



JAY'S UKRAINE BLOG - 9

HOW CAN THE LOCAL ARMED FORCES OF A SMALL NEIGHBORING COUNTRY LIKE UKRAINE DEFEAT THE SECOND LARGEST ARMY IN THE WORLD? AMERICAN DEFENSE EXPERT JAY TUCK ANALYSES STRATEGY AND TACTICS IN A DAILY BLOG. TODAY, IT'S ABOUT SYMBOLS.

We have all seen the big "Z"s painted on the vehicles of Russian invaders in the Ukraine. Purpose is for identification. They are now being used widely as PR symbols for Putin's war. But little known is the fact that the Allies have also used similar symbols in the Gulf War.

When I was reporting from the combat zone, we noticed there were inverted "V"s painted on US military vehicles. Occasionally, we also saw them on unmarked cars used by officials. We were told they were protective measures to reduce "friendly fire" by allied troops. Vehicles without the symbol, we were told, could be confused with enemy vehicles, and fired upon.

We quickly covered our camera car with inverted "V"s (see photo above).



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TODAY, IT'S ABOUT TRUCKS.

As a cub reporter, I was often tasked to create graphics of force levels to show the prowess of military powers. I drew up colorful charts with sketches of tanks and planes, artillery and infantry. In my war experience, I quickly learned that such numbers do not necessarily reflect power on the battlefield. There is another weapons system that is often underestimated – the simple truck.

Expecting to take Kiev in a matter of days, Russian leadership seriously underestimated distances and logistics for their vehicles, leaving many stalled on the roadside. Stupidly, they approached Kiev in a single-file convoy stretched over fifty-miles of highway. A single stalled vehicle could block their progress. Many ran out of gas. Others had insufficient food and halted to plunder stores. Some simply ran away.

When Russia re-defined its war goals to concentrate on the Dunbas Region, tanks and trucks were detoured through safe territory in Belarus and Russia, rather than risking confrontations with Ukrainian forces. They tried to improve their logistics. The trick was to keep fuel and food, supplies and ammunition moving as fast as ground troops. "The weapon isn't the tank," as one commander explained to me, "it's the shell the tank fires. And that shell travels by truck."

Or, as US General Omar Bradley learned during World War II, "amateurs talk strategy, professionals talk logistics."

Jay Tuck is a hardened combat correspondent from two major wars, a global expert on artificial intelligence and defense systems, as well as best-selling author and speaker. A complete collection of his wartime blogs is available at www.jaytuck.com.



JAY'S UKRAINE BLOG - 7

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The war is not going well for Vladimir Putin. His T-90 battle tanks, which rolled into northern Ukraine at the outset of the war, did not fare well against Ukrainian guerillas. US-made Javelin missiles destroyed them by the hundreds. Yesterday, President Biden yesterday praised factory workers at the Javelin factory in Alabama. Many dozens of Putin's combat helicopters have been shot down. Over 20,000 of his soldiers have been killed. Two of Russia's most prestigious warships are lying on the bottom of the Black Sea.

Putin's second offensive along the eastern front has been making slow, if any, progress. Latest deliveries of heavy long-distance artillery are now being readied for combat. The main problem for Moscow is the calendar. The 9th of May is "Victory Day" in Russia. But Putin has no victory to celebrate. The following day Vladimir Putin will be disappearing from public view for a cancer operation, leaving the helm to his underlings. It is not a good time to be absent.

In recent days, the CIA created a special darknet connection for disaffected Russians. Accessible only through the Tor browser with encryption, the Americans hope it will become a conduit for confidential informers. An official said the agency knows, "there are concerned Russians who are desperately trying to contact us".

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JAY'S UKRAINE BLOG - 6

HOW CAN UKRAINIAN ARMED FORCES DEFEAT THE SECOND LARGEST ARMY IN THE WORLD ON THE BATTLEFIELD? AMERICAN DEFENSE EXPERT JAY TUCK ANALYSES STRATEGY AND TACTICS IN A DAILY BLOG. TODAY, IT'S ABOUT A NEW TOP-SECRET DRONE CALLED "PHOENIX GHOST".

