THE COMPLEXITY OF THE MILITARY OPERATIONS CONDUCTED IN ENCIRCLEMENT

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ABSTRACT
The military operation carried out in the encirclement represents an actional complex of extreme character because the troops fighting in this context maintain with difficulty the defense of a completely blocked area by the enemy forces, according to the configuration of minimal or even non-existent possibility for external support. This actional setting determines both the necessity of a well-done planning regarding the consumption of all types of resources, especially ammunition, spare parts and medicines, as well as a mental and physical strength of the military involved in combat actions characterized by a special thrill.

KEYWORDS: fighting within encirclement, the extreme character of actions, the isolation of the fighting forces, battle order, getting out of encirclement

1. Operational Context Determining the Encircling of Forces and Means
Fighting within encirclement is a defensive process carried out in a circular defensive system, organized on features of terrain (areas, districts) that allow for a relative resistance of the captured forces in these spaces due to ampler actions of maneuver executed by the enemy forces on the flanks or through the open intervals of the friendly troops.

The actions of envelopment or return to the defense on the flanks and the use of airborne or the special forces of the enemy lead to gradual isolation from the upper echelon and the encirclement of a subunit or some heterogeneous forces, made up of various military structures.

The encircling of some friendly forces can occur during offensive actions too (including counterattacks), in the context in which a too deep penetration of the enemy’s deployment, its isolation from neighbors and the lack of insurance of the flanks can determine the possibility of an offensive response by the enemy, on double enveloping directions, which is completed by encircling and blocking those forces.

Also, in the context of envelopment or during withdrawal, due to the lack of protection of the flanks and the non-timely use of safety procedures of the rear, the surprising maneuvers of the enemy exploit these vulnerabilities and determine a rapid encirclement of the friendly troops.
The platoon (the company) of infantry, mountain or airborne troops carry on the fight into the encirclement with organic and strengthening subunits belonging to the structures of the previous actions, as well as with other elements of the remaining subunits in the area encircled by the enemy. All the subunits existing in the encircled area are subordinated to the infantry, mountain or airborne platoon (company) commander and act strictly in accordance with his orders.

In the context of the configuration of danger of encirclement, the platoon (company) commander is obliged to:

- enhance reconnaissance;
- ensure the flanks, the intervals and the rear of the deployment;
- strengthen the defense of the threatened directions, in particular those favorable to be attacked by tanks;
- order the installation of barriers and obstacles on the directions that lead to the flanks and rear of the platoon (company);
- take measures for the protection of the personnel against weapons of mass destruction and incendiary means;
- maintain uninterrupted communication with the upper echelon;
- take measures to ensure the materials by creating additional stocks, particularly of ammunition, food, medical equipment and medication;
- evacuate to its own medical site, of the wounded and the sick and eliminate, from the encircled perimeter of the materials that abound and might prevent a firm and stable defense.

The main conditions, with determining character to ensure success in the context of the fight within encirclement are: self control, initiative and determination of all commanders, firmness, brevity, simplicity and accuracy of orders, personal example in combat and development, by the entire personnel, of a sequence of actions with active, surprising character, particularly in bad weather conditions meant to determine the permanent insecurity and instability of the enemy’s deployment.

2 The Need for Rigorous Planning of All Types of Resource Consumption during the Fight within Encirclement

In the context of the fight within encirclement, the extreme character of the operations makes the platoon (company) commander establish a severe regime of consumption for all materials.

Thus, ammunition, fuel, lubricants, spare parts shall be distributed to the subunits depending on the importance and difficulty of the missions they will perform.

At the same time, the commanders must ensure measures for timely harnessing of natural conditions or facilities offered by the terrain of the encirclement area for the resupply of the personnel with food, drinking water and health care.

In the situation in which there is a possibility that upper echelons could send ammunition or supplies by air, the containers with these products are gathered in places determined by the platoon (company) commander and distributed in strict accordance with his orders.

In essence, the fight in encirclement must ensure:

- firm hold of the occupied area;
- rejection of the attempts by the enemy to fraction or destroy the encircled subunits;
- creating favorable conditions and rapid and timely harnessing of their exit from the encirclement.

