

# KV'S TO THE ATTACK

*"Five powerful tanks came down the conveyor, five armored fortresses brought to life. . . ." The story of a Soviet tank from plant to front line. Voroshilov meets an old friend. First of a series.*

*Kuibyshev (by cable)*

PAST blocks of factory buildings stretched dozens of kilometers—as far as I could see. The plant roars day and night, knowing no rest, no Sundays. It is not simply working, it fights, like the entire Soviet country. These buildings, deep in the interior of the country, house the Kirov Works evacuated from Leningrad.

Several thousand workers were flown here. The Kirov men were brought to the Urals to produce powerful mobile armored fortresses for the Red Army. The front must get as many tanks as it calls for—that's the slogan of the Soviet country at war. Guided by this slogan, friendship was formed between the Leningrad and the Ural workers.

On my first visit to the plant I met small teams of foremen and workers from the assembly department. "Have you come to pay us a visit?" I asked one of the guests. A middle-aged worker answered. "Other departments are lagging behind us," he said bitterly. "They are lagging behind us and we behind the front. So we have come to spur them on. That's the kind of guests we are!" Usually, after such a visit, tank production leaps upward. "The Germans trumpeted throughout the world that they destroyed our plant," Socialist Hero of Labor Zaltsman, the plant's director, said to me. "Now their bones can attest to the products of the 'destroyed' plant." His military bearing and the orders on his breast reminded me of a general. He is a marshal of production, leading the vast army of workers, engineers, technicians.

This captain of industry leads his troops into battle and wins a victory. I saw there how a tank is born. I saw how a powerful crane hoists a newborn infant into the air where young women give it the finishing touch: a snow-white coat. The tank is then tested. I saw a machine driven at headlong speed across the broken country, whirled on the spot. On the shooting grounds machine-guns and cannons were being tested. Alexei Volkov, a veteran Putilov worker, has charge of the assembly department. He wears three decorations: for valiant labor, a medal and Order of the Red Banner, awarded earlier, and the Order of Lenin, bestowed on him recently for excellent fulfillment of important defense orders. He has eleven years' experience in tank production and assembled the first tank of

the KV (Kliment Voroshilov) type. In the winter of 1939, when the KV tanks produced by the Kirov workers went into action against the Finnish White Guards, Alexei Volkov and his team accompanied their handicraft to the front. Ignatyev, Kovsh, and Lyashkov led the tanks into the attack, Istrativ and Kolkov effected the necessary repairs right on the march. All of them are working with Volkov to this day—Lyashkov and Kovsh as team leaders. All of them were awarded government decorations; Istrativ thrice. The Kirov men who had worked in Leningrad under enemy fire realize fully what an order from the front for machines means.

I noticed a small red flag with the inscription "For Stakhanov Work" pinned on one of the machines in the polishing department. A young woman with a red kerchief about her head is the operator. Anna Martyanova exceeds the scheduled norm of output several hundred percent. Wife of an artilleryman at the front, she earns 900 rubles monthly. Martyanova was eager to talk. She radiated happiness that day, having received a letter from her husband—after three months' silence. "But we are fighting too," she declared suddenly. "He writes me that they have received the Banner of the Guard Troops. I am sure that by the end of this month our department will have won the Red Banner. See, we too are guardsmen."

Recently Kliment Voroshilov visited the plant. He climbed up on the tank named KV in his honor, and amid hushed silence addressed the workers: "Comrades, workers of the Kirov Plant and of the Urals. Stalin says that to achieve final victory over the enemy, we must eliminate German superiority in tanks and planes. You are producing tanks—what's more, heavy ones. That means victory lies in our hands, therefore it's up to you to help bring closer the hour of reckoning with the enemy. Stalin asked me to say that the front is expecting more and more of the splendid tanks you are making at present."