President Biden has changed many of the basic principles of modern warfare. His policy seems to deem that speed is more important than secrecy. If a weapons system seems promising, it is quickly catapulted from the drawing boards and to the battlefield. The new top-secret weapon system, the *Phoenix Ghost*, is one of them. Today, Biden announced it is being sent to Ukraine. One-hundred twenty-one are earmarked for shipment. *Ghost* is so new that little detail is known about it. The new weapons system is produced by AEVEX Aerospace, a company specializing in equipment for secret special services operations. *Ghost* is so secret that few details and no photographs are available. Even most American defense correspondents have never heard of it.

Similar to *Switchblade* drones, which are already in service on the Ukraine battlefield, *Ghost* is a portable backpack drone which can be operated by a single soldier. The "Phoenix Ghost Tactical Unmanned Aerial System", so its exact name, is an expensive one-way suicidal drone of the category "loitering munitions." It hovers over the battlefield, identifies enemy targets and, once they are selected, flies a collision course, destroying it.

According to the US President, its final design has been tailored to the needs of Ukraine. According to my defense sources, it will be a game-change in the Ukraine war.

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JAY'S UKRAINE BLOG - 5

HOW CAN UKRAINIAN ARMED FORCES DEFEAT THE SECOND LARGEST ARMY IN THE WORLD ON THE BATTLEFIELD? AMERICAN DEFENSE EXPERT JAY TUCK ANALYSES STRATEGY AND TACTICS IN A DAILY BLOG.

TODAY, IT'S ABOUT THE SHOULDER-CARRIED AMERICAN ANTI-TANK WEAPON JAVELIN, A GAME-CHANGER.

For many years, German anti-tank missiles called "Milan" were the prime anti-tank weapons of NATO. Developed in cooperation with France, the shoulder-launched weapons were light, easy to operate and inexpensive. After launch, the user can steer his missile into target inflight with joystick and a thin Kevlar protected wire. In the Ukraine war, however, wire-guided technology proved obsolete.

The new American Javelin is a fire-and-forget weapon. Once targeted and released by the operator, the missile makes all adjustments alone using artificial intelligence. More important, however, is the flight path of the new weapon. While the Milan and most other anti-tank weapons use terrain-following flight paths, approaching targets horizontally, the Javelin spurts straight upward shortly before impact, slamming down vertically into the tank turret. This makes interception nearly impossible. It also circumvents the armament.

Russian tanks are protected against anti-tank missiles by Kontakt-5 explosive reactive armor (ERA). These ERA blocks, also known as bricks, give the tank its distinctive squared appearance. They are spaced and installed in such a way as to mitigate the penetrating power of armor-piercing munitions. As tank commanders in the field have recognized this weakness, they have mounted makeshift metal cages on top of their turrets. But to no avail.

When Russian tank caravans entered Ukraine in long, single-file columns, they were sitting ducks for fighters along the route. If one tank was hit, it blocked the entire caravan of vehicles. If they abandoned the paved road, they would bog down in the mud.

Proving infantry tanks an ineffective weapon against high-tech missiles. And, the missiles are inexpensive. There can be no doubt: the Javelin anti-tank rocket has been a major game-changer. But the Kremlin has since shifted its emphasis – and its armies – to the East Ukraine.

Ukrainian strategists were aware that the advantages of the Javelin most in forests and tight places. In the open terrain of East Ukraine, western strategists knew, the advantages of the Javelin would sink. So they came up with something new.

Today, President Joe Biden announced that a new top-secret weapon system, the *Phoenix Ghost*, is among the heavy weapons the United States is sending to Ukraine. *Ghost* is so secret that few details and no photographs are available. I will describe it in my next blog.

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JAY'S UKRAINE BLOG – 4

HOW CAN THE LOCAL ARMED FORCES OF A SMALL COUNTRY LIKE UKRAINE DEFEAT THE SECOND LARGEST ARMY IN THE WORLD? AMERICAN DEFENSE EXPERT JAY TUCK ANALYSES STRATEGY AND TACTICS IN A DAILY BLOG. TODAY, HOW RUSSIA LOST THE BATTLE OF KIEV.

