

Stratagems of the Ukrainian and Russian troops in the battles for Kharkiv (February 24 - May 14, 2022)

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ABSTRACT

Strategies, or military tricks, are a component of military art. They also play an important role in the modern Russo-Ukrainian War. Among the Ukrainian regions, one of the key ones is the Kharkiv region with a powerful administrative center – the city of Kharkiv. Therefore, in February-May 2022, heavy battles took place around Kharkiv. Then the Defense Forces of Ukraine successfully used 8 stratagems, which helped to defeat the Russian invaders and liberate a large area of the Kharkiv Region. Russian troops also tried to use 8 stratagems, but most of them were ineffective. The reason for this was the successful actions of the Ukrainian troops, including the ability to simultaneously use several stratagems, and the miscalculations of the Russian command. It overestimated the potential of Russian troops and underestimated the combat capability of the Defense Forces of Ukraine. During the the stratagems revealing, the author's approach to the definition and analysis of military tricks was used, which was tested in previous studies. The article states that the successful use of the stratagems by Ukrainian troops in 2022 may be a consequence of preserving the heritage of the Ukrainian Cossacks and their descendants. The ability of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to successfully use military tricks in the battles for Kharkiv confirmed the high level of their military art.

KEYWORDS

Military art, stratagems, Ukraine-2022, Russo-Ukrainian War, Defense Forces of Ukraine, Ukrainian Cossacks, Kharkiv

Introduction

The art of war has always been present in the history of mankind, and among its components, not the least role was played by methods of confusing the enemy – stratagems/military tricks. The current Russia-Ukraine war, which has been ongoing since 2014, was no exception (Allison, 2014; Mahda, 2015; Seheda, Shevchuk, 2019). Its course is influenced by the level of military art of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the Russian army, in particular, the variety and skill of using stratagems.

All this became even more obvious starting from February 24, 2022, when the full-scale armed invasion of Russian troops in the sovereign territory of Ukraine began (*Zvernennia Prezydenta Ukrainy...*, 2023). Bloody battles covered a huge territory, including the Kharkiv region, which is a very important region of Ukraine. Here, during the specified period, Ukrainian troops first conducted defensive and then counter-offensive battles, while the enemy began with an offensive and ended with a retreat. Despite the mentioned difference, we can detect the use of a significant number of various military tricks by both Ukrainian forces and the enemy.

Under such circumstances, it is fully justified to identify and compare stratagems of both Ukrainian and Russian forces, which will contribute to the understanding of the military art's priorities by both sides and will allow to determine the reasons for the differences in the efficiency

of their application. Also, an appropriate analysis can contribute to a better understanding of the Ukrainian military traditions' continuity in modern formations of the Defense Forces of Ukraine.

I would like to emphasize separately that the results of such a study can have not only a general scientific research, but also a purely applied character, because they will help to determine the most acceptable military tricks for inflicting defeats on Russian troops in the future.

All the listed reasons and circumstances determine the appropriateness of the analysis of the Ukrainian and Russian forces during the battles for Kharkiv from February 24 to May 14, 2022.

Despite the above-mentioned relevance, it must be stated that in modern historiography, the corresponding problem remains unexplored. And one of the main reasons is the fact that the full-scale armed aggression of the Russian Federation in the territory of Ukraine continues, and the events of February-May 2022 took place at a small time distance from the time of writing the proposed article. That is why not all sources are available for scientific analysis. Along with this, scientists are only beginning to work on this subject. Therefore, there is a natural lack of research on the art of stratagems' use by the Defense Forces of Ukraine and Russian troops during the mentioned operations in the Kharkiv region.

To date, only the first attempt to cover the main course of hostilities in February-May 2022 in the Kharkiv Region has taken place. I mean the publication "The Eastern Gate of the State" Defense of Kharkov (February 24 - May 14, 2022)", carried out on the initiative and under the patronage of the Center for Military History Research of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (Khlon, Pahiria, Poltorakov, 2022). Its authors are authoritative Ukrainian officers who not only participated in the relevant battles, but also used all the information allowed to be made public. Thanks to this, the publication presented today is the most complete general overview of the hostilities, which also has signs of a unique source. It is in this way that it will be used in the proposed article.

