller-Hillebrand*, Bd. III, 30)

Note: 35 corps and divisional cdrs were dismissed by Hitler during winter crisis (in addition, of course, to Brauchitsch, Bock, Guderian, Hoepner, etc.) (*J. Keegan, Second World War*, 206)

Note: Ueberschritten an der Ostfront in die vier [4] Monaten **Dez 41 – Mar 42** die „Abgaenge“ von der Truppe [i.e., Ostheeres] die „Zugaenge“ erheblich, naemlich bei H.Gr.Nord um **62.400**; bei H.Gr.Mitte um **256.500**; bei H.Gr.Sued um **17.400**. Insgesamt um **336.300**. (See, *B. Mueller-Hillebrand, Das Heer 1933-45*, Bd. III, 28)

- **Dec 41 – Feb 42:** Army Group Center receives total of only **9** new divisions during this three-month period (contrast w/ Soviets) (**III-636-37**)
In **Feb 42**, AGC received nearly **70 000** replacements, **3½** times as many as in the previous month. (For more details see, **III:686**)

- **Jan-Apr 42:** In the Soviet Rzhev-Viaz'ma operation, **1,059,000** forces are involved (at start of operation); they suffer **272,000** „permanent“ military losses during this period (i.e., killed, missing, POWs). These are **150,000** in Zhukov's Western Front and **120,000** in Konev's Kalinin Front. [Note: What about Northwestern and Briansk Fronts?] (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 119; 146)

- **Jan-Apr 42:** Glaring gaps exist in the historical record of the winter campaign of **1941/42**. The most serious of these is the absence of substantial accounts of the combat on the extreme flanks of the Moscow counteroffensive and elsewhere along the vast expanse of the Soviet-German front. These ops, which have been overlooked in the accounts written by Soviet and German historians alike, include three [3] major failed ops on southern flank of Battle of Moscow:

- Soviet Rzhev-Sychevka Offensive (**15 Feb – 1 Mar 42**)
- Soviet Orel-Bolkhov Offensive (**7 Jan – 18 Feb 42**)

- Soviet Bolkhov Offensive (24 Mar – 3 Apr 42)
- Soviet Oboian'-Kursk Offensive (3-26 Jan 42)

(D. Glantz, Soviet-German War: Myths & Realities, 24-25; also, **III:684-85**, for more details on these ops.)

- **28.2.42**: For table illustrating the material losses of the *Wehrmacht* from **1.12.41-28.2.42** see, "Tabelle 30, "*Waffenverluste nach dem Rueckzug vor Moskau*," in: B. Mueller-Hillebrand, *Das Heer 1933-45*, Bd. III, 29)
(Also figures for "Verluste u. Zuweisungen an Kfz im Bereich der Ostfront, Winter 1941/42," p 29)
- **Mar 42** [Ostheer]: „Im **Jun 41** galten rund zwei Drittel aller Divisionen [der *Wehrmacht*] als – wie es damals hiess – voll angriffsfaehig," erlaeutert Professor Bernd Wegner. „Im **Mar 42** waren es gerade noch 5%. Wir sehen daran, dass dieses Herr, dass **1941** zum Angriff angetreten war, im Grunde nicht mehr bestand." (Quoted in: G. Knopp, *Die Wehrmacht. Eine Bilanz*, 126)
- **Mar 42** [Ostheer]:⁵⁶⁰ Der Kampfwert der im Osten eingesetzten **162** Divisionen war bis **Mar 42** derart gesunken, dass nur noch **8** Divisionen als „voll angriffsfaehig," **3** erst nach Auffrischung als „angriffsfaehig," u. **47** gar nur als „begrenzt angriffsfaehig" galten; alle uebrigen konnten nur Aufgaben der Verteidigung erfuehlen. . . Die Verluste an Panzern u. Stugs waren bereits Ende **Jan 42** auf **4241** gestiegen, so dass die **16** Pz.-Div., die an der Ostfront kaempften, Ende **Mar 42** ueber insgesamt **140** einsatzbereite Panzer verfuegten. Die Stosskraft des Heeres hatte ihren Tiefststand erreicht. Wie bald ersichtlich wurde, konnte man nur mehr **9** Pz.-Div. vollstaendig auffuehlen, waehrend sich alle anderen mit nur einer Pz.-Abt., d.h. mit rund **50** Kampfwagen, begnuegen mussten. Bei den mot. Divisionen konnten nur **7** vollstaendig ausgeruestet werden. Besonders schwer wog der Ausfall an Kfz. Die *Luftwaffe* verzeichnete an der Ostfront bis Ende **Mar 42** **2700** Totalschaeden. (H. Magenheimer, *Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 224; also, *Reinhardt, Wende vor Moskau*, 258)
- **ca. Apr 42**: Even as Army Group Ctr's long, meandering front line was stabilized as the spring mud set in, the extent of the crippling wounds inflicted on the German army outside Moscow could not be disguised. Losses in men and materiel simply could not be made good, as evidenced by Hitler's decisions in rebuilding a new strike force for his projected summer campaign in southern Russia. To refurbish the panzer divisions for that offensive, those panzer divisions left along the northern and central fronts found their armored strength permanently cut to a single btn. The southern concentration also required stripping Army Groups North and Centre of hundreds of precious motor vehicles, rendering most infantry divisions functionally immobile. So many pieces of field artillery and prime movers had been lost that the batteries of the infantry divisions in Army Groups North and Centre suffered a reduction from four guns each to three. Manpower shortages affected the long-suffering infantry divisions the most. Intent upon raising new formations as Army Group South's divisions were refitted, Hitler essentially cut off all but a trickle of replacements to the regiments in the trenches. Commanders – from Model [**9 Army**] down to his division cdrs –

⁵⁶⁰ **Note:** One vital point is this – the *Wehrmacht* never recovered from the attrition it suffered in Russia from ca. **Jun 41 – Mar 42**.

took drastic measures to reinforce their frontline strength.⁵⁶¹ Rear-area units were “combed out” to find men fit for combat, often by replacing cooks, drivers, and other support personnel w/ indigenous Russian volunteers known as “Hiwis.” Reconnaissance, engineer, AT, and replacement btns. dwindled to company size (and sometimes disappeared completely) as more men found themselves in the infantry regiments. (*Newton, Hitler’s Commander*, 194-96)

- **30.4.42:** Die dt. Gesamtverluste im Ostfeldzug erreichten bis zum **30.4.42** eine Hoehe von **1.167.835** Mann (d.h. etwa ein Drittel des am **22.6.41** angetretenen Ostheeres). (*OKW KTB*, Bd II, *Einfuehrung*, 46)
- **6.6.42:** Das **OKW** konstatierte in seiner Denkschrift zur „*Wehrkraft der Wehrmacht im Fruehjahr 1942*“, dass „eine lueckenlose Auffrischung des gesamten Ostheeres zu voller Kampfbereitschaft u. Beweglichkeit weder personell noch materiell moeglich“ sei. („*Wehrkraft der Wehrmacht im Fruehjahr 1942*“, v. OKW v. 6.6.42 (Stand: Apr 42); quoted in: *Ueberschaer, Scheitern des Unternehmens Barbarossa*, 168)

c) *Milestones for Feb 42:*

- **Note:** GSWW, Vol. IV, 731, notes the “*remote, complicated [German] command structure*,” and that it “*restricted initiative*.” **OKH** and Hitler reserve right to make all decisions. (**III:694**)
- **Note:** Anfang **Feb 42** war an der gesamten Ostfront die akute Krise ueberstanden, auch wenn die Abwehrkaempfe noch eingie Monate andauerten u. es besonders bei Demjansk sowie im Bereich **4.Armee** noch manch bedrohliche Situation zu ueberstehen galt. (See, *J. Huerter, Hitlers Heerfuehrer*, 343; **IX:107**)
- **Feb 42:** Bizarre defensive lines held by AGC – *Lage Ost* maps for **Feb 42** look like the “work of an operations corporal gone mad.” It held a “welter of fronts going in all directions. . .” (See, **III:685**)
- **Feb 42:** German front finally stabilizing. At start of **Feb 42**, though AGC faced a multitude of dangers, the mortal crisis seemed to be fading.⁵⁶²
 - Model and **9. Army** close gap in front, cutting off much of Soviet **29. Army** west of Rzhev – Viaz’ma railway.
 - Heinrici and **4. Army** re-seals its eastern front and cut off Efremov’s **33. Army** and Belov’s **1 Gds Cav Corps**;
 - By end of month, GFM v. Kluge can finally make a more positive report about the situation of his **5** armies of his AGC;

⁵⁶¹ **Note:** As of **May 42**, **9 Army** had a reported infantry shortfall of about **28,400**, leaving it w/ just **46%** of its authorized strength in infantry.

⁵⁶² **Note:** From my readings, appears the dangers faced by AGC might have peaked in late **Jan 42**, only to recede by second week of **Feb 42** or so. Yet the threat to AGC in late **Jan 42** may be overstated, for the Red Army was by that time virtually exhausted.

- In mid-**Feb 42**, Hitler tells his army group cdrs that the „danger of a panic in the **1812** sense” has been eliminated.
 - Mit den Abwehrerfolgen bei Juchnow u. Rschew war der erste Schritt zum Aufbau einer neuen Verteidigungsfront getan. . . (**III:685-686**)
- **Feb 42:** AGC received nearly **70,000** replacements, **3½** times as many as in the previous month. But the number was still **40,000** short of those needed to cover the month’s losses, and the army group was left w/ a total deficit of **227,000** men for the period since **Dec 41**. The armies had received new men and returnees from hospitals as replacements for about **1 in 4** of their casualties. (Note: Counted in the losses were the frostbite cases and the dead, wounded, missing, and sick.) During **Jan-Feb 42**, the army group was also given **9** infantry divisions. Three [**3**] were Walkuere divisions; the others came from occupation duty in France and the Low Countries, and all were untrained for winter warfare. Most had to be committed piecemeal by btns and rgts as they arrived, and their artillery and other non-infantry components were left to make their way forward “on foot,” which meant by whatever means they could devise other than on the already swamped and all but paralyzed railroads. The Elefant and Christophorus programs which were supposed to have brought in thousands of trucks and other vehicles from all over Europe had been completed, but only about **25** out of every **100** vehicles reached the front. The other **¾** had broken down and were awaiting repairs or had become snowed or frozen in on the roads back to Poland. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 177)
- **Feb 42:** Early in **Feb 42**, the Soviet Western Theater HQ was revived, under Zhukov, to co-ordinate the attack of Kalinin and Western Fronts. In mid-**Feb 42**, the Stavka again ordered Zhukov to destroy the Rzhev-Viaz'ma group of the enemy, this time by **5 Mar 42**. The offensive made little progress. The mobile phase of the campaign was over, w/ the Soviet front stalled and w/ the greater part of **3** Soviet armies (**29, 33** and **39 Armies**) trapped behind enemy lines. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 124)
- **Feb 42:** Die russ. Kraefte hatten sich erschoept u. ungeheure Verluste erlitten. Mit dem erfolgreichen Absetzen in die „Winterstellung“ u. den Abwehrerfolgen bei Juchnow u. Rschew war der erste Schritt zum Aufbau einer neuen Verteidigungsfront getan; die dt. Fuehrung, die weitere Verstaerkungen noch im Laufe des **Feb 42** erwarten konnte, sah die aergste Gefahr ueberwunden. (*Hofmann, “Schlacht von Moskau,”* 179)
- **1.2.42:** On [this day], the Stavka reactivated the HQ, Western Theater, giving Zhukov control of all operations against Army Group Centre. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 170)
- **1.2.42:** **59 AK** incorporated into **3 Pz Army**. The panzer army holds Soviet attacks before Vitebsk. . . HQ, **3 Pz Army**, shifted west by air as all roads are blocked, takes command in sector Velikiye Luki – Belyy. [sp?] (**III:687**)
- **1.2.42:** Soviet **4 Shock Army** had headed south out of Toropets w/o cover on its flanks and running on captured supplies. At first, as far as fighting was concerned, the going was relatively easy in a roadless wilderness that the Germans had, in fact, never thoroughly occupied; but AGC was receiving reinforcements that it would rather have used farther east but which it could divert to occupy Velizh, Demidov, Dukhovshchina, and Belyy. For the effort at Velizh, the army group employed a security division and two infantry divisions. One

of the latter was the **330 ID** – a **Walkuere** division⁵⁶³ hastily put together from overage officers and NCOs and recent recruits from the Replacement Army. But the three [3] divisions were enough to force Eremenko to carry out several exhausting sieges in the dead of winter. . . . On **1 Feb 42**, HQ, **3 Pz Army** was shifted west – by air because all roads were blocked – to take command of the sector from Velikiye Luki to Belyy and to engage **4 Shock Army** in a duel that would last the rest of the winter. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 170-71)

