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Handbook on USSR Military Forces, Chapter IV, Semi-Military Organizations. 15 March 1946

War Department (USA)

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Technical Manual, TM 30-430
Handbook on USSR Military Forces
Chapter IV, Semi-Military Organizations
15 March 1946

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**Handbook on USSR Military Forces
Chapter IV, Semi-Military Organizations**

**War Department
Washington, DC**

Comments

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Abstract

TM 30-340, Handbook on USSR Military Forces, was “published in installments to expedite dissemination to the field.” TM 30-430, Chapter IV, 15 March 1946, “Semi-Military Organizations,” is a brief chapter describing militarized governmental organizations including security services, signal and transportation organizations, youth organizations, and partisans.

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A Note on Scholarly Usage

Since revised editions of Army manuals are customarily issued with the same manual number and title as the previous editions, the minimal scholarly citation must contain the date of issue. The minimum unambiguous citation for this chapter is TM 30-430, Chapter IV, 15 March 1946.

CHAPTER IV

SEMI-MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS

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CHAPTER IV

SEMI-MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS

INTRODUCTION

1. GENERAL

One of the outstanding features of a totalitarian state is the facility with which governmental agencies can be applied to military effort. During World War II, all agencies of the U. S. S. R. and the Communist Party were devoted, in varying degree, to military purposes.

The transition of agencies and individuals between civil and military positions within the Soviet Union has always been extremely fluid. A number of semiofficial bodies, commissariats, and main administrations were, however, specifically brought into the military structure during World War II. These organizations included those temporarily incorporated into the Red Army or Navy, those given the status of armed forces, those legally militarized, and the Partisans.

2. AGENCIES INCORPORATED INTO ARMY AND NAVY

The most important agencies temporarily incorporated into the Red Army and Navy were the Main Administrations of the Civil Air Fleet, the Hydro-Meteorological Service, and the Northern Sea Route. In addition, the Main Administration for Universal Compulsory Military Training of the Citizens of the U. S. S. R. (*Vseovobuch*) was organized in 1941 to place the semiofficial and voluntary training activities carried on by the national Organization for the Defense of the Soviet Union and Defense against Air Raids and Chemical Attack (*Osoaviakhim*) under military control and on a compulsory basis.

3. AGENCIES GIVEN ARMED FORCE STATUS

Even before World War II, troops of the Peoples' Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) had the legal status of an armed force equivalent to the Red Army and Navy. Its authority was extensive. It maintained border guards and strategic security forces, controlled all local police and fire departments, conducted foreign espionage, and conducted

counterespionage among the civil population and in the army and the navy.

The Soviet government carefully controlled the functions of the NKVD. The Army was made responsible for its own internal security in 1943. Secret domestic counterespionage and foreign espionage functions were given to the newly organized Peoples' Commissariat of State Security (NKGB). The NKGB also was given the status of an armed force.

4. AGENCIES LEGALLY MILITARIZED

Because the operation of transportation and signal communications systems had to be coordinated closely with the requirements of the Red Army and Navy, the Soviet government legally militarized the Commissariats of Signal Communications, Transportation, Waterways, and the Maritime Fleet. Repeated enemy attacks also necessitated their militarization. Personnel in these organizations were subjected to martial authority and, in most instances, were given army or navy ranks. They wore special uniforms.

5. PARTISANS

The organization of the Partisan movement in the areas of the U. S. S. R. occupied by the Germans and in other countries overrun by German forces is the only exception to the rule that the Communist Party does not maintain an armed force within the Soviet state.

Early in World War II, the Central Committee of the Communist Party directly commanded and administered all Partisan activities through the Commander in Chief of the Partisans. Operational coordination of Partisan activities was taken over by the General Headquarters and by army group (front) headquarters in the field as the Red Army assumed the offensive. Once an area was reoccupied, control over all Partisans was assumed by the Chief of Security Troops, who commanded all NKVD forces within each army group zone.

Occasionally, Partisans in reoccupied areas were organized into "destruction battalions" to assist in the mopping up of the remnants of German forces.

All Partisans, however, ultimately were disarmed and screened by the NKVD. Some were drafted into field replacement units. Some were given responsible local positions with the NKVD or civilian authorities, and some were sent to the rear as unreliable elements. The secret agents of the Occupied Territories Administration of the NKGB assisted the NKVD screen Partisans.

6. EFFECTIVENESS

Semi-military organizations generally proved to be of marked usefulness in the Soviet war effort. Partisans were of strategic importance in impeding German operations. The NKVD and NKGB consolidated the rear area of the Red Army and protected the zone of the interior. A considerable number of German remnants and isolated dissident groups were controlled so effectively that they never interfered seriously with military operations. The signal communications and transportation systems of the U. S. S. R. were able to accomplish their missions successfully despite a partial break-down in the winter and spring of 1942 and despite serious shortages.

In contrast, *Vsevobuch* achieved only limited results. The attempt to add training to the total productive effort of Soviet civilians required an impossibly great effort. Results were achieved only for a few critical months and in a few special fields.

One of the most significant aspects of the Soviet employment of semi-military organizations was the care exercised to insure effective coordination with the strictly military effort, to prevent the growth of a vast competing structure, and to avoid duplication of effort.

