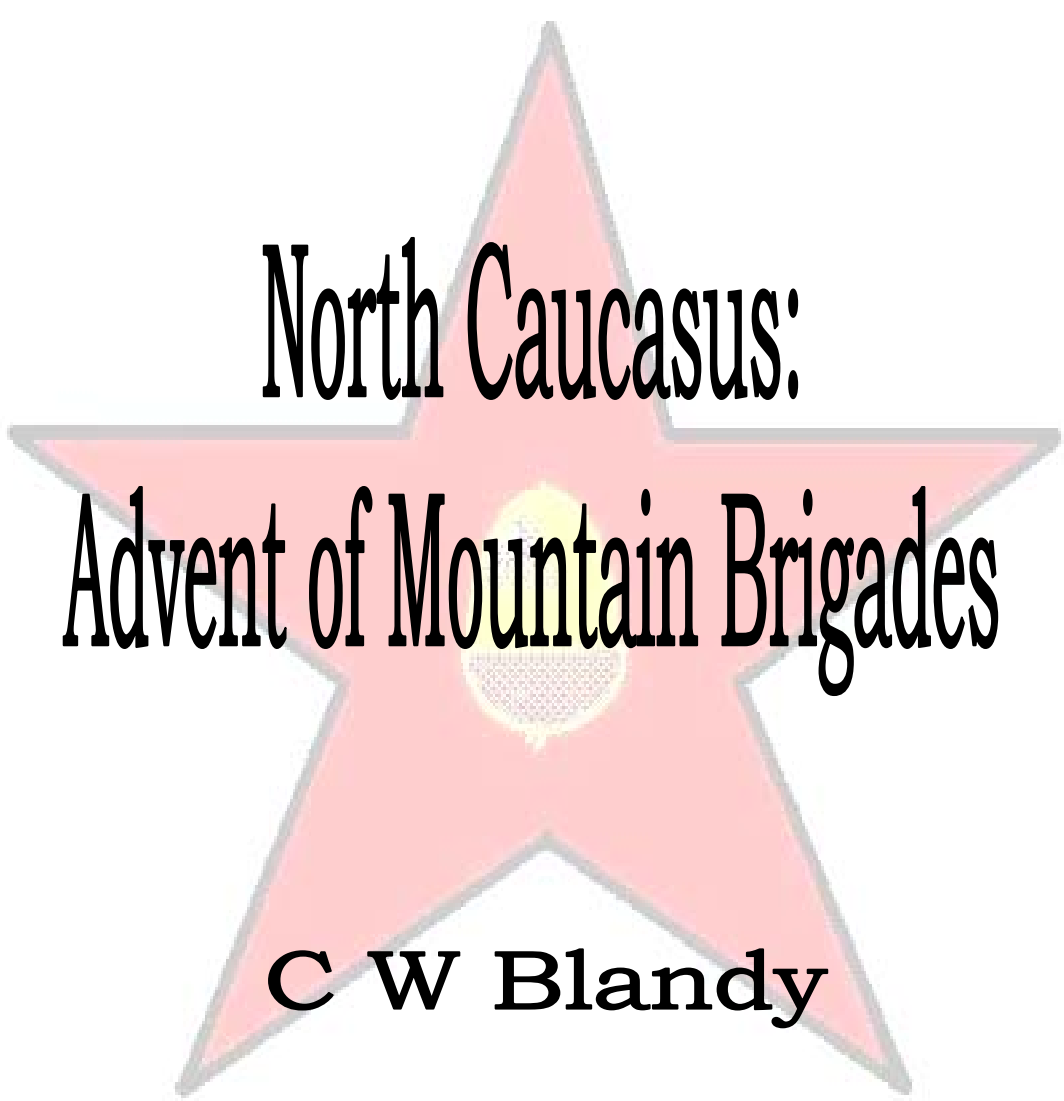


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## **North Caucasus: Advent of Mountain Brigades**

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**Defence Academy of the United Kingdom**

# North Caucasus: Advent of Mountain Brigades

**C W Blandy**

## **Key Points**

\* President Putin conceived the concept of mountain brigades in August 2004 to improve security along the southern Russian border and counter cross-border violations.

\* President Putin also stipulated that the infrastructure envisaged for the mountain brigades: roads, electricity, water and gas must also serve the inhabitants of Botlikh (Daghestan) and Zelenchukskaya (Karachayevo-Cherkessia).

\* Whilst construction of new barracks is almost complete, the recruitment, manning and training of personnel is more difficult. It is unlikely that the brigades will be fully operational until the end of 2008.

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# The North-Caucasian Military District

(Schematic Map)



## Key

● **B** - 33MR Bde (M) Botlikh

● **Z** - 34 MR Bde (M) Zelenchukskaya

● **S** - Sochi



# North Caucasus: Advent of Mountain Brigades

C W Blandy

## Introduction

Recent events in the North Caucasus have once again underlined the need to improve security along the southern Russian border, to control cross-border movement, prevent illegal entry and to strengthen internal border controls between the mini-republics, where:

*“Latterly the centre of instability in the South of Russia is remorselessly moving from Chechnya to other regions of Russia, in the first place to Ingushetia and Daghestan. From there not a day passes without news bulletins reporting the dead and wounded. A consistency is observed in this: military forces have ceased to be an effective factor in supporting the constitutional order in hot spots of the North Caucasus.”<sup>1</sup>*

Almost 40 terrorist acts took place in Ingushetia during summer 2007. Three Arab emissaries of Al-Qaeda had reportedly been active in the Ingush republic since the end of May 2007,<sup>2</sup> despite 2,500 additional interior troops in the republic.

At a ceremony marking the opening of a new Federal Border Service (FPS) outpost at Garakh on the Russian (Daghestan) border with Azerbaijan at the beginning of September 2007, Dmitriy Kozak, the Presidential Plenipotentiary to the Southern Federal District reminded those attending that border security in the southern part of Russia was a vital political task.<sup>3</sup> The Garakh outpost is one of a chain of border outposts and is situated on the southern bank of the Samur river where it narrows and is surrounded by high mountain terrain. The terrain around Garakh highlights the requirement for well-trained FPS troops, internal troops and military forces accustomed to working in a mountain environment.

President Putin’s concerns over Russia’s border security had been raised in 2003, when Ruslan Gelayev and his band had been trying without success to get back across the border to the comparative safety and comfort of the Pankisi gorge in Georgia. On the night of 15 December 2003 one of the inhabitants of Shauri (Tsuntinskiy rayon, Daghestan) came to the FPS outpost “Mokok”, situated 15-20 km from the administrative boundary with Chechnya and the state border with Georgia, with the news that there was a group of bandits in the village of Shauri. Nine servicemen belonging to the Khunzakh FPS detachment who went to investigate this piece of information fell into an ambush laid by Gelayev on a small track between Mokok and Shauri. Not only were the servicemen shot at point blank range, but they were also beheaded.<sup>4</sup> The border guards service from being an independent entity had only recently been transferred to the Federal Security Service (FSB), the successor organisation to the KGB. The operation later culminated in the deaths of Gelayev and his band in February 2004 at Galatli in Tsuntinskiy rayon

In July 2005 Shamil' Basayev carried out another significant terror attack in the village of Znamenskoye, Nadterechnyy rayon in Chechnya, where 14 people were killed, including three civilians, and 24 people wounded.<sup>5</sup> So important was this task of border security in the eyes of the Russian president that whilst in Makhachkala at the FSB spetsnaz centre on 15 July 2005 he spoke about plans for the deployment of mountain brigades to the North Caucasus region, in Botlikh (Daghestan) and in Karachayevo-Cherkessia (Zelenchukskaya). The Russian president gave directives to the then Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov; FSB Director Nikolay Patrushev; Head of the Ministry for Economic Development German Gref; Chief of General Staff Yury Baluyevskiy and the Head of the FPS Vladimir Pronichev. President Putin made it clear that the federal centre was well aware of the situation not only in Daghestan but in the region as a whole: he was determined to resolve it. By far the most important task was the strengthening of the southern borders of Russia, which at that time were simply not capable of being closed.

