



## Russia Conducts Fourth Arctic Riverine Exercise

**OE Watch Commentary:** The Northern Fleet is well into its summer training and the Northern Sea Route is ice free. The fleet conducted its fourth Arctic Riverine exercise in five years up the Yenisei River to the port of Dudinka. Last year's exercise was the largest ever—involving ground forces, airborne forces, four SU-24 jets and an airborne tanker, the Ministry of Situations, and the Federal Penitentiary Ministry, and it involved four times as many land combat vehicles (including T-80BVM tanks and BM-21 MRLS) than previous exercises. Arctic riverine exercises are becoming routine for the Russian military, as are Arctic amphibious landings. Of interest is the exclusion of the sea tug Pamir from the Riverine exercise. The Yenisei River current is strong and tugs were used in past exercises to keep the large amphibious landing ships at right angles to the beach. Evidently, for this exercise, the fleet had confidence in keeping the landing ships aligned during disembarking and embarking. The Russian Navy is also gaining skills in conducting shipboard artillery fire in a strong current. Readers may want to read “The Russians Train for Arctic Riverine Operations” in the November 2019 Marine Corps Gazette <https://mca-marines.org/wp-content/uploads/Arctic-Riverine-Operations.pdf>. End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)

***“The exercise began with the conduct of an airstrike against the notional terrorists’ positions. Then the AK-100 batteries of the Severomorsk’s and the AK-725 batteries of the Kondopoga and the Aleksandr Otrakovskiy opened fire on the aggressor coastal positions to suppress their fire.”***

**Source:** Thomas Nilsen, “Eight Russian navy ships make ready for ice-free Northern Sea Route”, *Barents Sea Independent Observer*, <https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/security/2020/07/eight-russian-navy-ships-sail-ice-free-northern-sea-route>, 31 July 2020

### ***Eight Russian navy ships make ready for ice-free Northern Sea Route***

*This is the ninth year in a row that Russian Navy ships sail the Northern Sea Route. Destinations and port-calls are not yet announced, but traditionally the annual flotilla sails all east to Kotelny Island, where Russia has one of its new Arctic bases. Kotelny is part of the New Siberian Islands in the Laptev Sea in the eastern sector of the Northern Sea Route. This year, the voyage will not be challenged by sea-ice. Already by 20th July, there were completely open waters across the Northern Sea Route. Normally, ice used to pack north of the Taymyr Peninsula, but for the 2020 season ships will find open waters across the vast seaway.*

*Additional to Severomorsk news, the two landing ships Kondopoga and Aleksandr Otrakovsky will be sailing, as well as the new navy icebreaker Ilya Muromets, the tanker Sergey Osipov, the minesweeper Vladimir Gumanenko and the rescue tugboat Pamir. Together with the crane ship KIL-143 all these vessels trained together in the Barents Sea, but returned to port in Severomorsk, making ready for the Arctic voyage, according to the press service of the Northern Fleet.*

*Several of the vessels participated in previous years’ voyage where live-fire exercises, amphibious landings, and anti-terror drills were conducted at locations like Dudinka and the Kotelny Islands.*

*Source: Anton Alekseyev, “Severomorsk leads the Formation”, Krasnaya Zvezda, <http://redstar.ru/severomorsk-vozglavlyayet-stroj/>, 19 August 2020.*

### ***Severomorsk leads the Formation***

*The ships and vessels of the Northern Fleet Arctic Grouping, under the command of Fleet Deputy Commander Vice Admiral Oleg Golubev, continue sailing along the Northern Maritime Route east to the Bering Sea. They have already conducted combat training at the anchorage in the Port of Dixon.*

*The transit from the Port of Dixon to Dudinka against the current of the Yenisei River took the Northern Fleet Arctic Group two days. The ships and vessels sailed along the river channel in formation led by the Large Antisubmarine Warfare Ship Severomorsk with an average speed of approximately 10 knots. The Icebreaker Ilya Muromets and KIL-143 brought up the rear. The Salvage Tug Pamir, the Large Seagoing Tanker Sergey Osipov, and the Minesweeper Vladimir Gumanenko remained at the Port of Dixon roadstead.*

*Upon arrival at Dudinka, the Severomorsk anchored at the mooring berth, and the Large Landing Ships Aleksandr Otrakovskiy and Kondopoga dropped anchor at the port’s roadstead. The leaders of the Taymir Dolgano-Nenetskiy Municipal Rayon and of Dudinka and the city of Norilsk greeted the Northern Fleet seamen here. After the meeting, they conducted a working session with the Arctic Grouping command authorities on organizational issues for the conduct of the inter-service tactical exercise to defend the important industrial facility at Taymyr and joint athletic and mass cultural events.*

*Eight members of the Taymyr Yunarmiya [Young Army—a uniformed patriotic youth group formed to encourage interest in the armed forces], were rewarded for their achievements in training, discipline, and social activities. They joined the sailors on the transit from Dixon to Dudinka onboard the ships.*

*Over the course of two days, the sailors conducted training on the ships’ approach to the river banks and disembarking naval infantry and their equipment onto an unimproved river front.*

*The Arctic Grouping’s tactical exercise ... took place on 18 August. The Severomorsk, Aleksandr Otrakovskiy and Kondopoga along with naval infantry and their equipment, and Ka-27 assault helicopters took part.*

*According to the exercise scenario, the force had to defeat a notional terrorist foothold and to support the landing of the amphibious assault force’s equipment. The naval infantry would develop the offensive into the depth of the Peninsula’s territory to defend the important industrial facility in the Arctic.*

*The exercise began with the conduct of an airstrike against the notional terrorists’ positions. Then the AK-100 batteries of the Severomorsk’s and the AK-725 batteries of the Kondopoga and the Aleksandr Otrakovskiy opened fire on the aggressor coastal positions to suppress their fire. Then the subunits of naval infantrymen, who provided security for the teams of military engineers, who were transported to the coast on fast boats to clear lanes through mine fields and prepare the equipment landing area, landed on the beach from Ka-27 helicopters.*

*The Kondopoga and Aleksandr Otrakovskiy approached the beach when everything was ready for landing the amphibious assault force’s equipment. More than 20 wheeled and tracked vehicles were landed using the “thrust” method from the ships’ tween-decks: BTR-82A personnel carriers, 2S1 “Gvozdika” 122mm self-propelled howitzers, and TTM-4902 PS-10 tracked, amphibious articulated transport vehicles....*