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Subj: SECOND CLASS MIDSHIPMAN JONATHAN A. MUNSON'S RESEARCH PAPER

Ref: (a) Battle of Stalingrad by Raymond Limbach  
(b) Deadliest Battle in History: Stalingrad by The Armchair Historian  
(c) Battle of Stalingrad (1942-43) by Simple History

1. The Battle of Stalingrad took place from July 17, 1942, to February 2, 1943, is a pivotal moment in military history, marking a shift in the philosophy and tactics of urban warfare. This analysis goes into the battle's tactical intricacies, exploring how it reflects various philosophies in warfare, the nature and factors of war, and its lasting impact on the evolution of combat.

2. In the summer of 1942, the German army launched Operation Case Blue, an operation to seize the oil rich lands in the Caucasus region. Initially, Stalingrad was not a part of Operation Case Blue(b), however, Stalingrad was a prime target as it was used for troop and supply movement along the Volga River. The German army wanted to secure the eastern front however, the German advance stalled, and brutal house-to-house fighting began in the city. The intensity of street fighting resulted in significant casualties on both sides, turning individual buildings into fiercely contested battlegrounds.

3. Stalingrad's urban landscape transformed the battle into harsh close-quarters combat. The destruction caused by initial Luftwaffe bombings created lots of rubble, providing excellent cover for Soviet defenders. During the bombing done by the Luftwaffe, Stalin refused to evacuate civilians(a) as he thought that if the Red Army had something to protect, they wouldn't fail. Soviet General Vasily Chuikov capitalized on the rubble created and the civilian presence by engaging in hugging tactics, maintaining very close proximity to German forces to neutralize their artillery and air support advantages. This approach forced the Germans into hand-to-hand combat situations, negating their technological superiority. General Chuikov used small teams, flexible decentralized command, and small unit adaptability.

4. After Operation Barbarossa, Stalin issued Order 227, "Not One Step Back" to the defenders of Stalingrad(a). Under General Vasily Chuikov, the Soviet 62nd Army used innovative defensive strategies. They established fortified positions in key buildings, utilized sniper teams effectively, and conducted night raids to harass German positions. The use of the city's sewer systems(c) for movement and surprise attacks exemplified the adaptability of Soviet tactics in urban warfare.

a. After the initial offensive by the Germans, the Red Army was able to hold and continue fighting in Stalingrad. A critical moment of this battle was when, on October 14th, the Soviet defenders had their backs so close to the Volga that the few remaining supply crossings of the

river came under German machine-gun fire. The Germans, however, were growing dispirited by heavy losses, fatigue, and the approach of winter(a).

b. A turning point in the battle came when a 2-pronged attack named Operation Uranus led by General Georgy Zhukov, he moved to attack the flanks of the German lines but not the main force. The German flanks were exposed on the steppes outside of the city, which allowed Zhukov to effectively cut the German 6th Army's supply line. This encirclement is similar to what happened at the beginning of the war between Russia and Germany.

5. The German 6th Army, led by General Friedrich Paulus, faced significant challenges adapting to urban combat. Their reliance on mechanized infantry, effective in open terrain, proved to be less effective in the tight urban spaces of Stalingrad. The lack of preparation for prolonged urban warfare, coupled with extended supply lines and harsh winter conditions, further hampered their efforts.

a. On an operational level, Hitler canned General Paulus and personally oversaw the takeover of Stalingrad(b). This complicated the German Army's movements as Paulus had no operational level control on where to move his men. Which resulted in them being encircled by additional Red Army units outside the town.

b. Due to the winter setting in, the 6th Army were stuck and surrounded in Stalingrad and running low on supplies. Hitler ordered his most talented General, Erich Von Manstein, to form a special army to save Paulus's forces. Paulus asked Hitler if he could fight westward in order to open a gap for his forces to fall back and regroup, however, Hitler refused, hurting his forces more. Manstein's forces could not penetrate the Russian lines. This final straw ultimately doomed Paulus's forces. On January 31st, 1943, Paulus went against Hitler and surrendered; 22 of his generals followed him. Then, on February 2nd, 91,000 German soldiers surrendered to the Red Army.

6. Stalingrad was a turning point in the evolution of modern warfare, especially urban warfare tactics. The battle showed the limitations of technology and combined arms when faced with determined resistance in urban environments. The Soviet defensive tactics and decentralized command structures influenced future military doctrines worldwide, emphasizing specialized urban warfare training. After Stalingrad, several military institutions recognized the necessity for dedicated urban combat techniques, significantly shaping Cold War strategies. The battle's legacy helps modern military operations in urban environments, with its lessons showing tactical training and doctrinal developments in modern armed forces.

7. The battle of Stalingrad proves Clausewitz's opinion that war is an extension of politics. Hitler wanted to take the city due to its name and the person it represented. It would have been a crushing blow to the morale of the Soviet forces and their people. Sun Tzu's art of war also shows in this battle through adaptability. Soviet forces had to adapt to their situation in order to win, not only dealing with Stalin's order 227 but protecting the factories and civilians still in Stalingrad. Both Sides of the battle were extremely patriotic, especially the Soviets, defending the motherland from foreign invaders, which influenced their fighting spirit. German morale was high at the start of the invasion of Russia; however, over time, due to poor planning and

overextending, causing supply chain issues, German morale tanked to an all time low, resulting in a force that won't fight.