- **2.2.42:** Rege Partisanenkämpfe hinter der Front, die durch Fallschirmabtl. verstärkt werden. (**III:688**)
- **2.2.42:** Halder believes the worst is over. (For details see, his KTB; **III:688**)
- **3.2.42:** Demidow, Welish u. Wel-Luki wurden vergeblich von fdl. Kräften angegriffen. (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 176)
- **3.2.42:** Eine wesentliche Erleichterung der Lage an der Front der H.Gr.Mitte trat erst ein, als es am **3 Feb 42** gelang, die **4 Armee** u. die **4 Pz Armee** wieder zu vereinigen (an der Strasse Juchnow – Gshatsk) u. als es der **9 Armee** glückte, **7** sowj. Div. westl. Rschew einzuschliessen u. im Laufe der nächsten **14** Tage aufzureiben. (**III:688-89**)
- **3.2.42:** At the end of **Jan 42**, Heinrici's **4 Army** and Ruoff's **4 Pz Army** mounted a desperate push north and south along the Yukhnov-Gzhatsk road. To get the troops, Heinrici had, after much arguing w/ Kluge and Hitler, taken his front back to where it barely still covered Yukhnov. On the morning of **3 Feb 42**, **XII AK** going north and **20 PD** coming south „bridged the gap.“⁵⁶⁴ A bridge was all it was. Soviet **33 Army** stood on the west and **43 Army** on the east; the two in places were no more than **3** or **4** miles apart. In the meantime, other bridges had been opened, and convoys were moving again on the Rollbahn – and on the highway west of Vyazma. For the moment, the most dangerous gaps were closed, and AGC's vital arteries were functioning. For Soviet **29**, **39 Armies** and the two [2] cavalry corps it was beginning to look like the entrapment was becoming a trap. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 171)
- **ab 3.2.42:** The prospects of **4 Army** and **4 Pz Army** for the future looked somewhat brighter after they bridged the gap between them on **3 Feb 42**, even though the bridge was narrow, and the enemy was behind as well as in front of them. They now had a continuous front for the first time in weeks, which was a relief for them and apparently a disconcerting surprise for the Russians. . . Encouraged, **4 Pz Army** first shifted **5 PD** in position to set up a perimeter defense around Vyazma and then brought in the HQ, **5 PzK** [or **AK?**]. At mid-month, having temporarily acquired elements of another panzer division and two [2] infantry divisions, **V PzK** [**V AK?**] was getting ready to encircle and drive inward on Soviet **33 Army**, which was standing still SE of Vyazma; but by then the Stavka had issued its order to renew the offensive. (**Note:** For details of this fighting, including the landing by waves of transport acft of some **3000** Soviet troops on **19-20 Feb 42** south of Vyazma see, *Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 179-80)

⁵⁶³ **Note:** My be instructive to add something to narrative about establishment of this division, its combat role, etc. Check by **330 ID** division file for material.

⁵⁶⁴ **Note:** In other words, apparently the long-standing and dangerous gap between the two armies was finally closed.

- **3.-17.2.42:** Intense fighting in sector of **3 Pz Army**, around Velizh – Demidov – Velikiye Luki – Surazh, etc., in -40 C. temperatures. German Group Sinzinger distinguishes itself in this fighting. (III:689-93, 696)
- **4.2.42:** Die beiden Angriffskeile [i.e., **4 Armee**, **4 Pz Armee**] zur Schliessung der Luecke **45** km westl. Medyn haben Verbindung aufgenommen. (III:690)
- **4.2.42:** . . . An der Rollbahn starkes fdl. Artl.Feuer, Lage gespannt. . . Die beiden Angriffskeile zur Schliessung der Luecke **45** km westl. Medyn haben Verbindung aufgenommen. Der suedwestl. Wjasma vorgehende Feind (Partisanen) wird von einer Panzerformation umfassend angegriffen. . . Vergebl. Angriffe noerdl. u. nordwestl. Rshew, bei dem **4** fdl. Panzer vernichtet wurden. Zwischen Rshew u. Cischewka wurde der Angriff trotz fdl. starker Fliegertaetigkeit weiter nach Westen vorgetragen, **19 Ortschaften** wurden genommen. Von der bei Dimidow eingeschlossenen Kampfgruppe keine Meldungen. . . Vergebl. Angriffe auf Welisch. (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 178)
- **4.2.42:** As Soviet situation around Vyazma deteriorates, Zhukov orders a general attack upon the town in effort to smash thru German defenses. The **11 Cav Corps**, only **6** miles to the west, is unable to make any progress, while to the south and SE, **Group Belov** and **33 Army** fight in encirclement. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 212)
- **6.2.42:** Bei Wjasma erfolgreiche Beschaeftigung der Partisanen. (III:691)
- **6.2.42:** The **4 Shock Army** launches strong attacks on Velizh, almost succeeding in breaking into the centre, but Group Sinzinger repels the attack after close quarters fighting. Germans are hampered by extreme cold, lack of food, warming clothing, and ammunition; Sinzinger's men are becoming weaker w/ each passing day. Army Group Ctr resolves that the situation must be restored as quickly as possible and both Demidov and Velizh relieved. Heavy fighting in Rzhev and Vyazma sectors continues unabated as Germans increase pressure on the encircled Soviet units. **3** and **4 Shock Armies** have lost **10,400** killed and missing and **18,810** wounded during the month-long Toropetz-Kholm offensive operation. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 212-13)
- **ab 6.2.42:** With Soviet exhaustion and the coming spring *rasputitsa*, action along the Army Group Center front began to resemble World War One positional warfare. On **6 Feb 42** von Kluge ordered Schmidt to change directions to the NW and attack to close the hole in army group lines at Kirov. But with only **45** operational panzers and **XXIV PzK** stuck in exposed positions fewer that **10** km from Sukhinichi, this was impossible. A month later von Kluge and Schmidt met and agreed to withdraw from the Belev and Sukhinichi salients, which indeed happened by early **Apr 42**. . . (*Kirchubel, Draft*, 27)
- **6.-8/13.-15./20.2.42:** See, *Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*⁵⁶⁵ for **Feb 42** for examples of how Soviet forces butchered in winter battles. (III:691-95, 698)
Examples from *personal accounts* of German soldiers?
- **7.2.42:** German **59 AK** attempts to relieve the encircled *Kampfgruppen* at Velizh and Demidov, elements of **4 Shock Army** fighting fiercely near Dukhovschina. **3 Pz Army** is unable to support **59 AK**. . . (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 213)

⁵⁶⁵ **Note:** These secret "Berichte" also repeatedly illustrate the vital role played by German artillery in holding the front in winter **41/42**.

- **8.2.42:** Red Army presses **59 AK** hard as fighting intensifies at Velizh, Demidov, Dukhovschina and Velikiye Luki. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 214)
- **8.2.42:** Wegen der gespannten Lage bei Juchnow werden Panzerkraefte dorthin zugefuehrt. Um Wjasma noch Partisanenkaempfe. . . (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 186)
- **10.2.42:** . . . The **4 Shock Army** conducts a costly assault upon Velizh.⁵⁶⁶ After furious combat, Soviets push into the town, but a counterattack by Group Sinzinger throws them back. **3 Pz Army** begins its relief attack toward Velizh but progress is slow. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 215)
- **10.-12.2.42:** Kaempfe mit Partisanen um Wjasma halten an. (**III:692-93**)
- **10.2.-14.4.42 (292. ID / Gefechtsbericht):** Excellent example of status of a German infantry division on eastern front at this time. For example: „Die Gefechtsstaerken sind ausserordentlich abgesunken: Kpen., die wengier als **30 Koepfe** zaehlen, sind keine Seltenheit. Zudem bestehen bereits laengst nicht mehr alle kriegsgliederungsmaessig zur Division gehoerigen Inf.-Einheiten: **III./IR 507** [und] **I./IR 508** mussten aufgeloeset werden, nachdem im **Nov 41** bereits das **IR 509** aufgeloeset worden war. Bei den noch vorhandenen Btlnen. gibt es nur **2** Schtz.-Kpen., diese bestehen wiederum nur aus **2** Schtz.-Zuegen. Infolge dieser Schwaeche der Infanterie ist der infanteristische Einsatz der Pz.Jg.Kp. u. der Radfahr-Schwadron noetig geworden. . .“ (**VIII:219-20**)
- **12.2.42:** On [this day], GFM v. Kluge submitted his first situation estimate in two months in which he had no imminent disasters to report. Dangers existed aplenty, but the armies were back on their feet, and the Soviet effort was becoming dispersed. It was not the end, but Kluge expected the next round to be fought on better terms. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 171-72)
- **12.2.42:** Mit Erleichterung konstatierte die Weisung des **OKH** „*fuer die Kampffuehrung im Osten nach Abschluss des Winters*“, vom **12 Feb 42**, dass . . . der feindl. Ansturm doch noch „zum Stehen gebracht“ worden war. (See, **III:626**)
- **12.2.42:** The **4 Shock Army** keeps Group Sinzinger pinned down in Velizh w/ repeated infantry and tank assaults. Relief attacks toward the town continue but make slow progress in deep snow amid concerted Russian counterattacks. Farther east, **9 Army** is involved in heavy fighting around Rzhev and Olenino. Germans strike **29** and **39 Armies**, while the Kalinin Front attempts to smash those German units in the exposed Olenino salient. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 215)
- **12.2.42 [Juchnow]:** . . . **4 Armee:** Heftige Feindangriffe mit Panzern u. Unterstuetzung von Raketengeschuetzen auf die Stellungen um Juchno. Der Feind wird ueberall abgewehrt . . . Suedl. u. westl. Wjasma Partisanenkaempfe. . . (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 193)
- **12.2.42:** The enemy forces identified on **12 Feb 42** behind **4 Pz Army** in the area of Vyazma, and esp. along the railway line from Vyazma westward, may not have been able to mount any major independent ops, but fighting them was difficult. Recruitment from the local population

⁵⁶⁶ **Note:** Appears that there was furious fighting for town of Velizh in early **Feb 42**.

led to strong concentrations, esp. in the area of Bryansk. On **21 Jan 42**, **4 Army** [Heinrici] had reacted to this situation by ordering the immediate strengthening of the defenses of all supply installations and transport centres, and the detention and imprisonment of all male residents between **16- 50** years of age. They were to be released after the area had been pacified. In addition to fighting units in the rear area, which would be combined in **Mar 42** under the cdr of Rear Army Area Centre [Koruek] to form a „Group Schenckendorff“ (parts of **10** and **11 PD** still in fighting condition, the staff of **221 Div** w/ troops), mounted detachments and the already approved „native“ security forces were organized. (For policy re: treatment of captured Soviet partisans see, *GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 733-34)

- **13.12.42:** Despite repeated, fierce enemy attacks, the situation of **2 Pz Army** stabilized, and isolated thrusts led to defensive successes. . . Tactical planning of the army concentrates on closing gaps in the front. With a total of **45** battle-ready tanks – and **44** undergoing repairs – nothing more could be expected. (See, **III:694**)

- **13.2.42** [Anecdote]: In spite of repeated, fierce enemy attacks, the situation of 2 Pz Army stabilized, and isolated thrusts led to defensive successes against the Soviet **61 Army** in the sector of **XXXXVII PzK**. On **13 Feb 42**, information was received from spies that Soviet **3 Army** was going to suspend its attack. Optimism resulting from the belief that the situation was now under control became so strong that arguments between the commands of the panzer army and the army group on **13 Feb 42** were no longer concerned w/ a withdrawal but w/ an offensive operation against Kirov; however, no clear orders could be obtained as the **OKH** and Hitler reserved the right to make all decisions. Col-Gen Schmidt commented : „Difficile est, satiram non scribe.“ [*It is difficult not to write a satire.*] The tactical planning of the army concentrated on closing the gaps in the front. With a total of **45** combat-ready tanks and an additional **44** undergoing repairs, and w/ the troops exhausted and battle-weary, while replacements were often not ready for action, nothing more could be expected. . . Again, the remote, complicated command structure restricted initiative. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 731)

- **14.2.42** [Juchnow]: Vergebl. Ausbruchsversuche der eingeschlossenen Teile westl. Juchno an der Rollbahn. (Teile von **5 Schuetzendiv.**, **2 Pz.Brig.**, **7 Panzern** ohne Betriebsstoff.) Der Feind versucht auch heute wieder vergeblich die Stellungen um Juchno zu durchbrechen. Angriffe von Westen her kosteten dem Gegner **350** Tote u. **220** Gefang. . . (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 196)

- **mid-Feb 42:** In mid-Feb 42, the Stavka again orders Zhukov⁵⁶⁷ to destroy the German Rzhev – Viaz'ma group, this time by **5 Mar 42**. The offensive makes little progress. The mobile phase of the campaign was over, w/ three Soviet armies (**29**, **33** and **39**) trapped behind German lines. (**III:686-88**)

- **mid-Feb 42:** Danger to the outer wings of AGC has by now been warded off; yet threatening situations still develop, esp. for **4. Army**. (**III:695**)

- **16.2.42:** The **59 AK** repulses Soviet attacks towards Surazh, but at Demidov **4 Shock Army** pushes into the town. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 216)

⁵⁶⁷ **Note:** On **1 Feb 42**, Stavka reactivated the HQ, Western Theater, giving Zhukov control of all operations against AGC. (**III:687**)

- **16.2.42 [Stalin still attacking]:** By now, Army Group Ctr's retreat had ended, and the Soviet armies had been seriously weakened and were losing their offensive capabilities; but the Stavka's appetite for victory was still strong. On **16 Feb 42**, it directed Zhukov "to mobilize all the strength of the Kalinin and West Fronts for the final destruction of Army Group Ctr." He was to smash the enemy in the Rzhev-Vyazma-Yukhnov area and drive west another **60 miles** by **5 Mar 42** to the line of Olenino, the Dnepr River, and Yelnya. The armies of his left flank were to "liquidate" the enemy in the Bolkhov-Zhizdra-Bryansk area and take Bryansk. . . Any fresh effort was going to demand new muscle [and] the Stavka again reached into its reserves. . . [Yet] the reinforcements probably did not add strength commensurate to their numbers. The quality of Soviet reserves, which had not been high in **Dec 41**, had declined progressively during the winter. They would also be facing an enemy whose morale was picking up simply because he had survived thus far. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 176)

- **ab 16.2.42: Kirov operation** – Because Soviet partisans being supplied thru the Kirov gap were endangering the **4 Army Rollbahn**, **2 Pz Army**, at Kluge's insistence, began an attack toward Kirov on **16 Feb 42**. Objective was to close the gap.⁵⁶⁸ (See, *Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 178-79; **III:695-96**)

- **17.2.42:** German relief force from Velikiye Luki links up w/ Group Sinzinger at Velizh. Yet **4 Shock Army** remained at the gates, making an all-out effort to overrun the garrison before it could be reinforced. **4 Shock** also attempted to overcome Demidov, but again the Germans parry each attack. . . The next phase of Zhukov's attack begins as **14 Airborne Bde** is dropped west of Yukhnov. Losses are again heavy, w/ many men being scattered upon landing. Over next few days, Russians will continue to drop Paras into the Yukhnov area. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 216)

- **17.-20.2.42 [Soviet airborne ops]:** Zhukov, as commander of the „Western Theater,” instructed the **22, 30 and 39 Armies** of the Kalinin Front to take the Olenino area; and the **43, 49 and 50 Armies** of the Western Front to capture Yukhnov: the “new” **16 and 61 Armies** on the left wing would take Bryansk. When these assignments were complete, the main body of the Western and Kalinin Fronts would close in on Vyazma and Rzhev, and thus finally eliminating Army Group Centre.