The State Defense Committee maintained control over all semi-military agencies, although the General Headquarters directed NKVD, NKGB, and Partisan operations. Each organization was charged with strictly delimited functions. In several instances, notably the NKVD, prewar functions were reduced. Thus the NKVD lost its control over army intelligence, counterintelligence, and secret operations. It consequently was denied conditions favorable for grandiose usurpation of the military effort, such as was exercised by the SS in Germany. The volunteer *Osoaviakhim* was relegated to a secondary role during World War II. It was supervised strictly by the Communist Party so as to prevent its operation as the nucleus of any dissident movement.

Most semi-military organizations resumed their civilian roles with the termination of martial law in October 1945. Signal communications and transportation no longer are militarized. Military training, other than regular recruit training, now is voluntary and semiofficial.

The NKVD and NKGB, however, are of even greater importance than during World War II. They are insuring the orderly demobilization of the army, the effective integration of dischargees into the civilian population, and the careful screening of the future peacetime army to guarantee its complete political reliability.

Section I. PEOPLES' COMMISSARIAT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

I. GENERAL

The Peoples' Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) is responsible for maintenance of the security of the Soviet Union.

It conducts frontier and coastal patrols, controls all local police and fire departments, maintains special mobile forces for use against sabotage or insurrection, and is in charge of all prisons.

The local police functions involve the NKVD in the maintenance of internal passport control, birth certificates, and other vital statistics. Its control over local fire departments gives it over-all control of passive anti-aircraft defense in time of war. Finally, the control of prison labor involves the Commissariat in extensive construction, mining, and development projects. All roads and highways are responsibilities of the Commissariat.

The NKVD is a Union-Republican Commissariat and consequently has corresponding organizations in the republics. Not all of the main administrations of the Commissariat, however, have counterparts in the republics (fig. 1).

The Main Administration of Border Troops, for example, is organized directly into Border Guard Districts. Railroad troops and other interior troops remain mobile under central control. Although prisoners are controlled directly by the Main Administration of Labor and Prisoner-of-War Camps, their productive efforts normally are directed by special trusts such as *Dalstroi*, a trust for the economic development of the Kolyma area in the Far East.

Semi-military forces of the NKVD include Border Troops, Interior Troops, Signal Troops, Police Troops (militia), and Fire Defense Troops. The Commissariat's troops normally are selected from reliable Party members. Their great strength, at one

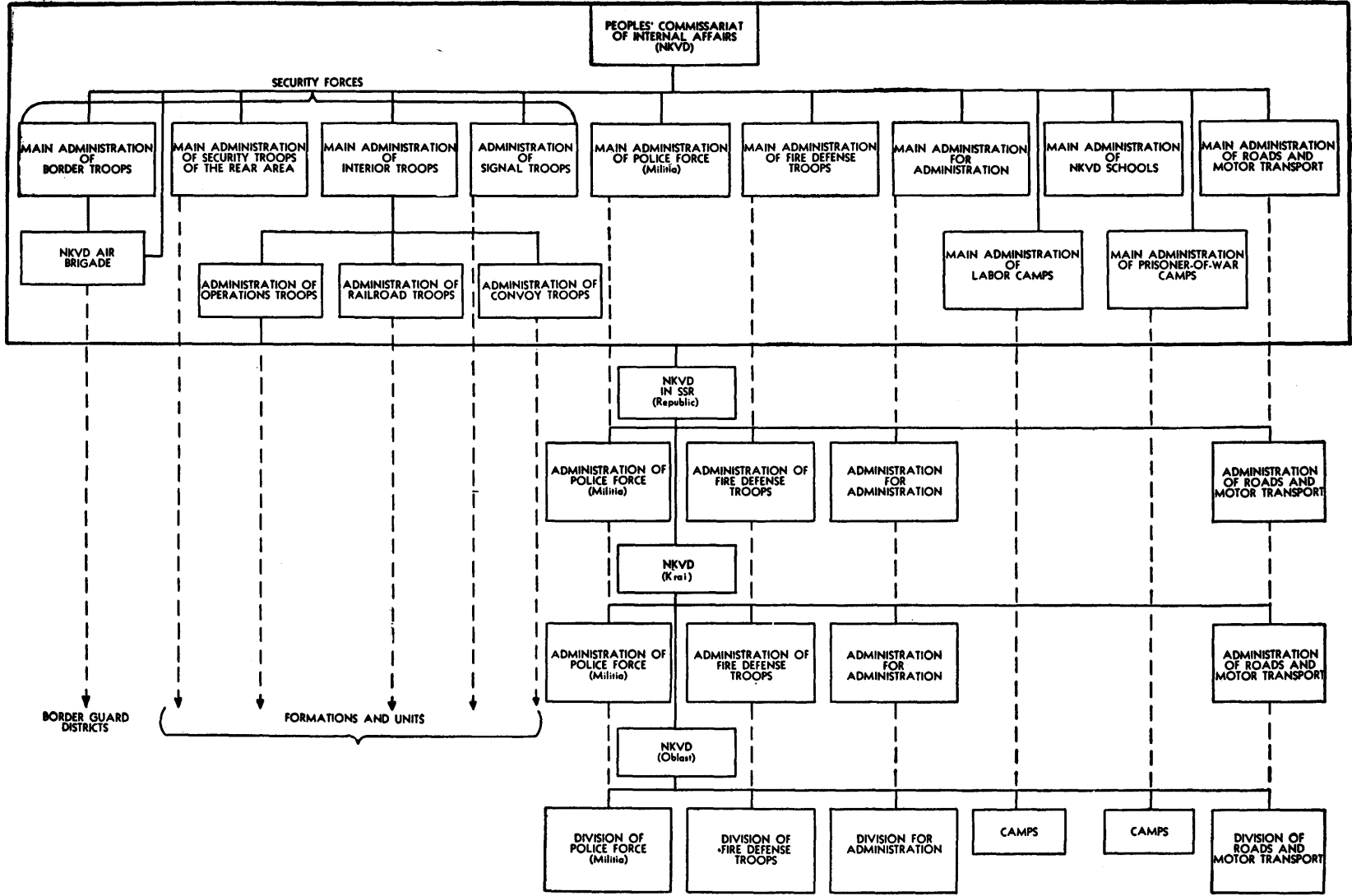


Figure 1. Organization of the Peoples' Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD).

time well over half a million, attests to the importance of their activities during World War II.