An interesting meeting occurred in the engine department. Behind one of the machines Voroshilov saw an old foreman. Dressed in a blue smock, his pocket bulging with gauges, the old man attracted attention by the stern expression on his face. "Listen, friend," Voroshilov said, pausing near him, "are you not Khudyakov?" "That's me, Comrade Voroshilov!"



"Well, old fellow, how come you're here?" "Making engines for tanks. I was evacuated from the Ukraine." Khudyakov, an old Party member, a partisan, fought in the detachment under Voroshilov's command. Marshal Voroshilov and the foreman recalled how they fought against the Germans during the civil war in the Ukraine. "Well, war is here again and we must do our best," Voroshilov said. "With my whole heart," Khudyakov replied, "but I wish I were a little closer to the front." "Never mind the front. Cut out that talk. Isn't this the front?" "True, of course. But my hands are aching to get at the fascists." "Have no fear, there are younger ones who will get at them. Say, you yourself probably have someone at the front." "Of course, my son Vasili!" "What is he doing?" "Driving a KV tank." "So what are you beefing about, old man? The father makes tanks, the son leads them into battle."

This factory is an army echelon linked to the front with ties of blood. Foreman Khudyakov sees to it that his son gets good tanks and his son makes sure that he will not disgrace his father.

**F**IVE powerful tanks came down the conveyor, five armored fortresses brought to life by Khudyakov and his comrades. Testers climbed onto them. A few minutes of waiting, and then with a roar the grim snow-white fortresses pulled out. . . . The five heavy tanks rolled toward the testing grounds. The drivers closed their eyes, dazzled by the snow scintillating in the winter sun. The forty-five degree frost singed the skin. Driving at the head of the column was twenty-three-year-old Lieutenant Astakhov. He had already fought at the front, was wounded, and was now getting ready to go back with his tank men. His crews comprise combine operators, tractor drivers, chauffeurs training at the grounds adjoining the works. The plant turns out tanks while the nearby training center turns out tankmen. Before leaving for the front the men spend ten days at the plant helping workers assemble the machines.

Tramping down the snow, the huge steel "mammoths" roared down the main street, past the factory buildings. "Watch our beauties go," said army engineer Novotortsev, beckoning to his friend Major Shevazudsky to come to the window. He was now training tank drivers while Shevazudsky was instructing artillerymen. The training grounds were cut by several ditches. The elevated line, barely perceptible under

the heavy snowdrifts, outlined anti-tank obstacles. In the instructor's presence, Battalion Commander Captain Glushkov posed Astakhov a tactical problem: "Carry out a frontal attack on the strongly fortified 'enemy' defense line." The tanks dashed forward. The solid anti-tank obstacles cracked under the caterpillars like lumps of sugar caught by strong teeth. Neither did the anti-tank pits halt the machines. Finally the tanks reached the steep, snow-covered ditch bank. The five machines made a bold dash to climb to the opposite bank, but one after another they began to crawl back along the frozen slope. A few more thrusts proved fruitless. The attack failed.

"And you call yourselves tankmen? And driving such tanks as the KV?" Novotortsev mocked, ordering the men to alight. The drivers stood embarrassed, silent, looking askance at the accursed bank. They thought the bank would be as soft and yielding as in the summer but it now proved tough as granite. "Now watch me," Novotortsev said, and climbed into the nearest tank. With a terrific clatter the machine started. After driving back and forth along the bank to gain speed, the engineer suddenly made a resolute thrust across. Once at the opposite bank the tank again began to misbehave, as if rendered dizzy by the height, began to back out. But a sharp turn to the right and then to the left sent it zigzagging upwards. When the top was reached, the engineer emerged, signaling to those below. Then he climbed back and returned, saying that he would demonstrate another method of overcoming high obstacles at great speed. "Look, there is some brush and further on some trees. You were afraid of them, for you underestimated the strength of your machine." Novotortsev then headed straight for the place where the opposite bank was covered with brushwood and trees. The thrust was so straight and so fast that before I realized what was happening, I saw the tank uproot the tree which collapsed onto the machine, leaving a huge crater in the ground which served as a stair for the tank. With this as a foothold, Novotortsev quickly reached the top. An hour passed, and one after another every driver did what previously seemed impossible, following Novotortsev to the top.

