
Summary Report by Lieutenant-General Károly Csémi, Chief of Staff, on the Experiences of the Hungarian Military Delegation Taking Part in the "Oder-Neisse" Joint Military Exercise of the UAF, on 22-28 September 1969, 30 October 1969

III.

The "ODER-NEISSE 69" military exercise was the biggest joint military movement so far, in which all the services of four allied armies—with the exception of the strategic missile units—and the troops of the rear participated, and various military actions occurred concurrently over a wide area—a territory almost as big as Hungary's.

This exercise demonstrated again that the socialist community is united politically and militarily, which is the basis of our strength and security, and the firm guarantee of the cause of our socialist achievements and our peoples. At the exercise, it was proved plainly and firmly that the defense capabilities of the armies of the friendly countries are on a high level, their comradeship in arms is firm, and our principles were identical.

The exercise was useful and successful for us, and what we saw—apart from being experiences—aroused several ideas in us. The most important of the experiences gained on the exercise are the following:

1) The exercise commanders and the troops participating in the exercise showed a high level of organization. Everything took place perfectly and punctually according to the plan and dates drawn up earlier for the whole period of the exercise. We experienced everywhere the greatest order and perfect camouflage.

To this greatly contributed the exact and resolute work of military police and the wide use of camouflage networks.

2) Before the individual presentations, short (few-minute) briefings (picture settings) took place and afterwards, the activities started punctually to the second.

During the evaluations, the description of the plan, in a break with tradition, took place through projection of a film, using some parts of the main movements filmed during the exercise.

3) Large quantities of explosives, tracer bullets and rockets, and dummy ammunition were used, thus giving the impression of a real battlefield, but not to the detriment of the display. The imitation occurred in full accord with the actions shown, *e.g.* explosions took place as the fighter-bombers struck, *etc.*

4) Helicopters of various types and purposes were widely used, participating in reconnaissance, transportation of troops and injured, repulsion of armor, and support for troops with direct fire. The MI-2 type helicopter and its various versions deserve special attention.

5) The fighter-bombers and helicopters supplied with on-board firearms acted constantly and continuously in small formations—of pairs and groups—at low altitudes—from 10 to 200 m—in support of the ground troops. The Polish fighter-bombers were repainted for land camouflage.

The front bombers carried out their assignments at altitudes of 600–800 m in small formations, and at night with individual planes, striking mainly against the tanks.

The fighters carried out defense at medium and high altitudes in small formations.

Direct air defense was organized using organizational means and equipment for self-defense.

6) The method of executing the exercise varied from one move to the other. So there was a two-sided tactical exercise; a commanders' and staff-command exercise; night and day military exercises combined with live-fire maneuvers; a tactical exercise against signals, *etc.*

Fully manned superior units did not participate in the exercise, but the direct forces were widely drawn into practice cooperation.

7) A maximum effort could be felt to have military vehicles—APCs, tanks—carry all the things necessary to fight independently. Of the big military supplies hard to transport, the combat troops were followed only by military supply-service first echelons (fuel-transporting vehicles, APCs for the injured, workshop and ammunition-transporting vehicles). This emerged especially during forcible crossings, but also during other military actions, when crowding could be avoided and mobility greatly increased.

8) APCs of various types and purpose were used. In the motor and motorized-rifle superior units, wheeled APCs were used, while in the motor and motorized-rifle units subordinate to tank superior units, track-laying APCs in various versions, *etc.* were used: commander's, mortar, ambulance, ammunition-transporting, *etc.* The APC were also numbered, like the tanks, according to a changing system.

9) Both at the tactical exercises and the live-fire maneuvers—irrespective of whether the individual moves were of a display type or not—it was proved that the soldiers—according to the requirements of modern combat—were well-trained and disciplined, that they use the technology entrusted to them well and shoot excellently under complicated circumstances, night and day.

10) The organization and maintenance of cooperation was realized not only in connection with military services, army corps and superior units of other nationalities, but in connection with units and subordinate units as well. For example, at the joint use of naval amphibious troops and airborne divisions: to support the successful activity of the German motorized rifle division as an airborne division, a Czechoslovak motorized rifle battalion was landed, *etc.*

11) The motorized rifle and tank troops equipped with modern technology, depending on the character of the river barrier, were able to cross in a very short time. For example, the motorized rifle regiment with its subordinated units coped with the river in 20–30 minutes.

12) In modern warfare, the joint and common activity of troops of various nationalities can be realized only with a corresponding composition of the command. This dominated when setting up the command for the exercise, and also during deployment of the naval and airborne troops and in the conduct of the troops of the 1st Army, where there were superior units of four nationalities.

The common staff command started work on August 1. The commander of the exercise conducted the exercise through his national deputies, who—with the participation of some operational staff and the use of small VHF radios—were in constant touch with the staff command located at the individual display areas.

The command of the common-nationality army—which corresponds to our relations too—was realized so that the divisions of foreign nationality sent an operational liaison group to the army staff, while the Polish Army staff sent a liaison (direction) officer to the divisions of their own nationality.

13) We experienced significant efforts to modernize command. This could be seen in the wide use of motorization and automation on the one hand, and in the new grouping and working methods of the staff.

14) The staff was quite well equipped and supplied with the facilities needed for undisturbed execution of work under harsh field conditions, such as tents with plastic floors, camp flush toilets, toiletries, etc.

15) For the period of the exercise—the command of the exercise—a uniform political body was created out of the appointed political workers of the participating armies, to organize and direct the party political work, which functioned quite well and successfully, and greatly contributed to the success of the exercise and the deepening of the international spirit of comradeship.

A four-language camp newspaper was published daily; mutual friendship meetings were organized among the soldiers and with the population.

The participants received the latest daily news consistently and punctually. At certain periods in the exercise, the soldiers were entertained with film shows and programs by groups of entertainers.

Appendices:

No. 1: General concept of the exercise.

No. 2: The distribution of participating troops.

No. 3: General data on the combat techniques displayed.

Appendix No. 2 to 02655/69 Headquarters First Group Directorate

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The distribution of participating troops

1) The participants in the maneuvers:

	PPR	USSR	GDR	.SSR	Total
Troops	41297	10957	8948	4098	65 300
Tanks	259	209	154	112	734
Guns and mortars	179	54	74	24	331
Anti-aircraft guns	169	25		12	206
Launch pads	38	3	3	3	47
armored personnel carriers (APCs)	384	157	273	145	959
Aircrafts	332	214		7	553
Helicopters	81	31	8	4	124
Vessels	61	36	42		139
Motor vehicles	5196	1621	1259	584	8659

[Archives: War History Archive, National Air-defense Headquarters 1969 Unit 102/05/550 pp. 16–20, 2 supplements]

