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THE ECONOMY AND EVERYDAY NUANCES OF MILITARY LIFE: FOOD SUPPLY FOR THE WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' RED ARMY (RKKA) FROM 1941 TO 1945

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Abstract. *Introduction.* The article delves into the food supply of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army in 1941–1945 in the prism of the everyday life of soldiers and officers. The sustenance of the military forces plays a crucial role in influencing their immediate combat effectiveness during military engagements. Due to the all-round tragic situation at the warfront in the early period of the war, there was a need for immediate reorganization of the material and technical system, especially the food supply system of the Red Army. Even in the key stages of the war, changes were constantly made in the system of supplying the army with food products. The changes were reflected in the standards of food products for soldiers and officers and in the organization of the army's supply mechanism. *Methods and materials.* The problem studied in the article is considered from different perspectives. In examining the daily experiences at the front during the war, a variety of source levels are employed. The research extensively utilizes oral history and written accounts, including diaries, letters, and memoirs of war participants, to gain insights into everyday life directly at the warfront and the mood in the army, in addition to various laws and norms dealing with food supply. On the other hand, army life is subject to different regulations. The article also includes a partial comparative analysis. The organization of food supply in the Soviet and fascist German armies in 1941–1945, the norms of supply in the two armies are studied. *Analysis.* During the war, military servicemen's daily life at the warfront, including food supply, was organized on the basis of various legal documents. In this regard, legal documents (resolutions, orders, and reports from the government authorities responsible for supplying the army with food products, etc.) were also used to reveal these aspects of the issue. The use of the above-mentioned sources in the article allows a comprehensive approach to the problem of food supply to the Red Army in 1941–1945. That is, the introduction of legislation and security mechanisms is directly compared with the memories of military personnel who were witnesses and participants of these events. *Results.* Considering the growing interest of historians in everyday life and the food supply of the army, which is an important part of the history of the Second World War, it should be noted that the work in this direction has only started. *Authors' contribution.* Kh.B. Babadjanov, together with A.K. Abdullaev, examined the scientific literature, as well as oral history materials, and came to conclusions on the topic. By carefully examining historical materials, Kh.B. Babadjanov was able to describe the features of everyday life and military routine, using the example of food supplies for the Red Army (RKKA) of workers and peasants from 1941 to 1945. A.K. Abdullaev contributed to the data summary and analysis of the available statistics.

Key words: food supply of the army, intendant service, food norms, local resources, captured product, Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, "babkin attestat".

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ЭКОНОМИКА И ВОЕННАЯ ПОВСЕДНЕВНОСТЬ: ПРОДОВОЛЬСТВЕННОЕ ОБЕСПЕЧЕНИЕ В РАБОЧЕ-КРЕСТЬЯНСКОЙ КРАСНОЙ АРМИИ (РККА) В 1941–1945 ГОДАХ

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Аннотация. *Введение.* В статье рассматривается организация и функционирование системы продовольственного обеспечения Рабоче-крестьянской Красной армии в 1941–1945 гг. в контексте повседневной жизни солдат и офицеров. Проблема продовольственного обеспечения войск в боевых условиях стала важным фактором, определяющим непосредственную боеспособность армии на поле боя. В связи с катастрофической ситуацией, сложившейся на фронте в начальный период войны, требовалось немедленно реорганизовать материально-техническую основу, в частности систему продовольственного снабжения Красной армии. Даже на ключевых этапах войны постоянно вносились изменения в систему снабжения армии продовольствием. *Методы и материалы.* В статье исследуемая проблема рассматривается с разных ракурсов. При изучении повседневной жизни на фронте в годы войны использовались источники нескольких уровней. Устные и эпистолярные (дневники, письма, воспоминания участников войны) источники широко использовались для изучения повседневной жизни непосредственно через призму жизненных условий участников боевых действий, настроения военнослужащих в армии, практических сторон продовольственного снабжения, а также влияния на жизнь на фронте различных законов и норм, касающихся продовольственного обеспечения. Статья также включает частичный сравнительный анализ. *Анализ.* Армейская жизнь, в отличие от мирной, подчиняется другим правилам. В годы войны быт военнослужащих и снабжение продовольствием четко организовывались на основе различных правовых документов. В связи с этим для раскрытия данной проблемы использовались правовые документы (решения и приказы органов государственного управления, ответственных за снабжение армии продовольствием, отчеты и т. п.). Использование в статье вышеуказанных источников позволяет комплексно подойти к проблеме продовольственного снабжения Красной армии в 1941–1945 годах. Акты законодательства сопоставляются с воспоминаниями военнослужащих, которые были свидетелями и участниками этих событий. Изучаются организация продовольственного снабжения и нормы снабжения в советских и немецко-фашистских войсках в 1941–1945 годах. *Результаты.* Учитывая растущий интерес историков к быту военнослужащих на фронте и продовольственному снабжению армии, являющемуся важной частью истории Второй мировой войны, следует отметить, что работа в этом направлении находится во многом еще в начальной стадии. *Вклад авторов.* Х.Б. Бабаджанов совместно с А.К. Абдуллаевым изучили научную литературу, а также материалы устной истории и формировали выводы по теме. Тщательно изучив исторические материалы, Х.Б. Бабаджанов смог описать особенности быта и военной повседневности на примере продовольственного обеспечения Рабоче-крестьянской Красной армии (РККА) в 1941–1945 годах. А.К. Абдуллаев внес вклад в обобщение данных и анализ имеющихся статистических данных.