Since driving lessons took a considerable portion of the day, artillery practice was postponed until the night. Major Shevazudsky, who started grumbling at Novotortsev for encroaching on his schedule, finally calmed down, for after all, night

## YESTERDAY "Where will they attack next?"



practice is necessary at the front too. The artillerymen were up to snuff—and no wonder: four out of five already had taken part in the war. It was merely a matter of perfecting their skill, acquiring greater experience, familiarizing themselves with the machine. All of them, the tank commander, the driver, the gunner, the mechanic, the wireless operator, acted as a well synchronized crew.

OUR old acquaintances, the five KV tanks, cautiously crawl onto a huge platform. The locomotive is puffing away, ready to start. The tank crews line up near the cars. Those who built the giant tanks and those who trained the tankmen came to see them off. The men bid their friends and relatives goodbye.

We stop at a small station, children and adults run our way. They guess the nature of the load on the platform. You can't hide it, for it is not a needle, not even a combine harvester. . . . Again moving west, past endless snow-covered collective farm fields.

Mechanic George Konstantinov had just returned from the platform where he spent several hours warming the tank to protect it from the forty-five degree frost. He worked outside, exposed to the biting wind. "How goes it?" Tank Commander Yefimov asked. "Fine, have no fear we will not let it freeze." Konstantinov was a broad-shouldered, energetic fellow with a serious expression of concentration on his face. He knows tanks to the last detail. Even technicians frequently turn to him for advice. This twenty-three-year-old youngster is already a veteran. He fought at Chalkhingol, was on the Karelian Isthmus during the entire Finnish campaign, and was returning now to the front for the third time since the outbreak of the present war.

Another, perhaps no less experienced mechanic and driver, is Muscovite Eugene Dormidontov, affectionately called Zhenya. A tall, well built Russian giant, he's the merrymaker of the crowd. Even the slightly phlegmatic and dreamy wireless operator Vedishchev, cannot resist a smile when Dormidontov cracks a joke. He is also liked for his soft voice and the warmth and emotion put into every song. "Zhenya, sing 'Eagle'!" "Zhenya, sing 'Sulike'!" are orders showered on

him from every direction. Those were favorite songs and the boys were ready to listen to them endlessly. "Wait, boys. Just let me adopt the proper pose," replied Dormidontov, putting his knapsack on the berth and making himself comfortable. Everyone quieted down, and drawing closer to Dormidontov listened to the words of "Sulike"—the Georgian song about love and nightingales.

EVERY morning and evening the men got a review of the current political situation. This was Astakhov's job. Removing his helmet and throwing back his blond hair, he would announce, "And now I will tell you what is taking place today in the wide world." Wireless kept the train in contact with the outside and the tankmen seated in the rapidly moving cars were indeed in close touch with the whole wide world.

As we drew nearer the front, the boys threw the doors open more and more. Dressed in cotton padded suits, felt boots, the tankmen were unmindful of the cold and wind. "Boys, look, there's a trophy tank!" someone shouted during one halt. Despite the fact that more than half the tank men fought on the battle field and an enemy tank was not a novelty to them, everybody ran to the platform where the damaged fascist tank was stationed. "Professor, take a chair," shouted Dormidontov inviting Konstantinov, who knew all about German tanks, to "deliver a lecture." Many hands lifted Konstantinov onto the platform and in a few minutes he described the technical properties and fighting qualities of the fascist tank. "Now you can see for yourselves," concluded Konstantinov, amid laughter, pointing to dozens of bullet holes, "what cardboard armor is. This is not your KV!"

The train is nearing the front line after covering over 2,000 kilometers in slightly more than two days. A faint booming of guns is heard in the distance. Some ten kilometers remain. The tank engineers are already started. The crews take their places.

