



Training the Airborne for Mountain Combat

OE Watch Commentary: The accompanying excerpt from *Krasnaya Zvezda* discusses Russian Deputy Defense Minister Lieutenant General Yunus-Bek Yevkurov's visit to the Novorossiysk Guards Airborne Assault Alpine Division, where he inspected the formation's preparations for the summer training season and viewed the training base and facilities. The 7th Guards Mountain Air Assault Division is garrisoned near the Black Sea coastal city of Novorossiysk in Krasnodar Kray. This is close to the Kerch Straits and Eastern Crimea. Besides being a parachute division, the 7th is also a designated mountain unit and is specially trained for that type of combat. Mountain climbing and unit movement requires special skill sets. Mountain range firing is quite different than normal level ground firing and requires special training and practice in order to be effective. Moving combat vehicles, especially towed artillery, in the mountains is also quite different and challenging. Crossing mountain rivers and streams present its own challenges. The 7th has access to an excellent mountain combat training facility and is using it. Training for mountain combat is nothing new to the Russian military. When the Soviet Army entered Afghanistan, it had one mountain training facility. It expanded to seven and, during the course of the war, all infantrymen and drivers attended a mountain training center for up to six-months instruction before deploying to Afghanistan. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

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Source: Unattributed, “Developing the Alpine Component,” *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 15 May 2020. <http://www.redstar.ru>

“Developing the Alpine Component”

During a visit to the Novorossiysk Guards Airborne Assault Alpine Division, Deputy Defense Minister Lieutenant General Yunus-Bek Yevkurov inspected the state of the formation's preparations for the summer training season and also viewed the training base and facilities at its Rayevskiy training ground.

The division's commander, Colonel Andrey Sukhovetskiy, showed the Deputy Minister around the training ground's tactical shooting range, its alpine firing range which provides intensive instruction on firing on steep terrain from above and below, the alpine driving course for fighting vehicles and an alpine engineering camp. All these instruction and training facilities are being successfully used by Novorossiysk airborne subunits, to gain solid skills in conducting combat in mountainous terrain.

The airborne reconnaissance troops demonstrated the unique facilities of the new “Four Elements” assault course for Lt Gen Yevkurov. This comprehensive course of alpine obstacles can recreate realistic assault combat in mountainous terrain: in the air -- on a hanging bridge across a gorge and mountain river, in the water -- when reconnoitering and fording a water obstacle, on the ground -- when tackling a highly challenging 100-meter obstacle course, and even under ground -- in the cramped confines of a concrete culvert, and also in the fiery elements -- breathing the heat and soot of the “burning buildings.” Added to all the hurdles ... is altitude -- at the climbing wall and its sheer surface, which requires special alpine skills and random rocks. Or the sector for moving vehicles across rocky ground and scree.

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Guards Col Andrey Sukhovetskiy stated that “all the resources at this training ground make it possible to train high quality specialists who can wage war in mountainous conditions....The Four Elements course includes sectors with trenches and craters, a “village of fire,” a place to practice crossing a mountain river, and a climbing wall. Training facilities like these enable assault troops to successfully practice the actions required in combat training programs for alpine subunits.”

Lt Gen Yevkurov was impressed by the level of equipment at the facilities he was inspecting and by the outcomes of the training carried out at them....“Preparing personnel for warfare in mountain conditions is one of most challenging and particular processes in the combat training program. A unique base has been created here, where one can train in shooting, driving fighting vehicles, overcoming various natural hurdles, and tactical actions in the mountains. They have everything here to prepare high-class specialists in this field,” the Deputy Defense Minister said.

During his working visit to the Novorossiysk airborne assault troops, the Deputy Defense Minister met with the command and personnel of a separate reconnaissance battalion and artillery regiment at the division, where the Atlant training and instruction complexes recently opened. These have 25-meter four-lane pools with showers, changing rooms, and gyms, and provide more opportunities for the troops to work on their total fitness. Their design means they can be used not only for sports but also for troops to practice tackling water obstacles in full kit and with weapons.