2. BORDER AND SECURITY TROOPS

The Border Troops of the NKVD are charged with the supervision and security of the land and sea frontier. They are organized into Border Districts manned by Border Battalions (fig. 2), whose duties include border and coastal patrol, counterespionage and customs control. They do not garrison fortifications.

Border Battalions, averaging from 1,000 to 1,200 in strength, control the First, or Border, Zone of the U. S. S. R. The First Zone extends approximately 9 miles from the actual boundary. Only border troops and special construction units are permitted

to enter the zone, except at control points. Every installation and road is guarded 24 hours a day. No movement is permitted at night, except mounted or foot patrols accompanied by dogs.

A Border Battalion's zone is approximately 60 miles wide, although it may be extended in areas of poor communications. Elements of the NKVD Air Brigade assist Border Battalions in difficult terrain. The Air Brigade is directly subordinate to the Peoples' Commissariat of Internal Affairs. It includes a number of air regiments and independent squadrons.

During World War II, the organization of Border Troops in theaters of operations was modified. The Border Troops were redesignated as Security Troops of the Rear Area of the Red Army. They were as-

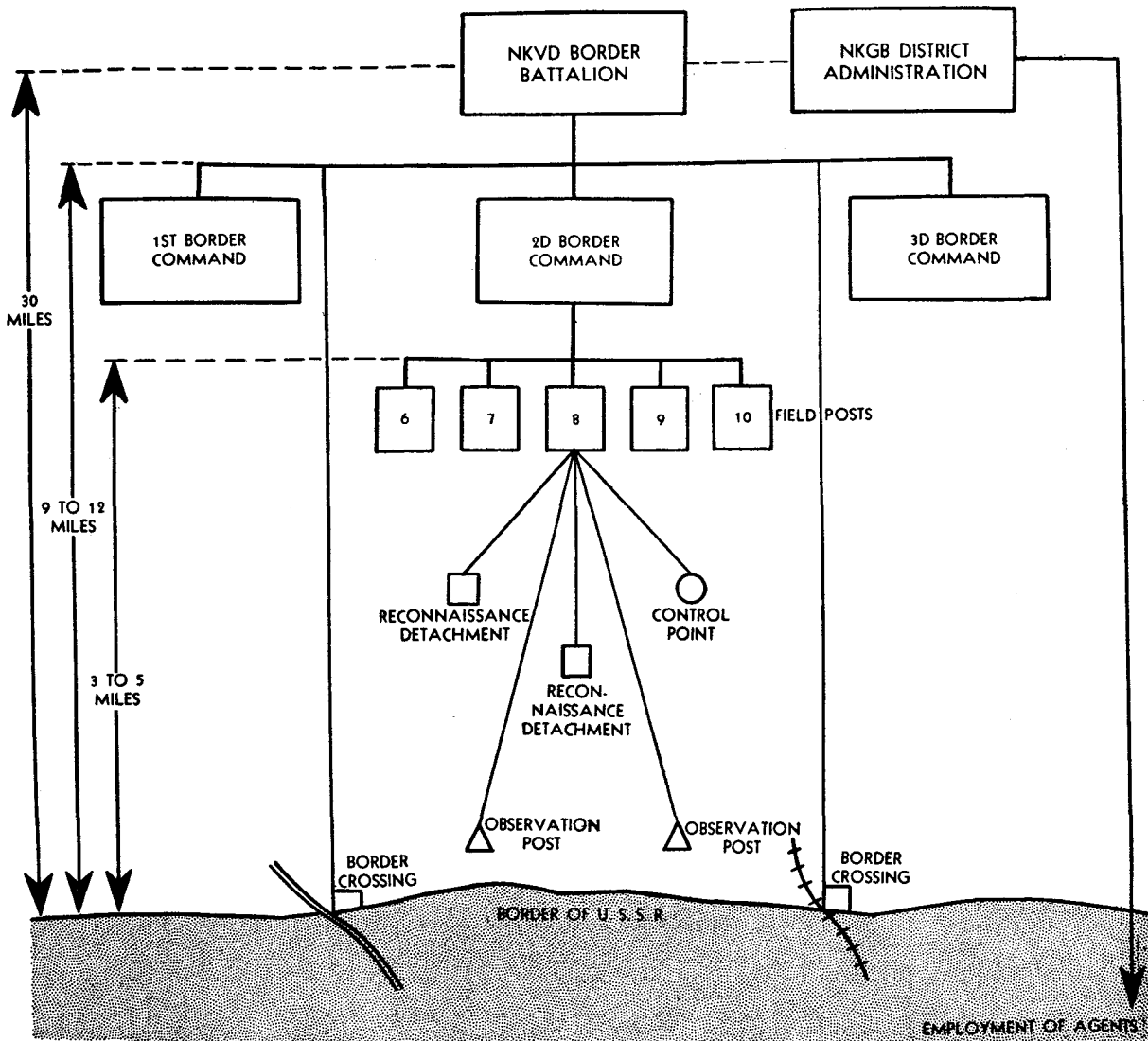


Figure 2. Organization and deployment of a NKVD border battalion.

signed the mission of apprehension of enemy agents, parachute troops, and Red Army stragglers or deserters. They also guarded rear area installations and maintained straggler lines. The Security Troops of the Rear Area of the Red Army were withdrawn from the Main Administration of Border Troops and placed under separate administrative control.

