THE RUSSIAN ARMED FORCES

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THE RUSSIAN ARMED FORCES

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CHAPTER I

THE ARMED FORCES UNDER PETER

Certainly Peter did more to develop the armed forces than anyone before his reign. He had a special interest in this direction, no doubt. When he was a mere child, he trained with his playmates in military drill. He became their leader. In becoming the leader of the group, he developed his ability to lead men for a later period.

Early in his reign he began to improve the army. He knew it was almost worthless against a European army. Its training, equipment, and dress were far behind the armies to the West. In order to overcome these weaknesses, Peter employed foreign officers to train his troops. He also put the army on a territorial basis of conscription. Each province was required to recruit, clothe, quarter, and pay for such military units as were assigned to it. This method of recruiting the army proved to be a dead weight on the provinces which had to support it from their often meager sources of income. The conscription law called for about thirty thousand men yearly. These recruits came mainly from the peasants and the servants of the squires. Rank in Peter's army was
given on the basis of efficiency, and not on noble birth. All the officers became gentry.¹

Besides this regular army, Peter had what was called the Guard. This troop was made up from the gentry itself. It might be termed the Tsar's private army for his own private protection, and for special purposes.²

A foreign officer, Le Fort, who was Peter's interpreter and adviser, did much toward reforming the army. Peter asked Le Fort what he thought of the army. The reply was that the dress of the soldiers could be greatly improved. He told Peter the uniforms could be made much more convenient, like the styles usually adopted by the western nations. In order to demonstrate to Peter the kind of uniform his troops should wear, Le Fort had two uniforms made. One was made for an officer and one for a common soldier. It was no easy task to secure these two uniforms. It was difficult to find a tailor who could make them, and it was equally as difficult to find suitable material from which to make them. After the uniforms were completed, Le Fort presented himself to the Tsar dressed in the officer's uniform. So different was this dress from anything Peter had seen before, that he failed to recognize his good friend, Le Fort. After recognizing Le Fort, Peter expressed great satisfaction with the

new dress and asked that the Guard be dressed in the new uniforms. Soon fifty men were dressed in the new type uniforms and carefully drilled along European methods. Le Fort marched with the fifty men to the Tsar's palace. Peter watched them from the window. He was completely satisfied with the work of Le Fort. In order to learn more about this new army which was in the making, Peter enlisted as a private and went through the training of a common soldier.\(^3\) This new type of training and dress was at first confined to the household troops and his private body guards and was not extended to the entire army.

This progressiveness, on the part of Peter, met with no little opposition. Public opinion resented these reforms in the armed forces. It especially resented the incursion of foreign officers to train the army along western models.

In 1698 a rebellion was staged against Peter's reforms. The rebellion was ruthlessly crushed by Peter's armies. Immediately after the rebellion, he began to reform the army completely. He established new regiments instead of the old Guard and put the entire army on a new footing. He abolished the dress which the Guards had been accustomed to wear. This was an ancient Muscovite costume which was similar to the dress of the Scottish Highlanders. This costume was strongly associated in the minds of the men with ancient national

\(^3\) Jacob Abbott, *Story of Peter the Great*, pp. 77-80.
customs. The Tsar wished to abolish this and many other customs, so as to break with the past. With this in mind, he dressed his new troops in a modern military uniform. This new dress was more convenient than the old form of dress. This change did exert a great influence in disenchanting the minds of the men from the influence of old ideas and associations. In time they came to feel that they were men, belonging to a new age.4

After the revolt many officers were executed for their crimes against the state. It was necessary to replace these vacancies and to add new ones, as well. To get these officers, appointments were made from the sons of the nobles. Peter sought those who were inclined to his side, or those who might be brought over by the influence of appointment and honors conferred upon their sons. His main object in reorganizing the army was not for protection from other countries or domestic violence, but was to strengthen his own position.

In order to keep his troops loyal, Peter discouraged marriage among the soldiers. He caused them to live in barracks and moved them often so that they would not become acquainted with civilians. The troops were permitted to indulge in all kinds of dissipation and vice, as long as it did not interfere too much with military discipline, or

deteriorate from the efficiency of the whole body as a military corps. The soldiers soon learned to love the idle and dissolute lives which they were allowed to live.5

The officers were paid large salaries. They were also clothed in a gaudy dress which was adorned with numerous decorations. These unusual fellows were treated everywhere with great consideration and respect. They, in time, became devoted to the will of the government and gradually lost all regard for, and all sympathy with, the rights and welfare of the people. The army was mainly to keep the people in a state of utter and abject submission to the Tsar's will. The Tsar was, in turn, to collect from the people thus subdued the sums of money necessary for their pay. With this standing army, he was able to strike awe into the hearts of his millions of subjects and to hold them all entirely subject to his will. He had no intention of using all the energy of the army at home, for he had secret plans in other directions, as well.6

Peter had made a tour of several European countries and had become thoroughly convinced that his own beloved Russia was far behind the European powers. One thing he needed most was an outlet to the sea. To possess this much-needed port, he turned his attention toward the Baltic. He attacked Narva,

5Ibid., p. 174. 6Ibid., p. 179.
a Swedish port, in 1699. While Peter laid siege to Narva, Polish forces advanced on Riga and put it under siege. In the meantime, England and Holland sent communications to Peter at Narva and to the Polish king at Riga, persuading them to discontinue the war on Sweden. The Polish king withdrew from Riga when he knew he was going to be attacked by the Swedish army. He pretended that the occasion for the withdrawal was to please Holland. The real reason for the withdrawal was the fear of Swedish arms.

After the withdrawal of the Polish army, the Swedish forces started for Narva to attack Peter. The Russian army was commanded by General Coy, who was a German. General Coy sent out troops to attack the Swedish army on its advance. The enemy troops, expecting such a move from General Coy, left the main traveled road and evaded the intended attack. They arrived at Narva without incident. The Swedish army attacked the Russians and completely defeated them. The Swedish army consisted of about eight thousand well-equipped and well-organized troops. The Russians numbered about forty thousand men. The Russians lost about twenty thousand killed. The Swedes had so many prisoners that it was difficult to keep them. The officers were retained, and the enlisted men were released. To render them harmless, their clothes were cut in such a way that they had to be held at all times to

7Ibid., p. 195.
keep out the wind and the cold. This being done, they were
driven about a league toward Russia and then left to find
the way for themselves. 8

A short time before Peter's forces were attacked at
Narva, he left for Russia to get reinforcements. If he had
remained with the army, no doubt he would have been taken
prisoner. When he heard of the defeat of his troops, he
did not seem very much disconcerted. He said he expected
to be beaten at first. His expression was that they had
beaten him once, and that they might beat him again, but in
time they would teach him to beat them.

While Charles XII busied himself in the war with Poland,
Peter built a new modern army. He again attacked Swedish
territory in 1702. He took the Swedish fortress of Noteberg,
on the Neva. In 1703 the Russians took the fortress Nien-
schang, also near the Neva. In 1708 Russian troops defeated
the Swedish army of General Loewenhaupt in White Russia.

Charles XII invaded Russia through the Ukraine. He
intended to attack Moscow from the south. Peter marched
his army parallel to the Swedish army, covering the lines of
communications leading to Moscow. At his order the popula-
tion scorched the earth in advance of the invader and fled
to the forest.

8 Ibid., p. 204.
Charles attacked Poltava, but the garrison and the armed citizenry repelled the attack and held out until Peter marched upon them. On June 27, 1709, Charles ordered his troops to attack the redoubts Peter had thrown up. This engagement detached about a quarter of his total forces. The rest of the troops attacked the Russian center and pierced it. At this moment Peter brought up his reserves and routed the Swedes. The Russian attack ended with the surrender of the bulk of the Swedish army. Charles XII was severely wounded, but some of his faithful soldiers escaped with him into Turkey. After recovering from his wounds, he returned to Sweden. This bitter disaster ended Sweden's attempt to conquer Russia. Peter's prophecy that Sweden would teach him how to defeat them had really come true.\(^9\)

CHAPTER II

ARMY LIFE UNDER THE TSARS

The time covered in this chapter is the period preceding World War I, and up to the Bolshevik Revolution. About the same conditions existed during almost any time the Tsars ruled Russia. To begin with, the barracks were usually dirty and very unsanitary. The beds were inadequate. In most cases they consisted of nothing more than a dirty mat which could be rolled up when not in use. In order to keep warm in winter, the men were compelled to sleep in the clothes they had worn during the day. These unwholesome living conditions often caused the spread of disease among the men. They were also poorly dressed. Uniforms were handed down from one to another until they became so badly worn that they were scarcely fit for use any longer. The food was no better than the other things mentioned. It was of the coarsest type imaginable. The food might be vegetable soups and black bread. Meat was almost unknown to the common soldier.¹

The soldier was considered to be as low down the social ladder as one could possibly be. The very name soldier carried with it a sinister meaning. A soldier was considered

¹Albert Rhys Williams, The Soviets, p. 497.
a ruffian or someone who would mistreat civilians. Society in general had little use for him at all.

The code controlling the existence of the soldier was a severe one. It forbade him to travel on boats or trains except third class. He could not eat in any but inferior restaurants. He could not ride inside street cars without permission from officers. He could not smoke in public places except by permission from an officer. He was rigidly bound by rules. For the slightest infraction he was punished severely. One common punishment was to compel him to run the gauntlet. Another means of punishment was to cause one to stand completely still for two hours under a load of sand weighing seventy-two pounds. If an officer called him names, the best he could do was to say, "Quite so, your nobility." The aim was to remind such an inferior creature that he must stay in his place. He was treated as an inferior, and he certainly acted like one.2

There was little discipline under the old regime in the sense of obedience prompted by respect for the worth and rank of officers. Things were so bad in World War I that Grand Duke Nicholas authorized an officer to shoot down at once any man who failed to obey him.

Also in World War I a man was beaten for making a remark that sanitors and orderlies were not given presents at Easter.

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2 Ibid., p. 497.
The man was then made to stand for two hours in front of a trench for the enemy to shoot at him. A squad of fifty men was ordered to defile him. They refused and were in turn made to stand at attention for two hours under enemy fire.

Under the old regime, military service was compulsory. The youth shrank from those conscription years, for it meant from three to seven years of hardships and humiliations.

The leaving of recruits for the armed forces was an important event in a community. They had ceremonies, songs, dances, and feastings which lasted a week. It culminated in a series of farewells.

The recruits were usually very sad on these occasions, for they knew well what was in store for them. The mothers usually suffered great sorrow, too, because of the unhappy fate of the sons. During these days of festivities, many excesses occurred. Vodka flowed like water. Then came fighting, sex excesses, and remorse. In many of the more backward communities, these same festivities and excesses are engaged in today when recruits are leaving for training, but these practices are being frowned upon.3

The new recruits went into the armed forces protesting against the old discipline of blows and beatings. In drunkenness, they sought to drown their grief. To escape this dismal existence, the recruits resorted to various ways to

3Ibid., p. 498.
escape the service. Those who were financially able re-
sorted to bribery. Some ran away to America. Others ren-
dered themselves unfit for service by fasting or by chewing
tea to double the heartbeats. Some injured their trigger
finger. Others jumped off high places, so as to damage a
leg or an arm.