Ключевые слова: продовольственное обеспечение армии, интендантская служба, нормы питания, местные ресурсы, трофейная продукция, Рабоче-крестьянская Красная армия, «бабкин аттестат».

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Introduction. The war had a negative impact on the agriculture of the countries that participated in the Second World War. Military actions directly led to the disruption of the process of growing, processing, and storing agricultural products. As a result, food shortages occurred (the higher the scale and intensity of the hostilities were, the worse the situation was). Therefore, a complex bureaucratic system of food supply and distribution emerged in the states.

The main purpose of the resulting system was to ensure a balance of supply between the army and society. Supplies were directed first to the army and then to the workers of military production enterprises. Safeguarding stability in society mainly depended on whether this balance was maintained appropriately or inappropriately.

On the one hand, the deviation of the balance towards the army could lead to a sharp deterioration of supply of society, an intensification of the discontent and revolutionary mood among the population, and a decrease in productivity of the economy. On the other hand, the army without a sufficient supply of food products could hardly carry out military operations. Therefore, the food supply of the army was a constant focus of the USSR government.

Methods and materials. After the end of World War II, they began to study its history in many countries. To date, researchers have addressed many problems related to the history of the war within scientifically based studies. These studies explored military operations, the impact of war on the social and economic state of the countries, diplomatic relations, and many other issues. As a result, many books and articles have been published.

However, in the historiography of the Soviet and later post-Soviet states, the history of the provision of military personnel with living conditions, food, and other products during the war years has not been sufficiently covered by researchers. The experience of the Second World War reveals that almost all the countries involved in the military actions experienced, to varying degrees, the problem of supplying the army in action with food.

A considerable number of socio-anthropological challenges from the Second World War era have not been thoroughly examined as distinct subjects of study. At the same time, the discovery and release of new sources highlight

the importance of conducting relevant research. Extensive historical sources – collections of normative documents, results of research of search parties expeditions, and oral memories of war participants – were used in the study of this historical problem. In addition, the materials from the State Archive of the Russian Federation, the Central Archive of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, and the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History were used in the article.

Analysis. It is common knowledge that the victory of each army on the battlefield depends on several factors related to each other. These include the combat readiness and the spirit of the army, the availability and effective use of modern weapons, discipline, officers' tactical training, etc. Also, during the war, the issue of food supply directly affected the combat characteristics of the army.

The analysis of the problems of the food supply of the Red Army (RKKA – abbreviation in Russian) in 1941–1945 allows one to get a detailed picture of the army's supply system, the efficiency of the services responsible for the system's operation, the logistics, and other organizational and economic issues. To cover the topic of food supply of RKKA military personnel in 1941–1945, it will be necessary to analyze the following issues that are inextricably bound up with each other:

Firstly, the analysis of the supply system of the Army as well as the legislation that regulates it.

Secondly, the study of the sources of food supplied to the Army, as well as the operation of the logistics system.

Thirdly, the exploration of the issue with the viewpoint of the quality of the food delivered, as well as adequate satisfaction of the military personnel's needs.

The policy of collectivization, implemented in the USSR in the 1930s, led to the governance of the main agricultural resources by the state. The state, in turn, spent these resources on exports and replenishing and increasing Army Reserves. Therefore, in the USSR, sufficient food reserves were created for large-scale military actions. The volumes of reserves (in tons) as of June 22, 1941, at the disposal of the Red Army and the USSR Navy, are presented in Table 1.