The former Border Battalions were organized into Security Regiments, subordinate to army groups (fronts) and commanded by the Chief of the Security Troops of the Rear Area.

Normally, one Security Regiment was assigned to the rear area of each army, and five to six regiments to the rear area of each army group.

Each Security Regiment consisted of three rifle battalions, a machine gun company, a reconnaissance company, a submachine gun company, a signal communications company, an antitank company, an engineer platoon, and maintenance, chemical warfare, and transport units. Artillery was attached as required. The strength of each regiment was approximately 1,650 officers and enlisted men.

3. INTERIOR TROOPS

The Interior Troops of the NKVD constitute mobile forces to insure the security of the state. They include Operational Troops, Railway Troops, Convoy Troops, and Factory Guards.

Operational Troops are charged with destruction of enemy elements in the interior and in the rear of the Red Army, suppression of insurrection, and protection of key installations and individuals. They also guard railroads and prisoners when necessary.

Their organization has been subject to several changes. Before World War II, they were organized into corps, regiments, battalions, and companies. The corps were reorganized into divisions of approximately eight regiments each early in the war. Approximately five of the regiments were similar to NKVD Security Regiments, organized from Border Battalions, one to two were motorized, and one was a cavalry regiment. By 1944, the divisions were being motorized, cavalry largely had been grouped into separate divisions, and brigades of two to three regiments and two to three separate battalions were being organized within each military district.

At present, the divisions are believed to be equipped with tanks and to approach the Red Army mechanized corps in size—approximately 15,000 officers and enlisted men—and in fire power. The brigades appear to be flexible semimobile organizations similar to the Security Regiments.

Missions of the divisions and brigades of the NKVD are different. The divisions provide a centralized mobile force for maintenance of state security. During the World War II, they were committed for operations, particularly anti-Partisan actions and mopping up of enemy remnants, in the rear of army groups under the army group Chief of Security Troops. The brigades, however, provide internal security within the military districts. Both conduct defensive operations against airborne forces.

The *Railway Troops* are charged with the defense of railroad lines. They employ armored trains and cooperate closely with Railroad Station Commandants of the Red Army, who are charged with the defense of terminals, stations, and depots. Railway Troops are organized into divisions, brigades, regiments, and separate battalions. Divisions in active operational zones have as many as 10 armored trains.

The *Convoy Troops* protect the movement of troops, supplies, and prisoners on the roads, railroads, and waterways. They also insure the uninterrupted movement of convoys. Although their major functions apply to the zone of the interior, their commitment extends to the rear areas of armies. Normally, they are concentrated in the zone of main effort. Convoy Troops are organized into divisions, each containing up to five regiments.

The *Factory Guards* provide local and interior protection for major industries.

4. SIGNAL TROOPS

The Signal Troops of the NKVD were organized in 1943 as a separate administration directly under the Commissariat to improve the communications security of the Red Army and of the Peoples' Commissariat of Signal Communications. Their mission includes monitoring of both friendly and enemy broadcasts, and the establishment, operation, and maintenance of signal communication systems for staffs and units of the NKVD.

One Signal Regiment is subordinate to the Chief of Security Troops of each army group. Each Signal Regiment includes three operating battalions and two signal construction companies. Its strength is approximately 1,000 officers and enlisted men.

5. POLICE TROOPS

The Police Troops (militia) of the NKVD are a uniformed force to suppress crime and control traffic. They also play a major role in state security

through comprehensive control of passports and vital statistics. Police representation on all draft boards and in reception centers assures the political reliability of all inductees. All changes in residence, travel applications, births, and deaths must be reported to the police, normally within 24 hours.

Police control is especially stringent within the Second and Third Border Zones. The Second Zone extends approximately 60 miles in depth from the boundary. All inhabitants in it are examined carefully by the police to determine their political reliability. Unreliable elements are sent further into the interior. Travel within the Second Zone is permitted only with special passes.

The Third, or Alertness, Zone extends still deeper. The population in this Zone is supervised carefully and is specially indoctrinated to cooperate with the Police Troops and other agencies of the NKVD in the apprehension of suspicious characters. Travel in the Third Zone is controlled.

Police Troops are organized on a Union-Republican basis. Consequently, police headquarters are attached to all political subdivisions down to district or *Oblast* level. Police troops are organized into regiments, battalions, companies, and platoons. Each unit is much larger than corresponding units in the Red Army.

Service in the Police Troops was on a volunteer basis prior to 1941. Periods of enlistment were 2 years. Men who had served in the Red Army constituted the majority of personnel. Volunteers could join at 18. They could remain in the service and be exempt from military service if their performance was satisfactory. Women were recruited extensively for Police Troops during World War II.

6. FIRE DEFENSE TROOPS

The Main Administration of Fire Defense of the NKVD, assisted by the Central Research Institute of Fire Defense, controls the Fire Defense Troops. In time of peace, they are charged with local fire protection.