In most instances the soldier was very illiterate. It
seemed to be the opinion of those in authority that an il-
literate soldier was a better soldier than one who was edu-
cated. In keeping with this opinion, the government made no
provisions to improve him mentally. Since these recruits
were illiterate and inexperienced, it was more difficult for
them to adjust themselves to army life. They usually knew
no manners and had little or no ambition. If they made mis-
takes, as they often did, they were reprimanded in such a
way that they were constantly conscious of their inferior
position.

On the other hand, other classes of Russian society
regarded army service as an honor and a glory. This was the
reaction of the nobility, the merchant class, and others
superior to the masses. For these socially elite, service
in the army was a career which carried with it prestige,
power, position, and a comfortable salary. It also meant
excitement and adventure. This group constituted a caste
all their own. Now and then an individual peasant could
filter into their ranks. In the last years of the Tsar's rule, more peasants who had been educated accepted the army service as a career. Mainly peasants and workers served as ordinary soldiers, because any official position in the army was almost beyond their reach. 4

Among the officers there was little discipline. Many of them had reached this much-coveted position, not on evidence of ability, but by a political pull. They usually drank heavily, gambled with cards, and had loose women in their quarters. They also disregarded many general orders aiming to regulate their conduct. Sometimes men were sent into unauthorized attacks by their drunken officers. They also neglected the sick and the wounded. As a result of such abuses, the men hated their officers. 5

5 Ibid., p. 83.
CHAPTER III

THE RUSSIAN SOLDIER

The period covered in this chapter is from about 1860 to 1890. The purpose of the chapter is to give some of the characteristics of the Russian soldier of the period and to relate some of the conditions under which he had to live.

He is said to have had a sincere love for the monarch. He was sincerely religious, but his religion was somewhat associated with the Tsar himself. The Russian soldier was very brave, even when his life was in grave danger. Death held little fear for him. He looked upon death with something of contempt. The glory with which his name would be surrounded caused him to lose sight of any fear that might otherwise have haunted him. Generally speaking, he was kind hearted, but he possessed a somewhat indulgent disposition.

The Russian soldier had an unusual sense of duty. He is known to have frozen to death standing, while doing sentry duty. For example, on the heights of Shepka, he was found standing and transformed into a statue of ice. On many occasions, he has died on the march, "giving up his last step with his last breath."¹

¹By a Russian General, "The Russian Army," Harpers Magazine, LXXX (May, 1890), 187.
He has an unusual way of adjusting himself to almost any situation he happens to be in. He might be, "in the steppes of the father-land, in the tundras of Siberia, or in the mountains or deserts of central Asia," yet he was able to adjust himself to the conditions around him. Under conditions which would cause others to die of hunger, thirst, or hardships, he usually survived. There are incidents related which are in keeping with the idea of his ability to endure hardships. It is stated that the Russian soldier has marched for thirty miles, under the most trying conditions, and without rest, going immediately into battle. Again, in the campaign against Khiva in May, 1873, the Russian army marched "two months through the steppes and the wildest desert," and arrived on May 11 with only six men ill. Once during this expedition the troops were caught in the Dehisak mountains by a blizzard. Several natives who were following the army were frozen to death, but not a soldier was lost. In order to keep the men from freezing, the officers organized games for the men to play and told them stories. The idea was to keep them awake. If any of them should have fallen asleep they would have frozen. Even under trying conditions such as this kind, the strictest discipline was enforced. To illustrate this point, a commander punished a soldier for losing a brush used to brush the horses. This
was done in order to show the men that nothing, however severe, was to interfere with their duty as soldiers.²

Peculiar looking uniforms were worn during this period, 1860 to 1890. The soldier wore a cloth coat with a tail. His trousers were made short, so they could be tucked into high-topped boots. His overcoat was made long and of a coarse gray cloth. His cap worn while working was made of cloth and without a peak. The one worn on parade duty was a round fur cap.

The Russian soldier has been noted for his skill in shooting the rifle. During peace times it was not unusual for sixty or seventy per cent of the bullets to find the target during target practice.

The soldier carried a heavy pack with him. It contained provisions for four days, cartridges, a tent and anything else he wished to carry. The Russian army had the advantage of the British army when it came to moving across the country. The Russians carried most of their necessary equipment in their packs, while the British used large baggage trains and a mass of camp followers.³

The army was made up of many nationalities of people. In it were Coreans, Tunguses, Manchoos, Mongolians, Kalmuchs, Chinese, Uzebecks, Afghans, Persians, Kurds, Armenians, Wallachians, Poles, Germans, Swedes, and Laplanders. We can

²Ibid., p. 194. ³Ibid., p. 188.
have a better idea about the nationalities represented in Russia, if we remember that in Dagestan alone, which is a part of the Caucasus chain, one hundred and twenty miles long and ninety miles wide, there were forty-eight different tribes. Almost all of them spoke a different dialect. These different tribes were associated together in the army. Usually one year in the army served to blend them into one type, that of the Russian soldier.  

There was quite a contrast between the common soldier, just discussed, and those of the Guards at St. Petersburg. This troop was chosen from the finest men in the country. They were kept under the eye of the Tsar himself, and they were commanded by some member of the imperial family. The major part of their training was for a show. They were trained to do perfect drilling, so as to make them unequaled in the precision of movement.  

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4 Ibid., p. 190.  
5 Ibid., p. 195.
CHAPTER IV

THE CAVALRY

Russia has probably employed the use of cavalry on a far larger scale than has any other nation. At a very early period in her history, the Cossacks began to play a prominent part in her wars. They are traditionally known to be great fighters. So great has been their influence on the history of Russia, that our thoughts turn to the Cossacks when we think of their cavalry.

Some interesting characteristics of these famous horsemen deserve mention. From their early existence, they were lovers of freedom. This love for freedom made it difficult for the Tsars to bring them under their rule. They lived mainly in the hill country in what is now southeastern Russia. From their hideouts they raided Persian merchants and Turkish tax collectors. They made raids into Turkey and as far away as Poland. They did not hesitate to raid any place which offered adventure and material gain, if they thought there was a chance to succeed. Because of their lawlessness, they became outlaws who were even considered dangerous to the government itself.¹

¹By a Russian General, "The Russian Army," Harpers Magazine, LXXX (December-May, 1889-1890), p. 95.
During the nineteenth century the Cossacks were a combination of several nationalities, but they were dominated by Russian customs. The word Cossack is of Turkish origin, meaning rider, or advance guard, or robber. By some, the men have been considered very handsome, and the women to possess unusual beauty. This might be traced to their habits of carrying off their neighbor's beauties. The Turks took female slaves from diverse lands, and the Cossacks in turn took them from the Turks. No doubt their personal appearance and their traits of character could at least in part be traced to this mixture of so many bloods.

Before the middle of the nineteenth century the Cossacks refused to submit to any yoke. Nominally, they were ruled by the Turks, but it was a decaying power which could not control them. The Cossacks of the Ukraine surrendered their independence to Moscow about the middle of the century. There were two reasons for their surrender. Moscow was stronger and more energetic than Turkey, and they were of the same orthodox faith as the Russians.²

Their training for cavalry service started in the early life of the sons. It is said that the mothers sang them to sleep with their war songs. They were taught to play games of a warlike nature. Almost by the time these children could walk, they were given lessons on horseback with their fathers.

²Ibid., p. 196.
Very early, too, they were taught to shoot and to handle the saber. The Cossack horsemen wore no spurs. They did not want to be betrayed to the enemy by the noise the spurs might make. All the other equipment they possessed was so well contrived that it made little or no noise at all. It is said that one hundred of them made less noise than one regular cavalry soldier.³

The Cossack cavalrymen have always been considered the soul and eye of the army. They seemed to be able to smell an enemy where others would pass by him. Neither they nor their horses ever seemed to tire. Even when slumbering, they both seemed to be watching for an enemy. They could find their way everywhere. They could glide furtively across the ground occupied by the enemy. If a message needed to be sent anywhere, they were chosen for the task. Probably no others have been the equal of the Cossacks in guerilla warfare. Next to the terrible winter, it was the Cossacks who contributed most to the extermination of the French in 1812. They had the ability to appear out of nowhere and attack with lightning speed; however, the force of their shock was not so powerful as that of the regular cavalry. They could fight on foot as well as on horseback. If they were attacked by superior forces, and could not retreat, their horses were made to lie down to serve as ramparts.⁴

³Ibid.  
⁴Ibid., p. 198.
Those of the Caucasus preserved their primitive characteristics of pure warriors until the latter part of the nineteenth century. Their villages were situated along the rivers Kuban and Laba. It was called the Terek-military line. They were called the Cossacks of the line. Here they kept sentinels at strategic positions to keep a lookout for danger. There were two signals commonly used to warn of approaching danger. The firing of a cannon was sometimes used, and sometimes a smoke screen was used. When these signals were observed, the men left the sickle, the rake, or the plow, and hastened to the village where they quickly armed themselves while their wives saddled the horses. If they hurried, they could enjoy a lively fight with some band which was attacking a neighboring village.

Occasionally they made attacks on enemy villages which needed punishing for some crime. They had learned though, not to take away the women captives, nor to drive away the cattle, if they won the fight.

The principal hero among them in the nineteenth century was Stepsoff. His daring attacks on the Terekases won him legendary renown. His name and exploits form the theme of many of the songs of the Cossacks.

The Cossacks usually rode small horses that were very tenacious and enduring. Other cavalry troops preferred the tall argamac horse. Either of these horses was capable of
much endurance. The horses were trained to jump ditches, hedges, and ramparts. They were also trained to swim across rivers and lakes.

The officers sometimes were timid in society, but when danger came, they were for and equal to their task. They advanced at the head of their men. One regiment lost one hundred per cent of its officers.5

In the course of the years, these warriors developed their own uniform and their own brand of horsemanship. When they were called to wars, they left their fields, mounted their own horses, furnished their own arms, and reported for duty within a few hours.

The dress of the Cossacks is very interesting. They wore high boots, black hats, and long, flowing cloaks tied at the waist. Over each breast were nine pockets which were called "gaziri." These were used to carry bullets. Over their shoulders they wore a combination scarf and hood which they called a bashlik. If from the Don region, the bashlik was gray in color. Those from the steppe country of the Urals wore a bashlik of light blue. Over all this was worn a heavy black cape of unfinished felt called a "burka." It reached the ankles, leaving the sword arm free, and it was used to sleep in.6

5Ibid., p. 190.
6Walter Kerr, The Russian Army, p. 80.
In 1917, most of the Cossacks fought against the Revolution. They were broken. Attempts were made by the new government to exterminate them as an entity. It was hoped that they might be blended with other Russians in such a way that they would lose their identity. The task was a hopeless one. Their traditions were too strong. After fifteen years, the government permitted them to become a separate unit again. They gladly donned the uniform. When Germany attacked Russia in 1941, they were ready to fight for their homeland. Many went into battle wearing decorations won under the Tsars.7

The Russian cavalry was never all Cossacks. It usually consisted of about half Cossacks and half other nationalities of Russia. They were trained the same way and dressed the same, except the colored bashlik which identified the Cossacks as different from the others and indicated the region from which they came.

