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Volunteer movement in the Rostov Region in the Period of the Great Patriotic War

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Abstract

Introduction. An indicator of the national and domestic character of the Great Patriotic War was, among other things, the mass volunteer movement shown by Soviet citizens literally immediately after its beginning. In its essence, scale, social and ethnic composition, forms, military-political significance, it was a truly unique phenomenon of domestic and entire world history.

Materials and methods. The article uses documents and materials containing information about various aspects of the volunteer movement during the Great Patriotic War in the Rostov region, identified in data historians and contained in published collections. The multifactorial approach, descriptive, comparative-historical and historical-system methods are used.

Results. The volunteer movement during the war included citizens who voluntarily showed their willingness to go out and fight. They filled out the application to the military commissar's office asking for being sent to war. There were two main categories: those who due to their age and health status were liable for military service and were subject to conscription after the announcement of mobilization and those who due to their non-conscription, too young or elderly age, illness or official exemption due to their important professional activities (the so-called "reservation") were not subject to conscription. The volunteer movement in the Rostov region was distinguished by great activity and massive participation. The first volunteer groups in the region were fighter battalions. In July 1941, 77 fighter battalions were formed with a total number of 16 thousand people. On July 5, 1941, a special resolution of the Rostov regional committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) on the organization of the people's militia units was issued. The Rostov rifle regiment of the people's militia was formed. In the Don villages, literally from the first days of the war, a massive volunteer movement of Cossacks arose. During the temporary occupation of the Rostov region by Nazi invaders, Don partisans courageously fought behind enemy lines. Members of guerrilla regiments operating throughout the region and based in the most suitable secret places of stay, and underground groups located directly in the settlements of the region, should also be attributed to the participants in the volunteer movement.

Discussion and conclusion. The mass volunteer movement that unfolded in the Rostov region in its content and forms of implementation had both general, characteristic of all regions of the country, and special characteristics. Its features were the great participation of volunteers of various age and social categories, from cities and villages of all parts of the Rostov region, the formation of volunteers from the Cossacks of the Don Cossack cavalry volunteer division, a very significant number of guerrilla regiments.

Keywords: volunteers, volunteer movement, people's militia, military units, partisans, the Great Patriotic War

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Добровольческое движение в Ростовской области в период Великой Отечественной войны

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Аннотация

Введение. Показателем народного и отечественного характера Великой Отечественной войны явилось среди прочего и проявленное советскими гражданами буквально сразу же после её начала массовое добровольческое движение. По своей сущности, масштабам, социальному и этническому составу, формам, военно-политическому значению оно явилось поистине уникальным явлением отечественной, да и всей мировой истории.

Материалы и методы. В статье используются документы и материалы, содержащие сведения о различных аспектах добровольческого движения в период Великой Отечественной войны в Ростовской области, выявленные в архивных хранилищах и содержащиеся в опубликованных сборниках. Использованы многофакторный подход, описательный, сравнительно-исторический и историко-системный методы.

Результаты исследования. Добровольческое движение в период войны включало в себя граждан, добровольно изъявивших желание идти сражаться с врагом и написавших соответствующее заявление в военкоматах с просьбой отправки на фронт, двух основных категорий: тех, кто по своему возрасту и состоянию здоровья являлись военнообязанными и подлежали призыву в армию после объявления мобилизации и тех, кто в силу своего непризывного, слишком молодого или пожилого возраста, болезней или имевшегося официального освобождения от призыва в силу своей важной профессиональной деятельности (так называемой «брони»), призыву в армию не подлежали. Добровольческое движение в Ростовской области отличалось большой активностью и массовостью. Первыми добровольческими формированиями в области стали истребительные батальоны. В июле 1941 г. было сформировано 77 истребительных батальонов общей численностью 16 тыс. человек. 5 июля 1941 г. выходит специальное постановление Ростовского обкома ВКП (б) об организации частей народного ополчения. Был образован Ростовский стрелковый полк народного ополчения. В донских станицах буквально с первых дней войны возникло массовое добровольческое движение казаков. В период временной оккупации Ростовской области немецко-фашистскими захватчиками в тылу врага мужественно боролись донские партизаны и подпольщики. Членов партизанских отрядов, действовавших на всей территории области и базировавшихся в наиболее подходящих скрытных местах пребывания, и подпольных групп, находившихся непосредственно в населённых пунктах области, также необходимо отнести к участникам добровольческого движения.

Обсуждение и заключение. Развернувшееся в Ростовской области массовое добровольческое движение по своему содержанию и по формам реализации оно имело как общие, характерные для всех регионов страны, так и особенные характеристики. Его особенностями было большое участие в нём добровольцев самых разных возрастных и социальных категорий из городов, станиц и сёл всех районов области, формирование из казаков добровольцев донской казачьей кавалерийской добровольческой дивизии, весьма значительное число партизанских отрядов.

Ключевые слова: добровольцы, добровольческое движение, народное ополчение, части, партизаны, Великая Отечественная война

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Introduction. This year, residents of the Rostov region celebrate the 80th anniversary of its liberation from German invaders during the Great Patriotic War. The visible indicator of the national and domestic character of the Great Patriotic War was, among other things, the mass volunteer movement shown by Soviet citizens literally immediately after its beginning. In its essence, scale, social and ethnic composition, forms, military-political significance, it was a truly unique phenomenon of domestic and entire world history.

Materials and methods. The article uses documents and materials containing information about various aspects of the volunteer movement during the Great Patriotic War in the Rostov region, identified in data historians and contained in published collections. Historiographic research on this problem is involved. The multifactorial approach, descriptive, comparative-historical and historical-system methods are used. The latter, in particular, allows you to study the object of

in published collections. Historiographic research on this problem is involved. The multifactorial approach, descriptive, comparative-historical and historical-system methods are used. The latter, in particular, allows you to study the object of this research by highlighting its individual structural elements, their direct and intermediated functions, their connection with each other and with the whole, scientific and critical analysis. When writing the article, methods of analyzing and synthesizing data were also used as well as general scientific and special scientific historical principles, such as objectivity, scientificity, historicism.

Results. The volunteer movement during the war included citizens who voluntarily showed their willingness to go out and fight. They filled out the application to the military commissar's office asking for being sent to war. There were two main categories: those who due to their age and health status were liable for military service and were subject to conscription after the announcement of mobilization and those who due to their non-conscription, too young or elderly age, illness or official exemption due to their important professional activities (the so-called "reservation") were not subject to conscription. The study by A.M. Sinitsyn noted that during the war, citizens of the USSR submitted more than 20 million applications to military, Soviet and party organizations asking to enroll them in the army [1, p. 26]. But due to various objective and subjective circumstances (non-draft age, unsatisfactory state of health, official "reservation"), a significant part of these applications was not granted. During the Great Patriotic War, the official number of volunteers in the USSR enrolled in various volunteer militia groups was more than four million people [2, p. 183].

Various groups, units and detachments of the so-called people's militia began to form from volunteers. These were volunteer military and paramilitary groups of various types, appointments, numbers and forms of organization (communist regiments and battalions, combined military detachments of the party, Komsomol, Soviet asset, regiments of the people's militia, as well as numerous fighter battalions subordinate to NKVD to protect important rear targets, maintain order, combat enemy paratroopers and saboteurs). Militia military units in the form of divisions and regiments totaling more than two million people [2, p. 183] were sent directly to the front line only at the most critical moments of the battles, mainly in the initial period of the war as military support to regular units of the Red Army.

Tens of thousands of the Rostov region residents showed willingness to volunteer for a deadly struggle against the enemy. The first volunteer groups in the region were fighter battalions. Their formation began immediately after the resolution of the Rostov regional committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) "On Measures to Combat Parachute Landing and Enemy Saboteurs in the Rostov Region". In accordance with this resolution, fighter battalions of 100-200 people were formed in all districts of the region, not subject to priority conscription into the army, of the most "proven, courageous, selfless communists, Komsomol members, Soviet activists capable to use arms, without interruption from their constant work" [3, pp. 24–25]. A lot of work was done in this direction very quickly, as a result of which by July 17, 1941, 77 fighter battalions with a total number of 16 thousand had been formed in the region. With each battalion, several assistance groups were created, the total number of which was 2,118 units. In total, there were 23,500 people in the fighter battalions and their assistance groups [4, p. 48].

