

**To the younger generation living abroad  
about the heroic feat of the Defenders  
of the Russian Land**

**from the Battle of the Neva River  
to the Capture of Berlin**





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The “Moaiikki” prepared educational materials designed for a broad audience

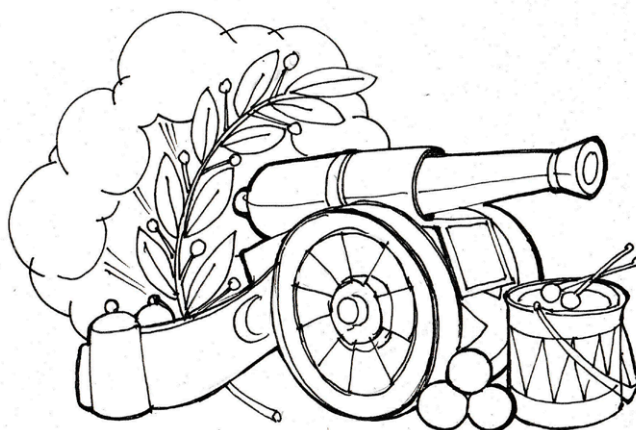
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To the younger generation living abroad about the heroic feat of the Defenders  
of the Russian Land: from the Battle of the Neva to the Capture of Berlin.

## The Collection of Stories about Major Historic Battles



Finland

The “Moaiikki” non-profit organization

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*“The secret of the victorious Russian weapon, glorious victories on land and at sea is inherent within the Russian soul. .... Russia saw the Russian fighting squads in the Battle of Kulikovo in 1380, the regiments of the imperial army in the Battle of Borodino in 1812, the divisions of the people’s volunteer corps in the Battle of Moscow in 1941, all rising to the defense of their Motherland. And always, our warriors did know full well for what cause they sacrificed their lives and had trust in their commanders”*

a quote from **Vladimir Medinsky**, Chairman  
of the Russian Military-History Society

## Preface

The project “To the Young Generation Abroad on the Heroic Feat of the Defenders of the Russian Land: from the Battle of the Neva River to the Capture of Berlin” is focused on preserving the spiritual, cultural and historic heritage of Russia abroad through the dissemination of information about the most significant battles in the history of our Motherland.

It is imperative to keep strong memories and continue the narrative about the heroism of the defenders of the Russian Land to ensure that our people do not lose their historic memory.

That narrative should sound even louder amongst the younger generation abroad so that boys and girls who, by a twist of fate, have become displaced from their homes, living and studying abroad in a foreign country and mass media environment, should not be shy of speaking their native language in public. On the contrary, they should be encouraged to respect and love Russia and enjoy the sense of pride for the heroic past of their native Motherland.

The “Mosaiikki” non-profit organization and society, its concept and administrator, were registered in the city of Jyväskylä, Finland in 2003. As of 2004, the society carries out enlightenment projects both in Russian and Finnish with the target audience being the fellow-countrymen of all ages i.e. young and teenage children and adults living in Finland. The priority projects, among other things, are designed to support and promote the Russian language and culture in Finland.

Throughout the years of its operation, the organization has been instrumental in generating a multitude of interesting, valuable, and objective publications on the Russian people, the Russian culture, and the Russian community worldwide. The Mosaiikki organization strives that the younger and teenage children of their fellow-countrymen living abroad be proud of their native homeland so as the people of other cultures could learn about Russia as the land of opportunity where they could find friends, travel on cultural tours, find business partners and discover more and more fascinating things about its close neighbor.

The “Mosaiikki” expresses its gratitude to all the partners in the project:

- **“The Ruskiy Mir Foundation”**, provided a grant for the project;
- **“The Russian Peace Foundation”**, provided a grant for the project;
- **“12” Charitable Foundation for Social Security and Promotion of Cultural and Moral Development of Society**, provided a grant for the project;
- **“The Russian Military History Society”** presented a gift to the project i.e. the “Russian Military History” book which constitutes a textbook for educational institutions. The project is authorized to use texts from the book to write historic stories of its own.
- **The St. Petersburg-based “Russia is My History” Museum and Exhibition Center** gifted 19 video lessons to the project.
- **The “Finland-Russia Society” and its affiliate in the city of Kuopio** contributed to the project by translating the materials on history from Russian into Finnish.
- **The “Historical Literature” Publishing House:** translation the materials on history from Russian into English.

All the media products generated by the project i.e. story collections, online games, and video lessons are designed to **be readily available at no cost.**

By **Tatiana Daultseva**, the chairwoman of the “Mosaiikki”  
non-profit organization and society



Благотворительный фонд «12»



# **The Battle of the Neva**

**victory by Prince Alexander Nevsky  
in the battle against the Swedes**

**July 15, 1240**



**T**he Novgorodian prince was only 19 years old when in the summer of 1240 the Swedish ships entered the estuary of the Neva river and the Swedes landed on the Izhora shore. Knowing full well that Novgorod was cut off from the support of the Southern principalities, the Swedes, instigated by Rome, were counting on, at least, seizing all the lands North of the Neva river, while converting the local pagans and Orthodox Karelians to Catholicism.

The young Novgorodian prince did not waste time by calling up a huge army in Novgorod but rather launched a rapid offensive against the enemy with a small force and a hastily assembled detachment recruited out of the Novgorodians.

The 4,000 strong Swedish force was confronted by only 1,200 Russian warriors including the Izhora volunteer corps which joined the Novgorodians. Alexander inspired his warriors by addressing them as follows: « My brothers! God dwells not in strength but in truth!» and bravely led them into the fray to attack the enemy camp. Since the time of the landing, the Swedes failed to build fortifications which was a fatal mistake.

The young Novgorodian prince led a lightning assault of his force and routed the Swedish camp. Alexander was at the forefront of the battle.

The Swedes rushed to embark their ships to sail homeward-bound. The casualties of the Novgorodian force stood at only 20 dead. However, this count did not include the casualties of the Izhora squad which fought alongside Alexander's warriors.

This relatively small-scale engagement near the border became widely known. Why so? 1240 was the third year of the invasion of the Mongolian army led by Batu Khan into the Russian heartland, Batu Kahn being the grandson of Genghis Khan. The Russian principalities fell one by one under the mounting pressure of the invaders, the very existence of the Russian state was at stake. At this time of trials and tribulations, the decisive victory on the Neva River over the numerically superior enemy forces played a major symbolic significance. It brought Prince Alexander great fame and the honorary title of Alexander Nevsky.

However, the Novgorodian boyars (the top nobility) were apprehensive of the growing influence of the prince and made attempts to oust him from governing the city. Soon afterward, Alexander left Novgorod, however, a year later a new threat of war forced the Novgorodians to reach out to him for help again.



**The Battle of the Neva**



# The Battle on the Ice

the victory by Prince Alexander Nevsky  
in the battle against the German knights

on April 5, 1242



**In** 1242 the German knights of the Livonian Order seized Pskov and advanced towards Novgorod. The Novgorodians, who a year prior had quarreled with Prince Alexander, reached out to him for help and handed him the authority yet again. The prince built a force, ejected the enemies from the lands of Novgorod and Pskov, and reached the shore of Lake Chud.