*"It is vital to act in the immediate future, taking into account the international obligations of the country, including also in cooperation with European partners the question of the creation of 'four common spaces' including the space of internal security. From Astrakhan up to the border with Azerbaijan – the whole of this border sector must be reliably closed, defended. And in this region where the resorts of Krasnodar Krai are situated, millions of our citizens have holidays and this zone must be protected."*<sup>6</sup>

On 19 July 2005 the Russian government took the decision to deploy mountain brigades in the shortest time possible along the vulnerable sectors of the country's southern border as a result of the presidential demand to accelerate the process of strengthening the southern borders. This was indicative of President Putin's displeasure that little or nothing had been done with regard to military protection of the borders and the formation of two mountain brigades. During his unexpected visit to Dagestan Putin had remarked that the Chief of the General Staff had spoken about the fact that mountain subunits were in existence, but had added "*I don't know where they are,*" which Putin followed by: "*When you come up against the problem of fighting against terrorism, you send combined arms units there, and they do not have special training, neither special education nor proper fitting out.*"<sup>7</sup>

Whilst the president expressed his displeasure with the winter footwear issued to subunits, particularly for work in the mountains, it appeared that there were problems of a far deeper nature. The President had ordered the formation of two mountain brigades over 18 months ago as a matter of priority, and yet it transpired that the infrastructure was still in the process of being created for these formations. It was envisaged that the formations would be operational by the beginning of 2005, but the date had been put back to the beginning of 2006. The time lag between an expressed presidential wish and its fulfilment taking the best part of five years is truly amazing and verging on the scandalous, illustrating a degree of myopia on the part of the General Staff.

Many difficulties had been experienced in the recruitment of mountain specialists, men, animals (mules and donkeys), the actual manning to the prescribed strength, the purchase, fitting out and provision of special equipment and weapons to the authorised scale (*ukomplektovaniye*) not least of which was the fact that 68 Detached Motor Rifle (Mountain) Brigade of Soviet times had been disbanded long ago in 1991.

It is now understood that some subunits of the two separate motor rifle (mountain) brigades having been through the process of '*ukomplektovaniye*' in the Moscow, Siberian<sup>8</sup> and Volga-Urals Military Districts, and undergone initial mountain

warfare training and tactical live-firing exercises at the Dar'yal training area in the North Caucasus Military District will be deployed to their permanent duty stations before the beginning of 2008: 33 Detached Motor Rifle Brigade (Mountain) to Botlikh (Daghestan) and 34 Detached Motor Rifle Brigade (Mountain) to Zelenchukskaya (Karachayevo-Cherkessia).

## Concept and Deployment

In connection with the construction of a military township for the mountain brigade at Botlikh, it was also announced that there was another new task, namely, the creation of a new training area in Vedenno rayon (Chechnya) of some 2,200 hectares for the brigade, which would also require the construction of an improved road from Botlikh to the new training area.<sup>9</sup> The new training area is in fact part of a much wider project of training area modernisation and refurbishment within the Federal Special Programme of the “*Transition to bringing formations and troop units up to strength with contract servicemen for 2004-2007*”:<sup>10</sup> all servicemen in the two mountain brigades will be ‘*kontraktniki*’. The improvements included in the North Caucasus Military District: “*New training areas will be fitted out and brought into use (Sernovodsk, Troitskiy – 19 Motor Rifle Division, Budennovsk – 205 Detached Motor Rifle Brigade, Buynaksk – 136 Detached Motor Rifle Brigade, Kalinovskaya, Shali – 42 Motor Rifle Division)*.”<sup>11</sup>

### 33 Detached Motor Rifle Brigade (Mountain)

Botlikh is an important nodal point, as it commands the routes along the Andiyskoye Koyusu river from Tsumada and other starting points on the Daghestani-Azerbaijan border in the south up to Dargo and Zandak,<sup>12</sup> also the route to/from Vedenno in Chechnya over the Kharami pass and to/from Tlokh and Gimri via the Erpeli-Gimri tunnel in the east. The main task of 33 Brigade will be to support the FPS in strengthening the Russian border. A mountain brigade is certainly needed to cover that part of the mountain sector where the three borders of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Russia meet, the very passes over which Gelayev and his band had made their last incursion into Daghestan.<sup>13</sup> Annually by November/December at the latest the passes are closed and are not open again until May/June, although the passes into southern Chechnya may have been open earlier in 2007.<sup>14</sup> A reinforcement capability for the FPS Mokok detachment and the FPS outpost at Garakh from the mountain brigade at Botlikh would be a step forward in improving border security. A brigade stationed at Botlikh, some 252 km southwest of Makhachkala, would also be in a position to participate in counter-terrorist operations in Central Daghestan in support of 136 Motor Rifle Brigade from Buynaksk or even 77 Naval Infantry Brigade based at Kaspiysk.

In addition in 2006, at a meeting with President Putin at Sochi, the Daghestani President Mukhu Aliyev stated that he was concerned about the situation in the south of the republic, particularly the problem of the increasing spread of Wahhabism in southern Daghestan.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the presence of a mountain brigade at Botlikh has relevance to a notorious area such as Gimri in Untsukul rayon,<sup>16</sup> where a frequent object of attacks by boyeviki is the vehicle tunnel which shortens the journey from Buynaksk to Botlikh. The situation in Untsukul rayon, which is in the very centre of Daghestan, was described as “*having a tendency to deteriorate*,”<sup>17</sup> due to the activities of religious extremists, growth of crime, wide-scale unemployment<sup>18</sup> and misappropriation of funds, and sadly President Aliyev’s inability so far to eradicate the legacy of endemic corruption practised previously by the system of collegiate governance. Nevertheless, over the last few months in

Untsukul rayon as a result of several successful special operations many *boyeviki* hideouts and bunkers have been discovered. “*The choice of Untsukul rayon by the boyeviki is not accidental*”,<sup>19</sup> for whilst the mountain sun-scorched earth was almost denuded of trees the terrain was extremely broken, abounding in caves and steep hollows causing complications for both the conduct of ground operations as well as those using heavy equipment and aircraft.

The road from Botlikh to Vedeno crosses over the Kharami (Khagaliya) pass and loops around Lake Kezenoyam (Goluboye), where it was rumoured Basayev used to keep an amphibious aircraft before it was destroyed in the spring of 2000. The proposed creation of the 2,200 hectare training area in Vedeno rayon has also highlighted the need to improve the road between Botlikh and Vedeno, to make it into an ‘all-weather route’. The grain of the country has mountain rivers flowing south to north, spilling out into the Chechen central lowland areas and also the plateau-like feature from west of Vedeno to Elistanzha and Mokhkety (Makhkety): an area of vital ground in the first Russo-Chechen conflict in recent times and which the Russians in the Great Patriotic War were concerned was a possible landing zone for the Germans in 1942.<sup>20</sup> In the area around Makhety not only did the inhabitants suffer from devastating air raids in the second Chechen conflict but in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century their forbears were hounded out by Tsarist ‘Hunting Detachments’.<sup>21</sup>

It will also be remembered that Anna Politkovskaya wrote about the complications which existed between the pro-Basayev fiefdom of Vedeno and the inhabitants of the Makhety mini-rayon. A permanent military establishment near Makhety would go some way to interdict movement of would-be *boyeviki* between Vedeno and Shatoy. The area around Vedeno has become well-known for acts of violence against federal forces and pro-Russian Chechens, such as the ambush of a militia convoy on 9 October 2007 on the road between Dargo and Vedeno in a heavily forested area resulting in the deaths of three servicemen belonging to Battalion “Yug” and wounding 10 others:<sup>22</sup> doubtless the creation of a training area and live-firing range in Vedeno rayon could witness an increase in ambushes against federal subunits going to or departing from the training area.

