

Directives of the Front Commanders of the Red Army (1917–1922)

Volume 4

Preface

The fourth and final volume of the collected documents of the Red Army front commanders shows the material basis for the strategic, operational planning and leadership of the armed struggle against the interventionists and White Guards during the civil war. The statistical information contained in the volume is important source for researching the history of Soviet Armed Forces and Soviet military art, and organically complements and deepens the documents of the whole edition. In this sense, the volume unites the whole series with the previously issued collection of "Directives of the Red Army Headquarters" in a single, closely related, complementary set of directive and administrative documents, and is a logical conclusion of these editions.

The volume contains data on the combat and numerical composition of the Red Army and Navy, the number of communists, combat reserves, material and technical support of the troops, and lists of commanding and political personnel of fronts, armies and divisions. It also includes information on enemy combat and military personnel, and a list of directives that were not included in those volumes.

The reference apparatus for the edition also covers "Directives of the Red Army Headquarters", and consists of an index of units and formations mentioned in the documents, and a name index.

The main part of the volume is taken by the documents of the combat and numerical composition of the Armed Forces of the Republic from 1918 to 1922.

The military and historical literature provides considerable variation in the accuracy of the numbers given for the army; as a rule, these figures are not accompanied by archive references, and the authors do not reveal their methods of calculation, do not describe the materials used, and do not give the sources of statistical data.

This situation was largely due to the difficulties associated with the disordered nature of statistical reporting in the army throughout the Civil War.

The beginning of the centralized registration of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army¹ personnel was made by the registration department of the All-Russian Board of Organisation and Administration of the Red Army which involved prominent military statisticians of the old army who prepared the first consolidated document about the number of the Red Army on April 20, 1918 (doc. No. 6).

In the initial period of military construction, the operational department of the Narkomat² for Military Affairs and the Supreme Military Soviet³ were also involved in calculating the number of the army.

With the transition to universal military duty, accounting of the total number of the army was entrusted to the All-Russian General Staff, which was established in May 1918. When the Field Staff of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic (RMSR) was created in October 1918, it kept an account of the number of soldiers in the army and in the military districts. Thereafter, all the information for the General Staff, the RMSR and the Sovnarkom⁴ was prepared by the Field Staff. Information about the troops stationed in the military districts was taken into account by the General Staff. The Field Staff and General Staff systematically exchanged information to ensure greater consistency. The reporting and reference documents of these two Supreme Headquarters of the Red Army form the basis of this section.

In addition, many supplying agencies – the Central Supply Administration (TsUS), Narkomprod, Glavsnabprodarm, Chusosnabarm, each of which received information through their own channels – were involved in recording the numbers in the army. As analysis shows, the statistical data of this group of institutions is highly inaccurate, mainly in the direction of exaggeration. This can probably be explained by the fact that the information was submitted taking into account the receipt of replenishments. Therefore they were excluded as the main source for the preparation of the tables on army numbers.

When studying the statistical documents there are serious difficulties because of significant discrepancies between the figures of the documents compiled by the central directorates and headquarters of fronts, armies and military

¹ PKKA or RKKA, I shall generally use "Red Army".

² Народный комиссариат по военным делам, People's Commissariat for Military Affairs, the state body of the RSFSR in charge of the army throughout the Civil War.

³ The three man committee that oversaw the defense of the state and the organisation of the armed forces.

⁴ Soviet of Peoples Commissars.



districts. There were several reasons for these discrepancies: information from headquarters often was not received regularly, was compiled arbitrarily, and was late in delivery, thereby losing its practical value.

In order to establish uniformity and regularity in reporting, the army developed reporting forms, various instructions and guidelines for accounting of servicemen (see notes to Doc. No. 14).

However, due to lack of experience, the youth of the army and many other reasons, the understanding and interpretation of those reporting forms, and the notions of "bayonet" and "soldier" by the army staffs and local military authorities varied greatly (see, for example, notes to doc. No. 40). Hence the discrepancies in the reporting data sent to the Field Staff and General Staff by the headquarters of the fronts, armies and districts. During the civil war the question of coordinating reporting forms and deadlines between the Field Staff, various departments and headquarters of auxiliary troops was raised repeatedly.

