

Summary

Doctoral dissertation entitled “The 10th Soviet Army in the Białystok Region (September 1939-June 1941)” discusses the stay of one of the Soviet occupation armies in the pre-war Białystok Voivodeship. The mobilization of the army was carried out in September 1939 as part of Soviet preparations for aggression against Poland. It conducted military operations as part of the Belarusian Front, initially as a second line unit, and then, in the first line, the army took part in the occupation of the Białystok region.

The main aim of the thesis is to examine and present the process of creation and mobilization of the 10th Army, its participation in the aggression against Poland in September 1939, the stay of occupation troops in the Białystok region and its role in planned military operations against Germany. Moreover, the aim of the dissertation is to analyze the state of preparation of the army for war with Germany, by showing the process of training, development, armament and equipment, as well as the deployment of troops. An important task of the work is also to present the course of German-Soviet battles conducted in June 1941 in the Białystok region, which resulted in the complete destruction of the army.

When preparing the dissertation, the author relied on the literature on the subject and published documents from Russian, Belarusian, Polish and American archives. He also conducted research in the Russian State Military Archive in Moscow, the Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation in Podolsk, the Central Military Archive in Rembertów, the Archive of New Records in Warsaw, the National Archives Microfilm Publication in the United States, the Archive of Social Organizations of the Grodno Oblast and the State Archive of the Grodno Oblast in Grodno. The second source of information are published documents from Russian archives in Russia and Belarus.

In the thesis, the author also used information, including reports of Soviet soldiers collected by Dmitry Egorov from Kaliningrad, Mikhail Timin from Moscow and Sergei Piwowarczyk from Grodno, as well as reports from residents of the Białystok region.

Information about the last period of fighting of the 10th Army in the area of the Zelvyanka and Shchara rivers was provided by Alexander Dudaronek from Minsk.

The years 1939-1941 were assumed as the time limits for the dissertation, i.e. the period from the establishment of 10th Army until it was defeated in the initial period of German aggression. Sometimes, however, it was necessary to go beyond this time frame and refer to earlier or later events. Basically, the events discussed in the thesis take place in the pre-war Białystok Voivodeship. The background of the preceding events takes place in a wider area.

The work has a factual and chronological structure. In descriptions and analyses of functioning. The author distinguished several phases and periods of the 10th Army in the Białystok region and characterized them in chapters:

- Preparations of the Red Army for war.
- Expansion of the 10th Army in 1940-1941.
- Plans, forces and resources of the parties on the eve of Operation Barbarossa.
- Combat operations of the 10th Army in the period from June 22 to July 2, 1941.

The entire thesis is supplemented with tables showing the development and quantitative status of the Red Army and units of the 10th Army and maps illustrating the course of hostilities in June 1941. In the dissertation, the author focused primarily on strictly military issues, ignoring the political aspect.

The plans of the Soviet military command included the 10th Army to strike against the Germans in the area north of the Bug River. In June 1941, it was the strongest operational union in the Western Special Military District. It was stationed in an area that the enemy could easily eliminate with strikes from the wings. However, this area was perfect for launching a surprise attack on the flank and rear of the German troops. When fully assembled, the army could reach a strength of approximately 250,000 soldiers, 4,000 guns and mortars, 2,350 tanks and 698 armored cars. It was intended to reinforce it with numerous artilleries, NKVD units and other units. However, on June 22, such a strong army was not yet ready to attack, and it did not plan and did not know how to defend itself.

On the eve of the outbreak of war, there were changes in the dislocation of troops in the 10th Army. Increasing troop movements and the resulting organizational chaos resulted in that the Soviet command failed to complete measures aimed at concentrating and developing troops

and establishing the groupings provided for in the protection plan. The units did not have time to build warehouses, secure and camouflage fuel tanks, or build facilities to protect personnel and equipment. Moreover, most of the army's first-line divisions were located in training camps several or a dozen kilometers away from the planned development lines. In many units, artillery and sappers' units were located in training centers outside their parent divisions.

The deliveries of new, modern weapons did not translate into an increase in the combat value of the troops. The modern equipment introduced into service was underdeveloped and caused many problems. The equipment was kept secret. Training with new weapons was conducted to a limited extent with a small group of soldiers at a time. As a result, when the war broke out, the Russians were unable to effectively use the capabilities of modern weapons. Lack of knowledge of the equipment led to many march losses and operational.

The paralysis of the Soviet communications system was of particular importance for the success of German war operations. Most telephone lines were unsecured, so many of them were destroyed in a short time. Additionally, German aviation destroyed or damaged a large number of military and civilian communications nodes. In combination with an acute shortage of radio equipment and trained radio operators, this led to the collapse of the communications system. During the dynamic development of events and the rapidly changing situation, this made commanding troops difficult, and in some cases even impossible.

In less than two years of existence, the 10th Army had 4 commanders, each of them had different experience and skills in commanding troops. However, none of them had sufficient experience in commanding an operational organization such as the army. Their theoretical knowledge was not sufficiently supported by professional experience. They spent several months as army commanders. It was too short a time for them to sufficiently familiarize themselves with the specifics of the area and get to know the characters and skills of commanders of large units subordinated to them.

All this, combined with insufficient infantry training, too little ammunition issued to soldiers at the beginning of the fighting, unfinished defensive fortifications and only partial occupation of them, meant that Soviet troops were unable to stop the German invasion forces. As a result, from the first hours of aggression, Soviet troops in the Białystok region were forced to retreat to new defensive positions. The Russians did not have time to develop their forces. By approaching the combat zone and joining them in parts, the scattered units were unable to stop the strong, fast and well-led enemy groups and thus defeat them. They were also unable to

organize new lines of defense. Leaving under pressure from German troops, Soviet troops were forced to leave their permanent locations and thus were unable to evacuate their ammunition and supplies. As a result, the troops of the 10th Army were completely defeated and destroyed within ten days of the war. Personnel losses were enormous. With the destruction of the Soviet army, a huge number of weapons were destroyed. Particularly severe losses were suffered in modern types of aircraft and armored vehicles.