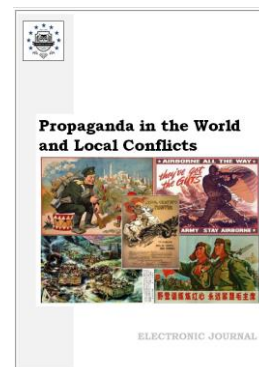


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Weapons of Propagandists

From the Experience of Using Powerful Sound Broadcasting Stations by the Red Army in 1943

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Abstract

The article considers some experience of the use of sound broadcasting stations by the Red Army in 1943 on the Eastern Front of World War II. The attention is paid to the circumstances of the emergence of a document on the conservation of sound broadcasting installations at the front – “A memo on saving loudspeakers and trench installations from enemy fire”.

There were used as materials the documents from the Central Archives of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation (Podolsk, Russian Federation). Case 91 was used – the Documents of the 7th department of the political department of the 33rd Army on the organization of propaganda and agitation (bulletin “Sharing of experiences”). 1944 year.

After the Red Army's offensive operations in 1943, there were recorded among troops the cases of the destruction of sound broadcasting stations PLI-39. The fact of the destruction of these powerful loud-speaking installations led to the investigation of this case in the political department of the Red Army. During the proceedings, the reasons for the death of the equipment were clarified and, ultimately, on January 7, 1944, “A memo on saving loudspeakers and trench installations from enemy fire” was developed.

Keywords: a powerful sound broadcasting system, Red Army, combat use, 1943, World War II.

1. Introduction

1943 is a year of transition of the strategic initiative on the Eastern Front from Germany to the Soviet Union. This then predetermined the resumption of the use of Powerful Loudspeaker Installations (PLI, in Russian abbreviation MGU) at the front. At that time, PLI were used both to generate noise (for example, the sound of armored vehicles moving), such a sound was put to misinform the enemy about the concentration of tank units in the immediate rear, or vice versa, classical music was put to drown out the noise from the movement of equipment. Furthermore, PLI were also used for propaganda broadcasting to the front line of the enemy, in order to demoralize him. The use of PLI at the front soon led to the death of such installations ([TsAMO RF. F. 388. Op. 8719. D. 91. L. 32](#)). If we take into account that this equipment was a piece of no more than two installations for the army, then this was the reason for the proceedings in the 7th department of the Main Political Directorate of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army.

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2. Materials

There were used as materials the documents from the Central Archives of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation (Podolsk, Russian Federation). In particular, Case 91 was used – the Documents of the 7th department of the political department of the 33rd Army on the organization of propaganda and agitation (bulletin “Sharing of experiences”). 1944 year.

3. Results

So, in the second half of 1943, several deaths of PLI (Figure 1) were registered together with the service personnel. During the proceedings, it was found out that these installations were noticed by the enemy's sonometric devices and covered with the fire of his mortars or artillery. The reasons for the death of these installations were insufficient camouflage, incorrect choice of position or prolonged broadcasting from one point.



Fig. 1. PLI-39 Sound Broadcasting Station

The head of the 7th department of the political department of the 33rd Army, Major Rosenstein, noted that in their army, the culprits of losses in most cases were senior instructors of political departments for work among enemy troops at division headquarters, who were extremely irresponsible about the organization of the work of the sound station, ignoring instructions on the need for a thorough study of their front line and the preparation of convenient places for works of PLI and trench loudspeakers (TL, in Russian abbreviation OGU) (TsAMO RF. F. 388. Op. 8719. D. 91. L. 33).

Senior instructors of political departments often did not care at all about the advance preparation of places for transmissions from PLI and TL (providing shelter for the station, careful masking of equipment and horns, the allocation of fighters to guard the station, etc.). Often the PLI crew has to hastily choose a position to work without sufficient knowledge of the terrain and the situation, which lowers the quality of work stations and leads to the failure of equipment losses in men (TsAMO RF. F. 388. Op. 8719. D. 91. L. 33).

Especially for the preservation of sound stations, a guidance note was drafted, which was called “A memo on saving loudspeakers and trench installations from enemy fire”. We will cite this document full:

A memo on saving loudspeakers and trench installations from enemy fire.

January 7, 1944

1. For successful operation of the installation and saving it, it is necessary to choose the right position, skillfully use it tactically.

The senior instructor for work among enemy troops, Podiva, (political department) is a responsible for choosing the workplace of the station, its disguise, as well as protection.

2. In all cases, the PLI car and remote speakers should be placed secretly from the enemy's observation and well masked on the spot with improvised means.

The TL are located secretly in a dugout, but no closer than 200-250 m from the front line of the enemy.

3. It is better not to place the PLI remote horns directly on the ground, but to hang them in tree branches, but not on a free-standing tree – this will increase the range of audibility and make it difficult for the enemy to detect their location.

The TL horns should be placed as close as possible to the front line of the enemy, but no closer than 100-120 meters and carefully camouflaged.

Taking into account the insignificant range of audibility of TL horns, they should be placed covertly on the crests of hills, trees, under the roofs of large buildings, in the embrasures of destroyed buildings, etc.

4. A powerfully speaking station and horns should never be placed directly at the edge of the forest, along glades, hollows, streets, because in these cases the enemy will be able to easily locate the installation.

5. It should never be placed the installation along the axis with the direction of the horn, but always away from it (at an angle), and you should also not position the horn along the axis of the location of your command posts, ammunition supply points, batteries, etc.

If it is possible, the conductors going to the horns should be placed covertly in trenches, ditches, kerbs in order to protect them from damage by fragments of mines and shells.

6. The duration of transmission from one position should not exceed 8-10 minutes.

When operating the TL in populated areas, it is desirable to change the location of the horns as often as possible or give them different directions, considering the special conditions of sound propagation under these circumstances.

7. If there are no natural shelters or a pit suitable for use at the PLI workplace, a special pit should be dug to shelter cars, as well as slit trenches for shelter crew of the sound station.

8. At the end of the PLI work from this position, the installation is immediately set aside.

9. The horns must be constantly guarded by snipers or machine gunners. The work of the installation, if necessary, is covered by arrows and mortar fire of the units ([TsAMO RF. F. 388. Op. 8719. D. 91. L. 34-37](#)).

4. Conclusion

After the Red Army's offensive operations in 1943, there were recorded among troops the cases of the destruction of sound broadcasting stations PLI-39. The fact of the destruction of these powerful loud-speaking installations led to the investigation of this case in the political department of the Red Army.

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[TsAMO RF](#) – Tsentral'nyi arkhiv ministerstva oborony Rossiiskoi Federatsii [Central archives of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation].