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HISTORICAL EVENTS AS A BASIS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MILITARISTIC TOURISM: DEFENSE OF VLADIKAVKAZ IN THE BATTLE FOR THE CAUCASUS

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The article is devoted to the study of events of the Great Patriotic War within the limits of one of directions of a modern tourist industry – militaristic tourism, allowing to plunge into atmosphere of war time and to learn about occurring events through categories of informative tourism. "Battle for the Caucasus" which is one of the largest companies in 1942-1943, the theatre of military operations which, in terms of territory coverage, stretched from the Don River to the slopes of the Main Caucasus Range where the battles of a critical nature occurred in the territory of the modern Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, namely near Mozdok, the Elkhoto Gate and Vladikavkaz. The result was the transition of the strategic initiative to the Soviet side. A significant number of objects from the Great Patriotic War period have been preserved in North Ossetia: There are museums, memorial complexes, and monuments to those who died in the war have been erected in almost every settlement. The development of military-historical tours contributes to the preservation of the military heritage of the Ossetian people, strengthens the sense of patriotism of the younger generations, helps to understand the concepts of "peace" and "war", and allows to participate as volunteers in the "Memory Watch" search activities.

Key words: Caucasus, North Ossetia, Vladikavkaz, history, Great Patriotic War, memory, tourism, excursions.

[И.С. Возиянова, Д.А. Покровский, А.В. Камалов Исторические события как основа развития милитаристского туризма: оборона Владикавказа в битве за Кавказ]

Статья посвящена изучению событий Великой Отечественной войны в рамках одного из направлений современной туристической индустрии – милитаристский туризм, позволяющего погрузиться в атмосферу военного времени и узнать о происходивших событиях через категории познавательного туризма. «Битва за Кавказ» – одна из крупнейших компаний 1942-1943 гг., театр военных действий которой по охвату территорий, протянулся от реки Дон до склонов Главного Кавказского хребта, где сражения переломного характера происходили на территории современной РСО-А, а именно – под Моздоком, у Эльхотовских ворот и Владикавказом. Результатом стал переход стратегической инициативы к советской стороне. На территории Северной Осетии сохранено значительное количество объектов периода Великой Отечественной войны: действуют музеи, открыты мемориальные комплексы, практически в каждом населенном пункте установлены памятники погибшим в годы ВОВ. Разработка военно-исторических туров способствует сохранению военного наследия осетинского народа, укреплению чувства патриотизма молодых поколений, осознанию понятий «мира» и «войны», позволят принять участие в качестве волонтеров в поисковых мероприятиях «Вахты памяти».

Ключевые слова: Кавказ, Северная Осетия, Владикавказ, история, Великая Отечественная война, память, туризм, экскурсии.

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Introduction

Militaristic or military tourism is one of the current trends in the modern tourism industry, which can be considered in several categories: firstly, with cognitive content, where the sites of the battles that took place and military-historical heritage sites are visited: memorial complexes, monuments, museums. Cognitive tours should include programs that provide visits to modern military ranges with the possibility of living in the field, learning the basic skills of firing and driving military equipment, flying combat helicopters and planes. Secondly, militaristic or military-historical tours include participation in reconstructions of famous military battles of the past, during which key episodes of military operations are recreated in theatrical form with a vivid emotional perception. The practice of such tourist trips and excursions is one of the forms of preserving the historical and cultural heritage of the military past in the memory of people living now and for future generations.

The subject of the Great Patriotic War has always occupied a special place in Russian-Soviet history. Its relevance remains significant at the current stage of society development. In the context of rapid change and technological influence on development in the political, socio-economic, cultural and educational spheres, it is particularly important to know, understand and appreciate the underlying lessons of history. It is necessary to pay maximum attention to the topic of the Second World War, as people of peace time should understand – through what privations the Soviet people went through four hard war years and what price they paid, having won fascism, thus, having protected the world from "a brown plague". While considering in detail military-historical events of that time, it is important to approach the information base with great awareness and responsibility, without "rewriting" the historical facts, setting the right accents. Upbringing of patriotism of future generations is ensured by the knowledge about the great feats performed by our grandfathers and great grandfathers, and what efforts were made to achieve them.