In 1242 in his battle known as the Battle on the Ice Prince Alexander Yaroslavich destroyed the force of the German knights. The Russian archers, despite the German onslaught trying to break through in the center, bravely confronted the attackers. Their bravery enabled them to encircle the knights from the flanks and eventually win.

Because the attackers got too overcrowded, the fragile April ice cracked which further contributed to the sense of panic, the Germans faltered and started to flee. This resulted in complete German annihilation. The Russian pursued the Germans for a whopping 7 versts (some 7,468 kilometers). Alexander demonstrated the fortitude of the Russian force. The victory brought about the signing of the peace treaty between Novgorod and the Livonian Order.

In honor of the victory of the Russian warriors led by Prince Alexander Nevsky over the German knights on Lake Chud, the date of April 18 is considered the Day of Military Glory of Russia.



**The Battle on the Ice**



# The battle of Kulikovo

the victory by Prince Dmitry Donskoy  
in the battle against the army  
of the Golden Horde

on September 8, 1380





**T**he Battle of Kulikovo that took place on September 8, 1380, became a turning point by demonstrating the might of the unified Russian force and Russia's capability to confront the Golden Horde. Prince Dmitry became the leader of the union of Russian principalities in their struggle against the Tartars.

The Moscow principality grew stronger, Russia scored many victories over the troops of the Horde. In 1380 the Horde's commander Mamai decided to launch an offensive against the army of Prince Dmitry to defeat his forces once and for all. Dmitry decided not to sit and wait but rather advanced his forces towards the enemy. The combined marching force included not only the Moscow Prince's regiments but also the units from Vladimir, Yaroslavl, Rostov, Belozersk, Pskov, Smolensk, and many others. Russia rose with a view to putting an end, once and for all, to dependence on the Horde. The Russian troops crossed the Don River and burned the bridges behind them so that none of those faint of heart would even entertain the idea of retreat.

On September 8, 1380, when the armies finally clashed it became clear that both sides would sustain heavy losses. According to an established tradition, the battle was to start with a joust between the two mighty warriors. The Tartar warrior on horseback by the name of Chelubey was confronted by the Russian monk by the name of Peresvet. It is believed that Peresvet, before his ordination as a monk, was a boyar and had considerable combat experience. The Russian venerated Orthodox saint Sergius of Radonezh blessed him and another monk by the name of Oslyabya to join the Russian force, he also blessed the Moscow Prince to fight against the Horde.

In that joust between Peresvet and Chelubey, both died almost instantly when they pierced each other with their spears. After that, the Tartars launched a frontal assault.

The turning point in the battle came when the Russian regiment deployed in an ambush struck the Tartars in the back after they broke through to the river. The Horde's cavalry was driven into the river and destroyed while the remaining Horde's forces lumped together and started to retreat in disarray. Mamai fled realizing that he no longer had any force to continue the battle. Some estimates put the numerical strength of the Russian troops in the battle between forty to seventy thousand while the estimate for the Horde's troops stood at ninety to one hundred fifty thousand.

The victory came at a high price. It is believed that every third Russian warrior was killed in the Kulikovo Field, many others were wounded. The Grand Prince Dmitry was found under the birch tree chopped in the battle, he was still alive although unconscious. Following the battle, Prince Dmitry was granted the title of Donsky in honor of the victory on the Don River. The victory by Dmitry Donskoy significantly weakened the Golden Horde what foreshadowed its subsequent disintegration.

In honor of the victory by the Russian regiments led by the Grand Prince Dmitry Donskoy over the Mongol-Tartar troops in the Kulikovo Battle, September 21 is considered the Day of Military Glory of Russia.



**Куликовская битва**

# **The Great Stand on the Ugra River**

**Russian victory on the Ugra River,  
Russia gains independence  
from the yoke of the Golden Horde, 1480**





**T**his event heralds the end of the Horde's domination over the policies of the Russian princes. It was under Prince Ivan III, also known as Ivan the Great, that Russia liberated itself from Horde's dependence. Interestingly, the victory over the Tartars was achieved not in a bloody battle but through a sophisticated operation more akin to a chess game.

In 1476 Ivan III, the Grand Prince of Moscow, ceased paying tribute to the Golden Horde, he even went further by tearing up the Khan's ordinance in front of the Tartar ambassadors meaning that Russia had no intention to pay tribute to the Horde anymore.

In the summer of 1480 Akhmat Khan led his troops through Lithuanian-dominated territories with a view to deploying his force by the Ugra River while awaiting for his Lithuanian allies. Here he confronted the Russian force, The Russians deployed their cannons and harquebuses in the positions which they had prepared in advance. The new type of firearms signified complete superiority over the Tartar archers i.e. following an engagement to capture the river crossing that lasted four days Akhmat Khan decided to wait until the river freezes.

At this time the Crimean Khan Mengli Giray, an ally of Moscow, invaded the Great Duchy of Lithuania what prevented Kazimir to come to Akhmat's rescue. On October 20 Prince Ivan III received reinforcements, the regiments of his brothers Boris and Andrey Bolshoi.

When the Ugra River finally froze, Akhmat Khan nevertheless did not venture to start the battle. He was confronted by the Russian army, which was in no way inferior. His Lithuanian ally Kazimir never came to his rescue. November set in and it turned out that the Horde's force on the Ugra had no forage to feed the horses. On November 11 Akhmat Khan turned his force around heading back into the prairie. On his way, out of frustration, he ransacked the lands of his allies. So ended the face-off on the Ugra River, a bloodless victory of the Russian army which was a milestone in Russia's struggle for independence. Soon afterward Akhmat Khan was murdered in the Horde. While Russia cast off the Horde's yoke once and for all and gained its independence.



**The Great Stand on the Ugra River**

# Battle of Molodi

**victory by Prince Mikhail Ivanovich Vorotynsky in the battle against the Crimean-Turkish force**

**June 30 – August 2, 1572**



June 29, 1572 was the starting date of the Battle of Molodi, whose outcome made a major impact on the course of Russian history.

The situation before the battle was very unfavorable. The main segment of the Russian army was bogged down in a fierce struggle in the West against Sweden and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. They were able to build only a small force out of the local population and oprichniks( life-guardsmen of the czar) led by Prince Mikhail Ivanovich Vorotynsky and his military commander Dmitry Ivanovich Khvorostin. They were joined by a seven thousand strong unit of German mercenaries and Cossacks from the Don River area.

