

## Chapter V-7: German Mobilisation After 22nd June 1941: the Actual Strength of German Land Combat Units Mobilised from 22nd June to 31st December 1941

In Part V-6 we focused on the German ground forces that existed and were Deployed (D) from 22nd June to 4th July 1941, the first two weeks of Operation Barbarossa. In this chapter we will focus on the new German ground forces that were mobilised between 22nd June and 31st December 1941. It would be reasonable to say that in general the German's mobilisation effort during the second half of 1941 was almost the exact opposite of the Soviet's mobilisation effort. While the Soviets embarked on what became the largest and fastest war mobilisation effort ever carried out by a single country, the Germans appeared confident (and in the end over-confident) that their existing forces in the East would crush the USSR by year's end.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the German forces Mobilised and Deployed (MD, see below for definitions) on the East Front from June to December 1941 bordered on non-existent compared to the Red Army's MD forces.

### Definition of Deployed (D), Mobilised and Deployed (MD), and Mobilised and Not Deployed (MND) in the German FILARM Model

In this study of German ground force mobilisation after 22nd June 1941 the following definitions of Deployed (D), Mobilised and Deployed (MD), and Mobilised and Not Deployed (MND) combat units are used in the German FILARM model.

- **Deployed, (D):** the unit is deployed with a TOE anywhere in the armed forces on the 1st day of the campaign, in this case 22nd June 1941. The unit may be deployed at a fraction of its full TOE strength and it may be allocated to any military district or army. The details and assignments of all units in a Deployed (D) status are detailed in the German Deployment Matrix.
- **Mobilised and Deployed, (MD):** the unit is mobilised with a TOE after the first day of the campaign, in this case 22nd June 1941, and allocated (or assigned) to an active front or army HQ. For Germany and Finland, an 'active army HQ' is any operational army HQ in the armed forces. Note, Germany had multiple theatres of war (or active fronts) in 1941, all with active army HQs. Even occupying forces (such as those in France, Norway and the Balkans) were still in active war fronts. These units were organised and operated on a war footing, and in most cases were carrying out military and security operations. Hence newly mobilised Wehrmacht units which were allocated to HQs in these theatres are considered to have been Mobilised and Deployed (MD).
- **Mobilised and Not Deployed, (MND):** the unit is mobilised with a TOE after the first day of the campaign, in this case 22nd June 1941, and not allocated (or assigned) to an active front or army HQ. An active front or army HQ is as defined for the MD state.

In addition a unit which is created by a simple name change from an old unit without the addition of any new subunits from reserves (that is any newly mobilised regiments or battalions) is considered a Mobilised and Not Deployed (MND) unit. This is because the unit in question is already deployed on the battlefield and simply changes its name. In so doing the 'old' unit ceases to exist. In effect the new unit becomes deployed, but the old unit it is replacing simultaneously becomes 'un-deployed'. If there is no additional personnel and equipment added from reserves then the net effect is that the deployment of new reserves is zero.

<sup>1</sup> Refer Part IV 7. – 'Soviet Mobilisation After 22nd June 1941: the Actual Strength of all Soviet Land Combat Units Mobilised from 22nd June to 31st December 1941'.

For example, on 1st August 1941, the already Deployed (D) 5th Light Division (already with the 5th Panzer Regiment) was officially designated the 21st Panzer Division. In order to enable this ‘field conversion’, the 15th Panzer Division was ordered to hand over its 104th Motorised Infantry (*Schutzen*) Regiment and 15th Motorcycle Infantry Battalion to the 21st Panzer Division.<sup>2</sup> In return, the 21st Panzer Division handed over the Staff 200th Infantry Regiment and the 2nd Machine Gun Battalion to the 15th Panzer Division. Neither panzer division received a second *schutzen* regiment, so during 1941 they were both weaker than contemporary panzer divisions in terms of infantry support. The conversion of the 5th Light Division to the 21st Panzer Division amounted to a reshuffle of the forces already within the *Afrika-Korps*: the only new unit used in the ‘creation’ of the 21st Panzer Division was the 200th Armoured Signal Battalion which arrived in early August 1941. Therefore in the German FILARM model the 21st Panzer Division is an MND unit, and only the 200th Armoured Signal Battalion is a true MD unit.

It should be carefully noted here that all D, MD and MND combat units may still receive newly mobilised personnel and equipment (i.e. reserve forces) via the Replacement (R) process. In the FILARM model the Replacement (R) process is a separate process to creating completely new combat units.<sup>3</sup> In this way combat units which are considered ‘newly mobilised’ but were in fact merely old units with a simple name change, can still build up their strength to their TOE given enough time and priority treatment.

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### German Land Combat Units Mobilised from 22nd June to 31st December 1941

The German land combat units mobilised from 22nd June to 31st December 1941 are shown in table **Ger MD & MND Units**. Also shown for each unit is: the approximate date that mobilisation can be considered to have started, whether or not it was Deployed (i.e. MD or MND), if it was sent to the East Front, and a brief historical description. The TOE, and peak strength during 1941, of all the combat units shown in this table are covered in the relevant parts of Part V-3. ‘The Tables of Organisation and Equipment (TOE) for German Land Combat Units from 22nd June to 31st December 1941; and The Unit’s Actual Organisation and Equipment in 1941’.

Excluded from the table are the following panzer forces.

