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WE ARE GUERILLAS

An Account of the Work
of Soviet Guerillas Behind
the Nazi Lines

"Soviet War News" Books No. 3

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INTRODUCTION

What is a guerilla? He is defined in dictionaries as "one engaged in irregular warfare, generally in small independent bodies". The term is derived from the Spanish *guerra*, meaning war, and guerillas were the main force which prevented Napoleon from ever completely conquering Spain. And the same guerillas, in their Russian form, harassed Napoleon unmercifully when he invaded Russia in 1812.

In Russia, guerillas are generally called "partizans". They developed as a fighting force, with a tradition all their own, during the years of civil war which followed the Soviet revolution in 1917. While a life-and-death struggle was going on between Whites and Reds—between those who wanted to restore the inequalities of the old regime and those who supported the government of the people—thousands of men and women, mostly peasants, joined the guerillas.

Brave and skilful leaders sprang out of their ranks, men like Chapayev and Shchors, of whose exploits colourful sagas have now passed into the rich folk-lore of the Russian people. In the rolling plains of the Ukraine, the marshes of the Dnieper, the Cossack lands around the Don, and in the barren steppes of Siberia, everywhere the partizans fought untiringly to help the then young Red Army against the enemies of the Soviets.

That was just over twenty years ago. There are still thousands of men in the Soviet Union today who fought with Chapayev and other partizan leaders, who remember the old traditions of guerilla warfare, and who have not forgotten how to deal with invaders.

From the very first days of the German invasion in June 1941, guerilla bands were formed wherever the enemy appeared. After Stalin's call to the nation on July 3, when he urged the Soviet people to create in the German rear "conditions impossible for the enemy", the guerilla movement spread like wildfire.

Once again brilliant leaders sprang up everywhere. Literally thousands of detachments were formed. Men, women and

even children are fighting in these detachments, pitting their bravery and native ingenuity against the mechanized juggernaut of Nazism. They are a source of constant terror to the German troops, who can never be sure that an innocent-looking clump of bushes does not conceal a machine-gun, or that a simple peasant girl is not carrying a hand-grenade in her market basket.

While the major portion of this book is concerned with the tactics and operations of Soviet guerillas, the heroic struggle of guerillas in other parts of Nazi-occupied Europe receives its share. From Finland in the north, through Central Europe to Greece in the south, the trail of guerilla fire is being laid in the German and Italian rear.

This fiery trail is growing every day more fierce. The guerilla movement is the foundation of a new people's army which will one day link up with the regular Allied forces to smash Fascism from the face of Europe.

PART ONE

CHAPTER I

HOW A GUERILLA DETACHMENT IS FORMED

WHEN Nazi forces are reported to be nearing a Soviet district three things happen. If it is a collective-farm the entire population works to gather together anything that might be of use to the invaders. Grain, oil, machinery, food—all are loaded into lorries or peasant carts and evacuated to the rear or handed over to near-by Red Army units. A number of people leave the villages to carry these goods to the rear.

Cattle, livestock and poultry are then driven off into the forests and hidden. In innumerable cases the villagers then set fire to their own homes, applying the scorched earth policy in all its heartrending ruthlessness, and also take to the forests. In other cases a certain proportion of the people remain in the villages to act as bases for the guerilla detachments. Theirs is a dangerous role, for it exposes them to all the horror of Nazi occupation with its looting, torture and rape.

Meanwhile a number of men and women go into hiding and form the nucleus of a guerilla detachment. Here, in the words of a guerilla commander in the Polessya region, is how a unit was formed.

"When the Nazi troops broke into our district many of our people left for the forests. Those who remained in the district centres established contact with the guerillas and the population of the surrounding countryside. Soon we were joined by hundreds of collective-farmers who vowed to fight the Nazis to the death.

"The Germans began looting, committing outrages and murdering. This aroused a still greater hatred in our people. In literally a few days our numbers in the forest had increased to such an extent that instead of one we had organized two guerilla detachments. Forests and swamps protected us from the enemy."

Another guerilla commander in the Leningrad region noted in his diary :

"Today the Germans occupied our district centre. It was bitter to see our burning houses, the club, the hospital. At midnight our guerilla detachment meets."

A special correspondent from the eastern front, T. Lilin, describes how three unknown collective-farmers carrying small knapsacks and shotguns appeared one day in a village on the left bank of the Dnieper, which was then still in Soviet hands.

"They stepped into the village Soviet (council) and, speaking in a low voice, asked the chairman of the Soviet how they could get to Ryzhikov.

"Although the chairman knew full well what they were referring to he nevertheless asked cautiously: 'What Ryzhikov?'

"'What Ryzhikov?' repeated the collective-farmers in a surprised tone. 'Don't you know him—Ryzhikov? An old guerilla fighter. He should be somewhere around here in the marshes. We want to get in touch with him since we decided to join the guerillas.'

"This was in August, when the Germans had reached the right bank of the Dnieper. Scores of people from different villages already captured by the Nazis strove to establish contact with the guerilla detachment under the command of Fedor Ryzhikov.

"Nobody knew exactly whether there was such a detachment, but everybody was looking for it and were positive there must be one. Ryzhikov, a Bolshevik since 1919, was precisely the person whom old collective-farmers remembered in times of stress. They were convinced that he would again take up arms—and they were right."

WHO ARE THE LEADERS ?

In most cases the leadership of the guerillas is taken by the secretary of the local Bolshevik Party committee, the president of the rural executive committee, the president or a member of the board of a collective-farm, the director of a machine-tractor station, or possibly an agricultural expert.

These are the same men who in peace-time were elected by popular vote to their responsible positions precisely because they had given proof of their courage, ability and steadfastness.

The people who elected them had confidence in them and turned to them quite naturally for leadership in a crisis.

But in some cases, and there were many, the leaders were ordinary people, farmers and workers, who led unobtrusive lives in peace-time but who, in an emergency, suddenly displayed new qualities of leadership

THE RANK AND FILE

Those who compose these detachments are drawn from every sphere of Soviet life. Collective-farmers predominate, but there are also members of artisan-groups (carpenters, blacksmiths, mechanics, etc.). Employees from local industries join. Factory directors and managers, schoolteachers, horse-breeders. . . . Lilin describes some of the people he met in the same Ryzhikov's guerilla detachment

"While the group was getting ready to set out I made the acquaintance of some of the guerilla fighters. Who are they? A book-keeper from one of the local breweries, a black-haired tractor-driver, the chairman of a collective-farm, a mechanic and an agricultural expert. A young woman, a former accountant, has become a nurse. A doctor's assistant from a village on the left bank of the Dnieper has organized a real medical base in the marshes.

"They are all children of the Ukrainian people who have gathered together to wreak vengeance on the bandits who have invaded their native soil. Take Ivan Krapivets, for instance, a former doctor's assistant. On reaching the marshes he immediately felt at home—as he had spent a number of years here."

In another part of the Ukraine the club director of the "Politotdyel" collective-farm received many applications from collective-farmers anxious to join the guerillas. It was decided to form a detachment. After checking the military experience and civil occupation of the applicants a detachment of 94 volunteers, comprising the best candidates, was formed.

Each man was given a responsible job. A docker, decorated for bravery in the Soviet-Finnish war, was put in charge of the reconnoitring party. An assistant-doctor, who had previously worked in a Ukrainian medical clinic, took over the first-aid station. A collective-farmer with military experience was elected as leader.

In the northern region of Soviet Karelia, bordering on Finland,

the leader of a guerilla detachment is an old Karelian lumberjack, a veteran of many battles. Twenty-three years ago he headed a ski patrol which fought against the Finnish White Guards, then as now under the leadership of General Mannerheim.

This time the old fighter is helped by his 17-year-old son. Among his men are stevedores, collective-farmers, a lawyer, a factory manager—Russians, Finns and Karelians.

In the same region a guerilla unit consists of the following ordinary men and women: fishermen, lumberjacks, a woman schoolteacher, quarry workers, the chairman of a rural Soviet, a technician, a miner, a bank employee, a mechanic and a tailor.

INTELLECTUALS TAKE A HAND

While the majority of guerilla fighters are naturally drawn from workers, peasants and artisans, an outstanding feature is the complete solidarity of men and women from the liberal professions (doctors, lawyers, schoolteachers, etc.) who in Russia are generically called "intellectuals".

In the Uman district of the Ukraine, for example, the guerilla detachment named "Soviet Ukraine" includes many schoolteachers from towns and villages. The chief doctor of a hospital works in a unit commanded by a former militiaman (approximately equivalent to a policeman). When the guerillas take a rest this doctor occupies his time teaching first-aid to the men. His two daughters, Galina and Nina, are also in the detachment as nurses.

Another unit includes in its ranks a former forestry expert who guides them along concealed paths unknown to the Nazi patrols.

Women and children also play an important part, either as active fighters and scouts or as secret helpers in the villages. A fuller account of their work is given in a separate chapter.

RED ARMY MEN JOIN

In a number of cases the nucleus of a guerilla detachment is formed by regular Red Army men who at some time or other were cut off from their units and decided to stay in the rear to harass German garrisons and communications wherever they could.

The story is told of one of these units which in the early stages of the war was on its way back to the Soviet lines from the German rear. They came across a leaflet in German containing Stalin's speech appealing to the population in occupied districts

to continue the war by every possible means in the Nazi rear.

The commander of the detachment managed to translate the leaflet into Russian, and when he had read it he said to his men: "We won't try to get back to our troops. Here is Stalin's command to make things in the rear impossible for the enemy."

The detachment then remained in the rear and engaged in guerilla warfare. It made contact with the local guerillas, amalgamated with their detachment and passed on to them all its military experience and knowledge. There were many such cases. Among the first-hand accounts given later is the story of a wounded Red Army man who was nursed back to health by peasants and who then formed them into a fighting detachment.*

THEY TAKE AN OATH

In most guerilla detachments a new recruit is required to take an oath of loyalty. In his diary, a guerilla commander named Vassili G. notes on September 3: "I have been appointed commander of the guerilla detachment. I took the guerillas' oath not to spare my life in the merciless struggle against the Nazi bandits."

An example of this oath is that taken by guerilla fighters in Byelo-Russia, the district of the Soviet Union nearest to Poland.

"I, a citizen of the great Soviet Union, true son of the heroic Byelo-Russian people, promise not to lay down arms until the last Fascist on Byelo-Russian soil is destroyed. I promise unreservedly to obey all orders of my commanders and to observe strict military discipline.

"The destruction of our towns and villages, the death of our children, torture, violence and insult to my people I promise to avenge always, mercilessly and without pity. Blood shall be avenged by blood and death by death.

"I promise to help the Red Army in every way to destroy the enemy, sparing no efforts nor life itself. I declare that I would sooner die in battle with the enemy than to surrender myself and my family and my people to be slaves of a bloodthirsty Fascism.

* A graphic account of a Red Army unit, cut off from its main forces, which fought its way back to the Soviet lines is given in A. Polyakov's *With a Soviet Unit Through the Nazi Lines*. Hutchinson. (*Soviet War News Books No. 1.*)

commanded by a former agricultural expert, are typical. In the course of a few days they rounded up small groups of Germans in a village. With the arms they captured they then attacked a German transport column, killing 48 soldiers and destroying 22 transport vehicles, nine motor-cycles and one motor-car carrying four Staff officers.

This action brought them 30 German rifles, eight automatic rifles, two sub-machine-guns, one mine-thrower with eight mines, and 8,000 rounds of rifle and machine-gun ammunition.

Another guerilla unit, commanded by a collective-farmer named Chernyi, consists of several hundred men. They are all armed with automatic rifles and hand-grenades. The unit is divided into three detachments and has its own artillery batteries and about 30 machine-guns. All their weapons were captured in battles against the Germans.

The majority of guerilla detachments now have adequate quantities of modern arms. Besides machine-guns, many of them now have motor-cycles, armoured cars and even whippet tanks manned by former collective-farm tractor-drivers. In one German-occupied district of Byelo-Russia a guerilla detachment under the command of Zakhar Maximovich broke into a village where the Germans had pitched camp for the night, killed all the soldiers and officers, captured two armoured cars, one whippet tank gun, more than a dozen motor-cycles, several machine-guns and a large number of rifles.

In districts near the front the close co-operation between guerillas and regular Red Army units makes the supply of arms and ammunition comparatively easy. As a general rule, however, irregular units are encouraged to render themselves entirely independent and to become self-supporting—or rather to support themselves at the expense of the enemy. Guerillas have often remarked that they much prefer to possess a German rifle or machine-gun "because it's so much easier to get ammunition".

There are instances, however, where isolated guerilla units which have found themselves in a tight corner have appealed to near-by Red Army units and have received arms delivered to them by aeroplane.

The present Soviet scheme of civilian military training, which includes all male citizens between the ages of 18 and 50, means that henceforth every able-bodied man in the Soviet Union will know how to handle a rifle, machine-gun and hand-grenades. This will be of inestimable help to the development of guerilla warfare in any new districts which the Germans may occupy.