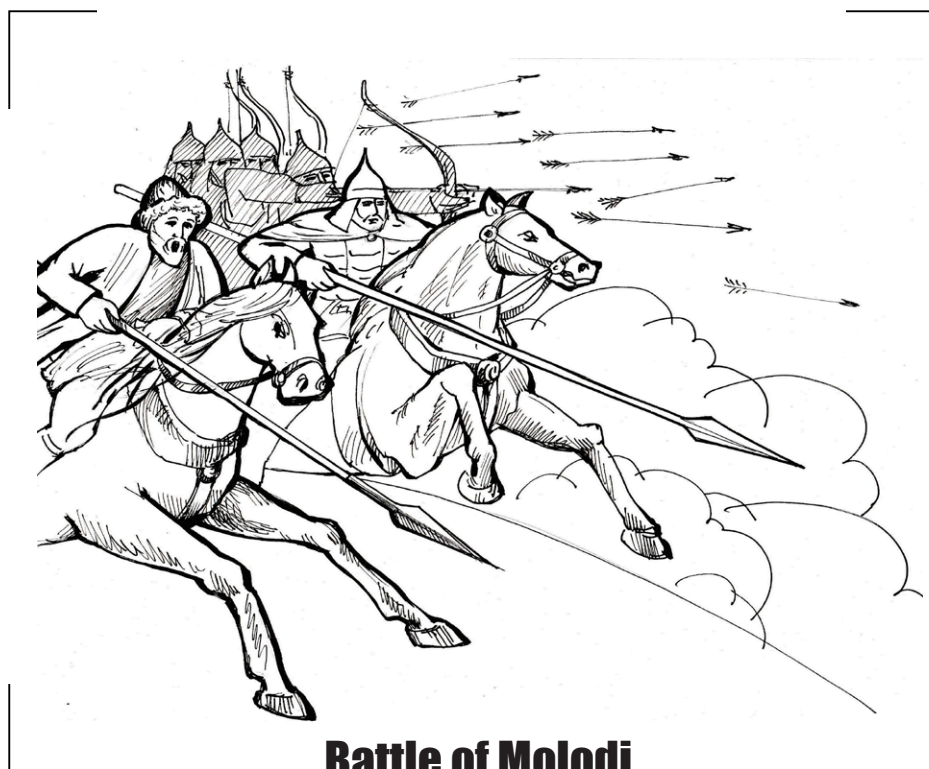
The total numerical strength of the Russian troops stood at 20,034, four times less than that of the enemy. The numerical strength of the force led by Crimean Khan Devlet Giray stood at some 80,000. Turkey added 7,000 more. The Khan secured Turkey's support for his campaign against Moscow by convincing the Turkish Sultan that to ensure Russia's fall they needed to deliver one final blow.

Prince Vorotynsky decided to employ a mobile fortress ( Gulyay-gorod in Russian, literally: «wandering town») which sheltered archers and gunners. The fortress was quickly erected by the warriors of the Russian army by the village of Molodi. The Crimean cavalry came under heavy fire coming from arquebuses and cannons fired by the fortress defenders and sustained heavy losses. The fierce fighting lasted for three days.

The German mercenary Heinrich von Staden, who fought alongside the Russian soldiers against the Tartars, did recall as follows:» If the Russians had not had a «wandering fortress», then the Crimean Khan would have defeated us, would have captured us and would have shipped us tied to Crimea». Not only did the Russian troops halt the advance of the enemy force which outnumbered it four times, but also put them to flight. The Crimean-Turkish force led by Devlet Giray was annihilated.

Following the debacle at Molodi only less than 15,000 Tartar horsemen were able to retreat to Crimea, while none of the Turkish janissaries survived. The Horde lost a major percentage of able-bodied males while the Tartar incursions ended for many years to come. Down the road, the Tartars never ventured to invade with major forces again.

The heroic victory of the Russian army in the Battle of Molodi, the last major battle of Russia against the «incursions from the prairie», was of tremendous geopolitical significance. Moscow was rescued from complete destruction while the Russian state – from defeat and loss of independence. Russia was able to preserve control over the entire Volga River basin which was a most important trade and navigation artery.



**Battle of Molodi**



# The Battle of Moscow

**победа князя Дмитрия Пожарского  
в сражении против поляков и войск  
литовского гетмана**

**1612**



**T**he Battle of Moscow became the decisive episode of the Time of Troubles. In 1611 the First People's Volunteer Corps besieged the Polish-Lithuanian garrison in Moscow. The volunteer corps comprised all types of people. They included noblemen who refused to pledge allegiance to Władysław, son of the Polish king, the Tartars who were in service of the Russian state, cossacks, and simply adventure seekers. The internal discord weakened the corps and as a result, they failed to capture the capital. However, their effort did play its part.

While the Poles and boyars were sitting locked up in the Kremlin, 1612 saw the emergence of the Second people's volunteer corps marching on Moscow from the city of Nizhny Novgorod.

Kuzma Minin, a man of simple origins who owned several butcher's shops, became the organizers of the people's volunteer corps in Nizhny Novgorod. He launched an appeal in the city's central square to his fellow citizens to liberate Russia from the enemies. After that Minin was elected the head of zemstvo (local council) and tasked to raise funds to finance the volunteer corps. Every citizen of Nizhny Novgorod was expected to donate one-third of his assets for the military cause.

Prince Dmitry Pozharsky, who participated in the First People's Volunteer Corps, was offered to take command of the force. At this time he was healing his wounds in his family estate near Nizhny Novgorod. Thus the corps had two leaders. Pozharsky was in charge of the military affairs while Minin was in charge of the logistics. The three thousand strong forces headed by Minin and Pozharsky hit the road moving up the Volga River taking control of the local towns and counties.

More and more warriors joined the force while on the march. The volunteers restored order clearing the neighborhoods from criminal gangs and bringing back a sense of normality to life. They would restore Russia bit by bit, town after town. It was exactly this effort that became its «weapon» i.e. «strategic advantage» that brought about victory over the invaders.

The decisive battle took place in Moscow itself. Minin and Pozharsky joined the remnants of the First People's Volunteer Corps, a 2,500 strong cossack detachment led by Prince Dmitry Trubetsky. Taken together they had a slightly greater than 10,000 strong forces versus the 3,000 strong Kremlin garrison and the 12,000 strong force of the Polish Hetman Jan Chodkiewicz .

The Battle of Moscow lasted for three days. For the first two days, the Russian troops were on the defensive only precluding Chodkiewicz from breaking through into the Kremlin while barring the garrison to make an incursion. On the third day, the Russian troops launched a frontal assault. Pozharsky proved himself to be a talented commander although he had never led such a large military force before. He even took charge of the noblemen's cavalry counter-attack.

Kuzma Minin also took part in the battle although he had no fighting experience whatsoever. Following Chodkiewicz's retreat, the fate of the garrison in the Kremlin became a foregone conclusion. Two months thereafter, the Poles, reduced by starvation to cannibalism, finally surrendered. Moscow was liberated. As the Polish chronicler stated, «The hope to take possession of the entire Moscow state was dashed irrevocably».

In honor of the liberation of Moscow Russia instituted the national holiday of the Day of National Unity which is celebrated on November 4. The members of the volunteer corp soon afterward elected a new czar, he was Mikhail Fyodorovich Romanov. In the course of the solemn coronation ceremony, Mikhail Pozharsky and Trubetsky were carrying the symbols of the czar's power, these were a scepter and an orb (a golden sphere topped with a cross). Prince Pozharsky became one of the top military commanders under the new czar while Kozma Minin was awarded the rank of a «Duma» nobleman (third level in the tier of hierarchy) and was appointed the chief tax collector of Moscow.



**The Battle of Moscow**

# The Battle of Poltava

the victory by the Russian troops led by Peter I over the Swedish army led by Charles XII

June 27, 1709





**J**une 27, 1709, saw the pitched battle of the Northern War near the city of Poltava between the 37,000 strong Swedish army and 60,000 strong Russian army. Interestingly, the cossacks of Little Russia fought in the battle on both sides, however, the majority of them alongside the Russians.

Prior to the battle Czar Peter I visited all his regiments and urged the soldiers to fight not for the czar but Russia. The Swedish king Charles XII also inspired his soldiers in advance of the battle: he vowed that the next day they will be feasting in the rich Russian supply train.