At the same time, Zhukov sprang his major parachute operation: the whole of **4 Parachute Corps** (**9, 2, 14 Parachute Bdes** and one btn. of **8 Para Bde**) was to be dropped west of Yukhnov to break the enemy front from the rear, Boldin's **50 Army** was given orders to attack in conjunction w/ **4 Para Corps**. On the night of **17 Feb 42**, **20** transport acft, flying singly, took out the lead elements of **14 Bde**. **19** planes turned back having failed to find the DZ, and only one plane dropped its paratroopers though not at the right spot, since a partisan-held area had been selected for the drop and bonfires were used to signal but the Germans too lit bonfires which put the pilots off their marks. Nevertheless, by the morning of **20 Feb 42**, **6988** paratroopers had been dropped, time also for German units to assemble to surround the parachute detachments, of which only half managed to form up, short of wpns, ammunition and heavy equipment. . . On **17 Feb 42**, as Zhukov hurled in the paratroopers to finish off the Yukhnov battle and to bridge the isolation between **1 Gds Cav Corps** and **33 Army** inside the German perimeter, and **49 and 50 Armies** outside it, General Model succeeded in encircling the **29 Army** west of Rzhev. . . (*J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 323-24)

⁵⁶⁸ **Note:** The Kirov gap was still open as of late-**Mar 42**.

- **18.2.-3.6.42: Anecdote:**⁵⁶⁹ **4 AOK & Yukhnov**. Situation of **4 Army** at this time reveals that both its flanks were still weak; its centre jammed into a round-nosed bulge around Yukhnov. Beset everywhere and enmeshed in a constant battle for the Rollbahn, Gen Heinrici on **18 Feb 42** proposed giving up Yukhnov in favor of a shorter line behind the Ugra River 10 miles to the west. . . On **1 Mar 42**, to Heinrici's astonishment [he was at Rastenburg, East Prussia, meeting w/ Hitler] Hitler gave his approval at once, explaining that now whether the army went 5 miles forward or backward was no longer important to him. . . **4 Army** evacuated Yukhnov on **3 Mar 42**, and went behind the Ugra on the 6th, which did not solve its problems but raised the prospects of at least surviving after the onset of the rasputitsa. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 180-81; **III:697-98**)
- **22.2.42:** A [German] relief attack toward Demidov gets underway. . . (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 217)
- **26.2.42:** Heavy fighting takes place at Velizh, as **4 Shock Army** attacks repeatedly. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 217)
- **27.2.42:** German relief attack towards Demidov is successful, as garrison is relieved. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 217)
- **28.2.42:** Germans launch a strong counterattack at Demidov, forcing back Soviet **4 Shock Army**. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 218)
- **28.2.42: 2 Pz Armee:** Suedl. u. nordl. Mzensk griff der Feind in mehreren Wellen mit Panzern an u. wurde unter erheblichen Verluste abgeschlagen.⁵⁷⁰ Partisanen unterbrachen suedl. Bjansk an mehreren Stellen die Bahn. Wetter: **-10 bis -15 Grad**. Starker Nordostwind, Schneeverwehungen. **4 Armee:** Ein Feindangriff ostw. Demenskoje wurde abgewehrt. Auf die Stellungen um Juchnow staerkere fdl. Angriffe u. starkes Artl.-Feuer. . . Der Kampf mit Partisanen im Hintergelaende war fuer den Feind sehr verlustreich. . . Zwischen Sytschewka u. Wjasma konnte die dort stehende Div. durch Angriff nach Westen bis in Gegend Borky vorstossen u hat in den letzten Tagen **65** Feinddoerfer genommen.⁵⁷¹ (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 213)
- **Feb-Apr 42 [19 PD / Rollbahnkaempfe bei Jekaterinowka]:** This is virtually "incandescent" example of the vital role played by German artillery in fending off disaster during Winter **1941/42**. Report notes, *inter alia*: "Die Russen hatten ihren Angriff mit **8000 bis 10.000** Mann vorgetragen. Wir verschossen an diesem Tage **1700** Schuss Haubitzengranaten u. **60** Schuss Moerser. Mit Hilfe dieses Feuers konnte die Hauptstosskraft des Angriffs gebrochen werden. Alle diese Angriffe trug der Russe aus einem kleinen Waeldchen heraus vor, das . . . als Bereitstellungsraum diente. Wollten wir uns vor Ueberraschungen schuetzen, mussten wir dieses Waeldchen „ausraeuchern.“ Zu diesem Zweck bauten wir in Fomino-Nord, direkt neben der Rollbahn, lange Holzgestellreihen mit schweren Wurfgeraeten (Raketen) im Kaliber von **32 cm** auf, die wir im Gegensatz zu den Stalinorgeln „Hitlerklaviere“ nannten. Diese Wurfkoerper enthielten nicht nur normale Sprengsaetze sondern auch Flammoel. . . In den wenigen Tagen der Abwehrkaempfe Ende **Mar 42** verschossen die Haubitzen **12.375**, die

⁵⁶⁹ **Note:** Terrific example of how Hitler's anxieties vis-à-vis the Ostfront had finally been relieved.

⁵⁷⁰ **Note:** **2 Pz Army** still fighting around Mzensk (on the Zusha River). Army is also ensconced along the Oka River, I believe.

⁵⁷¹ **Note:** Believe this is reference to Model's "Schnecken-Offensive."

Kanonen **3045**, die Moerser⁵⁷² **90** Schuss. . . Der Munitionsverbrauch auf deutscher Seite betrug in diesen Gefechten allein Ende **Apr 42** insgesamt: I.F.H. (**39.330**) Schuss; s.F.H. (**16.080**); 10-cm Kanone (**7.410**); s.Gr.W. (**17.355**); 21-cm Moerser (**1.355**); etc. (See, *R. Hinze*, 19. Inf.- u. Pz.-Div., 284-314; **VIII:220-27**)

d) *Milestones for Mar 42:*

Note: Even this late in the winter battle, Stalin refuses to let go of firm belief he was on the cusp of total victory!

Note: Spring '42 – Mass die Front der H.Gr.Mitte nicht weniger als **1400** km Laenge, davon **600** km „innere Front“ im Ruecken der H.Gr. (**III:704**)

Note: In **Mar-Apr 42**, Stalin, Stavka and General Staff remain convinced that German summer offensive will once again come in central sector, toward Moscow. Even when Stalin had in his own hands the operational orders for Operation “Blau,” he continued to believe the German drive south was merely a feint. (**III:705**)⁵⁷³

-- **Jan-Mar 42:** Ueber den bereits erwaehten, gegen Ende der Sommeroffensive durchgefuehrten Kraefteaustausch hinaus [p 19] wurden im **Jan** bis **Mar 42** dem Osten **17** Inf.-Div. zugefuehrt. (For complete list of divisions see, *Mueller-Hillebrand*, Das Heer 1933-45, Bd. III, 31)

-- **Mar 42:** Kampfwert des Ostheeres. (See, **III:627**)

-- Status of Soviet counteroffensive (*L. Hart*, quoted in: **III:628**)

-- **Mar 42:** German “Sneckenoffensive” in Rzhev sector vs. Soviet **39 Army** – **6 PD**, etc. – continues at least thru this month. (**III:699**, f.n. 438)

-- **Mar 42:** *Goebbels* erkannte [in Hitlers Willen u. endgueltigen Sieg im Winterkampf] . . . den „Triumph des Willens“ (**III:628**)

-- **Mar 42:** During early **Mar 42**, the fighting started to die down, w/ the Germans strongly and firmly entrenched w/ secure communications to Vyazma and Orel. (*Seaton*, Russo-German War, 239)

-- **Mar 42:** Nachdem die sowjet. Winteroffensive im Bereich der H.Gr.Mitte Ende **Feb/Anfang Mar 42** im grossen unter dt. Kontrolle gekommen war, genehmigte Hitler den Antrag des H.Gr.Kdos., die Front von Juchnow bis zur Bahn Wjasma – Kaluga hinter die Ugra zurueckzunehmen, um Reserven zu gewinnen. Hitler erklarte dabei dem OB der **4 Armee**, General Heinrici, „dass er bewusst starrkoepfig auf dem Halten jedes Fussbreits Boden bestanden habe, um ein Rueckwaertsgleiten des Ostheeres zu verhindern. Jetzt komme es auf **10** km vorwaerts oder rueckwaerts nicht mehr an.“ (*KTB AOK 4*, 2.3.42; quoted in: *OKW KTB*, Bd II, *Einfuehrung*, 41-42)

⁵⁷² **Note:** Moerser = Howitzers of caliber **210** mm and larger.

⁵⁷³ **Note:** This entry includes information on Soviet intelligence apparatus, “Lucy,” Ultra, etc.

- **Mar 42:** After heavy fighting at beginning of month, Soviet **43, 49** and **50 Armies** succeed in cutting off the Yukhnov salient and taking the town itself, but they fail in attempt to link up w/ troops of **33 Army, I Gds Cav Corps**, and the airborne units trapped SW of Vyazma. Yet Soviet High Command not impressed by failures of the increasingly weakened Soviet armies. Stalin remained *convinced that success was bound to come*. As late as **20 Mar 42** he categorically demanded that the German armies fighting in the Olenino – Rzhev – Vyazma area be annihilated. . . (See, **III:700-01**)

- **1.3.42: 2 Pz Armee:** . . . Im rueckwaertigen Gelaende in der Gegend Druptschewsk, Brjansk wurden in der Zeit vom **1 – 23 Feb 42** **32** Buergermeister mit **25** Familienmitgliedern u. **100** Einwohnern vom Ordnungsdienst von den Partisanen ermordet. Eigene Verluste bei den Partisanenkaempfen in dieser Zeit: **60** Tote, **24** Verwundete. (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 215)

- **2.3.42:** . . . NW Rschew griffen fdl. Batl., vermischt mit Skiverbaenden, die eigenen Stellungen an. Der Angriff brach unter schweren Feindverlusten zusammen. . . Westl. u. SW Sytschewka konnten eigene Panzerverbaende im Vorgehen nach Westen wieder mehrere Ortschaften nehmen. (*Mehner, Geheime Tagesberichte*, 217)

- **3.3.42:** Halder bezeichnete den gesamten Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion als „den Krieg des Willens.“ (*Niederschrift von Gen. Hossbach v. 13.7.51 ueber Gespraech mit Halder v. 3.3.42*, quoted in: *Ueberschaer, Scheitern des Unternehmens “Barbarossa*, 160)

- **4.3.-15.4.42 [35 ID]:**⁵⁷⁴ Anfang **Mar 42** verdichteten sich die Anzeichen eines neuen Vorstosses vor dem Abschnitt der Division. In den letzten Wochen [i.e., **Feb 42**] waren mehrere hundert Mann Ersatz eingetroffen, die Verbaende konnten etwas aufgefuellt werden, u. so sah man mit Zuversicht den neuen Kaempfen entgegen. Am **4 Mar 42** begann der neue Grossangriff, der von den Russen mit **7** Schuetzendivisionen, **6** Schuetzen-Bde u. **2** Pz.-Bde gefuehrt wurde. Mehrere Einbrueche in die **HKL** konnten durch Gegenangriffe bereinigt werden. Heftiges feindl. Artilleriefeuer u. laufende Fliegerangriffe erschwerten die Verteidigung. Mehrere Gelaendeabschnitte wechselten mehrmals den Besitzer. Am **19 Mar 42** flauten die Kaempfe ab. Bis auf kleine Gelaendeverluste konnte die Stellung gehalten werden. Der Gegner hatte Tausende von Toten verloren, aber auch die eigenen Verluste wog schwer. Mehrmals mussten Trosse u. rueckwaertige Dienste an der Front eingesetzt werden.