In September of 1919 under the RMS of the Republic there was created a Permanent Interdepartmental Commission to determine the numbers of the army, and in December of the same year the Special Commission on the registration of all the armed forces of the Republic at the Field Staff (under the chairmanship of V. N. Egoriev) who, having difficulties in their work because of imperfection of statistical reporting, took many decisions about the total number with a certain degree of approximation (see documents Nos. 14, 30, 35).

Tables on combat and numerical composition of the Red Army and Navy constitute the first section of the volume.

Preparing this section, the authors of the book set an aim of giving a complete picture of the Red Army numerical strength during all the most important stages of the Civil War. First of all they aimed at the completeness of coverage, selection of the most reliable documents, coherence and systematism in presenting the information.

The section contains documents of different sorts, such as summary tables for all the Armed Forces, tables on the number of active armies and separately for each military district, the number of combat troops of the active Army, and information about the Navy. Such a broad range of material, combined with its systematic character, enables the comparison and double-checking of data and a more detailed and comprehensive analysis of the issues related to the number of troops and the navy.

The tables contain data on the availability of weapons in the fighting forces of the active Army.

However such documents were not compiled regularly, especially during the second half of 1919 and the first half of 1920. Therefore the compilers had to do the work themselves to summarize the data from the front-line documents in order to prepare summary tables for the active army as a whole.

The documents in the second section contain data on the number of Communists in the army and navy and on party mobilisations.

The Communists were in the vanguard of the armed struggle, raising the morale of the Red Army men and instilling in them faith in victory.

The record of the number of Communists in the army and navy evolved gradually, it has shortcomings inherent in the record of the Red Army as a whole. The documents themselves, especially those of the initial period, are very imperfect because they are often compiled at random, information was not received on a regular basis, and inaccuracies and mistakes were made, so they do not reflect the whole number of the Communists.

The documents were found in the archives of the Political Department of the RMSR, the General Staff and the Field Staff, and some previously published data has also been added to complete the picture.

The third section includes data on the combat reserves of the Red Army – mobilised, trained and sent to the fronts from military districts and reserve armies, as well as data on their availability at the High Command as a part of combat and reserve formations for a certain period of the war. The direct reserves of the High Command in the Civil War, because of its peculiarities, were formations and units created in the rear of the country and in the theatre of military operations, as well as troop formations of the army in service, which were drawn from the battlefields and thrown from one front to another. The reserves also included reinforcements sent by military districts and reserve armies to reinforce the troops of the active army.

Up until the end of 1918, when the 11 rifle divisions formed in the military districts under Order No 4 of the RMSR of 11 September 1918 had not been filled and the reserve units had not started to train reinforcements, the main source of the High Command's human reserves were detachments and units of the local military bodies, and the army formations created in the sectors of the screen.⁵

⁵ The thin line facing the Germans was called a "screen".



In middle of 1919, when the field forces (11 divisions) in the military districts were in action, the main source of reserves, together with the reinforcements from the military regions, were the reserve army and active troops which had been withdrawn from the battlefields and thrown from one front to another, from the secondary directions to the main one. The shortage of field troops also necessitated the use of auxiliary troops as reserves.

Section Four provides researchers with a wide range of sources describing the actual state of army provision with the main types of logistics – arms, engineering, materiel, and food during certain periods of the war. Primary attention is paid to the issue of armament. It illustrates the availability of weapons and ammunition in the depots of the General Artillery Command (GAU), military districts, fronts and armies, their distribution among the units, the fulfillment of the planned supply and needs of the active army, provision of the main fronts with weapons and their consumption of ammunition.

Together with the information about the armament of the combat troops included in the tables on combat and numerical strength (Section One), this section helps us to obtain a more detailed picture of the army's material and technical supply at different stages of the Civil War.

This section gives a known picture of the army's engineering, clothing and food supplies. The section is compiled in view of irregular reporting and lack of summary data in the fonds of Chusosnabarm, TsUS, the Main Military Engineering (TVIU) and the Main Military Economic Department, Glavsnabprodarm, as well as the RMSR, the Field Staff, etc.

Therefore the authors of this section have resorted to summarizing individual documents into summary tables.

The fifth section publishes information about the number of enemy ground troops and naval forces on the fronts of the Soviet Republic and their equipment with weapons and military equipment.

The tables are compiled according to schedules of enemy forces, prepared by the SMS, the Field Headquarters and front headquarters.