Moscow launched the invasion of the Ukraine with great optimism. It had amassed large numbers of troops and tanks on the border and was expecting to roll at high speed into its small neighbor and conquer it quickly. It employed a tactic used by Nazi Germany in the early stages of World War II with great success, charging across frontiers at high speeds, guns blazing, planning to overrun unprepared defenses quickly. It was called *Blitzkrieg*.

But massive surprise attacks can run into trouble quickly when distances are underestimated, weather conditions poor or resistance unexpectedly strong. In protracted combat, soldiers need large supplies and ammunition, food and warm clothing. When supply lines stretch over long distances, which need to be defended, they are not reliable. So it was in World War II. At the Battle of Stalingrad German soldiers were left starving and stranded in the icy snow, Hitler had also underestimated the resistance of an army defending its homeland against foreign invaders. And he underestimated the obstacles created by hostile weather conditions.

Putin, misled by the council of his Yes-Men, made the same mistakes. He believed Kiev would be an easy take. Road conditions were poor. Heavy vehicles had to stay on the pavement, backing up in single-file lines for over forty kilometers. If they stayed on the pavement, they were sitting ducks for Ukrainian ambush. If they left it, they got stuck in the mud. Their planners provided far too little spirit, so many simply ran out of fuel. Others resorted to plundering local stores for food.

Many of the invaders were one-year conscripts with little training and little motivation, just waiting for their duty to pass so they could return home. Prisoners of war were given their telephones so they could call home – and inform relatives that the war was not going.

But the real-game changer was a new high-tech weapon system from America.

[Next Edition: The Javelin - Ukraine's Weapon of Choice](#)

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JAY'S UKRAINE BLOG - 3

HOW CAN THE LOCAL ARMED FORCES OF A SMALL COUNTRY LIKE UKRAINE DEFEAT THE SECOND LARGEST ARMY IN THE WORLD? AMERICAN DEFENSE EXPERT JAY TUCK ANALYSES STRATEGY AND TACTICS IN A DAILY BLOG. TODAY, IT'S ABOUT THE [FAILINGS OF THE RUSSIAN AIR FORCE](#).

One of the prime demands of the Ukrainians from the West has been the establishment of a no-fly zone for the Russian Air Force over their territory. The reasons were obvious. In the air, the Russians were a superpower. But the west rejected Ukraine's demands, knowing that a no-fly-zone would have to be enforced. That meant a potential confrontation with NATO aircraft, perhaps even between the two nuclear powers. Given the superior technology and absolute numbers of Kremlin armed forces, it seemed a given that they would quickly obtain air superiority over Ukraine. In the initial days of the invasion, news footage showed skies blackened with dozens of Russian low-flying attack helicopters, mostly KA-52 Alligator. The Alligator is Russia's most modern gunship - heavily armed with a 30-millimeter gun, anti-tank missiles, unguided rockets and a 25-pound S-8. Apparently intended to play a key role in the attack, the Alligator proved very vulnerable in combat. Ukrainian defense forces, armed with high-tech ground-to-air missiles were very successful at shooting them down. Weapon of choice was the US Stinger missile used so successfully in Afghanistan. But other antiaircraft weapons also proved efficient. In one unusual case, a Ukrainian soldier even managed to shoot one down with an anti-tank weapon. Soon there were fewer KA-52 attack helicopters in the air.

Most of the Ukrainian airfields have been reduced to rubble by Russian artillery and many observers assume the Ukrainian air force had ceased to exist. But there remain a number of Ukrainian MIGs and Sukhoi hidden in barns and camouflaged sheds. Some pilots even sleep in flight suits in the cockpits of their planes, ready for takeoff. Obviously, they remain quite inferior to the jets of the Red Army. But the danger remains. Moscow did not rule the skies.

In recent weeks, Kiev has been increasing diplomatic pressure on its neighboring countries and NATO to supply heavy weapons, including tanks, artillery and, yes, warplanes. Several neighbors still have old Soviet MIGs and Sukhoi aircraft in their arsenals. But the diplomacy is complicated. And while they debate their moves in the safety of their cabinet rooms, the killing in Ukraine goes on.

