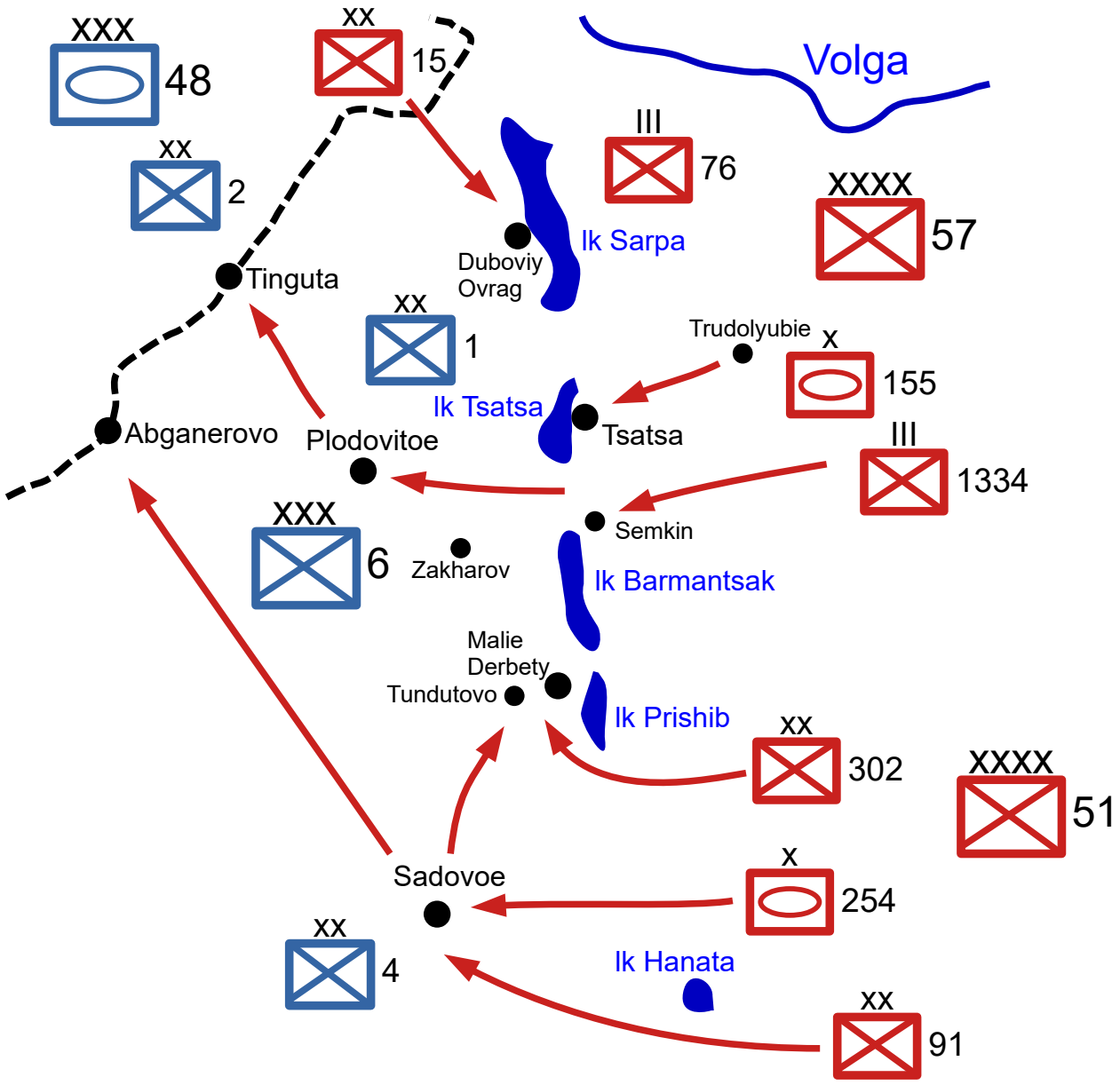
Battles at Sarpinskie Lakes

September 27 - October 3, 1942

At the end of September 1942 German 6A continued the assault on Stalingrad, the southern suburbs and the Voroshilovsky district of the city were occupied by the Germans. Elements of 51AC advanced on positions of Soviet 62A near the mouth of the Tsaritsa. Heavy fighting also took place between the Volga and Don rivers. The German 4TA was advancing south of Stalingrad. 14TD operated in the area from the Volga River to height 145.5. To the south there were 371 and 297IDs and 20ID (Romanian). Further, the front line ran along the shores of the Sarpinskie lakes.