Einen besonderen Anteil am Abwehrerfolg hatte auch unsere Artillerie. Bis zu **5000** Schluss taeglich stieg der Munitionsverbrauch. Am **15 Apr 42** war der grossangelegte Durchbruchversuch, der den Durchbruch bis Gshatsk bringen sollte, endgueltig gescheitert. Es fanden statt: **221** Angriffe [der Russen] in Kompanie- bis Divisionsstaerke, davon **78** mit Panzerunterstuetzung von zwei [2] bis zu **10** Panzer. Feindtote etwa **10.000**, Gefangene zwei [2] Offiziere, **651** Mann. Die eigenen Verluste in dieser Zeit⁵⁷⁵ betrugen: gefallen, **12** Offiziere u. **411** Uffz. u. Mannschaften; verwundet, **26** bzw. **1251**; vermisst, **1** bzw. **134**.

⁵⁷⁴ **Note:** This significant entry illustrative of fact that, while the combat in central sector had died down, in some spots furious fighting continued. Again, this entry makes my point on the vital role played by German artillery and other hvy wpns.

⁵⁷⁵ **Note:** While implied, not entirely clear that the figures given for number of Russian attacks, losses, etc. are strictly for period from early **Mar 42** to mid-**Apr 42**. Look at Baumann’s divisional history of the **35 ID** to confirm details.

(*Kameradendienst 35 e.V.*, *35. Inf.-Div.*, 104-05; see also, **D-285**: “*The 35. ID Between Moscow & Gzhatsk (Dec 41 – Apr 42)*.” Gen Rudolf v. Roman)

-- **5.3.42**: The Soviet West Front captures Yukhnov after bitter fighting. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 219)

-- **10.-24.3.42** [Spring thaw]: While **4 Army** withdrew to the Ugra [early **Mar 42**] – which also shortened its bridge w/ **4 Pz Army** – **5 PD** was mopping up part of **1 Gds Cav Corps** in a pocket south of Vyazma. Looking to build on that success, **V PzK** [AK?] was again beginning to lay an encirclement around Soviet **33 Army**. The **5 PD** finished its movement on **10 Mar 42** in the midst of a snowstorm and started to turn to move in on **33 Army** from the west. Although snow was not a novelty by then, this late winter downfall was an event *not even the local people had ever seen before*. It began on the **10th**, and by **1200** on the **12th** reached such an intensity that every kind of movement stopped. Drifts piled up in minutes and made plowing and shoveling totally useless. The **5 PD** was buried in its tracks. The **4 Pz Army** staff could barely keep contact between its sections which were housed in separate buildings along the village street in Boznnya, **8 miles east of Vyazma. Drifts covered the street and the buildings to beyond the tops of the doors [!].**

The storm at last subsided enough for the digging out to begin on the **16th**. Eight [8] days later, when the roads were about cleared, the thaw set in. Under warm sunshine the snow melted. The roads became torrents of water, their surfaces broken by potholes as much as several feet deep that froze at night into sheets of slick ice. Corpses of men, animal cadavers, garbage, and human waste that had been frozen for weeks and could not have been buried in any case began to thaw, thus adding to the troops discomfort and raising the threat of an epidemic. Since the full-blown rasputitsa could not be long in coming, it appeared that the active phase of the winter's ops was over, especially after Army Group Ctr ordered **5 PD** to begin assembling at Vyazma on the **24th** for transfer to **9 Army**.⁵⁷⁶ But as melting snow and ice filled the low areas, of which there were many, w/ waist-deep water, the fighting flared up once more. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 181-82)

-- **20.3.42**: Supreme Command HQ, however, was not impressed by the failures of the increasingly weakening Soviet armies. Stalin remained *convinced that success was bound to come*, if not today then surely tomorrow. As late as **20 Mar 42** he categorically demanded that the German armies fighting in the Olenino-Rzhev-Vyazma area be annihilated and the line Belyy-Dorogobuzh-Yelnya-SW of Bryansk reached by **20 Apr 42**. Against their own better judgement, Zhukov and the Western Front HQ passed on these demands to the armies under their command and called for ceaseless attacks, which, as was later admitted, „only cost pointless casualties.“ (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 926-27; also, **III:703**)

-- **20.3.42** [Spring thaw]: Another major offensive directive followed from the Stavka on **20 Mar 42**, which Zhukov found foolish and wasteful, as the spring rasputitsa was about to set in. The rasputitsa in **Oct 41** came from the autumn rains, but the rasputitsa in the last weeks of **Mar 42** was more elemental. The melting of the winter's snowfall was combined w/ the gradual thawing of the sodden ground which had been frozen to a depth of several meters.

⁵⁷⁶ **Note**: On **28 Mar 42**, Army Group Ctr decided to leave **5 PD** at **4 Pz Army** to restore control over the road west of Vyazma, which was again threatened by the renewed Soviet offensive, and, after that, to complete the long-projected encirclement of **33 Army**. (182)

For up to **2** months, movement was very difficult, esp. on unpaved roads. (*E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 124)

- **24.3.42**: The encircled Soviet **33 Army** and Group Belov are ordered to fight their way out and effect a junction w/ **50 Army**. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 220)
- **28.3.42**: Der von Hitler geforderte Sommeroffensive **1942** war zum ersten Mal am **28 Mar 42** Gegenstand einer Besprechung im FHQu. (**III:630**)
- **31.3.42**: Frontpfeiler Belew: Nachdem man den Frontpfeiler bei Belew an diesem Tage „abgeschraegt“ u. den Anschluss zum Suedfluegel der **4 Armee** hergestellt hatte, gewann die **2 Pz Armee** endliche eine geschlossene, relativ begradigte Front, die weiteren Angriffen standhielt. Wie verbissen der Gegner versucht hatte, den Frontpfeiler bei Belew zum Einsturz zu bringen u. die Oka-Stellung zu durchbrechen, um endlich nach Orel vorzustossen, unterstreichen die enormen Verluste der Brjanskfront von rund **100.000** Mann, die sie zwischen Anfang **Jan 42** u. Anfang **Apr 42** erlitt. (*H. Magenheimer, Moskau 1941. Entscheidungsschlacht im Osten*, 220)
- **Late Mar 42** [Operation “Brueckenschlag”]: Of the late winter possibilities to recoup his fortunes, the Ostashkov operation was the one that most firmly held Hitler’s attention, and it could, indeed, have been the most profitable. As its code name BRUECKENSCHLAG (“bridging”) suggested, its first objective was to bridge the gap between army groups North and Centre. [Note: This operation never carried out; for details see, *Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 183-85; **III:704**)
- **Late Mar 42**: Germans evacuate salients at Sukhinichi and Belev. (**III:696**)
- **Mar-Apr 42**: Im ganzen behauptete sich die H.Gr.Mitte zu Beginn der Fruehjahrschlammperiode auf der durch die „Winterstellung“ vorgezeichneten Linie. Aber zu den **800 km** dieser Linie waren **600 km** weiterer Front zum Schutz der Flanken u. des Rueckens hinzugekommen, abgesehen von den Partisanengebieten, die noch zusaetzliche Kraefte banden. Den ganzen **Mar 42** ueber entwickelten sich beispielweise Kaempfe um den Strassenknotenpunkt Jelna, den Hitler aus „aussenpolitischen Gruenden“ unbedingt zu halten befahl. (*OKW KTB, Bd II, Einfuehrung*, 42)
- **Mar-Apr 42**: Convinced that the main threat in the summer of **1942** would make its appearance at the centre of the Soviet-German front, in the direction of Moscow, Stalin ordered a maximum concentration on this sector and at its approaches, of which the most dangerous was finally considered to be the Tula – Orel axis (the southern flank of the Moscow defenses), though a drive through Kursk was not excluded after which the German assault would strike north, thereby deeply outflanking Moscow from the SE. . .

Stalin for his part had at his disposal perhaps the most effective intelligence apparatus of any, operating right in the heart of German decision-making, the fantastically well-informed “Lucy,” whom Stalin personally added to the strength of Soviet intelligence agents in **Jul** or **Aug 41**: instructions dictated by Stalin to this end were passed to Foote and Rado, and thereafter the information assembled by “Lucy” and “Werther” received the highest priority.

*Data on German strategic plans, dispositions and operational intentions on the Eastern Front came daily from "Lucy," whose real identity "the Centre" never learned. . .*⁵⁷⁷

The Stavka and the General Staff persisted in believing that Moscow was the basic German aim [for 1942], and therefore the Western and Bryansk Fronts were slab-sided w/ armor, their rear deepened w/ major reserves. Of one thing apparently Stalin was immovably convinced: the German drive south [i.e., Operation "Blau"] was merely a feint, designed to drain off Soviet reserves from the vital Moscow axes. Even when he had in his own hands the operational orders specifying the movements for Operation "Blau," Stalin dismissed the seriousness of these intentions and abused his intelligence operators for not having uncovered the "real" German intentions. (*J. Erickson, Road to Stalingrad*, 338-42)

- **Mar-Jun 42:** The flow of reinforcements to Army Group Centre had stopped in Mar 42, and as soon as the rasputitsa set in, Hitler reversed the flow, using AGC as a base from which to draw reinforcements for the south. In the first week of **May 42**, HQ, **4 Pz Army**, departed, to be followed by **5** of the army group's **20** corps HQs. From **Apr 42** to early **Jun 42**, AGC had lost **16** divisions – a good **20%** of its overall strength, **30%** of its panzer divisions. In the divisions that stayed, personnel and other shortages were not going to be filled until summer; thus, regiments had to be reduced from **3** battalions to **2**, artillery batteries from **4** guns to **3**. Panzer and motorized divisions were such in name only. Most of the tanks and trucks which had survived the winter were awaiting repairs, and the shops could not keep more than **20%** in running condition. Army Group Centre was to be a supernumerary in the **1942** campaign. GFM v. Kluge, army group cdr, told his generals on **18 Apr 42**, „We must economize on the forces we have left.“ [By spring of **1942**], Hitler's interest had drifted completely away from the area. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 241-42)

e) *Milestones for Apr-Jul 42:*

- Overview of Soviet counteroffensive, **Jan-Apr 42 (III:637-38)**
- **Note:** Mit ihrer Winteroffensive **1941/42** fuegte die Rote Armee der *Wehrmacht* eine empfindliche Niederlage zu: a) Der Gegner wurde **150** bis **400** km nach Westen zurueckgeworfen; b) Mehr als **60** Staedte wurden befreit; c) Das Gebiet von Moskau u. Tula, eine Reihe von Abschnitten im Gebiet von Leningrad – Kalinin – Smolensk – Orel – Kursk – Char'kov – Stalino sowie die Halbinsel Kerc auf der Krim wurden von der *Wehrmacht* aufgegeben; d) Der Angriff der Roten Armee zwang die dt. Fuehrung in die Defensive; er fuehrte zum

⁵⁷⁷ **Note:** Collate this date w/ information on ULTRA. Wikipedia: "In World War II espionage, the Lucy spy ring was an anti-German operation that was headquartered in Switzerland. It was run by Rudolf Roessler, a German refugee and ostensibly the proprietor of a small publishing firm, Vita Nova. Very little is clear about the Lucy ring, about Roessler or about Lucy's sources or motives. . . Roessler managed to make contact with Alexander Rado's Soviet espionage organization in Switzerland and used it to pass information to Moscow. . . [A controversial] aspect of the Lucy ring story is the allegation that it was, at its heart, a British Secret Service operation intended to get Ultra information to the Soviets in a convincing way untraceable to British codebreaking operations against the Germans. . . That the Soviets had, via their own espionage operations, learned of the British break into important German message traffic was not, at the time, known to the British. . . Some suspicion has developed that, even more so than for most espionage operations, the Lucy ring was not what it seemed." (**Jul 09**)

endgueltigen Zusammenbruch der „Blitzkrieg“ Strategie; e) Allerdings muss gesagt werden, dass die Rote Armee dennoch *keine der ihr gestellten Aufgaben*, naemlich die Vernichtung des Gegners in den operativen Hauptrichtungen, vollstaendig zu loesen vermocht hatte; f) Dies war darauf zurueckzufuehren, dass die dt. Truppen in der Verteidigung *betraechtliche Erfolge* erzielten; g) Der Hauptgrund aber lag bei den von der sowj. strategischen Fuehrung begangenen Fehlern; diese hatte die Ergebnisse des von der Roten Armee bei Moskau gefuehrten Gegenangriffs *ueberschaetzt* u. traf im **Jan 42** die *nicht* ganz gerechtfertigte Entscheidung, zu einer Offensive *auf breiter Front* ueberzugehen, ohne dabei dem Gegner in einer der drei operativen Richtungen an Kraefte u. Mitteln ueberlegen zu sein. (Anatolij S. Knjaz'kov, "Die sowj. Strategie im Jahre 1942," in: *Stalingrad: Ereignis – Wirkung – Symbol*, J. Foerster (Hrsg.), 39-40)⁵⁷⁸

- **Jan-Jun 42:** German deaths on the eastern front have been estimated as **48,000** in **Jan 42**; they were **44,000** in both **Feb** and **Mar 42**; dropped to **23,000** in **Apr 42**; **16,000** in **May 42**; and **13,000** in **Jun 42**. Total German losses [over this period] came to **188,000** – on the face of it one-seventh (14%)⁵⁷⁹ of Soviet ones [which came to **1,400,000** over same six-month period]. Stalin's **Jan 42** strategy of wearing down German reserves before the spring did not work. For its huge losses, the Red Army regained little territory. (E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 147)
- **Apr 42:** Losses of Ostheer can no longer be made good. (Newton, *Hitler's Commander*, in: **III:630-31**)
- **Apr 42:** Fighting rolled on as the thaw continued . . . Near Vyazma, Zhukov prepared one final throw, by which Soviet **50. Army** would attempt to break across the Yukhnov – Roslave [Roslavl?] road and link up w/ Belov, attacking from the rear of the German forces. . . (See, **III:706-07**)
- **Apr 42:** Efremov's **33 Army**, cut off in early **Feb 42** in the woods south of the Smolensk – Viaz'ma railway, was finally destroyed. General Efremov shot himself rather than fall into German hands. (E. Mawdsley, *Thunder in the East*, 124; for more details on final destruction of Efremov's army and Belov's group see, **III:706-07**)
 (Note: Just ½ a mile separated Belov from Boldin's relief attack (**50 Army**) when German Stukas caught them. . . At same time, Efremov's small force was being "systematically and literally cut to pieces." By **18 Apr 42**, when Eefremov was dying, his much reduced force practically ceased to exist in its last desperate push to cover the mile or so to **43 Army** lines; at night, Eefremov's party came under heavy German fire and lay in the woods lit up by German flares. Eefremov, unable to help his men and unwilling to die a prisoner, whispered, "Boys, this is the end for me, but you go on fighting." At that, he shot himself in the temple.) (J. Erickson, *Road to Stalingrad*, 332-33)
- **Apr 42:** Contrary, probably, to original Soviet and German expectations, the fighting rolled on as the thaw continued into the rasputitsa, and w/ the warming nights the ground turned rapidly to mud during the second week of **Apr 42**. The Soviet attacks. . . added to the general misery of the season for the Germans and delayed their long overdue rest and refitting but otherwise served only to mark the definitive end of the winter campaign. The **V PzK** [AK?],

⁵⁷⁸ **Note:** This single page of notes can be found in my "Introduction" files.

