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ГВ. МАЦКОВОЙ БРИГАДЫ

**REPORT
ON THE BATTLE ACTIONS OF THE 38th
GUARDS SEPARATE TANK BRIGADE FROM 9.9
to 14.9.1944.**

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сентябрь 44 г.

Confidentially

REPORT

ON THE BATTLE ACTIONS OF THE 38th GUARDS SEPARATE TANK BRIGADE FROM 9.9 to 14.9.1944.

Map 1: 100,000 – 1936

1. GENERAL SITUATION AT THE BEGINNING OF BATTLE ACTIONS.

The enemy with the main group 36 AK occupied a defensive line: Ur*.(Urochische-long ago the disappeared village) KYUNSINTUNTURI, Ur.KUNSIVARA, Lake KHORVAS-YARVI, lake PITERUMA-JARVI, lake AHVEN-YARVI and the water system VERMAN, lake TOLVAND. This defensive line was built and improved by the enemy since the fall of 1941 and was a strongly fortified defensive line.

The left flank of the main enemy grouping was defended by units of the 230th reconnaissance squadron, which occupied the defense at Ur. VALATUNTURI and the 56th Mountain Jager Battalion, defense with a system of separate strong points: KETKOYEVA, KEICE, BEYER, MIOCKALAHTI, HERNE, FILFRAS, by force from platoon to company. The system of strong points was a cover for the left flank of the hull. The strongholds of BEYER / 5422 /, KEITZE / 5026 /, KETKOYVA were created by the enemy in the first half of JUNE 1944. Each of them is adapted to all-round defense and represented a system of rifle trenches and earth-and-timber pillbox, using wire fences and minefields.

Strongpoints, MIOCKALAHTI. / 5418-1 /, FILFRAS / 4204 / were strong strongpoints in the enemy's defense system on its left flank and likely areas of anti-tank defense.

Machine-gun and anti-tank earth-and-timber emplacement were prepared by the testimonies of defectors and prisoners of war along the western shore and swamps / 4608-4-7 /, / 4408-1 /.

211th separate tank battalion of the enemy — the only tank unit in the direction, consisting of two tank-company, a headquarters and a repair company — was in the reserve of the corps commander and was deployed in the ALAKURTTI area.

The area where the fighting of the 38th Guards Separate Tank Brigade took place was wooded and swampy and rocky with the presence of hills, continuous stone ridges and large boulders, which completely excluded the possibility of tank maneuver. The 38th Guards Separate Tank Brigade transferred to the operational subordination of the commander of the infantry division. After making an extremely difficult march in the history of armored forces on off-road, rocky mountains and swamps, it went to the flank of the 36th German army corps, together with the rifle division, hung over the enemy's main communications KUOLAJARVI - ALAKURTTI in the rear.

2. MARCH OF BRIGADE.

The brigade made a march of 160 km., in conditions of extremely difficult terrain in the polar Karelia, of which about 60 km. off roads, along the column road, which was laid by the tanks themselves through the mountains with the presence of continuous boulders through forests and peat bogs.



Terrain on the brigade's movement in the area of sq. 5480.

A perfect march by a brigade opened a new page in the history of tank troops during the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945). These successes brigade,

achieved, thanks to the high training of personnel, especially the driver mechanics and excellent preparation of the material part.

This area is a part of the KOVDA river basin, and has a sharply hilly, very sparsely populated and almost unexplored relief.

The terrain of this region is mountainous-rocky and wooded, swampy, impassable swamps occupy more than 70% of the entire surface and stretch from the foot of the mountains to the peaks. In the depressions between the elevations, as well as along the roads of rivers and lakes, there are many small mossy marshes.



The presence of a dense vegetation and peat cover retains moisture of high saturation for the entire period of short summer time.

Swamps are found in two varieties: with ordinary bumps and with granite boulders overgrown with moss, but they are apparently completely indistinguishable, since these boulders under the moss create the appearance of bumps. The whole area is covered with dense forest. There are hills completely bare-rocky, overgrown with eternal mosses. Forests are neglected (not well-groomed, wild, thicket), impassable with continuous natural blockages. Mountains and hills are steep, steep and stretch an unbroken network throughout the whole of polar Karelia. The soil is weak, extremely low resistivity.

The relief of this area is a continuation of the spurs of the Scandinavian mountains and has a mountain-knoll-like character. There are rocks and boulders scattered all over the area, reaching huge sizes, in some places, making up a heap of boulders, not overcome by transport and difficult to overcome by infantry.



The area in the area of square 5626.

The mountains abound in springs, as a result of which at different levels of the surface the swamps and lakes do not dry out even in summer.

The rivers of the region can be classified as semi-mountain rivers with many cracks and sills. All rivers in summertime are passable on rifts and rapids. The bottom of the rivers is rocky, the flow is fast, 1.5-2 m/s.



Photo. Left bank of TUN TSA River.

Off road terrain stretches hundreds of kilometers. Settlements are rarely found near the Kirov Railway and its branches, and the remaining expanses of the region are completely uninhabited and deserted.

The present brief description of the terrain is only superficial and not exhaustive, but it is sufficient for a general presentation of all the difficulties associated with the greatest transition of tanks of a large group into the enemy's deep rear, with a length of 160 km, of which 60 km. completely off-road.