The President of the Academy of Geopolitical Problems, Colonel General Leonid Ivashov, believed “*very little is being done, in order to remove the causes of separatism and terrorism... in the North Caucasus the role of the Russian factor is being reduced, which had always stabilised the situation and extinguished conflict*”.<sup>23</sup> Whilst one might question the methods used to extinguish conflict especially in the present, the inescapable fact remains that many ethnic Russians have left and are leaving the North Caucasus, particularly Daghestan.

### **34 Detached Motor Rifle Brigade (Mountain)**

This mountain brigade is located in the predominantly Russian Cossack areas of the Republic of Karachayevo-Cherkessia (KChR), namely at the stanitsa of Zelenchukskaya not far from the other Cossack populated centre of Urup which borders the north flowing Urup mountain river. KChR is populated by the Turkic Karachay and the Cherkess. Suffice it to say that there have always been problems over the questions of land ownership, religion, political and social standing between the Turkic peoples (including Turkic Nogay), Circassian Cherkess and Kabardins. The position was exacerbated by forced mass deportation to Central Asia and Siberia ordered by Stalin at a critical stage during the Great Patriotic War.



Karachayevo-Cherkessia was the first of the republics in the North Caucasus to have introduced a border zone “*in the interests of creating the necessary conditions for the protection of the state border of the RF*”.<sup>24</sup> The primary purpose of the zone was to counter the spread of religious radicalism, particularly from Abkhazia and Georgia,<sup>25</sup> designed to give law enforcement organs greater control over the areas where Wahhabi *jamaats* are found within the border zone.

In accordance with the presidential decree creating the border zone, the new rules included clauses relating to entry, residence, movement of people and vehicles in the zone which could only be granted by permission of the local militia. Local inhabitants have been required to carry special documents proving their right to be in the zone. However, sanatoria, rest-houses and other large civil residences were not included in the border zone. In addition to talking about the strengthening of the border with Georgia, in Cherkessk at the time of implementation they noted that with the help of the army the authorities would be better able to preserve the natural riches of the kray, notably the pine-oak forests. “*Over the last 20 years pine and oak trees have become the commercial target of avaricious exporters to Turkey.*”<sup>26</sup>

The main task of 34 Detached Motor Rifle Brigade (Mountain) would presumably be similar to that of the mountain brigade at Botlikh – to assist the FPS in controlling the state border, in this instance with the border between the Russian Federation (Karachayevo-Cherkessia, Krasnodar Kray (including Adygeya, Sochi and coastal resorts),<sup>27</sup> and the Republic of Georgia and the unrecognised Abkhaz Republic. Vachagaev suggested that there could be mounting problems in the north west Caucasus:

*“It is likely that the Chechen [separatist] leadership is working on activating the jamaats in the north-western part of the North Caucasus – that is, in Karachaevo-Cherkessia and Adygea – with the purpose of spreading activities to the Black Sea coastline.”*<sup>28</sup>

The separatist leader Doku Umarov’s plan<sup>29</sup> for the reorganisation of the armed forces of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria included two new fronts in place of the Northern Front, one of which was the Northwest Front under the command of Colonel Abubakar El’muradov, in turn subordinated to Brigadier General Akhmed Yevloyev (Magas), overall commander of the Kavkaz Front. With Umarov now concentrating solely on Chechnya,<sup>30</sup> it would not be surprising if Anzor Astemirov’s military *jamaat* “Yarmuk” based in Kabardino-Balkar, supported by the Karachay *jamaat* which has close links with “Yarmuk” came to play a leading role in the development of the Adygey *jamaat*<sup>31</sup> and subsequent hostile action against the Russian authorities and population in the North West Caucasus.

An important consideration, particularly in the area of Zelenchukskaya, is the need to reassure ethnic Russians that steps are being taken to give additional protection to the civilian population: if the ethnic Russian population leaves the region, Russia in time could lose the territory altogether. There has already been a significant reduction in the ethnic Russian population in the Muslim republics, as people seek a more stable and secure environment.

Vachagaev noted an additional more serious aspect of the problem of Russian emigration from the North Caucasus.<sup>32</sup> In the 1990s Russians who had lived in the Muslim republics of the North Caucasus started to move to entities such as Stavropol’ kray, Krasnodar kray and Rostov oblast’, but found that they were not regarded as ethnic Russians, but people ‘tarred’ by the association with the native peoples of the Muslim mini-republics: they were not welcomed by the predominantly

Cossack populace in their new locations. Secondly, mainly as a result of the two Russo-Chechen conflicts, many Muslim mountain peoples also left their homes and moved into Stavropol' and Krasnodar kraya and Rostov oblast', in many cases outnumbering the ethnic Russian population in villages and settlements with the result that ethnic Russians are again to moving further north.<sup>33</sup>

Federal counter-terrorist operations could also be made more complicated by the simmering grievances of the Cherkess over the recent manipulation and falsification of history.<sup>34</sup> The omission of any reference to the 'houndings' and deportations of the Circassian peoples (Cherkess, Kabardins and Adygey) in 1864 which caused their forced emigration to the Ottoman Empire,<sup>35</sup> has fuelled further discontent. An additional factor is a 'simplification' of the law to allow the government to expropriate land without court hearings around Sochi in preparation for the 2014 Winter Olympics.<sup>36</sup> Fatima Tisova considered the problems arising under three headings: environment, noting the high levels of pollution adjacent to the site; military-security issues; and issues of national history, some of which have already been mentioned briefly above.<sup>37</sup> Environment, history and land ownership are emotive subjects, as has been evident elsewhere in the Caucasus and are likely to produce a significant backlash aided and abetted by the *jamaat* network.

## Implementation of Concept

### Construction of Brigade Base Locations

There can be no doubting President Putin's determination to implement the formation and deployment of the two MOD mountain brigades with his strongly expressed requirement that "*The infrastructure which is being built for the military; roads, electricity, water and gas must serve all the inhabitants in the areas of Dagestan [Botlikh] and Karachayev-Cherkessia [Zelenchukskaya].*"<sup>38</sup>

The development of the infrastructure for these bases with the provision of roads, electricity, water and gas is probably as important as the actual formation of the brigades in a long term perspective. Using the resources of the defence ministry, particularly the skills of military engineer troops in building roads, was perhaps the only way to ensure that the task was completed without vast sums of budget subsidies from the centre<sup>39</sup> disappearing into deep pockets in Dagestan. Large and small military bases and outposts throughout history have provided a degree of employment for local employed civilians: cleaners and sweepers, 'bottle washers', gardeners etc. There would appear to be jobs in the new Botlikh base and its 50 bed hospital for hairdressers, laundry staff and a local civil labour administrative office. Over three years much has been accomplished in the construction, billeting and quartering sphere for the mountain brigades: especially in the last six months. According to the deputy head of the MOD Quartering Directorate, Lieutenant General Yuriy Gun'kin almost 85% of the task had been completed.<sup>40</sup> At the present time construction work at Botlikh on living accommodation for contract servicemen has been finished, as well as that for officers and warrant officers: all officers and their families have been guaranteed married quarters<sup>41</sup> together with a middle school catering for 110 pupils and a kindergarten facility for 64 kids, a water park for children, and an eight-lane swimming pool. It would appear that the accommodation and facilities have been designed to reflect the need for improvements in living accommodation necessary to attract and retain young men as contract servicemen. In conversation with officers who had served in the armed forces for more than 10 years, Pinchuk found that present day majors and lieutenant colonels, in their wildest dreams during their time as young lieutenants could not have visualised such splendid, well-appointed accommodation and living conditions.<sup>42</sup>