⁵⁷⁹ **Note:** In other words, the Germans continued to be much more efficient at killing Russians than "vice-versa."

on the other hand, managed at the last minute to bring **5 PD** to bear against Soviet **33 Army** on **10 Apr 42**. During the next five [5] days in rapidly deepening mud, the army was „squeezed out of existence.“ At the end, on the **15th**, an estimated **500** to **1000** troops, among them Yefremov, the commanding general, escaped from the pocket into the woods along the Ugra River. . . When the last of his command was trapped and destroyed before it could make its way through the front to **43 Army**, Yefremov committed suicide. (*Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 182-83)

- **Apr 42:** Army Group Center's line stabilized in **Apr 42** along the ragged leading edges of a half-a-dozen once deadly, now stalled and blunted, Soviet thrusts. . . The straight line distance from the army group's northern boundary near Velikiye Luki to its southern boundary SW of Orel was about **350** miles. The front in between, including most though not all of its convolutions, was more like **900** miles long. Its outstanding features were: a) the **150-miles-deep** and at least equally wide Toropets bulge on the north; b) a **75-by-125-mile** salient on the south that had evolved from the old Sukhinichi bulge, and, between the two, c) a dogleg projection occupied by the **9, 4 Pz** and **4 Armies**. On the rim of the Toropets bulge, **3 Shock Army** was **285** miles west of Moscow and **50** miles west of AGC HQ at Smolensk. At Gzhatsk, **4 Pz Army** was within **90** miles of Moscow.

Rzhev, Vyazma, and Bryansk, commanding the immediate road and rail approaches to Moscow on the west, were in AGC's hands and so kept alive a threat to the Soviet capital. Along a **250-mile** line from Rzhev to south of Bryansk, however, the army group had acquired a second front that practically denied it territorial control east of Smolensk. From the army group boundary north to Bryansk and from there north to Roslavl and Kirov, partisans held sway in the broad spaces between the roads and railroads. (For more details see, *Ziemke & Bauer, Moscow to Stalingrad*, 240-41)

- **14.4.42:** There is renewed fighting near Vyazma, as Soviet **50 Army** conducts a strong attack to free the encircled **33 Army** and Group Belov. Initial progress is good; by afternoon, lead elements of **50 Army** are only **3 miles** from Group Belov, having taken the Zaitsevo heights by storm. The *Luftwaffe* then enters the battle, launching a crushing attack upon the advancing units. Repeated assaults inflict serious losses, forcing **50 Army** to fall back. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 223-24)
- **15.4.42:** Germans launch a series of furious attacks against Soviet partisans and paratroops trapped in the Dorogobuzh area. (*Taylor, Barbarossa to Berlin*, 224)
- **20.4.42:** On this day, Kalinin and Western Fronts were apparently [?] ordered to shift to defense, and w/ that the „Rzhev'-Viaz'ma operation“ sputtered out. The great Battle of Moscow was over. (Note: Zhukov's Western Theater command was disbanded on **5 May 42**). . . . The Soviet operation in the central theatre had not been a success. The maximum goal, the destruction of Army Group Ctr, had not been achieved, and neither had the more practical goal of getting back to the line held in **Sep 41** at the start of Operation „Taifun.“ The fighting was extremely costly for the Red Army. Zhukov's Rzhev-Viaz'ma operation alone, from **Jan-Apr 42**, cost **272,000** lives. The failure had several explanations; they are as follows (as adumbrated by Mawdsley):

[For details see, *E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 124, 127-28 (**III:708-09**). He states, *inter alia*: “In reality, the Red Army was still a very weak instrument in the winter of **1941/42**, manned by untrained conscripts and poorly equipped. In **Jan 42**, the whole Red Army had only **600** heavy tanks and **800** medium tanks, plus **6300** light tanks (in contrast, the figure for

Jan 43 would be **2000** heavies, no fewer than **7600** medium and **11,000** lights.) The relative figures for artillery to equip the new rifle divisions were similar, only **18,900** field guns in **Jan 42**, compared to **36,700** in **Jan 43**.”]

- **20.4.42**: Not until **20 Apr 42** were the armies of the Kalinin Front and the Western Front authorized to suspend the pointless attacks and go over to the defensive in the regained sectors.) (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 926-27)
- **30.4.42**: Die deutschen Gesamtverluste im Ostfeldzug erreichten eine Hoehe von **1 167 835** Mann (OKW KTB, in: **III:631**)
- **Apr-Jun 42**: Flow of reinforcements to AGC had stopped in **Mar 42**, and as soon as the *rasputitza* set in, Hitler reversed the flow, using AGC as a base from which to draw reinforcements for the south (“*Blau*”). From **Apr-Jun 42**, AGC lost **16** divisions – a good **20%** of its strength, **30%** of its tank divisions. (See, **III:705-06**)
- **May 42**: By this time, the *Wehrmacht*’s **225** divisions [in the east] were **740,000** troops below authorized strength; *Luftwaffe* was **45%** under strength. (*D. T. Zabecki* (ed.), WWII in Europe. An Encyclopedia, Vol. II, 1694)
- **1.5.41**: An diesem Tage verfuegte die sowj. kaempfende Armee ueber **5,1** Millionen Mann, nahezu **3900** Panzer, circa **45 000** Geschuetze u. Granatwerfer, fast **2200** Kampfflugzeuge u. **140** Schiffe der Hauptklassen. . . Mit der Aufstellung von Panzerkorps u. –armeen wurde begonnen. . . Grosse Bedeutung wurde der Bildung von operativen Reserven u. der Aktivierung der Partisanenbewegen im Ruecken der *Wehrmacht* beigemessen. Dennoch war die sowj. Seite dem Gegner taktisch unterlegen; ihre Kommandeure u. Staebe waren erst im Begriff, Erfahrungen in der Fuehrung eines modernen Krieges zu gewinnen. Zugleich blieb die strategische Lage fuer die Sowjetunion ueberaus schwierig. Die *Wehrmacht* blockierte noch immer Leningrad u. stand nur **150** km vor Moskau. . . (*Anatolij S. Knjaz'kov*, “Die sowj. Strategie im Jahre 1942,” in: Stalingrad: Ereignis – Wirkung – Symbol, J. Foerster (Hrsg.), 40)
- **9.-11.5.42**: Between [these dates] the **7 PD** was relieved and sent back to France to recuperate. In **Jun 41** one of its units, **IR 6**, had been transported from the Cologne area to East Prussia in **12** trains in preparation for the invasion. One [**1**] train was sufficient to achieve the move less than one year later. (*Manteuffel*, 7. PD, 278)
- **10.5.42** [Status of 9 AOK]:⁵⁸⁰ Steady decline in **9 Army** infantry strength: By **10 May 42**, the army controlled **13** inf.-divs., two [**2**] mot.-divs., one [**1**] Pz.-Div., and several improvised Kampfgruppen ranging from regimental to bde strength. The authorized strength of Model’s infantry divisions called for **117** inf. btns., each of which should have mustered between **400** and **500** men. He could actually deploy along the front only **97** such btns., most of which contained only **250** to **300** men. The reported infantry shortfall in those divisions during **May 42** approached **28,400**, leaving him at about **46%** of his authorized infantry strength.

Some divisions had shrunk to mere skeletons. The **256 ID** was reduced from **9** to **4** infantry btns., its artillery rgt. was cut from **12** to **6** batteries, and its engineer, anti-tank, and reconnaissance elements were consolidated into a four-coy fusilier btn. Still, w/ a single attached inf. btn. from another division, Col. Friedrich Weber’s depleted division remained

⁵⁸⁰ **Note:** **9 AOK** illustrative of what had become of AGC by spring **1942**.

responsible for an **11-mile** defensive sector. . . Virtually all of the army's tiny supply of AFVs had been consolidated in two units: Pz.-Btn. Herschel and **Assault Gun Btn 189** – which were farmed out in platoon- and coy-sized packets to the infantry divisions.⁵⁸¹ (The “definition” of “AFV” at the front lines near Moscow had, by **May 42**, come to include everything from captured Soviet **T 26** and **T 34** tanks to armored cars, obsolete French tanks hastily imported from the West, and weaponless command vehicles placed ostentatiously near the front for a deterrent effect.) (Note: For details on condition of other **9 Army** divisions at this time see, *Newton*, Hitler's Commander, 195-96)

- **May-Jun 42:** The „Belov Group“, based on **1 Gds Cav Corps**, was also trapped south of Viaz'ma, but it was more fortunate than **33 Army**. Belov's troopers escaped German Operation „Hannover“ in **May-Jun 42**, and the haggard and bearded survivors were able to break out in mid-**Jun 42**. General Belov himself was flown to safety. Some survivors of **4 Airborne Corps** also got out. (*E. Mawdsley*, Thunder in the East, 124)
- **Jun-Jul 42:** The **2 Pz Army**'s rear areas between the cities of Bryansk and Kirov were heavily forested and had become a massive sanctuary for partisans that required much effort by Schmidt's men to combat. One major cleansing operation was Operation Vogelsang. Led by **XLVII PzK** headquarters, **6000** men from the **339 ID** and **707 Sec Div** tried to clear **12,000** square miles of marches and forests. These men fought in terrible conditions against hidden enemies, mosquitoes as much as partisans and accomplished little during the period **6 Jun – 4 Jul 42**. . . (*Kirchubel*, *Draft*, 27-28)

f) *Front line of AGC in Apr 42; Status of Ostheer; future plans in east*

- **Note:** Army Group Center will never recover from attrition it suffered during first **10** months of the war.
Most of its inf. btns reduced from **3** to **2**, etc.
- **Note:** Front line stabilized along⁵⁸² . . . The *straight line distance* from the army group's northern boundary near Velikiye Luki to its southern boundary SW of Orel was about **350 miles**. The front in between, including most though not all of its convolutions, was more than **900 miles** long. Its outstanding features were: (See, **III:707**)
- **5.4.42:** Fuer **1942** plante Hitler neue Offensive an der Ostfront, die nun im Sueden in Richtung Kaukasus zielen sollten. Dabei war Hitler nach wie vor von der fixen Idee beherrscht, auch die Sowjetunion habe im Winter ihre *Reserven weitgehend verbraucht* u. es sei daher moeglich, im Sommer **1942** deren verbliebene Wehrkraft endgueltig zu vernichten, wie seine Weisung Nr. 41 vom **5 Apr 42** in unverbesserlichem Optimismus bestimmte. (*Ueberschaer*, Scheitern des Unternehmens Barbarossa, 171)
- **5.4.42 [Sommeroffensive]:** Stalingrad nahm im Zuge des Operationsplans eine Schluesselposition ein: die Stadt lag an der Wolga, einem Hauptverkehrsstrang, u. dort konnte man den Transport des kaukasischen Erdoels nach Norden unterbinden. In der Weisung No. **41** vom **5 Apr 42** wurde daher angeordnet, bis nach Stalingrad vorzudringen, die dortige Ruestung lahmzulegen u. die Wolga zu sperren. Allerdings galt die Eroberung der Erdoelfelder des

⁵⁸¹ **Note:** According to *Newton*, **9 Army** “deployed no more than **60** armored fighting vehicles” as of **May 42**. (200)

⁵⁸² **Note:** Check maps!

