Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to analyze the wins and losses of the war through major battles of the First Chechen War and find implications for understanding the continuously evolving modern warfare (conflict) and establishing readiness for it. From the results of the win-loss analysis of the various battles, we want to learn how the weak against the strong should prepare for the battle. In addition, based on the understanding of how to conduct combat under the division level and the results, we would like to gain implications in establishing the direction of education and training for the Korean military.

Method: The main battle of the First Chechen War was analyzed to derive a lesson about the war. To this end, the battle of Gudermes, Bamut, and Yarshymardy, which were the fiercest battles of the Chechen War, was selected to analyze the victory and defeat in terms of combat history. The Battle of Gudermes and the Battle of Bamut were analyzed from the perspective of Russia, while the Battle of Yarshymardy was analyzed from the perspective of Chechen to draw lessons.

Results: Russia failed to lead to victory and ended in a cease-fire despite the large deployment of troops and equipment in the First Chechen War. They suffered from lack of preparation for the war, soldiers' posture in battle, and lack of tactics, hurting their pride as a powerful nation. On the other hand, Chechen forces fought a decisive battle to build their own independent nation despite the difficulties and tried to overcome the inferiority of their forces. The Chechen military’s decisive battle caused a lot of damage against the Russian army and eventually resulted in a ceasefire.

Conclusion: The main battles of the First Chechen War shows what the consequences will be if pursued without preparation only based on the logic of politics and power. And it also shows how an underdog can lead an unfavorable situation to its advantage. The security situation on the Korean Peninsula is that South Korea confronts North Korea and is surrounded by major powers. In this situation, we can look back on our reality and get the practical implications necessary to prepare for the changing modern warfare and the future battlefield.

Keywords: First Chechen War, Winning and Losing Factors, War History, Chechen Military, Russian Military

1. Introduction

The Korean Peninsula is where the two Koreas face each other, making it the only divided country on Earth. Due to this confrontation, military tensions are persistently high, and in particular, a sense of crisis is increasing due to North Korea’s push to build up asymmetric forces such as nuclear weapons. The mood for reconciliation, including the inter-Korean summit, which began in the wake of the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics, seemed to be building up, but the consensus has never been reached due to the differences in stance among related stakeholders regarding North Korea’s nuclear issues. As a result, nuclear negotiations for peace remain stalled, and inter-Korean relations remain colder than ever due to persistent provocations such as North Korea’s missile launch tests, the tearing down
of the Kaesong Inter-Korean liaison office, and hardline remarks by North Korean leaders. In addition, tensions are continuing in the Korean Peninsula due to the increased arms and defense efforts of neighboring countries[1][2]. We must face this security reality and make every effort to maintain the preparedness of the battlefield and build defense capabilities to prepare for future wars[3][4][5]. In particular, we should face the fact that there are constant wars on Earth and maintain a proper understanding and preparedness for modern warfare through research into conflict history.

The First Chechen War was a war between Russia and Chechnya, which was fought on the continuous line of conflict between the two peoples[6][7][8]. So far, much research has been done on the Chechen War. Prior studies studied the causes of the First Chechen War, mainly in religious, economic, social, and political aspects. From a religious perspective, the First Chechen War was judged to be a war between Russian Orthodoxy and Chechnya’s Islamist religion, and related studies were conducted centered on Chechnya’s Islamic powerization[9][10][11]. From an economic perspective, the Chechen region has oil fields and oil pipelines are passing, which led to a war to protect it[12][13]. Also, from a social perspective, research was conducted on ethnic conflicts through regional conflicts in Kafkaz and the current status and prospects of Russian migration policies[14][15]. From a political perspective, studies analyzed in terms of strengthening power and taking over power by Russian President Yeltsin and Chechen leader Dudayev[16][17].

This study aims to analyze the wins and losses of the war through the main battles of the First Chechen War and to find implications for understanding and preparing for the evolving modern war(conflict). To this end, the main battles of the First Chechen War were selected as the time and target range of the study. From the results of the victory-loss analysis of the various battles, we want to learn a lesson about how the weak, who deal with the strong, should prepare for the battle. In addition, based on the understanding of how to conduct combat under the division level and the results, we would like to gain implications in establishing the direction of education and training for the Korean military.