Some 3,000 people were employed in the construction work for the Botlikh garrison, drawing in teams from Daghestan, Stavropol', Russia's central regions and major towns such as Samara, Saratov, Ul'yanovsk and Penza. Local construction organisations in Daghestan also assisted "Cherkezi-stroy", "Botlikh MSO", "Botlikh-granit", Spetsservis (Botlikh): within the total of 3,000, "350 men came from Botlikh with more than 1,000 from Botlikh rayon".<sup>43</sup> The Federal State Unitary Enterprise 529-e of the Military Construction Directorate (FGUP 529-e VSU) is continuing to carry out a huge volume of work. In the words of its head, Colonel Nikolay Voloshenko, military construction teams encountered a whole range of difficulties in building the brigade infrastructure. A specific problem was that initially the majority of the workforce were not ready for the tasks required. A particular complication was the rocky ground, in addition to the delivery of building materials, and the working conditions under a burning sun during summer time. Thus, for example in order to build the parade ground, it was necessary to blast 120 cu m of bedrock, followed by the delivery of soil and flagstones.<sup>44</sup>

After the opening of the school, which took place on 1 September 2007, Lieutenant General Gun'kin stated that the delivery of materials was the main headache for the constructors. Despite the fact that the road to Botlikh had been somewhat improved, it had been little more than a track, along which columns of heavily laden lorries travelled over steep and narrow roads, where drivers risked their lives on every journey because of frequent landslides and rockfalls. The construction team experienced many complications in the transportation and delivery of building material and equipment. A new road diversion was built which has now enabled the delivery of materials and freight to the garrison at Botlikh in half the time compared to the situation in 2005.<sup>45</sup>

On 12 July 2007 the head of the MOD Directorate of Construction Troops, Lieutenant General Sergey Dvuluchanskiy, gave some interesting and specific details concerning the benefits of engineering works for the local population in and around Botlikh in addition to those required by the garrison.. First, on the road approaches to Khunzakh – Tlokh – Muni – Botlikh – Tando, 42 km of improvements had been undertaken and completed. The building of a pumping station will deliver a volume of purified water at 1,900 cu m/24 hrs for the village needs of Botlikh and 1,215 cu m/24 hrs for the military township. A new sub station will meet the electricity requirement with a capacity of 32 megawatts, with 3.7 MW for the military township and the remainder for the population of Botlikh rayon.<sup>46</sup>

Botlikh is situated along a narrow finger of land varying in height between 250-500 metres above sea level alongside the Andiyskoye Koysu where the steep-sided, narrow mountain valley becomes more restrictive towards the river's source. Mountainous terrain surrounding Botlikh is in the height bracket of 1,000 to 2,000 metres. In and around Botlikh there is an acute shortage of workable land for agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry. Even the smallest space becomes a vital element in the production of food. The establishment of a brigade barracks has reduced the area of land available for local inhabitants to pursue cottage industries which help to supplement a meagre income derived from subsistence farming. It is to be hoped that the infrastructure improvements will go some way to compensating the locals for this loss. However, the inhabitants of Botlikh who had had their land seized for the construction of the barrack complex had in July 2007 not received the promised compensation of 123 mln roubles from the ministry of defence; the money had only just been transferred to the military district.<sup>47</sup> It will be remembered that in 2004-2006 the inhabitants of Botlikh carried out protest action against the authorities which included blocking the road to the building site and boycotting

work on the construction site itself. It will also be remembered that the head of the Botlikh village administration Ruslan Aliyev was shot and killed whilst in Makhachkala on 22 March 2006,<sup>48</sup> another reminder of the tentacles of criminal activity involved in political and economic matters in Daghestan bubbling beneath the surface.

Whilst the construction of the mountain brigade base at Zelenchukskaya has been much easier, the local population also felt that there was an opportunity to extract compensation from the MOD.<sup>49</sup> In July 2007 the residents of the aul of Kobu-Bashi, Zelenchukskiy rayon blocked the Karachayevsk-Maykop road demanding compensation for the disruption of their peace and quiet from the MOD, for around their aul a tank training area had been established. However, the view of the MOD is that the tank training area is on MOD property. Clearly, this is one of those cases which has the potential to escalate unless some form of compromise is reached.

Since 1999 through to 2006 military construction subunits of the Directorate of Construction Troops have also been very busy in Chechnya. Table 1 below outlines the ministry of defence expenditure.

**Table 1 - Outline of Ministry of Defence RF Expenditure on 42 MRD in Chechnya, 33 Det MR Bde (m) and 34 Det MR Bde (m)**<sup>50</sup>

Formation	Task	Expenditure
42 MRD permanently based in Chechnya	630 objects Kalinovskaya, Khankala, Borzoy, Shali Vedenno	9.5 mlrd roubles
33 Det MR Bde (m)	Construction of base	8.8 mlrd roubles
34 Det MR Bde (m)	Construction of base	8.8 mlrd roubles <sup>51</sup>
	35 km of road from Botlikh to the Vedenno training area	40-50 mln roubles (average indicative price per kilometre 1 mln roubles)

## Recruitment, Manning and Training

The actual construction of the base areas for the deployment of these two detached motor rifle mountain brigades can be confirmed by hard evidence – concrete, whereas the stages of recruitment, manning and training of the two brigades for mountain warfare are more difficult to substantiate, particularly in the latter stages of attaining confidence and competence required for moving in mountains and conducting of mountain warfare both in summer and winter. The problem is not so much in the creation of a “*Potemkin*’ village of detached mountain forces” as dubbed by a highly critical Pavel Felgenhauer,<sup>52</sup> but finding soldiers suitable for service in a mountain brigade.

Army General Aleksey Maslov, head of the Ground Forces, stated at the end of 2006 that the long-awaited event would in the best case be nearer to 2008 “*The process of ‘ukomplektovaniye’ of the brigades with personnel has not even begun. Only from May 2007 will we set about forming these units with personnel on a contract basis which will be completed by the end of 2008*”.<sup>53</sup>

At the end of March 2007 doubts existed over whether the mountain brigades would actually be fit for the task of operating in high mountain terrain in both summer and winter, or would they in fact be ordinary motor rifle formations with regular infantry weapons. It was not until July 2007 that confirmation came concerning the

arrival by air of the first separate motor rifle battalion at Mozdok familiarisation training at the Dar'yal training area.<sup>54</sup> Two thirds of the way through July 2007 it was announced in "*Krasnaya Zvezda*" that:

*"Yesterday [19 July 2007] servicemen of a separate motor rifle battalion (mountain), part of one of the [two] brigades being formed, arrived at Mozdok military airfield. They will now be dispatched to the Dar'yal training area, where in accordance with the programme of training for mountain warfare subunits will carry out special tasks under the mountain conditions of the North Caucasus region after which they will be transferred to their permanent deployment location."*<sup>55</sup>

In a later article Colonel Vladimir Sokolov, Commander of 33 Detached Motor Rifle Brigade (Mountain), expected completion of "*ukomplektovaniye*" "*before the specified date of 1 December 2007. By this time the formation must be fully formed and ready to set about everyday activity and fulfil the laid-down authorised tasks.*"<sup>56</sup> By this stage the reported influx and dispatch of subunits for mountain training at Dar'yal suggested that much acclimatisation and training would need to be carried out before they could in all truth be called mountain brigades.

There were more than 20 Il-76 flights from different regions of Russia between July and August to Mozdok and Vladikavkaz, transporting 2,000 servicemen belonging to the reconnaissance and motor rifle battalions which formed the backbone of the two brigades, mainly from the Siberian and Volga military districts. The federal railway system had delivered more than 1,000 troops, in addition to those troops who would 'storm' the mountains, namely logistic subunits which include specialists in: nuclear, biological and chemical protection, communications, medical service, repair and recovery subunits, and material replenishment subunits which were already at the permanent base locations.<sup>57</sup>

The overall combined strength of the two brigades, including officers and warrant officers on the completion of '*ukomplektovaniye*' would amount to 4,566 servicemen.<sup>58</sup> It is of interest to compare their combined manpower strengths with that of 68 Detached Motor Rifle Brigade (mountain) which was disbanded in 1991 on the fall of the Soviet Union: Box 1 below provides an outline of its basic structure.