Taking into account the fact that many thousands of the region's residents including those who were not subject to conscription into the army expressed their desire to go to war. On July 5, 1941, a special resolution of the Rostov regional committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) on the organization of the people's militia units was issued. In July 1941, sotnyas, battalions, regiments were formed from militiamen in almost all cities and parts of the region. On July 10, 1941, an order was issued by the commander of the Rostov garrison, Major General A.A. Grechkin, on the formation of the Rostov rifle regiment of the people's militia. The deputy director of the auto assembly plant, a reserve captain, M.A. Varfolomeev, was appointed as its commander. Only within a month after the release of this decree in the city of Rostov, more than 60 thousand applications from volunteers were submitted, in the city of Shakhty about 1.4 thousand, in the city of Kamensk over 1.6 thousand, in the city of Taganrog over 7.2 thousand, in the Zverevsky district more than 2.3 thousand, in Belokalitvinsky about 1.7 thousand, in Yegorlyksky more than 1.3 thousand [5, p. 174]. On October 15, 1941, a new Rostov militia regiment began to form which on November 10 joined the Rostov rifle regiment of the people's militia.

In the Don villages, since the first days of the war, a massive volunteer movement of Cossacks arose. On July 15, a joint resolution was adopted by the Bureau of the Rostov Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Rostov Regional Executive Committee "On the Creation of the Don Cossack Division in the Rostov Region". It was supposed to be staffed by volunteer Cossack sotnyas of 4 platoon-size formed in various parts of the region, each numbering 135 people, from persons... "regardless of their age/not subject to conscription, but able to use arms" [3, p. 62]. The formed volunteer Cossack division in the Rostov region received the name "Don volunteer Cossack cavalry division". On January 21, 1942, on the basis of the guideline of the General Staff of the Red Army, the "Don Volunteer Cossack Cavalry Division" was officially renamed the "116th Don Cossack Cavalry Division". Colonel P.Y.

Strepukhov was appointed a division commander. On January 26, 1942, the division became part of the army. Volunteers often joined this division with their families. For example, Cossack I.A. Khomutov, being already at the advanced age, joined a volunteer division with his sons, 14-year-old Alexander and 16-year-old Andrey. Cossack Vyshkvartsev joined one of the Cossack regiments of the people's militia with his wife and son. Cossack Zubenko arrived at the assembly point with his wife, son and two daughters. Cossacks Sklyarov, Chernoyarov, Fedorov and many others joined the militia together with their sons [6, pp. 17–18].

Among the Cossack volunteers there were also very young men who did not reach the draft age, in particular, the youngest of them, Alexander Khomutov, was only 14 years old, and very elderly men of non-draft age, for example, the oldest Cossack volunteer Nikolai Erokhin was 67 years old [7, p. 179]. In the spring of 1942, the 116th Don Cossack Volunteer Cavalry Division became part of the 17th Cossack Cavalry Corps. It is noteworthy that in one of political department reports of the 116th Don Cavalry Division to the political administration of the North Caucasus Military District on the state of the division, it was noted: "The vast majority of Cossacks are volunteers. More than 80 % of private corps are Cossacks over the age of 40 (that is, very advanced age – V.T.), participants of the civil war... There are squadrons equipped fully by Cossacks of the same region" [8, p. 84]. Later, this division was renamed the 12th Guards' Don Cossack Cavalry Division and became part of the famous 5th Guards' Don Cossack Cavalry Corps.

The volunteer movement on the Don continued in the subsequent war years. At the same time, it was expressed in two main forms: the desire of citizens of their own free will to go to war and the so-called Komsomol mobilizations. Thus, in 1942, the Komsomol mobilization of girls for service in the air-defense forces was announced in the country in order to send men to war. About 200 thousand girls in Komsomol mobilizations became fighters of air-defense troops, communications units, etc. [9, p. 204]. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that the Komsomol mobilizations were not officially mandatory and the Komsomol members could either voluntarily respond to them and become volunteers for the army, or ignore them. In the second case, to the maximum, they could only be declared penalties according to the Komsomol line. Thus, Komsomol mobilizations at their core were also one of the forms of the volunteer movement.

In the Rostov region, according to this Komsomol mobilization, a lot of Komsomol girls who were sent to serve in two air-defense regiments voluntarily signed up for the emerging air-defense units. Their girls-fighters fought the enemy courageously. And the feat accomplished by the antiaircraft gunners of the 3rd battery of the 734th air-defense regiment went down in the history of the war as a true example of heroism and courage. At the same time, for a number of objective reasons, for many years it had remained unknown, and only recently, thanks to the research of search engines, it has received attention in historical works and media publications.