Another publication of the mentioned center, dedicated to the battles in the territory of neighboring Sumy Region in February-April 2022, has a tangential nature to the subject of the study (*Tsentr doslidzhen ...*, 2022). Acquaintance with the relevant materials contributes not only to a better understanding of the trends in hostilities at the beginning of the Russian military offensive in 2022, but also permits to understand the importance of the Kharkiv region.

I would also like to emphasize that due to the specifics of the modern information space, various analytical reviews, forecasts and evaluations of the combat operations of the Russo-Ukrainian War are distributed in many publications. Among the Ukrainian authors, I would like to mention Oleh Zhdanov (*Zhdanov, 2022*), and among the foreign ones, John Spencer (*Spencer, 2022*), Dara Massicot (*Massicot, 2023a; 2023b*) and Marcin Gowenda (*Gawęda, 2022*). They analyzed the general aspects of this war, in particular in the territory of the Kharkiv region, but did not consider in detail the stratagems of the parties in the battles for Kharkiv.

This also applies to materials prepared by specialists from the American Institute for the Study of War (2022), which are distinguished by a clear, but very brief overview of military operations at the strategic and operational levels.

I will pay particular attention to the author's latest publication, in which the analysis of the stratagems use (military tricks) during the large-scale Russian armed aggression in 2022 has begun (*Zadunaiskyi, 2023b*).

Therefore, historiography still lacks comprehensive studies of stratagems used by Ukrainian and Russian troops during the February-May 2022 battles for Kharkiv. All this determines the appropriate relevance of the proposed development, which begins the scientific analysis of the specified field of military art on the example of battles in the Kharkiv region.

Methods

Considering the fact that the key task of the presented article is to identify / military tricks of the Ukrainian and Russian troops during the hostilities in the Kharkiv region in the winter – spring of 2022, the author's methodology for their definition and formulation will play an important role. Its foundations were outlined and tested in a number of publications related to the analysis of the corresponding component of the military art of the Ukrainian Cossack formations of the 17th – early 20th centuries and military formations of their descendants during the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921 (*Zadunaiskyi, 2017; 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2023a*).

The comparison of the corresponding techniques of military art permitted not only to reveal their similar typol-

ogy, but also the tendency of a certain environment to their use, taking into account the natural transformation of military actions over time. That is why, in addition to the usual scientific terminology, traditional Ukrainian Cossack and folk sayings will be used to emphasize the historical continuity of the military tricks of the Defense Forces of Ukraine during the repulsion of the modern Russian armed invasion (according to the model of the author's previous publications).

Primary attention in this study will be paid to the comparison of stratagems used by the Ukrainian and Russian troops in the battles in the Kharkiv region. The consequence of this will be the author's assessment of the quality of their combat use by the parties during the relevant operations. In other words, the application of the methods of comparativism will contribute to a more comprehensive analysis of the main trends in the use of military tricks at the initial stage of a large-scale Russian armed invasion in 2022 by the Ukrainian Defense Forces and enemy troops.

Results and Discussion

Before starting the review by the stratagems of the Defense Forces of Ukraine and Russian troops in the battles for Kharkiv from February 24 to May 14, 2022, I will immediately emphasize that they were the result of the large-scale armed invasion by the Russian Federation in the sovereign territory of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. And this is the greatest threat to European security since World War II. This is what Western leaders have focused on since the beginning of the large-scale Russian armed aggression. One of the important documents that summarized these approaches and assessments is Cedric Perrin's report on the new concept of strategic security of NATO countries (*Perrin, 2023*). The Euro-Atlantic community is focused on its implementation, particularly in the military dimension.