The people of modern Ossetia have been famous for their feats of arms for a millennium, one of which dates back to the period of the Great Patriotic War. Chronicle materials of those years contain a large amount of information, allowing to reproduce the events in the mind of a modern person in real mode. Due to the simultaneous strategic success at Stalingrad, the significance of the battles that took place in North Ossetia was not given due attention, although the defense of Vladikavkaz in the battle for the Caucasus had no less significance in the military turn of events of 1942-1943. A fuller disclosure of this fact may cause deserved interest among a wide audience, in particular the participants of military-historical tourism, allowing to make the preserved military objects, museums, memorials and monuments a subject of tourist interest.

The aim of the article is to investigate and substantiate the significance of military-historical topics in the development of tourism activities at the present stage of society development. Achievement of the above objective implies solution of the following tasks: to analyze available information about the events of the Battle for the Caucasus and the Defence of Vladikavkaz (1942-1943), to consider on the basis of the studied data the concept of basic directions in the development of military-historical tourism in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania. The following works served as the main information base: A.A. Magamev "Defeat of Germans near Vladikavkaz"; V.I. Larina, I.H. Bezhanov "Mozdok: a historical sketch." V.I. Larina "The streets are named after them"; A.V. Isaev "When there was no suddenness any more". Materials from the Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense, as well as data from an electronic resource, were a significant addition to writing the article.

Research methods

Using the method of historical and geographical analysis the study of military actions of Vladikavkaz defense in the Battle of the Caucasus is conducted. Statistical and bibliometric methods were also applied.

Results and discussion

After the failure of the Barbarossa plan and the Blitzkrieg strategy, German commanders planned a second lightning-quick campaign, which goal was to defeat the southern wing of the Soviet forces. This complex operation was called Braunschweig, for which two group of forces were assigned to carry out the task. "Army Group A" was intended for an offensive into the North Caucasus to seize the oil fields of Grozny and Baku. Under the command of Field Marshal Wilhelm List, an offensive was carried out in the summer of 1942, but Hitler dismissed him for not accomplishing the task of reaching the Caspian Sea, and for several months he led the command on his own. The aim of Army Group B was to capture Stalingrad and reach the Volga. It also provided cover for the left flank of Army Group A [6].

After the defeat of the Soviet forces in the Crimea, near Kharkov and in the Donbas, the German troops had overwhelming numerical superiority on the North Caucasus Front, which created favourable conditions for the implementation of plans to seize the Caucasus. On June 28, 1942 the "Blau" offensive operation began, an important component of which was the capture of oil fields. But on July 23, after the beginning of fighting for Rostov-on-Don, Hitler determined that the goal was achieved, and on the same day a new offensive operation "Edelweiss" began. On July 25, Soviet troops were ordered to retreat from the city. Commander of the North Caucasian direction, Marshal Budyonny, in order to avoid complete encirclement and destruction, offered Joseph Stalin to withdraw his troops on the edge of the Main Caucasian Ridge and the Terek River valley. The timely withdrawal promised to save the troops and hold the Caucasus, but delaying could lead to encirclement and defeat in the southern direction. The main reserves were engaged at Stalingrad. On July 28, Stalin approved the proposal, and on the same day the famous Order No. 227 "Not a step back" was signed [1].

After breaking the Soviet defenses at Rostov-on-Don, Army Group A moved to the oilfields of the Caucasus, where its shock nucleus was the 1st Panzer Army under the command of Ewald von Kleist. The initial plan was a tank breakthrough through Ordzhonikidze (Vladikavkaz) along the Military Georgian Road to Tbilisi. Von Kleist did not consider it necessary to attack the passes of the western Caucasus and wanted to concentrate all his efforts on the main direction, but the German high command did not accept his strategic intentions. Hitler set the task – to seize the eastern coast of the Black Sea, thereby depriving the Soviet Union of sea ports and the entire Black Sea Fleet.

To break through the passes of the Western Caucasus were drawn mountain corps, which included the 1st mountain division "Edelweiss". The personnel of such units were formed from soldiers who were trained and well equipped for combat operations in mountainous terrain, most of whom were natives of mountainous regions of Germany. These units were given an ambitious task: break through the mountain passes of the Main Caucasus Range and reach Tbilisi, to the rear of the Soviet units [1].