With the beginning of the war on June 22, 1941, it was not possible to effectively use the

Table 1. Volumes of reserves as of June 22, 1941 at the disposal of the Red Army and the USSR Navy (in tons)

Name of the product	Movable reserves	Inviolable reserves	On-call reserves	The total amount
Flour and grain	140356	27791	321792	989939
Cereals and pasta	49325	4408	276342	330075
Meat and fish, canned food	20784	3842	131453	156079
Oils	10784	–	31847	42631
Sugar	12982	2361	39595	54938
Tea	499	118	1896	2513
Salt	10979	2551	44944	58474
Tobacco	–	–	11422	11422
Oats	109117	31178	1157850	1298205

Note. Source: [13, p. 79].

reserves accumulated by the RKKA. In some cases, these reserves were seized by the enemy and used to conduct military actions against the USSR. The explanation lies in the fact that prior to the war, the location of the USSR's main storage facilities within the western military districts led to their destruction due to intense enemy attacks. In particular, as of June 1, 1941, a total of 340 warehouses and bases, representing 41% of the army's overall resources, were situated within the boundaries of the Western military districts, specifically the Leningrad Military District, the Baltic Special Military District, the Western Special Military District, the Kyiv Special Military District, and the Odessa Military District [9, p. 87]. Under the intensity of military action, it was not possible to remove about 70% of foodstuffs in the mobilization reserve from the western border areas of the USSR [13, p. 80].

The first weeks of military action became tragic for the Armed Forces of the USSR. Due to problems in the supply of ammunition, military equipment, and food products, the RKKA was at risk of losing its combat capability. The issue of supply of the army immediately began to be seen at the level of the State Defense Committee and the Soviet (Council) of People's Commissars of the USSR. On July 1, 1941, the Committee for Food and Material Supply of the Red Army was established under the SPC (Soviet (Council) of People's Commissars) of the USSR. The group included A. Mikoyan (Chairman), A. Kosygin (Deputy Chairman), A. Khrulev, V. Zotov, and S. Lukin [22].

This group was engaged in the study and planning of all issues related to the food supply of the armed forces, agreed with the Red Army and

navy supply services, and the development of draft resolutions for the State Defense Committee in the area.

In general, more than 100 resolutions of the People's Commissariat of Defense of the USSR on the formation of a food supply system for the RKKA military personnel of 1941–1945 were announced, the date of adoption of most of which dates back to 1942 [11, p. 42].

Having analyzed the situation with the food supply of the army, we can divide it into three stages:

The first stage covers the period from June 1941 to mid-1942. The provision of supplies to the active army was primarily conducted through the military reserves established prior to the war, in addition to the state reserves located within the warfront territories. This phase was dominated by the efforts to move reserves from areas close to the front into the interior of the state, rather than supplying food to the warfront.

In the second stage (November 1942 to June 1943), during the period of battles on the threshold of Stalingrad and major military operations in the Kursk Arc, an attempt was made to bring the reserves to the maximum close to the warfront line.

Between 1941 and 1945, there were supply problems at every stage of the war. During the second half of 1941 and early 1942, there was the hardest time in the food supply of the RKKA soldiers and officers. This was caused by:

Firstly, with the beginning of hostilities on June 22, 1941, there was the destruction of a large part of the food stocks stored in the RKKA warehouses. Time was needed to refill food supplies and reorganize the supply system. As it turned out, the rapid occupation of the western

regions of the USSR required the supply of food for the army from relatively distant territories (even across the ocean). As a result, the supply chain between the army and the product manufacturers (producers) stretched for several thousand kilometers. As a result, the time for the delivery of food to military units increased, as well as the amount of expenses for transportation grew.

Secondly, mass mobilization, which began with the onset of the war, increased the number of military personnel in the short term. In such conditions, the deficit in the army, which did not have enough food reserves, increased even more. In terms of the number of soldiers, the RKKA was among the largest armies in the world by personnel composition. As of 22 June 1941, the RKKA and the USSR Navy had 4,629,465 enlisted men in all types of military units [3, p. 10]. The beginning of hostilities and the announcement of mobilization led to a brief increase in the number of military personnel. Approximately 3,900,000 men were mobilized into the army by the end of the summer of 1941, and the figure amounted to at least 7,150,000 by the end of 1941 [2, p. 301].

Relatively accurate information about the number of Red Army servicemen and the food allocated to them is indicated in the Resolutions of the State Defense Committee. In particular, in the Resolution of the State Defense Committee No. 660 dated September 11, 1941, the amount of food allocated for the Red Army in September and the IV quarter of 1941 was calculated based on the account of 7,400,000 people [23]. Data from early 1942 indicate a sharp increase in the amount of food and fodder allocated for the personnel of the Red Army and their supply. In State Defense Committee Resolution No. 1119 SS, adopted on 10 January 1941, the amount of food for the need for the Red Army in January 1942 was calculated on the account of 8,598,595 people. Also, during the indicated period, the hospital ration food was allocated for 605,542 people in the army, and fodder was provided based on the number of 1,391,635 horses [24].

