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The Royal Hungarian 1st Mobile Corps' Ukrainian operation in 1941.

Author's guide

1. Identifying the topic of research

The dissertation wishes to introduce and analyze a poorly researched period of the Hungarian historical-military historical canon. The year of 1941 that is the topic of this work was of great significance in the Hungarian military history. This year the Hungarian Kingdom joined the German offensive against the Soviet Union whereby Hungary entered World War II that brought longterm changes.

Ever since the 1960s historians, inspired by anniversaries, often publish about the backgrounds of the events under study. Therefore, the days and hours foregoing the attack on the Soviet Union is well researched and the number of publications, ranging from critical contemporary works to monographs, would fill a smaller library. The hotly debated issue of going to war against the Soviet Union without a declaration of war is well accessible through many well documented study. However, there are fields that has not been foregrounded by any historical research; for example, the period following the sending of combat troops to the eastern front line, the mobile corps' Ukrainian operation, the course of action, and the consequences of the operation's military experience regarding the military structure. Generally, the syntheses of Hungarian military historians introduce the events mostly just as deep as necessary to their topic; thus, forming minor chapters that explain the quick response units' method of deployment on the Soviet front line.

The lack of a summarized complex work about the operation of the quick response force and its subordinates justifies the need for this dissertation. In one of my earlier studies I wrote detailed about the first period of the Hungarian offensive on the Soviet Union; in particular, about the operations and invader activity of the Kárpát battle group. This dissertation highlights the event between the mobilization of the mobile corps, that is the act of being at war with the Soviet Union, and their withdrawal.

2. Research Goals

In my current study I wish to achieve the following research objectives:

- I. The adequate historical introduction of the Royal Hungarian 1st Mobile Corps' Ukrainian operation in 1941 according to present day requirements, by establishing new synthesis.
- II. A complex presentation of the historical event that includes microhistorical elements gained via critically synthesizing the accessible archives, related bibliographies, rarely used reports, and reminiscences.
- III. The assessment of the wartime activity considering an approach focusing on the tasks received during the operations as a subordinate to the allied forces and an other approach focusing on the strategical-operational situation from German and Soviet points of view.
- IV. The strategical level examination of contemporary conceptions and expectations regarding the mobile corps troops' cooperation with different branch of services of the Hungarian military with special interest on the mechanized troops and cavalry.
- V. To prove that the objective analysis and the use of a multi aspect approach to military historical events might conclude valuable correlations with another fields of military history.

3. Method of research

The research is eminently based on primary sources. Particularly, the foundation of the study is established on the daily reports of the Royal Hungarian Honvéd General Staff's Operational Department that had the most up-to-date information about the events. Thus, these data can be trusted and considered as the most authentic. In order to understand the operational tasks executed in German subordination it is quintessential to study the referring daily reports of the Army Group South.

The contemporary field reports are sources of extraordinary value to the interpretation of the contemporary events.

The German archival source publications and document collections of the period proved to be of primary importance in point of strategic correlations considering the bibliographical material relevant to my study. Unfortunately, scholars lack the majority of the paralleling Soviet sources or these are hardly open for research. Hence, I could use a great number of older Soviet military historical summaries, memoirs and only fewer new publications.

From the point of understanding tactics and operations it is of outstanding importance to research beyond the motivations of the contemporary decision makers. Military regulations,

combat evaluations and publications of the same era can reveal the underlining elements of motivation.

Even the greatest scientific publication is only of scholarly value if very distant. A realistic and more sensible touch is given to the work by incorporation of microhistorical elements, such as the memoirs and diaries of average soldiers. Resulting in a humanistic perspective of the greater event.

4. The description of research

In the introductory part of my dissertation I review the military and political scenario prior the deployment of the Hungarian mobile corps to the Soviet theater of war. I present the military situation antecedent of the offense on the Soviet Union, the organizational history of the participating corps and divisions.

The majority of the dissertation elaborates on the detailed presentation of the events happening on the Eastern front line in 1941. On the one hand, I examine the operational circumstances of the mobile corps phase by phase, on the other hand, I elaborate on the mobile corps' detailed tactical performance, such as defensive or pursuit fights, through the historical events.

The withdrawal of troops is a notably different usage of troops from that of a wartime deployment, there I devoted a separate chapter to the mobile corps' withdrawal from the operational area. This chapter facilitated a detailed introduction of the wartime logistics within the alliance.

Following the chapter introducing the Hungarian mobile corps' activity on the Eastern theater I evaluate this activity based on the reports and reminiscences of the contemporary participants.

5. New Scientific Results

- I. I have explained the Royal Hungarian 1st Mobile Corps' Ukrainian operations in 1941 by relying on primary archival sources. As to achieve a more complex aspect and work I have added a critical synthesis of the accessible and up to my current knowledge the most extensive bibliographical material.
- II. At the recount of minor movements that did not influence any operations I have used the reminiscences of the soldiers being there, thus, focusing on the human side of warfare. Instead of an approach caring only for depicting the great scale and quickly changing operations I took a firm stand to recognize the place of a soldier on the field,

i.e. microhistorical approach. Thus, I reflected on seemingly insignificant events from the life of officers, non-commanding officers, and privates, thereby, I achieved that the reader has a more personal attitude to the soldiers on the field.

- III. The parallel tactical-operational comparison of the German and Soviet forces along with the data about Hungarian Mobile Corps not simply aids the understanding but it provides for further conclusions. It spotlights, that due to the action-reaction policy of the Soviet and the German commands – or due to the mere luck – there were many times when the assaulting Hungarian mobile corps' troops had to confront only with the retreating rearguards of the enemy.
- IV. At the introduction of combative actions I have demonstrated the functioning of both the cavalry and the mechanized troops parallel in order to exemplify the difficulties of cooperation of these units. During the analysis the cooperation of the air force and army branch of services have been amended by the troops of the all the services of the armed forces.
- V. The multitude of aspects used to analyze the military historical event objectively may provide lesson in the nexus of the fields of military history from command theory through communication to logistics. The problems of the logistical relations deriving from a situation in an allied subordination can be useful to military leaders of today, as well.

6. Utilization of the research

The events discussed took place seventy years ago but from certain aspects we may say that they still affect our lives today. There are Hungarian troops serving abroad within the framework of an international alliance. There are rare cases where dispute about interest occur even within any alliance. Therefore, the military leaders bear significant tasks and must be well skilled in military diplomacy in order to provide working facility to these soldier operating in a subordination. The supply, the movement, the problem of coordination of land and air forces, and the excessive task given to these troops pose difficulties in any heterogeneous military alliance independent of age and ideology, for example, the relatively small number of Hungarian forces serving abroad. Consequently, the results shown in this study can avail present strategies, as today's soldiers are deployed with light armament just as the fast moving mobile corps troop were in 1941. Therefore, the combat activities of the past should serve as a lesson to present utilization and limits of these forces.