**Box 1 – 68 Detached Motor Rifle Brigade (mountain)**<sup>59</sup>

68 Detached Motor Rifle Brigade (mountain) on war establishment numbered 3,800 men, but on reverting to peace time establishment only 1,800 men. On its establishment it had two motor rifle battalions in BMP-1s, reinforced by a subunit of self-propelled artillery "Nonna" (12 pieces) and grenade launcher detachments AGS-17, and two motor rifle battalions (mountain) in GAZ-66 vehicles, reinforced by AGS-17 detachments, flamethrower, mortar and anti-tank detachments.

The portable anti-tank complex "Fagot" was very effective for mountain caves and hollows. The brigade had a self-propelled artillery battalion (18 x 122mm SP "Gvozdika"), a battery of 120mm mortars, an air defence artillery missile battery, including a troop of four ZRK "Strela-10" and a troop of four ZSU-23-4 "Shilka". The brigade was reinforced by young men with practical skills as an alpinist. Mountain training instructors were officer-alpinists 1<sup>st</sup> class at the level of masters of sport. To increase mobility and autonomous action under high mountain conditions a separate cavalry squadron and a separate transport company were formed.

The subunits joining the brigade<sup>60</sup> were formed in different military districts of the country. For instance the combat engineer squadron was formed in Moscow Military District and carried out training at the engineer troops training centre in Yaroslav oblast'. A motor rifle battalion and signals battalion also arrived from Moscow Military District with a repair and recovery company coming from Siberian Military District. A reconnaissance battalion from SibMD arrived in September.

Plugatarev felt a distinct impression was being formed that the generals in '*scraping the barrel*' throughout the whole of Russia had only been successful in recruiting one hundred contract soldiers who had any kind of experience or awareness of life in mountains, alpine or mountain training.<sup>61</sup> Their experience however small would then be enlarged on the "Yelan" and "Dar'yal" mountain training areas and as part of the first major exercise they would scale Mt El'brus. "*What about the remainder of over 4,000 would-be 'mountain men - what experience do they have of climbing mountains - none*".<sup>62</sup> Much publicity was given to the company-size exercise scaling the highest peak in Europe, Mt El'brus (5,642 m) in full battle order, weapons and ammunition, undoubtedly to draw attention to the fact that mountain brigades had arrived. Furthermore, "*never before had an army subunit of the Russian Armed Forces climbed to such a height*".<sup>63</sup> It did provide an opportunity to become familiar with equipment and clothing, and to carry out some form of training at high altitudes.

However, motor rifle mountain brigades to be worthy of the name require men of outstanding physical fitness, robustness and experience of working in high mountain terrain. The lack of such men has obviously exposed a serious deficiency, despite the MOD having had over three years to implement the training programme at Dar'yal even before the main bases were complete. The problem has been compounded by the fact that an instructor in mountain (and arctic) warfare "*needs to train for no less than four years*".<sup>64</sup> Within the world of mountaineering there are clear-cut differences between an alpinist and tourist-mountaineer, as differentiated by Anton Kostyanov, a captain in the FPS in August 2005: "*the alpinist differs from the tourist-mountaineer like a formula 1 driver does from a Paris-Dakar rally driver*".<sup>65</sup> Kostyanov was convinced that future spetsnaz rock-climbers should be trained along the lines of the tourist-mountaineer. This is due to the fact that when operating in the mountains the main interest of the FPS, spetsnaz or mountain brigades are the mountain passes. The weight of equipment of a mountain-tourist is approximately the same as the weapons and ammunition carried by a soldier operating in mountainous terrain. Consequently the load is three to four times heavier than that carried by the alpinist when making his ascent. Kostyanov also emphasised that there was a difference in tactics in surmounting different mountain obstacles.

Apparently at the meeting between the Federation of Alpine Sport (FAS) and the MOD two proposals emerged for the training of mountain troops: the first was a short programme and the second was a longer one for training novices, namely nine and 12 month courses respectively.<sup>66</sup> There would obviously be a requirement for a mountain warfare cadre of instructors. It was interesting to note in the case of the Botlikh brigade, that logistic personnel were already at Botlikh whilst mountain acclimatisation was taking place with subunits which formed the backbone of both brigades, namely the motor rifle and reconnaissance battalions. Presumably, in time cooks and even clerks would need to become mountain trained, just as in airborne forces everyone is required to be parachute trained and in theory complete a number of descents every year.

On the question of equipment, Army General Vladimir Isakov, Head of Rear Services of the Armed Forces on 31 August 2007 had no doubt that “*Today this equipment is the best in the world*”;<sup>67</sup> the scale and costs are shown in Box 2 below.

**Box 2 – Mountain Brigades – Clothing and Equipment Costs<sup>68</sup>**

Requirement was for 2,500 sets of mountain equipment. Cost of one complete ‘*komplekt*’ (outfit) of equipment for one mountain soldier is almost 140,000 roubles.

Cost of one ‘*komplekt*’ of specialist alpine clothing and equipment for a serviceman is 48,600 roubles; for carrying out special tasks in mountainous terrain – 80,000 roubles.

Certain elements of clothing and equipment were purchased from abroad, but not at a cheaper, discount price. In future Rear Services MOD RF intended that 80% of clothing and equipment would be bought in Russia.

Two additional points emerged from Plugatarev’s recent article. First, the MOD discounted the use of the donkeys and mules which had been bought some two years ago in Daghestan<sup>69</sup> in favour of horses.<sup>70</sup> During the time of 68 Detached Motor Rifle Brigade (Mountain), the brigade had a squadron of 248 pack-horses on its establishment which had been purchased at Issyk-Kulya in Kirgizia, where it was reckoned that as a load-carriers they were better than donkeys. The experience concerning mules and donkeys was that not only were they a hindrance, but also that they carried a lesser load (in total 60 kg, of which 20 kg were food and water for the animals themselves). Horses have been purchased and are now stabled in the Federal state agricultural-enterprise “Prokhladnoye”, in the settlement of Lesnoye, Prokhladnenskiy rayon (KBR). Whilst at Prokhladnoye feeding, maintenance and upkeep, and veterinary care of the horses will be carried out by the North Caucasus Military District. Special veterinary care detachments would be formed in animal transport platoons of the mountain brigade logistic companies.

The second matter concerned the recruitment of local people. Plugatarev wrote: “*It is interesting that they are not recruiting locals to the brigades, although local lads knowing the mountains could be a great help in bringing the units up to strength with experienced professionals*”.<sup>71</sup> The subunits have already been formed before being deployed to the North Caucasus, but “*...there is another particular aspect that the General Staff is trying to keep quiet. A simple analysis of the conscription process in the Russian Federation shows that efforts are being made to refrain from recruiting individuals for the Armed Forces and other enforcement departments who come from so-called “socially unreliable regions” (or limit such efforts to an extremely careful selection of recruits). This applies to certain areas of Daghestan, Chechnya, Karachayev-Cherkessia, Ingushetia, and so forth, where the influence of Wahhabism and other Islamic extremist trends is great.*”<sup>72</sup> And yet local manpower could be of assistance to the brigades in knowledge of the ground, climate and people, and also a good source of soldiery remembering that Zelenchukskaya and Urup have a preponderance of Cossacks in their population.

