



Russian Ground Forces Divisions Upgrading Air Defense Capabilities

OE Watch Commentary: The accompanying excerpted article from *Izvestia* discusses a major change in Russian motorized rifle and tank divisions. Previously, these divisions would have a regimental set of 16 Osa (SA-8 GECKO) or Tor (SA-15 GAUNTLET) missile launchers in their anti-aircraft missile regiment, while the anti-aircraft missile-artillery battalions found in the four maneuver regiments would have batteries of: missile-gun systems, ZSU-23-4 Shilka (GUN DISH) or 2K22 Tunguska (SA-19 Grison); close-range, tracked missile systems, the 9K35 Strela-10 (SA-13 Gopher); and close-range portable systems, Igla (SA-18 GROUSE) or Verba (SA-25). If this reform is implemented, the systems in the anti-aircraft missile regiment will be replaced by Buk-M2s (SA-17 GRIZZLY) or Buk-M3s. (Currently, Buks are only found in Ground Forces air defense brigades, but it often supports/covers maneuver brigades and divisions). This would be a significant capability increase. The Osa has a 15km range, while the Tor has a 12km range. In comparison, the Buk-M3 has an approximate range of 70km, and reportedly has a limited capability to engage ground targets. In addition, the division's maneuver regiments will gain an anti-aircraft missile battalion, equipped with Tors (likely 12 launchers per battalion). Although not mentioned, it is likely that the maneuver regiments will retain their anti-aircraft missile-artillery battalions (for providing point defense, and defeating small UAVs). Aside from the obvious area denial considerations of adding Buks to divisional MTO&Es, this change is also significant because the Buk will become the first piece of equipment that could be found in maneuver divisions, but not maneuver brigades.

In theory, these organizational changes will give the Russian motorized rifle (3 motorized rifle regiments and 1 tank regiment) or tank division (3 tank regiments and 1 motorized rifle regiments) four anti-aircraft missile battalions and an anti-aircraft missile regiment (typically, the anti-aircraft missile regiments found in divisions only have subordinate batteries, no subordinate battalions). In practice, of Russia's eight divisions, only a few have all four maneuver regiments, so most divisions will only have three anti-aircraft missile battalions. Despite this, this reform will significantly increase the divisions' capability to deny air space, an especially important capability when combatting peer-level adversaries. In terms of area defense, the 70 kilometer range of the Buk-M3 will be able to fully cover the division in combat formation, including the rear logistic areas. The Tor will be able to fully protect the individual regiments in combat formation, and are designed to not only destroy aircraft, but also cruise missile and other precision guided munitions. Also to be considered is the role of the electronic warfare company. The electronic warfare company works closely with these air defense units by feeding the air defense units targeting data, and can also help protect the air defense units from enemy precision munitions. These anti-aircraft missile units in conjunction with the anti-aircraft missile-artillery battalions found in the maneuver regiments will give the division an effective area, as well as point defense against air threats. The accompanying excerpted article from *Interfax* quotes Russian Ground Forces Commander-in-Chief, Colonel General Oleg Salyukov on Russian Ground Forces air defense capabilities as saying, "Our troops' surface-to-air missile systems and complexes [are] capable of fighting all existing means of aerial warfare." **End OE Watch Commentary (Bartles)**

Source: Nikolay Surkov and Aleksey Ramm, "Пехота и танки получают новый зенитный купол (Infantry and Tanks Units Will Receive a New Air Defense Dome)," *Izvestia Online*, 22 December 2017. <https://iz.ru/685386/nikolai-surkov-aleksei-ramm/pekhota-i-tanki-poluchat-novyi-zenitnyi-kupol>

An echeloned air defense dome will cover Russian infantrymen, tank crewmen, and artillery personnel. The rearming and significant reinforcement of the standard anti-aircraft missile battalions, which exist in all tank and motorized rifle divisions, will begin in 2018. Instead of the obsolete Osa [SA-8 Gecko] short-range air defense missile complexes, they will receive state-of-the-art Buk-M2 [SA-17 GRIZZLY] or Buk-M3 medium range air defense missile complexes...

It is assumed that the anti-aircraft missile battalions, which are in each Ground Troops division based upon the TO&E, will be rearmed with Buk complexes in the next few years. In 2018, the anti-aircraft missile battalion in each of the four divisions will receive Buks: two in Western Military District and one each – in the Southern and Central Military Districts. In each battalion, the Buk air defense missile complex – will have up to three batteries of four launchers each...

The Buk-M2 has been arriving in the troops since 2008. This is a medium-range air defense missile complex – up to 50 kilometers. The complex is mounted on a tracked chassis and can easily follow attacking units. This air defense missile complex is known for its versatility and can shoot down both standard aerodynamic targets (aircraft, helicopters, and cruise missiles) at all altitudes, and also more complex offensive air weapons, for example, ballistic missiles or guided aircraft bombs. In the future, they are planning the modernization of all of the tactical Buk complexes to the latest version – the Buk-M3...

One more significant innovation within the new Tactical Air Defense Development Concept – is the creation of an anti-aircraft missile battalion (with Tor launchers [SA-15 GAUNTLET]) in each of the division's motorized rifle and tank regiments. These air defense missile complexes previously constituted the foundation of the division's air defense. Now there will be four anti-aircraft missile battalions in each division...[typically, the anti-aircraft missile regiment only has subordinate batteries, no subordinate battalions]

*Retired air defense Lieutenant-General Aleksey Gorkov told *Izvestia* that the combination of the Buk and Tor complexes will permit them to provide each division with full-fledged echeloned air defense. "The Buk complexes will destroy targets at the distant approaches and the Tor complexes will provide coverage at close range. It will turn out to be a multilayered and often time overlapping, in particular, based upon altitudes and range, air defense zone," the expert pointed out. The complexes supplement each other, the Buk complexes have some facilities to cover and the Tor complexes have others. In the aggregate, it will turn out to be a joint fire system, a type of 'impenetrable dome'..."*

(continued)



Continued: Russian Ground Forces Divisions Upgrading Air Defense Capabilities

“Our troops’ surface-to-air missile systems and complexes [are] capable of fighting all existing means of aerial warfare.”

-Russian Ground Forces Commander-in-Chief, Colonel General Oleg Salyukov

Source: Russia’s air defense can counter all existing means of aerial warfare - Ground Forces commander-in-chief,” *Interfax*, 25 December 2017.

Russian air defense weapons can counter any means of aerial warfare that currently exist in the world, the Ground Forces’ commander-in-chief Oleg Salyukov said on Friday.

“Our troops’ surface-to-air missile systems and complexes have the characteristics making them capable of fighting all existing means of aerial warfare,” Salyukov told reporters on Friday.

The rise of military threats in the aerospace sphere necessitate “a coordinated development of missile-space and air defense systems to meet qualitatively new requirements,” Salyukov said.

New air defense units have been formed, armed with the S-300V4 [SA-23 GLADIATOR] SAM system and the Buk-M2 [SA-17 GRIZZLY] complex, the commander said. The rearming with Buk-M3, Tor-M2 [SA-15 GAUNTLET] and the Verba [SA-25] portable SAM complex continues, he said...



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9A317 TELAR for Buk-M2 air defence system.

Source: By Vitaly V. Kuzmin, <http://www.vitalykuzmin.net/Military/Victory-Day-Rehearsal-in-Alabino-21April2017/i-dPMGMNW>, CC 4.0.