When World War II started, Russia had by far the largest cavalry force in the world. Their tactics were to hit and run. They charged in mass formation. Their equipment was somewhat changed to meet the conditions under which they were to fight. They used one or two tank brigades and a number of air force squadrons. They did not use trucks or mobile artillery. They moved their artillery on horse-drawn vehicles. These were moved by four swift horses. The guns

7Ibid., p. 81.
and other equipment could be hauled over rough terrain where mobile equipment could not go. Feed for the horses, food for the men, and ammunition for the guns were hauled in horse-drawn wagons. 8

The Russian cavalrymen of today have agreed that the best horses they have are a medium-sized Anglo-Don breed, but the majority of the animals are small Russian steppe horses capable of long marches under difficult conditions. In winter training, squadrons march from eighteen to forty miles a day, while in summer they cover as much as seventy miles a day. During World War II, the horses were trained to wear gas masks. They were also trained to wear special stockings to protect their feet from mustard gas.

After nine months of fighting in World War II, it was necessary to alter the equipment of the cavalry again. It was learned that the airplane and the tank were the horsemen's greatest enemy. In the spring of 1942, the Inspector General's office issued new instructions. The number of anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns was doubled in every regiment, and the squadrons were reorganized. To every squadron was assigned one forty-five millimeter gun or one seventy-six millimeter gun. Each squadron, of perhaps a hundred horsemen, had field artillery for anti-tank fire. They also had a liberal number of twenty millimeter anti-tank rifles in every squadron.

8Ibid., p. 82.
Whenever a rocket signaled the approach of enemy machines, the horses were removed from the field, and the field gun was wheeled into position. Anti-tank riflemen were scattered about the gun, and sub-machine gunners were spread out to protect the anti-tank riflemen and the gun from enemy infantry infiltration. 9

The effectiveness of cavalry in present-day fighting was questioned by many observers. They remembered well the tragic fate of Poland's fifteen brigades of cavalry against the Germans in 1939. They expected the same fate for the Russian horsemen.

The Russian cavalry did not meet the same fate as the Polish cavalry. They were very successful against the German forces. 10 There are several examples of successful operations on their part. In the Ukraine the German ninth Tank Division and the twenty-fifth Motorized Division broke through the Russian lines. These divisions were met by General Belov's cavalry corps. After a long ride, the horsemen dismounted and attacked the German forces. The attack was made at dawn, and by nightfall the Germans were routed enough to give the Soviet High Command time to straighten its lines. A few weeks before, this same cavalry corps was in retreat and had met a German motorized force. It attacked immediately and

9Ibid., p. 88.  10Ibid.
captured the village of Balta. It also defeated the two hundred ninety-third and two hundred ninety-seventh Infantry Divisions.

Again, General Dovator's cavalry corps engaged the enemy in a number of skirmishes from August 14 to August 23. He was trying to find a vulnerable spot in the lines. Finally his men dismounted and launched a bayonet attack. They cut up the third battalion of the forty-third infantry regiment, broke through and stayed behind the enemy lines for two weeks. They worked in small groups, but in close coordination. The enemy believed them to be isolated bands.  

Another illustration of successful cavalry action is found during the first days of the war. On the fifth and sixth days of the war, the cavalry corps commanded by Major General V. D. Kruchenkin held the River Ikva close to the frontier against repeated attacks by the German Eleventh Tank Division. This again was dismounted action.

In 1942, General Dovator's cavalry, while operating with Rokassovsky's army west of Moscow, charged into a German division one moonlight night and destroyed an entire regiment, killing two thousand officers and men. They captured more than three hundred vehicles, one hundred cannon, and many machine guns.  

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11Ibid., p. 86.  
12Ibid., p. 87.
In the fifth month of the war, the Russian command began to give the title of Guards to units that had distinguished themselves in battle. The early honors went to General Belov's force, which became the First Guard cavalry corps. General Dovator's unit became the Second Guard cavalry corps. Both these men fought valiantly in the battle for Moscow, during which Dovator was killed. His body was cremated and the ashes were placed in an urn in the Moscow crematory. Today he is recalled as one of the outstanding heroes of the war.  

In 1943, the cavalry, including the Cossacks, received new kinds of equipment and more than had been provided before. They were equipped with trucks to transport both men and mounts from one sector to another, so as to keep them fresh. American jeeps were supplied the horsemen as their auxiliary liaison vehicle. The Russians called these jeeps "little goats."  

In the same year, the cavalry was supplied with quantities of heavy machine guns. Some were mounted in armored cars, while others were mounted in horse-drawn carriages of the tachanka type, made popular by Budenny's riders in 1918-1920. Sometimes the Russian mud was too heavy for the trucks to go through, but in any event the horses always made their

13 Ibid., p. 90.
14 Albert Parry, Russian Cavalcade, p. 290.
way through the mud. Tommy-guns and automatic rifles were distributed among the cavalrymen in abundance. They were also supplied with long-stemmed anti-tank rifles which looked something like their old-time lances. For their heavy equipment, they had a supply of fifty millimeter wheel-mounted guns. These supplemented their earlier supply to the Cossacks of thirty-seven millimeter and forty-five millimeter anti-panzer artillery. Grenades, too, became a part of their equipment. These were hurled in close combat by the horsemen, while others cut down survivors who were left on the field.15

In this war Soviet planes, tanks, infantry, and cavalry fought as a unit. Many of the Russian successes were due to their excellent teamwork.

These new weapons, tactics, and equipment, were entirely different from anything used by the men in World War I, but these older men reported for duty with their old Tsarist medals shining beneath their long beards. Very quickly they learned to operate the new guns and other new types of equipment. They were also able to adjust themselves to the new conditions that prevailed.16

There were many nationalities of people represented in the cavalry. There were the Cossacks, who have already been

15 Ibid., p. 291. 16 Ibid., p. 292.
mentioned, and the Turko-Tartar and Mongral horsemen from the Soviet Middle Asiatic and Far Eastern republics. In addition to these were the Cir Cassin and other Moslem riders from the mountains and valleys of the Caucasus. During the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905 and the First World War of 1914-1917, there was a number of such forces, known mostly under the romantic name of Wild Divisions. During World War II, the Eastern cavalry troops were very numerous and diversified.

The horses from the East were somewhat different from the Cossack's mounts. The Cossack's horses were small and tough, while those from the East were large, because of the Arabian strain in them. They were as tough and enduring as those of the Cossacks. Both types of horses can live off the field, even when there is very little left for them.17

In 1942-1943, it became the task of the Cossacks to wrest their own native lands to the south from the foe. The Cossack leader here was Lieutenant General Nicholas Kirichenko. The country of the Caucasian foothills and the Kuban steppes was taken by the Germans. During their occupation, they had violated every law of decency known to man. Now the Cossacks had the chance to get revenge. Old men went into the ranks to fight. Even women who were good riders went into battle alongside the men. They burned

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17 Ibid., p. 192.
everything which might have been used by the Germans. Their battle cry was, "Strike three blows for every blow. Kill ten of the enemy for every fallen friend."\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 297.
CHAPTER V

THE RUSSIAN ARMY IN WORLD WAR I

When Russia entered the war against Germany in 1914, she was ill prepared for such a major undertaking. As was the usual case, she had too many men in the armed forces, and too little of out of date equipment. The Western Powers were anxious for the Russian steam roller to get started in the East because of the effect it would have in the war. In this war, however, numbers of men did not constitute a steam roller. It also required modern equipment and enough of it to fight successfully against a foe like the German army. The Russian authorities were unable to see their needs for the war and to plan to meet those needs.

In the plan of mobilization there were four million five hundred thousand rifles available, including a supply in reserve. There were to be added seven hundred thousand more yearly. Actually, there was a need for five million rifles at the beginning. There was also a need for five million five hundred thousand to arm the men who were to be called to arms later. There was a need for seven million two hundred thousand to make good the waste and losses during the three years of war. This need amounted to about
two hundred thousand a month. The actual number needed for
the course of the war was seventeen million seven hundred
thousand. There was a shortage of eleven million rifles.¹

The Russian factories supplied two million four hundred
fifty-nine thousand rifles during the war. Two million four
hundred thirty-four thousand were purchased abroad. There
were, in addition to this number, about seven hundred thou-
sand captured from the enemy. The total number of rifles
used was eleven million three hundred sixty-five thousand.

As early as September 1914, the Artillery Department
saw that it was impossible for the government to satisfy the
demand through its own factories. It began to look for rifles
outside Russia. A desire was expressed for old models not
of the same caliber as the Russian rifles, provided they
could be purchased with accompanying ammunition. Negotia-
tions were discontinued by order of General Sukhomlinov, who
gave as his reason the impossibility of using rifles of dif-
f erent calibers. It was not until December 15 that the pur-
chases were authorized. The Chief of Staff ordered that they
were to be bought, regardless of the caliber. Three months
were lost, and by January 1, 1915, foreign markets had al-
ready been invaded by Russia’s allies and enemies; thus, it
was almost impossible to obtain the needed weapons.²

¹Lieutenant General N. N. Golovine, The Russian Army
in the World War, p. 126.
²Ibid., pp. 128-129.
Another hindrance was that the soldiers themselves did not take care of the rifles the army had. They were not educated sufficiently to enable them to care for them, and the higher officers gave little or no assistance toward keeping the guns in repair. To provide for this need, the ninth army set up mobile workshops for repairing guns at the front.

The supply of small arms ammunition, in accordance with the mobilization plan, should have been three billion three hundred forty-six million rounds for the rifles and machine guns. The ministry of supply cut down that supply to two billion seven hundred forty-five million rounds. At the beginning of the war, there was a shortage of six hundred million rounds. The available supply lasted only until the beginning of 1915.₃

The annual production in the three cartridge factories was five hundred fifty million rounds. The actual number needed was two hundred fifty million rounds a month. During the course of the war, there were enough cartridges produced to meet the need, but it was too often that they were far too late in reaching the front.₄

The mobilization plan called for four thousand nine hundred ninety machine guns. In July, 1914, there was a shortage of eight hundred eighty-three. The first engagement proved that there were not enough machine guns for an army of three million men. About ten per cent of this number

₃Ibid., p. 131. ₄Ibid.
was kept in reserve. No provisions were made for machine guns until after September, 1915. General Polivanov was appointed minister of war. He immediately placed an order for twelve thousand thirty-nine machine guns. Three weeks later, the number was increased to thirty-one thousand one hundred seventy. The guns ordered were to be delivered in fifteen months. The Russian factories were unable to produce the guns as rapidly as they were needed, and orders were placed abroad. By this time, all factories abroad were busy filling orders for allied and enemy countries. In the meantime, the need for machine guns was mounting rapidly.