The train comes to a halt. A few minutes and every tank creeps down to solid ground.

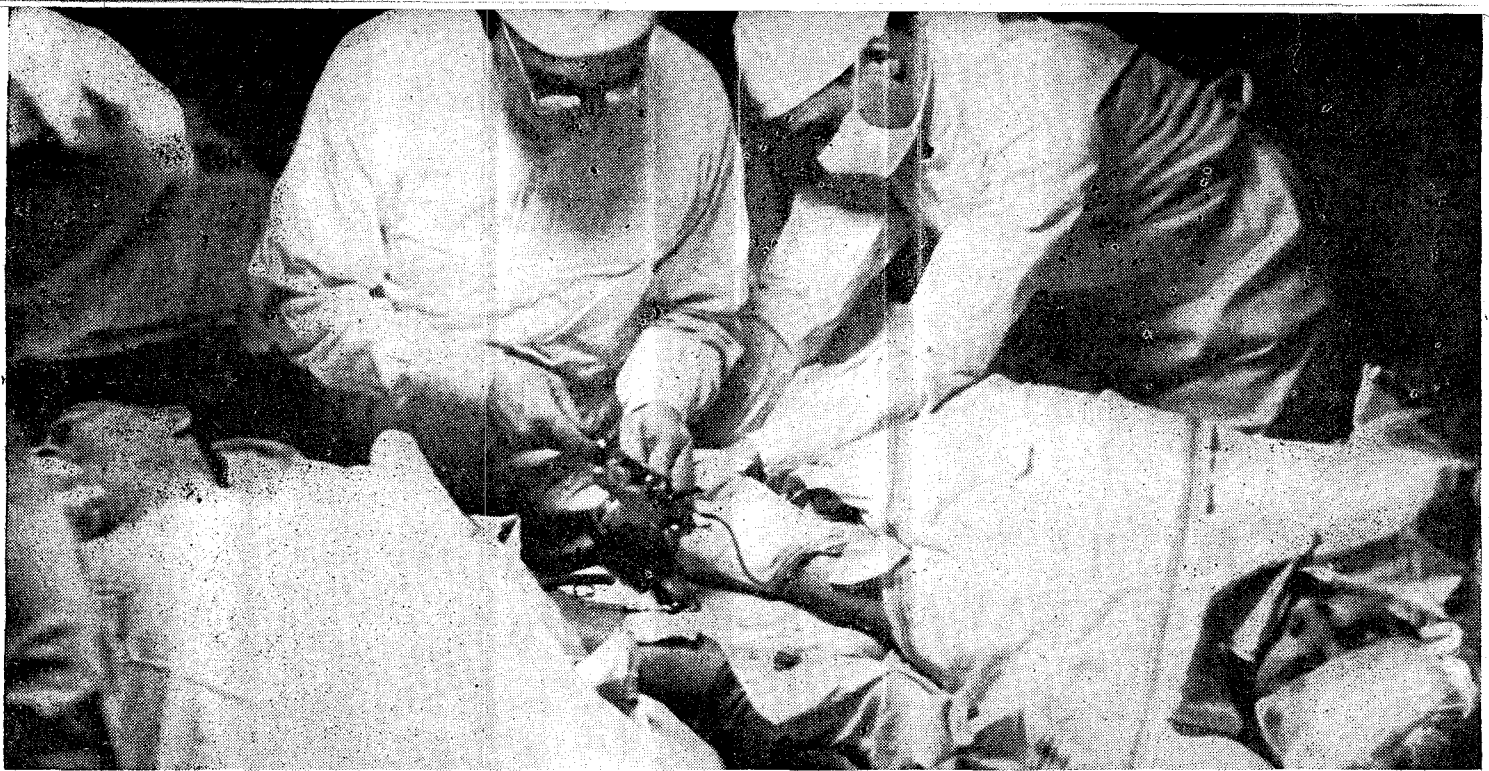
I. POLYAKOV.