The march, accomplished by the 38th Guards Separate Tank Brigade, is divided into two stages:

1st stage was completed from 22.00 3.9 to 22.00 5.9.44 from KANDALAKSHA to the lake KOUTAMOLAMPI sq.5488-8 along the army road, the latter is characterized by frequent ascents to 15-20° and descents, with sharp turns on ascents and descents.



Tank T-34 Guards Lieutenant KUKHARENKO overcomes the rise of stone soil in the area of the sq. 5628.

The road made by tanks in the forest area sq. 5676

2nd stage from 9.00 9.9.44 on 16.00 10.9.44 from the lake KOUTAMOLAMPI to the MIOKKALAHTI-KUOLAYARVI road in the square 5016-4, completely off-road and passed along the coordinates from 5644 to 5030 with a common horizontal.

In the square 5422-9 the mountain river TUN TSA was forced, with a rough current with a rocky bottom, a depth of 0.7 m and a width of over 70 m.



Further, the route passed through a very stony and swampy location / coordinates 5220, 5218, 5018, 5016-4 /.

Under normal conditions, it would take a lot of time, material means and physical labor to lay a column road along this impassable terrain, not only for tanks, but also for horse-drawn vehicles. But the military situation required a deep detour to the rear of the enemy quickly and suddenly for the enemy.

It was inexpedient to build a column road in advance in this direction, since it was impossible to maintain the secrecy of its construction in front of the enemy, thereby suddenness would be lost. Therefore, only tanks could achieve the desired success by ironing the upcoming route, preparing the passage through difficult places, which was perfectly accomplished by the personnel of the 38th Guards Separate Tank Brigade.

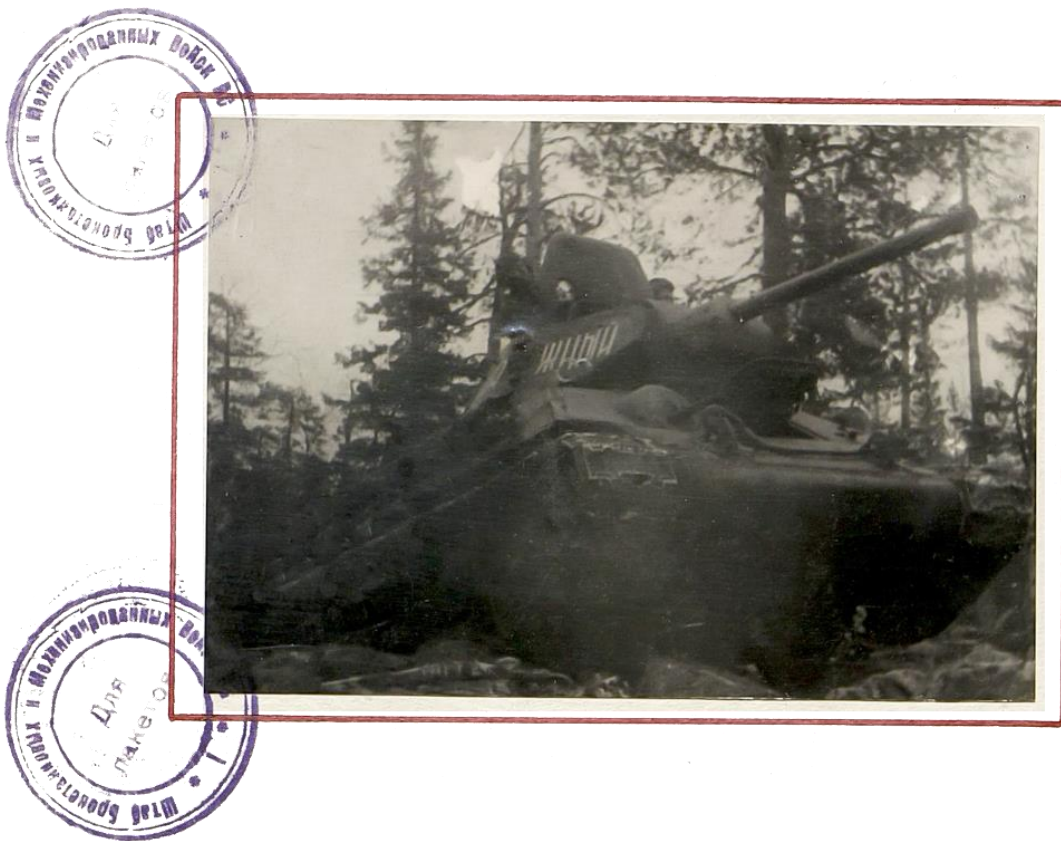
The brigade arrived on the Karelian Front in the month of May 1944. In the combat training of the personnel of the brigade, special attention was immediately paid to a thorough study of the terrain and the characteristics of the conduct of hostilities.

The brigade's command, relying on the officers staff and the Party-Komsomol (politic) team, managed to put together and prepare an excellent combat team in a relatively short time, confident in the applicability of Soviet tanks in the Arctic, and taught them "po-Gvardeisky" (Professionas – who know how to drive tanks in Guards units) to drive tanks in these regions.