### **Coordination and Direction**

The title of Felgenhauer’s article “*Putin’s order to create mountain troops results in competing, haphazard forces*”<sup>73</sup> raises the question of command and control of the various elements of federal forces in the North Caucasus, namely the FSB, Interior

Ministry (MVD) special forces troops, the Army and airborne forces, *“with each service attempting to recruit, train, and arm the men as it sees fit”*.<sup>74</sup>

In 2005 MVD special services troops in the North Caucasus had built a 60 hectare mountain training centre in the area of Mt Khatsavit in Krasnodar kray.<sup>75</sup> Commander internal troops Colonel General Nikolay Rogozhkin together with experienced instructors of extreme forms of sport from the Russian State University of Physical Culture had worked out a fortnight’s training programme for mountain preparation. By January 2006, 405 servicemen had experienced the course. It was expected to put a further 1,500 servicemen through the course in 2006. A fortnight’s course would hardly produce a skilled mountain warrior, but it brings an awareness of mountain conditions, and the need for increased MVD special troops activity cannot be discounted in the North West Caucasus.

On the matter of coordination and direction of effort it should be remembered that there are two centres in the North Caucasus region: the Regional Operational Headquarters (ROSh) directing and conducting the counter-terrorist operation, and subordinated to it, the Combined Grouping of Troops (OGV) in the North Caucasus. The ROSh is chaired by the Deputy Director FSB RF – the head of the department for protection of the constitutional structure and the campaign against terrorism. Administrative responsibility lies with the Interior Ministry of Russia, to which he is seconded. The head of the Chechen Republic, head of the FSB Directorate on Chechnya, the commander OGV, the commander North Caucasus Military District and commander of the North Caucasus District of Internal Troops Russia, the head of the North Caucasus Directorate FPS, the military commandant and head of republic Interior Ministry and a series of other heads of republic and federal structures are included in the composition of the ROSh.

President Putin was quite clear that *“these brigades must become sole centres of work of all the special services: the FSB, Ministry of Defence and Border Troops. Terrorism and organised crime can only be beaten [by acting] together”*,<sup>76</sup> but it was equally clear that the ROSh remained the mechanism through which local direction and control would be exercised.

At a national level, combat training has assumed a higher priority after two recent appointments. It comes as no surprise that a former general of airborne forces possessing bite, ruthless determination and combat experience, having served in both Russo-Chechen conflicts,<sup>77</sup> has been plucked out of the obscurity of ‘consultancy’ to become head of the Armed Forces Directorate of Combat Training and Service of Troops: the appointment of Lieutenant General Vladimir Shamanov was announced on 12 November 2007.<sup>78</sup> General Shamanov’s candidacy for the post was supported by Colonel General Aleksandr Kolmakov, the newly appointed first deputy Chief of the General Staff, a former commander of Russian airborne forces and well acquainted with General Shamanov. General Shamanov will become General Kolmakov’s own first deputy. As the chairman of the Public Council of the Defence Ministry, Vitaliy Shlykov, stated on 12 November, the post required *“a decisive man... Military training over these years has not been brilliant, nothing new has appeared.”*<sup>79</sup> The new team led by two men with rich combat experience is set to change all that.



## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> [http://www.ng.ru/ngregions/2007-09-03/13\\_terroristy.html](http://www.ng.ru/ngregions/2007-09-03/13_terroristy.html) *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 3 September 2007, "Terroristy ne menyayut taktiku" by Vladimir Mukhin.
- <sup>2</sup> <http://www.vremya.ru/2007/164/4/186748.html> *Vremya Novostey* No 164, 11 September 2007. "Poligon dlya dzhikhada" by Tat'yana Gritsenko. The article also stated that "according to information from the local special services the emissaries were occupied in putting together new combat groups, canvassing young local men. According to members of special services for each attack young fighters get between US\$ 2,000 and US\$ 5,000, from that it follows, 'Arabs don't come to Ingushetia with empty hands'."
- <sup>3</sup> *Granitsa Rossii*, 4 September 2007, pages 1-2 "Dmitry Kozak: Security of southern borders is a vital political task" translated into English by A. Ignatkin. For an overview of the planned FPS presence in the region see C W Blandy "North Caucasus: Problems of Helicopter Support in the Mountains" CSRC Caucasus Series 07/24 August 2007, page 7.
- <sup>4</sup> [http://nvo.ng.ru/wars/2003-12-19/1\\_Daghestan.html](http://nvo.ng.ru/wars/2003-12-19/1_Daghestan.html) *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye* (NVO) 19 December 2003 "Fiasko spetssluzhb v Daghestane" by Igor' Plugtarev.
- <sup>5</sup> [http://nvo.ng.ru/wars/2005-07-22/2\\_board.html](http://nvo.ng.ru/wars/2005-07-22/2_board.html) *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye* 22 July 2005 "Yuzhnyye granitsy usilyat" by Vladimir Ivanov.
- <sup>6</sup> <http://www.rg.ru/2005/07/16/Daghestan.html>, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 16 July 2005, "Granitsu – na zamok" by Sergey Belov.
- <sup>7</sup> <http://www.rg.ru/2005/07/16/dagestan.html>, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 16 July 2005, "Granitsu – na zamok" by Sergey Belov.
- <sup>8</sup> [http://www.redstar.ru/2007/09/11\\_09/n.html](http://www.redstar.ru/2007/09/11_09/n.html) *Krasnaya Zvezda* 11 September 2007, *novosti*, "Tol'ko fakty", anon.
- <sup>9</sup> [http://www.ng.ru/politics/2007-07-17/3\\_kartblansh.html](http://www.ng.ru/politics/2007-07-17/3_kartblansh.html) *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 17 July 2007 "Snachala polygon, vse ostal'noye" by Vladimir Mukhin.
- <sup>10</sup> [http://www.redstar.ru/2007/09/11\\_09/5\\_01.html](http://www.redstar.ru/2007/09/11_09/5_01.html) *Krasnaya Zvezda* 11 September 2007 "Glavnokomanduyushchiy Sukhputnymi voyskami general armii Aleksey Maslov: Armii nuzhny professionaly".
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>12</sup> See Blandy "Chechen Caravan Trails" P21 CSRC April 1996 which covered the trails and routes to and from the south from Azerbaijan through Daghestan.
- <sup>13</sup> [http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2005-07-22/1\\_experience.html](http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2005-07-22/1_experience.html) *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye* 21 July 2005 "Poka reshen vopros tol'ko s oslami i mulami" by Igor' Plugtarev.
- <sup>14</sup> Blandy "North Caucasus: Problems of Helicopter Support in the Mountains" CSRC Caucasus Series 07/24 August 2007, page 7.
- <sup>15</sup> [http://www.ng.ru/regions/2007-09-18/5\\_nestabilnost.html](http://www.ng.ru/regions/2007-09-18/5_nestabilnost.html) *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 18 September 2007 "Lokal'naya nestabil'nost" by Milrad Fatullayev.
- <sup>16</sup> See C W Blandy "Daghestan: Birth of Presidential Republic" CSRC Caucasus Series 06/25 June 2006, page 12.
- <sup>17</sup> [http://www.ng.ru/regions/2007-09-18/5\\_nestabilnost.html](http://www.ng.ru/regions/2007-09-18/5_nestabilnost.html).
- <sup>18</sup> <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=758968> *Kommersant Vlast'* No. 14 (718) 16 April 2007 "Mesta ne stol' otdelenniye" by Ol'ga Allenova. It is of interest to note in Allenova's interview with President Mukhu Aliyev, his views on some of the reasons for unemployment in Daghestan and the subsequent increase of Wahhabism in Daghestan. "Mukhu Aliyev is convinced that basic problems of Daghestan have appeared because of the neighbourhood with Chechnya. The president said 'You see after the war in Chechnya a complete collapse of industry in Daghestan took place. You understand for us a transfer of hundreds of kilometres of railway lines took place. Generally all the industry of a village, people were left with no work. All electricity supply and gas lines were rerouted. Therefore the process of Wahhabi recruitment proceeded unhindered. In reality Wahhabism is alien to Daghestan, we have a very strong tradition of Islam, you see Islam appeared in Daghestan in the VII Century, and later moved into Russia. Wahhabism has become an ideology in Chechnya, because they have not had such ancient traditions Islamic traditions that we have.'"
- <sup>19</sup> [http://www.ng.ru/regions/2007-09-18/5\\_nestabilnost.html](http://www.ng.ru/regions/2007-09-18/5_nestabilnost.html).
- <sup>20</sup> Gennadiy Troshev "Moya Voyna" Moscow, Vagrius 2002, pages 60 to 65.
- <sup>21</sup> Zayndi Shakhbiyev "Sud'ba Checheno-Ingushskogo Naroda". Assotsiyatsiya Obshchiy Yevro-Aziatskiy Dom. Rossiya Molodaya, Moscow, 1996, pages 375 to 463. See also Blandy "Dynamics of War - Hounded Out?" P36 CSRC September 2001, page 3.