The defenses of the passes were originally weak and poorly organized, because, according to the Soviet commanders, the Great Caucasus Range was an insurmountable natural obstacle. This allowed the "mountain rangers" to reach the passes much earlier: Sancharo, Marukh, Klukhor. The main strike followed on 15 August through Klukhor: The Soviet units located on the pass were flanked, which gave the "Jägers" an opportunity to penetrate into their rear. An attack from the front and a threat from the rear forced a retreat and left the saddle to the defending troops. After capturing the Klukhor Pass, further German advance was halted, but subsequent counterattacks failed to recapture Klukhor. Then

the Germans reached the southern slopes of Mount Elbrus and on August 18 captured the "Refuge of the 11", which became a support base for the rush to the two-headed peak. On August 21, a group of mountaineers climbed the mountain, hoisting the flag with the German swastika. This fact was widely covered by the press: it was claimed to symbolise the conquest of the Caucasus and its peoples. But in reality, this action had no tactical significance, and Hitler perceived this ascent extremely negatively: he believed that precious time had been lost, as a result of which the Soviet troops were able to retreat from the passes, avoid being surrounded and totally annihilated.

In the battle for the Caucasus, the fights that took place on the territory of present-day Republic of North Ossetia–Alania can be considered the key stage, since their outcome was decisive for the entire military campaign, as well as for the transition of the military initiative to the Soviet side. At the end of August von Kleist's tank army reached the Terek River lines. Steep banks and strong stream did not allow to cross the river, and it was necessary to look for a suitable crossing, the place of which was chosen the town of Mozdok, captured on August 26 [3]. September 2, at 3:20 a.m., after an artillery preparation, the Germans began to force the river by boats, occupying the forest south of Mozdok, and by 8 a.m. they took the Predmostniy settlement and the northern suburbs of the Kizlyar village. From September 2 till September 4 German troops were concentrated on the south bank, where, putting up bridges, they threw tanks and began attacking at Voznesenskaya station. Hard battles near the settlement continued till September, 7, to which the enemy did not reach 10 km, as counterattacking formations of tank and infantry units of the Red Army were supported by aviation. Here German units, having suffered considerable losses, were forced to retreat in the direction of Predmostniy village. On September 11, the enemy moved the main strike to the west of Mozdok, and near the village Pavlodolskoe pontoon bridges made it possible to break through the defense of the Soviet troops and reach operational space and by the end of the day approached the north-western outskirts of Malgobek. From September 14 till September 16 the Soviet side made attempts to cut off from the main crossings the vanguards of the advancing enemy troops, conducting a counter-offensive in several directions at once. But from 19 till 25 September there was no active action on either side; each of them took advantage of the lull, building up their strength to strike again. The Soviets reinforced the grouping of troops located in the area of Elkhотовsky Gate, while the Germans continued to intensively accumulate forces in the Malgobek area [6].

Thus, having reconstructed the picture of the battles, we can argue that the territory of Mozdok district is optimal for the organization and development of militaristic tourism. Remains of defensive structures have been preserved in the area: pillboxes, trenches, utility lines, engineering structures for the organization of the crossing, in parks and squares of the city are war graves, allowing for informative tours. Since modern Mozdok is a major military transport hub, there is an opportunity to use this infrastructure as a complement to the historical programme.

On September 25, German units launched an offensive towards the village of Elkhотовo. To repel enemy attacks, the defending Soviet units were supported by artillery fire of two armored trains. On September 28, German troops captured Elkhотовo, but managed to continue their offensive and took the defensive. No active offensive action was taken until 26 October. Field Marshal General Kleist did not plan to stay in the narrow valley, expecting to quickly break through to Vladikavkaz and further to the oil fields, but he was forced into a long grueling battle. Fighting in the area of Elkhотов Gate lasted about 3 months and was of a positional nature; The main battles were fought for the dominating heights: No. 703, No. 331 (south of the village of Elkhотовo), No. 458 (south-west of the village of Karjin, north-west of the village of Darg-Kokh). Control over the heights allowed countering the movement of enemy troops along all the surrounding roads, including the

railroad tracks. To prevent the advance of the German troops, the narrow part of the valley was tightly fenced with minefields, wire barriers and anti-tank hedgehog. German troops stranded near Elkhotoovo could not expand the existing bridgehead, and von Kleist shifted the direction of the main strike to Baksan and Nalchik [4; 7].