The supply of field guns was equally inadequate. In May, 1915, the requirements in guns were fixed by General Headquarters at two hundred ninety-three a month. In the second part of the year, this was increased to five hundred sixty a month. Finally, in 1917, it was estimated that there was a need for twelve hundred a month. The mobilization plan provided only for the production of seventy-five guns a month. To meet this need, the output had to be increased sixteen times the original schedule.5

There was also a shortage in light howitzers. The quantity needed at the beginning of the war was estimated at thirty-five a month. The need gradually increased until, in 1917, it was necessary to have two hundred a month. There

5Ibid., p. 135.
was also a vast shortage in heavy artillery, such as the four and two-tenths inch long-range guns and the six-inch field howitzers. The mobilization schedule called for an output of two pieces a month. The actual need was ninety-five a month. The planned production had to be increased forty-seven times.  

The actual requirement for heavy artillery was so little understood that up to the middle of 1915, even the special commission did not indicate that big guns were needed. When the fighting took on the form of trench warfare and strong fortifications had to be destroyed, they came to understand that guns of large caliber were necessary. The problem was partially solved by creating an artillery reserve under the control of the commander-in-chief.

This lack of foresight on the part of those in authority contributed in a major way toward Russia's defeat in the war. Because of numerous shortages, Russia suffered defeat after defeat.

The lack of rifles in sufficient numbers made it impossible to fill the gaps at the front. Men were sent toward the front, but because of the lack of rifles, it was necessary to keep them in the rear in depot battalions. This swelled the number of men and hindered the training of new contingents. In 1914, there were eight hundred thousand men trained and

\[\text{Ibid.}\]
ready for the fighting, but they had no rifles. At the same time there was an appalling need for men at the front.

In 1915, the situation became worse. The Russian army occupied a front from Reval to Chernovitsy. There were only six hundred fifty thousand rifles available for this area. Only part of the men at the front were armed. The remainder waited for the death of comrades so they could get their rifles. Again, in August, 1915, a telegram was received from the headquarters of the Southern front, to the effect that some infantry companies were to be armed with very long-handed axes.\footnote{Ibid., p. 145.} It was thought that such companies might be used to protect the artillery. The order was disregarded by General Lechitsky, commander of the ninth army. He was of the opinion that such a fantastic order might destroy what prestige remained for the Russian army.

There were many instances in 1915 in which successful military operations could not be carried out on account of a shortage of ammunition. For example, in September, 1915, the ninth army opened an offensive between the rivers Sereth and Strypa against advancing Austro-Hungarian forces. The offensive was very successful. In five days of fighting, more than thirty-five thousand prisoners were taken, and the Austrian line was broken on a front of sixty kilometers. They did not have a single division in the vicinity to fill
the gap. The Russians had two infantry divisions and two cavalry divisions of the ninth army standing in front of it. They were ready to move forward, but their ammunition was gone. General Lechitsky, commander of the ninth army, asked General Ivanov, commander of the southwest front, to send a million cartridges by truck. This was refused, and no further advance by the ninth army could be made.⁸

Again, in the spring of 1915, the situation became tragic. Germany turned her main attack from the French front to the Russian front. It is almost impossible to describe the suffering of the Russian army. The enemy’s powerful and destructive artillery could be answered only by shots fired at long intervals. In certain regiments, ten rounds a day was the limit.

The retreat of the Russian army from Galicia is described as being a terrible tragedy. It consisted of endless marches and bloody fighting. Physical and moral weariness were ceaseless; it is probably impossible even to imagine the suffering they were compelled to endure.

In May, 1916, the Russians were attacked heavily by the Germans in the battle of Przemysl. Here the enemy concentrated overwhelming artillery fire on them, and they were defeated with heavy losses. It was again proved that the Russians were not match for the well-equipped German army. For eleven

⁸Ibid., p. 132.
days the Fourth Rifle Division fought stubbornly, but the German artillery swept away whole lines of Russian trenches and the defenders with them. The Russians hardly replied with artillery; they had nothing with which to reply. The exhausted regiments beat off one attack after another by bayonet or short range fire. The Russians suffered a loss of at least one hundred fifty thousand men in this engagement. Had they possessed the artillery necessary for such an engagement, no doubt the outcome would have been different.  

In 1916, the Russian General Headquarters placed orders for guns of the same type Germany had at the beginning of the war. This suggested that Russian guns were not as good as the Germans had. Certainly, Germany had made great improvement in all her equipment during the course of the war.

Some very interesting observations are made by Edward Allworth Ross. Russia began the war short of rifles. She called out four million five hundred thousand men at the beginning of the war. At first, there was one rifle for every two men; later, there was one to every four men, then one to eight, and one for ten men. Finally, the regiments arrived at the front without a gun of any sort among them.

In the sectors where there were no guns with which to fight, the soldiers removed their boots and fought with them.

\[^9\text{Ibid., p. 145.}\]

\[^{10}\text{Edward Allsworth Ross, The Russian Bolshevik Revolution, p. 30.}\]
In other places, they fought with sticks. They were trained with sticks, and they fought with sticks. Even while almost naked and unarmed, they fought like lions.

Siberian soldiers were seen in the trenches without even sticks with which to fight, while seven miles away sixteen thousand men waited for the rifles of dead and wounded comrades.

When the Russian army started its movement from Galicia in the spring of 1915, there occurred one of the most appalling tragedies in all history. Some seven hundred thousand shells burst above the shallow Russian trenches, while the Russians had no ammunition. This needless slaughter of brave, half-armed, and unprotected men left bitterness which made men welcome the Revolution. By the spring of 1917, Russia had lost in killed, invalided, and prisoners four million men.\(^{11}\)

Not all the officers were as loyal to Russia as they might have been. On one occasion, General Walters visited the front on inspection. He exposed himself almost constantly to the enemy, and yet they did not fire on him. Several times he mopped his face with a white handkerchief. Those who were with him were suspicious of him because he exposed himself so needlessly. After he was gone for about thirty minutes, the Germans started shelling the Russian lines. In those

\(^{11}\)Ibid., pp. 34-35.
places where the General used the handkerchief, they concentrated the heaviest fire. These were the weak places in the Russian lines. They were torn to pieces. If he had been present at the time of the shelling, no doubt he would have been killed by his own men.\textsuperscript{12}

The High Command also took all the steel output for cannon and shells and left none for the railway, factory, and farm. They also took skilled engine drivers and other skilled workmen to the front because their unions were said to be revolutionary. Peasants were called from the farms at a time when they were not needed, but they were needed to produce food for the under-fed soldiers. There were at one time four million of these peasants at camps in the interior, with no officers to drill them, and no rifles to use in drilling.

While at the front, the president of the Duma saw men with their feet wrapped in pieces of tents. He asked to have a conference with the proper officials to arrange for a supply of shoes for the men. He was told that he wanted to spread revolutionary ideas.\textsuperscript{13}

At the time that Russia's needs were so great, there were millions of tons of freight in Vladivostock waiting shipment to European Russia. These goods were shipped from

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., p. 32. \quad \textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 33.
the United States and Japan. The Trans-Siberian Railroad could not move them because of the lack of equipment with which to move them.

The reasons suggested for the economic collapse are interesting. The Russians who were in authority were interested in the ballet, the opera, music, painting, and literature. Before the war, they hired Germans or Austrians for overseers of their businesses and estates, and they had really learned little for themselves. These hired foreigners were often secret agents who wanted information.

The officers were not chosen because of talent or ability. They were drawn from the privileged classes. These young men were put in cadet schools and trained in espionage. They were finished in special army schools. Only the hard-boiled were retained for training. They were trained to serve the Tsar, and not their country.

Tompkins points out some conditions during World War I. On August 14, before mobilization was complete, it was decided to launch an offensive against East Prussia. The Russian first army, commanded by Rennenkampf, crossed the frontier on August 17. The second, or Narew, army, under Samsonov, entered East Prussia some three days later and advanced toward Allenstein. The German eighth army, led by General

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14 Stuart Ramsey Tompkins, *Russia through the Ages*, p. 527.
Prittwitz, attempted to block Rennenkampf in this area. It was at first pushed back by the Russians at Stalluponen, and later severely beaten at Gumbinnen. Prittwitz was replaced by Von Hindenburg. He took advantage of the terrain in the area and surrounded the Russian army of two hundred thousand men and defeated them in the famous battle of Tannenberg.15 The Russians lost ninety-two thousand as prisoners, besides those killed and wounded. Among the captured were thirteen generals. They also lost three hundred fifty guns. Because of this action, the fighting value of the second Russian army was destroyed for months.

There were a number of factors which contributed to the Russian defeat. The terrain of the country was very difficult, and the German commander knew how to take advantage of it. Again, the Russian communication lines were very deficient, while those of the Germans were very efficiently operated. The Russians further weakened their chance for a victory by failing to secure intelligence of the enemy's operation and by revealing their own plans by not sending their wireless messages by code. They also made their defeat almost certain because of being so slow in their movements. The army headquarters also failed to coordinate the movement of the two armies in the vicinity. During this action, General Samsonov and General Rennenkampf failed to keep in

15 Ibid., p. 523.
close communication with each other. No doubt the Russians had a good chance for a victory, but they carelessly allowed the German command to out-maneuver them.\footnote{Ibid., p. 529.}

Hindenburg, after the victory at Tannenberg, attacked Rennenkampf's army and almost succeeded in destroying it.

The Russians lost another forty-five thousand men as prisoners of war. Up to September 11, they suffered a loss of one hundred forty thousand prisoners taken by the Germans. This comprised over one-third of the Russian effectives. By now, they had suffered a loss of about five hundred guns. This was about one fourth of the guns in the possession of the Russian army.

While these defeats were being inflicted in the north, the Russians were having better successes against the Austrians in the southwest. During operations in this area, the Russians took over one hundred thousand prisoners and about four hundred guns.

The campaign of 1914 ended with Russia badly in need of guns, ammunition, and other necessary supplies.

In the campaign of 1915, the Russians had no better success than in 1914. In February, 1915, the German tenth army broke through the weak Russian defenses along the Niemen River east of Tilsit. It destroyed the railway from Kovno to Stalluponen. Immediately following this victory, the
German eighth army destroyed the greater part of the Russian tenth army. Ninety-two thousand prisoners were taken, including nine generals, two hundred and ninety-five guns, and one hundred seventy machine guns.\textsuperscript{17}

About two months later, Germany renewed her offensive. The attack began with a prolonged bombardment to which the Russians could not reply because of the lack of shells. The Germans carried the positions in the region of the upper Dunajic Bisla and the Wisloka Rivers. The attack spread north and east until the whole Russian line in Galicia had retired behind the line of the San and the Dniester. Here the Russians had a breathing spell and could make up their losses.