2. Consideration on the Major Battles of the First Chechen War

The first Chechen War was a war between Russia and Chechnya. It was the war between Russia and Chechnya, who wanted independence[18][19][20][21]. The war took place from December 1994 to May 28, 1996, and ended in June when the armistice was signed. The First Chechen War ended in a ceasefire, not a victory or defeat for anyone. The ceasefire was finally signed on 28 May 1996 in Hashabrt, Dagestan, when Russia’s Lebedt and Chechnya’s Mashadov signed the agreement[22]. After the signing of the agreement, Russian troops completed their withdrawal from Chechnya by early August, and Chechen troops disarmed by the end of August, ending the First Chechen War. In the first Chechen War, 38,000 Russian troops(including 4,800 internal forces) and 15,000 to 25,000 Chechen troops(including 2,000 presidential guards and 3,500 national security forces) were deployed to the war. In addition, Russia deployed 80 tanks, 208 armored vehicles, 182 guns, and 90 helicopters, while Chechen forces deployed 42 tanks, 108 armored vehicles, 18 MRLs, 139 self-propelled guns(including howitzers), and 30 anti-aircraft guns[22]. The actual state of forces is considered to be the first input power, and Russia has increased the number of additional troops and equipment to lead the war to an advantage. However, it should be considered that there is a limit to the presentation due to the limited confirmation of the exact combat capabilities of each side. The status of the two sides’ force deployment during the First Chechen War is as follows[23][24].

Table 1. Status of Russian and Chechen military forces(first input).

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<th>Description</th>
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2.1. Battle of Gudermes

The first Battle of Gudermes took place from 28 March 1995 to 30 March 1995. The Russian military’s plan was to launch an operation after destroying Chechnya’s base with strong artillery fire. To this end, the Northern Cavalry Division, 271, 129th Infantry Regiment, 131st Infantry Regiment, 165th Infantry Regiment, 76th, 104th, 106th Airborne Division, and the Interior Forces 21st and 22nd Special Mission Units were deployed [22]. Operation Gudermes first began after the siege of Shali, southwest of Belgatoi and Nova Adderg in the east, the Zalka River in the southeast, and Gudermes in the north. Russian forces broke through Chechen’s defenses in a surprise operation and then captured Gudermes on March 30. The Second Battle of Gudermes was fought in Chechnya to recapture Gudermes.

The second Battle of Gudermes took place from December 10 to 25, 1995. The Chechen army, led by Raduyev, attacked Gudermes and surrounded Russian forces around commercial districts and train stations [22]. And on December 15, 600 Chechen troops under Salman Raduyev and Sultan Gelishanov occupied most of Gudermes. The Russian army planned an operation to recapture Gudermes. In the Second Battle of Gudermes, the Russian army suffered a lot of damage as Chechen troops struggled with effective attacks and ambush operations. However, the Russian army defeated the Chechen army and re-occupied Gudermes on December 25th, utilizing excellent air support and firepower.

2.2. Battle of Bamut

The first Battle of Bamut lasted from 10 March to 17 April 1995. The Russian military’s operation is to deploy operational units after the capture of commanding ground [22]. To this end, 70 members of the Interior Army’s special forces, Rositz, took over the commanding ground in Bamut and posted the attack on April 15. The Chechen army effectively defended the missile bases built during the Soviet Union, making it difficult for the Russian army to take over. On April 16, Russian troops took over parts of the village, but their attacks were stalled due to the Chechen military’s effective response. This solid defense of the Chechen forces led to the withdrawal of Russian troops from Bamut, and the occupation of Bamut was ultimately unsuccessful. Russia re-established a plan to occupy Bamut.

The second Battle of Bamut took place from 21 to 23 May 1995. The Russian army formed a tactical maneuver group of 131th Infantry Corps, 136th and 166th Brigade, and the Interior Army units to attack Bamut [22]. They decided to form two battalions of artillery, mortar units, aircraft(25 Su-24s) and helicopters to support the attack. On May 20, Chechen army bases were destroyed by artillery and aerial fire, and Chechen troops were blocked from retreating due to the occupation of the commanding ground and the deployment of reserve forces by a tactical task force. Russian forces launched an attack on May 21 to defeat Chechen forces and secure the area around Bamut. The Chechen army, which was on the defensive, gave up its base in the area around Bamut and gathered its forces around Bamut. Afterward, they fought desperately by utilizing a solid position built in Bamut, but gave up and withdrew due to the devastating attack of the Russian army. Russian forces occupied Bamut on May 24. However, 21 were killed and 54 were wounded in the battle, and 350 Chechen troops were killed.

