

Freischaren und Freikorps (Guerilla Forces and Free Corps)

Lt. Gen. K. Adaridi German

Text, 165 pages, 22 sketches. (Berlin: R. Eisenschmidt, 1925). Library No. 357.66.

The author, formerly a lieutenant general in the Imperial Russian Army, states that guerilla enterprises directed against the enemy's lines of communications will always play an important role in war; for example, the destruction of railways, telegraph and telephone lines, and surprise attacks on hostile billets, camps, bivouacs, or supply establishments. That, under certain conditions, such enterprises may even become necessary; for instance, when a country, having at its immediate disposal only weak military forces, is compelled to defend itself to the utmost against a foreign, more powerful invader, or when it is desired to gain time in which to create the necessary combat forces.

Notwithstanding the fact that such enterprises generally are directed against localities where no large hostile troop units are active, that they bring no decision, and that only weak forces participate therein, they are capable, nevertheless, of placing the enemy in difficult situations fraught with grave consequences, and of contributing materially to victory when conducted in cooperation with the army.

The author continues that these considerations point to the necessity of a thorough knowledge of the characteristics and activities of guerilla forces, in order to make possible their employment to the fullest advantage. That, however, such knowledge is more difficult of attainment than it may seem, for the existing number of publications devoted to the study of this subject is very limited. Furthermore, that the available publications date from a time when the conditions of warfare differed greatly from the present.

The author defines *Guerilla Forces*

(*Freischaren*) as forces operating independently, at greater or lesser distances from the army, in rear or on the flanks of the enemy, with the object of inflicting on the latter the greatest possible damage. He distinguishes between Guerilla forces composed of troops detached for this purpose, usually called *Free Corps* (*Freikorps*), and those created by the citizenry itself which are composed of volunteers.

Concerning the latter, history teaches that such volunteer forces came into being as the result of special causes, such as revolution, subjugation of the land by an invader, etc.; i.e., at a time when the leaders of such movements are not in a position to ascertain sufficiently the views and sentiments of the persons who offer their services for the deliverance of their country. Hence, the danger that a part of such guerilla forces may be recruited from inferior classes or adventurers whose sole object it is to fish in troubled waters or to evade military service, but not to risk their lives. Such guerilla forces are a veritable pest to their own land; it is impossible to guide their efforts into proper channels or to regulate their activities. For example, bands of this nature appeared in considerable numbers during the French Revolution and during the second half of the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71).

The author closes his first chapter with a brief historical review, quoting numerous examples of the employment of guerilla forces by various countries under various conditions, drawing conclusions therefrom, and discussing the possibility of the appearance of such forces in wars of the future.

The remainder of the fourteen chapters is devoted to a detailed technical study of the general employment and the tactics and technique of Guerilla enterprises, supported by numerous historical examples with twenty-two sketches.

List of Contents:

I. Definition of the term Guerilla Forces (*Freischar*). Brief Historical Review of the Activities of Guerilla Forces. Possibility of their Appearance in Future Wars. Guerilla Forces in Connection with the Rising of the Populace.

II. General Characteristics of Guerilla Enterprises. Their Relation to Minor Warfare. Material and Moral Consequences of such Enterprises.

III. Dependence of Success of Guerilla Enterprises on the Attitude of the Population, on the Terrain, on the General Direction of the Enemy's Lines of Communications, on the Condition of the Army and the Situation in its Rear, on the Season of the Year, and on the Weather.

IV. Activities of Guerilla Forces during the different Periods of the War. Tasks which may be assigned to them.

V. Organization of Guerilla Detachments, their Number, Strength, and Replacement. Armament, Clothing, and Equipment of Guerilla Forces.

VI. Commander and Subordinate Commanders of Guerilla Detachments. Training of the Personnel.

VII. Preparatory Measures on Part of Army Headquarters and the Headquarters of Guerilla Forces. Reconnaissance. Preparation of Operation Plans. Signal Communications. Material Preparations.

VIII. Approach to the Objective. Instruction of the Personnel concerning the Enterprise. Organization of the March. Measures to expedite the March: Forced Marches, Employment of Wagons, Bicycles, Motor Vehicles, Snowshoes, Boats, and Railways. Selection of the Route of March and of the Time of Day. Security on the March and while in Shelter. Subsistence. Maintenance of Order and Discipline. Care of the Sick and Wounded.

IX. Activities of Guerilla Forces on Close Approach to the Objective. Reconnaissance.

Decision. Selection of the Time and Method of Surprise Attack. Ambush. Measures to be taken after Successful Attack. Prisoners and Captured Supplies.

X. Surprise Attacks against Railways. Measures to safeguard Railways. Selection of suitable point for Surprise Attack against Railways. Approach toward Railway Line. Destruction of Railroads and Telegraph Lines. Feint Attacks against various Railway Establishments.

XI. Surprise Attacks against Localities, Isolated Posts, and weak Military Forces.

XII. Ambush. Surprise Attacks against Wagon Trains on the March, Supply Columns, and other Transports. Enterprises against Water Transports.

XIII. Guerilla Enterprises against Coast Lines.

XIV. Guerilla Forces in connection with Stabilization.

Appendix: The German Free Corps after the World War.

This book contains an excellent presentation of the subject of guerilla warfare or, to suggest a more appropriate term, of independent raiding operations; it is marked by clearness and conciseness of expression and offers many valuable historical examples on which future study of this subject may be based.

It is considered of general value to all officers, especially since the subject matter contained therein finds particular application to the national defense situation in this country.

A. B.