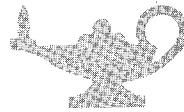


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## Maps

Joint Operations Graphic 1:250,000, Series 1501

Sheet No. 35, 36-8 (Kirkenes)

35, 36-9 (Severomorsk)

35, 36-11 (Verkhne Tulomskiy)

35, 36-12 (Murmansk)

Map symbols: STANAG 2019, Edition no. 2, 5 February 1976.

## Interviews

During a field trip to the Kirkenes area on 14—22 October 1987, the author conducted several interviews, some with the aid of an interpreter, with Norwegian civilians who witnessed the events of October 1944.

Robert Dahl, Ospeli

Jure Kasereff, Grense Jakobselv

Kare Kristensen, Elvenes

Ella Mathisen, Munkelv

Ole Sotkajervi, Stenbakk

Aase Stavem, Tarnet

Knut Tharaldsen, Jarfjordbotn

Several interviewees declined to identify themselves.

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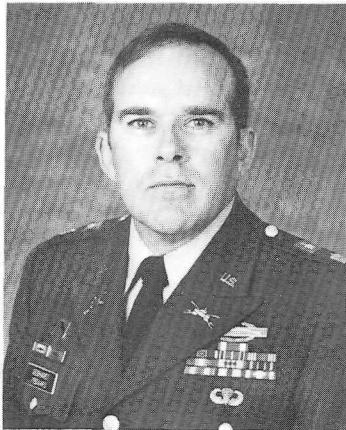
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## SYNOPSIS OF LEAVENWORTH PAPER 17

In the fall of 1944, some 56,000 German troops of the XIX Mountain Corps were occupying a strongpoint line just 70 kilometers northwest of Murmansk, about 200 miles north of the Arctic Circle. To clear these enemy forces from Soviet territory, *STAVKA* ordered General K. A. Meretskov's Karelian Front to plan and conduct an offensive, which was to be supported by Admiral A. G. Golovko's Northern Fleet. This Leavenworth Paper explains the planning and conduct of this offensive, known in Soviet military historiography as the Petsamo-Kirkenes Operation.

The Soviet force of approximately 96,000 men was organized into a main attack force of two rifle corps, a corps-size economy-of-force formation, and two envelopment forces, one consisting of two naval infantry brigades and the other of two light rifle corps of two brigades each. The Soviets employed over 2,100 tubes of artillery and mortars, used 110 tanks and self-propelled guns, and enjoyed overwhelming air superiority. Engineer special-purpose troops infiltrated up to fifty kilometers behind German forward positions to conduct reconnaissance before the battle. On 7 October 1944, the Soviets began the offensive with a 97,000-round artillery preparation, followed by an infantry attack.

While the forces on the main axis were achieving a breakthrough against the German 2d Mountain Division, the light rifle corps were enveloping the German defensive position by a grueling march over extremely rugged terrain on the southern flank. Late on 9 October, a 3,000-man naval infantry brigade landed along the Barents Sea coastline behind the German northern flank, joined on the morning of 10 October by another naval infantry brigade attacking overland. Supported by naval special-purpose forces, the Northern Fleet conducted a second landing into the German left flank on 12 October. Battered in the center and threatened on both flanks, the German corps executed a forced withdrawal into Norway. Soviet troops captured the port of Petsamo on 15 October.

Soviet forces pursued the German troops westward, crossing into Norway on 18 October along the northern flank and on 23 October on the southern flank. Naval infantry units assaulted German coastal positions on 18, 23, and 25 October. Soviet troops captured a burning Kirkenes on 25 October and pursued the retreating Germans along the Norwegian coast as far as Tana Fjord, stopping on 30 October. In the south, the Soviets pursued the withdrawing German forces as far as Ivalo, Finland, stopping on 2 November.

As a result of the Karelian Front victory, Soviet troops occupied the northern portion of Norway until October 1945. The Soviet armed forces uses the Petsamo-Kirkenes Operation as the basis for all of their study of warfare in arctic regions. With this first full account of the battle in English, this combat experience is now accessible to the U.S. Army.