During World War II, the organization was changed into the Main Administration for Passive Antiaircraft Defense. The regional counterparts of the Main Administration controlled Passive Antiaircraft Defense Groups conscripted from local populations. They were responsible for preparatory measures against air raids, air-raid warning systems, camouflage, camouflage discipline, defense against chemical attack, damage control, and first aid.

The operations of the Main Administration for Antiaircraft Defense were integrated closely with those of the Main Administration of Antiaircraft Defense Forces (GUPVO) of the Red Army, with the *Osoaviakhim*, and with the Commissariats of Transportation and Signal Communications.

The Commander of the operational staff for Passive Antiaircraft Defense in each political subdivision was in direct communication with the GUPVO Commander, who was responsible for the active fighter and antiaircraft defense of the area. The visual observation systems of Passive Antiaircraft Defense were integrated fully with the observers and radar of the GUPVO.

Regional staffs of the Passive Antiaircraft Defense Main Administration controlled the passive defense of signal and railroad installations. Because such installations were major targets, they were provided with direct communications to the air warning center. Special damage repair brigades were provided for them.

Local air-raid defenses were based upon thorough preparation of shelters and full mobilization of the population. All air-raid shelters had to be approved by the local antiaircraft defense staff, a medical inspector, and construction organizations.

A Passive Antiaircraft Defense Group was organized in residences or apartments for every 200 to 500 population. One Group was organized for every 100 to 300 population in factories and other installations. All able-bodied men between 16 and 60 and all able-bodied women between 18 and 50 were subject to compulsory service in the Fire Defense forces. They served in both their place of residence and their place of work. The sole exceptions were persons on active duty with the Red Army or the NKVD.

Each Passive Antiaircraft Defense Group included a Commander, his deputy, and five detachments. Strengths of the detachments were as follows:

<i>Detachment</i>	<i>Strength</i>
Control and observation.....	6
Fire defense.....	9
Anti-chemical.....	5
Repair and damage control.....	7
Medical.....	4

Each Group maintained a reserve of not less than 25 percent of its strength.

The Main Administration for Passive Antiaircraft Defense shared the responsibility for civilian defense training with the *Osoaviakhim*, the nation-wide vol-

untary defense association of the U. S. S. R. Joint training regulations and a special 40-hour training program were prepared.

Fire Defense Troops were trained to form the nucleus of Partisan bands should their area be overrun by the enemy.

Section II. PEOPLES' COMMISSARIAT OF STATE SECURITY

1. GENERAL

The Peoples' Commissariat of State Security (NKGB) was organized in 1943 to assume the functions of counterespionage and strategic foreign espionage which had been handled by a special division of the Peoples' Commissariat of Internal Affairs.

Reconnaissance, tactical espionage, and counterintelligence operations within the Red Army, however, were conducted by the Red Army itself. Overt surveillance of the civilian population and signal security remained functions of the NKVD.

The NKGB is a Union-Republican Commissariat, but counterparts of the national organization have been established in few of the republics and political subdivisions of the U. S. S. R.

2. ORGANIZATION

Functions of the Commissariat of State Security are performed by a number of administrations and divisions.

The *Foreign Countries Administration* organizes and conducts espionage outside of the U. S. S. R. It is believed to be composed of regional divisions. The Administration also is concerned with Soviet propaganda abroad.

The *Occupied Territories Administration* supervised and controlled Soviet nationals in enemy-occupied territory during World War II. It is not known whether this administration still exists. It may continue to conduct surveillance of Soviet nationals in areas outside direct Red Army control. It is believed that this administration was concerned primarily with political reliability and that it took little or no part in the conduct of Partisan operations.

The *Secret Political Administration* investigates anti-Soviet activities and organizations within the U. S. S. R. It maintains secret surveillance of the loyalty of Communist Party members.

The *Administration for Counterespionage in the Soviet Economy* is charged with the responsibility of preventing foreign economic espionage and sabo-

tage. It is charged with security control over industrial installations and output and over the fiscal position of the U. S. S. R.

The *Counterintelligence Administration* is concerned principally with control of the activities of foreigners in the U. S. S. R. It also watches Soviet citizens of foreign birth or suspected of foreign affiliations.

Other administrations and divisions of the Peoples' Commissariat of State Security are charged with mail censorship, telephone and telegraph communications, secret surveillance within prisons, etc.

The Commissariat of State Security, unlike the Commissariat of Internal Affairs, maintains no troops or armed forces of its own. It operates through small groups or individuals, largely under cover. It has, however, official militarized status. Its personnel are given military rank and the privileges of general officers.

Section III. PEOPLES' COMMISSARIAT OF SIGNAL COMMUNICATIONS

1. GENERAL

The Peoples' Commissariat of Signal Communications (NKS), a Union-Republican Commissariat, is responsible for the majority of Soviet signal communications systems. However, it is not responsible for combat zone communications, the internal communications of the Peoples' Commissariat of Internal Affairs, the railroad signal system, or the internal communications systems of the navy. It does include the postal, telephone, and telegraph services.

The Commissariat cooperates closely with both the Peoples' Commissariat of National Defense and the Peoples' Commissariat of Internal Affairs. Its personnel were placed under full military discipline during World War II.

The close relations between the Commissariats of Signal Communications and Defense during most of World War II were reinforced by the appointment of the Commissar of Signal Communications, Ivan T. Peresyphkin, as Chief Marshal of Signal Troops and Chief of the Signal Division of the Red Army General Staff.

2. RESPONSIBILITY FOR ARMY COMMUNICATIONS

The Peoples' Commissariat of Signal Communications maintains and operates all communications in the area of army group (front) headquarters, except

those direct to the GHQ. The Commissariat is responsible for the development, production, and initial supply of Red Army signal equipment, powerful radio stations, charging equipment, and other operations beyond the capabilities of Red Army signal troops.

3. ORGANIZATION

The Peoples' Commissariat of Signal Communications is known to include Main Administrations for the Postal Service, Signal Operations, and Signal Construction. It also includes a number of research and training institutes.

Coordination with the armed forces is the responsibility of the Central Military Administration of the Commissariat.

Section IV. PEOPLES' COMMISSARIAT OF TRANSPORTATION

1. GENERAL

The Peoples' Commissariat of Transportation (NKPS) is an All-Union Commissariat charged with the maintenance and operation of all railroads, including the Moscow subway.

Prior to 1931 the Commissariat controlled all types of transportation. During 1931, however, responsibility for all transportation other than rail was transferred to other commissariats. The Commissariat of Transportation was militarized in April 1943. Employees were compelled to remain on their jobs for the duration of the war. They were placed under the Red Army disciplinary code and were made subject to military tribunals. Special uniforms and military ranks were introduced in September 1943.

Thirty-nine railroad divisions have been identified. Generally, they correspond to the military districts.

Activities of the Peoples' Commissariat of Transportation are conducted through the following agencies:

Departments:

- Political.
- Central Operating.
- Central Locomotive.
- Central Car.
- Car and Track Maintenance.
- Signal Communications.
- New Railroad Construction.

Central Sections:

- Supply.
- Economic Planning.
- Finance.
- Mobilization.
- Lumber.
- Electrification.
- Personnel Training.
- Sanitary.
- Accounting.
- Administration.

Central Bureau for Foreign Relations.

2. COORDINATION

Coordination is effected between the Commissariat of Transportation and the Chief of the Rear Services of the Red Army, between the Chiefs of Railroad Divisions and the Chiefs of Transportation of the Rear Services of army groups (front), between the Chiefs of Railroad Divisions and the Chiefs of Transportation of military districts, and between the Transportation Commissariat Station Masters and the Railroad Station or Railhead Commandants.

3. MOVEMENTS

The planning and execution of major troop, supply, or evacuation movements by rail is the joint responsibility of the Peoples' Commissariat of Transportation and the Chief of Transportation of the Rear Services of the Red Army.

Major military movements normally must be planned 30 days in advance because of the demands made on the limited Soviet rail systems. The Transportation Commissariat must be prepared to inform the Red Army of its rolling stock and transport capabilities 25 days before the movement. Twenty-three days before the movement, the Chiefs of Transportation of the army groups and military districts involved must forward their estimated requirements for the movement to the Chief of Transportation of the Rear Services of the Red Army, who must submit his consolidated request to the Commissariat of Transportation.

Should the request exceed the estimated capabilities submitted by the Commissariat, the problem is referred to the Supreme Economic Council or to the State Defense Committee for adjudication. Adjudication must be completed and a joint Commissariat-Red Army plan must be transmitted to the Chiefs of Transportation of the army groups and military districts at least 13 days before the movement. The Chiefs of Transportation and the Railroad Divisions

must have prepared their detailed joint plans and must have transmitted them as warning orders to military formations, railroad units, and industrial enterprises concerned at least 10 days before the movement.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

The maintenance of epidemiological and epizootic control on all railroads is a special responsibility of the Peoples' Commissariat of Transportation. The Commissariat maintains medical and veterinary inspectors on all trains and special infectious hospitals at major stations and all railheads. The Main Medical Administration and the Veterinary Administration of the Red Army share in this responsibility.

The Peoples' Commissariat of Transportation is responsible for the operation of all railroads up to army railheads. It is responsible for all permanent and heavy construction, even in advance of army railheads. The Railroad Construction Battalions of the Red Army are, however, responsible for initial mine clearance.

Coordination between the Chiefs of Railroad Divisions and the Chiefs of Transportation of military districts is limited to planning, epidemiological and epizootic control, and supervision of the Transportation Commissariat Station Masters and the Station Commandants.

Station masters have sole authority over the operations of railroad lines, rolling stock repair, rail line construction and repair, and railroad signal communications.

Station and railhead commandants of the Red Army are responsible for the orderly loading and unloading of troops, equipment, and supplies, the successful operation and maintenance of Red Army dumps and depots, and the active defense of stations. They exercise the disciplinary authority of garrison commanders over all troops and other personnel in transit or at stations. In defensive situations, it is believed that they have tactical command over all personnel in their sectors, including Transportation Commissariat Troops, Railroad and Convoy Troops, and the local Passive Antiaircraft Defense Groups (in the zone of interior).

Section V. SEMI-MILITARY TRAINING ORGANIZATIONS

1. GENERAL

Appreciation of the necessity for widespread interest and voluntary participation in military activities

outside of the official organizations of the army dates from 1912, when a national society was organized for semi-military training. Following the Revolution, many Soviet citizens and the Communist Party realized the need for supplementing the limited conscript training of the Red Army of the early twenties. Consequently, various societies were formed to accomplish this function.

The societies were merged in 1926 into the Organization for the Defense of the Soviet Union and Defense against Air Raids and Chemical Attack (*Osoaviakhim*). The *Komsomol* (League of Communist Youth) and its children's affiliates, the *Pioneers* and the *Octobrists*, formed the core of *Osoaviakhim*. Defense training outside of the army became virtually compulsory for Soviet youth.

