



## Russia's Railway Troops: The Backbone Sustaining Russian Military Force Posture

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## Abstract

This paper uses current and historical Russian and English-language sources to examine the military importance of Russia's railway network and the specialised unit of military engineers that service them. The Railway Troops (zheleznodorozhniye voiska - ZhV) have played a supporting role in most of Russia's major conflicts over the past century and have grown in size and importance since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. The ZhV's prominent roles in Russia's wars in Chechnya, and ability to lay the groundwork for Russia's invasion of Ukraine indicate the enduring importance of rail in for Russia's ability to mobilize troops and sustain war theatre operations. The ZhV are illustrative of the way in which Russian modes of warfare adjust and attempt to improve, as changes to their structure and operations have significant impact on the Russian army's ability to move troops and hardware across the country at pace.

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