On September 24, 1942, 51 and 57As of the Stalingrad Front received orders on the night of September 27 to attack the positions of Romanian troops in the defile between lakes Tsatsa and Barmantsak, capture the village of Plodovitoe and reach Tinguta station (Pic. 1).



Pic.1 - General operation map

Elements of 51A were supposed to strike north to the railway road near the Abganerovo station. The operation plan envisaged the destruction of the Romanian 1 and 4IDs with subsequent access to communications behind enemy lines, as well as the diversion of German forces from

Stalingrad As part of the operation, it was also planned to provide an auxiliary attack on Duboviy Ovrag with forces of the 15gds RD.

The positions of 57A elements were located in the area of Sarpinskie Lakes. The army included the 15gds RD, 20DBde, 1188ATAR, 18 and 76gds MTRs, 1334RR from 442RD and 76FR. South of 57A the defense was occupied by 51A. Elements of 57 and 51As were opposed by divisions of the Romanian 6AC consisting of 1, 2 and 4IDs. The area east of the lakes was a semi-desert with salt marshes, in which there were no natural shelters or even constant roads. The defense of the Romanian troops was at heights of 70-100m, which made it possible to view the Soviet defense to its entire depth. Romanian troops had a significant amount of artillery (more than 30 batteries).

For the offensive, 57A allocated 1334RR, 1188ATAR (20 - 76.2mm guns), 18 and 76gds MTRs, 525sap bn. 51A allocated 825RR, combined bn of 503RR, 1246ATAR and 80gds MTR. The attack of the army units was supported by two tank brigades: 155 and 254TBdes. At the beginning of the offensive, the 155TBde was under staffing and had a small number of tanks: T60-10, T37-1, M3l-1, as well as 29 trucks. The brigade's personnel consisted of 654 men. The brigade's MRBn had 120 "active bayonets". Most of the tank crews were put into tanks that they had not studied before. The brigade did not have a sapper platoon, a MT company or an AT battery. There was a similar situation in 254TBde. In fact, both TBdes were light tank companies. The T34 and three T60 tanks were transferred from the 51A training battalion to the 254TBde. The 155TBde also received a T34 tank from repair shop.

Due to delays encountered during the march to the initial lines, the start of the operation was postponed to the night of September 29. At the same time, German intelligence was able to identify preparations for the offensive.