Although *Osoaviakhim*, and particularly its *Komsomol*, achieved considerable success, the status of universal military preparedness was not satisfactory at the beginning of the war with Germany. Consequently, military control and compulsory participation in prescribed training courses were instituted in 1941 with the organization of the Main Administration for Universal Compulsory Military Training of the Citizens of the U. S. S. R. (*Vsevobuch*) of the Peoples' Commissariat of Defense.

Osoaviakhim was relegated to a secondary and supplementary role for the duration of World War II. The State Defense Committee required the organization to turn its facilities over to the newly formed *Vsevobuch*. *Osoaviakhim* conducted passive antiaircraft and elementary aviation training, conducted war-bond drives, and assisted in mine clearance and collection of enemy weapons and equipment in recaptured areas. With the conclusion of the war and the termination of *Vsevobuch*, *Osoaviakhim* once more is the primary auxiliary military training organization of the U. S. S. R.

2. OSOAVIAKHIM AND KOMSOMOL

Osoaviakhim is comprised of a pyramidal series of local, *Oblast*, and republican organizations. It is directed by the All-Union Presidium.

The organization expanded rapidly following its formation. Its membership totaled 2,950,000 in October 1927 and reached 13,000,000 in 1941. As early as 1929, there were 47,200 organized groups for the study of military science. *Osoaviakhim* was actively engaged in aviation training. In 1931, it had 14 glider stations, 40 airfields, flying schools, model airplane shops, and centers for training aviation mechanics.

Although *Osoaviakhim* was designed to provide military and physical training for citizens of pre-conscript age, it also included former members of the Red Army who wished to study new technical developments in warfare. Its program, which centered about clubs and training centers, included virtually all types of military training.

Markedly close relations are maintained between *Osoaviakhim*, the state, the Communist Party, and the armed forces. The Soviet government has supported the organization strongly. It has authorized the use of army reserve personnel, giving them active pay duty.

The organization of *Osoaviakhim* has been changed for peacetime operations. The clubs have been replaced by military-type units, infantry or cavalry squads or platoons and detachments of specialists. The Communist Party supervises the selection of unit commanders, often reserve officers or noncommissioned officers on deferred status.

The *Komsomol* of the Communist Party specializes in tank, artillery, and marksmanship training. Red Army personnel on active duty often have served as its officers.

3. VSEVOBUCH

The Main Administration for Universal Compulsory Military Training of the Citizens of the U. S. S. R. (*Vsevobuch*), which existed between 1941 and 1945, had the mission of providing a reserve for the Red Army and for Partisan operations. It conducted training for all male citizens between the ages of 16 and 60.

A special 110-hour training program was given trainees during their off-duty hours, without interruption of production and without pay. Regulations provided that the program must be completed in not more than 5 months and that classes must meet at least twice a week. Instruction was presented by reserve officers and noncommissioned officers recruited from wounded Red Army personnel. Training was specialized by arm. Insofar as was practicable, the training organizations corresponded to units and elements of the Red Army, but had no military status.

The program achieved only partial success due to the inadequate supply of instructors and equipment. Best results appear to have been achieved in the initial training of specialists, such as signal men whose courses extended far beyond the initial 110 hours.

Section VI. PARTISANS

1. DEVELOPMENT AND MISSION

Partisan operations have always been an important factor in wars fought on Soviet territory. The large, inaccessible areas and the robustness of the Soviet population favor this type of operation.

The mission of Partisan warfare is to harass enemy forces, to cut their extended supply and communication lines, to assist Red Army operations, and to gather information about the enemy.

The Soviet government and the Communist Party, with the *Komsomol*, made preparations before World War II for the foundation of a Partisan movement. The *Osoaviakhim* and the Fire Defense Troops assisted in this preparation, and later in the actual organization of Partisan bands. *Vsevobuch* also assisted in the formation of Partisan bands after 1941.

During World War II, the development of Partisan bands was greatly facilitated by the German Army's inability to mop up the large territories captured during its rapid advance. Special recruiting agencies of the Communist Party in the rear of the enemy forces furnished the Partisans with a steady flow of replacements. It is estimated that more than 300,000 Partisans were operating behind German lines at the end of 1943.

The Soviet Partisan command also assisted Partisan bands in other countries under German occupation, such as Yugoslavia, Slovakia, and Poland.

2. HIGH COMMAND AND COORDINATION WITH RED ARMY

The Communist Party supervised and controlled the Partisans. The High Command of the Partisans was the Central Staff of the Partisan Movement, first under Marshal of the Soviet Union Voroshilov and later under *General Leitenant* Ponomarenko. The Staff is responsible directly to the Central Committee of the Communist Party.

The Central Staff of the Partisan Movement was represented in the General Headquarters and coordinated with the Operations and Intelligence Division of the Red Army to assure closest cooperation with the Red Army.