2.3. Battle of Yarshymardy by ambush of Chechen troops

In order to overcome the inferiority of troops and equipment, Chechen forces selected positions that utilized the advantages of the terrain, occupied them, and engaged in ambush battles [22]. This ambush of Chechen forces posed many threats to the Russian army and they could not easily reach Chechen positions. The Yarshymardy ambush is a good example of the Chechen army’s ambush tactics. Yarshymardy was formed in mountainous areas and roads along the valley, forming terrain favorable for ambush battles. Chechen forces were able to take advantage of the mountainous terrain of Yarshymardy to inflict damage on Russian troops in ambush battles.
The Battle of Yarshymardy took place on April 16, 1996. The Russian army decided to send a supply support unit of the 245th Regiment (130 troops, 27 vehicles) near Shatoy, and moved from Hankala to Shatoy. The Russian army was severely damaged by the Chechen ambush when the supply support unit departed and passed through the Yarshymardy Valley. The Russian regiment decided to destroy the Chechen army by dispatching the 2nd Infantry Battalion, with tanks, and firepower to destroy the Chechen ambush, and subdue the Chechen army. But in the battle, the Russians suffered 73 casualties, 52 injuries, six tanks, six armored vehicles, and 11 wheeled vehicles.

2.4. Result of the first Chechen war

As a result of the First Chechen War, the Russian army recorded 4,100 to 6,000 deaths, 17,000 to 20,000 injuries and 3,000 missing. The Chechen army estimates 2,000 to 3,000 deaths. It was estimated that between 40,000 and 50,000 civilians were killed and between 350,000 and 400,000 displaced. Russia spent 5.71 trillion rubles in the First Chechen War, economically losing between 10 trillion and 15 trillion rubles (US$2.5 billion and US$3.5 billion), excluding military equipment. In addition, 300,000 to 500,000 refugees have been created, and the cost of post-war restoration is estimated to be between $50 billion and $75 billion. During the First Chechen War, Russia attempted to take Chechen territory by force with huge budgets and equipment, but failed. It was also a war that damaged Russia with a lot of troops and equipment and wounded pride as a military powerhouse.

3. Analysis of the Consequences of the First Chechen War

3.1. Russian army

The First Chechen War, which lasted from December 1994 to June 1996, was a war of great damage and economic losses. Throughout this war, Russia has suffered many damage to its image as a military powerhouse. The Chechen conquest ended in a ceasefire, struggling with the Russian leadership's misjudgment that it would end with a swift decision. That is not to say that Russia failed in the First Chechen War entirely. The Russians won many major battles and did a lot of damage to the Chechen army too. However, it is not a success in that Russia failed to completely control the small republic and that the war ended as a "ceasefire." Therefore, we would like to analyze Russia's major battles in the Chechen War, the Battle of Gudermes, the Battle of Bamut, and the Battle of Yarshymardy <Figure 1>.

Figure 1. Map of the main battles of the first Chechen war.
Russia had problems in terms of military operations and tactics from the war preparation phase to the actual battles. The first major problem is the hasty judgment of the war leadership and the lack of preparation for war. The Russian leadership began the war in the course of the war decision-making process, where opinions were not put together due to hasty decision-making and internal conflicts. This decision did not secure enough time to prepare for the war, so the operational forces were put into battle without proper preparation. As a result, the unit was not organized as a combat organization where the unit could perform its duties, such as organizing the unit in a manner that was tailored to the system. This poor arrangement resulted in a lack of unity and cooperation among combatants in the field and limited cooperative attacks.

Second, the lack of mental armament by soldiers engaged in the war continued to cause violations of the military discipline in the battlefield. The soldiers considered the Chechen War as light enough as suppressing protests, and they could not be found as warriors going to war. This mental state of the Russian army, despite having superior equipment and troops, did not lead the war and resulted in a large number of casualties.

Third, due to lack of sufficient research on the area of operation, combat preparations were not made in line with the characteristics of the area of operation. By entering the city without sufficient research and pre-scouting for the operations, the ambush of Chechen forces inflicted severe damage to the Russian army. In addition, the mechanized unit's operation in urban areas should be carried out after reconnaissance by the lead reconnaissance unit, but this basic was not properly followed and the operation was not carried out after subduing the enemy's expected ambush.

Fourth, the firepower support, which was linked to artillery and air fire, was not effectively achieved. In terms of firepower operation, operations linking firepower and maneuvering were not carried out properly. In other words, because support and operation were not carried out using aviation and artillery firepower, cooperative attacks linked to firepower and maneuvering were not carried out properly. This failed to subdue the Chechen forces in the stronghold and ambush areas and the ground forces that were maneuvering suffered much damage during the offensive.

