

# INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY

East Germany

DATE DISTR. 9 January 1953

SUBJECT

Survey of the Fall Maneuvers of the Eighth Guards Army

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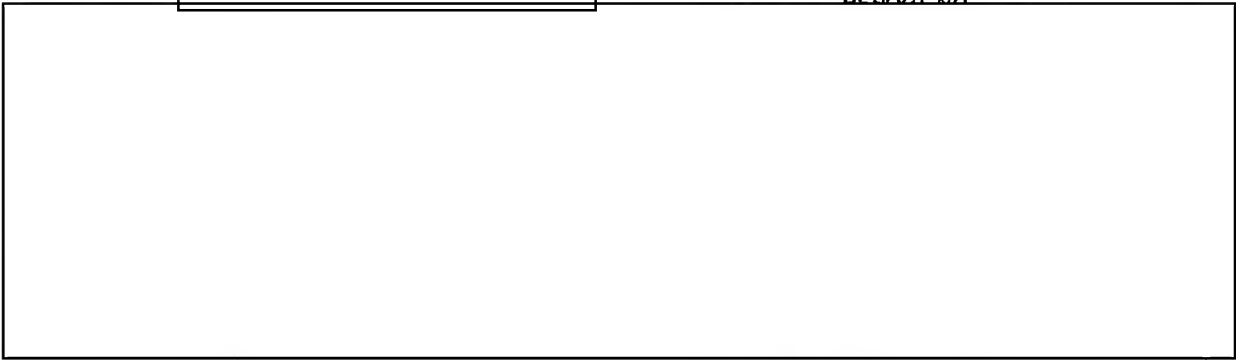
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(LISTED BELOW)

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SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.



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1. The fall maneuvers of the Eighth Gds Army were covered by five groups of sources. The reports by 68 sources who covered four of the phases from 1 to 20 October 1952 were processed and evaluated individually as well as collectively. It is therefore possible to confirm the individual reports and to gain an understanding of the course and objective of the exercise as well as of the movements, occupancy of barracks installations after the pre-winter evacuation of fall encampments, [ ]

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The T/O of the units involved has not been evaluated in this study.

2. The movements of the Eighth Gds Army can be divided into periods of time as follows:

a. From 1 to 10 October 1952, part of the troops and billeting equipment were transported to the home stations from the troop training grounds in Ohrdruf, Kirdel and Lossa. During this period, 49 trains consisting of 253 converted boxcars, 804 boxcars and 1,095 flatcars involving 24 APNs were observed.<sup>1</sup>

b. From 5 to 10 October 1952, part of the troops moved from the troop training grounds to the assembly areas for the fall maneuvers in the Dessau-Miesenburg area. During this period, 55 trains consisting of 313 converted boxcars, 138 boxcars and 1,708 flatcars, involving 32 APNs, as well as 9 trains of the IV Arty Corps were observed.<sup>2</sup> A comparison of the number of cars of the various types used for these two movements shows that the troops who moved from 1 to 10 October required 804 boxcars, and therefore it is concluded that they carried six times the amount of billeting equipment and baggage to the troop training grounds that they actually needed for this short-term exercise.

c. From 6 to 8 October 1952, another part of the force marched to the assembly areas by road.