When the Red Army went on the offensive, much closer coordination was required. Special Partisan staffs were organized at army group (front) and army levels to achieve this coordination (fig. 3). The Operations Staff of the Partisan Movement in the Rear of the Enemy was organized in enemy-

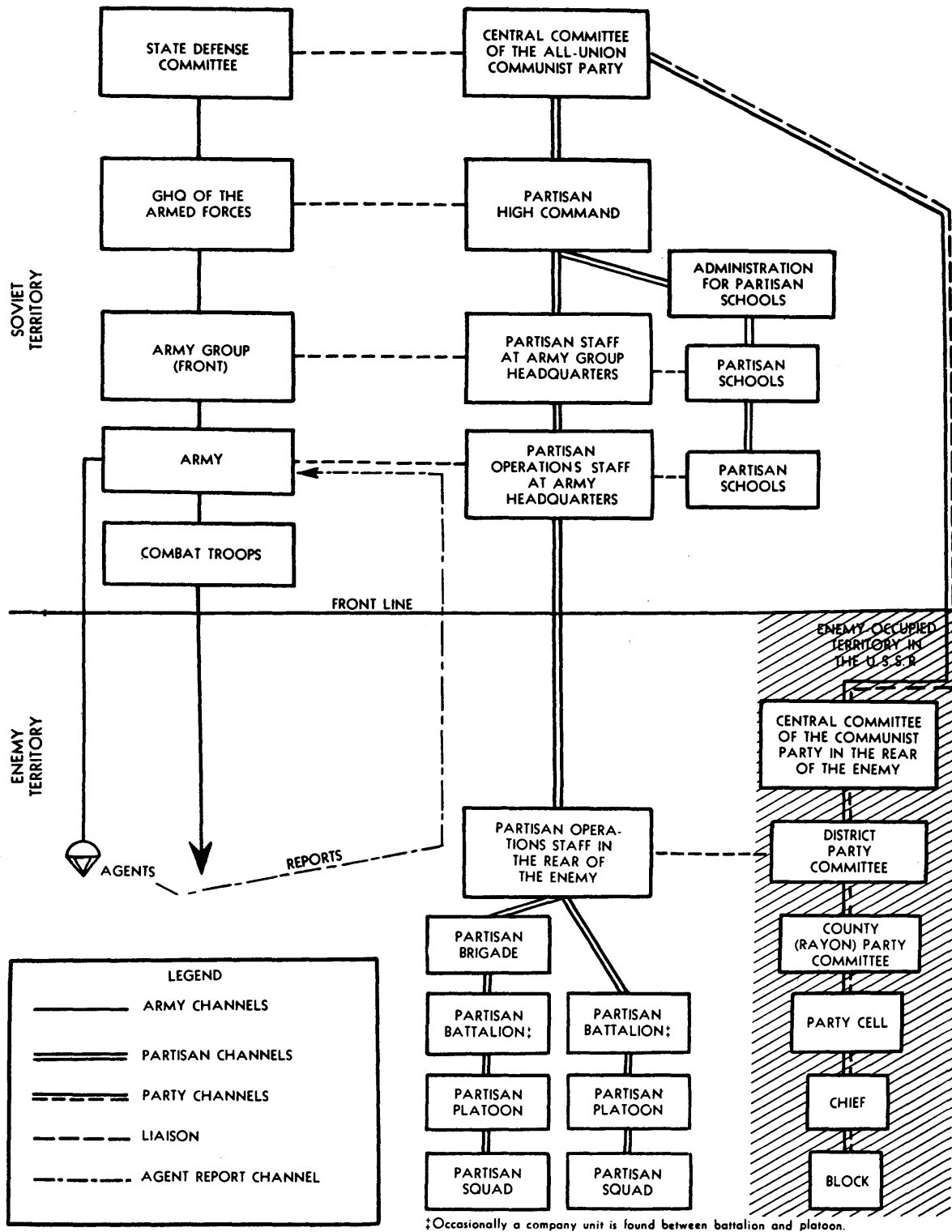


Figure 3. Structure and organization of Soviet Partisans, Communist Party control of Partisans, and lateral liaison with Red Army headquarters.

occupied territory to receive orders from the Partisan High Command and to assure the dissemination of orders to individual Partisan bands.

3. ORGANIZATION AND EQUIPMENT

The organization, equipment, and strength of Partisan bands varied greatly. They depended upon terrain conditions, density of the road net, and the strength of enemy forces.

The most commonly found unit was the Partisan battalion (*Otryad*), with 200 to 400 officers and enlisted men. In favorable terrain, battalions were often combined into brigades and, early in the war, into regiments (*Polk*). In very few instances, Partisan divisions (*Divisia*) were organized.

Partisan units were composed of personnel received from the Communist Party and semi-military organizations, of isolated Red Army soldiers, and of escaped prisoners of war.

The types and quantity of weapons, equipment, and supplies used by the Partisans, largely depended upon the initiative of the units and the success of Partisan raids on enemy supply depots and columns. Battlefields also were a source of supply.

Partisans normally did not receive supplies from the Red Army or the Soviet government, except for medical supplies usually delivered by air. When Partisan units were in contact with Red Army units, however, they were able to obtain equipment.

Most of the food for the Partisans was obtained from the local population and was supplemented by supplies seized from enemy dumps. They generally

had sufficient supplies of weapons. Limited transportation was available to Partisans. It normally consisted of light horse-drawn carts.

4. TACTICS

In general, the Partisans operated on orders from the Partisan High Command to carry out specific operations. When the Red Army went on the offensive, Partisan units usually were confined to operations which gave direct assistance to the advance elements of Red Army assault forces. They also assisted the Red Army by gathering information about the enemy, often employing children, women, and the aged for these missions.

Surprise raids and ambushes were characteristic Partisan operations. They usually operated at night, often near woods and marshes. Partisan bands normally avoided engagements with strong enemy forces. After a successful raid, they returned to their bases by separate routes. They continually changed their positions, marching by night and hiding by day.

When Partisan units were surrounded, they broke up into small groups which attempted to pass through the enemy lines or hid in the surrounded area.

Partisan units employed a markedly effective security system of sentries, patrols, and advance observation posts. Roads leading to their camps normally were camouflaged and mined. Excellent communications were maintained by the use of radio and messengers.