It should be noted that the Moscow elite, having a strategic advantage in all components of weapons, as well as economic, human and territorial potential, expected to win an easy and quick victory over Ukraine. By the way, experts from the American Institute for the Study of War (*Institute for the Study of War, 2022*) also discussed the possibility of such a scenario at the beginning of the invasion.

But the Armed Forces of Ukraine, together with other Ukrainian military formations, relying on the mass volunteer movement and the support of the entire Ukrainian people, destroyed the Kremlin's plans. And it happened in bloody battles, when Ukrainian troops successfully applied a number of techniques of military art, in particular, stratagems. The enemy also tried to use military tricks, but their efficiency turned out to be low, which additionally led to a number of his defeats, in particular in the Kharkiv Region.

Therefore, I will proceed to the analysis of the stratagems of both sides in the battles for Kharkiv. And I will start with the Defense Forces of Ukraine. I will emphasize that I will describe the relevant techniques of military art using both the usual terminology and Ukrainian Cossack and folk sayings (this was discussed earlier).

I will emphasize right away that the battles for Kharkiv from the end of February to the middle of May 2022 were conditionally divided by Ukrainian military experts into 3 periods:

- February 24 - March 3. Disruption of Russian plans to capture Kharkiv.

- March 4 - April 28. Stabilization of the battle line.

- April 28 - May 14. Completion of the defense of Kharkiv (*Khlon et al. 2022: 2-6*).

It is necessary to pay attention to the fact that for the enemy this direction was initially one of the priorities, but the successful defense of the Ukrainian troops destroyed the enemy's plans. Such changes are evidenced by the conclusions of experts from the Institute for the Study of War, according to which at the end of February the Kharkiv axis was second in importance after the Kyiv axis, on March 22 it became an auxiliary effort in the Kyiv direction, and on May 15 it was reclassified as a secondary auxiliary effort in the Izyum direction (*Barros et al., 2022a; 2022b*).

Despite the difference in purpose and results of the mentioned periods, their main meaning was the successful repelling of the enemy's attack by the Defense Forces of Ukraine. And its logical conclusion was the liberation of a large part of the Kharkiv region from the Russian occupiers on May 14. This date as the completion of the relevant operation is not disputed by our Western partners, analyzing the situation on the battlefield as of May 15 (*Sabbagch et al., 2022*).

I would like to emphasize that the key to success in the battles for Kharkiv was the high level of Ukrainian society's mobilization and combat cooperation between all armed formations, both state and volunteer. One of the vivid examples of such cooperation is the defeat of the shock squad of the Russian troops on February 27, 2022 in the area of school No. 134 in Shevchenko street in the city center (*Khlon et al., 2022: 3*). At that time, units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the Security Service of Ukraine, the National Guard and the Voluntary formation of the territorial community "Fraykor" successfully cooperated. In the future, this principle of action only strengthened, as evidenced by the formation of a separate operational group of troops "Sloboda" within the Defense Forces of Ukraine (*Ibid*). Therefore, the Ukrainian troops here acted in a rather coordinated manner and thanks to this skillfully destroyed the enemy forces. I would like to emphasize that in a similar way they repelled the enemy in other regions of Ukraine, in particular in the territory of the neighboring Sumy Region. There, too, the Armed Forces successfully interacted with voluntary formations of territorial communities, units of local territorial defense and other special services (*Tsentr doslidzhen..., 2023: 6-7*).

Speaking about the use of specific strategies, I will immediately emphasize that the Defense Forces of Ukraine managed to counter the enemy in different directions at the same time. This approach indicated the use of military trick "on all sides." It is about repelling the attacks of the enemy, who operated not only from the boundaries of the district road around the city, but also tried to bypass the Ukrainian group in the southeast direction (*Khlon et al., 2022: 2-4*). To some extent, a similar approach took place during the local Ukrainian counterattacks in March and during the main counteroffensive at the end of April – mid-May.

At the beginning of the invasion, the enemy troops, thanks to a significant superiority in forces, managed to temporarily capture a large part of the Kharkiv region, in particular, on April 1, they occupied the city of Izyum (*Khlon et al., 2022: 5*). So, under the blows of the over-

whelming forces of the enemy, Ukrainian troops had to retreat in some directions, but they did it quite skillfully, which permitted to preserve the combat potential for a further counteroffensive. And such actions can be considered a manifestation of the traditional Cossack strategy "if the Cossack did not win, he managed it."

By the way, in addition to maintaining its combat potential, the Defense Forces of Ukraine constantly captured and used enemy equipment in battles, which corresponded to the Cossack military trick of "Cossack bread". A clear example of this is the combat operations of the 93rd Mechanized Brigade "Kholodnyi Yar" (hereinafter 93rd MB) on March 2, 2022. Then its units unexpectedly defeated part of the 200th motorized rifle division, capturing 6 Russian T-80BVM tanks (*Khlon et al., 2022: 3*) Such trophies turned out to be very appropriate for further counterattacks on the enemy.

The mentioned example of combat operations of the 93rd MB (surprise strike) also corresponds to the traditional military trick of "catch by surprise". Thus, during March 9-22, 7 devastating blows were inflicted on Russian columns and strongholds (*Khlon et al., 2022: 4-5*). As a result, a large number of personnel and equipment were destroyed, including the newest Russian tanks of the elite Kantemir division. In my opinion, among the mentioned attacks, the strike on March 11 in the Chuguyiv district, carried out by special operations forces, was the most unexpected for the enemy (they destroyed a large enemy convoy consisting of armored vehicles and fuel tankers). I would like to emphasize separately that the surprise factor of Ukrainian strikes was often provided by the use of the latest domestic and foreign types of weapons. This is exactly the effect created by the Ukrainian Stugna-P anti-tank missile systems. As for the foreign artillery weapons supplied to us by our Western partners, they are quite mobile and long-range in terms of their technical parameters, and therefore increase the effect of surprise during the rout of enemy forces (*Zadunaiskyi, 2023b*). At the end of the analysis of the application of this stratagem, I will note the fact that its success largely depended on the ability of the Ukrainian troops to hide both their real combat potential and their plans. In other words, there was a place for using the skills of misleading the enemy, who was "to cover one's eyes".

The above-mentioned techniques and means of delivering unexpected blows led to a significant demoralization of the Russian troops. And such a factor is a very important prerequisite for victory over the enemy, because his personnel eventually lost the ability to conduct combat operations. In other words, the Ukrainians skillfully used the military trick of "preliminary horrification." One of the obvious consequences is the capture of Russian servicemen and their escape from the battlefield. And there are plenty of such examples in Kharkiv Region (*Khlon et al., 2022: 3-5*).

I would also like to note the successful actions of detachments and units of the Defense Forces of Ukraine, aimed at destroying enemy communications and logistics in the enemy's rear, in particular during the counteroffensive at the end of April – mid-May 2022. At that time, not only were key enemy communications captured or cut, but also the technique of taking under the fire control its main logistics hubs in the rear (*Khlon et al., 2022: 7-9*). Thus, Ukrainian soldiers successfully applied the strategy of "destroying the enemy's rear."

Among the military tricks that have been repeatedly used by the Ukrainian side, an important place is occupied by the ability to strike at the enemy's key locations. An example is the combat operations of the 92nd Mechanized Brigade "Ivan Sirko" near Kharkiv at the end of March 2022. Then several enemy battalion-tactical groups were defeated, in particular, their headquarters were captured along with all the documentation (*Khlon et al., 2022: 5*). This led to the retreat of the enemy group's remnants in the corresponding area. Ukrainian counteroffensive actions in late April - mid-May had a similar significance (*Khlon et al., 2022: 7-9*).

At that time, strikes were carried out in the most vulnerable directions for the enemy's defense – along key roads and taking into account the landscape. Also, the enemy's main rear communications and its logistics hubs within Kharkiv Region (the same Vovchansk) were under threat of fire. So, the Ukrainian soldiers "punched in the face", and therefore the enemy's "legs fell off".

Summarizing the review of military tricks used by the Defense Forces of Ukraine during February-May 2022, I present their list:

1. Actions in different directions - "In all directions".
2. Timely retreat - "Cossack didn't win, he managed it."
3. Capture of trophies and their use in battle - "Cossack bread".
4. Unexpected blow - "Catch by surprise".
5. To hide the real situation and battle plans - "to cover one's eyes".
6. Demoralization of the enemy - "Previous intimidation".
7. Destruction of the enemy's communications and logistics - "Destruction of rear".
8. Attack in a key place - "Hit in the face, the legs will fall by themselves".

I would like to emphasize that all presented stratagems were successfully applied by the Ukrainian troops, and did not remain only an intention or an imitation of combat activity. And the most successful, in my opinion, were 2 military tricks: unexpected strikes ("Catch by surprise") and the ability to hide the state of the troops and one's plans ("To cover one's eyes"). 2 more stratagems were used quite often and efficiently: destruction of the enemy's communications and logistics ("Destruction of the rear") and strikes at key locations ("Hit in the face, the legs will fall by themselves"). Separately, I would like to emphasize that the Defense Forces of Ukraine often combined the mentioned military tricks, and this ensured the maximum efficiency of their actions in the Kharkiv Region. By the way, the ability of the Ukrainian troops throughout 2022 to skillfully act at the tactical level is also noted by Western experts (*Massicot, 2023b*). I consider it necessary to emphasize that all the mentioned stratagems had counterparts in the military art not only of the Ukrainian Cossack troops, but also of various Ukrainian armed formations of the times of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917-1921, which were the inheritors of the respective military Cossack traditions. Thus, the masters of using the military trick of "Catch by surprise" and "To cover one's eyes" were the Cossacks of the 16th-18th centuries and the rebels of Father Makhno and the Kuban chieftain M. Guloy (*Zadunaiskyi, 2017; 2018; 2020*).

Stratagems "Destruction of the rear" and "Hit in the face, the legs will fall by themselves" were also often used by the Zaporozhians Petro Sahaidachnyi and Bohdan Khmelnytskyi and the Kuban Cossack rebels A. Shkuro (*Zadunaiskyi, 2017; 2018; 2019*). The other 4

military tricks used by the Defense Forces of Ukraine in the battles in the Kharkiv region also have analogues in the actions of our ancestors (*Zadunaiskyi, 2017; 2018; 2019; 2020; 2021; 2023a*). I assume that not only the similarity of the mentioned methods, but also the ability to actively and successfully apply them can be determined by following a certain principle of thinking and the tendency to take the appropriate initiative due to the peculiarities of the life of the Ukrainian people, who have preserved some components of the Cossack heritage (*Zadunaiskyi, 2006: 241-269; 2023a*).

After the review of the Ukrainian forces' stratagems, I will proceed to the analysis of using military tricks by the enemy. And one of the first was the attempt of Russian troops to strike unexpectedly in the territory of the entire Kharkiv region. The prerequisite for this was the fact that the enemy had the opportunity to choose the time and directions for his invasion in the sovereign territory of Ukraine. So in the morning of February 24, 2022, the enemy insidiously attacked the Kharkiv Region, in particular the regional center.

I draw attention to the fact that the superiority in forces allowed the Russian troops to advance deep into Ukrainian territory and into the neighboring Sumy Region (*Tsentrdoslidzhen..., 2023: 5*). There, they also acted in a similar way, but at the same time, the importance of capturing Kharkiv for the enemy was a higher priority in the military-political context, and therefore he spent much more energy on it. Therefore, persistent efforts of the enemy to seize Kharkiv took place not only at the beginning of the armed offensive (especially February 24-27), but also during an unsuccessful attempt to seize the combat initiative on May 5 (*Khlon et al., 2022: 2, 8*).

At the same time, Russian troops used Ukrainian communications. An example is the capture of the district and other highways and railways and the temporary occupation of Vovchansk, which became an important logistical center of the enemy in the region (*Khlon et al., 2022: 2, 7-8*). Such intentions indicated the Russians' efforts to use 3 stratagems: launching unexpected strikes, carrying out attacks on key regional centers, seizing and using Ukrainian communications.

I would also like to note the fact that at the beginning, Russian troops not only invaded the territory of the Kharkiv region from different directions, but also stormed the regional center itself in a similar way (*Khlon et al., 2022: 2-3*). An example is several attacks from the border of the district road and the villages of Tsyrukun and Oleksiivka, as well as a breakthrough to School No. 134 (in the center of Kharkiv) by a sabotage squad. All this indicates an attempt to act from different directions, which is a military trick.

The failure of the Russian Federation's strategic plans for the rapid defeat of Ukraine revealed the military-strategic helplessness of the Kremlin and the indomitability of the Ukrainian people. Under such circumstances, the Moscow regime resorted to devastating artillery and missile attacks in the territory of Ukraine. The consequence of this was the destruction of not only the urban infrastructure, but also large casualties among the civilian population. Only as a result of shelling the center of Kharkiv (one of the rockets hit Freedom Square) on March 1, 2022, 29 civilians were killed (*Khlon et al., 2022: 3*). Such actions testified to the criminal methods of the Russian leadership, which he used in the war to intimidate Ukrainian society. But this intention completely failed, because the Ukrainian defenders, with the support

of the entire people, began to fight back the invaders even more tenaciously.

Having lost their combat potential, the Russian troops tried to gain a foothold in the temporarily occupied territories of the Kharkiv region and move onto the defensive. Then, in order to disrupt the Ukrainian counteroffensive, the enemy began destroying the surrounding communications, which was a manifestation of the appropriate strategy. Only at the beginning of May in the area of the villages of Tsyrkuny, Ruski Tyshki, Rubizhne and Stary Saltiv and the Pechenizka HPP, all road bridges were blown up (Khlon et al., 2022: 7). But this ruse did not work and the Russian troops had to flee quickly.

Actually, attempts to carry out an organized retreat can be considered another stratagem of the Russian command, which it was forced to use under the pressure of the Ukrainian offensive from the end of April to the middle of May 2022 (Khlon et al., 2022: 7-9).

So, in the battles for Kharkiv in the territory of the region from the end of February to the middle of May 2022, the Russian troops tried to use 8 military tricks:

1. Actions in foreign territory.
2. Unexpected attacks.
3. Attempts to capture key/priority centers.
4. Attempts to intercept and use local communications.
5. Strikes from different directions.
6. Attempts to intimidate Ukrainians.
7. Destruction of communications.
8. Timely retreat.

Next, I will try to briefly evaluate the efficiency of using these stratagems by the enemy. And I will start with that the very fact of the Putin regime's insidious armed aggression against Ukraine determined the actions in Ukrainian territory. So this is not about special military skill. Russian troops most often used 4 military tricks: seizing and using local communications; their destruction to counter the Ukrainian offensive; attacks from different directions; implementation of a partially organized retreat. At the same time, the efficiency of the listed stratagems was limited.

The use of 3 stratagems mostly failed: the implementation of unexpected attacks; capture of key/priority centers; attempts to intimidate Ukrainians (both military personnel and civilians). Such results were the consequence not only of the Russian command's mistakes and the shortcomings of the combat training of its troops, but also of the skillful actions of the Defense Forces of Ukraine.

By the way, the low level of military art of the Russian troops is noted not only by domestic experts. Leading American military analyst Dara Masikot (2023a) also notes the fact that the Russian command lost the ability to apply subtle techniques of operational art during the year of war. To this valid statement, I would like to add that, in my opinion, the Russian troops, even at the beginning of their invasion, showed a low level of ability to use military tricks, as evidenced by the above facts and their analysis.