These tables use simplified names for the enemy formations: "Ukrainians" (Petliura), "Poles" (the forces of the bourgeois-nationalist Poles), "Latvians", "Estonians", "Finns" (bourgeois-nationalist units), etc.

Section six contains information about the leading personnel of the Red Army. It lists the leaders, including commanders, RMS members and Chiefs of Staff for fronts and armies. In contrast to previously published lists (the Historical Encyclopedia, vol. 6; "Military Historical Journal", 1966, No 8, 10, 11, 12; 1967, No 2, 4, 6, 10; 1968, No 2, 5, 9, 10, 12), this list gives more detailed data on the time of holding the post, the names and patronymics to surnames, and also includes the important category of chiefs of staff.

This is followed by a list of commanders, military commissars and chiefs of staff for divisions, with similar data.

The published information refers to the period when regular units and formations of the Red Army were created; due to the lack of documents it was not possible to find information on armies, local fronts and formations that existed during the early period of the construction of the Armed Forces.

The compilers used orders for all the mentioned units and formations, name and alphabetical lists, personal files, and service records to prepare this section. Despite this, some names and patronymics could not be ascertained. When determining the time of service, the orders indicating the date of the actual entry and resignation were used as the basis, and when these were not available (mainly for the political staff), the study was based on the available signatures under the orders and numerous circumstantial documents.

The units and formations are listed under their most recent name, followed by a list of all the changes that have occurred, together with their chronological order.

The administrative documents of the front commands, found in the archives but not included in the other volumes, are listed in the seventh section. For convenience, the documents are arranged in this list by volumes, by fronts inside volumes, and then by chronology. The list combines documentary and group descriptions and group orders that are similar in content and time of preparation. In accordance with the scheme adopted of arrangement of documents by fronts, the designation of the fronts in the headings has been omitted. The list does not include orders, orders published in widely known publications: "The History of the Civil War in the USSR", vol.1-3 (M., 1960, 1961); "The Civil



War in Ukraine", vol.1-3 (Kiev, 1967, 1968); "Fighting for Soviet Power in Belorussia", vol.1-2 (Minsk, 1968, 1971); "The Southern Front" (Rostov, 1962); "M. V. Frunze on the Civil War Fronts" (Moscow, 1941).

The eighth section of the volume is an index of units and formations of the Red Army and Navy mentioned throughout the series. Parts and units, including some different arms types, mentioned in the documents are not included, with the exception of detachments, mainly presented to reflect an initial stage of army forming.

The Index is arranged according to the principle of subordination of units and formations, with fronts, groups, and detachments being arranged alphabetically by their initial designation, and armies, divisions, and brigades, first by their numbers, then by their names (without numbers) alphabetically. To enable the tracing of all transformations and interrelation of separate names, the reference data were concentrated under the last name of the unit or formation, and all other data were placed in their appropriate places with a reference to the main name. References relating to the High Command Directives, as in the following section, are indicated by the letters HC, and volumes of the publication by their numbers.

Section nine contains a name index of people mentioned in all the volumes. It does not include lists of the Red Army leadership, which have an independent reference function.

The publication of the tables, which occupy the main place in the volume, was fraught with difficulties. The most complete and authentic documents relating to the most important stages of civil war history have been selected from a large number of identified documents through critical analysis, comparison and data verification.

Most of the tables have been found in archives and processed by the compilers. For the ease of use and comparison of the data, first the detail and scatter of information has been eliminated. For that purpose some columns have been shortened and unified. Totals by divisions, separate brigades and similar formations are generally preserved in the tables, and data on units and subunits are omitted. The author's notes on incomplete information have been retained.

Tables prepared by the compilers by combining several tables into one because of the lack of summarised documents represent a significant group in all the sections.

Missing information in the tables has been supplemented and factual errors have been corrected by other archival sources. All totals have been checked and results that differ from those in the document are shown in square brackets below. All totals missing from the documents and entered by the compilers by counting omitted intermediate data and clarifying totals are also enclosed in square brackets.

The headings of the tables indicate the main content of the information and the date or chronological period to which the information relates.

For each table, the explanatory part lists the documents used, indicating their authenticity, search data, necessary additions, and the detailed handling of the documents undertaken by the compilers.

The archival treatment of the documents follows the principles laid down for the entire series.

The compilation was prepared by the teams of researchers from the Central State Archive of the Soviet Army and the Institute of Military History of the USSR Ministry of Defense.

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