On July 13, the army of Gallwitz on the frontier of West Prussia moved forward against the Narew line protecting Warsaw from the northwest. The Russians were compelled to retreat, and the Germans took Warsaw on August 5.\textsuperscript{18}

It might be observed here that each time the Russians were defeated they were able to retreat with reasonable losses in men and equipment. These defeats came too often, though, for the good of the Russian armies. For the year 1915, the total number of men lost and missing was two million three hundred thousand. The shortage of rifles was still very acute. There were about twelve per cent of the

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., pp. 534-535. \textsuperscript{18}Ibid., p. 136.
infantry who had no rifles. These constant shortages in guns and ammunition had by now almost paralyzed Russian resistance.

In April, 1916, the Russians attacked the Austro-Hungarians. The eighth, eleventh, seventh, and ninth Russian armies carried out the offensive. Up to August 12, they lost five hundred fifty thousand men. To this number must be added two hundred thousand casualties suffered by the Russians in the Lake Narock offensive in March. The Austrians lost three hundred seventy-five thousand men as prisoners to the Russians. This loss by the enemy partially offset the losses sustained by the Russians themselves.\(^{19}\)

This was really the last offensive attempted by the Russians. The year 1917 saw the revolution gripping the army, as well as the people themselves. Talks and arguments took the place of commands and directives. Soon the entire country was seething with a desire for a change from the Tsar's rule. The idea prevailed among the people that it was useless to fight a foreign enemy and at the same time to tolerate so much corruption and injustice at home.\(^{20}\)

\(^{19}\) Ibid., p. 142. \(^{20}\) Ibid., p. 543.
CHAPTER VI

THE RED ARMY

The Soviet army is a great improvement over the Tsar’s army. The observation is made that the only resemblance between the new and old is that "both wear uniforms and both sing on the march."¹ One of the major reasons for the Bolshevik Revolution was the corrupt practices in the army in World War I. The remodeling of the army was of major importance to the existence of the state.

Under the old regime the youths shrank from their conscription years with fear. They had good reason to do so, for it meant from three to seven years of hardships and humiliations. The officers bullied and intimidated them. The code forbade them to travel on boats and trains, except third class. They were also forbidden to eat in any but inferior restaurants.² Their place was at the bottom of the social ladder. Certainly such inferior beings were to be kept in their places by all means, and the Tsar’s officers had excellent ways to keep them in their places.

The individual soldier is of first importance in the new army. He is to be trained and respected in such a way

¹Maurice Hindus, The Great Offensive, p. 279.
²Albert Rhys Williams, The Soviets, p. 197.
that he will come to like army life, instead of hating it. To reach this accomplishment, recruits are contacted several months in advance of enlistment, so as to acquaint them with army life. This contact is made by sending an officer to the community from which the recruits are to be called. The young men are called together and told about all phases of army life. These meetings are carried on in a very informal and friendly way. The young men are encouraged to ask questions about anything they wish to know concerning the army. These officers also familiarize the parents with the conditions under which their sons live while they are in the service. As a result of these and other efforts to acquaint the people in general with conditions in the Red Army, there is no longer that fear of life in the service that existed in former days.

Upon arrival at the army camps, these recruits are given a plentiful supply of good clothing. They are given heavy, thick-soled boots, long overcoats, and warm caps, along with other substantial items which are needed. They are housed in good clean barracks. They are provided with clean beds and comfortable places in which to sleep. These soldiers are fed, regardless of the food shortages among the civilians. Their food consists of meat, bread, sugar, and many other items. The government also provides soap and tobacco for them.

3Hindus, op. cit., p. 279.
These young men are well cared for culturally, as well as physically. They are prepared to fight in time of war and to work in time of peace. When they return from service, they are qualified for election to the local Soviets, to the chairmanships of the collective farms, and to other responsible positions. In 1930, the army turned out one hundred trained workers for the collective farms.  

Whatever talent a soldier may have is given an opportunity for development in the many clubs and study circles maintained at the army post. There are six thousand so-called "Lenin Corners" in the army, which are essentially reading rooms and recreation centers. There are more than one thousand societies for the study of politics and an equal number of sports clubs. The army maintains more than two thousand art organizations. These organizations embrace the arts of acting, writing, music, painting, carving, and sculpture. It also maintains one thousand atheist societies, and more than twelve hundred study circles in the field of education of the liberal arts. Too, it has about six hundred groups for the study of foreign languages. The army has its own press literature and its own code of social and moral etiquette. These are as much a part of the training as rifle practice.  

The Red soldier is taught to be courteous and considerate of civilians. He never takes advantages for himself. He is  

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4Ibid., p. 290.  
5Ibid.
considered the gentleman of the country. There are very few soldiers or sailors who have become intoxicated. He does not use the vulgar vocabulary so common to the soldiers of other days. From the time he arrives at his post, he is taught good social behavior, which is so lacking among the civilian population.

The soldier of today is looked upon as a public hero. He is acclaimed as a defender, a builder, and even a spiritual symbol of the Revolution. From the very first day at the post, he is made to realize he is a personage of worth, dignity, and responsibility. An officer must set examples of politeness. He must be patient and kind at all times.  

The Red Army inculcates into the soldier the feeling of self-respect and importance. Everything is done to enhance the morale of the soldier. To avoid the old stigma attached to the word "soldier," he is called Red Armyist. Because of the very bad conduct of the soldier in the Tsar's army, the term soldier came to have a sinister meaning. To get away from this unwholesome feeling toward him, the word soldier has been changed. To encourage him further, the hours for drilling have been reduced from eight to five hours a day. The remainder of the day is filled with sports, study, and amusements.

\[6\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 284.} \quad 7\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 285.}\]
This concern of the Red Army extends to the soldier's family, too. The family receives certain tax exemptions and aid for its invalid members. If the family is being treated unjustly by the local authorities, the soldier can often get justice by appealing to his officers. His army life adds greatly to his prestige. No one stands higher than the man with the red star on his helmet.

The oath taken by the Red Army soldier runs as follows:

I, son of the working people, a citizen of the union of the Soviet Socialist Republic, take upon myself the proud calling of a warrior in the Red Army. I promise before the working class of the Soviets and the whole world to carry this title with honor, to master conscientiously the science of war, and to protect as the apple of my eye the property of the people from theft and destruction. I promise to observe revolutionary discipline, to obey strictly all orders of the commanders. I promise to refrain and to retain my comrades from every act unworthy of a Soviet citizen, to direct all my actions and thoughts to the great good of the liberation of all toilers. I promise at the first call to spring to the defense of the nation, and, in the fight for the Soviet Union, the cause of Socialism, and the brotherhood of all people, to spare neither my strength nor my life. If through evil intent I violate this solemn oath, let universal contempt be my lot, and may the stern hand of revolutionary law punish me.

The Red Army is a highly disciplined and democratic organization. It defends the rights of workers and peasants. It consists of men who have made a living by their own labor. It is commanded by men who know how to labor for a living. With the exception of a few old specialists of proved loyalty to the Soviet government, the general staff is largely of

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8 Williams, op. cit., p. 500.
worker-peasant origin. The first three to receive the title of Marshal, Commissar, and Commander-in-Chief are of common origin. Varashilov is the son of a Cossack shepherd. He was a slate-picker at the age of six and a metal-worker at fifteen. General Blucker is the son of a Ural workman. Budenny is the son of a poor peasant. These rose to leadership during the storm of wars. The younger men and colleagues must pass through the much longer process of training in the academies.9

The attitude of the officer toward the rank-and-file has undergone a complete change. The old caste spirit is gone. The Tsarist soldier was addressed in the "thou" which was used to address children, animals, and inferiors. A member of the Red Army is addressed as "you," which implies equality. He does not have to salute on every occasion. He salutes to report or to receive an order. While off duty, he does not salute if he does not wish to do so. In former days, an officer was addressed as "Your Excellency" and "Your Nobility." Now, an officer is simply addressed as "Comrade Commander." An officer is a superior while on the march or in drill. On other occasions he is to his men a senior soldier, counselor, and friend. In clubs and elsewhere they may associate in any way they wish.10

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9Ibid., p. 501.  
10Ibid.
This intimacy does not mean that discipline is lax. It is strict. If the code is wilfully violated, it means the deprivation of freedom and privileges. Sometimes offenders are punished by the men themselves. A common method of punishment is by ostracism. The old discipline of the cane, the fist, and the knout has been abolished. It is the aim to create a conscious discipline. This kind of discipline results from the mastery of every rule and regulation, and of the reason for them. These rules are explained in simple language in the handbook. The policy of the Red Army is to have every order carried out in detail. It does not want a blind obedience, but it wants an intelligent obedience. It wants its men to have intelligence, initiative, and self-control. These are the qualities the Red Army wants in its men. To this end, it supports an elaborate system of education—technical, cultural, and political.\textsuperscript{11}

The Red Army is in reality a school and a workshop. The general aim is to make every soldier of the Red Army a fighter for Socialism with the rifle and the book. No effort is spared that might develop his mind and intelligence. Every possible effort is made to discredit the old regime and to play up the new. The handbook cites a general of the Tsar as saying to his officers, "When you are in the presence

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid.
of a common soldier, forget that he is a human being. He is a mujik, an animal gifted with the power of human speech. He has as much use for intelligence as a horse for silk stockings. His sole obligation is to be blindly obedient to every command. To make him so, he should be ignorant, unthinking, and illiterate." This must have been the old regime at its worst. Under the Tsars about eighty per cent of the soldiers were illiterate.\textsuperscript{12}

The Soviet government completely reversed its policy toward its soldiers. It raised the slogan, "Every Red Armyist a literate man."\textsuperscript{13} He has learned to read while he rode and to figure while he fought. The primary group for training is needed very little now. Nearly all recruits go at once to higher courses, covering the whole educational field up to the university. He is not lacking in the three R's, but his great need is in the rudiments of science and techniques. These are basic essentials to modern mechanical warfare and industry. The army trains the soldier in two fields. It trains him to fight in war and to be able to perform practical things in times of peace. The soldier is trained to use a machine gun and also a tractor. He is taught to convert phosphate into fertilizers as well as into gunpowder. He is trained to build bridges and to destroy them.

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., p. 502. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{13}Ibid.
Every opportunity is afforded the soldier of the Red Army to acquire a trade or profession. Every year the technical schools of the army are turning out thousands of first-class automobilists, blacksmiths, chemists, drillers, electricians, hundreds of artists, musicians, librarians, and inventors.