In the Resolution of the State Defense Committee No. 1986 adopted on July 5, 1942, the allocation of food products for the Red Army, the Navy, and the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs was calculated based on the account of 9,205,000 people [25]. Hospital ration food was

allocated for 772,450 people and fodder for 981,200 horses. If we pay attention to the amount of food allocated to the military units in the beginning (January) and the middle (July) of 1942, we can see that the number of military personnel increased by approximately 600,000 during the given 6 months. Due to the scale and intensity of military operations, there was a need to increase the number of military personnel in the army during this period. Almost a 20 percent increase in the number of hospital beds is an indirect indication of the intensity of the fighting and the number of casualties.

There were serious differences between the provisions according to the standards and the supply of real products to the fighters. Especially in the second half of 1941 and the beginning of 1942, such differences were quite noticeable. From the middle of 1942, the situation began to gradually improve. The memories of the war participants confirm that the situation in food supply has improved beginning from this period. For example, the war participant V. Pozdeev recalls that from November 1942, the food supply began to improve, and even food rations were completely provided [6, p. 66].

With the outbreak of the war, changes were made to the supply norms that existed before the war. The difference in food supply before and after June 22, 1941, was not only manifested in the reduction of rations. The main difference was the complex classification of wartime norms based on different categories. Just like cards were divided into different categories in the areas behind the war frontline, the main purpose of the differentiation of norms in the army was to save food products. The division of supply of troops into different categories and their "differences in grams" in daily rations led to savings of millions of tons of products on the scale of millions of soldiers.

If we compare the caloric norms before and after the war, the food supply standards of the soldiers and the administration remained almost unchanged. The daily caloric intake of military personnel of combat units amounted to 3,547 kcal in winter and 3,357 kcal in summer. Only wheat flour bread was replaced with rye bread. Reductions in food rations were applied mainly to non-combatant units.

In particular, the difference in the daily supply of the combat and non-combat units was

about 500 kcal. That is, the daily norm of the personnel of non-combat units amounted to 3,028 kcal in winter and 2,848 in summer [5, p. 80]. Table 2 clearly shows the differences in the average daily caloric content of the basic food rations in the combat units of the Red Army.

The memories of the participants in the war reliably confirm the fact that in most reserve regiments and military educational institutions, in various special officers' courses, food standards were lower than at the war frontline, and even reduced standards were not always given in full. For example, Fyodor Slepchenko, who was mobilized to the 312th Rifle Division in December 1941, recalls the following about his life at the warfront, "Food was as follows: 600 grams of bread, pea soup, 3–4 spoons of porridge. There were no spoons or utensils for eating. First soup was poured into the bathroom bucket for four people, then porridge was served in the same way..." [20, p. 6].

Yu. Sharapov recalls, "In 1941–1942, the issue of food supply was difficult. Reserve regiments are provided in accordance with the second food norm. And this is not enough. During the months of January, February, and March, when the battles were taking place, they fed us twice with oats. Oats porridge in the morning, oats soup in the evening. At first they gave 400 grams of bread, and later we were provided with 700–800 grams of bread" [18, p. 282].

After all, since the issue of Army food during the war directly affects the combat status of military units, the issue of food supply also in the Wehrmacht in 1941–1945 should be considered. In general, the approaches to the supply of the Army with food in the Wehrmacht and the RKKA, to the issues of food norms and delivery, were varied. The most fundamental difference

was in the categories that determine the norms of food products. In accordance with the Resolution No. 662 of the USSR State Defense Committee dated September 12, 1941, a total of 8 categories were introduced in determining food norms for the personnel of military units participating in direct hostilities. Of these, 4 categories belonged to the Red Army and 4 more to the Air Force pilot-technical staff [26].

Unlike the RKKA, there were no categories and norms in the Wehrmacht, that is, uniform food norms were provided from the soldier to the army general [8, p. 92]. This situation is partially confirmed in the memoirs of General Field Marshal Manstein, who was the chief of staff of the Wehrmacht's army group "South" in 1939: "Of course, we were provided with food by the army like any other soldiers. I have nothing bad to say about the *Soldier Soup*. We had lunch every day with hard soldier's bread and similar hard sausage. Elderly officers had a hard time chewing such food" [4, p. 73].

