



## Vostok-2018 in the Arctic

**OE Watch Commentary:** The Northern Fleet played a significant role on the flank of the major Vostok-2018 exercises as noted by the accompanying excerpted articles from Russian sources. The Northern Fleet initially moved 5,000 nautical miles into the Eastern Military District territory to guard the eastern approach to the Northern Sea route. The 80th Separate Arctic Motorized Rifle Brigade and 61st Naval Infantry Brigade conducted yet another summer amphibious landing, this time of the northern side of the Chukotka Peninsula—the entrance to the Northern Sea Route. This repositioning of this large naval and ground force to an isolated region will probably become a matter of lore to the 200-some local inhabitants of the village of Vankarem. After finding and destroying notional enemy sabotage personnel, the motorized rifle brigade conducted a cross-country vehicle march across the peninsula from the Arctic to the Pacific Ocean. The naval component conducted simulated search and rescue missions and a detachment of vessels sailed south around the Kamchatka Peninsula to conduct an anti-submarine hunt in the Sea of Okhotsk. The exercise concluded on 17 September. **End OE Watch Commentary (Grau)**

*“Russian Federation Defense Minister Sergey Shoygu announced that approximately 300,000 servicemen (approximately one-third of the personnel of the RF Armed Forces), 36,000 tanks, armored personnel carriers, and other combat vehicles, more than 1,000 helicopters, aircraft, and drones, and ships and auxiliary vessels of the Northern and Pacific fleets will be taking part in the maneuvers over a vast territory.”*

**Source:** Sergey Ishchenko, “Восток-2018: Россия начинает репетицию Третьей мировой (Vostok-2018: Russia is Beginning a Dress Rehearsal for WWII),” *Svobodnaya Pressa*, 8 September 2018. <https://svpressa.ru/war21/article/210128/>

*A detachment of warships of the Northern Fleet, escorted by the nuclear-powered icebreaker 50 Let Pobedy and her diesel-electric colleague Ilya Muromets is at this time for the first time in history completing an adverse ice crossing of the Northern Sea Route from the Barents Sea to the Chukchi Sea. The detachment, which left Severomorsk on 8 August, is composed of the large ASW ship Vice-Admiral Kulakov, the large landing ships Aleksandr Otrakovskiy and Kondopoga with naval infantry on board, the sea-going minesweeper Vladimir Gumanenko, the tanker Sergey Osipov, the salvage tug Pamir, and the crane ship KIL-143. All these ships and support vessels are without reinforced ice strakes [longitudinal metal hull reinforcement]. Navigation in these areas for these vessels is clearly very risky. Even at the start of fall, the ice in the Arctic is at least one-meter thick.*



Source: Russian Defense Ministry, [http://eng.mil.ru/en/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12194983@egNews](http://eng.mil.ru/en/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12194983@egNews), CC 4.0.



## Continued: Vostok-2018 in the Arctic

**Source:** “Арктическая группировка Северного флота провела высадку морского десанта на Чукотке (The Northern Fleet’s Arctic Grouping Has Conducted an Amphibious Assault Landing on Chukotka),” *Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation*, 11 September 2018. [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12195023@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12195023@egNews)

“Vostok-2018” troop maneuver began as subunits of the Northern Fleet Naval Infantry and Arctic Motorized Rifle Brigade conducted a tactical landing of an amphibious assault force on an undeveloped beachhead on the Chukotka Sea in the area of Cape Vankarem. The amphibious assault operation of the Northern Fleet on Chukotka was conducted for the first time in contemporary history. The exercise occurred in several phases. The actions of the ships’ crews and the assault force were well-coordinated and rehearsed beforehand.

In the first phase, with the fire support of Large Antisubmarine Warfare Ship Vice-Admiral Kulakov, naval infantrymen seized a beachhead for landing the assault force and supported the approach of the Large Landing Ships Kondopoga and Aleksandr Otrakovskiy with the main force. In phase two, the landing ships beached directly on the coastline and the armored vehicles disembarked onto the shore. Ka-27 shipborne helicopters, from the Vice-Admiral Kulakov, conducted fire support for the amphibious assault force landing.

The Northern Fleet group that is led by ...the Vice-Admiral Kulakov is participating in the “Vostok-2018” maneuvers on the Northeastern Axis. The Northern Fleet forces are training in tactical combat in the Arctic Zone in the Chukotka area, both on the continental coast, and also in the seas of the Arctic and Pacific Oceans. Northern Fleet ships and vessels conducted a transit from the main basing facility on the Kola Peninsula to the exercise conduct area along the Northern Maritime Route to participate in the Vostok-2018 maneuvers. The detachment’s cruise began on 8 August. During this time, the ships and vessels covered more than 4,000 nautical miles and conducted several tactical exercises in the Arctic.