Soviet culture is a very broad term. It includes everything from politeness to polo playing. The activities of the army are centered in the three hundred fifty houses of the Red Army and the fleet. These are opened on equal terms to commanders, the rank and file, and their families. Some of them are equipped with buffets, gymnasiums, concert and cinema halls, rooms for radios, reading, and recreation. Here, in leisure moments, the men go to lounge. If they desire, they gather in study groups in the "Lenin Corners." These become Lenin tents when they go into summer camps.14

Reading is promoted in the Red Army. There are two thousand libraries with fifteen million volumes. Part of the library is taken on maneuvers. The men are encouraged to read at every opportunity.

The Red Army is a writing army.15 There are more than one hundred fifty thousand army correspondents who take part in the work of the press. They write for the daily Red Star, for the forty military journals, and for ten thousand

14 Ibid., p. 503. 15 Ibid.
newspapers. These are filled with anecdotes, poems, criticisms, sketches, and drawings. They write home millions of letters, telling their friends and relatives about army life. The people back home are also told of the new laws, taxes, and decrees made by the government. In turn, there are millions of letters sent back to the press, telling the soldier in the Red Army what the folks at home are thinking and doing. It serves the government well as a barometer of the people's sentiments.

In the army the soldier is taught to act. He gives skits on the themes of the day, performs in marionette shows and in reviews involving thousands of actors. These performances are mainly given at the Red Army Theater in Moscow. The army produces for the screen, as well as for the stage. The soldier participates as a set-builder, as a scene-shifter, as a playwright, as an actor, as a dancer, and as a singer.

The Red Army encourages its men to sing. Most of them are gifted with rich and resonant voices, and they like to use them. They sing in groups of two to twenty, accompanied by the harmonica. Whole Platoons, companies, and even divisions engage in group singing. They sing wherever they go. They keep time to the rhythm of their own voices. It is said that it is interesting to watch the army on the march
with all its equipment and its long overcoats suddenly burst into song.\textsuperscript{16}

The Russian army is a studying army. Everyone is required to take certain courses, but besides these courses almost everyone voluntarily is in one of the seventy thousand study groups known as "circles." These are "Literary Circles." The Classics, modern novels, and poetry are read. Sometimes the authors come to read to the soldiers. Foreign languages are studied, too. Almost any language can be studied in the army schools. It is especially important for spies, scouts, and agitators to study the language of the country where they may be required to serve. Para-troopers certainly should be acquainted with the language of the foe, for they might be dropped behind enemy lines.\textsuperscript{17}

There are all kinds of circles: art, anti-religious, drama, and sports. From these, the men may choose according to taste and talent. The commanding staff favors those dealing with state affairs and politics.

The army is very much interested in politics. When one enters the army, he retains all his civil rights. He holds his membership in his labor union and cooperative and continues to vote and hold office. He is taught courses in economics, civics, and history. He is also drilled thoroughly in Marxism. There are about four hundred fifty hours

\textsuperscript{16}\textsuperscript{16}ibid., pp. 504-505. \textsuperscript{17}\textsuperscript{17}ibid.
given in each course. The soldier is taught the history of the Red Army from the first until the present. He is taught to respect and to understand the one hundred eighty-nine nationalities comprising the Soviet Union. Some of them are the Armenians, Bashkirs, Cheivosh, and the Tartars. If he is to serve in the army with them, then he must be taught how to get along with them. He is taught of foreign lands, so that he will know about the conditions among the toiling people. He wears a five-pointed star which is a symbol of the five continents where these people live. Supplementing these formal lectures are evenings of conversation and debates, and the roulette, which has political questions attached to it. Some common questions are: What is the League of Nations? What countries are friendly to the Soviets?18

The Red Army men become good citizens. A small fraction go on to the academies. These consist of the most talented men. The others return to offices, farms, or businesses. They are missionaries of Soviet ideas, discipline, and culture. The Red Army men carry with them books, the electric lamp, and the latest knowledge of crop raising. In every field they are aggressive shock troops of Communism. They lead the campaigns against Kulaks and speculators. They champion the cause of teachers, doctors, and other worthy

18 Ibid., p. 505.
people. They are elected to all key positions in their communities. Most of the presidents of village Soviets are former members of the Red Army, Red sailors, and Red airmen.19

The Soviets are not making the Tsars' mistake of relying on numbers. At the same time, all citizens are obligated to defend the fatherland of the workers. Every able-bodied male, on reaching the age of nineteen, is called to the colors. Every year there are one million eight hundred thousand men who report to recruiting stations. Approximately one third enlist for full time intensive training in the regular forces.

In the Red Army there is no class distinction. Everyone has a chance to become a top-ranking officer. There are many schools and colleges provided for training. If one shows ability to become an officer, he is sent to a regimental school for one year. If he makes a good record, he may be appointed to a military officers' school. After several years' study, he is graduated as a second lieutenant. The army itself is a good source of officer material. If a man with talent is found among the ranks, he may be promoted on the basis of experience, or sent away to military school.

The Soviet school system is also a very good place to find officer material. The schools themselves give military

19bid., p. 506.
training. Special aptitudes are observed among the students. Any high school graduate showing such aptitudes may be appointed directly to military officers' school without passing through the ranks of the army. His record, though, must show high marks and good behavior. He must also have recommendations from the teaching staff.20

Since 1938, a number of special high schools have been designated as preparatory schools for future artillery officers and fliers. Only top flight students are accepted in these schools. They enter at the age of fifteen and graduate at the age of eighteen into an artillery or flying school.

The corps of commanders of the Red Army is very large. They come from a large network of officers' training schools. In peace time there were sixty-three officers' schools for the land forces and thirty-two for the air forces. There are, in addition, schools for the navy and the coast guard and for the other services.

The course is two years for infantry commanders. For special services, the commanders go through a four-year course. After graduation and a few years in service with units of the Red Army, they are sent to schools for improvement of the Commanding Personnel. This might be called a one-year "refresher" course.21

20 Captain Sergei N. Kournakoff, Russian Fighting Forces, p. 99.
21 Ibid.
Commanders who qualify for higher posts must go through military academies. The academies are something like the United States War College. There are sixteen such special academies, one for every branch of the service, general staff, artillery, mechanized troops, navy, and so forth. There are also six special military faculties in civilian colleges. There are always more than twenty thousand student officers studying in the institutions.22

The Commissars at one time were powerful, but their office was removed in October, 1942, from the army, and they were given other prominent positions. A Commissar was a moral leader of the unit. He was the first defender of its materials and its spiritual interest. He was also to inspire the men to fight, to popularize the best men and commanders, and to carry on a merciless campaign against cowards, panic mungers, and deserters. It was also his duty to remove injustices in the service. One of his greatest tasks was to build morale.23

For the first sixteen months of World War II, the officers and the Commissars operated on the dual command basis. This dual command authority was removed in October, 1942, at the time that the great Russian counter-offensive started.

This new army does not have as much the appearance of a workers' and peasants' army as it formerly had. Stalin has begun to make radical changes which take on a resemblance of the

22Ibid., p. 100.  23Ibid., p. 102.
Tsar's army. The officers are permitted to wear huge shoulder epaulets adorned with gold stripes on the sides of their trousers. During the first eighteen months of the war, officers on leave could wear frontline uniforms. After this period, they were forbidden to wear anything on leave except their best uniforms.\footnote{24\textit{L. Stowe, "Evolution of the Red Army," Foreign Affairs, XXII (October, 1943), 97.}}

Officers' clubs were created for the first time in the history of the Soviets. At first, women were in uniform performing duties of orderlies. Later, the men were used as orderlies. They served meals and shined the boots of the officers. A few years before, such a practice would have been denounced as a betrayal of the Revolution.

This would seem to indicate that there is a new tone in the Red Army. It may be that it is changing to an elite military organization which places stress on nationalism.\footnote{25\textit{Ibid.}}

The Soviet Union could mobilize some twenty million men. About ten to twelve million are fully trained reserves. The organized programs for sports in and out of the army have increased the efficiency of the troops in a very marked degree.

It took the old army several weeks to teach a lad to walk correctly and to distinguish between right and left. Athletic activities have helped greatly to overcome such difficulties. About eighty-five per cent of the present-day youth
are high school graduates. A great number of these youths are wearers of the Varoshilov sharpshooters' badge, the Varoshilov rider badge, and similar badges, indicating a considerable amount of valuable training as a start in the service.

Over sixty-five per cent of the recruits in the Leningrad military district in 1941 were Varoshilov sharpshooters. This means that they were qualified as expert marksmen. From the city of Leningrad there came six hundred snipers, two thousand five hundred machine gunners, and one thousand sharpshooters. They acquired these accomplishments after working hours, before they joined the army.26

In the manner of armaments, Russia seems to have at least held her own with the other nations. In 1938, the bomb-salvo of the Soviet Air Force was equal to six thousand tons, while that of Germany was estimated at three thousand tons. England's bomb-salvo was one thousand five hundred tons, while that of France was estimated at one thousand seven hundred tons.27

In one minute a Soviet army corps could hurl seventy-nine tons of metal at an enemy, including bullets, shells, mines, and grenades. The French army corps could hurl sixty-one tons, and the Germans could hurl sixty tons.

In 1931, the League of Nations' report on armament credited the Red Army with thirty regiments of heavy artillery. In

26Kournakoff, op. cit., p. 75. 27Ibid., p. 76.
1935, it was reported to the congress of Soviets that since 1931, the strength in heavy artillery had been doubled.\textsuperscript{28}

In 1938, the Red Army was said to have had more guns than the French, British, Italians, Poles, and Japanese combined.

In March, 1939, Varoshilov said that the artillery salvo of a German corps weighed six thousand seventy-eight tons. The salvo of a Russian army corps was seven thousand one hundred and thirty-six tons. In 1939, the Red Army had more and bigger guns and a higher rate of fire than any other nation.\textsuperscript{29}

In May, 1936, the German magazine, Artilleristische Rundschau, reported that the Soviet seventy-six millimeter gun had a range of eight miles. The German seventy-seven millimeter gun had a range of seven miles. The Soviet thirty-seven millimeter anti-tank gun had a range longer than the British Vickers forty-seven millimeter gun, and a longer range than the Swedish Bofors thirty-seven millimeter guns. The Soviet one hundred five millimeter anti-aircraft gun had the longest range in Europe.\textsuperscript{30}

The Red Army is well organized. It is directed by the Headquarters of Supreme Command. Under this Supreme Command are a number of front commanders. Each commander may direct the operations of two, three, four, five, six, or seven armies.

\textsuperscript{28}\textit{Ibid.} \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{29}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 77. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{30}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 78.
depending upon the length of his battle line and the importance of his sector.

Generally speaking, a colonel general commands a front, a lieutenant general commands an army, and a major commands a division. High command members belong to the Communist party. Throughout, only about one person in sixty carries a party card. If one is not a Communist, he does not have a chance of becoming a senior officer in the Red Army. The generals are the party, as much as the peoples' commissars are the party. There seems little chance for a rebellion by the generals.\(^{31}\)

The generals are usually about five feet seven inches tall and stocky. They are loyal to Stalin. They are all polite, easy-going, authoritative, and sometimes curt. All are disciplinarians.\(^{32}\)

Most of them are sons of peasants or factory workers. Many were privates in the Tsar's army, but they deserted and joined the Revolution. They wear medals on their chests, showing they have been in the army since 1918.