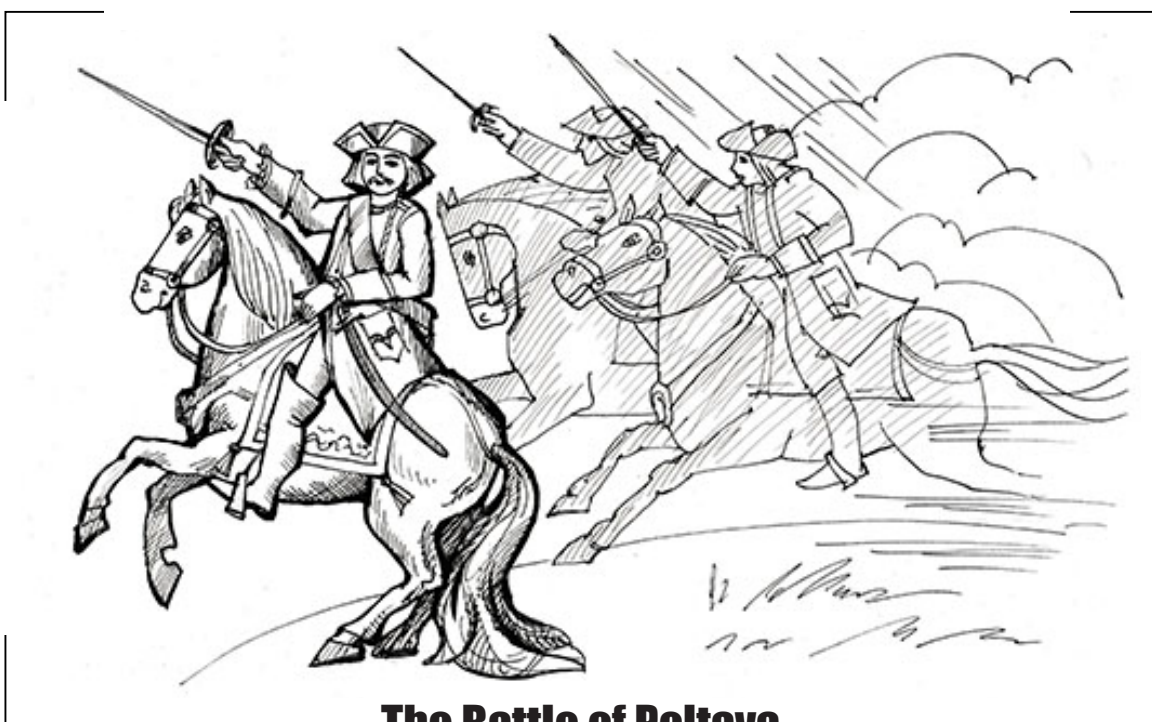
The total casualty figure for Charles XII stood at 8,000. Three more thousand were captured. The others, forced to flee, drove themselves into the trap between the rivers of Dnieper and Vorskla by Pierievolochna. Only the Swedish king and several of his associates were able to cross to the other side of Dnieper. They were able to escape to the Ottoman Empire. 16,000 demoralized Swedish soldiers abandoned by their king surrendered. Ironically, the feast that was promised by Charles XII did take place.

The captured Swedish generals were invited to the celebratory tent where Peter I referred to them as “my teachers in the field of warfare” and raised a glass to their health. The Russian monarch stated, without an inkling of irony, “Yesterday, my brother King Charles invited you to dine in my tent, however, today he failed to show up thus never kept his word, although I was looking forward to meeting him. However, once his Majesty never cared to show up, I invite you to pay a visit to my tent”

The captured Swedish soldiers were extended an invitation to serve in the Russian army on the condition that they will forever stay in Russia. Several thousand did consent. Two infantry regiments were put together out of them which were deployed on the Russian Southern frontiers to rule out the chance that they might fight their fellow countrymen in the future. Down the road this tradition became a regular occurrence i.e. following several other major battles the Swedish POWs would become Russian dragoons, sailors, some even became cossacks.

Following the Battle of Poltava the Swedish armed forces were seriously undermined. Its army was knocked out from the list of the best in the world. Russia’s superiority became obvious. Denmark and Poland resumed their membership in the Northern Union. The Swedish domination of the Baltic Sea was finished.

In honor of the victory by the Russian army led by Peter I over the Swedes in the Battle of Poltava July 10 is considered the Day of Russian Military Glory.



**The Battle of Poltava**

# **The Battle of Chesma**

**the victory of the Russian fleet led  
by Count Alexey Orlov over the naval  
vessels of the Turkish fleet**

**July 5 through 7, 1770**



**T**he Battle of Chesma is one of the key events in the war between the Russian and Ottoman Empires. The decisive naval battle in the Chesma Bay took place at the peak of the 1768–1774 Russo-Turkish War. The Battle of Chesma is considered one of the most well-known in the history of the sailing navy. It started July 5 and ended July 7 and resulted in catastrophic losses for the Turkish fleet.

Even though the balance of forces was 30 to 73( not in favor of the Russian fleet) the expert leadership of Count Grigory Orlov and the bravery of our sailors enabled the Russians to gain strategic superiority in the battle.

Operating under the general command of Count Alexey Orlov, the two Russian squadrons led by Rear Admiral Grigory Spiridonov and Rear Admiral John Elphinstone locked up the superior Turkish fleet in the Bay burning it the next day almost entirely.

The operation was conducted as follows. The four auxiliary ships were converted into fireboats. Their holds were filled with explosive and flammable materials consisting of gun powder, tarp, sawdust, etc. All that mix was sprayed with turpentine for better flammability. The fireboats came closer to the enemy ships, the Turks were late to notice the threat so two of the four ships were destroyed. One of the fireboats got hooked up to the Turkish battleship, after that the crew set the ship on fire and fled on the lifeboats. Both ships exploded and the ensuing fire on them spread to the neighboring ship because the ship was too crowded to each other. This triggered a chain reaction when the ships started exploding one after another.

At three in the morning, the Chesma Bay looked like the crater of a huge active volcano. The Turkish ships were floating and exploding one by one. The Bay was lit by the lurid red glow. The debris of the burnt ships was floating everywhere. The explosions stopped only after 8 am on July 7, 1770. Out of twenty-two ships, only one survived and it was captured by the Russian sailors the next morning. The Ottoman Empire lost the majority of its naval ships in a single battle. The total Turkish casualties stood at 11,000.

Chesma heralded the triumph of the Russian navy, it ensured the blockade of the Dardanelles thus seriously restricting Turkish supply roots in the Aegean Sea. In honor of the battle, they coined a medal featuring the scene of destruction of the Turkish fleet. Count Orlov was awarded the Order of St. George First Class and was bestowed the honorific title of Chesmensky added to his name.



