

The Third Battle of Kharkov
20 February to 18 March 1943

By

MSG Lars A. Skoglund

MSG Milton Hendon

MSG Richard Herman

MSG David E. Hull

MSG William L. Hyman

SGM Robert F. Houghton

Group 27

Outline

Thesis. Poor analysis of battlefield information, political/ethnic bias, and military tactical errors resulted in the Soviet defeat at Kharkov.

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By January 1943, Germany's Operation Barbarossa had come to a virtual halt. The easy victory Adolph Hitler had envisioned over the Soviet Union was now an impossible task entrusted to field commanders with no options but success or disgrace. Hitler and the German High Command ordered a no retreat, without exception, directive to the theater commanders, specifically the commanders on the Eastern Front. Soviet commanders felt no less pressure. Josef Stalin without impunity executed the majority of his military high command and sent the rest to Siberian camps when they appeared to endanger his authority. After the January 1943 Soviet victory at Stalingrad, he demanded further military successes. Kharkov, considered the third most important city of the Soviet Union (Hogg 229), was a logical if not well planned objective. The initiative of victory belonged to the Soviet Army, but its failure to respond to available battlefield intelligence secured a German counter-offensive victory.

Kharkov, the former capital of the Ukraine, was the major railroad center of the regime. As such, it provided both the transportation and communications requirements for most of the Crimean area and the Caucasus. The strategic importance of Kharkov is, therefore, obvious for both the defending Soviet forces and the invading German Army.

Initially during World War II, Kharkov fell to the German 6th Army (Army Group South) in October 1941. The German victory was nondescript and met no major Soviet resistance. On 24 October 1941, Kharkov was an occupied city totally under the control of the Axis powers.

In May 1942, Stalin, the total and absolute dictator of the Soviet Union, ordered a military offensive against the German forces at Kharkov without regard to its possible consequences. He massed 640,000 men and 1200 tanks in an unsuccessful attempt to route the German positions. The final result was 250,000 Soviet soldiers taken prisoner and every Soviet armored formation in the pocket destroyed. Josef Stalin, the undisputed ruler of the Soviet Union, never accepted failure and would not accept defeat. German and Soviet armored forces would not meet again in full force, however, until The Third Battle of Kharkov.

Both Soviet and German High Command officers attempted to control the battlefield from their headquarters well behind the lines. In both cases, military objectives were routinely and systematically determined by political goals and sometimes extreme ethnic bias. A basic understanding of the political background in both nations is necessary to evaluate the decisions made for and during the course of the battle.

After World War I, Adolph Hitler in his book, Mein Kampf, wrote that "the greatest threat to Germany in the future was Communism." He believed fanatically that Germany's defeat was the result of a huge Communist conspiracy, and that Germany's future depended on the total eradication of Soviet Communism. Therefore, the non-aggression pact he signed with Russia in 1939 should have been suspect. In June 1941, he launched "Operation Barbarossa", the full assault against the Soviet Union. While the wheat, coal, and oilfields of southeast Russia were reasonable tactical targets, the principal reason for attacking remained the eventual destruction of the Communist state (Praeger 33). Hitler's fear and hatred of Communism justified in his mind the "no retreat"

policy he gave his Eastern Front commanders.

German ethnic bias extended to the equipment outfitting of many of the Axis forces employed on the Russian front. Much of the force in this theater comprised Rumanian, Italian, and Hungarian armies. All these armies were more poorly trained and equipped than their German counterparts. Even the formidable Tiger MkI heavy tank was only in strictly German SS Panzer Corps units (Livesey 162).

Josef Stalin's dictatorial power in Russia was as absolute as Hitler's in Germany. The two leaders achieved power very differently, however. Hitler surrounded himself with loyal people totally dedicated and obligated to him. He then appealed to the fears and doubts of the German people to gain their total support. In essence, the people initially granted him power. He simply used that position of trust to make his power absolute.

Stalin, however, attained absolute power through a reign of terror during which he executed or imprisoned everyone who opposed or threatened his rule (Praeger 17). He attempted to justify these purges by claiming that his opponents were agents of the German government (28).

During this purge, Stalin decimated the Russian military officer corps. He executed, imprisoned, or dismissed from active service one third of all the officers in the Russian military. Included in the purge were three Soviet marshals, 13 generals of the army, all brigade and division commanders, half of the regimental commanders, and all but one fleet commander (Bialer 59). Stalin unexpectedly benefited from this destruction of his own military forces. His non-aggression pact with Hitler seemed to guarantee the safety of Russia thereby minimizing the effect of

his purges on national security. His ruthless actions, however, placed him in personal jeopardy with the Russian people. Hitler's unexpected attack changed that position. The Soviet system would not have survived the internal shock of leadership change while facing the external threat of the Nazi invasion (Bialer 44).

Stalin now had to quickly rebuild his military command structure to meet the German threat. He recalled several of the military leaders he had sent to Siberian labor camps calling upon their loyalty to Russia (Praeger 62). However, he developed the majority of the military cells using workers and peasants to prevent the formation of another officer military class. He selected these people for command positions largely based on social origin (Moynahan 59). As a result, Stalin had a large but poorly trained army rampant with ethnic and social bias.

Stalin's purge also caused serious logistic deficiencies within both the Soviet industrial and military arenas. Industrial growth declined, and military development stopped (Bialer 60). The newly created, but inexperienced, military leadership had to make immediate decisions about equipping, organizing, and deploying the available military forces. The doctrine they developed failed to consider and defend against the demonstrated success of the German blitzkrieg warfare which had been used throughout the Axis campaigns (Bialer 61).

During the Winter Campaign of 1942-1943 culminating in the Third Battle of Kharkov, battlefield and intelligence information gathering and interpretation were key elements to the German victory at Kharkov. The February 1943 Russian victory at Stalingrad gave the Soviet forces a false sense of euphoria that doomed them to defeat at Kharkov. Stalin's demand for further

battlefield victories and the recapture of Kharkov, drove the Russian leadership to disregard or misinterpret the intelligence information available to them. During and immediately following the Battle of Stalingrad, the Russian forces took thousands of Axis army prisoners. The vast majority of these prisoners were, however, non-German indicating that there was still an intact Panzer force that had not yet engaged in battle. Because of the social structure within the Soviet army, Ukrainians were second class citizens so information they could have provided was disregarded. Fear of Stalin's brutal and unchallenged authority also caused many local Ukrainians to flee the Soviet advance and seek refuge with the apparently retreating German army.

The initial German withdrawal from Kharkov also gave the German command an intelligence advantage. Soviet analysts, referring to Hitler's "no retreat doctrine", misinterpreted this action as a general retreat.

Soviet intelligence also failed to identify and locate the new German Tiger Tanks although a whole SS Panzer Corps so equipped had arrived from France (Appendix B). When Soviet armor engaged these units, they totally overpowered the Russian T34 Tanks (Appendix C).

German intelligence, on the other hand, was complete and accurate. It monitored Soviet radio communications to the point that it knew where every Soviet armor unit was located and its eventual destination.

With the Battle of Stalingrad decided, the Third Battle of Kharkov began (Appendix D). The Soviet Front, Voronezh, included five armies commanded by General Golikov. He committed three of these armies, the 40th, 69th, and 3rd Tank Army to the Kharkov

campaign (Appendix A).

Lieutenant General K.S. Moskalenko, commander of the 40th Army, could only field five divisions supported by light armor. He had already committed his other forces to operations in Kastornoye and Staryi Oskol (Voroshilov 179).

Lieutenant General M.I. Kazakov, commander of the 69th Army, had a reinforced rifle corps consisting of 40,000 men and 50 tanks. His assets were divided among five rifle divisions, one rifle brigade, one tank brigade, and one tank regiment.

Lieutenant General P.S. Rybalko, commanding the 3d Tank Army, was the Soviet's only true threat to the German forces. His 12th and 15th Tank Corps, supported by the 6th Cavalry Corps, totalled 55,577 soldiers and 165 tanks.

The total combined force the Soviets could commit to the Kharkov battle was 200,000 soldiers and 300 tanks. Their reserves for this operation were also extremely limited. Eventually, the Soviet High Command ordered several additional tank corps into the battle. These reserves did not arrive in time, however, to affect the outcome of the battle for Kharkov (180).

The geographic area around Kharkov provided excellent defensive positions for the occupying army. The Northern Donets River and the towns and villages along the valley avenue of approach to the city were traps to an advancing army if it attempted to avoid rather than attack them. General Golikov, therefore, ordered the Voronezh Front to destroy all enemy forces defending the towns of Tim, Oskol, Volokonovka, and the Valuiki area in order to destroy the German reserve forces and secure Kursk, Belgorod, and Kharkov. The Front's main attack force, the 40th, 69th, and 3d Tank Armies would break through German

defenses, advance southwest, and converge on the Kharkov area. These armies would surround Kharkov from the west and south and thereby trap the German forces in the city. Lieutenant General Chibisov's 38th Army would move toward Tomarovka and drive the German forces westward from Belgorod and protect the main force's right flank. At the same time, Lieutenant General Chernyakovsky's 60th Army would launch a secondary attack from the Kastornoye area to Kursk (Appendix E).

The operation would secure a 250 Km line from Rakitnoye through Graivoron, Bogodukhov, and Lyubotin to Merefa (Glantz 156). The plan consisted of two parts. In the first part, Soviet forces would destroy enemy units along the Oskol River from Stary to Valuiki and then advance to the Northern Donets River on a front from Belgorod through Volchansk to Pechenegi. In the second part, Soviet forces would secure Kharkov and advance to their final objective. The Front main attack force would converge on Kharkov from the northeast and east. The 40th Army would sweep northwest from Stary Oskol through Belgorod to surround Kharkov from the northwest. At the same time, a rifle division would advance westward to Bogodukhov and protect the right flank.

The 69th Army would attack southwest through Volchansk across the Northern Donets River to the northeastern approaches to Kharkov. Meanwhile, the 3d Tank Army would move through Veliki Burluk, cross the Northern Donets River, move southwest through Chuguyev, and turn west and northwest to Lyubotin in a close enveloping maneuver in order to link up with the 40th Army (Glantz 166).

This front was a single echelon force. Golikov did not have a second echelon to commit. By creating this type of force, he

hoped for a quick and complete victory over the German armies.

Because the Germans fought a strong delaying operation, the Soviets could not advance as fast as ordered. The first seven to eight days of the offensive operation frustrated the commanders of both the 69th Army and the 3d Tank Army. They had only advanced 80 Km to the Northern Donets River. They now faced highly fortified defensive positions outside Kharkov. Only the 40th Army achieved success. It advanced further than expected and forced the Germans to give up positions east of the Northern Donets River.

On 9 February, LTG Rybalko ordered the 3d Tank Army to cross the Northern Donets River. The 15th Tank Corps, supported by the 160th Rifle Division, had secured crossing sites near Pechenegi and occupied the town. At the same time, the 12th Tank Corps and the 62d Guards Rifle Division (GRD) was ordered to secure Chuguyev (172). After securing the city, they were to continue to advance westward to locations slightly in advance of the 15th Tank Corps operating to the north. The 48th GRD protected the 3d Tank Corps' left and right flanks. The 3d Tank Army encountered strong German defenses north and south of Rogan, 10 Km east of Kharkov, and came to a halt (176). On 11 February, Rybalko ordered the 15th Tank Corps, 48th GRD, 160th Rifle Division, and the 179th Independent Tank Brigade to attack German defenses east of Kharkov while the 12th Tank Corps and the 62d GRD attacked Kharkov from the southwest. The 6th Guards Cav Corps was to attack the German units from the south and occupy Lyubotin and Peresechanaya where it would unite with the 40th Army advance units (177). The 6th Guards Cav Corps met heavy resistance south of Merefa, and the German SS Panzer Division ultimately drove the corps down the Mzha

River past Novaya Vodolaga. The 12th Tank Corps tried to overcome German defenses at Rogan, but failed. Other 3d Tank Army units continued to regroup but failed to join the attack. Lack of command and control within the 3d Tank Army prevented a coordinated attack thereby giving German forces time to erect even stronger defenses. By 14 February, all attempts by the 3d Tank Army to secure Kharkov had failed. The direct assaults on the eastern and southeastern sides of the city had produced small gains but no German collapse. The attacks by the 3d Tank Army did force the Germans to move the SS Panzer Corps from the north and west of the city. On 9 February, the 69th Army had advanced to within 20 Km of Kharkov where it met with increased resistance from the SS Panzer Division. As the 69th Army approached Kharkov, the fighting increased and took a major toll on the unit's strength. On 9 February, the 40th Army commander ordered the 25th Guards, 340th, 183d, and 305th Rifle Divisions, and the 4th Tank Corps to attack south along the road and railroad from Belgorod to Kharkov in order to encircle the city from the west. The 40th's advance gained momentum on 12 February as the Germans continued to withdraw. Moskalenko then ordered the 5th GT Corps into the battle. As the operation developed, the 25th GRD (second echelon unit) entered the battle. By 14 February, the 40th had forced the German forces into the inner perimeter of Kharkov. The Soviets were finally threatening critical German lines of communication running southwest and west from Kharkov. German forces withdrew from Kharkov on 15 February temporarily surrendering the city to the Soviet forces.

Although the Soviets had taken Kharkov, they failed to encircle any sizable German force. German communication lines

were still open west to Poltava and south to Krasnograd. Soviet forces hopelessly ensnared in the fighting for Kharkov now had to regroup and continue the offensive against a still coherent German defense (179).

The deficiencies of Soviet command and control now became evident and critical to battlefield success. LTG Golikov had been issuing orders to the front armies from his headquarters in the rear (Zhukov 9). Disregarding or not realizing the chaos in Kharkov, he ordered his forces to advance west and southwest toward Lebedin and Poltava by 20 February. He ordered the 69th Army to attack Bogodukhov and Akhtyrka. He did not realize that Moskalenko's divisions had captured both Graivoron and Bogodukhov on 17 February. Meanwhile, the 3d Tank Army was to take Poltava while the 6th Army advanced to Krasnograd (Glantz 180).

Confusion created by the intense street fighting in Kharkov prevented immediate implementation of Soviet orders (Livesey 164). Three army headquarters, three tank divisions, four rifle divisions, and two tank corps now occupied the city with no central command. These units took three days to reorganize and reorient to the new mission requirements. The units located on the outskirts of Kharkov, however, continued to conduct limited operations. Isolated units of the 40th Army continued to move northwest into the Slavogorod area.

By 20 February, division sized elements of the 40th Army had reached a line running from Krasnopoye to Akhtyrka and were advancing westward toward Lebedin and the Psel River. The 69th Army had moved to Bogodukhov and was moving down both sides of the Merla River.