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3. Information obtained indicated that the course of the exercise was as follows: The XXIX Gds Itz Rifle Corps assembled in the Dessau-Koethen-Halle-Bitterfeld area, south of the Elbe River, constituting the White Force.<sup>3</sup> The following units were attached to this corps, the 18th How Arty Brig (US) of the 6th Arty Div, the 124th Iv How Arty Brig (US) of the 6th Arty Div, elements of the 34th Arty Div, the 25th Rocket Launcher Brig of the IV Arty Corps of the GDR, the unidentified engineer regiment in Bernburg and the 36th Pan Bridge Regt in Magdeburg of the GDR, and the Army Engr Regt and elements of the 13th AAA Div of the Eighth Gds Army.
4. The XXVIII Gds Itz Rifle Corps assembled in the area near Hedlitz and Wiesenburg southeast of the Altengrabow troop training grounds, constituting the Red Force north of the Elbe River. As 64 trains went to the maneuver area and 136 trains returned to the home stations from that area, it would appear that at least one half of the troops involved moved to the maneuver area by road.
5. Road movements observed included:
- (1) The movement of the 18th How Arty Brig (US) of the IV Arty Corps which, on 8 October, moved from Altengrabow to the area southeast of Dessau via Ziesar-Wiesenburg-Coswig.<sup>3</sup>
  - (2) The motor movement of the 21st Gds Mecz Div which, during the period from 6 to 9 October, left the Lossa troop training grounds southward, then went westward via Buttstaedt-Cerlishausen and, probably turning north via Koelleda-Heldrungen, reached Highway No 80 near Sangerhausen. Other sources reported those motor elements passing through Halle, coming from the direction of Bisleben and proceeding in the direction of Koethen.  large elements of the 39th and 57th Gds Itz Rifle Divs must have moved by road.<sup>1</sup>
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6. All troops were assembled on 10 October. The XXVIII Gds Itz Rifle Corps, Red Force, probably had assumed a defensive position in the Darby-Aken-Losslau section on the north bank of the Elbe River and had advanced reconnaissance units across the river prior to the beginning of the exercise. The reinforced XXIX Gds Itz Rifle Corps of the White Force attacking from the south dislodged these Red reconnaissance units and reached the south bank of the Elbe River by 11 October. The first White elements probably crossed the river in the evening on 11 October and, during that night, constructed five bridges making it possible for the bulk to cross in a very short time. The large White artillery group joined the XXIX Gds Itz Rifle Corps in its zone of action, moving from an assembly area southeast of Dessau and east of the Mulde River and advancing from east to west at right angles to the movements of the other White troops. On 5 October, the 36th Pan Bridge Regt of the group had been assigned the problem of constructing a bridge across the Mulde River near Kleutsch to facilitate the movement of the artillery units when crossing the river westward. This action was carried out before the assembly movements that were still under way on 9 October, and it cannot be determined whether the operation was a special exercise or merely a practice.
7. The attack of the White main group which proceeded from the south in the direction of Zerbst via the Aken-Brambach area was supported by a smaller group which, advancing from the wooded area northeast of Lodderritz, probably crossed on ferries and attacked toward Zerbst from the southwest. As Zerbst, which is at the intersection of five roads on which the Red Units had to retreat northward after being dislodged from the north bank of the river, was vital to both forces, the aggressor wanted to capture this point at the earliest possible moment. Therefore, heavy fighting with extensive employment of artillery and air force developed in that area on 13 October. Red units were to maintain possession of the airfield of Zerbst as a strong point for tactical reasons.

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8. [redacted] supplied the information on the construction of bridges. He stated that in places at which the minimum width of the Elbe River was 250 meters and on a frontage of 6 km, five bridges were built across the river during the night of 11 October. Of the five built, three were pontoon bridges with three-section equipment, one was an iron pile-bent bridge, and one was an underwater bridge on piles, probably a foot bridge for personnel. Although this report is unconfirmed, it appears credible inasmuch as 2 engineer regiments of the GDFG, 1 army engineer regiment, 1 corps engineer battalion and 2 divisional engineer battalions were available. However, the construction of the pile-bent bridge must have taken at least 24 hours.

9. The tactical aspect of building a large number of bridges during one night indicates that the white aggressor attempted to bring strong forces including numerous heavy batteries across the river in order to follow up the retreating enemy with massed forces and long-range fire. This principle of immediate pursuit was also emphasized in numerous small-scale exercises of tank units this summer.