- <sup>22</sup> [http://www.ng.ru/regions/2007-10-08/100\\_chechnia.html](http://www.ng.ru/regions/2007-10-08/100_chechnia.html)
- <sup>23</sup> [http://www.ng.ru/ngregions/2007-09-03/13\\_terroristy.html](http://www.ng.ru/ngregions/2007-09-03/13_terroristy.html) *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 3 September 2007, page 4 1 to 6 “*Terroristy ne menyayut taktiku – Geografiya goryachikh tochek na Severnom Kavkaze rasshiryatesya*” by Vladimir Mukhin.
- <sup>24</sup> *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 31 May 2004, “*Karachayev-Cherkessia vozvodit novyye granitsy*” by Milrad Fatullayev.
- <sup>25</sup> C W Blandy “*North Caucasus: Escalation of Terrorism into Ingushetia*” CSRC Caucasus Series 04/17, June 2004, page 2.
- <sup>26</sup> *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 31 May 2004.
- <sup>27</sup> <http://www.rg.ru/2005/07/16/Daghestan.html>, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 16 July 2005, “*Granitsu – na zamok*” by Sergey Belov.
- <sup>28</sup> Op cit [http://jamestown.org/chechnya\\_weekly/article.php?articleid=2373458](http://jamestown.org/chechnya_weekly/article.php?articleid=2373458) *Chechnya Weekly*, Volume 8, Issue 23 (7 June 2007).
- <sup>29</sup> C W Blandy “*Chechnya: Continued Violence*” CSRC Caucasus Series 06/54 December 2006 page 4.
- <sup>30</sup> [http://jamestown.org/chechnya\\_weekly/article.php?articleid=2373672](http://jamestown.org/chechnya_weekly/article.php?articleid=2373672) *Chechnya Weekly* Volume 8. Issue 36 (20 September 2007) “*Doku Umarov’s Attempts to Rebuild His Foundations*” by Mairbek Vachagaev.
- <sup>31</sup> [http://jamestown.org/chechnya\\_weekly/article.php?articleid=2373458](http://jamestown.org/chechnya_weekly/article.php?articleid=2373458) *Chechnya Weekly* Volume 8, Issue 23 (7 June 2007) “*Karachay Jamaat: Countermeasures, Connections and Composition, Part 2*” by Mairbek Vachagayev.
- <sup>32</sup> [http://jamestown.org/chechnya\\_weekly/article.php?articleid=2373581](http://jamestown.org/chechnya_weekly/article.php?articleid=2373581) *Chechnya Weekly* Volume 8, Issue 30 (26 July 2007).
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>34</sup> [http://www.iwpr.net/?p=crs&s=f&o=339641&apc\\_state=henh](http://www.iwpr.net/?p=crs&s=f&o=339641&apc_state=henh) *Caucasus Reporting Service* “*Circassians Voice Olympian Anger*” by Azamat Bram (CRS No. 413, 05-Oct-07).
- <sup>35</sup> [http://www.iwpr.net/?p=crs&s=f&o=339639&apc\\_state=henh](http://www.iwpr.net/?p=crs&s=f&o=339639&apc_state=henh) *Caucasus Reporting Service* “*Outrage at ‘Fake’ Circassian Anniversary*” by Marina Marshenkulova and Azamat Bram (CRS No. 413, 05-Oct-07”).
- <sup>36</sup> <http://www.novayagazeta.ru/data/2007/73/19.html> *Novaya Gazeta* No 73, 24 September 2007 “*Strana v olimpiyskoy reserve*” by Anna Lebedava.
- <sup>37</sup> [http://jamestown.org/chechnya\\_weekly/article.php?articleid=2373627](http://jamestown.org/chechnya_weekly/article.php?articleid=2373627) *Chechnya Weekly* Volume 8, Issue 33 (16 August 2007) “*The Challenges of the Sochi Olympics and Russia’s Circassian Problem*” by Fatima Tlisova.
- <sup>38</sup> [http://www.redstar.ru/2007/07/20\\_07/1\\_01.html](http://www.redstar.ru/2007/07/20_07/1_01.html) *Krasnaya Zvezda* 20 July 2007, “*Motostrelki sedlayut gory*” by Vitaliy Denisov
- <sup>39</sup> *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, No. 215, 6 October 2005 “*Kozaktsiy plennik*” by Andrey Riskin and Milrad Fatullayev. See also Blandy “*Whither Ingushetia*” CSRC Caucasus Series 06/03 January 2006, page 14, Table 4.
- <sup>40</sup> [http://www.redstar.ru/2007/09/05\\_09/2\\_01.html](http://www.redstar.ru/2007/09/05_09/2_01.html) *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 6 September 2007 “*V gory vernulas’ zhizn*” by Aleksandr Pinchuk.
- <sup>41</sup> [http://www.ng.ru/regions/2007-07-12///5\\_egeria.html](http://www.ng.ru/regions/2007-07-12///5_egeria.html) *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 12 July 2007 “*Gornyye yegerya na dayut pokoya zhitelyam aula*” by Vladimir Mukhin
- <sup>42</sup> [http://www.redstar.ru/2007/09/05\\_09/2\\_01.html](http://www.redstar.ru/2007/09/05_09/2_01.html) *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 6 September 2007 “*V gory vernulas’ zhizn*” by Aleksandr Pinchuk.
- <sup>43</sup> [http://www.redstar.ru/2007/07/20\\_07/1\\_01.html](http://www.redstar.ru/2007/07/20_07/1_01.html) *Krasnaya Zvezda* 20 July 2007 “*Motostrelki sedlayut gory*” by Vitaliy Denisov
- <sup>44</sup> [http://www.redstar.ru/2007/09/05\\_09/2\\_01.html](http://www.redstar.ru/2007/09/05_09/2_01.html) *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 6 September 2007 “*V gory vernulas’ zhizn*” by Aleksandr Pinchuk.
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>46</sup> [http://www.redstar.ru/2007/07/12\\_07/1\\_02.html](http://www.redstar.ru/2007/07/12_07/1_02.html) *Krasnaya Zvezda* 12 July 2007 “*Vozvrashchayem v gory zhizn*” by Yuriy Apal’kov.
- <sup>47</sup> [http://www.ng.ru/regions/2007-07-12///5\\_egeria.html](http://www.ng.ru/regions/2007-07-12///5_egeria.html) *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 12 July 2007 “*Gornyye yegerya na dayut pokoya zhitelyam aula*” by Vladimir Mukhin
- <sup>48</sup> <http://reporter-ufu.ru/article.cfm?issue=105&article=2128> *Yuzhnyy Reporter* 30 January 2007 “*Dve kraynosti*”.
- <sup>49</sup> [http://www.ng.ru/regions/2007-07-12///5\\_egeria.html](http://www.ng.ru/regions/2007-07-12///5_egeria.html) *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 12 July 2007 “*Gornyye yegerya na dayut pokoya zhitelyam aula*” by Vladimir Mukhin