Thus, by the time of the upcoming battles, in order to defeat the 36th Army Corps, the 20th Mountain Army of the enemy, the structure of the brigade was well prepared, united, confident in the readiness to carry out any assigned combat mission in the indicated terrain conditions.

The first stage of the march was 114 km. completed in 30 hours.

Driving along a sharply winding road with large frequent ascents and descents required from personnel, high discipline, tension and attentiveness.



Tank T-34 overcomes a rocky terrain in sq. 5222

All statutory rules of movement were strictly and accurately observed. The march went perfectly, only one tank lagged behind for several hours, and all the remaining 53 tanks (out of 54) arrived at the appointed place at the same time.

Overcoming the second stage of the route on impassability and woodland-marshy terrain / with a length of 60 km. / was organized as follows: a platoon of T-34 tanks under the command of deputy, commander of the 3rd tank battalion of the Guard Captain MELNIKOV (who died heroically in subsequent battles with the German invaders), together with the vanguard of the rifle division, spoke at 4.00 6.9.44 to lay the upcoming route. The second platoon of Guards Lieutenant KUKHARENKO made a similar task at the same time.



T-34 tank movement on a rocky ground in the area of sq.5424.

With the vanguard from another rifle division to pave the second path for the troops of the rifle division, this platoon, after completing its mission, connected for crossing the river TUN TSA with a platoon of Guards Captain MELNIKOV

Without the help of tanks, it was impossible to lay passages, since making a clearing in the overgrown forests and cleaning up these forests with detachments of infantry and sappers, as well as clearing passages in hard-to-pass natural blockages, all this took time and threatened with untimely fulfillment of the assigned task. In this case, the tanks, moving ahead of the advance vanguards of the rifle division, knocking down trees and breaking rubble, formed a kind of flooring for the road.



Tank T-34 paves the road in the forest area square 5486.



T-34 tank paves the road in the forest in the area of sq. 5482.

Going behind the infantry, it only remained to level and pull off the interfering dumped trees. Such advancement enabled rifle units to advance with convoys after tanks along the road they laid. In addition, as mentioned above, the presence of a thick network of marshes and the weakness of the soil did not allow the movement of tanks on one track without increasing the terrain with wood flooring. Thus, although all parts of the rifle division passed behind the vanguard, with separate groups of horse-drawn vehicles, the main forces of the brigade could not go along the laid route without proper preparation / arrangement of crossings over water lines, without strengthening the terrain with wood flooring /. The brigade did not have a sufficient number of sappers, and the infantry did not have them at all. The staff of the brigade, on its own, built itself all the way with wooden floorings and water crossings, casting logs, rocky rapids. They built over 6 wood floorings with a total length of 200-400m. Each log is more than 25 cm thick.

The movement of the main forces of the tanks did not always go along the previously planned path of the avant-garde, for this it would be necessary to cover most roads with wood flooring due to the weakness of the soil and swamps, therefore, frequent rounds to the right and left were practiced, avoiding driving on the same track, where possible, greatly accelerated the movement.

The march was organized, swiftly, secretly from the enemy, and the appearance of a large group of tanks in the area south of MIOKALAHTI, had a stunning effect on the enemy.

From the technical side, the march was carried out exemplary, all tanks in 54 units completed 160 km. spaces along a difficult path in mountainous-rocky and wooded-marshy areas, of which about 60 km. on a completely off-road path and to 16.00 10.9.44 the whole team concentrated on the road MIOKKALAHTI-KUOLAYARVI sq. 5220. Brigade command, engineers, technicians, and driver mechanics / assistant commander for the technical part of the 393rd separate tanks battalion***, engineer-captain DROZDOV, driver-mechanic senior sergeant VISHNEVSKY, driver-mechanic sergeant KOBLYANSKY, senior sergeant BOGDANOV / explains this outstanding / or how they call "UNEXPECTED" / transition, the following points:

1. The design and endurance of the Soviet T-34 tank.
2. Good condition state and contents of the material part, both before the march and during the march.
3. Highly trained and experienced drivers.
4. Timeliness in preventing the occurrence of accidents, breakdowns and other malfunctions.
5. The overall cohesion of the crews, platoons, companies, battalions, high discipline, strong hatred of the enemy, an unlimited desire to carry out any assigned combat mission - all this formed the basis for the success achieved.

Note *** 393rd Tank Battalion, 02.15.1942, included in the 180th Tank Brigade, and from 10.23.1943 - the 38th Guards Tank Brigade. On June 15, 1944 it was renamed the 2nd Tank Battalion of the 38th Guards. tank brigade