10. Comparison of the loading areas used after completion of the exercise with the unloading areas used prior to the beginning of the exercise shows that during the period from 13 to 15 October, the White forces advanced continuously, probably as far as the Belzig-Barby line, and threw the Red XXVIII Gds Mtz Rifle Corps back as far as the area of Altengrabow. The exercise ended with this action on 15 October.<sup>3</sup> and <sup>4</sup>

11. Only incomplete information is available on the participation of the 24th Air Army. The ground attack regiment stationed in Dessau took off at 10:30 a.m. and landed in Dessau again at 3:30 p.m. on 9 October. It is, therefore, believed that on that day the regiment made an intermediate landing at an unidentified airfield farther south. As the aircraft had the markings of the white force, there is reason for believing that they attacked the assembly areas of the Red forces. The ground attack regiment stationed in Brandenburg-Grado moved from Brandenburg to Dessau on 10 October and was probably assigned a similar mission. The fighter division in Merseburg -Alt-Loennowitz-Kerbst was involved in the exercise on 15 October.

12. All army units of the Eighth Gds Army and the IV Arty Corps moved on 135 trains from the loading areas north of the Elbe River to their home stations during the period from 16 to 19 October.<sup>2</sup>

13. [redacted]

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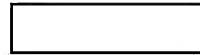
14. [redacted]

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15. The exercise was used to train the headquarters and troops at army level on the following subjects:
- A. Retraining and detraining.
  - B. Establishment areas and movements from and to these areas by headquarters during limited periods of time.
  - C. Handling of logistical problems by transportation offices and testing of the operational and structural capacity of the rail-road system.
  - D. Motor movements on highways and roads over great distances involving problems of fuel supply.
  - E. Lateral movements in the combat zone by large artillery units moving through other troops involving traffic control problems.
  - F. River defense and delaying actions in successive positions.
  - G. Defense of strong points.
  - H. Bridge building, with emphasis on time and rapid river crossings by large concentrated elements.
  - I. Pursuit following penetration.

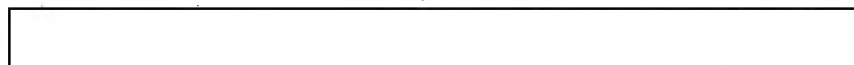
It cannot be determined whether the headquarters and troops involved were able to cope with these problems successfully.

16. However, the information on the engineer training in river crossing which had already been emphasized in 1951 and was described in paragraph 3 of the present report allows the following conclusions: The source who reported on bridges, stated that five bridges were built during one night and were dismantled until 15 October, when the exercise was probably completed.<sup>5</sup> The construction of the pile-bent bridge and the underwater foot bridge on piles was extremely fast and was probably accomplished that rapidly because of criticism by Soviet Marshal I. I. Konov, who in 1951, had reprimanded the same engineer units at the same sector of the Elbe River for slowness. The commanding engineer officers may, therefore, have felt compelled to establish record times this year. In support of this conclusion, it was repeatedly reported by sources that the engineer units concerned crilled in the same places on the Elbe River sector during the summer training periods.<sup>6</sup>

1.  Comment. See Annex 1.
2.  Comment. See Annex 2.
3.  Comment. See Annex 3.
4.  Comment. See Annex 4.
5.  Comment. See Annex 5.
6.  Comment. See Annex 6 for a list of reports, on which this study is based.

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Annex 1

- 1 -

Trains of the Eighth Gds Army and the IV Arty Corps during the Period from 1 to 10 October.

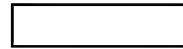
The information is based on reports by three sources.

Shipment-Record Number	Unit	Entraining Area	Number of Trains
75344 through 75347	U/i Arty Brig of the XXVIII Gds Mtz Rifle Corps	Ohrdruf	4
75348 through 75350	20th Gds Mecz Div	Ohrdruf	3
75614 through 75616	497th AAA Regt (US) of the XXVIII Gds Mtz Rifle Corps	Ohrdruf	3
75617	39th Gds Mtz Rifle Div	Ohrdruf	1
75619	20th Gds Mecz Div	Ohrdruf	1
75620 through 75623	Hq units of the XXVIII Gds Mtz Rifle Corps	Ohrdruf	4
75624 through 75633	20th Gds Mecz Div	Ohrdruf	10
75634 through 75642	Hq units of the XXIX Gds Mtz Rifle Corps	Eisenach	9
75643 through 75650	57th Gds Mtz Rifle Div	Eisenach	8
75654 through 75659	21st Gds Mecz Div	Lossa	6
		Total	49
75660 through 75683	20th Gds Mecz Div	Ohrdruf	24
75684 through 75687	Hq units of the XXVIII Gds Mtz Rifle Corps	Ohrdruf	4
75688 through 75693	20th Gds Mecz Div	Ohrdruf	6
75694 through 75699	21st Gds Mecz Div	Lossa	6
75701 through 75702	57th Gds Mtz Rifle Div	Eisenach	2
75703 through 75705	Hq units of the XXIX Gds Mtz Rifle Corps	Eisenach	3
75706 through 75707	39th Gds Mtz Rifle Div	Ohrdruf	2
75717	19th Indep Gds Ingr Bn of the Eighth Gds Army	Bad Koesen	1