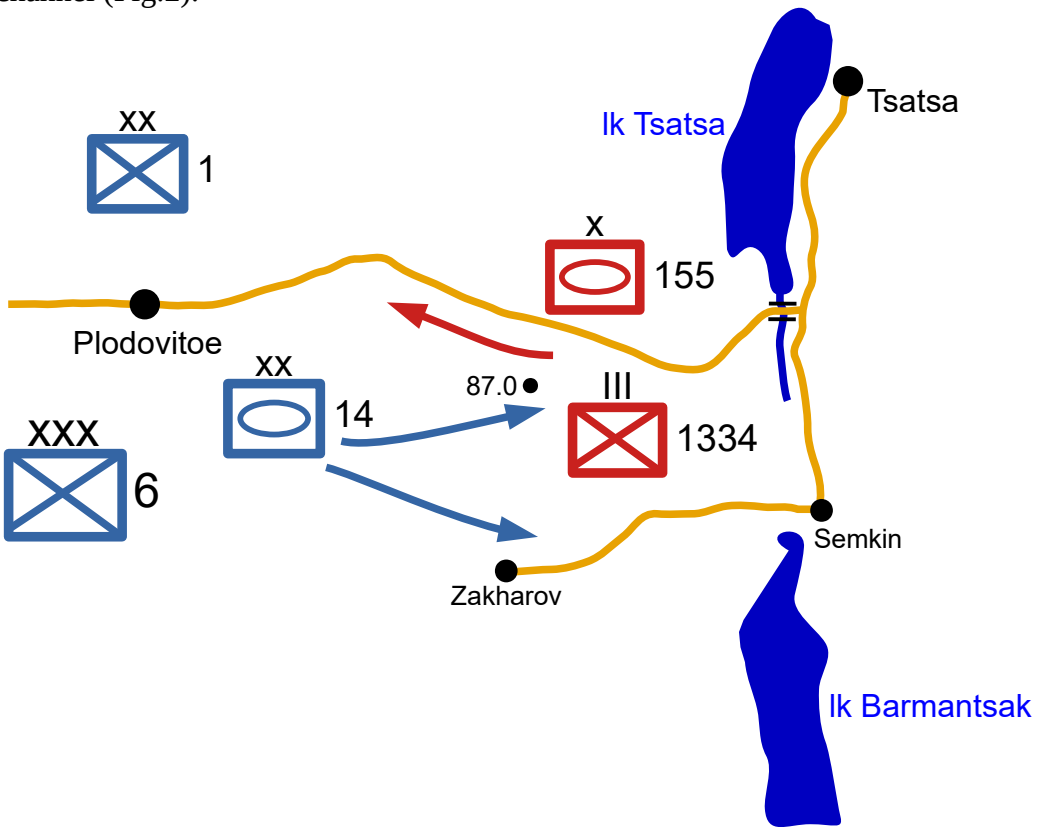
At 2:00 on September 29, units of 57A launched an attack in three groups on the forward positions of the Romanian troops. Two groups attacked enemy positions near the village of Tsatsa, and the third group, consisting of: 2/1334RR, a sapper coy, T34 and two T60 tanks, two AT batteries and a battalion of 76gds MTR captured the Semkin farmstead. The attack took place without artillery preparation; by dawn, tanks with an infantry riders entered the village of Tsatsa, and the Romanian troops began to retreat to the west. The plan for the initial stage of the operation envisaged encircling the Romanian troops in the village, but this could not be done due to the fact that the second group, which was supposed to block the escape route to the south, approached the village when the battle ended. The T34 tank stopped 1km east of Semkin due to a breakdown. As a result, the Romanian troops retreated to the heights west of the lakes. During the battle, several guns, trucks and small arms were captured.

After capturing the area between the lakes, the 1334RR with the 155TBde received the task of attacking the enemy at the heights west of the lakes and developing an offensive towards the Plodovitoe village. At the same time, 525sap bn with rifle units were supposed to prepare AT defense along the lakes line.

Units of 51A also attacked successfully, capturing the Sadovoe village, which forced the Romanian troops to retreat to the west. However, in the middle of the day, the control of the Soviet troops was disorganized and they, having suffered heavy losses, began to retreat to the east in scattered groups. In turn, the German command began transferring reserves to the sector of the breakthrough of Soviet troops. Units of 14TD were transferred to the area of Sarpinskie Lakes to fend off the Soviet offensive. In the rear of the Romanian positions there was a railway, which was the main supply line for both 4TA and 6A operating in Stalingrad. The advance of Soviet units to the Abganerovo railway station would have caused a crisis in the supply of the German troops in Stalingrad area. The German command began hastily preparing large settlements in the rear of the Romanian troops for defense, and also pulled up reserves to the line of lakes. By the evening of September 29, the forward units of the 14th TD entered the Plodovitoe village.

At dawn on September 30, 1334RR units, supported by tanks of 155TBde (T60-9, M3l), 155MRBn motorized rifles and two 1188ATAR batteries, continued the offensive, forcing the Romanian troops to retreat to the west. 2/1334RR, advancing to the south, through the Zakharov

farmstead, was stopped by enemy artillery fire. The 3 and 4 batteries of 1188 ATAR took up defensive positions near the barnyard north-west Lake Barmantsak, and 1 battery covered the bridge near the channel (Fig.2).



Pic.2 - Situational map

At 13:30 German aircrafts bombed the positions of Soviet troops. At 14:00 German artillery shelling began, and at 16:00 a tank attack began from the area of the Plodovitoe village - 20 tanks advanced to height 87.0.