After the battle for Mozdok, the grouping of Soviet troops near Nalchik was weakened, and concentrated strikes led to the disintegration of the defenses. The enemy launched a massive offensive along the Ossetian sloping plain along the northern slopes of the Central Caucasus to the flank of the Soviet units. This rapid breakthrough made it possible to capture the village of Gizel on November 2 and come very close to Vladikavkaz. According to eyewitnesses (Kargaev Konstantin Tsiplayevich) the attack began at night with indiscriminate shelling. The entire population of Gizeli was gathered in the anti-tank ditch that was dug by them in the direction of Vladikavkaz in front of the Chernaya river where the villagers spent about three days together with retreating defenders. Later they were evacuated to the Koban Gorge.

On November 4, 59 enemy tanks moved from the village of Gizel towards Vladikavkaz, but as they approached the Chernaya River, they failed to advance further and the offensive was redirected towards the village of Arkhonskaya. On November 7, the Red Army started an operation to surround the enemy near the village of Gizel and completed it on the same day. From November 8 to 10, the Wehrmacht troops made numerous attempts to break the encirclement through the village of Mayramadag, where the blockade was carried out from two directions: from the villages of Gizel and Dzuarikau – but only managed to penetrate a narrow corridor for a short period of time [4; 8]. The Germans desperately tried to retreat, but were destroyed, and the remaining scattered groups headed in the direction of the village of Kodahjin. By November 12, the clearance of the village of Gizel from enemy troops was finally completed [10].

By early 1943, as a result of the capture of the German forces at Stalingrad, the strategic situation was favorable for the defeat of another major German grouping in the North Caucasus. A turning point in the defense of the Elkhotoovsky Salient was the counterattack by Soviet troops on the north face of the front towards the Don River. In order to keep people and equipment under cover of numerous barriers, Germans began to withdraw their units to the north. A weakened German military commitment allowed the Soviets to take the initiative, but the advance was hindered by retreating rearguards and the large number of mines and land mines that dotted the roads. Since December 25 German troops began their withdrawal from Elkhotoovo village. Troops of the Red Army began an offensive on weakened positions, but persistent resistance, a large number of minefields and engineering structures prolonged the fighting and the enemy was finally defeated only by January 3, 1943.

The occupied territories of North Ossetia were fully liberated in early January 1943. On February 16, the Soviet counteroffensive pushed the 1st Tank Army to the Don, the 17th Army to the Kuban bridgehead. Already on February 17, at the bad time for climbing, a group of Soviet mountaineers climbed Elbrus to remove Nazi symbols and place red flags on both tops. The Battle of the Caucasus was finally concluded on October 9, 1943, when the German units were defeated on the Taman Peninsula [5]. Thus, one of the biggest battles of the Great Patriotic War ended. The city of Ordzhonikidze was awarded the title of City of Military Glory for the firmness and courage of Soviet soldiers and the inhabitants of the republic shown in the battles [11;12].

Having reconstructed the picture of the battles of the Great Patriotic War, which took place on the territory of Republic of North Ossetia–Alania, we can assert that this destination is optimal for the organization and development of militarist tourism. An important part of the program should be considered the architectural and sculptural complex "Memorial of Glory", the memorial complex "Barbashovo Field", where in addition to historical monu-

ments there is an exhibition of military equipment, a unique photo panorama of the Battle for the Caucasus chronicle, memory gallery "Heroes of the Soviet Union", installation of the feat by Peter Barbashov.

Conclusions

Thus, the historical events of the Second World War will allow to form cognitive tours and create tours of military subjects on the territory of the administrative subject of the North Caucasus Federal District – Republic of North Ossetia-Alania in the framework of tourist activity, which is economically profitable. The above-mentioned historical facts should be used to create various programmes, and, in our opinion, the starting point would be the village of Elkhotoovo where the most persistent and fierce positional fighting took place. Two routes are suggested: Elkhotoovo – Alagir – Duarikau – Mayramadag – Gizel – Vladikavkaz and Elkhotoovo – Ardon – Michurino – Archonskaya – Vladikavkaz. Mozdoksky district should be singled out as a separate territory, this destination is considered at the request of tourists, either independently, or is included in the specified routes. The textual part is complemented by the process of demonstration, as well as the opportunity to participate in historical reconstructions and "Memory Watch", where special teams are searching for the remains of fallen soldiers, to establish the names of heroes and find their relatives. Tourists will be able to contribute to the preservation of military-historical heritage by helping the "searchers" in their activities, which helps to create a lasting interest in military history, national patriotism and awareness of the concepts of "peace" and "war." It should be noted that the programs are designed using archival documents, the routes were built according to the reporting tactical maps of the times of hostilities.

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