Kaukasus, naemlich bei Majkop, Grosny u. Baku, als Hauptziel des Feldzugs, wobei man auch die Schwarzmeerkueste bis an die tuerkische Grenze besetzen wollte. . . Man war sich im klaren, dass die Operation grosse Risiken schuf: So erstreckte sich der Flankenschutz zwischen Woronesch entlang des Don bis zur Wolga bei Stalingrad ueber **600** km, wozu man fast ausschliesslich ungarische, italienische, u. rumaenische Verbaende einsetzen wollte, um dt. Truppen fuer die Hauptaufgaben frei zu machen. Insgesamt standen naemlich nur **60 1/2** dt. Divisionen,⁵⁸³ darunter **9** Pz.-Div., zur Verfuegung. Doch dass groesste Problem war die Versorgung,⁵⁸⁴ da man bis zum wertvollsten Erdoelgebiet von Baku **1 100** km zuruecklegen musste. (Dr H. Magenheimer, „Eine historische Korrektur,“ 5)

-- **10.5.42**: Status of German **9. AOK**. Army little more than a mere skeleton of what it had been; for eg., employed no more than **60** armored fighting vehicles at this time. Model was at about **46%** of his authorized infantry strength, etc. (See, **III:709-10**)

g) *Reasons for failure of Soviet counteroffensive*

Note: See my detailed analysis in “Key Perspectives concerning Operation ‘Barbarossa,’” p 5, in: “Introduction File.”

Note: Soviets identify three [3] reasons for their ultimate failure. (See, **III:691**)
See also, **III:708-09** (Mawdsley’s analysis)

Note: “No rational man in early **1942** would have guessed at the eventual outcome of the war.” (R. Overy, Why the Allies Won, 15)

Note: “In the dark months of that winter Hitler showed his *iron determination and hypnotic powers of leadership*. We shall see how these qualities and the German soldiers’ *legendary capacity for enduring hardship* spared the eastern army from cruel defeat that winter.” (D. Irving, Hitler’s War, 355)

Note: The [ultimate] Soviet failures were a direct result of Stalin’s interference, just as the terrible defeats of summer and fall **1941** had resulted from his incompetence as a military leader. By pursuing victory everywhere, he robbed his armies of their change to defeat Army Group Ctr. (W. Murray, War to be Won, 139)

Thesis:⁵⁸⁵ By all appearances (i.e., “conventional wisdom” of many accounts), the most dangerous moment for AGC arrived in late **Jan 42**, when its entire front faced existential danger of encirclement by advancing Red Army pincers on both flanks. Yet appearances – those red and blue arrows on the situation maps – can, of course, be deceiving. In fact, situation for AGC was most likely not nearly so dire as it seemed. How else can one explain fact that, by the second week of **Feb 42**, the overall predicament of Kluge’s army group had dramatically stabilized. This was, in part, because the malevolent red prongs on the situation maps concealed a basic truth – the Red Army was virtually exhausted and, perforce, its offensive

⁵⁸³ By comparison, Germans committed **78** divisions and nearly **2** million men to Operation “Taifun” in Oct 41. Satellite formations employed in 1942 offensive unable to compensate for growing weakness of the Wehrmacht. And it was barely **350** km to Moscow, but **1 100** to Baku!

⁵⁸⁴ **Note:** And these problems of logistics were never overcome by the Wehrmacht in the east.

⁵⁸⁵ **Note:** My thoughts, **16 Oct 10**.

striking power fatally attenuated by end of **Jan 42**, although it would go on attacking for many weeks to come (and placing AGC in more crisis situations!).

Most precarious period of winter battles for AGC was actually at the start, from **5-18 Dec 41** – a time when it was dangerously weak and overextended (well past its Clausewitzian *culmination point*) and reeling from the initial and utterly unexpected blows of the Soviet counteroffensive. Its existential predicament was made all the worse by a collective failure of leadership from the top – something felt all the way down the chain to the “Landser” at the front. There was a German word for it – encountered in many accounts of this difficult period – *Ratlosigkeit* (explain term).

The first turning point came between **16-18 Dec 41**, when Hitler finally took the reins and promulgated his draconian “*Haltebefehl*.” One can argue its merits tactically, but the halt order filled the fatal leadership vacuum and was greeted by the average soldier at the front w/ a sigh of relief (if not by all of his superiors!). The halt order – finally – provided a clear mission for the soldier at the front.

The second turning point came in the second week of **Jan 42**, when Stalin dissipated his strike force by attacking along the entire eastern front, instead of concentrated his forces and effort on the still reeling AGC in an effort to exploit the initial successes. Together, these two critical factors were keys to the ultimate survival of AGC – and the German *Ostfront* – in winter **41/42**.

Note: Key thesis of mine is disproportionate role played by relatively small number of German officers, NCOs, etc. – along w/ their handful of hvy wpns – in stabilizing the German front. Men like *Lt. Kagenack* (**6. ID**) or *Maj. Heinemann* (**23. ID**). However, human behavior is far from uniform, and not all German soldiers had fought courageously and discharged their duty honorably. The unparalleled hardships of the winter simply were too much for many – problems w/ shirkers (“*Drueckeberger*”), theft of food, crimes against Russian civilians, etc. (For excellent anecdotal evidence of this issue see, *inter alia*, *W. Heinemann, Feldpostbriefe, 2.-3.2./9.2.42*, etc.)

Note: It is now abundantly clear that the Red Army offensives planned by Stalin, Zhukov, and other Stavka members during winter campaign of **1941/42** represented a “comprehensive and coordinated attempt” to *collapse the Wehrmacht’s defenses across the entire span of the Soviet-German front*. It is also clear that, in comparison w/ the Red Army’s actual capabilities, these strategic offensives were excessively ambitious. As is so often the case in the initial period of any war, few if any of the Soviet players understood the real capabilities of their forces or, even more telling, those of the enemy. (*D. Glantz, Soviet-German War: Myths & Realities*, 25)

Note: Several factors contributed to survival of Army Group Center in winter **1941/42**: **a)** ability of experienced German higher officers; **b)** desperate cohesion of small units caught up in defeat but holding together for survival; **c)** narrow margin of Red Army superiority; and, **d)** inexperience and rigidity of Soviet officers. But the most significant contribution from the Soviet side was almost certainly the decision of Stalin to try for an exceedingly ambitious general counteroffensive in hope of smashing the whole German front, instead of concentrating all available resources on the sector in the middle where the chances for a truly major further victory were probably greatest. (*G. Weinberg, Global History of WWII*, 294)

Note: The Red Army's winter counteroffensive continued for over three (3) months after its **Dec 41** launching. By **Mar 42**, it had advanced more than **150** miles in some sectors. But the Germans maintained their hold on the main bastions of their winter front – such towns as Schluesselburg, Novgorod, Rzhev, Vyasma, Briansk, Orel, Kursk, Kharkov, and Taganrog – despite the fact that the Russians were many miles in rear of most of these places, through pushing into the spaces between them. These *bastion-towns* were formidable obstacles from a tactical point of view; strategically, they tended to *dominate* the situation, because they were „focal points in the sparse web of communications.“ While the German garrisons could not prevent infiltration into the wide spaces between them, these communication-blocks cramped and curtailed the exploitation of any penetration so long as they remained intact. Thus they fulfilled, on a larger scale, the braking function which the French forts of the Maginot Line had been designed to perform. (*L. Hart, History of Second World War*, 241)

Note: With its winter offensive of **1942** the Soviet leadership had set itself the ambitious objective of *routing the entire German army in the east*. The OPlans of the Supreme Command HQ and of the general staff lacked nothing in consistency or boldness; their weakness was simply that they were based on fundamentally incorrect assumptions regarding the relative strength of the two sides. An overrating of its own potential and an underestimate of the strength and capabilities of the Germans induced HQ [Stavka] to launch its offensive simultaneously in all directions – a strategy to which the Soviet leadership clung w/ remarkable obduracy. The result was a hopeless dissipation of the strategic reserves of HQ. Of nine [9] armies which, in the course of the winter battle, were for the most part newly raised and moved into action, **2** went to the Volkhov Front, **1** to the Northwest Front, **1** to the Kalinin Front, **3** to the Western Front, and **1** each to the Bryansk and Southwest Fronts. If one considers the precarious situation in which the German Army Group Ctr found itself as a result of the attacks, one realizes what opportunities the Soviet leadership had thrown away by its failure to concentrate on specific points of main effort. . . From the beginning, General Zhukov had pleaded for the HQ reserves to be employed solely on the Western Front, so that a decision could be brought about in the Moscow sector. Stalin and the general staff headed by the ailing Marshal Shaposhnikov had dismissed that suggestion. Because of their lack of realism in the field of „strategic planning and utilization of reserves“ they bear the responsibility for the fact that the winter offensive of **1942**, while achieving considerable success, failed to produce a decisive triumph. The strategic plans at any rate had failed. (*GSWW*, Vol. IV: Attack on Soviet Union, 928)

Note: Die am **5 Dez 41** aufgenommene sowj. Gegenoffensive erzielte angesichts der extremen Wetterbedingungen erste Erfolge. Es gelang freilich nicht, groessere deutsche Truppenteile einzukesseln.⁵⁸⁶ Bis zu **150** Kilometer tiefe Einbrueche wurden vor allem an der Naht zwischen den deutschen H.Gr. Nord u. Mitte erzielt. Doch die sowj. Eliteverbaende wurden schlecht versorgt u. gefuehrt. Sie strandeten erschoept vor einzelnen deutschen Widerstandszentren. Cholm, Velikie Luki u. Veliz bildeten wichtige Brennpunkte, die von teilweise neu zugefuehrten dt. Einheiten in verzweifelten Kaempfen gehalten werden konnten. Auch im Raum Rzev richteten sich die Truppen zur Rundumverteidigung ein. Grosse sowj. Luftlandungen u. der Einsatz von Kavallerieverbaende blieben erfolglos.

Immer wieder trieb Stalin seine zumeist schlecht ausgeruesteten u. ausgebildeten Truppen zu verlustreichen Angriffen vorwaerts, verzettelte seine Reserven u. erreichte keinen strategischen Erfolg. Bei den bis **Mar 42** andauernden Kaempfen erschoepte er seine Kraefte

⁵⁸⁶ **Note:** But what about Demjansk? (Ca. **95 000** men of German **2 AK** encircled.)

derartig, dass eine grosse Sommeroffensive nicht mehr moeglich war.⁵⁸⁷ Hitler erhielt so die Chance, die Initiative wieder an sich zu reissen. . .

Hitler war – entgegen der Darstellungen in spaeteren Generalsmemoiren – durchaus bereit, oertliches Ausweichen zu genehmigen, wollte aber keinen Rueckzug akzeptieren, bevor nicht die rueckwaertigen Stellungen mit Sicherungstruppen so besetzt waren, dass sie den sowj. Angriff zum Stehen bringen konnten. Alle Vorschlaege zur Verstaerkung der Front griff er auf, doch die Heranfuhrung von Reserven aus Frankreich, Daenemark u. vom Balkan erforderte viel Zeit. Die durch den Wintereinbruch hervorgerufene Transportkrise verhinderte eine schnelle Loesung. (R.-D. Mueller, Der letzte deutsche Krieg, 113-15)

Note: The Soviet counter-offensive had been launched in some strength but its momentum fell off rapidly the further westwards it progressed. The Soviet High Command had overestimated the success of its winter defense and underestimated the strength, resilience and stamina of the German enemy. Offensives were ordered everywhere [i.e., also in the north in Leningrad and Lake Ilmen areas, in the Ukraine and in the Crimea. Only at Demyansk and Izium was there any enduring success.] and for this Stalin was subsequently blamed. These offensives, for which the Red Army had insufficient strength, led to a dispersal and dissipation of effort. Of the **9** armies held in reserve at the beginning of the winter campaign, one [**1**] each had been allotted to the North-West, Kalinin, Bryansk, and South-West Fronts, two [**2**] to the Volkhov Front and three [**3**] to the West Front.

This first Soviet offensive was w/o closely co-ordinated strategic direction, and was the natural consequence of the sudden change from a piecemeal and hasty defense to a general offensive, which was launched w/ little time for planning and preparation. If all energies and all reserves had been concentrated on destruction of AGC, better results might have been achieved. . . The Germans had suffered a significant defeat before Moscow, but this reverse was not serious [?] and the **376,000** German battle casualties which occurred during that winter on the Eastern Front were in no way excessive. The sickness casualty rate, due to exposure and typhus, increased this total, however, to about **900 000**, and this was heavier than the Germans could afford. German accounts have tended to overstress the physical and mental qualities of the Soviet enemy. . . The Red Army soldier was hardy and had great stamina, and he was used to local weather conditions, but it is doubtful whether these qualities of endurance were superior to those found in the German troops. (For rest of Seaton's analysis see his, Russo-German War, 239-41)

XIV: CONCLUSIONS

Quote: *“The most dangerous error we could make in our sharpening confrontation w/ Iran is to convince ourselves that its leaders will act rationally. Few wars are rooted in dispassionate analysis. Self-delusion sparks most such catastrophies.”* (“Does Iran want War,” Ralph Peters, at: <http://www.nypost.com>, 9 Apr 06)

Note: For reasons for failure of “Barbarossa,” see my detailed analysis in “Key Perspectives concerning Operation ‘Barbarossa,’” pp 6-8, in: “Introduction File.”

⁵⁸⁷ **Note:** This is a terrific point!

Note: See, **X:45-48**, “Reasons for Failure of **1941** Campaign. . .” See also Notebook #**X** for discussions of Stalingrad and, mostly, Kursk as possible turning points of the Russo-German War.