The 69th Army's objective was now Krasnokutsk. It

encountered heavy German resistance in the Merla Valley, however, so the Soviet commander committed his second echelon division to the battle. He now had to continue his advance to Poltava without reserve elements to call upon (Glantz 182).

The Soviet 3d Tank Army, upon receipt of orders, proceeded south from Kharkov toward Poltava. It immediately met heavy German resistance south and west of Kharkov. The 15th Tank Corps was able to capture and secure Pesochnya. The 12th Tank Corps penetrated the German defenses at Merefa and continued along the Mzha River where it too encountered heavy resistance.

On 22 February, the German Panzer Grenadier Division withdrew to the south giving the Soviet forces the town of Lyubotin. The jubilant, but overconfident, Soviet 15th Tank Corps pursued the Panzer Division to Ogultsy where it joined the 12th Tank Corps. All the Soviet forces had now fallen into Field Marshall von Manstein's carefully planned and brilliantly executed trap.

LTG Rybalko's forces continued to advance slowly along the front, but the effort was in vain. German forces, although outnumbered, now held the initiative. They continued delaying operations while defending their positions south of Novaya Vodolaga. These delaying actions allowed Manstein to counterstrike further south. As a result, he reduced the Soviet 3d Tank Army to 110 tanks.

Following directives from Moscow, LTG Golikov overextended the Voronezh Front. When Manstein began attacking Soviet forces on the Southwestern Front, the Voronezh Front could not assist the southern units. On 22 February, the Soviet High Command finally realized the desperate situation in the south. It immediately ordered the 3d Tank Army and the 69th Army to move south to

reinforce the Soviet forces in the Krasnograd area. These orders directed the 3d Tank Corps to pass its present responsibilities to the 69th Army and move to and occupy Karlovka and Krasnograd. The 40th Army would assume responsibility for the territory held by the 69th Army. It would then move to Kotelva and secure Sumy and the area west of the Psel River. This directive extended the 40th Army's sector of responsibility by 30 percent and forced the commander to commit all of his reserve forces (186).

On 24 February, the 12th Tank Corps secured Ogultsy and advanced toward Kamyshevataya and Vlki. Despite concentrated German air attacks, the 12th Tank Corps captured Vlki on 25 February. It secured Kamyshevataya on 28 February, but paid dearly for the victory. The 106th Tank Brigade now had only 12 functioning tanks available for future operations (186).

By 28 February, the combined forces of the 69th Army and the 3d Tank Army could not rally enough strength to penetrate the German defenses at Karlovka and Krasnograd and advance to the final objective at Poltava (188).

Driven by a political need to succeed, LTG Golikov now issued the order that destroyed the remaining Soviet forces. He ordered Moskalenko, the commander of the 40th Army, to support the 69th Army's advance on Poltava. Moskalenko committed the 309th Rifle Division and the 5th Tank Guards Corps to attack the city from the northwest. His line of responsibility now extended from Sumy to Poltava. He was, however, reduced to six understrength rifle divisions and one understrength tank corps.

By this time, all Soviet forces along the Voronezh Front were understrength with no reinforcements expected. Soviet High Command directives had ordered commanders at all levels to commit

their forces prematurely. As a result, Soviet forces were now over committed and seriously depleted. Manstein's tactics assured a German victory.

German victory was not assured from the beginning, however. Early in the campaign, Manstein had to convince the German High Command that his plan would prevail.

By the end of January, when the Russian forces had recaptured Kursk, German Field Marshall Von Manstein knew he had to have the flexibility to maneuver and yield ground when necessary. This was the one point that Hitler would not compromise on. He believed you should never give up ground if you could help it. Manstein demanded a meeting with Hitler to explain his plan. By this time, Hitler had surrounded himself with advisors who only agreed with his decisions. In the German High Command, political, not tactical criteria determined battlefield decisions. Manstein, however, presented Hitler with his Eastern Front military plan without political considerations. He paraded no political objectives; his intent was totally military. His ability to change Hitler's "No Retreat" policy was the key to Germany's eventual victory at Kharkov (von Mellenthin 206).

Manstein knew the early Russian success would cause them to overextend their forces. He encouraged this by giving up Rostov and positions between the Don and Donets Rivers on a line from the Mius River to the west of Kharkov. As Manstein predicted, the Russians became overconfident in their apparent victory. They had pushed forward relentlessly but recklessly and were now exhausted. Manstein was now ready for his counterstroke (Sikes 7).

Manstein began his counteroffensive by initiating repeated small battles to stabilize the front (Appendix E). He then dealt

with each Soviet thrust in turn further exhausting the Russian forces. On 20 February, the SS Panzer Corps drove forward from Krasnograd and attacked the rear of the Soviet 6th Army. The 48th Panzer Corps drove north into their flank. This attack stunned the Soviets. The 1st Panzer Army thinned its extended lines conducting a risky economy of force to meet with the 40th Panzer Corps and attack the Papov Mobile Group.