Account must also be taken of the many thousands of Soviet citizens, men and women alike, who before the war received

some training in the use of weapons. There were thousands of rifle clubs throughout the country which trained their members to become sharpshooters. Numerous collective-farms and factories had their own rifle teams which competed with each other in nation-wide shooting competitions.

Given the weapons, the Soviet people know how to use them. It is particularly ironic that the bulk of the weapons used by the guerillas against the Germans come from the Germans themselves.

CHAPTER III

PLAN OF OPERATIONS

If it is true, as Napoleon is said to have remarked, that an army marches on its stomach (and the hungry ragged Grande Armée had occasion to prove it in its retreat from Russia), then it is equally true that the modern panzer army fights on its petrol supplies.

Food, ammunition and petrol—these are the main ingredients without which neither men nor machines can long exist. The task of armed forces is mainly to destroy the men and the machines. The task of irregular forces is obviously to cut off the blood supply. If in the process some men and machines can be destroyed too this is all to the good.

The general plan of guerilla strategy is therefore directed against the enemy's supply lines. Lorries carrying food, petrol and ammunition must be prevented from reaching the front. Stores and supply dumps must be destroyed.

Fighting as they are on a front more than a thousand miles long, the enemy must rely on an efficient system of communication between their separate bases and headquarters. Here then is the next task for irregulars—cut the nerves which co-ordinate the huge military monster.

The speed of modern aeroplanes and their long range, unknown in the last war, make it possible for aircraft to support the fighting at the front while operating from bases at some distance in the rear, out of reach of all but attacking aircraft. The modern art of camouflage also helps in concealing air bases.

It is difficult, however, to conceal anything from the sharp eyes of a peasant who knows every foot of the territory in which he has spent his whole life. Aerodromes then become a particularly attractive target for guerilla operations.

The old principle, which applied in the last world war, that Staff headquarters established at some distance from the firing zone were comparatively safe, no longer applies in the Soviet Union. In other countries, where the invading Germans found a bewildered and apathetic population, they could count on safety behind their lines. In Russia every foot of the land, whether occupied or unoccupied, is a zone of hostility.

What is more natural than that guerillas should make it their duty to attack staff headquarters? Some units have even specialized in this branch of warfare.

Lastly there is the question of morale. In the last great war the soldier who was on his way to the front had a comparatively safe journey. After a period in the front trenches he was generally withdrawn to the rear for a quiet rest.

In the Soviet-German war this well-designed routine has been completely upset. As he sits in his transport lorry on the way to the front the German infantryman never knows whether the next turn in the road will bring a hail of machine-gun bullets. And when he is withdrawn to the "rear" for a rest he can never be sure that he will not be killed in his sleep.

When we come to examine the testimony of German prisoners and documents it will be shown that this constant state of fear and apprehension is having a disastrous effect on the nerves and consequently the morale of the German rank-and-file.

Such is the general plan of guerilla strategy. What tactics are used to carry out this plan? It must be emphasized that the tactics demonstrated in the following chapters are the fruit of the guerillas' own initiative and ingenuity. It is the ordinary man who decides what to do and when and how to do it.

CHAPTER IV

SUPPLIES AND HOW TO DESTROY THEM

A TRAIN of horse-drawn wagons moved along a Russian road, carrying much-needed supplies to the German Army. For two days, unknown to the guards, guerilla scouts tracked the convoy and reported its probable route to the local detachment.

Then came a test of cunning. The guerillas fired on the train several times in an attempt to entice its guards into the forest. But the Nazis refused to be drawn.

Finally the wagons were obliged to take cover in a forest to escape being discovered by Soviet scout planes. This was the guerillas' opportunity. They set fire to the trees in front of the convoy and then opened up with machine-gun fire from the rear and sides.

The Germans were stricken with panic. The fear-crazed horses, smelling smoke, smashed the carts and trod on the men. The Nazi soldiers fled, abandoning 42 lorries and 32 carts loaded with provisions, engineering equipment and three wireless sets. Thirty-seven soldiers were hunted down and killed.

AMBUSH BY A BRIDGE

Another detachment was informed by its scouts that a German supply column was heading for a certain bridge across a river. The bridge was blown up and the guerillas then took cover in bushes and the near-by woods.

The Germans reached the bridge at night. When they found they could not cross they were obliged to halt while engineers prepared to build a pontoon bridge. At this point the hidden guerillas suddenly opened up with machine-gun fire, the dense mass of machines and men providing an easy target. Several lorries loaded with ammunition blew up, adding to the carnage. The entire convoy was destroyed. After capturing a great deal of material, the guerillas withdrew into the forest.

A similar action was carried out by a mounted guerilla detachment. In this case also they destroyed a bridge in front of a supply column, and the lorries again became jammed in front of the charred remains of the crossing-place. Lorry-drivers climbed out to find out the cause of the halt. The escort came up to investigate. Then the guerillas let loose with machine-guns.

The Nazis were thrown into confusion. Some of them tried to make a stand, but the majority abandoned the position and fled. Mounted guerillas then sprang out from a copse and rode down the fleeing men. In this action 24 soldiers and one officer were killed.

On September 11, near the village of Dolinka in the Smolensk region, a guerilla detachment led by a former station-master prepared an ambush for a German supply column.

They heaped large stones on the road along which the column was to pass and then hid in the bushes. The line of lorries was forced to halt. German soldiers got down from their transports and began clearing away the stones. The guerillas then fired on them with rifles and machine-guns. Several tank-lorries carrying

petrol caught fire and exploded. Altogether 12 vehicles were destroyed and 20 Germans killed.

RAILWAYMEN AND FISHERMEN

Professional railwaymen are specializing in wrecking enemy supply and ammunition trains. One of these detachments, operating under the leadership of a former despatcher, attacked a train which had been forced to halt for water. They killed the guards, captured a quantity of ammunition and several motor vehicles and set fire to the train.

Not content with this, they uncoupled the engine, shunted it on to a branch line and sent it at full speed crashing into a goods train standing in a siding.

Another type of specialized guerillas are those who operate on water. A group of Dniester River fishermen, led by a former Civil War fighter, have inflicted heavy damage on the Nazis.

In four motor-boats they raid German river crossings, bridges and riverbank patrols. They move at night, either by oar or under sail, and hide in the numerous bays and channels densely overgrown with tall reeds.

On August 12 the Nazis loaded four heavy guns on rafts to cross the Dniester River, which at this point is very broad. When the rafts were in mid-stream the guerilla boats suddenly appeared from hiding and attacked at high speed. After machine-gunning the Germans on the rafts the guerillas sank the guns, first taking the precaution to remove the breeches.

At another point they overtook some German provision barges. After killing the guards they sank four of the heavily laden barges. In a three weeks' operations they thwarted seven enemy attempts to cross the river. In that time they killed about 50 Nazis and sank 20 guns, as well as other supplies.

A RUSSIAN ROBIN HOOD

An action reminiscent of the Robin Hood tradition was carried out by guerillas in the town of Ukladva. The German commandant there had requisitioned all property, cattle and grain reserves from the peasants. When this booty was driven off to the railway station guerillas attacked and overpowered the convoy guards, seized the goods and returned them to the peasants.

Stepan Petrovich, leader of a guerilla detachment operating in Byelo-Russia, tells how he and his men laid a large mine in a road along which Nazi supply columns passed. When a line

of lorries appeared the leading one exploded the mine and flew into the air. The ones behind crashed into it before they had time to swerve.

At another place they stretched a telegraph wire across a forest road at a height of approximately four feet from the ground and fastened it to trees on either side. This was done during the night.

In the dim light just before dawn three German supply lorries came through the forest. The first, running at full speed, hit the wire. The driver and his guards were killed. The second lorry crashed into the first, and two hand-grenades were thrown at the third.

PIGS AND POULTRY

Hundreds of such ingenious tricks are being used against the enemy's transport lines. On a road near the village of Bolshye Poroskovichi, a guerilla unit prepared an ambush in a field near the village.

When German motor-cyclists appeared the guerillas, from their hiding-places, released pigs and hens in their path. The Germans, who are frequently short of food, were delighted at this sudden manna from heaven. They dismounted and began trying to catch the animals. The guerillas then fell on them and destroyed 30 motor-cyclists.

On another occasion a German transport column was proceeding towards the front. This was in summer and as the weather was very hot the soldiers were exhausted. They drew up beside a lake and, after placing sentries on guard, went in for a swim.

All this had been watched by concealed guerillas. They attacked suddenly, overpowered the sentries and killed the swimming men. Nine lorries were set on fire—after the guerillas had helped themselves to the contents.

In one area of the front Soviet troops had surrounded a German tank column. The Nazi tanks and transport vehicles were stranded without fuel. Several of their planes then appeared and dropped five drums of fuel attached to parachutes.

However, the airmen miscalculated a little and the drums dropped in a forest clearing some distance away. A guerilla detachment raced to the spot ahead of the Germans and captured the fuel which was then hidden in a dense forest. The immobilized tanks and vehicles were subsequently pulverized by Soviet bombers.

SOVIET EXAMPLE FOLLOWED

After the first days of the Soviet-German war, when the news of Soviet guerilla activities spread over the world, men and women in many other German-occupied countries took heart and followed the Russian example.

One of the weakest links in the Nazi war machine on the Eastern Front is the length of their supply lines which stretch across half of occupied Europe.

In Poland the Nazis have become gravely alarmed by the activity of Polish guerillas. "Mysterious" train accidents occur on the German supply lines. Recently a goods train near Warsaw crashed at full speed into the rear of a troop train. Over 200 men were killed and wounded, a large quantity of goods was destroyed, and traffic on the line was suspended. The Gestapo arrested many railwaymen.

This did not prevent the guerillas from derailing another troop train within ten miles of Dembice. About 200 German officers and men were killed and the guerillas captured 180 horses, much ammunition and large quantities of food.

In Yugoslavia, guerillas have torn down miles of telegraph wires and smashed the points and semaphores at dozens of railway stations. An explosives factory seized by the Germans in Kamnik was blown up.

Similar attacks on German supply lines have been reported from Norway, Rumania, Greece, Finland and the Baltic countries. A fuller account of the work of these European guerillas is given in a separate chapter

A BALANCE SHEET

Some idea of the extent to which German supplies and equipment are threatened by Soviet guerillas can be gained from the following balance-sheet of guerillas in one region of the enemy rear alone—that of Minsk in Byelo-Russia. Here is the total for two and a half months of operation :

German soldiers and officers killed	2,500
Headquarters destroyed	3
Bridges demolished	112
Destroyed :—	
Tanks	39
Armoured cars	12
Aeroplanes	22

Lorries	400
Motor-cars	45
Motor-cycles	200
Bicycles	450
Horse-wagons and horses	200
Ammunition dumps blown up	8
Motorized ammunition and supply columns destroyed	15
Blown up or burned :—	
Oil tanks	75
Army wagons with food, equipment and army property	47

From the Leningrad region, guerillas operating in German-occupied territory reported that in four days, November 1 to 5, they destroyed five German planes, 11 tanks, six armoured cars, 163 motor lorries carrying infantry and war supplies, about 15 petrol storage tanks, 16 motor-cars, more than 100 motor-cycles, 12 transport lorries and two munition dumps.

They interfered with communications to the extent of 43 bridges blown up, including seven railway bridges, telegraph and telephone lines cut in 59 places and one ammunition train derailed. During these operations they destroyed 28 German officers and 1,600 men.

One guerilla detachment alone, in the same region, during one week in November, destroyed the following : 26 planes, seven tanks, two whippet tanks, seven petrol dumps, two armoured cars, 290 lorries, 28 motor-cars, 33 motor-cycles, five supply dumps and two supply bases. Altogether they wrecked 36 bridges and killed 123 German officers and 1,514 soldiers.

CHAPTER V

HOW TO RAID AERODROMES

ONE of the favourite weapons of guerillas is the "fire-bottle". This is an ordinary bottle filled with highly inflammable liquid, sometimes a mixture of petrol and creosote, which is thrown like a hand-grenade. It is extremely effective against tanks, but guerillas also use it extensively against aeroplanes on the ground

A guerilla detachment learned that a German aerodrome had been built near a certain village. During the night sixteen guerillas made their way to the site. They split up into four groups, each with special duties as follows :—

- (1) Destroy the planes on the ground.
- (2) Blow up the petrol tanks.
- (3) Set fire to the neighbouring village containing the headquarters of the German air unit.
- (4) Lay an ambush for any Nazis who attempted pursuit.

At three o'clock in the morning the first detachment noiselessly overpowered the German guards. Within ten minutes fire-bottles and hand-grenades had destroyed three twin-engined bombers, blown up the fuel storage tanks and set fire to the village. In a sharp encounter 10 members of the aerodrome staff were killed.

In another district guerilla scouts spent several days spying on a German aerodrome to ascertain the strength of the guards and the daily routine of the personnel.