*Next week Polyakov reports how the tanks went into action on the northern front.*

**TODAY "Where will they attack next?"**







# MIRACLE MEN

*Here are some of the marvels military surgeons are performing every day. Sulfanilamide does it again. The "shrapnel locator" points the way.*

**W**E ALL talk of P-40's, Spitfires, and tanks. Yet we sometimes forget that these machines are operated by men, and are specifically designed to protect the fighters. Every effort is made to wage war with least loss of life, and machines help accomplish this. Unfortunately machines are not perfect, and casualties must occur. It is because of this that medical science assumes a top place as a tool of war. For it is the function of medical science not only to protect men before they go into battle, but to treat them when injured and restore them for further battle or for normal life when peace comes.

Since the last war great advances have been made in medical science and practice, and these are being put to use as a tool in the present war. Infection, for example, ranks as a problem of first importance to the military surgeon, and it is easy to see why this is so. Every scratch, every wound opens up the way for invasion by bacteria. Any infection on the surface of the body can spread rapidly, and before long enter the blood stream to cause what we know as blood poisoning or septicemia. In the past, amputation of an arm or leg had to be performed to prevent septicemia from causing death. Various antiseptics were prepared to avoid this cruel treatment. During the last war Dakin's Solution—a chlorine compound—was widely used as an antiseptic. While it was fairly effective, it was very tedious to apply and required repeated and painful treatment.

Nothing better appeared until recently, when sulfanilamide and its derivatives made their miraculous appearance. These have proved themselves invaluable. At Dunkirk, where medical services were completely disorganized, wounded soldiers were simply given sulfanilamide pills by mouth, then treated in English hospitals. The number of infected wounds was remarkably low. Soviet reports on these drugs are equally glowing. Wounded men are given the drug by mouth. And where the wound is severe or extensive, the sulfanilamide or sulfathiazole is powdered into it, and the wound covered with a bandage. If the case is serious and needs immediate operative treatment—such as head, abdominal, or chest wounds—the soldier is given the drug and is then flown by plane to the rear where adequate hospitalization awaits him. Thousands upon thousands of lives

are thus saved by a combination of powerful drug and speed.

The most recent report came from Pearl Harbor. One of the bright spots of this tragic episode was the preparedness of the medical corps. Several weeks before December 7 the medical commander had everything in readiness—bandages and medicines removed from warehouses, operating rooms ready, laundry trucks converted to ambulances, etc. On December 5, more than 300 civilian and military physicians attended a lecture on the treatment of war wounds. On the morning of December 7, they were again convening when the attack came. In twenty minutes the first wounded soldier was brought into the hospital, and immediately every doctor went to work. Speed and good organization saved many lives. The effectiveness of sulfanilamide and the sulfa compounds was again proved. Practically no infected wounds were seen even weeks after the attack; no amputations were performed because of infection; and no death from septicemia occurred. A remarkable record.

Improvements in surgery appeared, not only because of reduced danger of infection, but in actual technique. Many wounds are caused by shrapnel, and a real advance was made by the introduction of a "shrapnel-locator," a device invented by Samuel Berman, a New York subway worker. Formerly it was necessary to take many X-rays to locate the pieces of shrapnel, whether in the brain or other parts of the body. This was expensive, took a long time, and was not always accurate. The "shrapnel-locator" is both accurate and fast. It consists of a pencil-like apparatus which emits electro-magnetic waves. When the waves strike a metal, a deflection is observed on a meter to which the locator is attached. Not only will it locate the object on the surface, but it will tell accurately how deep the metal is. An improved model is now being manufactured in bulk.

**O**F ABOUT equal importance and requiring more immediate treatment than infection is the problem of shock, or collapse of the circulatory system. As a result of severe hemorrhage, extensive destruction of tissue, or intense nervous activity such as excruciating pain, the blood pressure falls to very low levels,