German intelligence provided the Panzer units with exact information on the size, location, and direction of movement of each Soviet thrust. German armor was able to keep moving, avoiding decisive engagement, while German infantry held key areas. The Germans, therefore, were strong in every engagement eventually converting successful tactical battles into operational victory (Sikes 8).

On 23 February, Hausser's SS Panzer Corps and the 48th Panzer Corps met at Pavlograd and destroyed what remained of the Soviet 6th Army.

On 2 March, the 1st and 4th Panzer Armies destroyed the remaining Soviet forces between the Dnieper and Donets Rivers. AG South had regained the initiative and attacked the Soviet Voronezh Front. The destruction of the Soviet 6th Army and the Popov Mobile Group created a 120 mile gap in the Soviet front line. On 14 March Germany recaptured Kharkov. By 19 March, Belgorod was also under German control. Manstein had regained the positions Germany held at the beginning of 1942 and in the process destroyed 52 Soviet divisions including 25 armored brigades (Appendix F).

Many factors contributed to the eventual German victory in the Third Battle of Kharkov. Isolating any single element as decisive is naive and does not properly address all the variables

of this battlefield. After the Battle of Stalingrad, the Soviet army was numerically and logistically superior to the remaining German forces. Its continued success on the battlefield seemed inevitable. Soviet military leadership, however, did not assume a dominant role on the battlefield. Leaders well to the rear of the battle continued to make tactical decisions for the front line. The resulting confusion and delays destroyed whatever initiative the Soviets had gained.

Stalin's political purges prior to the war had destroyed his existing military structure. When World War II started, Stalin brought several of his military leaders out of exile and demanded that they build a new army. This army was inexperienced but totally dedicated to the political ideals and ethnic prejudices of the government. Stalin's personal prejudices now became the bias within his military structure.

During and immediately after the Battle of Stalingrad, Soviet field commanders failed to react to battlefield information available to them. Their initial success created a sense of euphoria that effectively blocked any rational interpretation of the battle situation. They also felt a political need to provide Stalin with the additional military victories he demanded.

Had Soviet commanders properly analyzed the battlefield, they would have anticipated the situation they were to encounter. The absence of ethnic German prisoners at Stalingrad proved that at least one and possibly two full strength Panzer Armies had not yet engaged the Soviet forces.

The Soviet High Command also misinterpreted Hitler's directives and resolve to never surrender captured ground on the battlefield. When German forces tactically withdrew, Soviet

commanders assumed this was a general retreat and a surrender of positions currently held. Once again, the Soviet High Command failed to read the battlefield.

The German military writer, Ritter von Schramm, described Kharkov as "a miracle of the Donetz." There was, however, no miracle. Accurate intelligence information, decentralized command without political objectives, and superior training secured the German Victory.

Appendix A

ORDER OF BATTLE
Manstein's Counteroffensive
 Jan-Mar 1943

Soviet Forces

Voronezh Front (Golikov) (190,000 men and 315 tanks)

<u>40th Army</u> (90,000 men & 100 Tanks)	<u>69th Army (Kazako)</u> (40,000 men & 50 Tanks)	<u>3d Tank Army</u>
100th Rif Div	161st Rif Div	12th Tank Corps
183rd Rif Div	180th Rif Div	3 Tank Bdes
305th Rif Div	219th Rif Div	15th Tank Corps
309th Rif Div	270th Rif Div	3 Tank Bdes/1 Mot Rif
340th Rif Div	37th Rif Bde	6th Gds Cav Corps
107th Rif Div	137th Tank Bde	48th Gds Rif Div
303rd Rif Div	292nd Tank Regt	62nd Gds Rif Div
25th Gds Rif Div		111th Rif Div
129th Rif Bde		184th Rif Div
4th Tnk Cps(50)		179th Tank Bde
116th Tank Bde		201st Tank Regt
192nd Tank Bde		
59th Sep Tank Regt		
60th Sep Tank Regt		
61st Sep Tank Regt		

Reinforcements

25th Gds Rif Div
 253rd Rif Div
 219th Rif Div
 1st Czech Div
 19th Rif Div
 86th Tank Bde
 17th Rif Bde
 1st Gds Cav Corps
 113 Rif Div

Front Reserve

86th Tank Bde
 150th Tank Bde
 3rd Tank Corps
 (150 Tanks)
 2nd Tank Corps
 (175 Tanks)