- <sup>50</sup> [http://www.ng.ru/politics/2007-07-17/3\\_kartblansh.html](http://www.ng.ru/politics/2007-07-17/3_kartblansh.html) *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* 17 July 2007 “*Snachala polygon, vse ostal’noye*” by Vladimir Mukhin.
- <sup>51</sup> [http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2007-10-19/1\\_alpinisty.html](http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2007-10-19/1_alpinisty.html) *Novoye Voynnoye Obozreniye* 19 October 2007 “*Radi olimpiyskogo spokoystviya Gornyye brigady na Severnom Kavkaze obustroyeny, na chto za profi-alpinisty v nikh cluzhat – zagadka*” by Igor’ Plugataryev indicates that 34 brigade’s township allocation has been raised to 15 mlrd roubles.
- <sup>52</sup> [http://jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article\\_id=2372052](http://jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article_id=2372052) *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 28 March 2007 “*Putin’s order to create mountain troops results in competing, haphazard forces*” by Pavel Felgenhauer
- <sup>53</sup> [http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2007-01-26/3\\_ludi.html](http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2007-01-26/3_ludi.html) *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye* 26 January 2007 “*Yest’ vse, krome lichnogo sostava*” by Igor’ Plugataryev.
- <sup>54</sup> [http://www.redstar.ru/2007/07/20\\_07/1\\_01.html](http://www.redstar.ru/2007/07/20_07/1_01.html) *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 20 July 2007, “*Motorstrelki sedlayut gory*” by Vitaliy Denisov.
- <sup>55</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>56</sup> [http://www.redstar.ru/2007/09/29\\_09/4\\_02.html](http://www.redstar.ru/2007/09/29_09/4_02.html) *Krasnaya Zvezda* 29 September 2007 “*Yuzhnyy forpost strany*” by Aleksandr Pinchuk. “Sokolov Vladimir Petrovich was born on 28 July 1968 in the town of Magdeburg (GDR). Completed the Ordzhonikidzyevskoye higher all arms command twice Red Banner named after Marshal of the Soviet Union A. K.Yeremenko, Military Academy of Tank Troops of the Armed Forces RF. Passed through all the appointments from troop commander to commander of a detached brigade. Served in Primorskiy kray, in Kamchatka, and Samara. Previous appointment – deputy commander of motor rifle division in Vladikavkaz.”
- <sup>57</sup> [http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2007-10-19/1\\_alpinisty.html](http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2007-10-19/1_alpinisty.html) *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye* 19 October 2007 “*Radi olimpiyskogo spokoystviya*” by Igor’ Plugataryev.
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>59</sup> [http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2005-07-22/1\\_experience.html](http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2005-07-22/1_experience.html) *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye* 22 July 2005.
- <sup>60</sup> [http://www.redstar.ru/2007/09/29\\_09/4\\_02.html](http://www.redstar.ru/2007/09/29_09/4_02.html) *Krasnaya Zvezda* 29 September 2007 “*Yuzhnyy forpost strany*” by Aleksandr Pinchuk.
- <sup>61</sup> [http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2007-10-19/1\\_alpinisty.html](http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2007-10-19/1_alpinisty.html) *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye* 19 October 2007 “*Radi olimpiyskogo spokoystviya*” by Igor’ Plugataryev.
- <sup>62</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>64</sup> *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, No 29, 5 August 2005, “*Minoborony ishchet al’pinistov*” by Igor’ Plugataryev.
- <sup>65</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>66</sup> [http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2007-10-19/1\\_alpinisty.html](http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2007-10-19/1_alpinisty.html) *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye* 19 October 2007 “*Radi olimpiyskogo spokoystviya*” by Igor’ Plugataryev.
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>69</sup> [http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2005-07-22/1\\_experience.html](http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2005-07-22/1_experience.html) *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye* 22 July 2005 “*Poka reshen vopros tol’ko s osлами i mulami*” by Igor’ Plugataryev.
- <sup>70</sup> [http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2007-10-19/1\\_alpinisty.html](http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2007-10-19/1_alpinisty.html) *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye* 19 October 2007 “*Radi olimpiyskogo spokoystviya*” by Igor’ Plugataryev.
- <sup>71</sup> [http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2007-10-19/1\\_alpinisty.html](http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2007-10-19/1_alpinisty.html) *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye* 19 October 2007 “*Radi olimpiyskogo spokoystviya*” by Igor’ Plugataryev.
- <sup>72</sup> See *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, October 23, 2007 “A Call-Up of Slavic Recruits -- General Staff Wants To Effect Military Manning With Recruits From 'Russian' Federation Components” by Vladimir Mukhin. (BBC Monitoring)
- <sup>73</sup> [http://jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article\\_id=2372052](http://jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article_id=2372052) *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 28 March 2007 “*Putin’s order to create mountain troops results in competing, haphazard forces*” by Pavel Felgenhauer.
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- <sup>75</sup> [http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2006-01-20/1\\_gvardia.html](http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2006-01-20/1_gvardia.html) *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye* 20 January 2006 “*Natsional’noy gvardii u nas ne budet...*” by Aleksandr Babakin.

<sup>76</sup> [http://www.redstar.ru/2007/07/20\\_07/1\\_01.html](http://www.redstar.ru/2007/07/20_07/1_01.html) *Krasnaya Zvezda* 20 July 2007, “*Motorstrelki sedlayut gory*” by Vitaliy Denisov.

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=824700> *Kommersant* No 208 (3784) 13 November 2007 “*Dos’e – Vladimir Shamanov v Chechne*”. In March 2005 Colonel Vladimir Shamanov was dispatched to Chechnya as head of the ‘ops group’ of 7<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division. In May 1995 was severely wounded, but refused hospitalisation. 3 June 1995 commanded an airborne landing in the storming of the village of Vedenov in the course of which 300 boyeviki were destroyed. Autumn 1995 promoted to Major General. 24 September 1995, according to information from the mass media led an investigation into the capture of Sleptsov airport in Ingushetia. During the period of investigation one local inhabitant was killed and three were wounded. The military prosecutor instigated proceedings which were closed in the Spring of 1997 due to an amnesty. In May as commander of the MOD group in Chechnya commanded the seizure of Bamut fortified area. During the operation 350 boyeviki were killed. In August-September 1999 Commander of 58 Army Vladimir Shamanov commanded the capture of the Dagestani villages of Chabanmakhi and Karamakhi. In October 1999 commanding the Western direction of the OGV federal forces took Achkhoy-Martanovskiy rayon in Chechnya. In December 1999 led the capture of Alkhan-Yurt. In the course of which 17 to 40 civilians perished. 7 January 2000 transferred to Vladikavkaz, however, on 9 January after personal intervention of President Putin returned to Chechnya. 18 January promoted to Lieutenant General. In January-February 2000 prepared and participated in operation “*Hunt for Wolves*” in the course of which some 600 boyeviki were killed. According to *Novaya Gazeta* during the operation on 4 February 2000 in the village of Katyr-Yurt following an artillery bombardment 160 inhabitants were killed. Russian authorities refuted this information”. See also Blandy “*Chechnya: Federal Retribution Encirclement, Forceful Intervention & Isolation*” P34 CSRC March 2001, for further insights.

<sup>78</sup> <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=824479> *Kommersant* No 208 (3784) 13 November 2007 “*Minoborony vooruzhilos’ generalom Shamanovym*” by Konstantin b-Lantratov. “Vladimir Shamanov was born on 15 February 1957 at Barnaul. In 1978 he graduated from Ryazan’ Higher Airborne Command School, in 1998 the General Staff Military Academy. Participated in both Chechen wars, awarded the Hero of Russia decoration for meritorious military service. In December 2000 elected governor of Ul’yanov oblast’. In November 2004 he resigned from election as governor and obtained the post of assistant to the Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov on questions of social protection of servicemen and cooperation with veteran’s organisations. In March 2006 became a consultant in the Ministry of Defence.”

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

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