8. The factors of war influenced the battle heavily. From using civilians as a means to keep Soviet soldiers from retreating, close quarters combat tactics, and the utilization of mechanized infantry in an urban setting.

a. As the Luftwaffe bombardment began, Stalin refused to evacuate civilians to keep his soldiers from leaving as a means to stop retreats. This political involvement affected civilian morale as they feared that, like in Operation Barbarossa, the Red Army would retreat and leave them for the Germans.

b. As the ground battle began, the Red Army used their knowledge of the streets and sewer system to move troops around. This creates a stealth advantage as the enemy may not know where you will pop up. The Soviets also used the Volga as a staging point to move troops across, they would ferry supplies and people across. The Germans would focus on the troop ferries during the battle, especially on October 14th.

c. The Germans' use of vehicles, artillery, and aircraft became void as soon as they entered the city; the Luftwaffe's bombing campaign set up the city's ruins in a way that would benefit the Soviets, as they could more easily hide amongst the destruction. The Germans' use of armored cars and tanks also became pointless in Stalingrad, as the vehicles could be easily hit easily from the sides or destroyed buildings.

9. The biggest differences between the Soviets and Germans can be seen through parts of MOOSEMUSS. This highlights the intricate details between each side from their offensive strategy, economy of force, unity of command, and security.

a. The German offensive strategy was to be slow and steady. They initially made good ground fighting the Soviets with this method; however, when Hitler took command of Paulus's army, they lost most of their momentum. Their offense was also their greatest weakness; as they advanced closer towards the city itself, their flanks squished in, creating gaps and losing supply. Soviet leadership under General Chuikov, was superior to the Germans. Chuikov let his smaller unit leaders make tactical decisions on the battlefield, creating decentralized command.

b. The German battle plan stretched their supply lines and army groups thin. Their rapid advancements with the blitzkrieg caused their logistic units to fall behind, creating a gap between the front lines and supply points. This caused the Army Group's slow advancement as they got closer to the city. The soviet battle plan had the advantage; using their superior numbers, they had a greater economy of force through the battle. Especially in the winter, when they could easily cross the Volga due to it being iced over, the Soviet supply lines were expanded so that there were multiple points where supplies could enter the city.

c. The Soviet command was superior to the German command. Hitler liked to micromanage and control his units personally. Soviet leaders like General Chuikov used his subordinate commanders to fight the battle, which allowed for greater freedom of movement and tactical

level decisions that would greatly influence the operational level. German command was heavily micromanaged, which hurt German movements and decision-making as it had to be routed up the chain of command, which could take a long time and prevent action.

d. What made the Soviets hard to kill was their knowledge and use of the rubble and sewers in the city. The Red Army would stage themselves in buildings that were destroyed and use them as strongpoints to operate out of, they also used the sewer system to move casualties and units along the lines. The German army lacked security, they were not well equipped to handle city fighting and defense of their lines. They were affected by slow supply lines and diseases brought by no food or proper winter weather clothing.

10. Stalingrad was a turning point in modern warfare, highlighting the complexities of urban combat. The battle demonstrated that technological superiority alone does not guarantee victory, especially in environments where adaptability and morale are critical. Lessons learned from Stalingrad have influenced military doctrines worldwide, emphasizing the need for specialized training and tactics for urban operations.

a. The Soviets had the advantage when it came to the improvement and use of the art of war. They used snipers like Vasily Zaitsev, putting fear in the Germans. The Soviets used propaganda to improve the morale of their forces. The German morale fell due to prolonged urban fighting and the cold weather. Their lack of proper equipment and reserves cost the Germans heavily.

b. The Soviets innovated new tactics for urban combat, like night infiltration and the use of sewers. These creative tactics helped in evolving urban combat. However, the Germans struggled with urban warfare due to their reliance on combined arms.

c. The Soviets improved their logistical approaches by effectively utilizing available resources like ferries to maintain supply lines across the Volga despite severe bombardments. Their efficiency and adaptability under extreme logistical stress became instructive for future logistical planning in warfare. The Germans' inability to sustain supplies or properly anticipate the logistical challenges of urban siege warfare was a significant scientific miscalculation. Their logistical failures underscored the critical importance of logistical foresight and adaptability in sustained operations.

d. The battle showed that technological advantages, like Germany's initial air dominance when bombing Stalingrad and the superior artillery seen in the blitzkrieg, have severe limitations in urban warfare scenarios. The Germans learned that mechanization, though powerful in open battles, had severe drawbacks in confined urban spaces.

11. The Battle of Stalingrad was more than a decisive turning point in World War II. It represented a transformation in military history, impacting both the art and science of warfare. The battle's brutal intensity, strategic significance, and unparalleled human cost have cemented it as an essential study in warfare, showcasing vividly how tactical ingenuity, adaptability, resilience, and the moral dimension converge decisively to shape military outcomes. From a tactical perspective, Stalingrad set a powerful precedent by underscoring the necessity for specialized doctrines tailored specifically to urban warfare environments. The confined and

complex terrain of city combat exposed the vulnerabilities inherent in traditional mechanized warfare, demonstrating that technological and material superiority alone cannot guarantee victory in densely urbanized battlefields. The adaptive and flexible defensive strategies employed by the Soviets, including decentralized command structures, effective sniper utilization, and innovative close quarters combat techniques, became foundational lessons influencing future military strategies worldwide. Conversely, the German command's inability to adjust their tactics from open-field mechanized warfare to brutal, prolonged urban fighting starkly illustrated the perils of rigidity and lack of tactical versatility.

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