The following are partial examples of the proof of this:

a) one of the frequent accidents encountered in practice is time collapse of the final drive bearings during a difficult and lengthy march, especially in the absence of experience of driver mechanics, timely inspection and adjustment of tanks, such accidents are inevitable, and in this march would be inevitable. But the tanks of the 38th Guards Separate Tank Brigade did not experience such an accident, this was achieved by timely stretching and adjusting the tracks / such

precaution was even more necessary because of the sharply changing qualities of the path. Timeliness of adjusting the final drive bearings and most importantly, the tanks were conducted at a low speed, which allowed the experienced driver mechanic to safely squeeze the clutch when the caterpillars hit the granite boulder, while turning off the motor, preventing an accident;

b/ there were no cases of warping (beating during rotation) of the discs of the onboard friction clutches, which was achieved by timely adjustment of the latter during the march;

c/ there were no cases of failure of the main clutches, due to the fact that the moving (tanks) from the place and all changes in the operating mode of the machine were made smoothly, in addition, the main clutches were lubricated after 5-6 hours of operation, instead of 10-12 stipulated by the current manual.

d/ Forcing swamps without decking was carried out often, but always successfully. If the tank ahead was crossing the swamp and ironing the bottom of the vegetation cover, the tank following it did not follow in the footsteps of the front tank, but took it to the left or right, while in first gear, without shifting gears at constant engine speeds, without jerking the tank, strictly observing straightforwardness.

If the tank got stuck, further attempts to get out of the swamp immediately stopped, the crew hastily put logs in, and carefully examined the swamp, prepared wood flooring if necessary and then removed the tank from the swamp, this should explain the fact that throughout not a single tank needed a tow in the way, but went out by itself;

e/ difficult transitions through rocky hills with boulders have always been overcome as well, thanks to the high art of driving driver mechanics.

Conclusion:

The march of the 38th Guards Separate Tank Brigade on roads and off-road, in the difficult conditions of the Arctic, once again proves the impeccability and perfection of our T-34 tank.

The march conducted in the conditions of the Arctic, indicates excellent knowledge by the personnel of the material part and its contents, the skillful mastery of the technique of driving combat vehicles, the training of personnel of the brigade of hatred of the enemy and his desire for the quick destruction of the enemy.

3. BATTLE ACTIONS OF PARTS OF BRIGADE.

Fighting units of the brigade are characterized by surprise, swift action and ardent offensive rush.

9.9.44 The tank platoon, the 3rd tank battalion of the brigade, operating with the vanguard of the rifle division, was tasked with capturing the strong point of MIOKKALAHTI, the strong point of MIOKKALHTI was a fortified enemy unit with an area of 1 square kilometer. He had up to 50 dugouts (blindage) with knurls in 3 logs, lined with stones and surrounded by wire in 3 rows. The strong point is located on a hill, from where the surrounding area was clearly visible, the Garrison had up to 180 people and 5 anti-tank defense guns.

A tank platoon under the command of the deputy commander of the battalion, Guards captain MELNIKOV with an assault of machine gunners attacked a strong point. The enemy, stunned by the sudden appearance of tanks, could not provide serious resistance. Tankers did not let the enemy come to their senses, they shot Germans point-blank with fire from cannons and machine guns. The garrison was almost completely destroyed. In the strongpoint captured lot trophies. The tank platoon has no losses.

The commander of the 3rd tank battalion, Guards captain DONETS was given the task, together with the rifle battalion, to attack the strongly fortified enemy line sq. 5016. The platoon commander Guards Lieutenant KUKHARENKO, immediately attacked the enemy.

The enemy, having a prearranged tank ambush, having specially missed the platoon of Comrade KUKHARENKO, opened fire on unit.

A platoon of Guards lieutenant KUKHARENKO, being behind enemy lines, attacked him from the rear, while captain DONETS at the same time, attacked the enemy from the front.

All enemy tanks were destroyed and partially captured in good condition, the enemy tank crews who tried to escape were destroyed.

