

Western Allies Join Russia in Balkan Battle



Reds on the Rampage

Red Generals Match Nazis in Tactical Skill



GEN. NIKOLAI FEDOROVICH VATUTIN died recently, after a brilliant career as a strategist. He planned the offensive in the Ukraine. Heading an army variously estimated at 500,000 to 1,000,000 men, he literally swept the Nazis off their feet. Key rail junctions were the objectives of his drives below Kiev. A veteran of the Red Army, he played a vital role in liberating Stalingrad, and later defeated Von Mannstein at Kharkov. He defeated the Germans at Kursk, and recaptured Kiev so swiftly that Nazi demolition squads had no time to destroy the city. In charge of the 1st Ukrainian Front, Vatutin was well-matched for the tactical and strategic battles he had to fight against the retreating Wehrmacht.



GEN. RODION YAKOLEVICH MALINOVSKY has scored many spectacular victories, but certainly none brought him more personal pleasure than the recapture of Odessa, his native town. At 43, he is commander of the 3rd Ukrainian Army, and his military career dates back to World War I, when he fought in France as a corporal in the Russian Army. For his defeat of Von Kleist in 1941, at Dnepropetrovsk, Malinovsky was awarded the Order of Lenin. His men are veterans of Stalingrad, Krivoy Rog, Kotelnikovo, Rostov, and Nikopol. In all these battles Malinovsky played a leading role in defeating the Nazis. He's a stocky, bushy-haired, heavy-set, rough-and-ready veteran, seasoned in many tough campaigns.

FOR the first time since World War II began, the Russians and their Western Allies are engaged in combined military operations against the Nazis. While Russian ground forces surge into the Balkans, Allied planes are operating in tactical support of the Red Army.

Wellingtons of the RAF and Flying Fortresses and Liberators of the 15th U. S. Air Force, based at Foggia, have attacked key Nazi supply and communication centers to aid the advance of the Ukrainian armies. Key rail centers have been smashed repeatedly.

One of the primary objectives of the Balkan campaign is recapture of the Ploesti oil fields and other sources of Nazi oil in Rumania. The Wehrmacht depends on this region for one-third of its vital oil supply.

Meanwhile, Marshal Tito's guerilla army in Yugoslavia is adding its weight to the concerted drives against the Nazis, threatening the Germans' rear. Russian forces may be joined, in time, by Allied troops, thus opening the way for a concerted sweep into German territory from the East.

Russian generalship has been a vital factor in the striking successes of the Red Army in the Balkans. Young, tough, veteran campaigners, the Russians have trapped an estimated 200,000 German troops and are steadily pushing them back.

Military analysts believe the Nazis will form a new defense line along the Danube River, with its western flank at the Carpathian Mountains and its eastern terminus at the Black Sea.

Main Russian drives are expected to encircle the Carpathians in giant pincers movements, with one drive pushing through Poland and another through the Danube River valley. Meanwhile, the 4th Ukrainian Army has succeeded in smashing German positions in Crimea.



MARSHAL GREGORY ZHUKOV, commander of the 1st Ukrainian Army, is one of Russia's best students of modern warfare. . . . Peasant-born, he served in the czar's army, and later was a corporal in a cavalry division of the Red Army. Zhukov enjoys the distinction of having defeated both Jap and Nazi armies. At Khalkin-Gol in the Far East he destroyed the Japanese Sixth Army, and was the first officer to use large tank forces in battle. Later, he was in command when the Red Army at Stalingrad smashed Germany's Sixth Army. Defense of Moscow, early in the war, was entrusted to Zhukov. With his wife and son, Zhukov made his home in Moscow. His generalship has been a prime factor in Rumanian successes.



MARSHAL IVAN STEPANOVICH KONEV, commander of the 2nd Ukrainian Army, was the first to cross the Dnieper, the Bug, the Dniester, and now the Prut River. He has been with the Red Army since its formation. Shortly after World War I, he was transferred to the Far East, where he fought against the Japs. His decorations include the Orders of the Red Star and of the Red Banner. He has conducted operations on the Moscow front, and on the Stalingrad front, and was among those who led the attack on Orel and Belgorod. Konev's divisions are attempting to outflank Nazi units led by Von Kleist, who is recognized as Germany's most brilliant tactician. His immediate goal is Iasi, important Nazi-held railway junction.