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PECULARITIES OF ARTILLERY UNITS' DEVELOPMENT OF THE CENTRAL COUNCIL TROOPS IN THE PERIOD OF THE UKRAINIAN REVOLUTION THROUGH 1917-1921

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The Ukrainization of the artillery units within the army of the Russian Empire at the end of the First World War decelerated in comparison with other armed branches, primarily involving military formations in the rear of the fronts. Already during the congress of Ukrainian artillerymen of the Reserve Army in Kazan, which took place on May 11, 1917, a resolution on the formation of Ukrainian artillery units (batteries, divisions and brigades) was issued. As a result of the congress chaired by Colonel Savchenko, a military delegation was formed and sent to Kyiv to represent it.[1].

The Congress of Ukrainian Artillerymen of the Northern Front, held on October 20, 1917, advanced much further. Above all, the congress in the number of 642 delegates established the Council of Gunners of the Land Front, that demanded that the Commander of the Artillery and the Main Artillery Department of the Army of the former Russian Empire to form Ukrainian artillery units (brigades, divisions, batteries) on all fronts. [1].

The establishment process of the Ukrainian army through the Ukrainization of the Russian army can hardly be called rather efficient and promising, as far as it was influenced by general demoralization of the military in result of the First World War. However, due to the mass transfer of Ukrainian officers and soldiers of the Russian army to the military formations of the Central Rada, the young Ukrainian state had, though not for long, its own army, the strength of which, according to various sources, ranged from 60 thousand to 1.5 million soldiers. [3].

The proper level of combat readiness of Ukrainian artillery is evidenced by the analysis of the quantitative condition, organization and armament in the autumn of 1917. The process of Ukrainian artillery formation was led by Lieutenant General Serhiy Delvih(1872-1938), who served as an artillery inspector of the UPR and Colonel Ivan Pashchenko (1872-1938), chief of the artillery department of the Ukrainian General Military Staff [4].

The first Ukrainianized artillery units, being a part of the 1st Ukrainian Corps as a unit of the Central Rada, included formations in Bila Tserkva, Vinnytsia, and Berdychiv. The corps consisted of 27 gun batteries, of which twelve were 76-mm field guns, six 122-mm field howitzers, six 152-mm heavy howitzers and three 107-mm long-range guns. Totally, about 3,200 artillerymen armed with 108 guns and howitzers were on duty in the corps [5].

Therefore, it can be claimed that the artillery of the 1st Ukrainian Corps of the Central Rada was the most organized and combat-ready among the Ukrainianized units of the army of the former Russian Empire [6].

Among the front corps of the Russian army, that demonstrated a high rate of Ukrainization, the 6th Corps, which consisted of 80% of Ukrainians and was renamed the 2nd Zaporizhia Ukrainian Corps is worth being noted. The process of Ukrainization of the corps' artillery formations was commanded by Artillery Inspector General Vasyl Kyrei [4].

The artillery of the corps was composed of 27 gun batteries, altogether 108 guns. The base of all artillery units of the 2nd Zaporizhzhya Corps was stationed in Halychyna, mainly the territory of the frontline Ternopil region [6].

The high level of organization during the Ukrainianization of the artillery was demonstrated by the artillery brigades of the 11th Corps of the South-Western and Romanian Fronts under the command of Lieutenant General Petro Eroshevych (1870-1945) [4].

P. Yeroshevych personally took care of the artillery brigade of the 12th Infantry Division, which consisted entirely of Ukrainians and, despite the Bolshevik agitation of other parts of the corps, remained loyal to the Central Rada until the the last moment. The general concluded that after the collapse and demoralization of the Russian army in November 1917, he managed to bring from the front at the disposal of the Ukrainian General Military Committee in full force guns of the 12th Division (6 guns (36 guns))[7].

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The formation of the Ukrainian artillery of the Central Soviet troops took place not only through the Ukrainization of the artillery units of the Russian army. At the initiative of Ukrainian artillery officers, the process of forming separate batteries and divisions began, mostly from volunteers of the former imperial armies, who showed an unwavering desire to defend their homeland. Among the first newly formed artillery units was the cavalry artillery division formed in Kyiv by Colonel O. Almazov. The division was armed with 12 light cavalry and mountain guns. At the same time, Colonel K. Smovsky formed a cannon division as part of the Haydamatsky Basket of Sloboda Ukraine, and a former artillery officer of the Austro-Hungarian Army, R. Dashkevych, initiated a cannon battery of the Halych-Bukovynian smokehouse. In fact, these artillery units turned out to be the most viable and the only ones on whom the government of the young Ukrainian state later relied in the first battles for independence [9]. In total, the artillery of the Central Soviet troops in the autumn of 1917 was armed with 746 guns [10].

Thus, the formation of the Ukrainian artillery of the troops of the Central Rada, its development occurred in rather challenging military and political conditions. The pace and scale of that process was significantly impacted by the erroneous concept of the political leadership of the Central Rada, which at the initial stage of army modelling adhered to the idea of Ukraine's autonomy within Russia, not in a hurry to establish its own regular army.

The Ukrainianized artillery establishment in the circumstances of disintegration and demoralization of the Russian army turned out to be less stable than the newly

formed separate batteries and divisions, so it was on them that the Ukrainian government relied in battles with opponents of Ukrainian statehood. While the Ukrainianized units, under the influence of Bolshevik propaganda, gradually disintegrated and, after the announcement of general demobilization in early 1918, ceased to exist altogether, artillery formations formed on the initiative of artillery officers demonstrated a high level of resilience and combat readiness.

The development of Ukrainian artillery units was triggered mainly by valuable personnel potential of the experienced and hardened by World War I officers and generals of the artillery of the former Russian army, preserved by the General Military Committee [6].

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