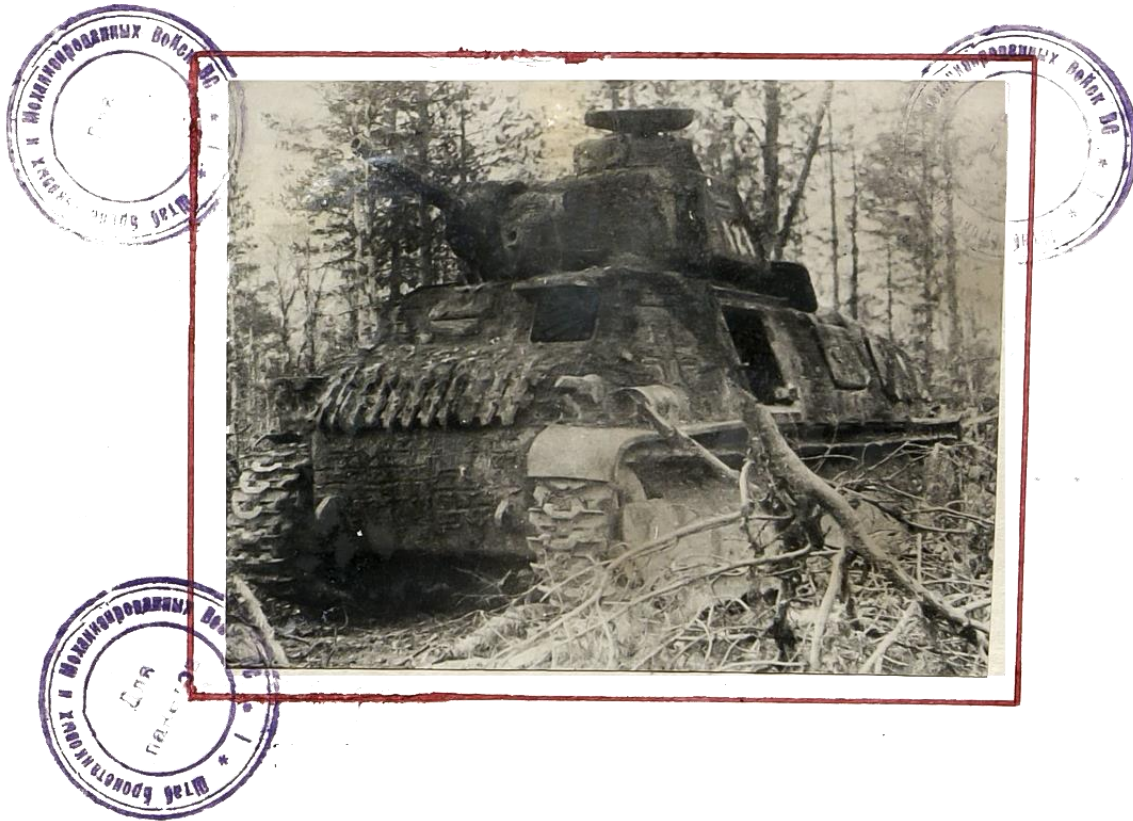


Photo. Padded German tank "Somua" in the area of square 4816.

By the end of 10.9.44 the battalion received the task together with the infantry to capture the enemy's defense abroad along the southwestern bank of the river NURMI-YOKI. Tankers inspired by the combat feats of previous battles successfully attacked the enemy.

During the fighting from 9.9 to 11.9.44., The 3rd Tank battalion inflicted the following losses on the enemy:

DESTROYED:

- Tanks 5
- Anti-tanks guns 8
- Guns of different caliber 11
- ***DZOTs 12
- Machine gun nests 12
- Trucks 2
- Soldiers and officers 400 (about)

CAPTURED

- Serviceable tanks 7
- Anti-tank guns 2
- Warehouses of different 3

***DZOTs - earth-and-timber emplacement (field defensive fortification)

During the same time, the battalion lost:

- Tanks 3
- Killed: Officers 2
- Killed: Junior officers 10
- Wounded: Officers 4
- Wounded: Junior officers 3

A brigade without a 3rd tank battalion, but with two rifle battalions of a rifle division at 15.15 11.9.44., by order of the commander of the rifle division came out of the area of sq. 5016 along the MIOKKALAHTI –KUOLAYARVI road, having the task of entering the breakthrough, then capturing KUOLAYARVI and cutting off the enemy's escape routes to the west. Performing the assigned task, the brigade overcoming the stubborn resistance of the enemy, moved forward with fights. In a short time from 15.00 to 20.00 11.9.44 defeated 4 defensive line, well trained and stubbornly held by the enemy, inflicting heavy losses on manpower and equipment of the enemy. With the onset of darkness, the main forces of the brigade with battles approached the nameless creek of the sq. 4404-9, the bridge over the stream was blown up and after the head tank passed, the bridge collapsed, the advance of the brigade was delayed, at the same time the enemy opened strong aimed fire from artillery and heavy 6-barrel mortars on the tank column and infantry. The terrain adjacent to the road did not allow maneuvering tanks.

The brigade commander, one tank battalion took the enemy out from under the artillery fire, and another battalion with a motorized battalion of machine gunners and infantry, found a place for crossing and began to transfer to the south-west coast of the nameless stream, in the morning of 12.9.44 a tank battalion with a motorized battalion of machine gunners and infantry crossed the stream and began to successfully advance. The retreating enemy managed to mine the road and 2 tanks of the battalion were blown up by mines. By order of the commander of the rifle division, the tank battalion crossing the creek stopped moving forward and entered the operational subordination of the commander of the rifle division.

The tank battalion, withdrawn by the brigade commander from under enemy artillery fire, remained in place. The next day, by order of the commander of the rifle division, in operational subordination

only one tank company was left to the commander of the rifle regiment, the remaining parts of the brigade were assigned to the rear line for 8 km., in square 4812-8. At 17.00 14.9.44, the rifle regiment with the tank company attached to it attacked the enemy. Tanks stumbled on a minefield and lost two tanks, one of them was detonated in a landmine, the other was burned down by enemy artillery fire.

At 6.30 18.9.44 by order of the commander, the brigade withdrew from the operational subordination of the rifle division and entered the army reserve.

The brigade, as the mobile group played the main and decisive the role of circumventing the German group and the threat of its communications inflicted severe defeats on the enemy.

For the period from 9.9 to 14.9.44 brigade inflicted losses on the enemy:

Destroyed:

– Tanks / medium and light /	5
– Truck-tractor	1
– Guns of different caliber	27
– Easel (heavy) machine guns	9
– Light machine guns	22
– Rifles	48
– ***DZOTs	29
– Mortar batteries	3
– Trucks	7
– Passenger cars	2
– Soldiers and officers	about btl.