In addition, there were differences in the organization of feeding of the warrior in these two armies. The following differences in the organization of supply in the the RKKA and the Wehrmacht are appropriate for the period of active military operations, and during times of relatively low intensity of fighting, the personnel of both armies was provided with hot meals in the field canteens.

Attempts were made to provide the RKKA fighters with hot meals as much as possible. Even on the front line, in addition to bread, ready-made hot food was delivered to soldiers and officers twice a day. In some cases (when there was risk of intensive military operations, rapid attack and retreat), fighters were were provided with dry food for three days [11, p. 43]. In the Wehrmacht,

Table 2. Differences in the average daily caloric content of the basic food ration in the combat units of the Red Army

Types of rations	Ingredients in grams			Kilocalories
	Protein	Fat	Carbohydrates	
Combat units	103	67	587	3450
Units behind the war frontline	84	56	508	2954
Reserve units that are not part of the active army	87	48	489	2822
Security units	80	48	456	2659
Rations for hospital	91	69	543	3243
Rations for cadets	101	70	562	3370

Note. Source: [11, p. 43].

a soldier was given a full ration of food once a day. Crackers were placed in a special bag, coffee and other hot drinks were placed in a flask, and other dishes were placed in a special pot. The soldier always had to carry these supplies with him or keep them in a special bivouac [11, p. 44].

These two armies had the advantages and disadvantages of each of the different approaches to supplying troops with food. For example, in the RKKA, striving to organize the supply of food as hot as possible increased the mobility of military units on the battlefield, and soldiers did not have to carry food products with them.

For instance, in the RKKA, combatants and soldiers were supplied with the hottest meals available, eliminating the need for them to carry food supplies. This practice significantly enhanced the army's mobility on the battlefield. In addition, the supply of hot food substantially lowered the risk of food poisoning among soldiers. At the same time, there were also disadvantages to such a supply system, and the interruptions in the supply of hot food (especially at the time of the battle) deprived the soldiers of the opportunity to eat at all on the front line. Food was delivered to the fighting units twice a day (before dawn and after sunset). The given times of the day were chosen in order not to attract too much attention of the enemy.

The participant of the Battle of Stalingrad, N. Tupylenko, remembers that food was delivered to military units at the front positions at night in order not to be hit by enemy artillery: "The food was delivered in the evening, sometimes at night, and we were given hot meals once a day. It consisted of one kilogram or nine hundred grams of bread, one pot or half a pot of porridge. Nothing else was given, neither lunch nor breakfast" [10, p. 91].

If there were no interruptions in the supply system of the military units, the soldiers of the combat troops had the opportunity to eat enough. In a letter dated April 29, 1942, the Deputy Political Leader Yu.I. Kaminsky wrote the following to his mother: "In the morning, the pot is almost full of the soup with meat, pasta, and noodles provided. 800–900 grams of bread, sugar, shag and 100 grams of vodka are given per day. In addition, soup or porridge is provided for lunch. For dinner, they also serve bread sprinkled with sugar and baked in the oven. In addition, sometimes they can issue 30 grams of sausage in the morning and 100 grams at lunch. Herring and

sausage were given on the day of the Red Army foundation. Now we are looking forward to the next one" [20, p. 12].

As noted above, the daily ration in the Wehrmacht was provided once a day. Therefore, despite the fact that it was inconvenient and heavy during the battle, the Wehrmacht soldiers had to carry all the food with them. The abundance of dry food in the ration of the Wehrmacht soldiers, as well as the scarcity of hot food, led to widespread gastrointestinal diseases, including digestive disorders, gastritis, and diarrhea. This situation adversely affected the combat characteristics of the army, reducing the combat capabilities of the army. In some cases, this problem has led to the loss of combat effectiveness of some military units.

In the period of July – December 1941, both the RKKA and the Wehrmacht faced serious supply shortages. Diseases ranging from dysentery to dystrophy spread among the soldiers due to the constant lack of food and their poor quality. The extent of the catastrophic situation that has arisen can be understood from the following report by one of the commanders of the military unit of the Leningrad warfront dated August 13, 1941: "...the food supply on the front line is very poorly organized, the soldiers are left without food for 2-3 days... not eating in time due to which the soldiers became physically weak" [6, p. 65].

According to captured German soldiers in 1942–1943, the Wehrmacht troops also had serious problems with food supply. It turns out that the average daily food ration of a German soldier consisted of 400 grams of bread and 40 grams of meat, or 80 grams of margarine instead of it [19, p. 79].