19 trains  
to home  
stations

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Annex 1

- 2 -

Shipment-Record Number	Unit	Entraining Area	Number of Trains
75719 through 75722	13th AAA Div	Weimar	4 )
75606	91st Sig Regt (US) of the Eighth Gds Army	Weimar	1 )
75607	53d Sig Bn (US) of the XXVIII Gds Mtz Rifle Corps	Ohrdruf	1 )
75865	880th Engr Bn of the XXVIII Gds Mtz Rifle Corps	Templin	1 )
75732 through 75725	124th Hvy How Arty Brig (US) of the IV Arty Corps	Brandenburg	4 )
75736 through 75737	25th RL Brig of the IV Arty Corps	Prennitz	2 )
75476 through 75477	Elements of the 34th Arty Div of the IV Arty Corps	Tanger- huette	2 )
75604	Elements of the 34th Arty Div of the IV Arty Corps	Stendal	1 )
Total			64

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Annex 2

- 1 -

Trains of the Eighth Gds Army and the IV Arty Corps returning from the  
Dessau-Wissenburg Area to their Home Stations  
during the Period from 16 to 19 October 1952.

The information is based on reports by six sources.

Shipment-Record Number	Unit	Entraining Area	Number of Trains
75885 through 75915	20th Gds Mecz Div	Kiesar-Alten- grabow	31
75916 through 75930	39th Gds Itz Rifle Div (15th Gds Engr Bn	Lindau Meinsdorf)	15
75931 through 75933	220th Hv Tank BR Regt of the Eighth Gds Army	Medlitz	3
75934 through 75940	21st Gds Mecz Div	Medlitz	7
75941 through 75946	39th Gds Itz Rifle Div	Loburg	6
75947 through 75955	IV Arty Corps	Loburg	9
75956 through 75958	U/I Arty Brig of the XXVIII Gds Itz Rifle Corps	Belzig	3
75959 through 75962	13th AAA Div	Belzig	4
75963	U/I Arty Brig of the XXVIII Gds Itz Rifle Corps	Belzig	1
75964	Army troops of the Eighth Gds Army	Belzig	1
75964	Hq unit of the XXVIII Gds Itz Rifle Corps	Belzig	1
75967	316th RL Regt of the XXVIII Gds Itz Rifle Corps	Belzig	1
75970	unidentified unit		1
75971 through 75973	30th(?) Army AF Arty Brig of the Eighth Gds Army	Belzig	3
75974	19th Indep Gds Engr Bn of the Eighth Gds Army	Aken	1

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Annex 2

- 2 -

Shipment-Record Number	Unit	Entraining Area	Number of Trains
75075 through 75999	57th Gds Mtz Rifle Div and Hq units of the XXIX Gds Mtz Rifle Corps (Engr Units Weinsdorf)	Wiesenburg-Zerbst	25
75001 through 75002	U/1 Arty Brig of the XXIX Gds Mtz Rifle Corps	Zerbst	2
75004 through 75014 ) except 75005 )	IV Arty Corps	Loburg-Altengrabow-	10
75016 through 75027 ) except 75022 )		Magdeburg	11
75035	880th Engr Bn of the XXVIII Gds Mtz Rifle Corps	Wiesenburg (for Templin)	1
Total			136

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