Conclusions

In the final part of the article, I will compare the achievements and miscalculations of the Ukrainian and Russian troops regarding the use of stratagems in the battles for Kharkiv from February 24 to May 14, 2022. And I will immediately draw attention to the fact that the number of military tricks used by both sides is formally the

same (according to 8 strategists). At the same time, one of them for the Russian side is the fact of fighting outside its territory, but it was not the mastery of command that worked here, but the implementation of insidious armed aggression in the territory of Ukraine.

More noticeable differences concern the efficiency of the respective stratagems. Here, the Defense Forces of Ukraine significantly outnumbered their opponent, because they used all military tricks with high quality, and half of them almost all the time. In addition, several stratagems were often combined, which ensured the maximum efficiency of combat operations. As for the Russian troops, most of them did not work as a stratagem, and only 4 had a partial effect. The reasons for such differences may be the enemy's overestimation of its combat potential and underestimation of the combat capability of the Ukrainian troops, as well as the low level of coordination and control of the Russian troops. Therefore, their first successes were mostly ensured by a military-technical advantage.

By the way, it was the importance of Kharkiv and the region in the military, political and socio-economic dimensions that led to the greater intensity and duration of hostilities in the region, compared to the neighboring Sumy region. And here, the successful defense of the regional center gained special importance, during which the skillful use of various stratagems by the Ukrainian side played a significant role. I believe that this was influenced by a kind of military-Cossack heritage, in particular, the mental focus on initiative, fighting ability and mobility inherent in the Ukrainian people.

Thus, in the battles for Kharkiv from February 24 to May 14, 2022, Ukrainian and Russian troops each used 8 strategies that influenced the results of combat clashes and proved the importance of this military art component today. The duration and nature of the fighting in this region confirmed its priority role in the course of the modern Russo-Ukrainian War. I will emphasize that the Ukrainian troops showed a higher level of skill in the use of stratagems.

And the reason for this was not only the enemy's miscalculations. A large role was played by the high combat capability of the Defense Forces of Ukraine, which was based on professionalism, cohesion and patriotism, which were inherent in the Ukrainian army and society due to many factors, including the preservation of Cossack military traditions.

The proposed article initiates in historiography the regional dimension of the military art analysis during the large-scale Russian armed offensive of 2022, using the example of the battles for Kharkiv, which should contribute to the activation of relevant research in the future.

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Стратегіми українських і російських військ у боях за Харків (24 лютого – 14 травня 2022 р.)

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Стратегіми, або військові хитрощі, є складовою воєнного мистецтва. Вони відіграють важливу роль і в сучасній російсько-українській війні. Серед українських регіонів одним із ключових є Харківська область з потужним адміністративним центром – містом Харків. Тому в лютому-травні 2022 р.

відбувались важкі бої навколо Харкова. Тоді Сили оборони України вдало застосували 8 стратегем, що допомогли завдати поразок російським загарбникам та звільнити значну територію Харківщини. Російські війська теж намагались використати 8 стратегем, але більшість з них була малоефективною. Причиною цього стали вдалі дії українських військ, у тому числі і здатність одночасно застосовувати кілька стратегем, та прорахунки російського командування. Воно переоцінило потенціал російських військ і недооцінило боєздатність Сил оборони України. Під час вияву стратегем використано авторський підхід щодо визначення та аналізу військових хитрощів, який було апробовано у попередніх дослідженнях. В статті зазначено, що успішне застосування стратегем українськими військами в 2022 р., може бути наслідком збереження спадщини українських козаків та їх нащадків. Здатність Збройних Сил України успішно використовувати військові хитрощі в боях за Харків підтвердила високий рівень їх воєнного мистецтва.

Ключові слова: воєнне мистецтво, стратегеми, Україна-2022, російсько-українська війна, Сили оборони України, українські козаки, Харків.

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