

## Russian Assault Tactics in Ukraine

### Introduction

The Russian Ministry of Defence issued a manual on the conduct of assault operations based on the experiences of the Russian Armed forces in Ukraine. The manual titled "Особенности ведения боевых действий в городе (населённом пункте) и лесозащитной полосе в составе штурмового отряда (роты, взвода) методические рекомендации" - which can be loosely translated as "features of conducting combat operations in a city (settlement) and a forest protection zone as part of an assault detachment (company, platoon) methodological recommendations".<sup>1</sup> This document aims to outline how to assault defensive positions that appear frequently on Ukrainian battlefields, namely urban fortification as well as forest strips that cut through Ukrainian farmland and steppes. The aim of this report is to provide a cohesive overview of the assault manual and of the capability of Russian assault detachments, and their influence on the frontline.

### Russian Assault Manual

*If Russian forces continue to develop in such a manner and start applying similar philosophy to larger formations they could become a much more cohesive and effective fighting force with advanced battle tactics and access to vast amounts of men and resources to execute them.*

In the introduction part of the manual, the author presents the abilities and characteristics of Ukrainian defensive positions, both in urban areas as well as fortified forest strips. According to the document Ukrainian urban positions are extremely comprehensive, with continuous replacement of personnel, steady supply of ammunition, transported at night to minimise risks, and a high amount of personnel manning the observation posts. The defenders also heavily utilise urban infrastructure to their advantage, with numerous strongpoints and observation posts present in high rise buildings, that grant both high visibility and cover, as well as incorporation of observation

infrastructure such as for example city cameras placed at crossroads, road junctions, and important buildings. This informational edge is further bolstered by the wide application of UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) conducting reconnaissance, ranging from small quadcopters to highly advanced drones like the Fury or even Bayraktar.

Furthermore, during offensive operations, if a Ukrainian unit is forced to withdraw, or eliminated, their position is targeted by artillery fire - either to cover the soldiers retreat or eliminate advancing assault troops. After around 30 - 40 minutes the lost position is counter-attacked by reserves in the hope of regaining the lost ground and eliminating remnants of assault forces. In the case of forest strips, Ukrainian defence is organised in 2 - 3 lines. Fire weapons (most probably indirect fire weapons like mortars, or/and weapons with anti armour capabilities), are located in reinforced positions both on the flanks and in the depths of the fortified forests. What is more, each of the defensive lines is bolstered by at least 2 fortified positions, either a combination of wood and earth or in some cases concrete bunkers, fitted with heavy machine guns. The defenders are also supported by aerial reconnaissance, mostly drones, as

well as "camera traps" - small cameras mounted around the defensive lines that monitor the area. This allows for better coordination of supporting fire, as well as boosts the capabilities of the heavy machine gun nests as some of them are fitted with remote controls, allowing the operator to engage targets from the safety of a bunker or a fortified position. Artillery supporting the defence lines is located between 8 and 10 kilometres away, hidden away in shelters and only brought forward for fire missions. The artillery fires only if it has a guaranteed opening on the target, the time spent at the firing position does not exceed 15 minutes, after which artillery is moved. Further manoeuvrable fire assets are present in the area of defence and widely used, this includes tanks, guns, mortars, and ATGMs.<sup>1</sup>

### **Composition and Organisation of Assault Detachments**

The second part of the manual focuses on the organisation of a new detachment out of readily available units that is tailored to conducting assault operations on the Ukrainian battlefield, based on platoon and company level forces - named and further referred to as the

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<sup>1</sup> Here most probably referring to self-propelled guns and self-propelled mortars.

“assault detachment”. The task of an assault detachment is to capture important objects, positions (including strong points or pieces of terrain), block and destroy large structures, and assault buildings in a populated areas. These units are mostly formed on the basis of a reinforced mechanised battalion, although the document also includes notes on assault detachments formed on the basis of airborne or air assault battalions - as they are oftentimes used as assault and/or shock troops.

The general organisation of the assault detachment is as follows: Command group, 2-3 assault companies, reconnaissance group, tank group, mobile electronic warfare group, flamethrower group, UAV group, air defence group, artillery support units, fire support group, engineering assault group, reserve group, medical evacuation group, VVST evacuation group. The attack is conducted primarily by the assault companies which are supported by the listed additional units (see figure 1. Assault Detachment Equipment for more details).