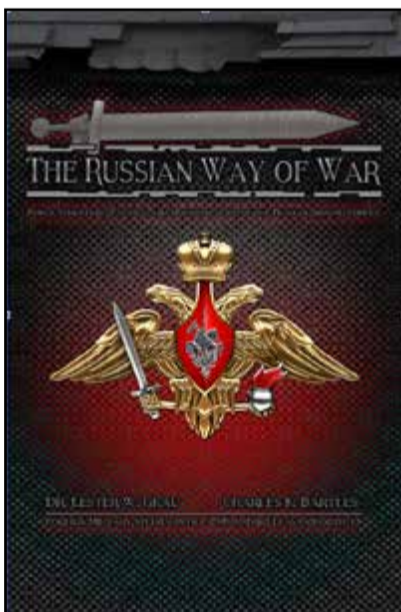
**Source:** “На Чукотке арктические мотострелки Северного флота учились уничтожать Диверсантов (On Chukotka, Arctic Motorized Infantry of the Northern Fleet Train in the Elimination of Saboteurs),” *Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation*, 12 September 2018. [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12195143@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12195143@egNews)

On Chukotka, subunits of a Northern Fleet Arctic motorized infantry brigade took part in the Vostok 2018 maneuvers. The conducted raids to hunt down and destroy reconnaissance and sabotage groups of a notional adversary. The training was conducted in the Cape Vankarem area, where ... motorized infantry and naval infantry landed the previous day.

Hypothetical saboteurs were detected using state-of-the-art reconnaissance equipment and unmanned air vehicles. Following the receipt of information from reconnaissance scouts, subunits of the Arctic motorized infantry brigade moved to the target area on army utility all-terrain vehicles and snow- and swamp-crossing vehicles armed with heavy machine guns. The motorized infantrymen conducted the pursuit and encirclement of a notional adversary. During a live-fire stage, the hypothetical saboteurs were eliminated by fire from small arms and heavy machine guns against prepared target positions.

**Source:** “Арктические мотострелки Северного флота пересекли Чукотский полуостров на штатной технике (Northern Fleet Arctic Motorized Riflemen Crossed Chukotskiy Poluostrov in Organic Vehicles),” *Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation*, 14 September 2018. [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12195525@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12195525@egNews)

Subunits of the Northern Fleet Arctic Motorized Rifle ... made a march across the Chukotka Peninsula from the shore of the Arctic Ocean to the Pacific coast in TO&E vehicles designed for the Far North. The road march across trackless terrain went from Cape Vankarem to Egvekinot settlement (a distance of more than 270 kilometers) in DT-10P articulated snow and swamp-capable vehicles in the course of two days. During the march, the soldiers conducted raids to find and destroy simulated enemy commando teams. Live fire with small arms and heavy-caliber machineguns ... was conducted during the march....



### THE RUSSIAN WAY OF WAR by LESTER W. GRAU and CHARLES K. BARTLES

At any given time, assessments of the Russian Armed Forces vary between the idea of an incompetent and corrupt conscript army manning decrepit Soviet equipment and relying solely on brute force, to the idea of an elite military filled with Special Operations Forces (SOF) who were the “polite people” or “little green men” seen on the streets in Crimea. This book will attempt to split the difference between these radically different ideas by shedding some light on what the Russian Ground Forces consist of, how they are structured, how they fight, and how they are modernizing.

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## Continued: Vostok-2018 in the Arctic

**Source:** “Northern Fleet warships, support vessels hold rescue drill as part of Vostok 2018 exercise,” Interfax, 14 September 2018.

*A group of warships and support vessels of the Russian Northern Fleet conducted a search-and-rescue drill in the Bering Sea. The drill involved crews of the ASW Vice-Admiral Kulakov, landing ships Alexander Otrakovsky and Kondopoga, tugboat Pamir, and diesel-electric icebreaker Ilya Muromets. The crews were tasked with helping a ship in distress on the Northern Sea Route. A search-and-rescue Ka-27 helicopter took off from the Vice-Admiral Kulakov to verify the coordinates of the ship in distress. The helicopter evacuated distressed people from the sea surface as did the crew of the Vice-Admiral Kulakov. Crews of the tugboat Pamir and the diesel-electric icebreaker Ilya Muromets conducted a firefighting exercise.*

**Source:** “Отряд боевых кораблей и судов обеспечения Северного флота провел противолодочное учение в Охотском море (Detachment of Northern Fleet Combatant Ships and Support Vessels conducts Antisubmarine Warfare Exercise in Sea of Okhotsk),” Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, 15 September 2018. [https://function.mil.ru/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12195594@egNews](https://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12195594@egNews)

*A detachment of Northern Fleet combatant ships and support vessels taking part in the Vostok-2018 troop (force) maneuvers conducted an antisubmarine warfare [ASW] exercise in the Sea of Okhotsk. In the course of the exercise the crew of one of the detachment's ships, the large ASW ship Vice-Admiral Kulakov, rehearsed a range of measures to hunt for submarines with the aid of onboard sonar armament as well as employing a Ka-27 PL ASW helicopter. During their sortie the crew of the helicopter conducted search operations using a dipping sonar station.*

*During the exercise, combat crews of the ship's mine and torpedo department conducted training drills involving a simulated submarine being forced to surface and the simulated employment of the entire array of ASW armament. The crew of the large ASW ship also conducted measures to protect the ship against attack by a hypothetical submarine using evasive antisubmarine maneuvering....*

*They cooperated with a tactical strike force of Pacific Fleet vessels including the Guards missile cruiser Varyag and large ASW ships Admiral Vinogradov and Admiral Panteleyev which conducted a joint coordination exercise with two ship hunter-killer groups of small ASW ships in maritime areas of the Sea of Okhotsk...The ships jointly rehearsed maneuver and changing formation, and air defense of a grouping at sea....A total of up to 20 combatant ships of various types took part in the missions. Their actions were supported by deck-based ASW aviation.*



Vostok-2018.

Source: Russian Defense Ministry, <http://мультимедиа.минобороны.рф/multimedia/photo/gallery.htm?id=60575@cmsPhotoGallery>, CC 4.0.