[Next Edition: How Russia Lost the Battle of Kiev](#)

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JAY'S UKRAINE BLOG – 2

HOW CAN THE LOCAL ARMED FORCES OF A SMALL COUNTRY LIKE UKRAINE DEFEAT THE SECOND LARGEST ARMY IN THE WORLD? AMERICAN DEFENSE EXPERT JAY TUCK ANALYSES STRATEGY AND TACTICS IN A DAILY BLOG. [TODAY, IT IS ABOUT RUSSIAN AIRCRAFT CARRIERS.](#)

With two of Russia's most prestigious warships at the bottom of the Black Sea, sunk by Ukrainian missiles, many wonder why the Russian Navy is not using aircraft carriers to project its military power into the region. The answer is simple:

It has none.

As least, none that function.

The "Admiral Kuznetsov," their sole aircraft carrier, has been out of order for several years. At best, it was hardly a state-of-the-art warship, powered by heavy fuel oil and emitting thick black exhaust plumes that were visible for many miles. In addition, the carrier was so prone to repairs that it was constantly accompanied by a repair vehicle. During its last mission, the "Admiral Kuznetsov" was towed for refitting to the Murmansk naval port. The ship caught fire in the docks on December 12, 2019 and has been totally incapacitated ever since. The only other aircraft carrier built by Russia, the ex "Warjag," was sold to China before completion.

Russian carriers were never comparable to the warships of the US Navy. American Nimitz-class carriers are nuclear-powered, which means they operate without emissions. While the Russian ship, when functioning, can operate only forty-five days without refueling, a Nimitz carrier can sail for over twenty-five years. US electronics and warplanes are far superior. Worldwide, the US Navy operates eleven nuclear-powered aircraft carriers of this Class.

To be a naval superpower, Russia needs the mobile aircraft carriers to project its power globally. Its own coastline has severe limitations. Geographically, Russia may be the largest country in the world. But the location of its naval bases in Arctic waters has severe limitations. Its two prime naval ports in Vladivostok and Murmansk are ice-locked in winter. Access to open ocean is crucial for them. This is why the contested coastal strip of the Black Sea in Ukraine is so crucial. Russian forces began their major offensive in that region today.

[Next Edition: Failings of the Russian Air Force](#)

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JAY'S UKRAINE BLOG -1

HOW CAN THE LOCAL ARMED FORCES OF A SMALL COUNTRY LIKE UKRAINE DEFEAT THE SECOND LARGEST ARMY IN THE WORLD? AMERICAN DEFENSE EXPERT JAY TUCK ANALYSES STRATEGY AND TACTICS IN A DAILY BLOG. TODAY, IT'S ABOUT THE SINKING OF THE "MOSKVA."

The Russian cruiser "Moskva", flagship of the Black Sea fleet, was a prestige object of the Red Navy. Formerly named "Slava", the cruise-missile cruiser had been revamped, modernized and equipped with an array of long-range artillery, high-tech torpedoes and state-of-the-art cruise missiles. It was the kind of weapons system that dictators love - photogenic, flashy, a strong symbol of prowess. Putin liked to be photographed on board. CNN was invited to film. The "Moskva" was status for the Russians - until two Neptune cruise missiles from Ukraine slammed into its side.

At first, the Kremlin denied foreign involvement, attributing the huge explosions to a fire. But while the severely damaged warship was being towed to Sevastopol for repairs, it capsized and sank. The crew, Moscow claims, was evacuated. But official casualty numbers have not been released. Unclear is how many perished. But it is clear that the incident has caused great damage to the Russia's reputation as a sea power. This was the second major ship the Russian Navy lost to Ukraine forces since the war began. In the early weeks of the war, the landing ship "Orsk" and two additional vessels, was hit by Ukrainian fire and sunk. A nearby ammunition depot and fuel terminal also went up in flames.

The loss of the "Moskva" is a crippling blow for Vladimir Putin's strategy in the East Ukraine. After major failures of his land forces inland, he was increasingly relying on naval firepower from the relative safety of offshore ships like the "Moskva." Now those ships have been forced to keep a healthy distance from the Ukrainian coast.

Next Edition: Where are the Russian Aircraft Carriers?

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