**The Battle of Chesma**

# The Battle of Kozludzha

**the victory of the Russian forces led by the military commander Alexander Suvorov over the troops of the Ottoman empire**

**June 9(20), 1774**

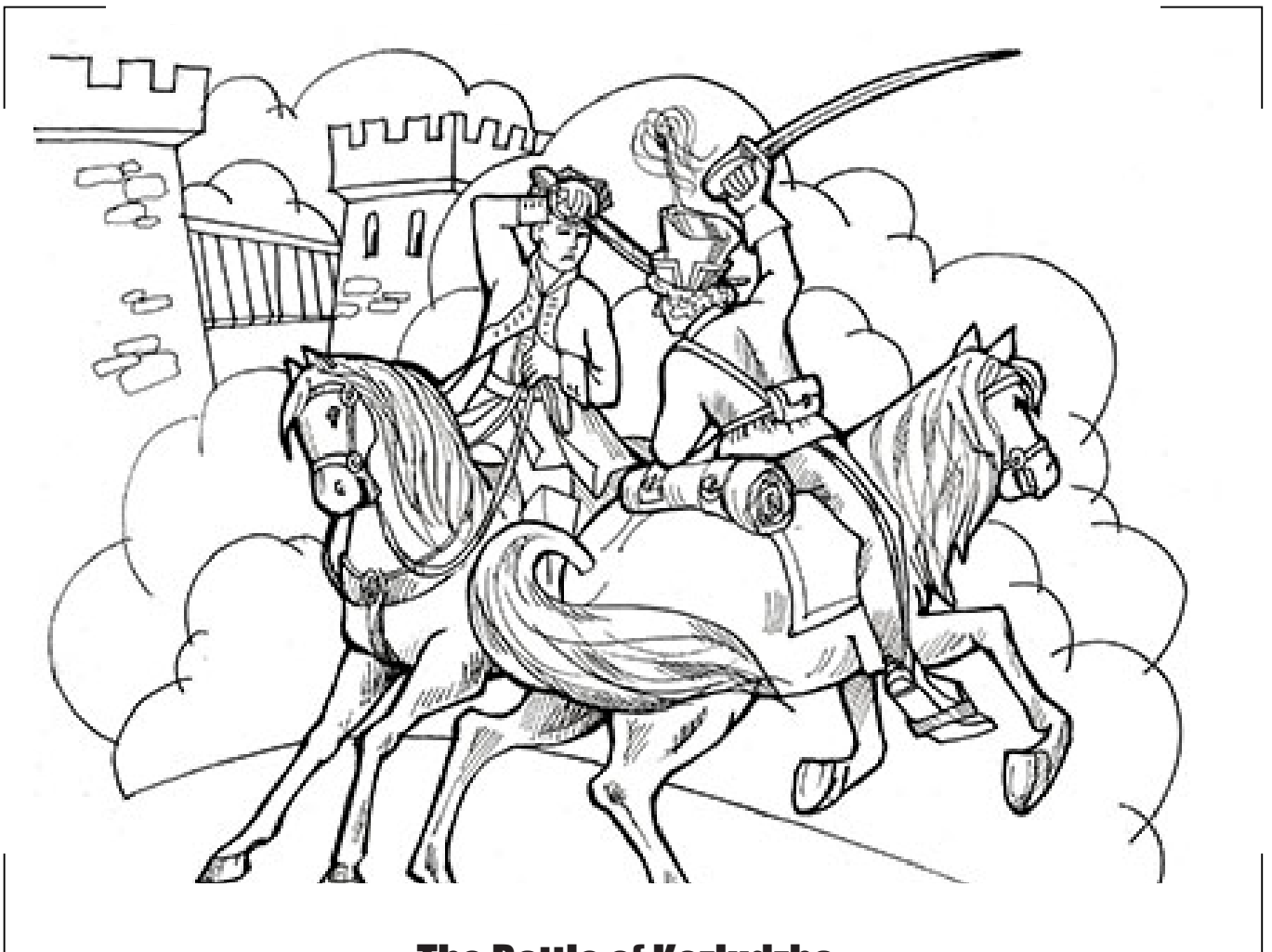


**In** the course of the Russo-Turkish war of 1768 through 1774 Russian scored yet the most important victory. The Russian army led by Commanders Alexander Suvorov and Mikhail Kamensky close to the city of Kozludzha( currently the city of Suvorovo in Bulgaria) was able to score a victory despite the Turks outnumbering the Russians 40,000 versus 24,000. Alexander Suvorov was able to eject the Turks from the hill and put them to flight, he did not even have to launch a bayonet charge.

The Russian casualties stood at 75 dead and 134 wounded while the Turkish losses stood at 500 killed, 100 captured and an unidentified number of wounded, a large number of Turkish troops were dispersed. The Russian trophies also included 29 canons and various properties.

The Battle of Kozludzha in large measure predetermined the outcome of the Russo-Turkish War, it was the very blow that undermined the morale of the Turkish high command to continue the war and forced the Ottoman Empire into signing a peace treaty. In 1774 Russia signed the favorable Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca with Turkey. Turkey lost its dominance over the Black Sea and was compelled to agree to Crimea's autonomy.

The city of Kozludzha was renamed Suvorovo in honor of Suvorov.



**The Battle of Kozludzha**



# The capture of Izmail

**the victory by the Russian forces led by commander Alexander Suvorov during the siege of the Turkish fortress of Izmail**

**December 11, 1790**



**D**ecember 11, 1790, the Russian troops led by Alexander Vasilyevich Suvorov took by storm the Turkish fortress of Izmail so far considered impregnable.

Not long before the war, Izmail was turned into a mighty fortress with the help of French and German engineers. The fortress, defended by a large garrison withstood two attempts of the siege without much trouble.

Suvorov took command of the troops only eight days before the final assault. He did ride on horseback around the Izmail on all sides and arrived at a depressing conclusion i.e. the fortress had no vulnerabilities. What was not surprising for it was built to the design of the best French and German engineers. The height of its rampart in some points exceeded 12 meters, while the depth of the moat was 10 meters. The numerical strength of the garrison stood at 35,000 Turkish and Tartar soldiers who wielded 260 canons.

Suvorov had 31,000 soldiers under his command. Therefore the remaining time was dedicated to training his servicemen. Suvorov's troops spent six days in training storming the mock-up of Izmail's walls specially built in the Russian camp for the purpose. They would quickly fill the moat with bunches of firewood, climb the rampart, put up the ladder and climb the walls while drilling the hand-to-hand combat techniques on the dummies. The defenders of the fortress were given a chance to save their lives i.e, they were presented with an ultimatum to surrender. However, the Turks jeered by saying that « the Danube would rather start flowing in a reverse direction and the skies would crash to the ground rather than Izmail would fall».

24 hours before the assault the Russians started an artillery barrage of the city from all their artillery pieces. This was a sign of preparation for the assault. The Russian troops moved out of its location of deployment and formed three units with three columns in each.

The general assault began two hours before the dawn broke. The fortress was attacked from all sides at once. By eight in the morning, the ramparts were already seized but the fierce fight continued on the walls and streets of the city for almost the entire day. The Russian forces sustained heavy losses with four thousand men killed and some six thousand wounded. However, the Turkish casualties heavily outnumbered the Russian ones i.e. 26,000 defenders were killed, tens of thousands were captured – almost all of them were wounded. The impregnable fortress fell.

When examining the captured fortress the winners were in disbelief that they were able to climb the ramparts and impregnable walls under a hail of bullets and case-shot. Suvorov later admitted, «You would venture an assault on such a fortress only once in a lifetime.»

The Turks realized that further resistance would be a futile exercise and agreed to sign the Peace Treaty of Jassy. They repudiated their claims to the Crimea and its protectorate over Georgia while ceding some areas of the Black Sea coast. The borderline between the Russian and Ottoman Empires got shifted to the Dniester River. Izmail had to be ceded back to Turkey.