The assault company is organised as follows: command group, UAV group, 2-3



Figure 1. Assault Detachment Equipment

assault platoons, fire support platoon, *бронегруппа* - armoured group, reserve squad, artillery support platoon, and the evacuation squad. (see figure 2. Assault Company Equipment for more details).

Each assault platoon is comprised of 12 to 15 men, divided into 3 men fire teams. The structure of the assault platoon is supposed to be flexible, adapted to the particularities of the battlefield and the current engagement. However, for reference and guidance purposes a "standard" platoon can be organised in the following manner: the lead team, first fire team, second fire team, command team, and reserve team. (see figure 3. Assault Platoon for more details)

## Planning

The tactics of the assault detachments are based on a very thorough, at least according to the manual, preparation of forces. According to the document the commander must allocate three days to plan the operation and prepare the troops. The commander should provide for the actions of the assault detachment lasting up to two days. The tasks, objectives, and plan of action can be refined by the end of the first day of operations. Assault operations should be launched at different times, with no strict



Figure 2. Assault Company Equipment pattern, this is done so presumably to confuse the defenders. In the course of

preparing the assault operation, the commander should take into account the characteristics of the chosen battlefield, including terrain, obstacles, buildings, etc. as well as study the enemy, presence of prepared positions, strongpoints, and the relative strength of opposing forces. The commander is advised to utilise available UAV assets, quadcopters especially to conduct the study of the battlefield. The day before the assault the recon detachment scouts the potential battlefield for up-to-date information and potential lines of advance. Based on this information the commander should assess the ability of his unit to complete the objective. If the decision to continue is made, the commander is responsible for setting up tasks for each assault company and each reinforcement unit (tank group, detachment artillery group etc.), including targets and milestones for the advance. Company commanders are responsible for platoon tasks, and platoon commanders for the actions of the combat threes (fire teams).

Additionally, artillery and fire support should be organised by echelon (company commander responsible for company assets, platoon for platoon



Figure 3. Assault Platoon

assets etc.) based on existing tasks, direction and range of fire. Each fire support and artillery unit should have pre-planned strike targets. In the case of suddenly appearing targets, on duty fire weapons are used. Furthermore, all the actions and fires conducted by the artillery and fire support are based on operational time periods, which discern which targets are to be shelled at which time. This allows the fire support units to better coordinate with the assault troopers, who then know which areas of the battlefield are being covered by artillery fire, and when and where they can/need to manoeuvre. During operations artillery units should be deployed at a distance from each other, up to 2 km in length, also depending on the designated targets and missions.

Assault units should only stop when the target objective has been reached. Upon reaching it, the soldiers should prepare defensive positions. The reserve units should be then deployed to reinforce the captured positions, while artillery fires target possible avenues of enemy counter attacks - such fire missions should last up to 60 - 90 minutes. The artillery units then switch to harassing fire – firing at targets of opportunity and disrupting enemy actions. The assault units should be resupplied with water

and ammunition only at night, and within 30-40 minutes when assault units capture their objective. The resupply units utilise armoured transports and should on the way back from supplying front troops evacuate the wounded.

### **Combat Operations – Forest Strips**

Forest strips are a very frequent area of terrain in Ukraine. These lines of trees cut through farming fields and steppes, creating a mesh of roughly four-sided fields bordered on all sides by treelines. These treelines are reinforced and changed into defensive positions, providing much more protection than the open fields in between. This part of the manual describes how to properly assault these forest strips.

When assaulting defensive positions located within a forest strip, Russian forces rely on coordinated actions of combined arms. The main assault is carried out by infantry within the forest strip. The advancing units are positioned within the controlled sections of the woodland. The units move forward only within the forest strip, soldiers are forbidden from going to the edge of the treeline or beyond it. This both covers and camouflages the assault units. The assault upon defensive positions can only begin after the artillery and fire

support units open fire on enemy positions. The fire is directed at the first line of defence, suppressing, and destroying the garrison soldiers. The

infantry advances under the cover of the bombardment. Upon reaching suitable positions the commander of the assault unit gives the order to the artillery and