- The panzer forces used in refurbishing the Deployed (D) 3rd Panzer Regiment/2nd Panzer Division and 31st Panzer Regiment/5th Panzer Division from June to August-September 1941. Both these Deployed (D) divisions transferred to the East Front in September 1941.
- The assault guns needed to bring the Deployed (D) *Sturmgeschutze* Battalions 177, 189, 202, 209, 244 and 245 to full strength. All these units were sent to the East Front from July 1941 to January 1942. The *Sturmgeschutze* Battalion 249 remained forming in the west during 1941.
- The Pz.Kpfw 35R tanks added to the Deployed (D) *Panzer-Kompanie Paris* in July 1941.

The reader should refer to the next section (The German Tank MD and MND Matrix) for details of the German AFVs allocated to the above units from 22nd June to 31st December 1941. These units are not included in table **Ger MD & MND Units** because they were all already Deployed (D) units on 22nd June 1941; albeit in a relatively low state of readiness and not at full strength.

<sup>2</sup> In 1942 the 15th Motorcycle Infantry Battalion became the III./104th *Panzergranadier* Regiment.

<sup>3</sup> Refer Part I 3. 3) c. i. - ‘Military Simulations, and the General Structure of the Integrated Land and Air Resource Model - The Structure of the Fully Integrated Land and Air Resource Model (FILARM) - Resource Allocation States inside the FILARM Model - Reserves and Replacements (R) - Replacements (R)’, and Part I 3. 4) – ‘Combat Unit Processes inside the FILARM Model’ for details of how this process simulates replacements in the FILARM model.

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At this point it is instructive to briefly compare the German and Soviet forces Mobilised and Deployed (MD) during the second half of 1941. From the Soviet FILARM model we know that the Soviets Mobilised and Deployed (MD), against the Axis forces in the Western USSR, the following principal combat units from 23rd June to 31st December 1941. 11 new Front HQs, 41 new Army HQs, 182 rifle divisions, 43 militia rifle divisions, 8 tank divisions, 3 mechanised divisions, 62 tank brigades, 55 rifle brigades, 50 cavalry divisions, 1 mountain cavalry division, 1 mountain rifle division, 31 airborne brigades, 11 naval infantry brigades, 21 naval rifle brigades, 3 NKVD rifle divisions, 3 NKVD motorised rifle divisions, 20 NKVD border regiments, 2 NKVD security (rifle) brigades, approximately 600 militia fighter battalions, 73 anti-tank regiments, 38 RVGK artillery regiments, 34 RVGK rocket artillery regiments and battalions, 38 engineer and construction battalions, and 57 anti-aircraft battalions.<sup>4</sup> In short, this massive force represents the largest and fastest war mobilisation effort ever carried out by a single country.

From table **Ger MD & MND Units** we can see that the Germans Mobilised and Deployed (MD), against the Soviet forces on the East Front, the following principal combat units from 23rd June to 31st December 1941. 1 infantry division, 2 infantry regiments, 2 infantry battalions (including 1 Waffen SS battalion), 1 panzer regiment, 1 reconnaissance armoured car company, 5 LS (militia) security regiments, 7 nationalist militia battalions, 1 artillery battalion, 3 artillery batteries, 1 army flak battalion, and 21 Luftwaffe flak battalions. Most telling of all is that the Germans Mobilised and Deployed (MD) a paltry single infantry division, and even this used Spanish volunteers! In fact all the separate infantry regiments and battalions Mobilised and Deployed were built around foreign (non-Germanic) volunteers who were joining the 'crusade' in the east. The four 17th wave infantry divisions were belatedly mobilised after the Soviet winter counter offensive had commenced, and were not close to being combat ready in 1941. Similarly, the 22nd and 23rd Panzer Divisions only started mobilising in late September 1941. Even though very few of the new Soviet 'divisions' and 'brigades' were in actuality divisional or brigade sized units, and even though many of them were barely trained, the German's mobilisation effort hardly compares to the phenomenal 243 rifle, tank and mechanised divisions mobilised against the Axis forces by the Red Army and NKVD during 1941.<sup>5</sup>

The reader should note here, that the above discussion only covers forces mobilised by the combatants after hostilities had commenced. They do not include additional Deployed (D) Soviet forces transferred from the Central and the Eastern USSR to the Western USSR, or the Deployed (D) German forces transferred from the Western Fronts to the East Front, during the second half of 1941. For details on these forces refer to Part IV 5. 'The Transfer Schedule of Soviet Land Combat Units in a Deployed (D) State, Transferred to the USSR's Western Fronts in 1941', and Part V 5. 'German Land Combat Unit Reinforcements on the East Front from 4th July to 31st December 1941'.

<sup>4</sup> Refer Part IV 7. – 'Soviet Mobilisation After 22nd June 1941: the Actual Strength of all Soviet Land Combat Units Mobilised from 22nd June to 31st December 1941'. The Soviets also Mobilised and Not Deployed (MND) the following (principal) combat units from 23rd June to 31st December 1941: 5 Front HQs, 7 Army HQs, 96 rifle divisions, 3 militia rifle divisions, 3 tank divisions, 26 tank brigades, 79 rifle brigades, 35 cavalry divisions, 1 mountain cavalry division, 5 naval infantry brigades, 7 naval rifle brigades, 1 NKVD motorised rifle division, 17 NKVD border regiments, and 1 NKVD security (rifle) brigade.

<sup>5</sup> The newly mobilised Soviet cavalry and mountain cavalry 'divisions' are excluded from this total because they were, in reality, regimental sized units.