One evening, under cover of darkness, they approached the aerodrome in small groups. Scouts crept up to the guards and silently killed them. One soldier managed to give the alarm and the rest of the aerodrome staff attempted to resist. They were overcome and 22 of them were killed.

The visitors then poured petrol over 12 planes and set fire to them. They also captured two lorry-loads of machine-guns, rifles, ammunition and several drums of fuel, which they required for refilling their store of fire-bottles.

Another detachment named "Krasny Sokol" learned that the Germans had set up an air base in a forest clearing 10 miles from a town. Guerilla scouts watched the aerodrome for several days and then planned their attack at a moment when many planes were grounded to await fuel.

They first set fire to the forest surrounding the aerodrome. The fire spread rapidly. When a number of the aerodrome guards had gone to fight the flames the guerillas attacked and destroyed 15 planes.

The same tactic of diversion was employed in another attack on an airfield. Guerillas crept up to a wooden outhouse and set it on fire. While the Nazis were engaged in putting out the fire, fire-bottles and hand-grenades accounted for a number of planes on the ground.

An alternative method was successfully used by another guerilla unit. The attackers divided themselves into two groups. The first posted its machine-guns to cover the quarters of the personnel. After the guards were overpowered a continuous fire was opened on the flying and technical staff, holding

them immobilized. In the meantime the second group showered four planes with fire-bottles and burned them to the ground.

What might be termed adding insult to injury is the action of guerillas when they attacked a German aerodrome and captured six Heinkel planes. Five of the machines were burned down, but the sixth was taken in hand by one of the guerillas, a tractor-driver named Solin, who had formerly been an instructor in a collective-farm flying club. He flew the machine across the lines and delivered it to the Red Army.

In that same action the attackers blew up the aerodrome's underground fuel tanks, put the landing-ground out of commission and set all the buildings on fire. Twenty-five Luftwaffe technicians, wireless-operators and guards were killed in this raid. The guerillas were rewarded with a small wireless station, five motor-cars and lorries, seven motor-cycles and a quantity of weapons.

CHAPTER VI

NO SAFETY FOR GENERALS

SOME guerilla units specialize in raiding and capturing German staff headquarters. Apart from their importance in disorganizing the military command, these operations invariably bring a bag of important staff documents which are of great use to the Soviet Command.

A group of guerillas in the Leningrad region one day discovered some carefully camouflaged telephone wires in a forest. They followed the wires and were led to the headquarters of a German unit which had taken up residence in a forester's hut three miles from the road.

After ascertaining the strength of the guards and carefully noting the movement of staff cars and despatch-riders, the guerillas attacked during the night. Seven officers and 18 soldiers were killed. Two lorries, two staff cars and a wireless station were destroyed. The reward for this was a machine-gun, six automatic rifles, some revolvers and a good deal of ammunition.

Another detachment led by Tikhon Bumashkov and Fyodor Pavlovsky (who have since been awarded the title of "Hero

of the Soviet Union") went one better by attacking the headquarters of a German division. The entire staff was killed. Thirty-five powerful motor-cars, many motor-cycles and bicycles were captured.

A Nazi general lost his life when guerillas attacked another divisional headquarters in Byelo-Russia. The other staff officers were also killed, and the guerillas made off with a large quantity of important documents which were duly handed over to the Red Army.

While out scouting, some guerillas discovered a strongly guarded German headquarters. As they were not strong enough to attack they appealed to a near-by Red Army unit for reinforcement. This joint attack was entirely successful and the headquarters was destroyed. Another German general and several officers paid with their lives for the illusion that the rear was a safe area.

In other instances, when a guerilla unit discovers a German headquarters which it is beyond their power to destroy, they pass on the information to the nearest Red Army unit. A strong patrol of regular troops or a bomber then finishes the job.

The important role played by the people who remain behind in the villages is nowhere better shown than in this hunt for enemy headquarters. If a German unit establishes its headquarters in a village the news is sure to be conveyed to the local guerillas. During the night a few shadowy figures will creep up and throw hand-grenades through the windows.

It is small wonder that the German Command is so enraged against the guerillas. That they should destroy supplies, cut communications and kill unwary soldiers is bad enough. But that they should have the audacity to attack high-ranking staff officers is an unforgivable crime.

CHAPTER VII

THEY ENGAGE IN BATTLE

It must not be thought that guerillas confine their activities to destroying supplies, communications, aerodromes and staff headquarters. In some districts their forces have become so strong, well-organized and well-armed that they are able to engage German troops in actual battle.

Often the guerillas deliberately draw an enemy unit into the forests and swamps, where they themselves know every path and bush. Then they swoop down in full force. In a recent battle of this kind a guerilla detachment engaged the Germans for three hours, killing large numbers of them.

Occupied towns are no obstacle. At Surazh, on the River Dvina in Byelo-Russia, the Nazis had stationed about 300 soldiers as an occupation garrison.

Guerillas penetrated into the town during the night, surrounded the houses in which the Nazis were billeted and attacked them with hand-grenades.

The Germans made a rush for the doors and windows, to be met by a withering fire from automatic rifles and machine-guns (of German manufacture). Before they left the town, after a pitched battle lasting several hours, the guerillas wrecked the garrison's headquarters and carried off 10 lorries, 20 motor-cycles, 12 machine-guns, some automatic rifles and a large amount of ammunition.

German billets were also raided near the village of Troitskoye in the Smolensk region. Scouts had first ascertained that the Germans usually slept in a certain large barn.

The guerillas, under the command of a schoolteacher, entered the village boldly, shot the guards and hurled hand-grenades into the barn. The schoolteacher himself threw several fire-bottles on the roof. Again, when the Germans rushed to get out they were met by machine-gun fire and all were killed.

Another town was attacked by a guerilla detachment led by Maxim Jukovsky. The German garrison retreated to a neighbouring village and entrenched itself in hastily erected defence positions. The guerillas went after them and blasted them out of the village with hand-grenades.

In co-operation with regular Soviet troops, a guerilla detachment led by a former shop manager routed an entire German regiment.

The action began by the capture of a Nazi despatch-rider. The guerillas employed their favourite trick of stretching a wire across the road, hiding in the bushes on either side, and then suddenly raising the wire about three feet off the ground when the motor-cyclist reaches it at full speed. The taut wire sends the rider hurtling into the ditch, generally killing him.

On this occasion the documents found on the despatch-rider showed that the 103rd German Infantry Regiment was heading for a certain hill to attack the Red Army in the flank.

Having reached the hill by a short route across gulches and through forests, the guerillas laid an ambush. When the German

troops came up unsuspectingly they were met by a murderous cross-fire. The guerillas kept them engaged until a Soviet unit arrived and completely routed the enemy. Over 450 Nazis were killed and wounded. The guerillas were rewarded with 21 machine-guns and scores of rifles.

On September 3 some guerillas, led by a former post-office worker, played a neat trick on the Germans. The Nazis were in possession of the village of Dunayevo. Guerilla scouts reported that a company of German infantry was moving from the neighbouring village of Podbereza towards Dunayevo.

The guerillas then approached Dunayevo from the road leading to Podbereza and opened fire on the German garrison. Three German rifle platoons were sent against the attackers.

Meanwhile the German company approached from Podbereza. The guerillas then ceased fire and hid themselves. The Nazis from Dunayevo, thinking that the guerillas were still in front of them, continued to fire—in the direction of the approaching company. The latter, thinking they were attacked by guerillas, fired back. More than 30 men were killed before both sides discovered their mistake.

CHAPTER VIII

HOW TO DEAL WITH TANKS

WHEN, in the first days of the war, three German tanks broke into the town of Pinsk they forgot to take into account that they might run short of fuel. In their previous campaigns they had been accustomed to fill up their tanks at the nearest petrol-filling pump. But this was before the "scorched earth" policy.

When the tanks came to rest in a square they were immediately surrounded by guerillas, who crept up to them and put their machine-gun barrels out of action with hammer-blows. Guerillas learned very early that the angle of fire of a tank machine-gun makes it impossible to hit a man crawling on the ground near by.

Although their guns were now out of order the Germans still remained protected by their tank armour. Thereupon blacksmiths came up and hammered away at the tanks until their occupants were no longer able to stand the shattering noise and were forced to surrender.

Camouflaged traps play a big part in the war of men versus panzers. Near a small town in central Russia a guerilla group learned the route by which tanks were expected to pass on their way to a concentration point. The route led through a forest, and the Germans were moving at night to escape the attentions of Red Air Force bombers.

Tank pits were hastily dug and an ambush was laid. The leading enemy tank fell straight into the trap. The second tank crashed into the first. The following tanks turned off the road, but three of them also fell into deep pits. When the rest of the tanks turned back they were showered with hand-grenades.

On one occasion guerilla scouts came across twenty large Nazi tanks which had halted in a hollow. They noticed that the tank crews were distributing fuel from two of the tanks among the remaining eighteen. Realizing that the machines had halted for lack of fuel, the guerillas sent word to a nearby Red Army unit.

An ambush was then laid along the road which the tanks had followed. Sure enough, in about six hours two German fuel lorries appeared. The guerillas felled trees across the road and stopped the lorries, both of which were blown up. The next morning Soviet dive-bombers flew over and smashed the stranded enemy tanks at their leisure.

Armoured cars are dealt with in the same way. When several of these were reported to be approaching a bridge guerillas dug a pit in the road and camouflaged it. Not far from the pit they hid themselves with a machine-gun, grenades and fire-bottles.

The German cars drove up to the bridge. The first one fell into the pit. The Nazis got down and began hauling the machine out again. The hidden guerillas then opened fire and hurled fire-bottles. Meanwhile a few of the guerillas had quickly laid a mine in the road along which the cars had come. When the Germans saw they were ambushed they crowded into the two remaining armoured cars and drove back. One of the cars then hit the hidden mine and blew up. The last machine was destroyed by hand-grenades.

German tanks are often in a dilemma, because if they move in the open they are spotted by Soviet planes and if they try to conceal themselves in forests they are in danger of attack by guerillas. More than one case is reported of a German tank column, which had camouflaged itself in a wood, suddenly finding itself ringed with flames. Guerillas had set fire to the surrounding trees and bushes.

It has been discovered by experience that even heavy tanks

can be disabled by a bundle of four hand-grenades tied together and thrown from the side at the caterpillar tracks. Several fire-bottles, thrown preferably against the front end where the engine usually is, quickly envelop the machine in flames. The inflammable liquid in the fire-bottles clings to the sides of the tank and burns fiercely for some time. The crew then has the alternative of being roasted or jumping out and being shot down.

When travelling along routes assumed to be safe, tank crews frequently open the hatch in the turret to get some fresh air. Guerillas take advantage of this by hiding in trees along the route and tossing fire-bottles or hand-grenades into the open hatch.

The principal factor in this battle of the ordinary man against the panzer is that of morale. The sight of a heavy tank approaching at full speed can be unnerving even to the strongest man. By teaching every guerilla the vulnerable points in a tank these armoured monsters no longer inspire fear. As will be shown later, even children have been known to attack a tank with hand-grenades and fire-bottles and destroy it.

Armour plating is no protection against cunning and fearlessness. In the early days of the war the Germans were in the habit of sending light tanks and armoured cars against the guerillas, believing in the invincibility of chrome-steel against flesh and blood. They have learned their error, at the cost of scores of charred and mangled machines.

CHAPTER IX

WOMEN AND CHILDREN HELP

WHEN the Germans invaded the Soviet Union they faced more than an opposing army—they came to grips with a whole people. The old adage that "men must work and women must weep" was never part of Russian tradition. In the modern Russia, where women are considered the equals of men in all things, it is only natural that they should demand their share in the struggle against the invaders.

As for children, even the severest critics of the Soviet régime have always been obliged to admit that in matters of child welfare the U.S.S.R. is the most progressive country in the

world. It is no wonder then that Soviet children are spontaneously joining in the fight to preserve a way of life which has given them so much.

The part played by women in the guerilla movement is three-fold :

- (1) They fight in the ranks of the guerilla units.
- (2) They act as scouts, messengers and "intelligence".
- (3) They supply food and tend the wounded.

A typical instance is that of Maria S., twenty years old, whose native village near Poltava was used as a staff headquarters by the Germans.

The local guerilla commander appointed an extermination-squad to destroy the headquarters. Maria was given the job of leading them. She not only guided them to the village by secret paths but herself crept up to the staff centre and threw a hand-grenade through the window. Four Nazi officers perished by her hand. The rest were destroyed by the guerillas.

A Red Army reconnaissance detachment, which was operating in the enemy's rear, recently met a guerilla unit composed entirely of women, with the exception of the commander, a 60-year-old collective-farm saddler.

The women had remained in the rear of the Nazis to help the Red Army in every way they could. They first turned their attention to German minefields, removing all distinctive marks from them. In this way many German cars and motor-cyclists perished on their own mines.