In honor of the capture of Izmail the poets Derzhavin and Kozlovsky wrote a song «Let the Sound of Victory !Roar!». Until 1816 it remained the unofficial anthem of the Empire.

In honor of the capture of Izmail by the Russian forces led by Commander Alexander Suvorov the day of December 24 is considered the Day of Military Glory of Russia.



**The capture of Izmail**

# The naval battle by the Tendra Cape

the victory by the Russian fleet led by admiral Fyodor Ushakov over the ships of the Turkish fleet

August 28 through 29 ( September 8 through 9), 1790





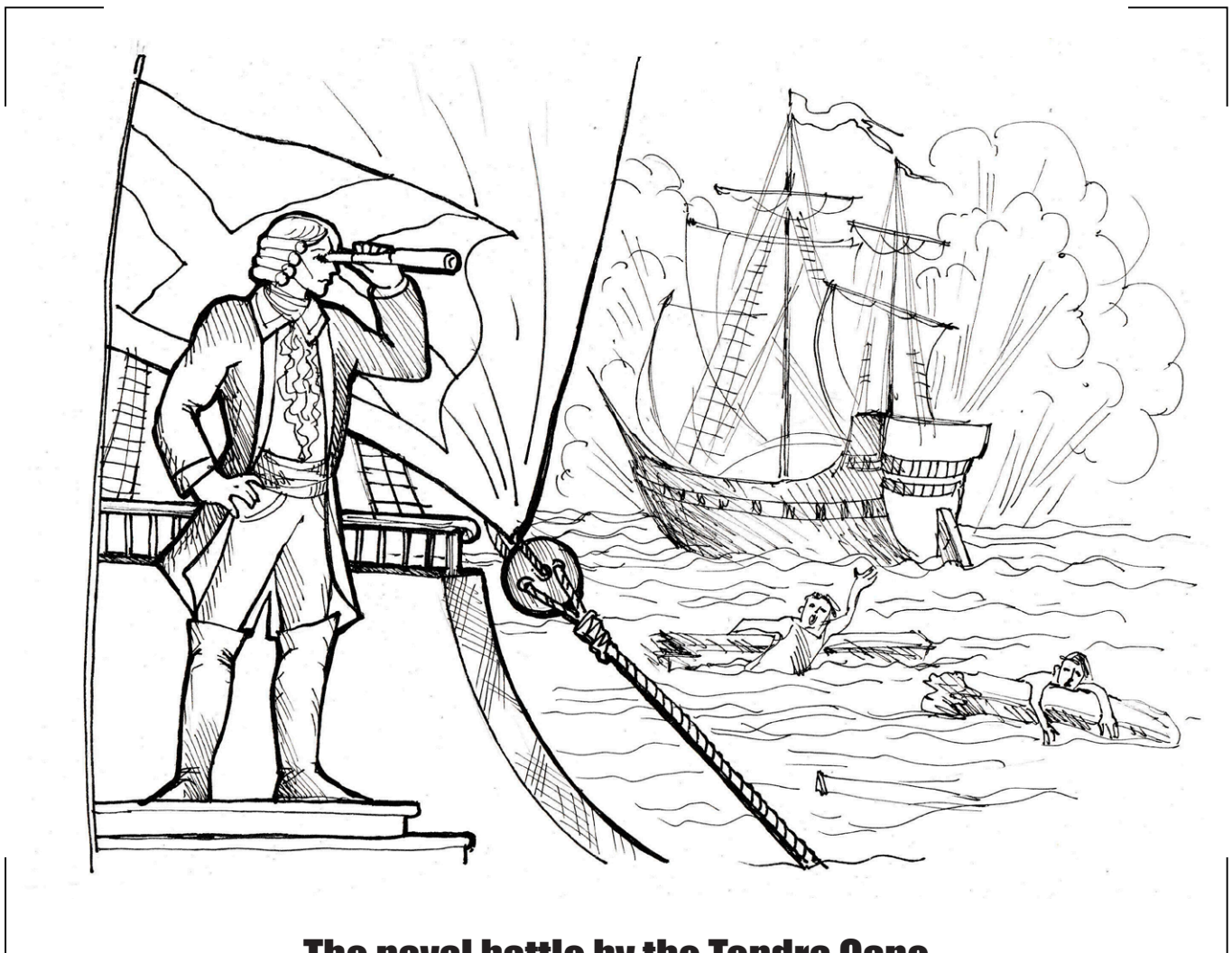
**H**ussein Pasha, the commander of the Turkish naval squadron, was instrumental in convincing the Sultan of an easy victory over the Russian fleet, therefore, advancing the main naval forces to the Tendra Cape in August 1790 (not very far from today's city of Odessa). However, the Turkish fleet which stood at an anchor was captured by surprise by the rapid advance of the Russian squadron led by Fyodor Ushakov. Despite being outnumbered by 45 to 37 ships respectively the Turkish fleet tried to flee. However, by then the Russian ships already attacked the front line of the Turks.

Ushakov was able to knock out all the Turkish flagships and thus demoralized the remainder of the Turkish squadron. At the same time, the Russian fleet did not lose a single ship.

The Russian casualty figure stood at only 46 dead and wounded while the Turks lost some 6,000 men. The report to the Sultan from the Turkish flagships stated that the number of killed and wounded «reaches» upward to 5,500.

The Russian Black Sea fleet at Tendra scored an ultimate victory, it made a major contribution to the general outcome of the war and enabled to clear of the Northwestern part of the Black Sea from the enemy ships. As a result, aided by the Russian flotilla which entered the Danube, the Russian troops seized the fortresses of Kiliya, Tulcea, and Isakchi, and finally Izmail. Admiral Ushakov became one of the first Russian admirals recognized in Europe who introduced innovations in the maneuver tactics of naval warfare which proved successful in the naval campaigns. It led to the elimination of the Turkish domination over the Black Sea and established Russia's domination on its coast.

In honor of the victory of the Russian squadron led by Fyodor Ushakov over the Turkish squadron by Tendra Cape, September 11 is considered the Day of Russian Military Glory.



**The naval battle by the Tendra Cape**

# The Battle of Borodino

**the victory by the Russian troops led by Commander Mikhail Kutuzov over the forces of the French army led by Napoleon**

**August 26 (September 7) 1812**



**W**hen making preparations for the pitched battle, Kutuzov was meticulously selecting the right kind of a battlefield. He examined several sites but would find fault with each of them. One field was too flat and the enemy could far too easily envelop him on the flanks. The other one was too heavily forested which would impede the maneuvers.

Finally, the commander found what he was looking for i.e. the field by the village of Borodino 120 kilometers away from Moscow. The Eastern section of the Borodino field was dominated by an upland meaning that the French would have to attack up the hill. The flanks were shielded by the forests and marshes which impeded the outflanking maneuver. The river with a bluff served a serious obstacle. He would be able to hide substantial reserves in the rear of the field.

August 26, 1812, the battle near the village of Borodino 120 kilometers near Moscow saw the clash between the French and Russian armies. The regular French troops led by Napoleon stood at around 135,000 while the Russian army led by Mikhail Kutuzov with due account of the cosacks and the volunteer corps who joined them stood at about 120,000. Kutuzov tried to make up for this relative disparity in the numerical strength of manpower by the preponderance in the Russian artillery. He had more cannons and they were also superior in caliber than the French ones. The rugged terrain enabled the movement of the reserves unnoticed while the artillery was deployed in the uplands.