Captured

– Serviceable tank	7
– Guns of different caliber	12
– Mortar	3
– Easel (heavy) machine guns	1
– Light machine guns	2
– Truck-tractor	1
– Trucks	1
– Personnel carriers	1
– Armored carriers	1

***DZOTs - earth-and-timber emplacement (field defensive fortification)

– Passenger cars	1	
– Radio stations	1	
– Banner (standard)		2
– Ammunition and food depots	3	
– Captured soldiers and officers	26	

For the same period, the team has losses:

– burned art. enemy fire of T-34	6	
– blown up on fougasse (mine) T-34		1
– Padded T-34	14	

Of the wrecked, 13 tanks were restored by brigade.

Personnel losses:

– Killed officers	5	
– Wounded	12	
– NCO (junior officers) and privates killed	29	
– Wounded	51	

CONCLUSION:

1. The march made by the brigade on the virgin lands of the Arctic without losses and breakdowns of the material part serves as an example of the high-quality training of tankmen, impeccable preparation of the material part, discipline and organization of the personnel of the brigade.
2. The brigade's exit to the enemy's flank in the deep rear of the main enemy group, the army decided to seize the VERMAN-line and ALAKURTTI.
3. Combat operations of tanks, together with infantry and independently as a mobile group, are characterized by the courage and courage of tankmen, rapid movement forward(rush) and the ability to overcome obstacles. All this led to insignificant losses in tanks and personnel. The tasks were completed with honor.

COMMANDER OF ARMORED AND THE MECHANIZED
MILITARY FORSES OF THE KARELIAN FRONT

General Lieutenant of Tank Forces

/I. KONONOV /

HEAD OF STAFF OF UK BT AND MV FRONT

Colonel

G.OBRUCH

INFORMATION

on the number awarded during the period of hostilities from 9.9 to 14.9.1944.

№ п/п	Name Awards	Total	from them		
			Officers.	Junior officers	Privates
1.	HERO of the USSR	1	1		
2.	THE ORDER OF LENIN	1	-	1	
3.	ORDER RED BANNER ...	7	7	-	
4.	ORDER OF THE PATRIOTIC WAR 1 DEGREE	5	4	-	1
5.	2nd DEGREE	16	13	3	
6.	ORDER RED STAR ...	40	17	23	
7.	ORDER OF GLORY	15	-	12	3
8.	MEDAL OF HONOR"....	45	7	34	4
9.	MEDAL "FOR COMBAT SERVICE"	16	—	13	3
Total:		146	49	86	11

BATTLE ACTION OF GUARDS SENIOR LIEUTENANT MATRONENKO.

For more than a day, the senior lieutenant MATRONENKO fought in the wrecked tank for an uninterrupted battle with the enemy, while there were shells and ammunition in the tank, when the ammunition ran out, he sent a radio operator for the ammunition, and he and the mechanic, Guards senior sergeant Aleksandrov, remained in the tank until the last cartridges. When the ammunition ran out and the tank stopped firing, the "fascist animals" crawled up to the tank and offered to Matronenko to surrender, but the Guardsmen did not surrender MATRONENKO and ALEXANDROV remained in the tank and then the fascist monsters planted a mine under the tank's bottom and blew it up together with MATRONENKO and ALEXANDROV. So, the Guardsmen died, but did not surrender alive to the Hitler's bandits.

**BATTLE ACTION (act of bravery)
of the Guard Lieutenant KUKHARENKO.**

6.9.44, Guards Lieutenant KUKHARENKO with his tank platoon, performing the task of the Command to lay a 50 km column road in the deep rear of the enemy in wooded and marshy and rocky terrain at exactly the appointed time, went to the intended target / to the highway / MIOKKALAHTI-KUOLAYARVI, thereby ensuring the separation of the enemy's grouping. At 9.30 p.m. 9.9.44 Guards Lieutenant KUKHARENKO, acting in the first echelon of the battalion, under a strong artillery the enemy's mortar and machine-gun fire at maximum speed was the first to break through the enemy's heavily fortified defenses and slip through an ambush of 12 tanks. One kilometer from the front edge in the rear of the enemy, took control of the road, thereby preventing the enemy tanks from escaping from the encirclement, having imposed a tank battle on the enemy, a platoon of lieutenant KUKHARENKO destroyed 8 P-35 tanks and up to 80 Nazis.

Personally, Comrade KUKHARENKO himself destroyed 3 tanks and captured 2 enemy tanks in good repair, thereby ensuring the overall success of the advance of the 1st and infantry 217th rifle Regiment, 104th rifle Division.



Photo. Captured serviceable German tank "Somua" in the area of sq. 4816.

At 7.30 10.9.44, Comrade KUKHARENKO, participating in the second attack, one of the first to break into the enemy's defenses of the 2nd echelon, where he also destroyed 4 anti-tank guns, 5 DZOTs and up to 70 Nazis. During further pursuit, the tank of Comrade KUKHARENKO fell into the swamp behind enemy lines and, despite the difficulty of the situation, Comrade KUKHARENKO did not abandon his tank under powerful artillery and mortar fire and fired at enemy firing points for 14 hours, not allowing the enemy to approach the tank and at the same time on the radio adjusted the fire to the remaining tanks of the battalion. With the approach of his infantry, Comrade KUKHARENKO led the tank out of the swamp and again went on to storm the enemy.