These women guerillas informed the Red Army scouts of the disposition of the enemy's mined area. Through hidden forest paths they led the Red Army men to a main junction of German troop concentrations in that sector of the front, enabling the Red Army subsequently to launch a successful attack.

Women are sometimes the leaders of men in this war. There is one guerilla detachment which is led by Maria D., a member of the board of the collective-farm "Krasnyi Pahar".

This unit has filled many wells with earth, destroyed important bridges and cut telephone wires. On one occasion they captured four German despatch-riders. Learning from them that a Nazi motor column carrying spare parts for tanks was due to pass during the night, they laid an ambush.

Early in the morning the German column was attacked on a narrow forest road. Eight vehicles were destroyed. The tank spares were smashed and thrown into a swamp.

In Byelo-Russia a young girl named Anna Shubyonik, secretary of the local Komsomol organization (Young Communist League), has been fighting in a guerilla detachment since

the early days of the war. It is recorded that during one engagement she crept up to an enemy petrol depot under heavy fire and, although wounded, threw her hand-grenades and blew up the fuel.

Another women's guerilla unit is operating in German-occupied villages near Leningrad. They recently blew up a bridge and destroyed a large enemy supply store. On the way back from this job they laid an ambush for two tanks and four armoured cars and destroyed them all with hand-grenades.

Among those who have been decorated by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet for outstanding merit in guerilla warfare is a woman member of the Young Communist League, Abramova, who received the Order of the Red Banner for her work as a nurse among guerillas.

During one engagement she carried 32 wounded guerilla fighters off the field, despite the heavy artillery, mine-thrower and machine-gun fire which was raging at the time. At a critical point in the battle she took the place of a wounded machine-gunner.

The story is told of an old peasant woman whose grand-daughter had joined a guerilla detachment. Information was needed of the German tank movements in that particular sector. The old woman, who remained behind in the village, volunteered to help. There was one difficulty. Being an old woman who was brought up in the Tsarist days, she had remained illiterate and could not count in numbers.

She hit on the idea of using peas and beans for her purpose—peas for the small tanks, beans for the large. As the German tank columns swept through the village they saw only an old woman shelling peas—but that evening the guerilla detachment was fully informed of the German forces.

This information was passed on to a Red Army unit, which was thus able to estimate correctly the forces required to defeat the enemy's tank force. When the Red Army entered the village the old woman, named Anisya, and her grand-daughter Ulka were congratulated by the commander.

In the first-hand accounts given in a later chapter will be found the engaging figure of "Auntie Glasha", who is the second-in-command of a guerilla detachment.

A 14-YEAR-OLD BOY'S REVENGE

On a collective-farm near Zhlobin the Nazis tortured and killed the family of the collective-farm chairman, Tishkevich. The chairman, his mother, wife and two little daughters were

bayoneted. Only the 14-year-old son, Sasha, who was away at the time, escaped the butchery.

When he returned home and saw the mutilated bodies of his family he went to the neighbouring town of Zhlobin to help in its defence. After fierce fighting the Germans captured the town.

Sasha watched the enemy tanks, armoured cars and infantry vehicles pour through the streets. He waited until a large staff car containing several officers came abreast and then ran forward and hurled a hand-grenade at it. The car and all its occupants were destroyed, the blast also killing the young boy. The infuriated Nazis tore his dead body to pieces.

In one guerilla detachment a group of children, under the leadership of two 12-year-old boys, recently carried a charge of dynamite to a bridge and placed it in position, taking advantage of the dark night and the dozing sentry. They then lit the fuse and made off into the woods. The bridge was blown to atoms.

In another detachment a 10-year-old member of the Pioneers (a Soviet children's organization) took part in the rout of a German tank unit. At that time the guerillas were concealed in a wood and the German tanks were attempting to blast them out of it with fire from all sides.

The guerillas fought back. When they set two tanks on fire the rest deemed it wiser to retreat. The young boy saw his opportunity and slipped away by a short-cut. As the retreating tanks passed by he hurled several fire-bottles at one of them and set it on fire.

Children are particularly helpful as scouts. A group of boys and girls, led by a young boy named Vladimir Mironov, have on many occasions helped regular army units to smash enemy concentrations.

On one occasion 13-year-old Eugene Zelinsky and his friend Paul Tropko discovered the location of German troops and provided the commander of a Soviet armoured train with the necessary information. The armoured train lost no time in attacking and breaking up the enemy's concentration.

The ruthless ingenuity of these young guerillas is well illustrated in the trick played by three Pioneers in a village in the Stalino region of the Donets Basin.

They met a group of Italian soldiers in the street. The three boys then began to sing and dance. The soldiers stopped to watch. When a large group had gathered the boys suddenly darted down an alleyway and from there hurled some hand-grenades. Nine soldiers and one officer were killed. The children acted with such suddenness that they were able to escape before the Fascists recovered their wits.

The case of young Andrei Kondratyev deserves special mention. He took part in an attack made by his guerilla detachment on a town in the hands of the Germans. After killing the guard, the guerillas set fire to an ammunition dump. The fire destroyed a large quantity of military equipment and provisions. In the battle the guerillas killed 85 soldiers and officers and captured a great deal of booty.

Andrei himself crept up to the enemy's headquarters and blew up the premises, killing and wounding sixteen officers and himself dying in the explosion.

THE STORY OF MANYA

When the Germans took the village of Novo-Selye, the chairman of the village Soviet, Mikhail Pyrenko, escaped and joined the local guerilla detachment. He left behind him his wife Olga and their 13-year-old daughter Manya.

His wife was arrested and questioned about her husband. She refused any information and was hanged in the village square. The Nazis drove all the villagers to look at the gallows to teach them a lesson.

Manya was taken before the German commander. He spoke Russian fluently and treated her kindly.

"Sit down there, my dear," he said. "Don't be afraid."

"I'm not afraid," the girl answered.

"That's right. Now, you see, your mother was a bad woman. She wouldn't help us. But you'll help us, won't you?"

"Yes, I'll help you," said Manya.

"We want to know where your father has gone. We won't do him any harm. We'll just bring him back here and he can go on living with you. You understand?"

"Yes, I understand."

"Good—now you tell me everything and I'll write it down."

The officer picked up a clasp-knife, sharpened his pencil and prepared to write.

"Remember," he warned, "no lies. We'll punish you severely if you tell lies."

"I won't lie," said Manya.

"That's a good girl. Here, have a sweet. We'll give you lots of sweets when you tell us everything."

Manya approached the table, sat down in a chair by the officer, smoothed down her hair and twirled a pencil in her fingers. Then suddenly she seized the clasp-knife on the table and plunged it into the officer's chest with all her might.

The village was recaptured by the Red Army shortly after.

The body of Manya Pyrenko, executed by the Nazis, was not found, but near the hut where she was interrogated Red Army men erected a modest memorial. A small mound stands there now, with a wooden head-piece bearing the Red Army star and the inscription: "To Manya—from the Red Army."

CHAPTER X

CO-OPERATION WITH THE RED ARMY

INSTANCES have already been given to show the close collaboration which exists between the guerillas and regular troops. This collaboration has often put the German Command in extremely difficult situations. On more than one occasion, in the heat of a battle with the Red Army, guerillas have appeared in the rear of the Germans, thereby forcing them to fight on two fronts.

Captain Khrustitsky, commander of a Red Army armoured car group, detailed for reconnoitring duty in the enemy rear, records his amazement at the organization he found in a guerilla detachment he met.

Near the ruins of a village the Red Army men came across an old woman. She directed them to a youth, who then led them into the forest. On reaching the outskirts of the wood the lad whistled a signal. A collective-farmer with a German automatic rifle slung over his shoulder came out from behind some trees.

He led Khrustitsky to the heart of the forest where the guerilla headquarters was hidden. There he found a real fighting unit adequately armed with modern weapons and even in possession of a German officer taken prisoner. From the guerillas the captain received important information about the enemy's movements.

On the northern front, in the region of Leningrad, a guerilla detachment spotted the headquarters of a large air formation, situated near an aerodrome. It was guarded by strong mechanized units. The irregulars established contact with regular Soviet forces and struck a joint blow which was entirely successful.

Many a wounded Red Army man owes his life to guerillas. A group of them one day found a Red Army political-instructor named Belokrysa lying on the shore of a lake near a bridge.

They carried him to a wood and tended him for two days. When he was slightly better they carried him 50 miles on a stretcher, crossed two lakes on improvised rafts, and on the sixth day reached a Red Army unit. The wounded man was taken to hospital by air.

In the Leningrad region the Soviet Command received word that a group of guerillas operating in the enemy rear were short of provisions. It was decided to deliver food by plane.

Pilots Raspertov, Kharitonov and Tamayev took off on a dark night with parcels of food on board. They flew low, almost touching the tree-tops. When they located the guerillas' hiding-place in the swamps and received the prearranged signal they dropped their stores. A second delivery was made on the following day. A few days later special messengers arrived at the Red Army headquarters to express gratitude for the help received.

An outstanding example of co-operation between regular and irregular forces was the rout of General von Kleist's panzer divisions at Rostov in the last days of November.

While the Red Army smashed von Kleist's covering force on his left flank, and other regular units drove the Nazis in headlong flight out of the town, irregular forces continually harried the German lines of communication in the rear.

No better testimonial to the work of guerillas could be devised than that given in the official German High Command communiqué on November 29 :

"The troops of occupation in Rostov, according to orders, are evacuating the inner city in order thoroughly to carry out the necessary reprisals against the population, who have illegally taken part in the battle in the rear of the German Army."

A German official spokesman subsequently complained bitterly that the action of guerillas and other civilians in the rear was "contrary to international law"—to which Germans have, of course, always paid the most scrupulous attention!

The same official added: "This form of warfare (by irregular forces) is new to the German soldier, and the German High Command needed time to adapt their methods to this cunning kind of fighting."

The last statement alone is not strictly true, for, as the next chapter will show, the Germans have had nearly six months in which to accustom themselves to what it means to fight a whole people.

CHAPTER XI

WHAT THE GERMANS THINK ABOUT GUERILLAS

FOR some time now the Germans have been putting up the following notice on roads, in forests and in villages of German-occupied territory :

Achtung

PARTISANEN GEFAHR !

Beware—Danger of Guerillas ! The notices then give strict instructions about moving only in large groups, never driving singly along roads, etc.

Major Wolf, commander of the 2nd battalion of the 212th German Infantry Regiment, issued an Order of the day to his troops :

"Russian guerillas are operating in this area. I hereby order to give instructions to the sentries, to station them according to the appended scheme and to reinforce the outposts with machine-guns."

A few days later Major Wolf ordered additional precautions.

"Company commanders must for the second time inform the entire personnel that with the advent of darkness men may be released from the camp only armed and in groups of not less than seven to ten men."

Guerillas waylaid a German motor-cyclist on the road near Borki and had the satisfaction of finding among his documents the following order from Captain Kotler to the German Command, referring to them :

"At least 32 guerilla detachments and groups are operating in the zone of Klichev, Batsevichi, Vyzhary, Chigirinka and adjoining districts. In the latter half of August and the early part of September 186 cases of assassination of our officers, officials and soldiers were recorded. In addition, in engagements with guerilla detachments 217 soldiers and eight officers were killed and wounded.

"Cases of arson in munition and provision stores are continuing. In the past few days there were three large fires in this district. The population stubbornly conceals the whereabouts of guerilla detachments. Apparently many of these 'non-combatants' belong to guerilla detachments."

This is fully confirmed by the Order of the day issued by the commander of the 11th German Army. in which he explains :

"Guerilla groups act in the night before dawn, when vigilance is relaxed. They strike suddenly from ambush, kill sentries in cold blood, waylay supply trains, open up unexpected fire, shoot at aircraft near landing-grounds when planes take off or land, shoot down artillery horses in order to impede the movement of the artillery and attack it."

HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM

Among the documents captured after the destruction of a Nazi regiment on the Leningrad front were the following instructions of Major-General Rauch on the methods of dealing with guerillas.

Rauch first of all details, with true German thoroughness, what is to be understood by the term guerillas. There are, according to him, three main types :

(1) Local guerillas—these are mainly young Communists working in the villages during the day and carrying out the instructions of the guerilla detachments at night.

(2) Guerilla battalions, consisting of 100 to 120 men, mostly in civilian clothes. They have permanent ties with the village populations, which enables them to prepare their attacks at night.

(3) Guerilla groups of civilian workers and members of the Osoaviakhim (Chemical and Air Defence Society—a form of A.R.P. organization).

The measures to be taken to combat guerillas are :

(a) Any civilian caught with firearms or anyone using firearms will be considered to be a guerilla and, after interrogation, will be shot.

(b) Anyone who protects guerillas will receive the same punishment as the guerillas.

(c) Guerilla camps and hiding-places are to be destroyed.

(d) If more severe measures are necessary, executed guerillas are to be hanged in the public squares for some time so that the local population may see what punishment has been given.

That the Germans, in desperation, have been obliged to resort to unbridled terrorism is illustrated by their treatment of three guerilla scouts whom they captured.