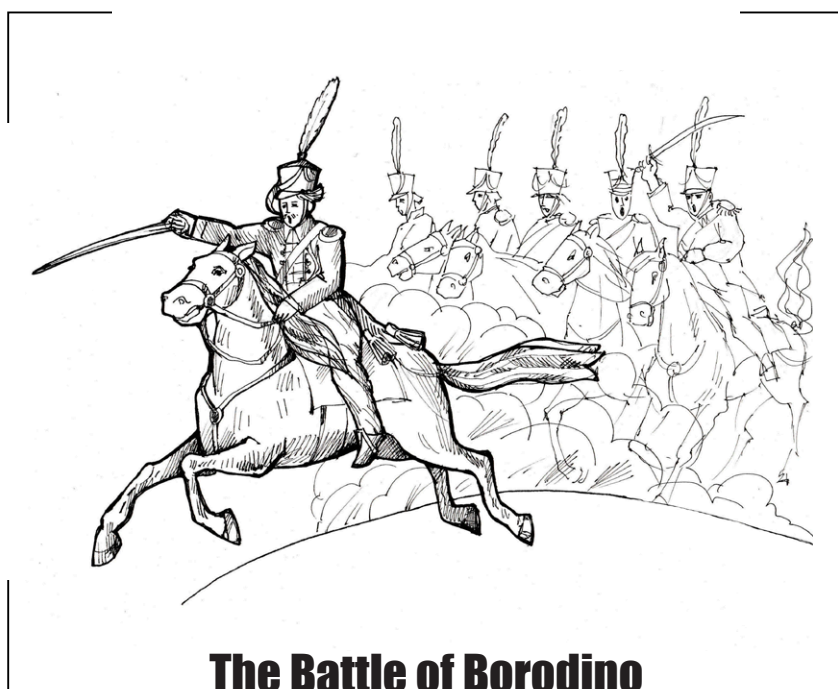
August 24 Napoleon advanced on the Shevardinsky redoubt which was positioned close to the village of the same, three versts before the Borodino field.

The Battle of Borodino began August 26( September 7), one day after the engagement at the Shevardinsky Redoubt, and the most grandiose battle in the war of 1812. The battle resulted in a staggering level of casualties on both sides i.e the French lost between 30,000 to 45,000 while the Russians 44,000 to 45,000 killed and wounded. The historians failed to calculate the close casualty figure for the French because the records of the «Grande Armee» perished during Napoleon's retreat from Russia. The Battle of Borodino was referred to as «the battle of the generals». The Russian casualty figure among the generals stood at four killed and twenty-three wounded; the French lost twelve generals killed and thirty-eight wounded. Kutuzov counted on replenishing the losses with new reinforcements. Napoleon was deprived of such luxury. The casualty figure for horses was also staggering. The fact adversely affected the French capability for further action.

Although Kutuzov, following the Battle, ordered to withdraw to Moscow, he proclaimed the Russian army victorious in the battle in his report to Alexander I. That is the view shared by many Russian historians.

French historians view the Battle of Borodino differently. In their opinion, the Napoleonic troops were victorious in the «Battle by the Moskva River». Napoleon himself, pondering the outcome of the battle, stated: «The French showed themselves to be worthy of a victory, while the Russian earned the glory of the right to be invincible».

In honor of the Battle of Borodino by the Russian army led Commander Mikhail Kutuzov against the French army, the day of September 8 is considered the Day of Military Glory of Russia.

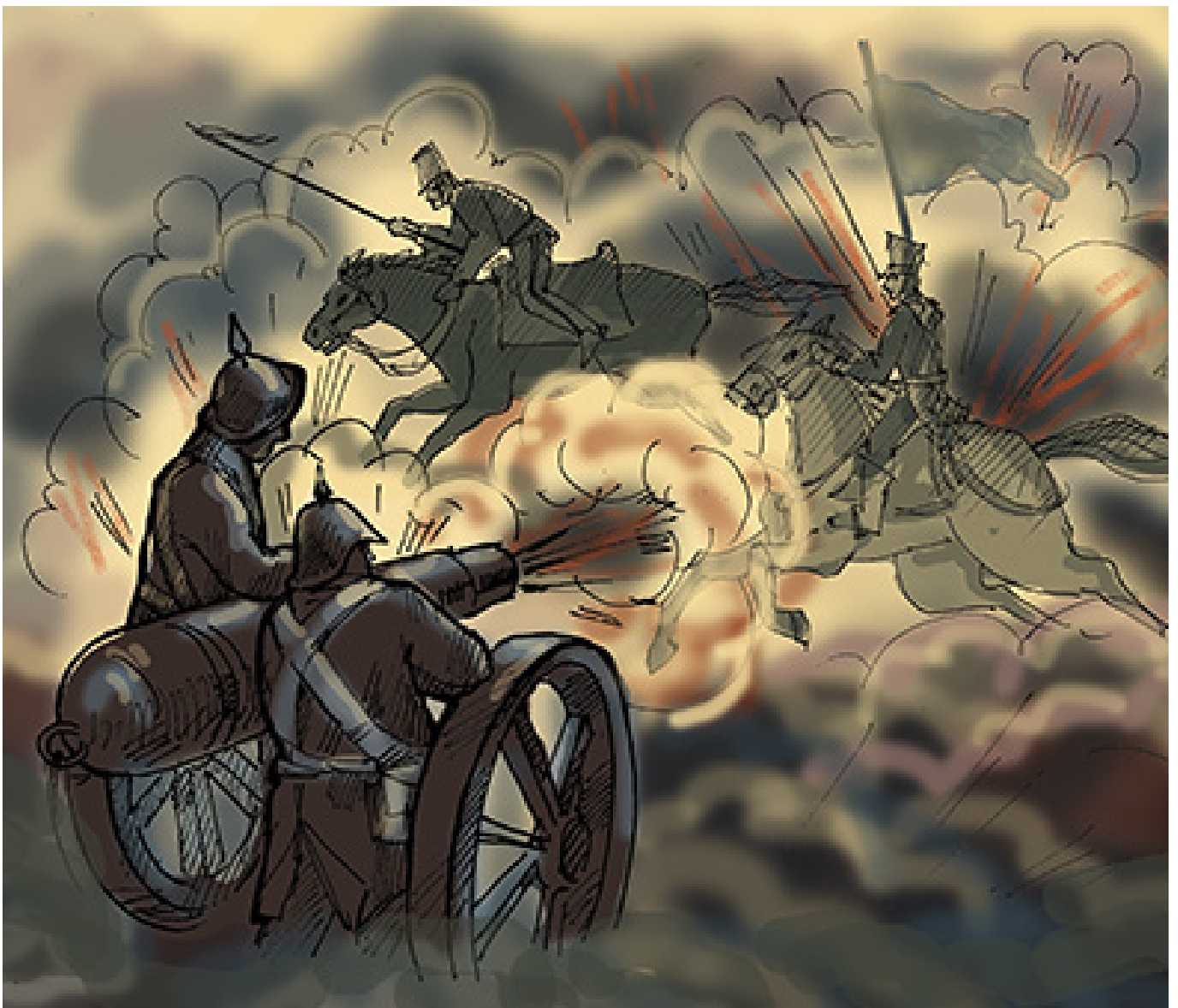


**The Battle of Borodino**

# **The Battle of Elisabethpol**

**victory by the Russian troops under  
command of Ivan Paskevich  
over the Persian army**

**September 13, 1826**





One of the key episodes of the Russo-Persian War of 1826 – 1828 was the battle near Elisabethpol (currently the Azeri city of Ganja). The victory scored then by the Russian troops under command of Ivan Paskevich over the Persian army led by Abbas Mirza, became the paragon of generalship.