Note: Die Katastrophen von **1918/45** erklaren sich weitgehend durch das Zuruecktreten der den Prozess der *Persoenlichkeitsbildung* entscheidend praegenden „Generalia“ zugunsten der blendenden, rein *fachlich-handwerklichen* Virtuositet des „Koenners.“ [i.e., of the „experts“]. Die besten Offiziere aus der Zeit bis Moltke⁵⁸⁸ waren kultivierte, gebildete Maenner mit weitreichenden geistigen Interessen, sie hatten Geschichte, Philosophie u. Politik studiert u. besaessen Verantwortungsgefuehl u. Weitblick. Nach Moltke lagen die Dinge anders. „Selbst die faehigsten militaerischen Fuehrer waren „Professionals“ einer neuen Art, Techniker der Macht, Fachleute in ihrem metier, aber ohne Interesse fuer irgend etwas ausserhalb dieser Eingrenzung.⁵⁸⁹ Je staerker sich diese Art von Professionalismus entwickelte, um so mehr schwanden politisches Denken u. Verantwortungsgefuehl.“ (*G.A. Craig* in der Einleitung zu *H. Rosinski, Die deutsche Armee*, 23; quoted in: (*H. Hinterhuber, Wettbewerbsstrategie*, 45-46)

Salient points:⁵⁹⁰

-- Asymmetric war:⁵⁹¹ Russo-German War **1941/45** an *asymmetric* war? Not in sense word is used today – i.e., tactics of *al Qaeda*, Iran, China, etc. – but certainly in sense that the war involved an *asymmetry of effort*. Soviet Union under Stalin ruthlessly mobilizing for war w/ Germany even during the **1920s/30s** – forced collectivization, industrialization, massive military buildup, all entailed terrible sacrifices for the Russian people. Conversely, Hitler’s Germany – despite prevalent myths – prepared for war at much more *leisurely pace* from **1933-39**. As late as early **1941**, Germany still only producing ca. **200** tanks per month, attacked Russia w/ fewer available acft than committed to France in **1940**, etc. Bottom line is that Stalin *ruthlessly lashed his people, his nation, on to victory, sparing no sacrifice*. (See my, “*Barbarossa = Asymmetric War?*,” in: “*Introduction*” file, for more details.)

-- Ostheer’s Recovery: Despite horrific losses through spring ’42, the *Wehrmacht* demonstrated its resilience during its “dramatic advance during Operation *Blau*, which *saved the Red Army once again*, indicating that, although the *Wehrmacht* was vulnerable during the winter, it remained *virtually invincible during the summer*. The Red Army’s brutal bludgeoning at the hands of the *Wehrmacht* in the summer and fall of **1942** cost it **6,000,000** more casualties and forced Stalin to revert to nearly the same defensive strategy he had employed during **1941**, although w/ a bit less desperation. (*David M. Glantz, Colossus Reborn*, 609-10)

-- “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?” (My thoughts)

⁵⁸⁸ **Note:** In Moltke waltet der Geist der klassischen deutschen Philosophie. . . In seinem enzyklopaedischen Kopf befand sich eine genaue Topographie nicht nur aller franzoesischen Heerstrassen, sondern ueberhaupt aller Wege des menschlichen Denkens u. Handelns. (45)

⁵⁸⁹ **Note:** GFM v. Bock was perhaps a classic example of this “syndrome.” He was fairly contemptuous of any sphere of life outside the military. (See his file.)

⁵⁹⁰ **Note:** In no particular order! (Many gleaned from my notes, “**IMPB**.”)

⁵⁹¹ **Note:** My thoughts (**28 May 07**). See also, **IX:68**, etc.

Role of *hubris* cannot be ignored. Critical role of France **1940** in shaping the catastrophic perspectives of German High Command. (See, **IMPB:19**)

-- 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 (Book #3: “The Red Army,” **3.0.3**). 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**)

-- German command structure: Formulation of all policy “remained firmly in Hitler’s hands.” It is astonishing that in WWII, similarly to WWI, Germany had “no comprehensive plan for war.” “Hitler himself had not laid down such a plan, and therefore nobody was allowed to shape one, nor dared press Hitler to do so. . . Hitler could not decide on establishing an effective Supreme Command w/ *full executive powers*.⁵⁹² Therefore, **OKW** became some kind of private military office for Hitler, rather than an effective instrument of execution.” Relations between **OKW** & **OKH** were *strained to such a degree* that General Beck [i.e., in late **1930s**] prevented his officers from communicating officially w/ **OKW**. . . One major attempt to by-pass the Army and curtail its functions was the creation of the “**OKW** theaters of war,” which were conducted by Hitler, as Supreme Cdr of the Armed Forces, w/o any say in them by **OKH**. . . In **Dec 41**, Hitler dismissed GFM v. Brauchitsch and assumed direct command of the Army. . . Crux: Hitler had degraded the military from responsible partners in decision making to mere receivers of orders and their blind execution. Bernhard v. Lossberg, in charge of army affairs on Operations Staff of **OKW**, revealed that Hitler had ordered *strict separation of military and political matters*, even in the highest staff – **OKW** – which *should have been concerned w/ the reciprocal aspects of political and military issues*. (J.L. Wallach, 304-05; see also, B. v. Lossberg, *Im Wehrmachtfuehrungstab*, Hamburg, 1949, p 33, quoted in: J.L. Wallach, 305)

-- 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.) (“*Barbarossa*” led to fatal dispersal of effort along the entire front, resulting in lack of clear *center of gravity*. Frederick the Great once said, “*Derjenige, der alles verteidigt, verteidigt nichts*.” But this insight can be turned on its head: He who tries to attack everywhere, fatally undermines the impetus of the offensive.)

-- Hitler & Clausewitz: Hitler, who was an “autodidact” in every field, had required a remarkable military knowledge thru reading books on military matters. People who knew him during the early **1920s** revealed that he had read Clausewitz’ On War at that time and *could quote from it at length*. . . During the war, however, he referred to Clausewitz very seldom. In Hitler’s famous “Table Talks,” as far as they are recorded, the great philosopher of war was never mentioned. Only in Hitler’s *political testament*, drawn up on **19 Apr 45**, he urged his followers to continue the struggle against the enemies of the Fatherland, “faithful to the creed of the great Clausewitz.” Even from this short survey it is obvious that Hitler, in fact, had *never penetrated the depths of Clausewitz’ philosophy*. . . One cannot deny that until the end of the campaign in France, Hitler had acted *completely in accordance w/ Clausewitz’ principles*. . . With the decision to attack the

⁵⁹² **Note**: Nothing in Third Reich’s command apparatus similar to the U.S. military’s Joint Chiefs of Staff; or the Anglo-American Combined Chiefs of Staff. Soviet command infrastructure – i.e., **GKO, Stavka**, etc. – also functioned w/ greater efficiency; this, in part, to Stalin’s growth as a political and military leader over course of war. Of major significance to outcome of war is that Stalin slowly learned to trust his generals, and defer to their superior judgement in military matters, while Hitler only became increasingly contemptuous and suspicious of his officer corps. (My thought)

Soviet Union while leaving an undefeated Great Britain behind his back, Hitler had left the firm ground of Clausewitzian principles. Policy no longer provided for the victory of arms. . . [Just like in WWI] the attempt was again made to solve the bloody disputes between nations on the martial level alone. It is not, therefore, hindsight to say that even before its actual outbreak, Germany had also lost the Second World War. It was simply predicted by Clausewitz' theory of the *relationship of policy and warfare*.⁵⁹³ (J.L. Wallach, Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation, 301, 305-07, 311-12)

-- Schlieffen & Clausewitz: Theories of both men influenced the German conduct of two world wars. "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' philosophy*, 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)

-- Schlieffen's Cannae obsession: A final word to the soldiers: Nothing is more destructive in the field of military art than the *establishment of dogma*. Germany has paid a terrific price for Schlieffen's Cannae obsession. . . There are no "patent solutions" or Schleffenian "gospels of victory" in so bloody a business as war. (J.L. Wallach, 312)

(Note: In my view, this insight strikes to the heart of the matter for the German High Command. Brauchitsch, Halder, Heusinger, *et al.* seemed to view the basic concept of annihilation of the enemy by encirclement as some sort of *operational panacea*; as a formulaic approach to war which – given the superior training, tactics, C2, etc. of the *Wehrmacht* – would always ensure victory. This outlook resulted in the neglect of other possible strategies, as well as in the neglect of intelligence, logistics and other critical factors of sound military planning.)

-- We are left to wonder why Hitler failed to capture Moscow in **Aug 41**, before mud season started, military production was moved, and the reinforcements from the Far East arrived. The answer is straightforward: he was *delayed by the millions of Uncle Vanyas* [i.e., by the Red Army]. (C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly: The Tragic first Ten Days*. . .," 268)

-- Yet if the German victory over France was, essentially, a triumph of *intellect*, the Soviet victory over Germany in **1945** was largely a *triumph of ruthlessness and will* – not only during the **1400+** days of the war w/ Germany, but reaching back to the **1920s** and **1930s**. Of course, "intellect" also played a roll, as the Russians eventually mastered the techniques of modern,

⁵⁹³ **Note:** The reasons for Germany's defeat in both world wars were "similar in both cases. During the First World War, from the outbreak, or rather from the planning phase, up to the very end the war was handled as a purely military matter. . . In such circumstances the bankruptcy of warfare became automatically the bankruptcy of politics also, as Clausewitz had predicted. Schlieffen's military-technical approach triumphed over Clausewitz' sounder view that *policy and warfare are closely interwoven spheres* and that policy is the dominating factor. Even a superficial survey of the political scene of **1914** will reveal that Germany had already lost the war before the first shot was fired. Because the war was lost on account of international political relations. . . It was an outstanding feature of Hitler's conduct of the opening phase of the Second World War that clever politics paved the way for military success. However, when the dictator became intoxicated by his unexpected and unprecedented military achievements, he neglected the political field and embarked on purely military adventures. The attempt was again made to solve the bloody dispute between nations on the martial level alone. (311) (Note: Not sure I agree entirely w/ all this, but points are provocative.)

mobile warfare and turned them against Germany w/ decisive results. (See notes gleaned from, War Made New, Max Boot)⁵⁹⁴

-- "We know now that the Soviet Union lost at least **8,668,400** Uncle Vanyas [i.e., Red Army soldiers] during WWII, about **600,000** of them during the first **20** days. Such casualties, virtually unprecedented in Russian history, should have *doomed the nation*. . . The German onslaught progressed robustly, and by the end of the year [**1941**] almost **40%** of the country's population – **74,531,000** people – lived under German rule. . . Nonetheless, in **Jul 41** the Red Army managed to *stall the German panzer armada* at the Dnieper, at the arcs of defense designed by Zhukov in Stalin's study on **26 Jun 41**." (C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly: The Tragic first Ten Days*. . .," 266-67)

-- Stalingrad campaign: See comments by David Glantz in his email to me of **19 Mar 04**. He writes:

Do not be fooled by the Soviet claim that Stalin and Stavka deliberately moved their forces out of harm's way when Operation Blau began. The truth is that they did not do so because, certainly before the German offensive and, in fact, as late as early **Jul 42**, they still expected the Germans to resume major offensive operations along the Moscow axis and prepared accordingly. As a result, many of the Southwestern and Southern Fronts' forward armies were indeed savaged by the German offensive. For example . . . [here, Glantz gives detailed casualty statistics for Red Army]. What ultimately saved the Red Army in **1942** were the **12** reserve and other armies the Stavka raised between **May** and **Sep 42** and employed from **Aug** to **Dec [42]**.⁵⁹⁵

-- See my "*Gedankengaenge ueber Barbarossa*" (elicited from J. Huerter's Hitlers Feldherren), for discussion of "Barbarossa's" failure and other topics. (My Book #9)

-- Roll of *massive mobilization* of Red Army between **1941/45**: The size of the USSR's total armed forces grew from **4,800,000** in **Jun 41** to **11,400,000** in **Jul 45**. Some **29,600,000** personnel were mobilized in the course of the war, beyond those already in service. The ration (*spisochnaia*) strength of the front-line army recovered from **2,800,000** in the fourth quarter of **1941** and rose to **5,900,000** in the first quarter of **1943**. Yet despite the USSR's greater population compared to Germany, the Russian military faced *growing personnel problems*. . . In **1942** Stalin had rightly emphasized that Russia no longer had the luxury of numbers. (See, E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East, 213)

--The battles of Moscow and Stalingrad were indeed the radical povorot ["radical change"] and the radical perelom ["radical turn"] of the war in the East. The first terminated Germany's bid for world power; the second put the Soviet Union on the road to a full share in the victory and to superpower status. (E. F. Ziemke, Moscow to Stalingrad, 514)⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹⁴ **Note:** Appears my own "musings" are mixed up in these notes.

⁵⁹⁵ **Note:** Just like the dozens of armies raised by the Soviet Union from **Jun – Dec 41** (as many as **50!**) had saved them in **1941**.

⁵⁹⁶ **Note:** This is the conventional view of the Russo-German War's impact on the Soviet Union. Current scholarship is coming more and more to conclusion that the war was ultimately a catastrophe for the Soviet Union, hastening its demise.