Tank Strength

29 Jan: 165
 14 Feb: 100
 18 Feb: 110
 27 Feb: 39
 16 Mar: 22

TOT: 57,557 men

Appendix B

ORDER OF BATTLE
 Manstein's Counteroffensive
 Jan-Mar 1943

German Forces

<u>AD Lanz</u> (50,000)	<u>1st Pz Army</u> (40,000)	<u>AD Hollidt</u> (100,000)	<u>4th PZ Army</u> (70,000)
24th Pz Corps	40th Pz Corps HQ	29th Army Corps	5th Army Corps
385th Inf Div	30th Army HQ	Group 79	Kos Regt
387th Inf Div	Grp Kreising(3d Mt Div)	Grp Sec Regt 177	111th Inf Div
213th Inf Div	335th Div (-)	Group Meith	15th Luftwaffe
320th Inf Div	3rd Pz Corps	384th Inf Div	57th Pz Corps
298th Inf Div	7th Pz Div	336th Inf Div	23rd Pz Div
SS Pz Div "Das Reich" (-)	19th Pz Div	17th Army Corps	SS Mot Div
Corps	27th Pz Div	62nd Inf Div	"Viking"
"Grossdeutsch-		306th Inf Div	17th Pz Div
land" Div		294th Inf Div	3rd Pz Div
168th Inf Div(-)		8th Luftwaffe	16th Mot Div
88th Inf Div(-)		48th Pz Corps	11th Pz Div
		5th Pz Div	
		22nd Pz Div	
		304th Inf Div	
		Grp Shuldt	
		Grp von Hundersdord	
		Grp Steinbauer	

Appendix C

RUSSIAN AND
GERMAN WEAPONS
EMPLOYED AT KHARKOV

Su 76 self-propelled gun



This Russian self-propelled gun, based on a modified T70 tank chassis, was the first to come into service, in December 1942. Its open top and high silhouette did not make it an ideal tank destroyer, indeed its four-man crews nicknamed it the 'Suka', or bitch, but it was used in large numbers as an assault gun by the infantry.

Weight: 11.2 tons; road speed: 44kmh/27mph; road range: 265km/165mils, cross-country range: 160km/100mils; armament: one 76.2mm/3in gun.

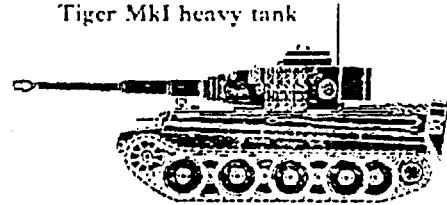
T70 light tank



The two-man Russian light tank was an upgraded version of the T60 and replaced it as a light reconnaissance tank from March 1942 until production ceased in October 1943; during this time, more than 40 per cent of Soviet tanks were T60s or T70s. It lacked hitting power and cross-country performance when compared with similar German tanks.

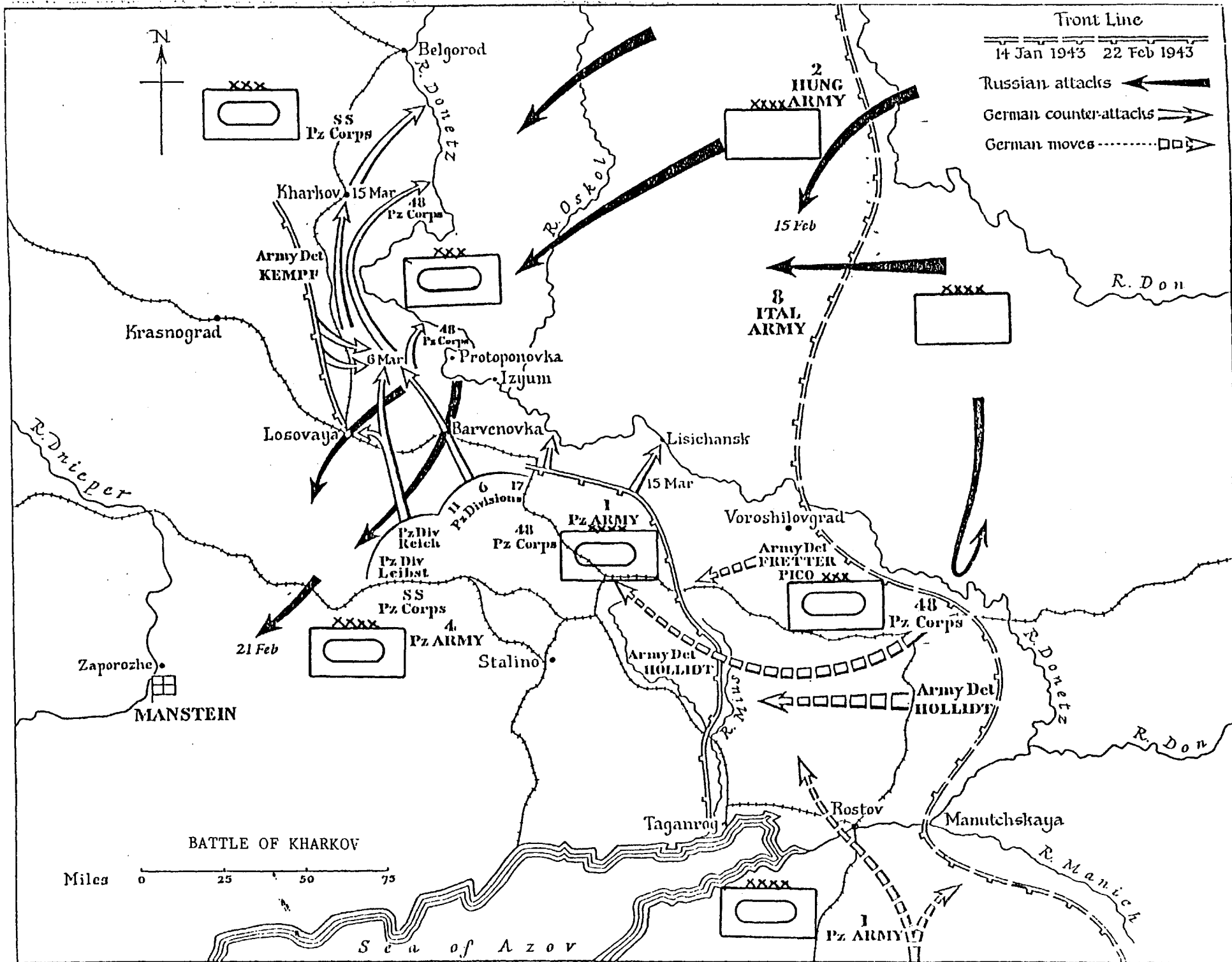
Weight: 9.2 tons; road speed: 45kmh/28mph; road range: 360km/225mils, cross-country range: 180km/112mils; armament: one 45mm/1.8in Model 38 gun, one 7.62mm/0.3in machine-gun.

Tiger MkI heavy tank

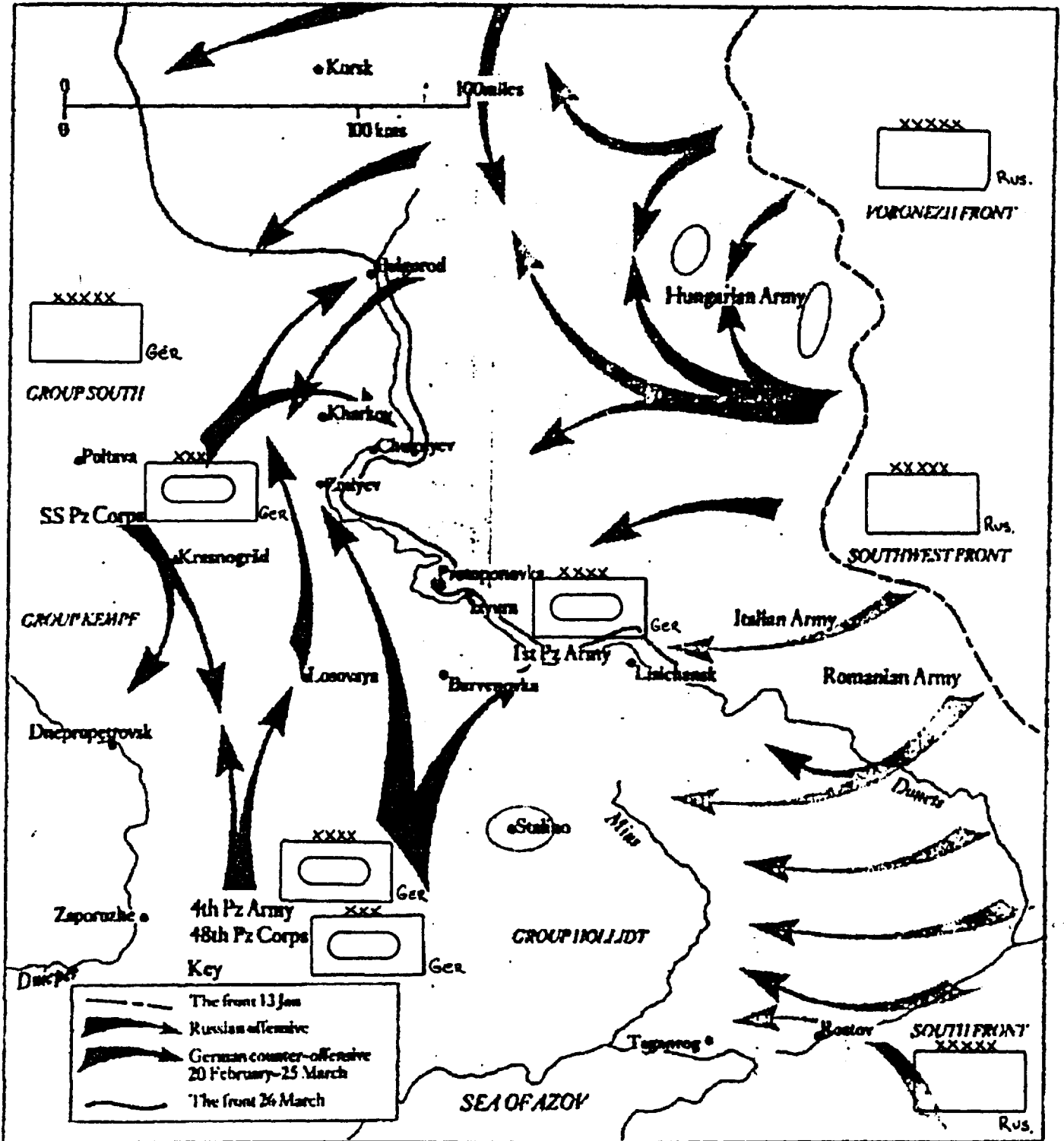


A formidable five-man heavy tank, this was used in quantity during Manstein's counter-stroke in the Donets Basin. In March, 2nd SS Panzer Corps employed them at Kharkov; for the first time Russian T34s had met their match, and the effect on the Red Army was demoralizing.