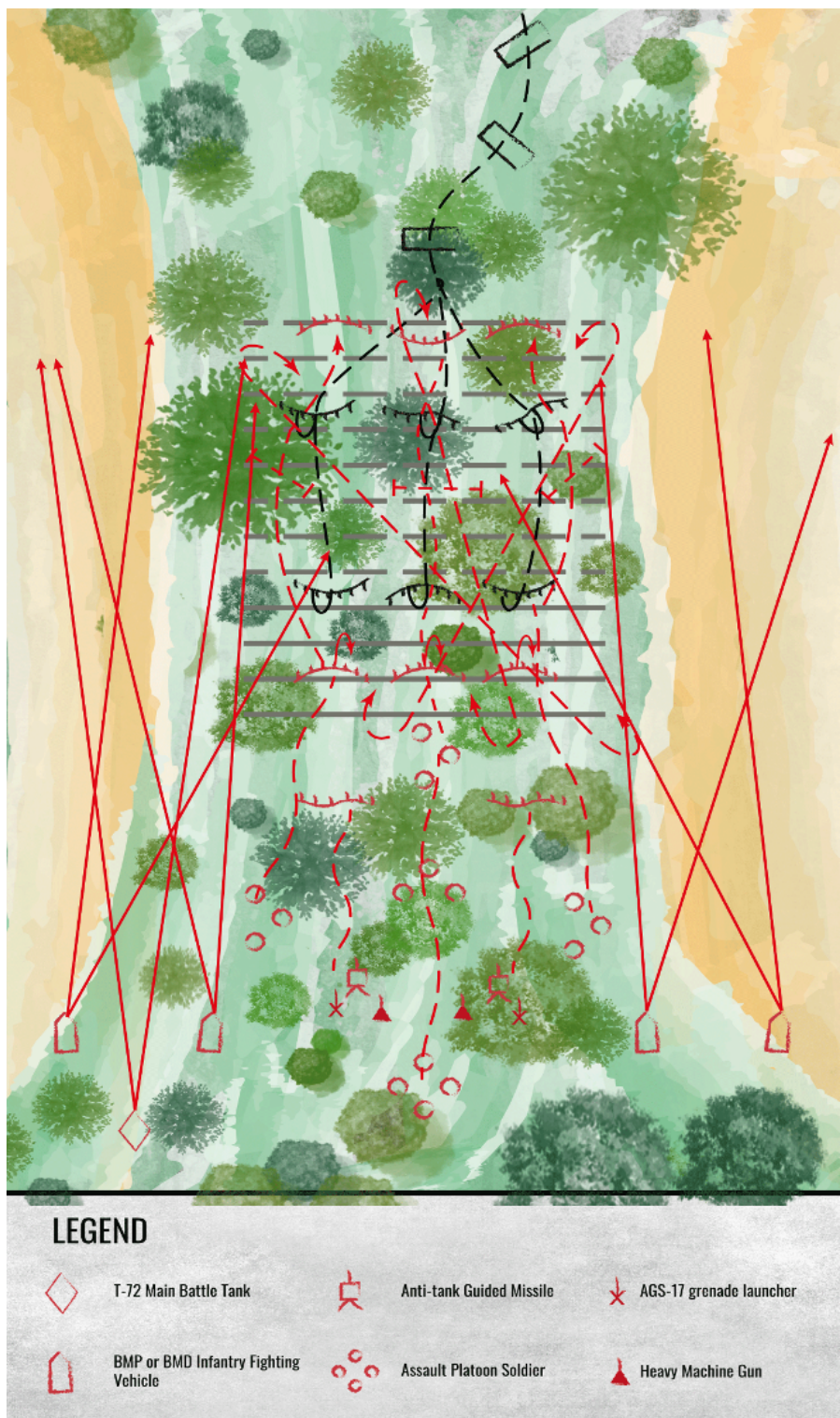


Figure 4. Combat Operations - Forest Strips

fire support units to transition into the next operational time period, thus shifting fire onto the second line of defence. This allows infantry to assault softened enemy positions, while the bombardment suppresses supporting enemy units. In order to execute this manoeuvre correctly, the infantry should assault enemy trenches within 1 minute after the bombardment shifts forward.

The process is repeated until all three enemy defensive lines are captured or the designated objectives are achieved. When advancing the infantry should also observe the surroundings for the presence of mine-explosive barriers and enemy video surveillance equipment. Upon reaching the designated objective, assault units should occupy the target and prepare defensive positions, in preparation for enemy counterattack. Russian soldiers are prohibited from occupying captured trenches, as the enemy knows their precise positions, layout, and weaknesses, can accurately strike them with artillery fire, and they can be mined.