-- Stalin's reorganization of the Red Army in the summer of **1942** may well have been the turning point of the whole Russo-German War. (See, *Theodore Ropp, War in the Modern World*, 340; also, *E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 217-19)

-- Evolution of Red Army: Although the Red Army was indeed colossal in terms of size, force structure, and perceived capabilities on the eve of war, the *Wehrmacht's* spectacular accomplishments during Operation Barbarossa proved w/o doubt that it was a *colossus w/ feet of clay*. After Hitler's experienced and blooded *Wehrmacht* exploited the Red Army's inability to either control or employ its forces in high-intensity maneuver war by shattering this colossus during the first six [6] months of war, Stalin and his *Stavka* had no choice but to ***reconstruct the Red Army from scratch in 1942***. . . Beginning in the spring of **1942** and thereafter throughout the summer, the *Stavka* and NKO slowly and painstakingly rebuilt the army. . . The Red Army recorded its first decisive strategic victory in **Nov 42** at Stalingrad. . . Exploiting this victory and the victories and defeats experienced during the ensuing winter campaign [**1942/43**], the *Stavka* and NKO were able to field a *new and far more capable Red Army by Jul 43*, one that was finally able to fulfill the promises of "deep battle" and "deep operations" theories as articulated by Soviet military theorists in the **1930s**. . . The Red Army demonstrated these capabilities at Kursk in **Jul-Aug 43**, when, for the first time in the war, it halted a *Wehrmacht* offensive in its tracks well short of the operational depths and, later, conducted sustained exploitation operations into the *Wehrmacht's* deep operational rear. . . (See, *David M. Glantz, Colossus Reborn*, 614-15)

-- Stalin's growth as "Generalissimo:" So what changed after the summer of **1941** [and the catastrophic Soviet defeats]?⁵⁹⁷ (For details see, **IMBP:21-22**)

(See also Zhukov's account of Stalin's growth as a commander in: *E. Mawdsley, Thunder in the East*, 206-08)

-- **Crux**:⁵⁹⁸ "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)

-- Yale U. professor Paul Bracken warns, "In focusing on whether the West can keep its lead in technology, the United States is asking the wrong question. It overlooks the *military advantages that accrue to societies w/ a less fastidious approach to violence*." (Quoted in: *Robert D. Kaplan, "On Forgetting the Obvious"* *AI Magazine*, Jul-Aug '07)

-- Hitler invaded the Soviet Union on **22 Jun 41**. . . Then the offensive stalled out, partly as a result of stout Soviet resistance but *mainly due to the inherent limitations of the Wehrmacht*. The blitzkrieg had proved a devastating weapon in the relatively confined spaces of western Europe. Its force was considerably dissipated on the nearly endless steppes of Mother Russia. Warfare in the Second Industrial Age required moving not only tons of food and ammunition but also tons of fuel and lubricants to keep tanks and trucks on the go. German logisticians were simply not able to keep their armies supplied more than a few hundred miles beyond the frontier (Sedan to

⁵⁹⁷ **Note:** C. Pleshakov, *Stalin's Folly: The Tragic first Ten Days*. . ., 268-70.

⁵⁹⁸ **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).

Dunkirk is **170** miles); in Russia, German armies quickly found themselves more than a **1000** miles from their bases. (*Max Boot, War Made New*, 236)

-- To paraphrase Clausewitz's comments on Napoleon's critics, *a plan which succeeds is **bold** and one which fails is **reckless***. On **22 Jun 41**, Hitler involved the German armies in their second two-front war in a generation [against] a country which, Clausewitz had believed, could only be subdued "by its own weakness, and by the effects of internal dissension." Hitler's major miscalculation – but one which seemed to be supported by the upheavals in Russia in the mid-**1930s** – was, like Napoleon's, political. (*Theodore Ropp, War in the Modern World*, 333)

-- Hitler's postponement of Barbarossa for a month in the late spring – whether this was due to the Balkan campaign or the weather – and his **Aug 41** postponement of the drive on Moscow cannot be defended. In any case – as w/ the Schlieffen Plan – *delays should be regarded as part of the inevitable **friction of war***. . . Stalin and his generals, like the French High Command in **1914**, saved themselves by *refusing to be panicked*. . . (*Theodore Ropp, War in the Modern World*, 338)

-- „Or perhaps Lebanon 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*. . .”⁵⁹⁹ (“*The Next Lebanon War*,” Lee Smith, at: <http://www.tabletmag.com>, 23 Jun 10)

-- For German High Command, there really was a “*problem of objectives*.” Hitler oscillated between investing Leningrad in the north and acquiring the economic and cultural resources in the south. Halder and Army High Command focused on Soviet capital. Front commanders “didn’t improvise,” but sought to “interpret the plan the way they thought it should go.” (“*Army Group Center*,” Cromwell Productions Video, 1999)⁶⁰⁰

-- Karl-Heinz Frieser: “Dass nicht Stalingrad oder Kursk, sondern bereits die Winterschlacht vor Moskau den entscheidenden Wendepunkt im Zweiten Weltkrieg darstellte, ist sehr leicht plausibel zu machen: Das Deutsche Reich war wirtschaftlich nur eine Mittelmacht u. hatte erhebliche Defizite an bestimmten strategischen Rohstoffen. Es konnte unmöglich einen langdauernden Krieg gegen die drei wirtschaftlichen Supermaechte Sowjetunion, Britisches Weltreich u. USA durchstehen. Die einzige Chance bestand darin, die Sowjetunion bereits im ersten Anlauf – also in einem Blitzkrieg⁶⁰¹ – niederzurennen, bevor sich die ueberlegene Ruestung dieses Kolosses u. die Hilfslieferungen seiner Alliierten bemerkbar machen wuerden. Dieser Versuch eines Ueberraschungsangriffs scheiterte Ende **1941** in der Winterschlacht vor Moskau. . .“ (*Email to C. Luther, 24 Oct 05*)

-- Stalingrad markierte die *psychologische Wende*. Die Siegeszuversicht schwand endgueltig dahin. Fatalismus griff um sich. Eine Feldpostpruefstelle meldete im Herbst **1943** nach der Durchsicht von etwa **75.000** Briefen beunruhigt *wachsende Disziplinlosigkeit* u. sinkendes Vertrauen in die eigene Staerke. Haeufig lasen sie Worte wie „*russlandmuede*“, „wann kommen wir einmal aus diesem verfluchten Land raus?“ (*Stefan Storz, „Perfide Rechnung*,” in: Der Zweite Weltkrieg, *Stephan Burgdorff* (Hg.), 315)

⁵⁹⁹ **Note:** This is a wonderful phrase – so apt for Hitler, **OKW** and **OKH** on eve of “Barbarossa.”

⁶⁰⁰ **Note:** These comments from J. Erickson in the video.

⁶⁰¹ **Note:** Several recent books on war in Russia state that “Barbarossa” was the first campaign truly planned as a Blitzkrieg by Germany.

-- Morality & determinism: Appears a combination of *moral and deterministic forces* defeated the “Ostheer” in Russia. . . In **2003**, the idea of regime change in Iraq appealed to those willing to do anything to defeat the deterministic forces of *geography* and *ethnic and sectarian differences*, and to those who thought that the American military power evident in the Balkans, particularly air power, had rendered such forces moot, paving the way for *universalist ideas* to triumph over *terrain and history*. . . Author mentions deterministic forces, like *geography*. . . Talks of Americans in Iraq – after destruction of Shiite al Askari mosque in **Feb 06** – as seeming powerless before *primordial hatreds*. . . The *myth of the omnipotent U.S. military* – born in the Gulf War, battered in Somalia, then repaired and burnished in Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo – was for the moment undone, along w/ the *idealism* that went w/ it.⁶⁰² . . . Those supporting Pres Bush in Iraq [and his surge] essentially argued that *human agency* – more troops and a new strategy – could triumph over *vast impersonal forces*, in this case, those of sectarian madness. . . Caveat: To treat every country as an *empty slate full of hopeful possibilities* is risky (i.e., what may be doable in one state – France **1940** – may not be in another (Russia **1941**)). . . General McChrystal is now the philosopher’s weapon against those *vast impersonal forces of history and geography*. . . By our own disastrous actions – by our *own agency*, in other words – we ourselves, in a process Tolstoy explains well in War and Peace, have helped contribute to fate. . . (“*Man versus Afghanistan*,” Robert D. Kaplan, in: *The Atlantic*, Apr 10)⁶⁰³

-- My notes:⁶⁰⁴

- Failure of Moscow offensive meant “Barbarossa” (and war overall) was lost. The turning point of war Moscow, not Stalingrad or Kursk. Failure before Moscow brought the “blitzkrieg” to an end (since **Sep 39** unstoppable).
- Goal was to defeat Russian in a “blitzkrieg” campaign – “Barbarossa” was the *first true blitzkrieg campaign* – by destroying Red Army forces west of the Dnieper. All German preparations – i.e., force structure, reserves (only **23** divisions!), logistics – attuned to this objective. No “Plan B” if “Plan A” failed. After it did fail, the Germans improvised at both Kiev and Moscow in summer/fall **1941**.
- 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.
- Thus, for Hitler, it was a *race against time*; and time, like the *Wehrmacht’s* inferior force levels, was not on side of the Germans.
- Clausewitz and ‘friction’: Friction militated against German operations from the start. Poor roads, inadequate rail net, etc., significantly slowed their advance. Also, Russian resistance was *far more effective* – at killing Germans and slowing

⁶⁰² **Note:** Obvious analog to Wehrmacht and its seeming invincibility during period from **Sep 39 – Jun 41** (Poland, Norway, France, Balkans, Crete, etc.). This, too, led to a kind of “idealism” infiltrating the highest levels of the German officer corps – anything was possible, nothing impossible for the German soldier! German Army in Russia – and, ultimately, the Third Reich – undone by this idealism.

⁶⁰³ **Note:** Article gleaned from: <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine>.

⁶⁰⁴ **Note:** These are thoughts of mine prepared very early on in my research.

advance! – than most historians (at least those in the West) have acknowledged. Typical view is one of Russian incompetence – i.e., Soviet officer on **22.6.41**: “We are under attack! What do we do?” (See, *Paul Johnson’s* history of the world, etc.)

- “Barbarossa” was the last truly large – strategic! – German offensive operation – at least in the Clausewitzian sense of being able to reap major political results. Operation “Blau” (Stalingrad) much more limited in nature; “Zitadelle” (Kursk) even more so. If latter successful, it might have resulted in some kind of negotiated settlement.

- Crux: Germany gambled everything on its ability to win the war in **1941** and failed. Result was a fundamental change in nature of war – now a war of attrition (“*Zermuerbungskrieg*”) that Germany could not win. Entry of U.S. into war sealed Germany’s fate.

-- David Kaiser:⁶⁰⁵

Despite his victories . . . Hitler in **1941** was still far from ready for the great war he anticipated. After the defeat of France, he seems to have hoped for a peace w/ Britain – perhaps one dictated by the weight of German air power – that would enable him once again to prepare for a large-scale war at some future date. But he failed either to defeat Britain or to coerce it into making peace, and the United States in late **1940** and early **1941** began rearming and providing generous assistance to Britain. Hitler then decided to undertake the conquest of the Soviet Union ASAP, in order to create his planned European empire before American rearmament had been completed. . . . Significantly, neither Hitler nor the German General Staff wanted to risk a long-term conflict *even w/ the Soviet Union*, but they had concluded that one would not be necessary. Operation Barbarossa anticipated the *immediate collapse of the Soviet government* as soon as the German army had defeated the Soviet army on the frontier. Hitler and his generals essentially hoped to *recreate the situation of mid-1918*, when the almost complete disintegration of the Russian state had allowed the German government to begin setting forth a new network of political and economic relationships in the Ukraine, the Baltic, and the Caucasus. Once the Soviets had collapsed, German arms production would shift to aircraft and ships, so as to defend the European empire against the Anglo-Americans and prepare for future conflict on a world scale. (*D. Kaiser*, 382-83)

The failure of the blitzkrieg against the Soviets, whose authority held together despite crushing initial defeats, and the American entry into the war in **Dec 41** left Hitler in exactly the situation he had hoped to avoid: a long-term struggle w/ industrially superior powers. Helped by the occupation of most of Europe, the German economy *performed remarkably well from 1942 through most of 1944*. An impressive system of inflated “occupation costs” and clearings gave the Germans an almost unlimited claim upon the resources of western Europe and enabled them to use western European agriculture, heavy industrial resources, and labor to raise production far above **1914-18** levels. Their brutal methods in eastern Europe were less successful economically. . . . With the help of more than **7,000,000** foreign workers, Germany raised production of heavy industrial products and munitions to new heights. But the Germans could not match the British and Americans, and their production collapsed rapidly when they had to retreat from Russia and France in **1944/45**. In retrospect, Hitler’s *whole strategy was doomed from the moment the Soviet regime failed to collapse* in the summer of **1941**. (*D. Kaiser*, 383-84)

⁶⁰⁵ **Note:** Politics and War. European Conflict from Philip II to Hitler, 382-84.

-- The skill w/ which Britain and America used advanced technology to illuminate global war was one of the principal reasons why the Germans and Japanese, w/ all their courage and energy, were *fighting an unsynchronized struggle from 1942 on*. Like Bronze Age warriors facing an Iron Age power, they appeared increasingly to be survivors from a slightly earlier epoch. . . The notion that “socialized” industry won the war is baseless. The socialized sector of German industry (e.g., the Herman Goering Steel Works) was a complete failure. The Soviet economy performed reasonably well in producing mass quantities of certain basic military items [i.e., tanks]. But the troop-carrying vehicles and jeeps which gave the Red Army its growing and decisive mobility in **1943/44** came from American industry. . . In Britain, the adoption of Ludendorff-style “war socialism” and Keynesian macro-economics enabled the British capitalist economy to perform much more effectively than Germany’s: in **1942** her war production was 50% higher. But the real engine of Allied victory was the American economy. . . By the end of the first year of the war America had raised its army production to the total of all three Axis powers together, and by **1944** had doubled it again. . . (*Paul Johnson, Modern Times, 399-401*)

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