In the guidelines of the General Directorate of the RKKA behind warfront supply, dated July 1, 1941, No. 1801-803 SS, mechanisms were developed to create food reserves for the military utilizing local resources in regions where military activities are occurring [27]. Guidelines were prepared based on the Resolution [12, p. 130]. In this instruction, the legal norm was fixed in the form of: "It is allowed for the Red Army's military supply bodies (intendant service) to use livestock, grain, potatoes, vegetables, milk, oil, and hay at the disposal of collective farms, collective farmers, and private households for the current supply of

troops.” Food preparation areas were divided into zones. These zones were attached to a certain military unit, and the representatives of the intendant service of this unit did not have the right to collect food products in a place other than the zone to which they were assigned.

The intendants had broad rights to collect food products in the zones assigned to them. The organization of this process was reflected in the guidelines as follows: in order to transfer food products to the army, the representatives of the intendant service should carry out their service in the territory assigned to them in agreement with the administration of the collective or state farms, and private farms. Usually, the products were bought for cash. It was mandatory to issue a special cheque by the intendants for the purchased product. It clearly recorded from whom and when the food product was purchased, its price and name. Unrestricted trade between intendants and farms were strictly prohibited.

In the second half of 1941, during the rapid retreat of the RKKA from the western borders of the USSR, the intendant service faced serious problems in the organization of supplies. Determining the location of military units during constant movement (retreat or counterattack) was a difficult task. While the fighting was going on, it was impossible to accurately count the number of military personnel in the unit. In such conditions, many organizational deficiencies and mistakes were revealed in the work of the intendant service, which did not yet have sufficient experience. A participant in the war, A.V. Belyaev, recalls it as follows: “The intendants came with food to the military unit where I was serving. They were looking for a certain regiment. The food was brought to them. We said that this regiment was destroyed in battle, you can leave us their products. But they answered that this does not correspond to the rule” [6, p. 65].

In some cases, commanders of military units directly sent their representatives to republican, province and regional centers to find food products. Such a goal was to encourage the purchase of necessary products for the military unit or to organize a collection of gifts for the army. For this purpose, on January 2, 1943, a representative from the 8th Aviation Army visited the city of Alma-Ata. There was also a letter of reference written on behalf of Aviation Major

General Ryabtsev. On January 6, 1943, the order No. 013, signed by the Deputy People’s Commissar of Defense of the USSR, Colonel-General of the intendant service, A. Khrulev, equated such cases to a serious crime and ordered that such persons be immediately arrested and handed over to a military tribunal [17, pp. 18-19].

During the period of intensive military operations, there were many cases of violations of the above-mentioned norms in the involvement of local sources in the food supply of the army. Especially, such cases were observed in the surrounded military units, which were cut off from the central supply. The reason is that the main (and in some cases the only) source of food supply for the besieged military units was local resources. But when the cash flow stopped, the intendants had no opportunity to pay to the farms.

The challenge of securing supplies proved to be quite arduous for the military units in retreat. Typically, in such challenging circumstances, farmers or local inhabitants would selflessly assist the soldiers without any checks or compensation. Sergeant Nikolay Inozemtsev, who was part of the troops retreating from Kyiv in the fall of 1941, remembers one such situation as follows: “It has been more than a day since we ate the last time. After 12–15 miles, there was no energy to move at all. A village was seen on the road. We entered the house. The hosts brought cabbage soup and potatoes. We drank alcohol. After the meal, all the soldiers fell asleep like the dead on the straw because we were tired...” [12, p. 131]. Food products or prepared meals given to soldiers by the population were called “babkin attestat” in Russian.

The military personnel, especially the infantry, needed help from the population. This is because the supply standards for infantry were low compared to tank, artillery, and air force flight (military units), and they were rarely given additional norms dealing with food supplies. Indeed, privileges dealt with the supply of food to the flight (military unit), which was considered elite in a certain sense in the Red Army. For example, according to Order No. 49 of the USSR Defense Committee dated January 31, 1943, the crews of long-haul aviation units, if the flight time in the air lasted more than 6 hours and the flight altitude was 4000 meters and above, an additional 200 grams of wheat bread, 100 grams

of cookies, 100 grams of ham (smoked pork), 50 grams of cheese, 100 grams of chocolate, 60 grams of sugar, 1 gram of tea, 5 grams of fruit extract were provided. In the case of a flight altitude below 4000 meters, the specified additional allowance was halved [5, p. 81].