The commanders of the assault units also has the ability to call on support from their respective armoured group, fire support group, or artillery group to engage newly identified targets (enemy

strongpoints, vehicles etc.), however, only the overall commander of the assault detachment can call for aviation support. The AGS (automatic grenade launcher) crews should provide supporting fire from covered positions, using only indirect fire, from a distance of between 600 - 1700 metres (between the "dead zone" – minimum safe range and the maximum range of the weapon). The assault detachment's armoured group should be set up in firing positions in the controlled section of the forest strip. These vehicles should be able to provide supporting fire along the entire line of the assault, and on both sides of the forest strip. The vehicles' positions should be well camouflaged, so as to avoid being spotted by enemy air assets or other reconnaissance. The vehicles should not operate out in the open (in the fields between the forest strips), if required they should manoeuvre along the edge of a forest strip (along the line of advance) where the advancing infantry can spot mines and anti-vehicle traps.

### **Combat Operations – Urban Areas**

Urban areas are key points of resistance, oftentimes possessing critical infrastructure, and are thus, heavily contested. The assault manual describes how to properly assault such areas, from



wider perspectives up to block by block and room by room fighting.

Prior to the assault, a thorough reconnaissance is conducted, aimed to locate enemy strongpoints, fire weapons, emplacements, armoured vehicles, tanks, and surveillance equipment (observation posts, drones, street surveillance cameras) - this is done by normal observation, or preferably using drones (quadcopters). When planning the assault, the commander should create alternative designations for points of interest such as a numbering system for buildings, and/or alternative street names. This allows easier planning, confuses enemy forces, and allows for open communication between friendly forces. Furthermore, each cleared building should be marked with a chosen sign and marked in green on the operations map in the command centre, again allowing for better coordination of forces while denying enemy information. Additionally, the soldiers of the assault units should not perform the evacuation of wounded personnel themselves in order not to disrupt the operation. Servicemembers are instructed only to provide first aid, report the location of the wounded, and then continue to pursue their mission objectives. The commander relays the position of the

wounded in the "yellow" zone (presumably contested area) to the evacuation squad, which carries out the evacuation.

Again, as in operation in forest strips, Russian forces rely on combined arms cooperation to achieve their objectives. However, in the case of urban assaults Russian forces rely a bit more heavily on their fire and armour support. Firstly, artillery and fire support units are prescribed targets along the entire frontline of enemy defences - this is done to weaken initial enemy resistance and allow assault units to enter the urban area. As mentioned earlier, artillery and fire support assets are also prescribed targets along the entire line of advance. Upon receiving an order to transition into the next operational time period the units shift fire to the next set of targets. This can be noticed in figure 5. where as it can be seen, each fire support and artillery unit has prescribed targets, with each target having the additional note on when it is supposed to be targeted. For example, the denomination "1" would mean that that target would be targeted in the first operational time period, the denomination with several numbers "1-3" would mean that these targets will be shelled continuously through several time periods.

Furthermore, it is vital to highlight the “destruction targets” which essentially mean that the bombardment of such a denoted target should result in its destruction in the allocated time period (destruction of an enemy position or levelling of an entire building). These time

periods are not fixed but denoted as mentioned earlier by the direct order of the assault commander, ordering artillery and fire support units to shift fire. This is done in concert with the advance of the assault units, which can then push into