The crew of the GW. Lieutenant KUKHARENKO

For heroism, courage and bravery shown in the fight against the German invaders, Guards Lieutenant KUKHARENKO was presented to the highest Government award of the title "HERO OF THE SOVIET UNION".

IMMORTALITY HERO

There was no person in our entire military unit who did not know the Guards captain MELNIKOV's . And there was no man who did not love him. And how it was not to love such a wonderful person as tankman MELNIKOV was - a person with a brave, cheerful heart, with an open Russian soul.

In the eyes of MELNIKOV, the lively light, hands never faded he was always drawn to work, and...*(an untranslatable Russian proverb). And all of him, at any moment, was ready to rush into battle.

And so it happened this time. As soon as the battalion received a combat mission, the Guards captain *(MELNIKOV - a man with a brave heart) asked the commander to send him with a tank head platoon. With a bold maneuver of tanks, he cut the road connecting the flank stronghold of the Germans with the location of their main forces.

After a few minutes, 3 Soviet tanks already burst into this stronghold, where Germans had DZOTs and bunkers.

But the strong pressure of our tankman and infantry broke the resistance of the Germans. The mass part of the enemy garrison was destroyed, and the rest surrendered. Ample trophies were captured at this point.

Returning and reporting on the defeat of the enemy garrison, comrade MELNIKOV immediately set off on a new mission, kilometer after kilometer, he won the road from the enemy. Fire and caterpillars, tanks led by MELNIKOV, suppressed the firing points of the enemy.

Retreating, the Germans blew up the bridge. But MELNIKOV's tank managed to slip through before the bridge collapsed. Cut off from the comrades, the tank crew bravely fought in the enemy environment, but then their tank was set on fire.



Burned T-34 tank of the Guards captain MELNIKOV's

A few hours later, our units crossed the river and took possession of the bridgehead on the opposite bank *, on which MELNIKOV fell into the hands of the enemy. The body of the Guards captain MELNIKOV's was found here.

Here is an excerpt from the act drawn up by the fighting friends of the deceased hero - comrades NOVIKOV, MELNIKOV, TROSHIN, ZOTOVA:

"on the body of MELNIKOV - 4 bayonet wounds, on the chest - bruises from blows with heels. The jacket, helmet and boots were torn off by German marauders. Pieces of the tunic with pockets, orders and a Guards badge were cut out.

The initial battle injuries - burns and a shrapnel falling into the leg, could not in themselves be the cause of death. The death of comrade MELNIKOV came as a result of German torture.

Comrade MELNIKOV's fighting friends vowed to mercilessly take revenge on the German monsters. And this oath was carried out honestly, in a military way. Soon, the tankers defeated the German detachment, captured the headquarters of the Germans.

The briefcase found in the car contained orders and documents by MELNIKOV.

This briefcase apparently belonged to Lieutenant SHTUTSER, whose corpse was lying five paces from the car. A fair bullet overtook a German geek. But this is only the beginning of revenge. *** vowing to avenge the painful death of the Hero, the tankers in subsequent battles performed it honestly, in a military way ***

We swear to beat the German bastard with courage and selflessness - as our Guards captain MELNIKOV defeated them earlier.

We swear mercilessly to avenge the hero's martyrdom! Let his immortality live in our military affairs, approaching the hour of death his tormentors.

Captain A. SMOLYAN.

/ from the newspaper "STALIN's Fighter" from 6.9.44. Number 227

At night, the tank platoon of the Guards Lieutenant crossed the fast mountain river. The enemy was close, and therefore the tankmen worked on muffled engines.

The twinkle from the cigarette was a guideline for us: one tankman moved to the opposite bank and lit a cigarette there. It was a kind of lighthouse, not visible to the enemy. Tanks clanging over the rocks climbed ashore. Behind there was a 35-kilometer, difficult path. It seems a little, but it took two days. I had to overcome mountains - forested and dotted with huge boulders, lowlands - rugged by rough and rocky rivers, marshes - covered with red bark.

The tanks drove on slowly. Ahead were the radio-arrows, choosing and pointing * some passable places for tanks, and the light from cigarettes, indicating the way for drivers.

Soon, the tankmen took to the road, which connected two settlements, adapted by the Germans for defense. Somewhere, on the same road, our rifleman, artillerymen and mortarmen were walking. They carried heavy weapons, rolled cannons and howitzers. Their task is bypass from three sides the first stronghold of the Germans and suddenly descend on the enemy. The Germans * will run (Germans fleeing) on the way to another strong point. Here they will be intercepted (here they will have to be intercepted) by KUKHARENKO tankman.

The night was very dark. It was drizzling autumn rain, cold and annoying. Tanks approached the bridge. The tank of the Guards Lieutenant MALYSHKO and the Guards Lieutenant KOKOSHKO became on the sidelines, and the tank KUKHARENKO -right in the middle of the road. Soon, an obscure hum was heard in the distance. The sounds of gunfire began to be heard.

- Look at both, be on the alert! - ordered KUKHARENKO to the tankman.

Radist got out of the tank and took up a circular defense.

There was a rumble of a tank engine on the road.