The youths refused to give their names or betray the location of their units. In spite of a terrible beating the Nazi officer could not elicit any information whatever. One of the men, Alexander Samokhin, was then laid near the caterpillar tracks of a tank and threatened with crushing unless he divulged where his unit was. He remained silent.

The enraged Nazis then tied all the guerillas' legs to a tank and drove the machine at full speed through the brushwood. Later that night the guerillas picked up the mutilated bodies of their comrades and buried them.

The favourite Nazi method of exacting a toll from hostages was embodied in the Order posted up by Captain Keil, German commander of the occupied town of Timkovichi.

I WARN THE WHOLE POPULATION THAT FOR EACH GERMAN
KILLED THE FIRST TEN RUSSIANS WE COME ACROSS WILL BE
IMMEDIATELY SHOT, IRRESPECTIVE OF AGE OR SEX.

The first night after this Order was posted up all the residents of the town took to the woods. Several guerilla detachments then combined forces to raid Timkovichi, killing part of the German garrison and taking others prisoner. Ammunition and fuel dumps were blown up, also two provision stores, and the guerillas made off with 12 machine-guns, over 150 rifles and other booty.

The Germans have become so unnerved by this irregular warfare that they are now even shooting boys found in possession of clasp-knives and razors, treating them as "guerillas". Thirty young boys were shot on that ground in the Zernitsky agricultural district during October.

WHAT THE GERMAN SOLDIERS THINK

Although the mechanized German soldier is not encouraged to "reason why", war prisoners have expressed their opinion on guerillas either verbally or in letters to their relatives.

Corporal Emil Katze wrote :

"You have to be terribly careful. The trees and bushes around here are bad friends. Behind each bush you find guerillas hiding. You can't imagine what this war is doing to our nerves. At night it is impossible to sleep. I lie

down but I can't sleep. I listen for every rustle, and I am not alone in my fear. Guerillas have put too many of my comrades to sleep for ever to allow me to rest easy."

Private Paul Weber, captured at the approaches to Moscow stated in evidence :

"Ambush awaits us on every road, and we can expect a guerilla bullet from behind every bush and corner. A short while back an encounter with a guerilla detachment threw us twenty hours behind time in bringing petrol to the front, and in consequence 11 tanks, left without petrol, were destroyed by Russian troops."

Another prisoner, Joseph Reiner, private in the 2nd Company of the 260th Infantry Regiment, testified :

"The engagement in which I was taken prisoner was my company's first. But even before it we were shot at on the way by guerillas, and over 20 of our men were killed and wounded."

This was confirmed by Hans Ritgel, private in the 5th Company 268th Infantry Regiment :

"We were often shot at on the march and sustained heavy losses in killed and wounded. Once during such a skirmish our column was stricken with panic. Shooting at our own men began, as a result of which many of my comrades were killed."

TWO KINDS OF PUNCTUALITY

When a German unit occupied a Soviet village they posted up the following proclamation :

"Russian fighters in uniform or in civilian clothes who are roving about in the rear, individually or in detachments, are called upon immediately to report to the nearest German military unit. Those who fail to do so by noon on August 5 will be considered as guerillas and punished accordingly."

Having pasted up their notice the Germans settled down to wait. No one put in an appearance at the specified time. They then crossed out the 5 in the date and substituted 8. Still no

one turned up. They finally decided to give the disobedient Russians their last chance and made the date August 13.

On that day the guerillas actually arrived. They attacked the village in force. The Nazis did not wait to receive their invited guests and took to their heels.

TWO ANNOUNCEMENTS

Red Army men who recaptured a village from the Germans found two notices posted on a fence. The first read :

"Whoever hides a Red Army soldier or guerilla fighter, or gives him food, or assists him in any way, will be sentenced to death and hanged. This order applies to women as well as to men."

(Signed) "The German Command."

The second notice, pasted right next to the first, read :

"Don't frighten us. We shall kill you, continue to blow you up, destroy you, wipe you out. We shall squash you like bugs. Death to Fascism."

(Signed) "The Guerilla Fighters."

Near by was another notice by the same guerillas :

WE SWEAR TO KILL A HUNDRED GERMANS FOR EVERY DEAD SOVIET CITIZEN.

CHAPTER XII

GUERRILLAS IN NAZI-OCCUPIED EUROPE

(Owing to the difficulty of obtaining news from Nazi-occupied Europe it must be understood that the following reports are only about a small proportion of the activities which they describe.)*

THE second front in the rear of Hitler's and Mussolini's divisions is no longer entirely limited to Soviet guerillas. Similar detach-

ments have sprung up in Finland, Norway, Poland, Yugoslavia and Greece.

As in the Soviet Union, these detachments are recruited from the native population, mostly peasants and working men, but also intellectuals, who on their own initiative are following the example of Soviet guerillas. In the last few months more and more people have joined these groups, who hide themselves in villages, mountains, forests and even towns. In many cases these secret groups have succeeded in establishing contact between each other and with the Soviet irregulars to the east.

Every new setback to the Fascist armies brings encouragement to the European guerillas and hastens the time when out of these isolated groups of Pioneers will grow a new army—an army which, at the decisive moment, will raise the banner of revolt deep in the Fascist rear.

The operations described in this chapter are only a beginning. These small heroic bands of men and women, whose names are largely unknown, are in reality the nucleus for new regular national forces which will one day arise on the Continent to supplement the main armies of the Anglo-Soviet Alliance.

FINLAND

A working man named Larsen heads a band of guerillas operating in the rear of the Fascists in northern Finland. The first news of their activities was the report that they had attacked a German transport column, killing the escort and destroying 15 lorries loaded with ammunition and supplies.

Later they extended their work by blowing up two ammunition dumps and an aircraft refuelling base near Petsamo. They followed the Soviet example in dealing with a Nazi aerodrome set up in a forest clearing. They first set fire to a petrol dump on the edge of the forest. When the Nazis raced to put out the fire and save the adjoining ammunition store the guerillas crawled to six planes on the runway and showered them with grenades and fire-bottles. Four bombers were destroyed.

A Finnish Fascist battalion then attempted to surround the sector where the guerillas were known to be. Splitting up into small groups, the guerillas slipped out of the encirclement through secret paths and creeks and reassembled elsewhere. On the following day they attacked the Finnish battalion in the rear, killed over 100 men and captured a large quantity of arms and supplies.

NORWAY

All reports from this country confirm the fact that sabotage and subversive activity are steadily increasing.

A store of aircraft bombs which the Germans had been accumulating in Trondheim for several months was blown up. During the summer forests were set on fire in many parts of the country, particularly in the areas which contained secret German constructions.

Infuriated by these activities, the Germans arrested people all over the country and filled their concentration camps to capacity. This only led to an intensification of anti-German activities.

POLAND

The growth of the guerilla movement here, particularly since the beginning of the Soviet-German war, has been very rapid. Although little information regarding the struggle of Polish guerillas can be obtained abroad, the news that leaks out discloses the increasing frequency of attacks on individual Germans, German troops, sabotage on the railways, in industrial undertakings and on communications.

At Prushkov, guerillas altered the switch on a railway line and caused a German troop train to crash at full speed into a goods train carrying ammunition. Scores of Germans were killed and quantities of ammunition were blown up. The Gestapo offered a reward of 50,000 zlotys for information leading to the capture of the guerillas.

German newspapers published in Poland almost daily carry announcements of the "sudden death" of a Storm Troop leader or members of the Nazi Black Guards—"as the result of hostile action". The Fascist newspaper in Poland, the *Krakauer Zeitung*, recently wrote:

"The guerilla movement is considerably larger in its scope than we suppose."

The Nazi-controlled *Neues Wiener Tageblatt* published the report of the execution of two Polish guerillas, Slavek and Klovnik, who shot two gendarmes and six policemen and organized several train collisions and explosions.

At the end of August the peasants in villages around the town of Radmosko revolted against the Nazi occupation

authorities. A force of 20 German gendarmes sent from the town to put down the insurrection were met with rifle and revolver fire. They were forced to withdraw after losing nine killed.

A German company was then called out from Czenstokohov, and they also suffered heavy losses. In the end the Germans were forced to use artillery. Most of the peasants who participated in this insurrection subsequently joined guerilla detachments.

At the end of the summer a number of peasant uprisings broke out in Poland, caused mainly by the Nazi requisition of grain. In many instances the Polish peasants applied the "scorched earth" policy of their Russian brothers, preferring to burn their grain rather than surrender it to the Germans. Aided by local guerillas, the peasants inflicted heavy losses on punitive detachments sent to repress their revolts.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

News from this part of the Continent is scanty, but it is confirmed that accidents to German military trains are happening more and more frequently in Bohemia. In a recent train wreck more than 250 German soldiers perished.

A landslide was arranged by Czech guerillas at a moment when a troop train laden with German and Italian soldiers was due to pass on the way to the Eastern Front.

GREECE

Guerilla detachments have been organized in the mountainous districts. They are particularly active in the north-eastern part of the country, where they have become a source of terror to the Italians. The Greek police, who were disarmed by the Fascists, sympathize with and help the guerillas.

Guerilla activity is also reported from the island of Crete, now in German and Italian hands. Captains of Greek sailing vessels are transporting arms for the guerillas, anchoring in the numerous shallow harbours of the southern coast of the island, which warships cannot approach.

A group of guerillas penetrated into the port of Hani and set fire to a German warehouse containing olive oil looted from the inhabitants. Other guerilla detachments attacked the German-Italian garrison of a town and drove the Fascists out in panic.

YUGOSLAVIA

The growth of the guerilla movement in this country has been more rapid than in any other Fascist-occupied part of Europe. From isolated bands of patriots operating in the hills and forests there has already grown a well-organized army of revolt.

In the early part of July news began to leak through of guerilla attacks on small German garrisons, supply trains and munition dumps. Railway tracks were demolished and telegraph wires cut.

From these modest beginnings the movement grew rapidly. The German victory in Yugoslavia by no means crushed the entire Yugoslav Army. Many thousands of soldiers, and often complete units, broke out of encirclements and retired to remote mountain districts inaccessible to motorized troops.

Around this nucleus there rallied all the Yugoslav patriots who thronged the hills and forests. Their strength has been estimated at about 80,000 men. The local population rendered them every assistance, supplying food and gathering information about the movements of Fascist punitive expeditions.

In the mountain districts, especially in Montenegro, the German and Italian authorities extend their rule only to the towns with large garrisons. In numerous villages and even some towns the guerillas have their own government, which refuses to recognize orders from the occupation forces.

The centres of the guerilla movement are in the mountains of Bosnia, Montenegro and Herzegovina. Over 150 guerilla detachments are active there. They attack German garrisons, destroy communications and in every way harass the invaders.

They often attack the enemy in the very suburbs of large towns. In Belgrade and Smederevo a munitions plant and considerable stocks of petrol were destroyed. An ammunition dump was burned down and an aerodrome raided. In Zagreb they blew up a store of shells. In Zemun they destroyed the Zmaj aircraft works and damaged the Ikarus aircraft factory.

The Fascist-controlled paper *Novi List* reported that coal-mines at Leslyanah in Bosnia were systematically attacked by detachments of guerillas numbering at least 400 and possessing field guns. The local inhabitants joined with the guerillas.

In the first half of August a conference of guerilla leaders from Serbia, Croatia, Slavonia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Voyevodina was held in a remote mountain district of Bosnia.

The conference summed up the result of six weeks' fighting. The balance sheet was as follows :

Officers and men killed and wounded	12,000
Bridges blown up	over 200
Petrol, munition and food depots burned or destroyed	300-400
Trains wrecked	17

In an effort to stamp out the guerillas the German-Italian forces have resorted to the most brutal reprisals against the population. In the first half of August alone the Germans sent 10,000 Serbs to concentration camps, the Italians shot 47 guerillas in Slavonia and over 200 Croats in Zagreb. In Belgrade alone 400 Serbs were executed, and in the Banat the Germans shot 150 civilians.

But this terrorism, as always, only served to strengthen the guerilla forces. By the beginning of December they had grown to such an extent that they could engage in pitched battles with the invaders. A great battle, in which the German-Italian command had to employ three divisions with tanks, was fought in the valley of the River Morava.

A considerable impetus to the patriot movement in Yugoslavia was given by the All-Slav Conference which took place in Moscow in August, at which the solidarity of all Slav peoples was affirmed. The speeches made at the Conference by the popular Montenegrin poet, Radul Stienski, the Serbian scientist, Professor Boshidar Maslarich and other representatives of Slav peoples were widely circulated by guerillas in Yugoslavia.

The feeling which animates the patriot movement in Yugoslavia is clearly expressed in this open letter which Serbian guerillas in the district of Valjevo recently addressed to General Nedich, head of the Serbian puppet government formed by the Germans :

"It is hard to imagine a man more base than you who are selling out your country in the most tragic hour of its existence. You may rest assured that you will suffer the same fate as all traitors. Your name will be spoken with contempt by every Slav.