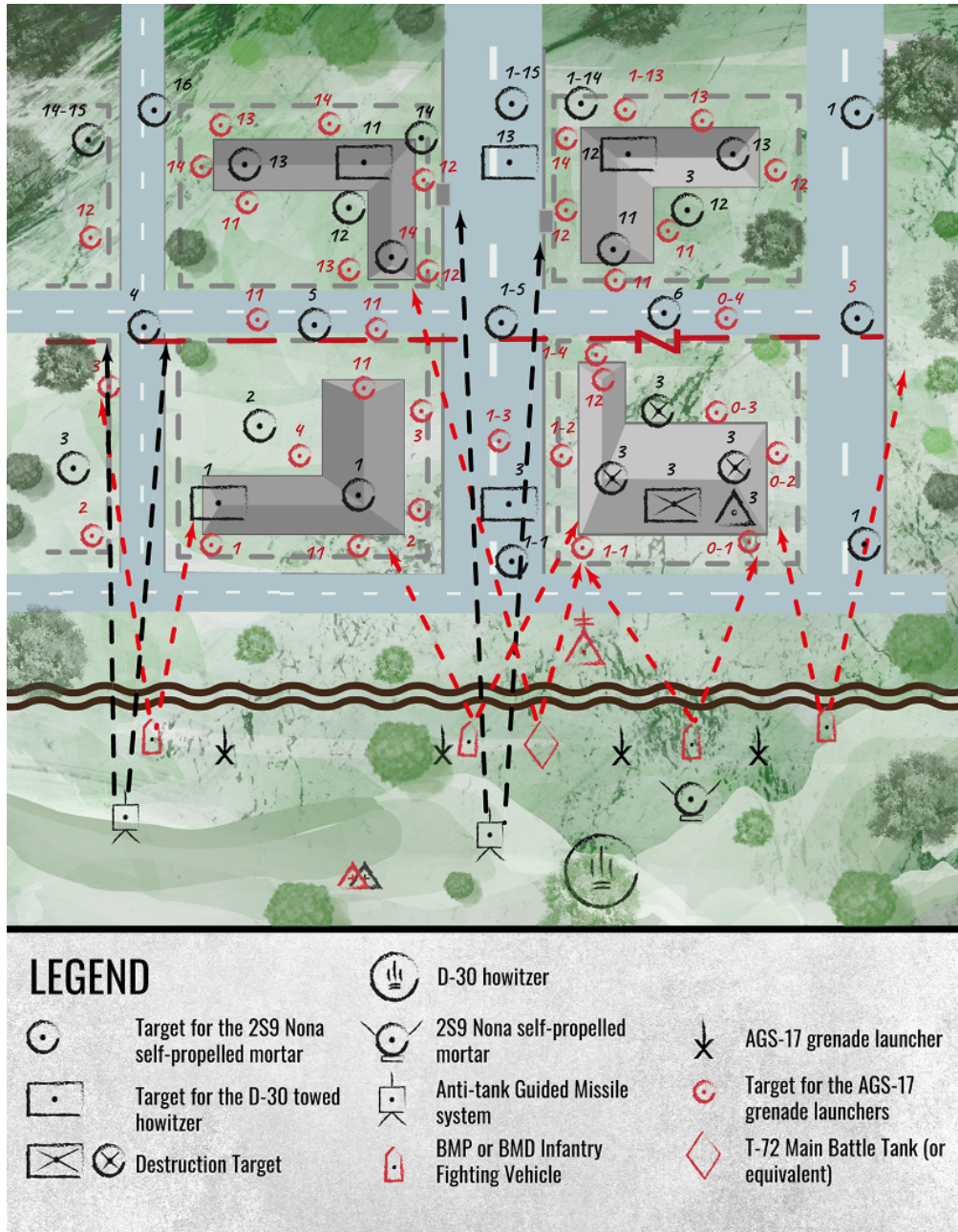


Figure 5. Combat Operations - Urban Areas

weakened enemy defensive positions.

In this case armoured vehicles of the *bronegrupa* will advance along the foot troops, providing protection and direct fire support. Vehicles can use street corners, side streets, and similar forms of cover when advancing through urban areas and/or engaging enemy forces. The armoured vehicles, tanks especially, are also responsible for the creation of entry positions for infantry into building and across other obstacles, by blasting holes through the walls. If possible, the assault units, along with supporting vehicles, should refrain from advancing down long roads and along long straight streets. During the assault soldiers should look to capture enemy electronic tablets (smartphones), as they could provide information about the enemy, and help the units navigate. Additionally, in order to combat enemy surveillance soldiers should utilise hunting rifles or buckshot to destroy low level flying enemy UAVs.<sup>2</sup>

The manual also proposes two variants of assaulting urban areas. The first one is basically a repetition of the previous outlines - artillery fire targets the first line of defence and then proceeds forward covering the assault platoons' advance. This can be described as a creeping advance, with infantry steadily

moving forward under artillery cover. The second variant is a bit different. It is also based on artillery supremacy, with fire assets heavily shelling the frontline positions of the enemy however, in this case after the initial opening bombardment, the fire focuses on a single section of the assault - presumably where a single platoon would attack. After weakening the defences, the position is attacked by the assault platoon, and the artillery fire shifts to cut off the second line of defence from reserves. This forces the defenders to either transition troops along the defence line from neighbouring defensive positions, thereby weakening them or do nothing. In the first case upon receiving confirmation of lateral reinforcements the remaining assault platoons advance and seize the less defended positions and can then proceed to eliminate defenders sent to support the primary assault target. If the neighbouring positions do not reinforce the assaulted position, it will serve as a breakthrough point, allowing more troops to advance through them, thus flanking the other defenders. Either way the position is taken, and the tactic is repeated until all objectives have been achieved.