When military pilots were behind the war frontline areas, supply standards were equal to those of the other military units. For pilots who were used to high supply standards, this situation caused serious inconvenience. The Hero of the Soviet Union military pilot Sergey Gorelov recalled, "...on the outskirts of Moscow and in general, wherever we were, the food supply for the pilots was at the highest level. When we moved to the rear areas, the quality of the supply deteriorated dramatically. That's why we tried to go from the areas of the war front line to the war front lines as quickly as possible..." [20, p. 20].

Soldiers used their entrepreneurial skills to provide themselves with food. Each unit had its own "supplier." The war veteran Vasilii Reshetnikov, who was the "supplier" of the unit, recalls his work as follows: "The incident happened in 1944. The field kitchen was destroyed as a result of the attack of German aviation. Warriors had to find food quickly..." [12, p. 132]. To deal with the situation, Reshetnikov crawls to an uninhabited farm in the neutral zone (where there were stray chickens). The bag was filled with these chickens. The most interesting thing about this incident is that Reshetnikov unknowingly crossed the minefield. On his way back, he was spotted by an enemy machine gunner and fired at him. Although Reshetnikov survived, the chickens in the bag would become holes.

Ivan Karnaev, who went fishing in Lake Ladoga in October 1943, remembers a similar dangerous situation: "We filled the boat with bream (a type of fish), and at first we almost exploded with our own charge. After a while we were attacked by German artillery. There is no objection to them. It is war..." [20, p. 23].

The supply of food products to the RKKA soldiers and officers was not always well received by the local population. Even in the territory of the USSR, the attitude was not the same. Vladimir Stezhensky, a participant in the war, remembers such a situation and reports that in the summer of 1942, in the Rostov region of the RSFSR, local residents did not want to

share bread with the soldiers and exchanged bread for goods [12, p. 132].

During the free time from the battles, the soldiers tried to effectively use the gifts of nature around to enrich their rations. A. Belyaev, a warrior who fought on the Karelian warfront, recalls the situation as follows: "The food supply was in a difficult situation during the winter. In the summer, there was abundance. The nature of Karelia is very rich. Berries and mushrooms are abundant. Sometimes it is possible to hunt. We usually went fishing in the river in our free time. We would throw the grenade into the water and then pick the fish from the surface of the water" [6, p. 66].

Many factors affected the food supply of military units. Even the level of supply was determined by where and on which warfront the military unit fought. For example, until the end of 1944, the soldiers who fought on the Leningrad warfront were provided with lower food rations than the soldiers and officers of the RKKA who fought on other warfronts [6, p. 66]. It is known that due to the blockade, an extremely difficult situation has arisen in the provision of food products to the local population of Leningrad and its surroundings. Therefore, taking into account the situation, the civilian population was partially supplied with food from the army reserves.

During the hostilities, the warring parties used captured equipment, various items, and food products. In order to prevent poisoning, it was established that the obtained food products could be consumed only after laboratory examination [14, p. 4]. Spoils of war made a significant contribution to replenishing the food sources of the Red Army. For example, as detailed in the report compiled by Guardsman Colonel Statsenko regarding the seized materials utilized on the South-Western Front, only during February 1–15, 1943, RKKA captured 579 tons of vegetables, which were used by the Soviet military [21].

In 1944–1945, the importance of captured enemy products in supplying military units increased even more. During this period, 80 to 92 percent of the Red Army's grain, sugar, and meat needs were covered by local resources and captured products [1, p. 54]. In some cases, food items captured by the army from the enemy were also allocated for civilian consumption. For example, the 1st Tank Army, which participated

in the liberation of the territory of Ukraine, sent 7 tons of flour from the captured properties to the possession of the Kyiv Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks [7, p. 592]. A.V. Pylytsyn recalls: “We were especially surprised by the bread wrapped in a transparent film with the date of production 1937–1938. Even though it was made so many years ago, it could even be sliced and eaten frozen” [16, p. 39].

Another factor affecting the supply of troops was the state of the transportation system in the area where the war was taking place and the distance or proximity to seaports. We can consider the level of supply of military units with lend-lease products as an example. In recent years, search teams have been excavating the battle sites. If we pay attention to the conclusions of their research related to the topic under study, we can learn that canned food and packaging of products brought under the lend-lease program were found in large numbers on the battlefields of the Karelian warfront, and they were not found at all in Leningrad and its surroundings [6, p. 67].

The discovery of lend-lease products in Karelia is explained by the proximity of this area to the port of Arkhangelsk. It is known that during the war, this port received a large amount of food products under the Lend-Lease program through the northern route. Therefore, it was more convenient to provide the Karelian front with products delivered directly under the lend-lease program than to bring products from other regions of the USSR. Since Leningrad suffered from a

siege or was partially blocked by the enemy by sea and land for a long time, the military units of the Leningrad front were almost never supplied with Lend-Lease products.

