



## The Iskander Missile Will Engage Naval Surface Vessels

**OE Watch Commentary:** According to the accompanying excerpted article from *Izvestia*, Russian Iskander missile brigades are now being trained to employ missiles capable of engaging naval surface vessels. The Russian military reportedly experimented with the use of Iskander missiles in such a manner in August 2018. Unit level training on such tactics implies the experiment was a success. *Izvestia* did not specify if an entirely new missile was required for such an endeavor, or if only a modification to the seeker on the warhead would be required. **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

***“The Iskander missile system is now being used for coastal defense missions. Starting this year, the ground troops missile brigades will be carrying out exercises involving the destruction of the enemy naval landing forces.”***



Iskander Missile and Loading Vehicle.

Source: Vitaly Kuzmin, <https://www.vitalykuzmin.net/Military/ARMY-2016-Demonstration/i-bSmJnCF>, Creative Commons License - CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

**Source:** Anton Lavrov and Roman Kretsul, «Искандеры» не дают добро: новые ракетные комплексы защитят побережье России (The ‘Iskanders’ are against it: New missile systems are to guard Russia’s coastline),” *Izvestia.ru*, 27 July 2020. <https://iz.ru/1040269/anton-lavrov-roman-kretcul/iskandery-ne-daiut-dobro-novye-raketnye-kompleksy-zashchitiat-poberezhe-rossii>

*The Iskander missile system is now being used for coastal defense missions. Starting this year, the ground troops missile brigades will be carrying out exercises involving the destruction of the enemy naval landing forces. The missile troops servicemen are learning to destroy ships and vessels, as well as enemy forces that have landed on the coast. According to experts, the use of Iskander missile systems for these purposes drastically complicates an attack on Russian territory from the sea and makes it possible to increase the strike potential of the Russian Navy.*

*The missile brigades are being trained to deliver strikes against naval landing forces and ships, the sources in the Defense Ministry told *Izvestiya*. In a matter of minutes, the Iskander operational-tactical missile system (OTRK) will proceed from the detection of the target to its destruction. In the future, this will become a standard combat training program exercise -- initially, these targets were not included in the standard list of these OTRK.*

*The enemy coordinates will be transmitted in real time via the channels of the automated troops command and control systems and from the top-level staffs. Thanks to 500 km combat range, the missile operators will be able to support the Russian naval infantry landing troops, using target designations from aviation, fleet, technical means of reconnaissance, and unmanned aerial vehicles... For target acquisitions, these OTRK use an inertial navigation system, as well as a signal from GLONASS satellites. A smart self-guided optical homing head is activated on the final phase of the trajectory, ensuring accuracy with an error margin of only few meters. The missile can be redirected while already in flight, thus allowing it to attack even mobile targets, such as ships.*

*The first “naval” firings of Iskander systems were recently conducted during the president’s snap inspection of the troops. The Defense Ministry reported that the OTRK stationed at Kuban executed electronic launches against coastal targets, within the framework of a tactical exercise. In the course of the tactical episode rehearsal, the missile operators practiced preventing the capture of the Black Sea coast by an amphibious assault force: the Iskander crews hypothetically destroyed the concentration of combat equipment at the moment of its roll-off onto the shore from landing ships...*

*In order for the OTRK to be able to work effectively against naval targets, it is necessary to ensure the transmission of data from the Navy’s structures to representatives of the ground troops, military expert Vladislav Shurygin explained to *Izvestiya*. “As a result, if necessary, it will be possible to sharply increase the number of missiles launched against the target,” he said. “Coastal missile systems, and systems that are part of the ground troops, will also target the enemy. Each army has Iskander formations, and the system’s involvement in coastal defense will make it possible to assemble a powerful “fist.” The more naval targets our missiles strike, the less targets we will have to destroy on the shore. It is easier to sink a ship at sea, than to catch a landed amphibious assault force later, the expert noted.*

*The Navy artillery and coastal missile systems are now tasked with guarding the coast. Compared to those, the Iskander OTRK is superior in range and just as accurate. The modern foreign strategy envisages the conduct of “over-the-horizon” amphibious operations, from a distance of several dozens of kilometers from the shore. During these operations, the naval infantry performs landing from ships on speedboats and helicopters. The landing transport itself and its escort are beyond the range of the coastal artillery. Yet, they remain vulnerable to missiles...*