When assaulting a building the assault platoon should act in the following manner. Firstly, a single soldier should be stationed by the building's entrance, with the tasks of preventing enemy attacks from the outside, or from the basement. The rest of the platoon proceeds to the upper floors in combat threes. The soldiers clear the entire building on an apartment basis, with the number of soldiers dedicated to clearing each apartment based on its size - three men per room. While clearing the building with a joint corridor, and/or stairwell, the assault platoon should dedicate between 1 - 2 soldiers to cover the yet uncleared apartments and the stairs leading up. When the entire building is cleared the assault platoon proceeds to the 2nd floor, where they create a breach to the next building, for this purpose each and every soldier of the assault unit should be equipped with a breaching device (this is a peculiarity of Soviet era architecture where several blocks of flats would be built right next to each other with conjoined side walls). The assault platoon also mines (booby traps) the stairwell leading to the upper floor before proceeding to the next building (presumably this is done in order to protect against infiltration of enemy troops in a similar manner, using a

breach charge to create an entryway on one of the upper floors). The process is then repeated.

In the case in which a building cannot be assaulted Russian troops are instructed to use the "extrusion" method. Soldiers take cover in the buildings / covered positions, surrounding the target building, but do not encircle it. The besieged enemy troops should be left with an avenue of retreat. Once the friendly forces are in cover, the objective is intensively shelled by the artillery and fire support platoon (supposedly the vehicles of the *bronegruppya* can also be used here). Enemy forces occupying the building should be forced to retreat due to the intensity of fire, in this case all friendly assets shift fire to the escape route, left unblocked especially for the purpose of shelling it during enemy retreat. This results in the easy capture of enemy strongpoints while at the same time dealing massive casualties. This approach has been observed in action during the battle for Bakhmut, with Ukrainian soldiers stating that their strongpoints were shelled until they were forced to withdraw, whereupon their line of retreat was targeted by Russian fire.<sup>3</sup>

The manual also provides recommendations for defensive and withdrawal operations in urban areas. Firstly, when preparing defence, a strongpoint should be chosen from among the available buildings/locations. It should be chosen based on its structural strength, ability to conduct all round defence, ability to set up observation posts and remote firing positions, with covered access to them. Units should not be accumulated in one area, but rather spread around the defensive positions. Additionally, these positions should not be located on the building's rooftop. In the case where the defensive position is placed in a basement, the units should be provided with enlarged feeder cable (6 - 12 metres), to mount the antenna on the building's roof. The defence should also utilise mines to block enemy advances. If the assault units are repulsed, they should be withdrawn at night, to minimise casualties.

### **Consideration from the Russian assault manual**

The discovered Assault Manual seems to be a very comprehensive training and guidance material, meant to supplement, or potentially even build from the ground up the ability and knowledge of Russian

commanding officers. This is potentially very useful due to the shortages of experienced officers, as well as numerous losses among the officer cadre, which cannot be as easily or quickly replaced. This manual can bridge this gap for the Russian armed forces, either providing guidance to freshly graduated officers or knowledge to the commanders promoted in the field.

Firstly, the entire introduction section of the manual serves both as an overview and a reminder of the abilities of the Ukrainian armed forces in defensive operation. It also encourages Russian commanders to comprehensively study the area of operations, meaning terrain, enemy forces, enemy weak- and strongpoints, as well as the capabilities of their own units. What is probably one of the most important takeaways from this introductory part is that the Russian forces have a well developed understanding of Ukrainian defences, both in terms of utilised equipment as well as tactics.