In this sense, the circular support point of the platoon (company) must include, if possible, localities and forests and support rough terrain landmarks, on obstacles hard to cross (rivers, canals, lakes, swamps) which block the enemy’s approach avenues and can be defended with little means and forces.

The system of barriers and obstacles must block the favorable avenues of access of the enemy, particularly with tanks, to cover the flanks and the intervals between
the subunits, by using the existing or improvised means. Mines and obstacles will be used, in particular, non-explosive ones such as (abatis, traps, log ramps, networks of concertina wire, logs and others) and the natural properties of the terrain will be used as much as possible.

*The deployment of the platoon (the company) must ensure:*
- the all-round defense;
- hold of the occupied support point;
- reduced vulnerability against the enemy strikes;
- possibility of destruction of its subunits that act to split deployment;
- carrying out actions in the situation in which opportunities to leave the encirclement are available;
- achievement of rapid juncture with the forces of the higher echelon in the situation of leaving the encirclement.

*The fire system, in the context of the fight within encirclement, must enable:*
- a low consumption of ammunition by executing accurate and effective fire of all categories of armaments;
- focus on the directions of attack favorable to the enemy;
- rapid fire maneuver and means from a threatened direction to another one;
- carrying out strikes on any threatened direction;
- reciprocal support with fire between subunits;
- sound combining of system of fire with all types of obstacles;
- possibility of permanent increasing of the engineering works required for the protection of personnel and the combat technique as well as the increase of the efficiency of the strikes.

### 3 Emphasis on the Extreme Character of the Operations Carried Out in a Long Term Encirclement

Special and extreme complexity of operations carried out in the encirclement is determined by the following main factors:
- total isolation from the higher echelon forces and the existence of minimal chances of restoring contact with them through an offensive action from the outside;
- reduced possibilities of resupply by air of the encircled forces due to the reduced areas of the encircled districts (0.25-0.3 square kilometers – platoon, respectively, 1-1.5 square kilometers – company), which also involves the launch of containers with ammunition and materials from a low altitude and the amplification of the vulnerabilities of transport aircraft towards the enemy’s aviation and anti-aircraft defense;
- inexistence of the personnel rest in an organized system because the entire combat strength must be in a state of high alert to intervene at any time and anywhere the enemy is trying to break into the perimeter of the encirclement; this state causes physical and psychological fatigue of the military, stress and tensioned relationships that can cause syncope in the process of coordination of actions;
- the necessity of using some sources of food and water from the local area whose quality cannot be inspected epidemically and whose consumption may cause sickness;
- progressive reduction of resources of personnel, ammunition, fuel and equipment, as a result of combat actions or other factors, without the existence of a real chance of support from the higher structures;
- permanent existence of the sensation of isolation of the encircled forces can gradually produce the feeling of fear and horror, and if firm measures of counseling are not taken or, in special cases, the restoration of order and discipline, these can turn into widespread chaos and abandonment of the fight.

In these contexts, of extreme difficulty, the camaraderie spirit needs to be permanently nurtured, the full potential of physical and mental resources of personnel be used and try constantly to find solutions to exit the encirclement by capitalizing the adverse weather conditions (night, fog,
storm, blizzard) and exploiting unattended or poorly supervised premises by the enemy.

In the sense described above, leaving the encirclement is prepared and run by the subunit which fought in the encirclement in order to break the encirclement front, on the most poorly defended direction and to achieve the junction with friendly troops in the shortest possible time.

Triggering actions of leaving the encirclement is conducted with the approval of higher echelon (if there was a contact with it) or at the initiative of the commander of the encircled forces and is carried out successively until the complete evacuation of the area is done. Evacuation in small groups without approval, and by abandoning the wounded, weapons and military equipment is prohibited.

To sum up the military operations within the encirclement represent some of the most difficult and critical possible combat actions due to the high degree of hazard and the permanent risk that the entire personnel who are in such an actional situation must be aware of and assume it.

BIBLIOGRAPHY