During the temporary occupation of the Rostov region by Nazi invaders, Don partisans and guerillas courageously fought behind enemy lines. Members of partisan detachments and underground groups also need to be classified as members of the volunteer movement. Indeed, they entered these formations exclusively voluntarily. In the summer and autumn of 1941, 83 partisan detachments with a total number of about 3395 people were formed in the region, even before its first occupation [10, p. 162].

The peculiarities of the natural, mainly steppe, landscape of the Rostov region, the practical absence of significant forests and other natural shelters for partisan detachments basing, as well as the proximity of the front line, most directly affected the tactics of their actions. The significant part of the detachments was forced to act from the front-line not occupied part of the region. In May 1942, there were 67 partisan detachments in the region with a total number of 2324 people [3, p. 362]. The partisan struggle unfolded especially actively in the summer and autumn of 1942, after the enemy occupied almost the entire territory of the Rostov region, with the exception of only two northern Vyoshensky and Verkhnedonsky districts. At this very difficult time for the country, Don partisans and guerillas, constantly risking their own lives, selflessly fought the enemy. Two partisan detachments ("Otvazhny – 1" and "Otvazhny – 2") in the Neklinovsky district of the region, three ("Azovsky", "Aleksandrovsky – 1st" and "Aleksandrovsky – 2nd") in the Azov district were especially successful. Partisans of the "Gnevny Don" detachments of the Zavetinsky district, "Don Cossack" of the Migulinsky district, named after Kirov, named after the Rostov regional committee of the CPSU (B), "Stepnoy Orel" of the Orlovsky region, fighters of the Taganrog detachment, as well as partisan detachments of the Semikarakorsky, Kyiv, Kolushkinsky, Litvinovsky and other districts of the Rostov region fought bravely in difficult conditions, in the Don steppes.

The Don guerillas fought the enemy courageously and selflessly. In addition to the Stalin detachment, underground groups "Tramvaishik", "Mstitel", "Klyatva", Len-zavodskaya, G.F. Zholik and others operated in the city of Rostov. The bright and tragic page of the nationwide struggle against the enemy was the activities of Taganrog's guerillas.

During the period of enemy occupation, a total of 163 partisan detachments and underground groups, numbering about 4990 people in their ranks, operated on the territory of the Rostov region at different periods of time [7, p. 200].

Discussion and conclusion. Thus, literally since the very beginning of World War II, the massive volunteer movement unfolded in the Rostov region. In terms of its content and forms of implementation, it had both general, characteristic of all regions of the country, and special characteristics. The general substantive elements include the exclusively voluntary nature of its participants, significant massive participation, the participation of representatives of various age and social categories of citizens, and special – the large participation of Don Cossacks, often even parents with their children and entire families, a significant number of volunteers from villages of all districts of the region. The general forms of the volunteer movement implementation include the creation of militarized and military units common to other regions of the country, such as fighter units and assistance groups, parts of the people's militia, partisan detachments, and to the special ones – the formation of the Don Cossack cavalry volunteer division from volunteers, preliminary organization, despite the lack of the necessary landscape and geographical conditions for their successful operation, a very significant number of partisan detachments, some of which did not act directly in the region, and from the location of the front-line units of the Red Army, the presence of the country's only urban partisan detachment named after Stalin, stationed and operating directly in the city of Rostov-on-Don.

Volunteer units, formations and detachments formed in the Rostov region, in particular, Rostov rifle regiment of the people's militia, Don volunteer Cossack cavalry division, renamed later the 116th Don Cossack Cavalry Division, and then became the 12th Guards Don Cossack Cavalry Division, despite the serious losses in bloody battles of the initial period of the war, were included as regular units in the Red Army.

Being active in the region, in very difficult unfavorable landscape and geographical conditions of the steppe, quite numerous partisan detachments, the total number of which for the entire period 1941–1943. amounted to 163 units, inflicted heavy losses on the enemy.

The volunteer movement in the Rostov region played an important role during the war, especially at its very difficult initial stage. Don volunteers fought the enemy courageously and made their considerable contribution to the Victory.

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