The author of the text goes into detail about the organisation of Ukrainian defences and especially their strengths and how they are used against attacking Russian troops. The level of Russian intelligence on the topic seems very

extensive and if applied correctly could prove very problematic to Ukrainian defenders. Some experts doubt the ability of this document to improve Russian assault tactics, stating that as per Russian doctrine such texts will be applied to the letter without any potential variations, making Russian assaults rigid and attack plans ignorant of the realities of the battlefield. However, the text is written in a guiding manner, aiming to equip its readers with knowledge and ability, rather than a strict set of rules to follow. This can be seen in the opening statements where the author claims that success of combat operations is based on a thorough understanding and study of the battlefield, where those combat operations will take place. The manual thus, aims to give Russian commanders guidance on how to conduct assault operations against typical Ukrainian defensive positions, subject however to battlefield circumstances. This could potentially result in greater flexibility and effectiveness of Russian assaults.

Secondly, the composition of the assault detachments provides great flexibility for the Russian forces, though potentially at the cost of specialisation. The assault detachments, as mentioned previously, are created on the basis of mechanised

infantry battalions reinforced by additional assets from other formations. The standard Russian mechanised battalion consists of roughly 539 men on 44 BTR vehicles or 461 men on 37 BMP vehicles. The manual suggests the use of BMPs, though BTRs can also probably be used.

Each BMP battalion has roughly 303 men mounted on 33 BMPs as its frontline primary fighting force, which translates to 3 companies, each with 101 men and 11 BMPs each. In the assault detachments each company has 4 BMPs, supported by a single T-72 tank, with 2 - 3 assault platoons, each consisting of 12 - 15 men. Thus, roughly a single mechanised company can be transformed into roughly 3 smaller or 2 larger assault companies. Or this could allow Russian forces to mount assaults without compromising their battle lines to Ukrainian counter attacks. The point is that these formations can be created spontaneously without the need for vast amounts of resources or manpower, or extensive prior planning. This is similar to the idea behind Russian Battalion Tactical Groups, smaller formations meant to be readily available, quick to muster, and very flexible to the task at hand. The core of mechanised infantry (or airborne/air assault troops), readily

available everywhere along the frontline, with involvement of locally available heavier assets, such as tanks, or artillery, which can be temporarily borrowed from other formations.

Third, the reason for the smaller number of heavy assets, tanks, and armoured infantry vehicles in particular, is the characteristics of the battlefield. The combat operations in forested and urban areas using heavy assets, tanks and infantry vehicles especially, oftentimes results in the loss of said assets. The characteristics of the battlefield are very unfavourable to the use of armoured vehicles. The forest strips are difficult to traverse for such vehicles, forcing them to operate by the woodland edges or in the open fields in between them. In both cases the vehicles are very susceptible to anti tank weapons, artillery, or pre-placed minefields. In urban areas vehicles have an easier time advancing, due to the existence of streets, but can be very susceptible to anti armour fires. The vehicles can be engaged by AT armed infantry from above, targeting the weakest points in the top armour. At the same time artillery strikes can target the vehicles easily as they cannot manoeuvre easily out of the line of fire due to the surrounding buildings. The loss of armoured combat equipment oftentimes

leads to the loss of the trained crew as well.

The resources needed to replace both the highly advanced vehicle along with trained personnel is much higher in comparison to the loss of infantry. It is much cheaper, and easier for the Russian Federation to train and equip infantrymen than armour troops, even if the infantry is lost at a much higher rate. Furthermore, infantrymen can advance across the forest strips and engage enemy positions while in cover. Similarly, infantry is also much more mobile in urban areas, as it can traverse across buildings, and take cover in them. Foot personnel is also much more preferable due to the ability to clear buildings and occupy enemy positions. Thus, the assault manual allows Russian forces to reorganise themselves into detachments more suitable to the tasks at hand, while minimising losses of valuable equipment and personnel.

Fourth, the assault detachments allow Russian forces to engage in coordinated combined arms operation on small organisational levels. The assault detachments are based on reinforced battalions, but their structure allows even single companies to conduct combined arms manoeuvres. This allows

Russian forces to plan and execute highly effective operations in a relatively short time. At the same time the manual provides guidelines and sample plans, that allows even lower lever, or inexperienced officers to carry out much more complex operations. While such commanders might be less effective in dynamic situations, the manual also provides a number of contingencies and emergency plans that can mitigate such difficulties.

