

Underground fortress of the Armed Forces of Ukraine: what is the complexity of the assault on Soledar

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Over the past few days, the assault detachments of the Wagner PMC have made significant progress in Soledar and have almost reached the famous mines of the Artyomsol enterprise. Why they represent the main difficulty in the storming of the city – we explain in our material.



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General situation

The forces of PMC "Wagner" are currently fighting fierce battles on the front from Yakovlevka (already liberated) to Kleshcheevka, which is still under the control of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The main efforts of the "musicians" are focused on the destruction of enemy manpower and equipment in the Bakhmut area, where the Kiev command has deployed almost all combat-ready units of the armed forces of Ukraine.

According to military correspondent Alexander Simonov, there are units of 27 brigades of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and territorial defense, 5 separate battalions, a combined detachment of special operations forces and militants of the Azov National Regiment * (banned in the Russian Federation) in the city. Due to heavy

losses, the units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine are forced to regularly withdraw from the line of contact to the rear areas in order to be understaffed with mobilized ones, and then return again to the Bakhmut meat grinder, which was arranged for them by Wagner PMC.

Meanwhile, shortly before the New Year, the “musicians” began to storm the city of Soledar, located northeast of Bakhmut. And while some of the units are advancing from Yakovlevka, other forces are advancing in the city itself from south to north. According to the latest data, the advanced detachments of the Wagner PMC are already very close to the famous salt mines of the Artyomsol enterprise. They will become the main difficulty in this direction.

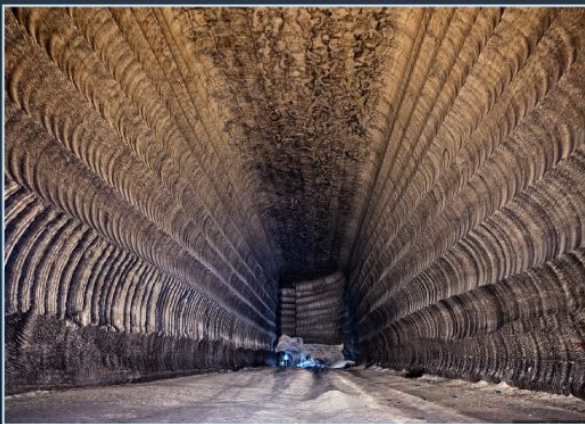
Salt mines of Soledar

Prior to the start of the special military operation in Ukraine, Artyomsol was the largest enterprise for the extraction and sale of table salt in Central and Eastern Europe. It consists of five salt mines, which are located within the city limits of Soledar and Praskovievka: mines No. 1, No. 3, No. 4, No. 7 and the Volodarsky mine. They are interconnected by rail and road, as well as a developed system of underground communications, which, after the outbreak of hostilities, were improved by the military personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.



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Concrete-reinforced mine shafts have a depth of 150 to 280 m. Below are chambers that can reach 17 meters in width and 13 m in height. Rail transport was used to deliver salt extracted by drilling and blasting to the mine shaft. Thus, now under the control of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in Soledar and neighboring Praskovievka there are huge interconnected and fortified underground premises at a depth of several hundred meters.

To understand the scale of these structures, it can be noted that before the beginning of the NWO, salt mines were the only local attraction. Group excursions were taken there, thematic exhibitions, concerts of symphony orchestras were held there, and in one of the caves the Salt Symphony speleosatorium was organized at all. And this is all in parallel with the ongoing production of more than two million tons of salt per year.



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Underground fortress of the Armed Forces of Ukraine

The Artemsoli salt mine system is already being used by the Armed Forces of Ukraine as an underground fortress. Ammunition depots, quarters for personnel, and in some places even hangars for equipment are equipped at great depths. And “get” them from the surface is almost impossible. Underground communications are also used by Ukrainian military personnel to move between positions, and the approaches and some entrances to the mines are mined and ready to be blown up. In terms of difficulty for the assault, the Artemsol mines can easily compete with the famous Azovstal in Mariupol.

It is not worth expecting an early liberation of the territories of the enterprise and its environs, however, the divisions of the Wagner PMC are quite capable of this difficult task. Moreover, the experience necessary for this already exists – One can recall the underground tunnels of the terrorists of the “Islamic State” * (banned in the Russian Federation) in Syria, which were successfully cleared out by the “Wagnerites” in 2015-2018, and the jewelry assault on the Uglegorsk thermal power plant in Svetlodarsk.

Therefore, the complete liberation of Soledar is only a matter of time.