Supplying the captured enemy soldiers and officers with food had greatly damaged the provision of Red Army soldiers. The RKKA supplies were also over-pressured by the capture of enemy soldiers and officers. The number of German prisoners of war during the battles of 1941 was very low. In 1942, and especially during the Battle of Stalingrad, the number of captured enemy prisoners of war increased sharply. The growth in the number of captives led to an increase in the amount of products allocated for their care. In the early period of the war, by order of the USSR People’s Commissar of Defense dated July 12, 1941, No. 232, the norms dealing with daily food for prisoners of war were introduced. These norms remained in force until the prisoners of war were handed over to the Internal Affairs People’s Commissariat camps. Their volumes are presented in Table 3.

The increase in the number of captives led to a growth in the amount of products allocated for their supply. For example, during the period of the Battle of Stalingrad from January 10, 1942, to February 2, 1943, 2,840 tons of food were spent on the supply of captured enemy soldiers and officers [13, p. 92]. During the Battle of Stalingrad, many German soldiers and officers were on the verge of starvation. The poor status of prisoners of war is noted in many sources. In particular, Anti-Tank Guns Platoon Commander P. Tretyakov

Table 3. Prisoner of war nutrition norms

Name of a product	Frequency of supply	Amount of a product
Rye bread	Daily	500
Second grade flour	Daily	20
Cereals	Daily	100
Fish	Daily	100
Vegetable oil	Daily	20
Sugar	Daily	20
Salt	Daily	30
Vegetables	Daily	500
Tomato paste	Daily	10
Tea	Monthly	20
Black peppercorns	Monthly	4
Vinegar	Monthly	20
Bay leaf	Monthly	6
Soap	Monthly	100

Note. Source: [17, p. 24].

recalls it as follows: “On February 2, we entered the *Barricade* factory, where nothing remained unharmed. The German prisoners of war walked round saying, ‘Russian, bread.’ Someone would kick them out, and someone would give them bread” [15, p. 71].

In 1941–1945, the RKKA food supply system experienced serious difficulties. Even so, the food norms of the military personnel were provided relatively fully, compared with the food supply of the civilian population of the USSR. In particular, according to the norms specified in the legal acts, the real supply of the army with sugar and fats amounted to 100%, with tea, salt, and tobacco products by 80%, with meat and bread by 66%, and with potatoes and vegetables by 30% [8, p. 91]. The significant enhancement in supply chains resulted in the absence of major disruptions in the supply to the RKKA from 1943, with the exception of times of extensive military operations or specific emergencies.

In 1941, the start of hostilities in the territory of the USSR put the RKKA supply system in a difficult situation. Military reserves accumulated over the years were depleted. The fertile lands in the west of the USSR were occupied. In this situation, in spite of the development of the new lands in the eastern regions of the USSR, they did not fully compensate for the losses. Furthermore, the decrease in the use of machinery and chemical fertilizers in agriculture had a negative impact on the overall productivity of food crops.

Results. The importance of food supply for the army in conducting military operations has been emphasized several times above. In a complicated situation, all the available food products were distributed, and they were mainly mobilized by the army. Several pieces of legislation were passed to redistribute precious food resources and form the delivery system. The supply of the army was constantly improved. The operation of the supply authorities was reviewed several times. As a result, the supply in the army began to improve year after year.

The analysis of the studied historical sources shows that in 1941–1945, the Red Army was supplied with food products using different sources and the use of them in different proportions. Such sources include local resources, so-called “babkin attestat,” products sent by the population, centralized supply of food products by the state,

farm products, products grown by soldiers themselves, captured products from the enemy, etc.

In 1941–1945, the citizens of the USSR went through a very difficult period in their lives. The difficulties of the war were mixed with the mobilization of family members to the warfront. While millions of people were working within the economy, millions of soldiers and officers participated in military operations at the warfront. It can be said without exaggeration that during these years society began to live on the edge of life and death. It was even more complicated at the front. In addition to everyday hardships, the serviceman faced death, injury, and other situations. In the extreme conditions of life, the soldier’s food supply became a decisive factor to survive and conduct the battle in the war. The provision of food to military personnel was a complex and interrelated process. On the macro scale, it consisted of the adoption of resolutions by the relevant high government authorities, starting from the gross harvest of food products on the entire state scale to the micro scale, that is, the delivery of food directly to the soldiers.

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