The additional option to further bolster company sized formations by heavier assets and direct subordination of these assets to company commanders, also allows for a greater flexibility and effectiveness of the assault detachments. The direct subordination of heavy assets, such as artillery pieces or tanks, enhances the detachment's ability to engage the enemy by creating a smoother chain of command. In this case, instead of requesting support from the battalion commander, which takes time and complex coordination, the company commander issues orders directly to artillery and armour units embedded into his detachment. Such a configuration allows company sized assault units to respond to a plethora of enemy threats, even capable of taking the fight to formations of technically larger size. This

also grants commanders greater operational freedom, and capability of crafting dynamic and favourable engagements. This closely resembles the characteristics of the Battalion Tactical Group - an independent detachment of combined arms forces tasked with objectives and granted operational freedom.

One key difference that should be noted here is that the assault detachments are only semi-independent. They are not formed as a permanent self-sufficient force but are created dynamically from units readily available in the area in order to fulfil specific objectives. The assault detachments are created, disbanded, and reformed on a dynamic means to an end basis. This ensures that the unit can be continuously supplied and reinforced from the parent formation (i.e. a mechanised or an airborne/air assault battalion). This also allows the parent formations to conduct offensive operations on a smaller scale, with limited involvement from higher echelons. This in turn allows Russian forces to maintain initiative and continue offensive operations along the frontline. Such limited offensive operations find success due to their small size, attracting limited attention before the attack starts. These assaults also enjoy a limited



response from Ukrainian forces, other than the present frontline forces, due to their small size and simultaneous similar sized engagements in other sections of the front. This forces Ukrainian defenders to divide their available resources and reserves among many different engagements, or even save reinforcements for the more major operations. Thus, Russian forces are able to pierce Ukrainian lines in many different places across the frontline and achieve small gains, which can later be developed into further, potentially major offensive operations. Bakhmut is a good example of this, where Russian forces used smaller tactical operations to threaten Ukrainian lines and continuously advance deeper into the city.

### **Conclusion**

The Russian Assault Manual provides a great overview of the Russian approach to offensive operations in Ukraine. First of all, it suggests that the Russian officer corps is lacking, and requires further preparation to conduct successful offensive operations. It also shows that Russian forces are struggling with their

losses and struggle to circumvent them by employing ad hoc formations, patched together to form a fighting force. On the other hand, it shows a degree of ingenuity, making Russian formations more flexible and adaptable. This also results in more organised combined arms operations, with clearly indicated objectives, manoeuvres, and actions. This might be an important step in Russian operations, due their previous struggles with coordinated action. If Russian forces continue to develop in such a manner and start applying similar philosophy to larger formations they could become a much more cohesive and effective fighting force with advanced battle tactics and access to vast amounts of men and resources to execute them.

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**Founded in 2005, the Casimir Pulaski Foundation** is an independent, non-for-profit, non-partisan Polish-think tank conducting research on different aspects of European and Transatlantic security, with a special focus on Central and Eastern Europe.

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Each year the Foundation presents the “Knight of Freedom” award to outstanding figures who contribute to the promotion of the values of General Casimir Pulaski, such as freedom, justice and democracy. It is also the home to the Polish branch of the Women in International Security network.

The Casimir Pulaski Foundation has been ranked as the first among Polish Think Tanks dealing with defence and national security according to the ‘Global Go To Think Tank Index’ report in 2018, 2019 and 2020 respectively. The Foundation also has a status of a partner organization of the Council of Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> “Ministry of Defense of Russia issued manual on assault operations based on experience of war against Ukraine. DOCUMENT”, *Censor Net*, December 12, 2022, [https://censor.net/en/news/3386414/ministry\\_of\\_defense\\_of\\_russia\\_issued\\_manual\\_on\\_assault\\_operations\\_based\\_on\\_experience\\_of\\_war\\_against](https://censor.net/en/news/3386414/ministry_of_defense_of_russia_issued_manual_on_assault_operations_based_on_experience_of_war_against).

<sup>2</sup> PStyleOne1, *Twitter*, March 12, 2023, <https://mobile.twitter.com/PStyleOne1/status/1634873021243723779>.

<sup>3</sup> Igor Kossov, “Ukrainian soldiers in Bakhmut: ‘Our troops are not being protected’”, *The Kyiv Independent*, March 5, 2023, <https://kyivindependent.com/ukrainian-soldiers-in-bakhmut-our-troops-are-not-being-protected/>.