"Tell your Berlin masters that they will not succeed in crushing the Serbian people, either openly or cunningly, with a handful of vile traitors. We will only recognize one government which will lead the Serbian people, together with all the Slav peoples, to battle against Hitlerite slavery for independence and freedom."

PART TWO

(First-hand accounts of guerilla warfare, including actual diaries of guerilla commanders and reports of Soviet war correspondents and Red Army men.)

DIARY OF GUERILLA COMMANDER K.

Extracts from the diary kept by K., Commander of a guerilla detachment in the Leningrad region.

AUGUST 13 : Today the Germans occupied our district centre. It was bitter to see our burning houses, the club, the hospital.

... At midnight our guerilla detachment meets.

August 14 : Our first baptism of war—near the village of G. we shot at a small group of Germans. On the roadside we left the bodies of two motor-cyclists. We had to burn their machines. At the same time we broke the Germans' communication lines.

August 15 : D.'s group returned from reconnaissance. They reported two German soldiers killed. The scouts brought important information. Outside the village of U. the Germans have built a field aerodrome and an air force repair base.

August 19 : We decided to attack the aerodrome, with the following results : set fire to seven bombers (Junkers 88), prevented a crossing of the river, cleared a minefield, taking 14 mines with us to train our men. In addition we set fire to big oil-tanks containing about 20 tons:

August 20 : In the evening, on the river bank, we discovered a German ammunition dump. The guard was quite small—only four soldiers. We got rid of the guards and blew up the ammunition. A serious loss for the Germans. Late in the night the shells were still exploding.

August 22 : Twice we destroyed a river crossing—the Germans just get it repaired and then our lads operate. Eight times we broke their communications.

August 24 : We destroyed isolated enemy machines. Set fire to 18 six-ton lorries carrying various loads. Sixty-seven Nazi soldiers were killed. Our guerillas never return without captured arms. A huge mountain of German rifles.

August 26 : S.'s group made a raid on a German motorized

column near the cardboard factory. We completely destroyed 11 6-ton lorries carrying petrol, 8 tank lorries, and 30 soldiers and 9 officers were killed. One was in the uniform of a lieutenant-colonel.

August 27 : Today V. was lucky. He and his lads kept a look-out and noticed a staff motor-car in which there were six officers. Only one of them escaped.

September 5 : In 22 days our detachment has destroyed four crossings, smashed seven planes, 47 lorries and two motor-cars, and has 35 times broken enemy communications. We have taken away five miles of cable and killed 203 Germans, including 14 officers.

A UKRAINIAN GUERILLA COMMANDER'S DIARY

Extracts from the diary of a former director of a machine-tractor station who is now commander of a guerilla detachment operating in the Vinnitsa region of Western Ukraine.

OCTOBER 3 : Made a night raid on the village of Z., where about 20 German bandits had put up for the night. Exterminated them all with bayonets.

October 5 : Mined the railway crossing and wrecked the train carrying German soldiers. Three carriages blown to splinters—70 Nazis killed.

October 6 : Two men of our detachment fired from ambush on a German motor-car and killed three officers and their chauffeur. The car, which was undamaged, was brought to our headquarters with the officers' weapons.

October 9 : The inhabitants of one village reported to us that a former kulak named Ivan Chenko had been appointed headman of the village by the Germans. He was robbing the peasants, had taken for himself the best land, and was forcing peasants to work for him. In the night we shot him as a traitor.

October 11 : Burned down a provision dump. Thirteen German soldiers killed.

October 14 : Attacked a German punitive expedition. Cross-firing went on for over an hour and we killed 15 soldiers and one officer, captured two lorries, one motor-car, one light machine-gun, three automatic rifles, eight rifles and two revolvers.

THE GUERILLA NEWS SERVICE

Report from Alexei Sirkov, on active service with a guerilla detachment.

DURING the night, at the guerilla headquarters, they tune in to Moscow. The news is taken down, transcribed and duplicated. In half an hour guerilla couriers are away with the sheets to the surrounding villages.

They use audacity. In the village of Zh., for example, the Germans had spread false news about the Soviet Union and the Red Army. Immediately afterwards a young man drove into the village, stood up in his car and addressed the people :

"And now, comrades collective-farmers," he said, "after all the stench of lies which the Nazis have tried to spread among you, listen to what is really going on."

He drew a sheet of paper from under his torn clothes and read the latest Soviet Information Bureau communiqué. He read telegrams from Siberia, from the Urals, the Caucasus. Then he distributed leaflets and drove away.

DIARY OF GUERILLA COMMANDER VASSILI G.

BY A SOVIET WAR CORRESPONDENT

A YOUNG guerilla scout, Seryozha, came in from the Nazi rear lines to-day and brought our Red Army unit a note :

"Come quickly to place indicated by Seryozha. Important business. Guerilla greetings !"

In two hours, taking every precaution, we came to the place indicated. In the glade of a thick forest we found a detachment of guerillas sitting around a big fire. This is what their commander, Vassili G., told us :

"We started to cross the front line to join you for a day or two—just for a rest, a sleep and a wash. But on the way we traced an enormous transport of ammunition and petrol—150 motor lorries. For a whole day we watched the Germans building an underground storage dump. We decided to pay them a visit later."

I asked the guerilla commander to tell me something about

his activities. He pulled out a battered notebook and gave it to me.

"There you are," he said. "No need to tell you anything. You'll find it all written down there."

Here are some extracts from his diary :—

September 9 : Some Germans got on our track as soon as we left M. They surrounded the village, noticed our departure and cut us off—trying to push us on to the road. They numbered a whole company, with machine-guns and automatic rifles. We just managed to beat them off. I got my ear shot through. Comrade V. was wounded in the hand, but is not complaining. The Germans lost six dead and an undetermined number of wounded.

September 13 : Mined the road between K. and C. Hid in the bushes alongside the road. The first to appear were four motor-cyclists with machine-guns. Then three motor lorries carrying ammunition. The first lorry blew up and the second smashed into it and caught fire. Eight soldiers were killed. Third lorry exploded. No losses on our side.

September 15 : An old collective-farmer arrived from the village of Beliaevka. He wept as he told us about the atrocities there. The Germans threw 14 wounded Red Army men and commanders and two collective-farmers into a house, splashed the walls with kerosene and then set fire to it. Girls were violated and kept in a separate house. For three days one could hear their cries and the sound of shots. A company of Germans is in the village, one platoon keeping guard.

We promised to come to Beliaevka on September 17. We arrived during the night. First we killed the guards. The rest of the Germans were all drunk. We killed more than 50 of them with grenades. The remainder fled. We freed the girls—all of them with their hands tied, all naked, and beaten black and blue. Among them were girls of 12 to 15 years.

September 20 : Disabled our first tank today. Seryozha did it with a grenade. Well done ! It was well smashed.

September 23 : At last we found a Nazi aerodrome with 30 planes—17 bombers and the rest fighters. A large guard, more than two companies. Seryozha found the aerodrome.

September 24 : Hard work. Only five of us in action. We crept to the aerodrome with hand-grenades. Nearing the planes, we stood up and walked the rest of the way. It was pitch dark. Some of the planes were evidently getting ready to start. Their engines were working. We threw 28 grenades. Indescribable panic. Sixteen planes were burned down. We

escaped into the woods—all safe except Comrade A., who must have been killed. All glory and honour to you, our brave comrade ; you perished like a hero.

September 25 : We spent all day sleeping in the woods—feeling a little tired. At night we quietly approached the former collective-farm club. Through the open windows we saw German officers. Some of them were typing in one room ; in another they were examining large maps on the walls. We threw two grenades through each window.

September 26 : Today was a real holiday. Comrade A. returned safe and sound. He had run from the aerodrome in another direction and had got lost in the woods. He was hungry, ragged, but sound and gay.

October 1 : Nazis trying hard to get at us. Their punitive detachment surrounded the whole forest. For four days we played hide-and-seek. In a skirmish our brave Comrade Gregory perished. Seven Nazis killed. Only today we got out of the encirclement—thanks to Seryozha, who knows the district like the palm of his hand. I got wounded in the leg, but I can walk. The bone is sound. A scout came from a Red Army unit with an order to mine roads on which Nazis are moving men and munitions.

October 3 : Mined 400 yards of the road. At the same time wound up 3½ miles of telephone wire connecting German headquarters—good thick wire with rubber insulation.

October 6 : Attacked German motorized kitchen. Burned it down. We had hardly got into the woods when a large Nazi motorized infantry column appeared. Halted by the smouldering kitchen, and then opened machine-gun fire on the woods.

October 8 : We approached the region M and fell on a punitive detachment. After a skirmish we retreated to the swamps. Seryozha brought a Nazi leaflet from the village—written in bad Russian about me :

ORDER TO POPULATION

I know the Bolshevik bandit guerrillas headed by Commander Jew G. operating in this region. Three days—come plead guilty, otherwise will be shot as dogs. Shall not allow partizan doings. This last warning to population. Whoever helps will be shot on spot.

Ober-Leutnant Evald Spann.

We read the leaflet aloud and laughed. I am not a Jew, but there are three Jews in our company—good warriors. Spann—commander of the German punitive detachment—we'll get this hangman.

October 9 : Exploded an ammunition store in wood beyond Beliaevka swamps. Collective-farmers say Spann is scouring woods. He has divided his detachment into three groups. All his men have automatic rifles. Seryozha disappeared—not seen him all day.

October 11 : Spann hunting us and we are hunting Spann. They don't go into the woods and swamps—afraid. We came to T. and found devastation there. This Nazi bandit Spann paid a visit there. Undressed old women, put them on the snow and whipped them. Said they had helped the partizans. Took two girls and carried them off in car.

October 14 : Spann no longer exists. It happened this way. An old woman came this morning and told us that Spann had arrived drunk, with 18 soldiers, also drunk. No guard was posted. The Nazis were chasing the women in the village.

We entered the village at both ends. Spann and two soldiers taken alive. Others fought frantically. We took their automatic rifles. Our losses : Partizan Moisei killed, two others wounded.

We put Spann on trial. This Nazi officer fell on his knees and begged for mercy. Sentence passed and executed.

This was the end of the guerilla commander's diary. The scout Seryozha came back and brought us a portfolio full of German documents and maps. Four days ago our reconnaissance unit reported : Region village P.—gigantic fire and explosions heard. Fire and explosions lasted two days. Vassili G. had fulfilled his task.

DIARY OF A BESSARABIAN GUERRILLA COMMANDER

Extracts from the diary of the commander of a guerilla detachment operating in the German-Rumanian occupation of Bessarabia.

JULY 25 : We are in the rear of the invaders. We are lying in ambush in the bushes on the bank of the river. We can see Rumanian and German units pass by. Our group consists of five men with two rifles in all.

August 3 : Last night met some soldiers who had lagged

behind their unit. Short battle. Two Rumanians killed. We captured two rifles, a quantity of cartridges and some hand-grenades. Now we are well armed.

August 5 : In 10 days the detachment has trebled its strength. Among those who joined us were a collective-farm chairman and his two sons from the village of P. Last night we intercepted two Rumanian cars. Our arsenal is growing richer.

August 10 : The detachment already numbers 39 men. In five days we killed 40 more German and Rumanian soldiers. Yesterday we captured two machine-guns and three lorries.

September 2 : A month has passed. The first four men to form this guerilla detachment with me are now group commanders. As for arms, we now have so much that we are able to arm five more detachments. We pay special attention to scouting operations. We now have among us 25 scouts, all armed with automatic rifles and pistols.

In the course of a month we killed 259 Rumanian and German soldiers and 17 officers. We destroyed four tanks, seven armoured-cars, nine guns, 19 lorries, two radio stations, 91 horse carts and crippled one plane.

October 7 : Five detachments are now operating in our locality. We often undertake joint operations. The accursed invaders have hanged three of our fighters and ruined our villages.

October 15 : We routed a large punitive expedition sent against us by the Germans. We spared no one. We annihilated 76 soldiers and the rest fled.

THE UNDYING FIRE

DURING more than seven weeks a Soviet guerilla detachment carried on successful operations behind the enemy lines. When it became too dangerous to maintain their large numbers they broke up into small groups.

One day four guerillas set out in a group. It was dawn when they reached the edge of a forest and saw a detachment of about 20 German cyclists coming up behind them. It was too late to take cover, as another party of cyclists armed with automatic rifles appeared in front.

Caught between the two, the four guerillas kept 40 Germans at bay for 10 minutes. Two of the guerillas were killed. One of them was wounded but managed to creep away. After a terrific fight the Germans seized the remaining guerilla and dragged him to an occupied village.

Late that night the wounded survivor saw a bright glow over the village. At dawn he cautiously crept nearer and heard what had happened during the night.

The bright glow was that in which a dying guerilla had been burned to death. Wounded and bleeding, he had been questioned by his captors in front of the villagers. Infuriated by his silence, the Germans had thrust bayonets into his wounds, broken his teeth, slashed his face and pried open his mouth with a dagger. He did not utter a single word.

