

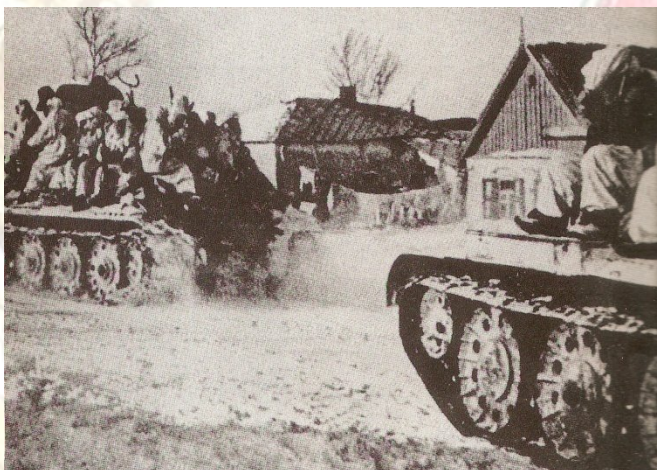
2nd Soviet Guards Army



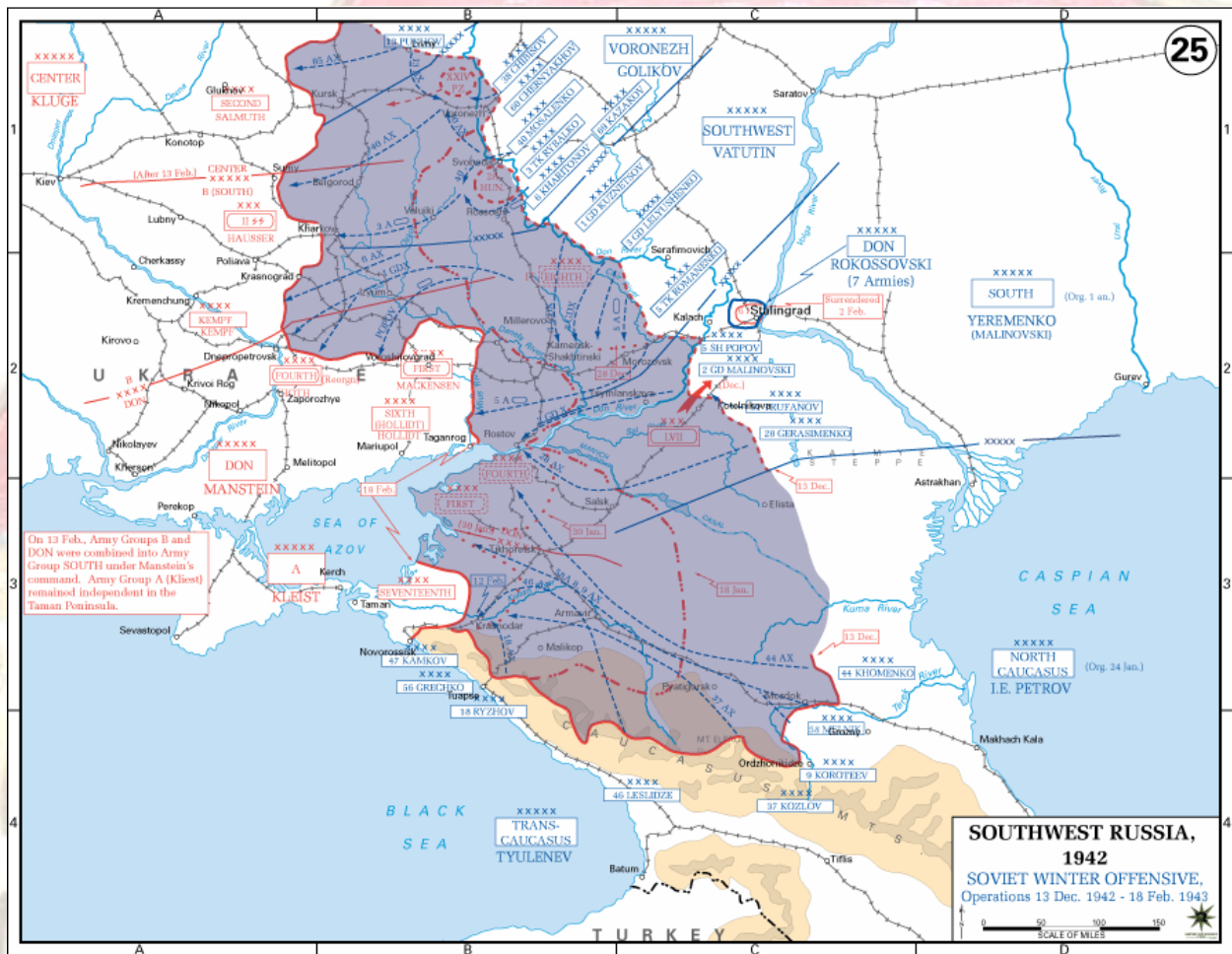
2nd Guards Army was formed according to the order of the Staff of the Supreme High Command from October, 23rd, 1942 on the basis of the 1st Reserve Army. Formation and training was spent in rear of the country, in the Tambov, Michurinsk and Morshansk areas. The Army initially comprised the 1st Guards Rifle Corps - 24th, 33rd Guards and 98th Rifle Divisions under Guards General-Major I.I. Missan, and the 13th Guards Rifle Corps with the 49th, 3rd Guards and 387th Rifle Divisions.

By the time of the Battle of Stalingrad, the 2nd Guards Army had become the most powerful force in the Red Army. The 2nd Guards Army appeared on the scene after the Soviet Operation Uranus had successfully encircled the German Sixth Army at Stalingrad in November 1942. In December 1942, as preparations started for Operation Saturn, the 2nd Guards Army was ordered by an impatient Joseph Stalin to get ready for the attack on Rostov. The assault and capture of Rostov was the ultimate goal of the Red Army for Operation Saturn.

In December 1942, plans for Operation Saturn had to be altered. The German Operation Wintergewitter, led by Field Marshal Erich von Manstein's Army Group Don, made an attack on the Stalingrad Front in an effort to relieve the Sixth Army in Stalingrad. Thus, Operation Saturn was changed to Operation Little Saturn, which was to be a counter-attack that would be launched as soon as Operation Wintergewitter subsides. The German forces, spearheaded by Army Group Hoth, made rapid



initial advances but was stalled at the Myshkova River. Colonel-General Hermann Hoth's panzer divisions were at a standstill and were suffering heavy casualties, even before the bulk of the 2nd Guards Army had arrived. By this time, Manstein realized that the operation was doomed. The 2nd Guards Army, under General Rodion Malinovsky, had been transferred to Stalingrad Front to halt the offensive. Stalin had agreed to this decision.



After Operation Wintergewitter had petered out, Soviet forces in the South-West Front led by the First Guards Army successfully launched Operation Little Saturn against the Italian Eighth Army. After that, the 2nd Guards Army and the 51st Army launched another counter-offensive, this time against Army Group Hoth, right before Christmas 1942. Not only had Operation Wintergewitter been halted, the Red Army had made substantial gains against Army Group Hoth, Army Group Don, and also Army Group A in the Caucasus that month.

The 2nd Guards Army made a very significant contribution to the Soviet halt of Operation Wintergewitter and the successful counter-attacks that followed. The 2nd Guards Army remained a powerful force fighting on the Eastern Front until the war's end in 1945. After the war ended, 2nd Guards Army, numbering six rifle divisions in two corps, was withdrawn to the Moscow Military District where it was eventually disbanded.