The Red Army is very secretive. It is as difficult to penetrate as the Communist party itself. What would be considered of very little importance in most countries is kept as a military secret in the Soviet Union. Facts about the generals are kept very secretive.

\(^{31}\)Walter Kerr, The Russian Army, p. 17.

\(^{32}\)Ibid., p. 18.
CHAPTER VII

THE RED ARMY IN ACTION

From the beginning of World War II the Soviet leaders watched with keen interest the battlefields of the West. It was easy for them to understand that the tank and plane in their most modern application had eliminated the great pitched battles of massed infantry. The concept of front, flank, and rear had been changed.

As they watched the battles in the West, where the Germans infiltrated the enemy lines and cut them to pieces, they began to work out some method by which they could overcome such a weakness on their part, if the time should come when they would have to combat an invasion of Russia. The plan finally worked out was for the squad, the section, the company, the battalion, and the regiment to be so trained that each could stand on its own in battle. If either should be isolated for any reason, it was to have the needed equipment and the training to continue the fight effectively.¹

This training proved to be very successful when the Germans did launch their attack against Russia. The panzer units did break through the lines, but instead of the Russians

¹Captain Sergei N. Kournakoff, Russian Fighting Forces, pp. 107-108.
surrendering under such circumstances, they engaged the enemy behind the lines, while the infantry closed the gaps. Thus the German tanks were compelled to fight behind the Russian lines without fuel and ammunition being supplied to them. In most instances, these tanks were either destroyed, or they ran out of fuel and were captured.

When Hitler’s armies attacked Russia on June 22, 1941, they met an army which had very little resemblance to the old army of World War I days. The social gulf which served to divide the men from the officers had been completely abolished. There was a unity existing which served to create and to sustain a fighting morale. The men were far better educated and trained than they were in former days. The peace time educational program had prepared them to use the highly mechanized equipment.

The blow which the German army struck on June 22, 1941, was probably unequalled in all military history.\(^2\) It was intended to paralyze the Red defenses and to prepare the way for a very early defeat. The danger to Russia was even greater than that of 1914. In the first World War, the Germans were engaged on two fronts, while the onslaught of 1941 was directed at Russia alone. By 1941, too, Germany was in a position to extort support from conquered and satellite countries throughout Europe. Among these nations were

France, Finland, Hungary, Rumania, and Croatia. The Russian armies were merely able to survive a blow delivered by what seemed to be the most powerful military machine in the world.

Before the powerful attack delivered by the Germans, Joseph Stalin assumed the post of chairman of the peoples' Commissars. After the invasion, a supreme council headed by Stalin was also organized to direct the total national defense. Its members were Communists who represented every phase of Soviet life. The council included only one military figure, Shaposhnikov. He served as an associate member and as Stalin's adviser. He was replaced by Marshal Vasilevsky in 1943. Stalin later became commander-in-chief of the Soviet Armed Forces, and still later he was made Marshal of the Soviet Union. During these perilous times, Stalin was the guiding figure in saving Russia from final defeat.³

To meet the emergency, the command was divided between three fronts.⁴ Marshal Timoshenko was assigned the central front; Marshal Varoshilov was assigned the northern wing; and Marshal Budenny was placed on the southern sector. The Soviet military leaders were convinced that it would be futile and possibly disastrous to attempt to stop the Germans at the frontier. They lacked the time and railroad facilities to mass

³Ibid.
⁴Ibid., p. 454.
enough troops at the frontier to stop the attack. The war plan which had been prepared was immediately put into operation. It provided for the concentration of the main body of the Red Army deep in Russian territory. Consequently, at the time of the German attack only light forces were stationed in the frontier zone. These troops were in a desperate situation, but the commanders held firmly to the policy they had previously adopted. They were to retreat with local counter attacks to slow the advance of the enemy and wear him down. As the Russian Army retreated, it moved the great part of the industrial and agricultural equipment east of the Urals. As sections were abandoned, the "scorched earth" policy was applied to destroy everything of use which could not be moved. The almost continuous retreats caused a serious strain on morale. In order to prevent complete deterioration of the fighting spirit, the system of political Commissars was restored.

The main force of the German drive was directed at the center sector in the direction of Minsk. By the middle of July the Germans had penetrated to the Smolensk region. It was here that the Red Army made its first determined stand. The battle which followed continued from the middle of July through September. It is considered one of the decisive battles of the war. The Russians succeeded in stopping the Germans temporarily, and they prevented the taking of Moscow. The battle, too, enabled the strategists to measure the
fighting abilities, the tactics, and the equipment of the two armies. It also provided them with the opportunity to improve their methods of warfare. 5

While the fighting in the Smolensk area was stalemated, the Germans scored advances to the north and to the south. They passed through the Baltic area with little resistance. Finally, they reached the outskirts of Leningrad. Kiev was occupied by September 20, and the Perekop Isthmus was occupied on October 30. The great commanders, General Varoshilov and Buddeny, were very capable, but they had not mastered the new techniques that had developed with mechanization. They resigned their commands and were assigned less hazardous ones in the rear. By now, Smolensk was in grave danger of falling, and it seemed that Moscow was soon to follow.

In this grave crisis, there were other changes in commands. Timoshenko was transferred to the southern front, while General Zhukov was given the task of holding the lines around Moscow. By November 22, the Germans occupied Rostov. A week later, the Russians recaptured the city. The position of Moscow seemed hopeless. The Germans sent troops around the city to cut its communications in the rear. During the bitter winter, thousands of soldiers charged backward and forward as the great armies struggled for the city. The German

5 Ibid., p. 455.
artillery was almost within range of the spires of the Kremlin, but the Russians were able to stop them.

On December 6, a carefully prepared counter-offensive was hurled at the numbed, ill-clad Germans. The Russians were supplied with special winter equipment that would function at temperatures far below zero. The ring that had been drawn around Moscow was cut, and the Russians pressed relentlessly on the heels of the half-frozen and dejected German army. The were forced to fight a bitter retreat which lasted until the spring thaws ended the campaign in March, 1942.  

On April 26, 1942, Hitler stated that the decision of the war would be determined on the eastern front. At this time, Germany was at her best.

The Red Army also had gathered strength during the year. It had acquired valuable experience, both in offensive, and defensive tactics. Most of the troops were battle-trained by now, and the leadership of the armies was in competent hands. The Russian industries which had been moved east of the Urals were also pouring out war equipment. American and British equipment, too, was reaching the Russian troops in the field. One great factor at this point was that national morale had been renewed by reasonable successes. This new feeling of confidence was invaluable for the advancement of the war.

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6 Ibid., p. 456.  
7 Ibid., p. 466.
The Red Army launched an attack on May 12, 1942. Timoshenko struck toward Kharkov. He failed to take the city and suffered heavy losses. He did succeed, however, in forcing the Germans to call up reserves and reinforcements from other sectors and thus temporarily upset German plans in the area. In the meantime, Russia was losing in other areas. The Germans took a part of eastern Crimea, which gave them control of Kerch Strait and the iron mines near by. They also completed the isolation of Sevastopol. Their big drive had been delayed, however, and by now it was necessary to limit their objectives. The long Russian campaign had exacted too heavy a toll of equipment and supplies. The main objective now was to drive through to the Caucasian oil fields and a break-through to Iran, which might eventually lead to a union with the Japanese.

The heaviest blow of the German attack was delivered against the Don area between Voronezh and Rostov. If they had been successful, Moscow might have been taken, but Voronezh, at the northern end of the front, held out against their heaviest assaults. Since this strong point could not be taken, the offensive developed in the southern and southeastern direction, against the Caucasus and the lower Volga. In order for the Germans to protect their western flank, it

8Ibid., p. 467. 9Ibid., p. 468.
was necessary for them to control the Crimea. If they were to gain control of the area, Sevastopol had to be subdued. It was a strong fortress and could only be taken at a fearful price. The defenders were determined to hold the city, even to the last man. It was the aim of the Red Army to inflict heavy losses on the enemy and to delay him so that it would be impossible to reach the objective that year. The city was attacked with all the ferocity at their command, but the Russians resisted heroically. They fought for the city foot by foot and stone by stone. When the city finally fell, it was a heap of rubble and destruction. This was the second time the city had been under attack during the century.

After the fall of the city, the Germans began their drive toward the Caucasian oil fields in earnest. On July 24, the Russians were again forced to evacuate Rostov. The Germans received reinforcements from the army which had been operating in the Crimea, and thus they were able to occupy the Maikop oil fields. Before the Russians surrendered, they put the oil fields to the torch. These last successes put the Georgian military road across the Caucasian Mountains and the Grozny oil fields in grave danger. The Russians drew a large part of their petroleum supplies from these oil fields. If the Grozny oil fields were to be taken, it was necessary to subdue one more stronghold. Stalingrad had to be reduced.

10Ibid.
The story of the siege and defense of Stalingrad is almost beyond imagination.\textsuperscript{11} The sacrifice and bloodshed here were on a scale unequalled in history. All through the fall of 1942, the Germans sent division after division and wave after wave crashing against the city. The retreat was from house to house and from room to room. The Russians exacted a terrific price in blood for every foot of the shell-torn city. Finally, they were forced into a small strip of land no more than a few hundred yards wide. Here they made a heroic stand. The Red Army withstood every attack hurled against it. While the heavy fighting was in progress, the Russians began to hack away at the flanks of the enemy north and south of the city. The Germans paid little attention to these movements, and apparently before they were aware of the danger, the jaws of the pincers closed around them. There were about three hundred fifty thousand Germans trapped in the area. The Red Army destroyed them piece by piece. In January, 1943, some ninety thousand German troops surrendered. This small number was all that was left of the huge army which attacked Stalingrad. The battle of Stalingrad was surely one of the decisive battles of the war.

In the meantime, the Russians launched attacks in several other sectors. The drives near Varonezh and Ordjonikidze threatened all the German armies on the southern front.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p. 469. \textsuperscript{12}Ibid., p. 470.
They were forced to retreat to avoid a catastrophe similar to that which had overtaken them at Stalingrad. In the north, the Russians had greatly improved their position. In January, 1943, they succeeded in retaking Schnesselburg on Lake Ladoga. They also succeeded in driving the Germans back from the Leningrad-Vologda railway. Again rail connections were established with the rear, which improved the conditions of the people within the city. On the southern front, Rostov was recaptured, and by the end of February, 1943, the Russians had occupied Kursk, Belgarod, and Kharkov. It appeared that the Germans would have to retreat to the Dnieper, but the Russians had over-reached themselves. Their supply lines had been lengthened, and the railroads had to be changed from the narrow to the wide gauge before they could be used. The Germans had changed the roads to the narrow gauge. Before the Russians had time to bring up sufficient supplies and to fortify their positions, the Germans attacked and forced them back from their advanced positions. In order to relieve the strain in the Donets fighting, the Russians created a "second front" in the Lake Ilmen and Viliki Lake sector. In this new offensive, the Russians took the fortresses in Rzhev, Gzhatsk, and Viazma. These points had been a constant threat to Moscow. The offensive also succeeded in preventing the Germans from shifting reserves southward to exploit their advantages in the Donets area. By the beginning of April, the eastern front was
stabilized, and both armies took advantage of the period of the spring thaws to rest and prepare for summer offensives.