They then dragged him to a barn, tied him to a door-post, piled hay around him and set fire to it.

'GRANDPA'

Somewhere in the Ukraine.

They call him Grandpa not because of his age or grey beard, but for his experience, wisdom, wit and resourcefulness. His commands are accepted with iron discipline, and his authority is that of a military commander.

The most remarkable thing about Grandpa is that, apart from two years' service in the cavalry, he has had no other military experience. And yet he has shown himself an extraordinarily gifted military strategist.

Before the war he was a modest co-operative artisan and chairman of the local village Soviet. When invasion came he organized a guerilla detachment into which recruits, old and young, poured from surrounding villages and collective-farms. The detachment now includes a book-keeper from the local finance department, two agricultural experts, the engineer of the local power station and five tractor-drivers. The latter are particularly valuable in all anti-tank engagements.

The detachment also includes two women: Grandpa's wife and Auntie Glasha, chairwoman of a collective-farm. They are in charge of the food supplies, serve as scouts, and when required act as propagandists. Auntie Glasha is unofficially considered Grandpa's second-in-command. She is a calm, sober-minded and plucky woman who holds her own with Grandpa.

The youngest member of the detachment is Lyosha, 14-year-old schoolboy. He is Auntie Glasha's only son and a general favourite with all the guerillas, including Grandpa, who gives him difficult scouting jobs to do.

One day Lyosha brought the report that he had found eight Nazi tanks camouflaged in a steep gully near the high road. Grandpa was not quite sure.

"Are you certain it's enemy tanks you saw," he questioned the boy.

"They were Nazi tanks, comrade commander," Lyosha assured him, "with that devilish spider on them . . . what d'you call it . . . tombstone sign."

Grandpa took Lyosha and two guerillas to reconnoitre. The lad was not mistaken. Eight German tanks stood in single file. It appeared that some of them had run out of fuel. Lyosha remembered having seen some Nazi officers drive up and confer a long time with the crews.

Returning to their base, Grandpa divided his detachment into three groups. The first consisted of riflemen, the second was armed with "fire-bottles" and the third consisted of the tractor-drivers and their assistants.

Under cover of night the guerillas silently approached the gully. Grandpa and Lyosha climbed a tree while the fire-bottle throwers went ahead. At a signal from Grandpa 30 bottles of flaming liquid were thrown into four of the tanks on the side. Twelve Nazis leaped out of the first four tanks. Supported by rifle-fire, Grandpa mowed them down with a sub-machine-gun. The engagement did not last more than an hour altogether.

The tractor-drivers in the group then drove three of the tanks to the nearest Red Army unit, while the village smithy smashed the remaining tanks.

Grandpa received the following note from the regimental commissar of the Red Army unit, an old friend of his:

"Thanks for your first little gift. I dare say you won't refuse us more of such gifts. Heartiest wishes for success."

Grandpa's detachment has already become legendary among the Nazis in that area. They have tried every means of discovering him, but, as Grandpa says, "It's like looking for a breeze in a field."

THE GUERILLAS OF SMOLENSK

BY WAR CORRESPONDENT FEDOROV

The people in the Smolensk region have risen against the invaders. In the western districts of the region alone scores of guerilla detachments are operating successfully.

In the Ilmsk district a guerilla detachment raided an enemy tank column of about 200 tanks which had halted, and hurled grenades and fire-bottles. Many tanks were damaged and burnt and the collective-farm field was strewn with the bodies of German soldiers and officers. The guerilla fighters hid in the forest.

On another occasion Mikhailov's guerilla detachment noticed that the Germans had begun to build winter barracks. Biding their time until the barracks were completed, a group of guerillas then burnt them to the ground. The Mikhailov detachment destroyed the Nazi supplies, damaged numerous telephone lines and destroyed the headquarters of the German unit.

At the Vilzh cardboard factory the Germans put up a mill where they ground the grain from the collective-farm. On learning of this, the local guerilla detachment, 300 strong destroyed the mill.

A detachment commanded by the scientific worker B. destroyed five Nazi planes. Another detachment under the command of the secretary of the Prechisten District Committee of the Bolshevik Party blew up an ammunition dump in the village of Borka.

Guerilla detachments are striking panic and terror into the hearts of the German soldiers. The Germans no longer risk sending small detachments into the Yelnia, Belizh and Prechisten forests. Many villages and hamlets in the wooded districts of the Smolensk region, situated in the enemy rear, are in the hands of guerillas. The forces of the guerilla movement are increasing and strengthening daily.

CONVERSATION WITH A GUERRILLA LEADER

At the end of September a guerilla detachment operating in the German-occupied region around Leningrad captured a German wireless station. After trying for a month, they managed to make contact with Moscow. Here is the conversation which the guerilla leader had by radio with a correspondent of the newspaper *Pravda* in Moscow.

Pravda : Tell us about your activities, Comrade V.

Guerilla : During the last 10 days we have carried out a number of raids on the Nazis and destroyed eight tractors, six cars, and killed 11 officers and many men. Besides this we attacked a column of 60 cars and burned an enemy artillery supply depot.

Pravda : How are the Germans behaving on your territory ?

Guerilla : Plunder and violation goes on all the time. But in our district the Germans seem to have quietened down a bit. Firstly, they are becoming afraid of us guerillas ; secondly, their forces in this region have greatly decreased. In a number of villages there aren't any German soldiers, because many German units have been sent to the front and their duties in the rear are being carried out by Spanish and Czech so-called volunteers.

Pravda : How are your comrades feeling ?

Guerilla : Excellent. Our detachment grows bigger every day. Local people and Red Army men who have escaped from behind the enemy's lines or after being taken prisoner have joined us. We have a number of women who are operating with us. They not only prepare our food, but look after the wounded as well. Very often they go out reconnoitring in the district and right into the town of N. and bring back valuable information.

Pravda : Do you know what is happening on our fronts and behind the lines ?

Guerilla : Nearly always. We have runners who keep regular contact with Red Army units. We also have a number of wireless receivers, listen in daily to Moscow and hear the Soviet Information Bureau communiqués. Some of our people go around the villages and give the population the latest news. The collective-farmers have become so accustomed to this that they already know a number of our people by their names and impatiently await their arrival.

Pravda : How do you get on about arms and ammunition ?

Guerilla : We are not badly off and continue constantly to arm ourselves at the expense of the enemy. We have rifles, machine-guns, revolvers, and all kinds of grenades which are used in the German Army. We do not need arms and ammunition, because we take them from the Germans.

HOW WE DEAL WITH THE INVADERS

Interview with the commander of a guerilla detachment on the Moscow front who returned from the enemy rear in order to establish contact with Red Army units.

ON November 6 we were in a little hut in the forest listening to Stalin's speech. We heard what he said about exterminating every single German.

This is the task we have set ourselves. We have decided to

turn the Germans out of every house and village. They are not going to keep warm in our Russian homes. Let them feel the real Russian winter.

Because they are afraid of guerillas the Germans are now turning the peasants out of the villages. But we have studied their habits carefully. At six o'clock in the evening they usually go to bed, leaving several gunners on guard. We have lads in our ranks who can creep up to a German guard and kill him before he can make a sound.

Then we come into the village from all sides and throw fire-bottles. Fires break out at several points. The Germans then jump into the street. We throw our anti-tank grenades right among them. Then we give them a dose of automatic rifle and machine-gun fire.

The Germans are thrown into a panic. They run about shouting and yelling, making more noise than a pack of hungry wolves. They do not even attempt to put out the fires, which spread all over the village. And on top of it all come our grenades and bullets. Before the Nazis can regain their presence of mind we are off and far away.

The Germans are sending out detachments with automatic rifles to fight us. Yesterday they succeeded in surrounding our detachment. We engaged them in battle. In the middle of the fiercest fighting we got out of their encirclement, leaving them to continue firing at what they thought was our ambush.

In the German rear, reinforcements are constantly coming up along the main roads. But you can trust us guerillas. Scores of tanks and motor vehicles and hundreds of soldiers will never reach the front lines. We are wiping them out and we will continue to do so. When the joyful hour of the Red Army's counter-offensive comes we will be right there to help kill the German invaders to the last man

I JOIN THE GUERRILLAS

By T. LILIN

The author, a Soviet war correspondent, describes his stay with the guerilla detachment commanded by Ryzhikov, an old veteran of the Civil War. The scene is in the vast tracts of marshland around the Dnieper River in the Ukraine.

THE Dnieper marshes stretch over many thousands of acres. It is certain death for a stranger in the marshy overgrowth.

People can conceal themselves a few steps from you and you would not know it.

A guerilla motor-boat picked me up on the left bank of the Dnieper together with about twenty other people who had come from neighbouring villages to join the guerillas.

The boat moved slowly past the left bank and came to rest in one of the reaches of the Dnieper. Here we changed over to a flat-bottomed boat and continued slowly through quiet creeks. A distant rumble of artillery and the raucous noise of a Nazi reconnaissance plane flying overhead reminded us of grim reality.

It had already grown quite dark when our boat came to rest by the river bank. The guard called out cautiously. We gave the password and soon found ourselves in the domain of the guerillas.

It was a quiet evening. All the guerillas with the exception of those out reconnoitring were at home. In deep silence the men were listening to a broadcast from Moscow. They eagerly received the leaflets we brought with us.

The Dnieper has overflowed widely and the marshes are inundated to such an extent that even trunks of age-old trees are under water up to their branches. Ryzhikov, however, decided not to leave the place.

"We shall take up our quarters in trees if need be and hang our weapons on their branches, but not a single one will leave," he said.

In conversation, the guerillas recalled how in one of the villages the Germans recently found that practically all the men who had not been called up for the Red Army had joined the guerillas. The enraged Nazis declared to the women that if the guerillas did not leave the marshes within 24 hours the marshland would be set on fire.

However, the time set by the Germans is long past, and the guerillas continue to remain in the marshes. The Germans and Rumanians mark time helplessly on the fringes of this marshland, not risking to move in the direction from which the guerillas carry out their bold raids.

Everybody has laid down to sleep. Only from the hut of the commander there are heard muffled sounds. The guerilla scouts have returned and are discussing the forthcoming operations.

Day was beginning to break. Scouts were returning from their night assignments. One of them, Lyonya Krivenko, reported that a Nazi officer in an armoured car had entered the adjacent village. Two roads run from the village, and which of the two the officer would use was not known.

The guerilla council detailed a group of fighters, under the command of Roman Senchenko, to "take a shot" at the Hitlerite "bird".

A few words about the guerilla council. Several detachments operate in the marshland, but they are all connected with Ryzhikov. Experience taught the necessity for uniting the forces of these detachments. Hence the idea of establishing a council composed of the commanders of the guerilla detachments.

In the marshes it is known as "our military council". No measures are now undertaken by the guerillas without first discussing them in the council which elaborates all the military operations. It also distributes all the weapons, ammunition and provisions. The commanders and commissars of the detachment are appointed by the Council.

However, to return to the Nazi officer. Six men organized in two groups were detailed by the council for the assignment. The plan of action was as follows: one group would lie in ambush where the roads forked, while the other would camouflage itself behind shrubs on the highway leading to the village K. If the first group failed to intercept the armoured car it would then be caught by the second.

While the group was getting ready to set out we made the acquaintance of some of the guerilla fighters. Who are they? A book-keeper of one of the breweries, a black-haired tractor driver, the chairman of a collective-farm, a mechanic and an agricultural expert. A young woman, a former accountant, has become a nurse. A doctor's assistant from a village on the left bank of the Dnieper organized a real medical base in the marshes.

They are all children of the Ukrainian people who have gathered to wreak vengeance on the bandits who have invaded their native soil. Take Ivan Krapivets, for instance, a former doctor's assistant. Resolute and intrepid, he heads the detachment of the inhabitants of villages near the district centre. On reaching the marshes, Krapivets immediately felt at home, as if he had spent a number of years here. His men are excellently organized, disciplined and active.

Towards morning the guerillas noiselessly crossed the small river in a boat, skirted the village and took up their positions in the places mentioned. Time dragged on. The guerillas did not take their eyes off the road. Only long past midday did a cloud of dust appear on the road. Soon a rapidly moving armoured car loomed in sight.

When the vehicle was only about 150 feet from the guerillas

machine-gun fire was opened on it. The driver jammed his brakes on. Senchenko deftly hurled two grenades, one after another. Four bloodstained Germans jumped out of the car. Three of the crew were brought down by rifle-fire. The fourth one, evidently the officer mentioned by the scouts, ran towards the bushes and, with trembling hands, tried to tear up some kind of a map. The young guerilla, Vasili Samokhval, brandished a grenade. The chief of the group grabbed him by the arm and explained that the grenade would also destroy the map. Senchenko then took aim and fired. The German staggered and fell.

The map fell into the hands of the guerilla fighters who came running up. The dead officer proved to be a liaison officer, Major Bage.