Fifth, a lockdown operation was required to block Chechen troops' retreat, but the lockdown was not carried out. During the occupation of the city area, Russian troops had to take the line to block Chechen's retreat, take the blockade, and destroy it in a blockade operation. However, the Russian military's failure to do so effectively led to the failure of suppressing the Chechen forces and opening up their path to retreat. This provided a pretext for Chechen troops to rally in the eastern mountains and convert to guerrilla warfare.

3.2. Chechen forces

The Chechen forces, with their inadequate equipment and troops, were inferior in power, but effectively exploited its advantages and disadvantages. Chechen forces embarrassed the Russians throughout, maximizing their strengths and minimizing their weaknesses. Chechen troops knew the characteristics of their area and dealt with it. In the early days of the war, ambush operations were carried out in urban areas, and when the war turned unfavorable, guerrilla warfare was carried out using mountainous areas. Also mentally, they were able to gain achievements by fighting the Russians in a "no more to lose" attitude, which eventually led to a ceasefire.

The first factor that Chechen forces did well was to be mentally armed and engaged in war with a sense of resistance to death. The Chechen was inferior in equipment and troops to their enemies. However, they were armed with the spirit of resistance based on the des-peration of war that began at their home and the desire to build their own independent state. Although they were inferior in military power, they were able to do much damage to the Russian army based on this mentality.

Second, the Chechen army was able to make the most of the advantages of the terrain and create effective ambush and favorable conditions to carry out small-scale offensive opera-tions. As the war zone was their home, they were well aware of the advantages and dis-ad-antages of the terrain and made the most of these advantages.

Third, they effectively managed tactical forces. To overcome their inferiority in numbers, they were able to compete equally against Russian superior equipment and numerical su-periority with small
forces through guerrilla warfare and effective urban operations. As a result, the Chechen army responded with a desperate resistance to Russia and announced its presence and achieved a ceasefire, not a defeat in the war.

4. Conclusion

As the Soviet Union transitions to Russia, it undergoes many changes and pain. The former Soviet Union, which had achieved massive and lax military power through an arms race with the United States, was maintaining the world's strongest military power along with the United States. However, the quantitative military buildup centered on regular warfare in the past was not suitable for modern warfare. Russia was able to derive many lessons through the First Chechen War, which occurred at this transitional time. Russia began the First Chechen War and underestimated the Chechen forces' strength and tried to end the war as quickly as possible. Due to this push-through, accurate analysis of the opponent was not made and preparations were not made properly. This led to the struggle against the Chechen, and this problem was evident on the battlefield. Eventually, Russia ended the war with a ceasefire contrary to their intentions. Since then, Russia has analyzed that it cannot effectively respond to modern warfare with quantitative and conventional-oriented electricity structures, and has been pushing for a strong defense reform that can cope with modern and future wars. To this end, the military reorganization was carried out for slim and efficient defense and military operations, and the weapons system was reorganized. It is now confirmed that the defense reform is being completed to some extent. Russia was able to win the second Chechen War, the Donbas war with Ukraine, and the Crimean War based on defense reform. In terms of strategy, they also launched a hybrid war, a new aspect of the war.

In this study, we would like to examine the implications of the First Chechen War for the Korean military. In the main battles of the First Chechen War, several factors influenced victory and defeat, the most influential of which was the battle of urban areas and guerrilla tactics. Geographical elements are obviously important, whether attackers or defenders. Winning or losing depends on who uses it more effectively to prepare for it.

If you look at the preparation of urban operations and effective response to guerrilla war-fare, first, the western part of the Korean Peninsula needs to be prepared for urban operations considering the characteristics of urban development. Therefore, the ability to conduct effective urban area operations and urban warfare should be provided through case studies and training on urban area combat in the division-level or lower units performing the combat. To this end, an operation training ground in the urban area shall be established to guarantee the conditions for operation training in the urban area. Currently, the operation training ground in the urban area is set up as a reserve force training ground in the mobilization division, and the standing and reserve divisions are not set up, making it impossible to fully practice operation in the urban area. At least one urban area operation training ground shall be established at the division level so that an opportunity to operate in the urban area is granted.

Second, the eastern front of Korea is formed as a mountainous area, so it is necessary to prepare for effective destruction against opponents who carry out guerrilla warfare using mountainous terrain. There are limitations in response to guerrilla warfare in mountainous areas only with troops. In other words, it is possible to effectively control joint operations using aviation and firepower. When training field units, joint air-ground drills should be conducted once a year, but they are not being properly implemented. Air-ground joint training opportunities linking aviation and firepower need to be increased twice a year to improve mission performance.

5. References

5.1. Journal articles


5.2. Thesis degree


5.3. Books


### 6. Appendix

#### 6.1. Authors contribution

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