"Ours or a stranger? Alien, of course - ours is buzzing calmer and more solid, and something nervous is heard..."

KUKHARENKO just had time to think how in the darkness a dark silhouette of an enemy tank appeared. He walked at full throttle. The driver's hatch was open. In the hatch illuminated from the inside, KUKHARENKO saw the head of the fascist.

The Germans also noticed our tank. The German * (German wanted to bypass the KUKHARENKO tank without slowing down the speed of his tank) shouted something and went around the KUKHARENKO tank at full speed. But guns from two of our other tanks hit the enemy.

The German tank roared * (tilted toward the cuvette and the motor stalled sharply) and stopped. It became so quiet that KUKHARENKO, it seemed as if he hears the rapid knock of his heart and the sound of blood in the ears.

On the road, the roar of an enemy engine was heard again, and a second tank emerged from the darkness.

Turning in front of the nose of the enemy machine, KUKHARENKO right around the cuvette went around it.

At this moment, the other * (our crews) 2 tank crews fired from the cannons.

The second enemy machine, crippled by our shells, smoked and stood behind the first wrecked tank...

Soon the third German tank appeared. He walked at top speed, the same lighting from the inside, and in the open hatch KUKHARENKO saw his head Nazi. The distance between the tanks was rapidly decreasing.

Fifteen... Twelve... Ten meters... * remained to the enemy tank. The Nazis saw the steel mass of the Soviet tank and the gaping mouth of the gun, and the German immediately began backing away in reverse.

At that moment * (at the same second) KUKHARENKO fired, a German tank spun heavily on one track. The lights in the tank went out.

A fourth immediately came up for the third tank, and a fifth came after the fourth, then the sixth. KUKHARENKO did not shoot anymore: enemy tanks piled up in front of him interfered. And there was no need to shoot: The enemy tankers, having forgotten even to turn off the engines, jumped out of the tanks and fled to the forest.....

When it dawned, our infantrymen approached this place, managed to deal with the German garrison. Soviet tankers stood at their vehicles, glancing at the eight enemy tanks frozen in front of them.

Major A. PLYUSHCH(ПЛЮЩ), Captain R. AITZHANOV(АЙТЖАНОВ).
/ from the newspaper "BATTLE FOR THE MOTHERLAND" of September 29, 1944. No.
225/1033/

Starting the war, the Germans relied on tanks that captivated their imagination. Rumbling steel tanks rushed at the start of the war along the magnificent roads of France, Belgium, and Norway, almost without resistance. A laughing German soldier followed the tanks about howling: "Wow! Tanks!" The German General GUDERIAN - the current chief of the German General Staff - wrote a book at one time: "Attention! Tanks! GUDERIAN prophesied that German tanks would pave the way for victory to a German soldier. In 1941, the tank army of General GUDERIAN was defeated by Soviet tanks, artillery, armored personnel and infantry on the outskirts of city TULA. General GUDERIAN called in vain: "Attention! Tanks!" A lot of time has passed since then. Tens of thousands of German tanks were written off by our fighters for recycling, turned into scrap-metal... The Germans called out "tigers" and "panthers". Did not help!

All these years, Obergefreiter HEINZ FRIEDRICH spent all these years here in the north; He did not meet with Soviet tanks. He served in the 8th company, 2nd battalion, 378th regiment.

The battalion commander, captain ZEYPP, awarded with iron crosses, I and II class and a German cross in gold, repeatedly told Friedrich that the Russians did not have tanks in the north and that the terrain here was impassable for tanks.

FRIEDRICH read General GUDERIAN and firmly believed in the invincibility of German tanks. He also believed in the captain of ZEYPP - the Russians have no tanks here. But more than to General GUDERIAN and ZEYPP, he believed his eyes - the terrain here is really impassable for tanks.

But what happened just recently. It got dark. Captain ZEYPP circumvented the posts, he stopped near Obergefreiter Heinz Friedrich.

In the distance, some noise was heard. The roar was approaching. Already the clanging of caterpillars is clearly audible. Someone shouted; "ATTENTION! TANKS!"

The second battalion fled. Our tanks broke through the defenses and crushed the fleeing Germans with caterpillars. Many Germans managed to raise their hands up. Among those who surrendered were Captain ZEYPP (with his crosses in gold and without gold) and Obergefreiter FRIEDRICH (very pleased that he had disposed of the "wooden cross" - he was still alive).

In the confusion, they lost their personal belongings. The book of General GUDERIAN "Attention! Tanks!". Was not found with them.

- that was incredible! The tanks couldn't get through here! If I hadn't seen it myself ... - Obergefreiter FRIEDRICH trails off without expressing his idea to the end.

General GUDERIAN is probably now not up to literary activity. ZEYPP and FRIEDRICH have more free time. They can write a new book about tanks, only about Soviet tanks, they have experience. And they have the title of the book: "KARAU*! Soviet tanks!"

B. KAGAN.

/ from the newspaper "STALIN's Fighter" dated September 26, 1944. Number 227.

In this report No. 206, the volume is hemmed, numbered sealed with wax seal of the headquarters of BT and MV SA and entered into the internal inventory (Fifteen / 15 /) sheets.

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