Their assignment fulfilled, the guerillas returned to the marshes. The map turned out to be extremely valuable, showing the disposition of the German units. Ryzhikov studied the map and clicked his tongue with satisfaction.

"Fine—fine! Semyon!" He called to one of the guerillas. "Make your way to the opposite bank to the headquarters of Major Sokolov. He will certainly thank you for this document."

The council then discussed the raid of the guerilla fighters who had had their first encounter with the Nazis. Their operations were examined in great detail. The amount of ammunition used was checked over; the behaviour of each of the participants in the raid was also subjected to a minute examination.

Ryzhikov summed up in his characteristic Ukrainian drawl: "You obtained a map—very good. But did you search the pockets and wallets of the other Nazis? No—you didn't. You were in such a hurry—too bad! In these matters one must hasten slowly—remember that next time."

It is a warm day. The September sun is scattering white patches through the shadowy forest trails. Swarms of midges fly interminably in the warm air. A deep sultry silence covers the Dnieper swamps.

The silence is broken by the sound of slow cautious footsteps. A platoon of German soldiers, carefully preventing their arms from clanging, is advancing through the swamp, automatics at the ready.

Enraged by the recent attack which our guerilla detachment had made on some Germans who were bathing in a river, the Nazis sent out a reconnoitring platoon to verify whether the swamp really is inaccessible.

They proceeded slowly, carefully treading on the spongy earth of the marshes. The coating of earth around here is only about two bayonet lengths' deep, and under that flow innumerable rivulets and branches of the Dnieper. The Germans followed the barely discernible trail made by the guerillas. After a few hundred yards they halted. The silence remained unbroken. Encouraged by this they set off again.

But the silence itself was deceptive. No sooner had the Germans appeared on the river bank than they were spotted by two of our scouts. The two guerillas trailed them all the way, moving noiselessly like shadows through the undergrowth. One of the scouts forged on ahead and informed the detachment commanders while the other continued to track the enemy.

Suddenly a volley of shots shattered the silence. The "gate-crashers" received a warm welcome from the hidden guerillas. The scout who trailed the platoon himself accounted for three. Only five Germans managed to escape from the swamp—the rest being destroyed on the spot.

"Let them keep away and not worry us," declared the black-bearded guerilla scout, Danilo Polishchuk, profoundly. Shouldering his rifle he set off to report to Ryzhikov the results of the skirmish.

On the following day the Germans again attempted to penetrate the swamp. This time the guerillas decided not to let them get far. Hiding in the river thickets they quickly out-flanked the enemy's rear and opened fire. At the same time Roman Senchenko's group attacked from the front. Very few Nazis got back.

Infuriated by this second failure the Germans decided to settle with the guerillas at all costs. A couple of days later they sent two strong detachments to the marshes from different sides. Besides this they decided to seize the headland part of the swamp by a landing-party from two neighbouring villages.

They loaded heavy machine-guns and mine-throwers into boats and set forth for the guerilla citadel through one of the reaches of the Dnieper. They calculated on catching the guerillas unawares. But as soon as the German troops met on the river bank they were met by two mounted guerilla scouts. Shots were exchanged, and one German and one scout were killed. The second scout rode off to the camp and informed Ryzhikov on the number of Germans and the direction of their movement.

"Good!" exclaimed Ryzhikov. "To arms, lads." Krapivets's group was detailed to make for the enemy rear towards the

river bank in order to scuttle their boats and cut off their retreat. The other detachments advanced to meet the Nazis.

"We shall lock up their 'tradesman's entrance,'" said Ryzhikov with a grin, "and let them try the front door."

Armed with heavy and light machine-guns, rifles and grenades, the guerillas deployed in the tall shrubbery. When the Germans had come near enough the hidden men opened fire. It seemed as if every tree and every bush was firing, as if the whole forest had taken up arms against the invaders.

Familiar with every nook and cranny, running from place to place and skilfully camouflaging themselves, the guerillas kept up a ceaseless fire on the Germans. The enemy began a hasty retreat towards the river—but their rage can be imagined when they found their boats gone. Senchenko's men had sunk some of them and concealed the rest. When the Germans arrived on the bank they were met by more fire.

Caught between two fires, they ran like cornered rats. Some of them tried swimming across the river, but were picked off by well-aimed sniper rifles. Others hid in the undergrowth hoping that if they lay low they could escape afterwards. But the guerillas searched out every one and despatched them to their Aryan forefathers. Some of the Germans even tried playing "grouse" by hiding in the branches of trees. They forgot that guerillas are also good game-hunters. The German "grouse" was quickly brought down.

The hunt continued for two days until every Nazi was destroyed. The bag for September 21 and 22 was over 150 dead Germans and many war trophies. Loaded with German automatic rifles and machine-guns, the guerillas withdrew deep into their swampy domain, leaving behind invisible sentries who remained on the banks of the river in a tireless watch.

A peaceful Ukrainian evening softly descended on the marshes. In the waters of the broad Dnieper the reflection of the trees shimmered in the darkening light.

Under cover of darkness Ryzhikov was preparing to move his detachment to another place nearer the Germans. The camp broke up silently. Everything was packed into flat-bottomed boats and peasant carts.

A motor cutter towed the long string of boats down the river, its muffled engine chugging softly in the night air. The rest of the detachment went by land. When the broad peasant carts, drawn by sturdy collective-farm horses, crossed water-filled gullies they also seemed to float like boats.

We reached our destination at midnight and two hours later we had finished pitching our new camp. I left my tent to go

for a stroll in the dense marshland growth. A sentry concealed in some bushes challenged me.

"Halt—who goes there?"

"Friend," I replied.

"Friend," said another muffled voice just behind me. I turned around and saw a broad-shouldered old man of medium height stepping out into the glade.

"Stepan!" exclaimed the sentry, and embraced the new-comer warmly. This was Stepan Semenovich, a collective-farmer who acted as scout to the guerillas. His scouting took him far afield. He was just then returning from an expedition far into the enemy's rear, where he reconnoitred their forces and distributed guerilla leaflets in the villages seized by the enemy.

I saw one of these leaflets, written by hand in large clear lettering. The guerillas wrote them all out themselves—dozens of men with pens in their horny hands painstakingly forming words which came from their very hearts. This is what one leaflet said:

"Comrades—Fellow Citizens: You are now on land temporarily occupied by that monster, Hitler. His foul policy is to force you to harvest the corn whereupon he will take it from you. This is what he came for. Remember 1918 when the Germans seized and shipped all the corn from the Ukraine to Germany. Your job is not to give your corn.

"Keep in touch with us. We know the Nazis tell you they've already occupied Moscow, Odessa and Leningrad. Don't believe these lies. Remember Stalin's words that the enemy is wily and cunning. Remember that the enemy will be defeated, as ours is a righteous cause.

"The Nazis will evict you from your homes and kill groups of the best and most honest villagers. Don't wait for this. Take up arms, join the guerillas and inflict deadly blows on Hitler's real lines."

This appeal bore fruit. Guerilla sentries began to meet a number of collective-farmers proceeding through the marshes to join the guerilla detachment.

I went with Stepan to see Ryzhikov. After he had informed the commander of his action in the enemy's rear and supplied him with much valuable information, old Stepan grew suddenly gloomy.

"What's your worry?" asked Ryzhikov.

"It isn't worry," replied the old man, "it's anger."

He then told how a traitor had been found in a village betraying all the active sympathizers to the Germans. A number of men had lost their lives through him. Ryzhikov grew very angry too.

Ivan Krapivets was entrusted with the task of dealing with the traitor. With a revolver hidden in his broad peasant sleeve, Ivan entered the village and found the house he wanted.

He tapped softly on the window. The man came out.

"Help me to reach the Germans," whispered Krapivets urgently, "and I'll give you my watch and some money."

The traitor readily agreed. "I'll guide you," he said, "but we must be careful not to fall into the hands of the guerillas."

In order to make quite sure, Ivan followed the man, who guided him out of the village towards a forest where a German unit was stationed. "Well, that's enough for you," thought Ivan to himself, shot the traitor dead, and slipped away into the marshes.

NOTE.—Lilin's account ends here, as he was called away for duty as a war correspondent on another part of the front.

HOW I BECAME A GUERRILLA FIGHTER

BY RED ARMY MAN OMELCHENKO

It was on a day in August, while I was on reconnaissance duty, that I was taken prisoner. The Germans brought me to a village which they had just captured.

The officer ordered me to undress, and when I refused I was beaten and my clothes were torn from my back. I was left wearing only my shorts.

Fighting was going on near by. The Germans were few in number and they felt nervous. The officer ordered me to proceed on foot to the neighbouring village, where there was the headquarters of a German detachment.

"I can't spare anyone to go with you," he said. "You won't run away naked, and if you try you'll be shot. They'll take you into custody over there. Thank your stars we didn't kill you."

I set off along the road. All around were open fields. A group of tanks came speeding towards me and raising a thick cloud of dust. The dust hid me from the enemy and I dived

into a ditch, crawled out on the other side and dashed across a field. When the dust began to subside I threw myself on the ground and crept along on my belly.

Some time later I reached some thick bushes and lay there until nightfall, my ears alert for every sound. Towards evening it grew chilly. I tried to prevent myself from shivering, but my teeth were soon chattering with cold. Cautiously I rose and moved in the direction of the front, taking cover in bushes and copses and crawling across open spaces.

The sky and fields were lit up by the glow of a big fire—a village was burning. I had to turn aside from the blaze. I walked on all night and when dawn came I collapsed from fatigue in a wood.

I was awakened by pangs of hunger, which the wild strawberries I had gathered were unable to allay. I went on through the forest—but towards evening I realized that I had lost my way. No firing could be heard. However hard I tried I could not find my way out of the forest. In desperation I scrambled through bushes, with branches scratching against my face and naked body.

After a time rain began to fall. My lacerated feet could carry me no further. I covered myself with moss and leaves and fell asleep. That was the end of my second day.

On the morning of my third day I could scarcely stretch my numbed limbs. In a semi-delirious condition I staggered on, acting more by instinct than by judgment. So it went on for five days.

On the sixth day I woke up and found an old peasant standing before me.

"Where are you from and why are you naked?" he asked me.

I told him I had been captured by the Germans and had run away.

He shook his head sadly. "I found you by following the tracks of your blood," he said.

"Lead me back to our troops," I asked.

"You're not in a condition to walk very far. No—you couldn't even crawl there if you wanted to. Our village was burned down by the Germans." That was probably the fire I had seen some time ago.

"We want to pay them back," the old man continued fiercely. "There are six of us—two old men, a woman and three lads. We need a commander and instructor. We want to get hold of a machine-gun, but we don't know how to handle it. Stay with us and lead us."

At first I thought I might stay with them for a while and

train them while I was getting my strength back. Afterwards I could find my way back to my unit.

When the old man and I reached a forest glade where the guerillas were hiding there proved to be eight of them, not six as he had said. On the following day their number rose to eleven.

The woman in the group bound up my wounds. At night we were brought milk and eggs from a neighbouring village. In the daytime I set to work to train the detachment.

We began operations by attacking three Germans who were spending the night in a lonely out of the way farm. Until then we had only two rifles which had been picked up by peasants in a field. Now we had three more and also some hand-grenades.

A week later we got hold of a machine-gun. A few days after that we held up an enemy motor-lorry which turned out to be full of explosives. These we used to blow up two bridges.

Every day I made up my mind to leave the detachment and cross the front lines. But there was always some new job to be done, some new operation to be carried out. New guerilla recruits would join us and require training. Special information would be received—requiring immediate attention.

By the end of September I realized that I would never leave the detachment. About that time we received information of such importance that it had to be conveyed to the Red Army Command right away. I sent one of my men—and only after he had gone did it occur to me that I might have gone myself!

Within three months my detachment had grown to 120 strong. Official war communiqués began to mention bridges blown up by "a guerilla detachment commanded by Comrade O" . . . enemy aircraft burned . . . motor-lorries captured. . . .

I established permanent contact with Red Army headquarters. In the course of our work we managed to lay our hands on a number of important secret documents of the German Command, and these were very useful to our people.

A price was eventually put on my head by the Germans. But that did not worry any of us very much.

One day it so happened that I found myself back among Red Army men. I received a summons from headquarters to appear in person.

When I went over they showed me into the general's dug-out. He rose and shook hands. When our official business was over he asked me in a friendly tone:

"What were you before the war?"

"A draughtsman," I replied. "I was preparing to enter the School of Architecture."

There was a pause while he thought over that.

"May I return to my detachment now?" I asked.

"Why—don't you want to stay with us? You're a Red Army man after all. I'll give you a long leave and after that appoint you on my Staff."

This was a difficult decision to make. It was true, as he said, that I was a Red Army man after all. Nevertheless . . .

"Comrade general," I said. "You'll understand . . . my job is over there with our guerillas."

He shook me by the hand and we parted.

THE END

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