On July 5, the Germans started their offensive rolling from Orel to Kharkov. The main object was to break through and flank Moscow. If this attempt should fail, they were to swing south in an encirclement against the Russians in the exposed Kursk salient. Earlier in the war, the main strategy of the Russians was to retreat and to whittle down the enemy, but now they were determined to stand. The battle raged furiously for about ten days. Enormous amounts of airplanes and tanks were hurled into the battle by both sides. At first, the Germans were able to make some minor gains, but the Russians succeeded in bringing their advance to a halt. By July 15, the fury of the attack had subsided. It was at this point that the Russians seized the initiative on the Orel front and went forward in their first summer offensive.13

The objective here was four-fold. They were to eliminate the Orel salient, to recapture Belgrad and Karkov, and to reestablish rail connections between Moscow and Karkov. If the Russians were successful, it would greatly facilitate the movement of supplies to the central front. This move, if successful, would also enable the Russians to begin drives toward the Crimea. By August 6, both Orel and Belgrad were in Russian hands. In their retreat, the Germans completely

13 Ibid., p. 480.
destroyed about sixty per cent of the buildings in Karkov, while most of those left standing were so badly damaged that they could not be used. Orel, too, was reduced to a heap of rubble.

Far more shocking than this wholesale destruction was the shattered and pitiful condition of the survivors. They related tales of terror and of starvation which were almost unbelievable, but there were evidences everywhere which proved those tales to be true.

The Red Army moved next to the Dnieper area. If it was to succeed there, several strong points had to be taken. It proved to be equal to the task. The Russians advanced along the front from Smolensk to Rostov. They also dealt heavy blows to the Germans, both in the north around Veliki Lake and Lake Lodoga, and in the south they scored successes around the Tanen Peninsula.

In abandoning the Russian cities, the Germans continued to demolish them. They also continued to be very cruel to the population. In some of the larger cities, they attempted to move the people westward with the intention, no doubt, of working them in the German factories. In some instances, they were successful in moving people out. Novorossiisk was almost empty of its population when the Russians regained it. Sometimes the Red Army moved with such speed that the Germans had

\[14\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 481. \ \ \ \ \ \text{15\textit{Ibid.}}, \ p. \ 482.\]
to abandon great herds of men and women whom they were driving away.

The Russian successes were so great that by the time the cold of the third winter began she could advance in almost any direction.

In her determined effort to relieve the country of the enemy, Russia sustained tremendous losses. By July, 1943, an estimate of five million soldiers had been killed or permanently crippled. The mortality rate among the Russian prisoners was also very high. It was reported that twenty thousand of them died of starvation in Finland alone. Civilian casualties ran high, also. It is estimated that at least five million people were killed or starved to death by the Germans in the occupied areas.16

Some of the equipment the Russians used should be noted. To destroy tanks of the enemy, they used bottles of gasoline or other inflammable liquid. These were thrown by hand against hot tanks, and they would ignite and explode. The British soldiers called these bottles Molotov cocktails. They also had a way of lowering their anti-aircraft guns for horizontal fire at land targets. Armored sleighs were employed on a large scale in winter fighting. These were loaded with infantry troops and drawn by tanks. There was also the aero

16 Ibid., p. 492.
sleigh, which was driven by airplane propellers. It carried
raiding parties at sixty miles per hour over the ice. Art-
tillery was also mounted on skis so that it could be moved where
it was most needed. In many instances, artillery could not
have been moved any other way. Land mines were also used
very effectively.

The greatest innovation was the anti-tank plane. It had
three known features. It had very heavy armor. It flew very
low and very fast. Its speed made accurate anti-aircraft
fire almost impossible. The low altitude with which it flew
made it very difficult for other planes to attack it. It was
equipped with a device which enabled it to shoot its bombs at
a target, rather than to drop them. It is not known just what
was used, but it was probably a rocket charge which shot the
projectiles.

The Red Army air force was very effective during the
struggle with Germany. It used more fighter planes than
usual. Since the Russians were fighting mainly a defensive
war, it seemed but natural for them to specialize in fighter
planes. These planes were faster and lighter than the German
planes. They were also smaller than the American and British
planes. They were so arranged that the landing gears could
be removed and skis could be put on in a very short time. It
is stated that no American or British fliers were permitted
to fly Russian planes.17

17 Kournakoff, op. cit., p. 139.
The greatest air battles were fought during the first two months of the war. The Russians estimated the loss of the Germans to be seven thousand planes during this period. The Germans estimated the Russian losses to be much higher than their own. By November, neither air force was strong enough to engage in the mass fighting that had occurred earlier in the war.

The American government supplied Russians with the Air-cobras, Tomahawks, and the Kittyhawks. It withheld the Lightning and the Thunderbolt at first. Toward the second year of the war they received these types of planes, also. The British government also withheld her best types of planes.\(^{18}\)

CHAPTER VIII

RED ARMY OFFICERS

During the progress of the Civil War in Russia, most of the officers fought against the Bolsheviks. After the war, Lenin and Frunze had to build up a new officer personnel from the worker and peasant classes. Many were actually illiterate, but they had distinguished themselves as military leaders in the revolt against the Tsars or in the Civil War after 1917.

Marshal Klementy E. Voroshilov was the son of a railroad watchman and a charwoman. He began to work in the coal mines at the age of seven and had to teach himself to read. He became a metal worker, organized a revolutionary circle, and led a strike in 1905 at Lugansk. It was later renamed Voroshilovsk in his honor. His connection with the Red Army began when he organized a detachment of guerrilla fighters at Lugansk to fight against the Germans in the Ukraine.¹

The parents of Semyon K. Timoshenko were peasants. He was drafted into the Tsarist army in 1915. He beat up an officer for being abusive and was imprisoned until he was

released by the Revolutionists in 1917. He studied strategy at a military academy and also went abroad to study foreign armies.2

From the students in the Frunze Military Academy and in the many special technical academies, the future leaders of the Red Army were chosen. They were chosen exclusively for ability and political reliability. They were given excellent training and were well grounded in the Frunze method in discipline. He taught by example that no commander should demand anything of a soldier that he would not do himself. This principle was strictly followed in the training of Red Army officers.

Another influential director of the Frunze Military Academy was Marshal Boris M. Shaposhnikov. He had been a colonel in the Tsarist army, but he joined the Revolution. Later, he carried on the work of developing the Red Army which Frunze had begun. He was mainly a strategist, but he saw the need of modern equipment because of experience gained in the first World War. He encouraged the use of tanks, heavy artillery, motorized troops, and aircraft. This was gradually furnished after 1923.3

The Russian generals are probably better known abroad than in Russia itself. In Russia the private lives of public figures are considered to be their own affairs. Since the

2Ibid., p. 298.  
3Ibid.
battle for Moscow and Stalingrad, the spotlight had been
directed toward military leaders. Painters, sculptors, and
photographers have been busy publicizing them.  

There are several reasons given for there being so many
great officers in the Red Army. Since the revolution, the
government has provided plenty of men for the armed forces,
and reasonable financial support has been provided. Again,
most of the training has been given under the psychological
stimulus of a threat of war. The Russians also have an ap-
titude for learning.

Many of the great generals were discovered and promoted
on the battlefields. Promotions sometimes came fast. General
Konstantin Bokossovsky and Marshal of Armored Forces, Pavel
Alexylvitch Rotmistroff, were colonels during the battle of
Moscow. Colonel General Konstantine Moskalenko was a di-
visional general while fighting near Voronezh, but he headed
an army when he captured Zhitoveir. Those who have had good
understanding of strategy have had promotions more rapidly
than others.  

Two outstanding commanders are Koneff and Rotmistroff.
Koneff is the senior of the two. While he commanded the
Kolinin Front in the winter of 1941-42, Rotmistroff was a


5Ibid.
colonel leading the Third Tank Brigade of Guards attached to Koneff's army. During the battle for Moscow, the two became great friends. 6

Koneff is a Serbian. 7 He is sparing with words in his addresses. While at the front or elsewhere, he cared little for comforts. Once he took up headquarters in a simple thatched Ukrainian cottage and moved out all the fixtures which were not absolute necessities. He also had a passion for accuracy. He carefully checked all booty, the captured, and the dead.

When fighting was in progress, he was usually in a position to see what was really happening, even if it meant danger to himself. He wore a plain great-coat over his uniform without epauletts. He wore a pilot's helmet on his shaven head. He never spared himself for any reason. Thirty months of fighting taxed his health very much.

Koneff is a military man through and through. When he was not talking war, his mind turned to hunting. During the war, when he talked with his staff, he paced the room with his hands behind his back. He gave orders in a low, coarse voice. He always cultivated a close friendship with his men, whom he addressed as brothers. 8

A tale is told of his finding a supply truck bogged down in deep mud. He is said to have taken a shovel and

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6Ibid. 7Ibid., p. 10. 8Ibid.
dislodged the truck and then pulled it out with the tank in which he was riding. He did this without being recognized by his men.

He is said to have a great knowledge of military history. He also possesses an extensive library and reads German and English well. Since the time when he was in the Tsar's army, he spent considerable time in military academies. Most of his life has been spent in the army.\(^9\)

Rotmistroff served in the Red Army in all the ranks.\(^10\) He graduated from Frunze Academy with the highest marks of his class. While in the Academy, he became interested in tanks. He began at once to specialize in them. He learned to handle them, and he studied all the foreign literature he could find on the subject. His thesis on the use of tanks in mountain warfare gained him an appointment to the Academy of Military Science. In July, 1943, he led the greatest armada of tanks the Russians ever put into battle and defeated an enemy of equal force.

He wore full uniform in battle and a tall lambskin "papakha" over his face in winter. He also did service in the Far East. He was very much interested in the theory of war.\(^11\)

There are few Red Army commanders who have had as many victories as these two men, but they are typical of the military men of Russia.

\(^9\)Ibid. \(^10\)Ibid. \(^11\)Ibid.
Very little information concerning the Red Army has been available since World War II ended. The Russians have not seen fit to permit the people of other nations to have any information concerning their military machine. During the war, she gave out just as little information as possible. Since she is so secretive about the matter, other nations have something of a fear as to what might be her military plans. Those fears may be without foundation. It seems reasonable to expect Russia to remain strong in a military way. We know she is not lacking in leadership nor material resources.
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