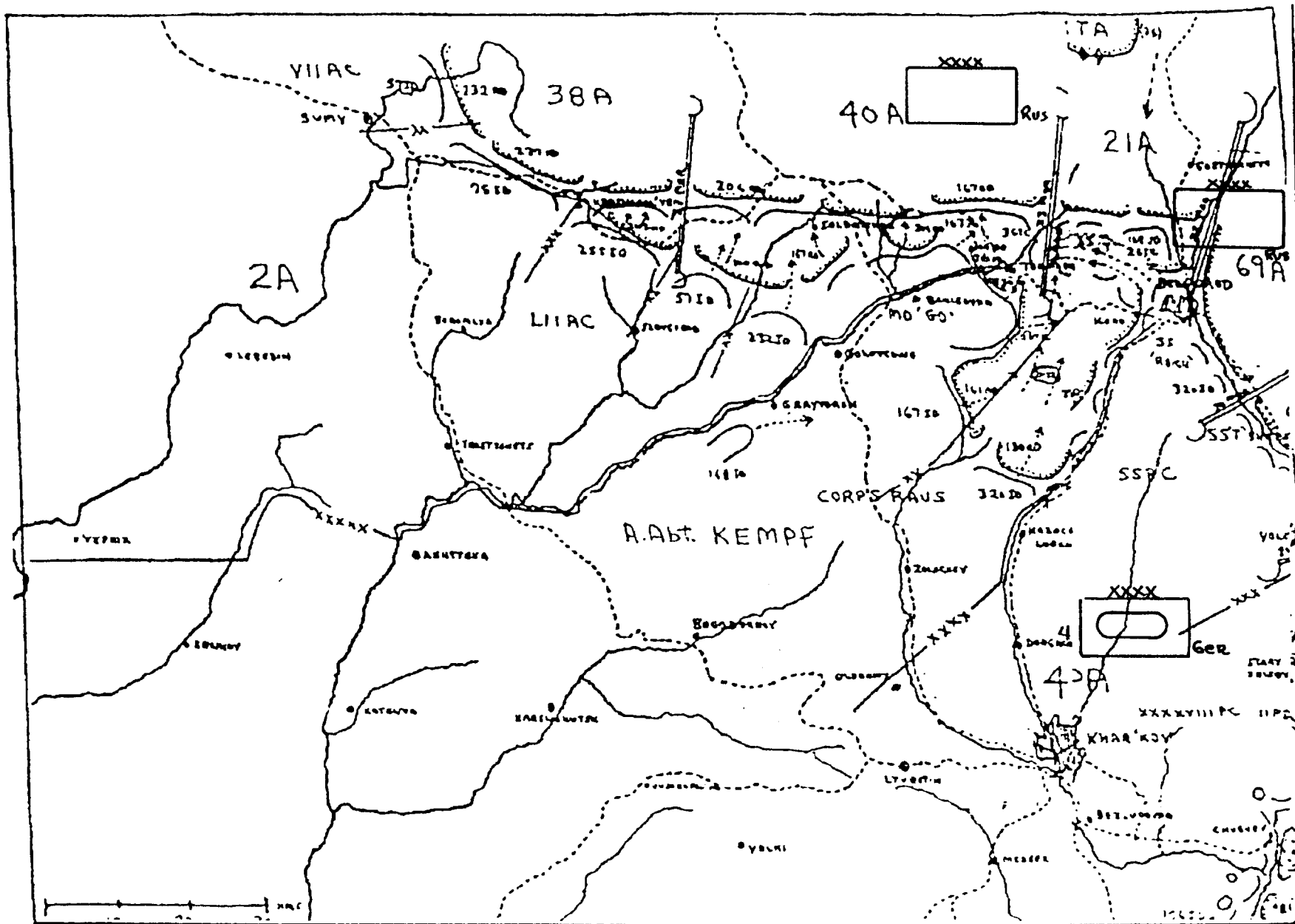
Weight: 56 tons; road speed: 37kmh/23mph, cross-country speed: 19kmh/12mph; road range: 116km/73mils, cross-country range: 67km/42mils; armament: one 88mm/3.5in KwK36, two 7.92mm/0.31in MG34 machine-guns.



Appendix E



RUSSIAN OFFENSIVE
AND
GERMAN COUNTER-OFFENSIVE
20 FEBRUARY TO 25 MARCH 1943



KHAR'KOV SITUATION 21 - 23 MARCH

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