On September 13, 1826 Field-Marshal Paskevich who commanded 10,000 strong Russian troops of infantry and cavalry, routed the 35,000 strong Persian army which also outnumbered the Russian force two-fold in the number of artillery pieces. Paskevich was able to take advantage of the Persian disarray who ended up in the ravine to deliver a counter-strike. Despite being outnumbered (35,000 vs. 10,000), the Russian regiments started to pressure Abbas Mirza's army along the entire front. The casualties of the Russian force stood at 46 killed and 249 wounded, the Persians lost 2,000 killed and some 1,100 captured.

Commander Ivan Paskevich was awarded a golden sword decorated with diamonds carrying the inscription "For the Persian Defeat near Elisabethpol".



## The Battle of Elisabethpol

# **“The Attack of the Dead Men” during the defense of the Osowiec Fortress**

**the victory of the Russian soldiers led by the second lieutenant Vladimir Kotlinsky, the commander of the 13th company of the Zemlyansky regiment over the German infantrymen**

**July 24( August 6) 1915**



**T**he Hague Convention on the laws and customs of war outlawed the projectiles with poisonous charges. However, Germany decided to circumvent the prohibition. The poisonous gas was used not in the shells but cylinders. They delivered hundreds of cylinders of chlorine to the positions near the Belgian city of Ypres. After catching an opportune moment when the wind would blow in the direction of the enemy the German soldiers started to spray the gas. A yellow and green cloud would slowly start floating in the direction of the British positions with the German infantry launching an assault behind it wearing gauze masks. The British soldiers wearing no protective gear from the chemical weapons would drop dead. Altogether 15,000 men were affected by the deadly gas with 5,000 being killed.

Soon afterward, the chemical weapons would be used by all the warring parties. In the summer of 1915, the Russian garrison of the Osowiec fortress came under poison gas attack. Chlorine made the tree leaves shrivel and fall while the grass turned black. According to the German military, the gas achieved the desired effect. Following the attack, the Germans launched a mopping up operation by an assault team never expecting any resistance.

However, the Russian machine gunners dying of the poison gas opened fire on the team. After that, the Russian fortress artillery started shelling the Germans and at the same time, a handful of Russian soldiers launched an attack. The soldiers with signs of chemical burns on their hands and faces, wrapped in rugs, were able to repulse the enemies. The contemporaries named the engagement «the attack of the dead men».

When the Russian chemist Nikolay Zelinsky invented a gas mask that made it possible to drastically limit the number of casualties from the effect of chemical weapons. The scientist did not apply for a patent for his invention so that it could be used in other countries. Zelinsky believed that it would be unethical on his part to make money from the death and suffering of the people.

Currently, the use of chemical weapons in any form is banned by international conventions.



**«The Attack of the Dead Men» during the defense of the Osowiec Fortress**



# The Brusilov Offensive

the offensive operation of the Southwest Front led by General Alexey Brusilov, which substantially undermined the military might of the Austro-Hungarian Empire

May 22( June 4) through 7(20) September, 1916





**E**ven the most formidable defenses could be breached by concentrating the overwhelming preponderance of forces in artillery and manpower. However, the problem is that the enemy would promptly bring in the reserves to repulse the attack. Therefore, they devised a ruse of how to disguise the direction of the main strike by striking the defenses in several locations at the same time. In that case, the enemy would be at a loss at what location you deliver the main blow. Such tactics were successfully employed in the Brusilov Offensive in the summer of 1916. The operation was named after one of its masterminds, General Alexey Brusilov, the commander of the Southwestern Front.

Following a two-hour artillery barrage that neutralized the pillboxes and made breaches in the barbed wired defense lines, the Russian launched an offensive against the Austro-Hungarian positions and broke through the frontline in thirteen locations. On the very first day of the offensive, more than 40,000 enemy soldiers were captured, by day 3 – more than 70,000. The Russian troops were advancing along the entire 400-kilometer wide front. Throughout the offensive, the Austro-Hungarian army lost almost 420,000 captured men alone.

To send reinforcements to the allies, the Germans had to deplete the Western Front and halt their offensive on the French. The Russian command failed to build on the success of the offensive therefore, with German help, the Austrians succeeded in stabilizing the frontline. However, the effect the operation produced was enormous. Romania decided to side with the Entente powers realizing that the war was entering the final stage.



**The Brusilov Offensive**

# The Battle of Moscow

**a victory by the Russian troops outside of Moscow, drove the enemy forces away from Moscow by about 100 to 250 kilometers. For the first time, the enemy was defeated and in retreat**

**1941 through 1942**



**T**he Battle of Moscow became the first major success of the Red Army. In the course of the defensive stage of the battle from October through December of 1941, the Soviet Command was able to impose on the enemy the war of attrition. Wehrmacht would commit the last reserves believing that it was about to win and the tank formations would venture into a breakthrough to surround the capital of Russia. However, in the end, the German units faltered. Many units lost half of their regular staffing. The disabled vehicles were required to repair and replace. The morale of the servicemen was broken for the Germans no longer believed in the expeditious victorious march Eastward.

At the same time, the Soviet troops were able to maintain considerable reserves. When, according to the intelligence reports, it became evident that Japan made its final choice in favor of the war not against the USSR but rather against the United States and Great Britain in the Pacific, the Soviet Union was able to relocate ten more fresh divisions, one thousand tanks and one thousand planes from the Far East.

December 5 and 6, 1941 the Soviet troops of the three fronts under the command of Ivan Konev, Georgy Zhukov, and Semyon Timoshenko launched a counter-offensive at the same time. The numerical strength of the Russian force was outnumbered by the Army Group Center by 1,2 million men versus 1,5 million men. However, the Russian side had fresh units, well equipped with weaponry and hardware, each serviceman had a full set of winter wear.

The use of cavalry proved a huge success. Despite the widely held view both in the Russian and European armies, that cavalry as a branch of the armed forces became obsolete and there was no room for it in the age of engines, the role of the Soviet cavalymen in the battle for Moscow was enormous. The cavalry units in the rugged terrain, slush, deep snow were capable to effectively fight not only Wehrmacht's infantry but also mechanized units. The cavalry did not need the supply of fuel without which the vehicles were immobile. Forage could be secured locally. The main goal was to learn how to use cavalymen in a surprise attack against the enemy and then pushing the advance deep into the rear of the enemy's defenses. The horses also played a major role as a means of transportation to pull ordnance, cases of shells, and other military hardware.

The outcome was impressive. The surprise strike by the Red Army threw back the Germans away from Moscow by 100 to 250 kilometers. The immediate danger to the capital which was the most important industrial and transportation hub was eliminated. Apart from that, the victory for Moscow had an enormous effect on the soldiers' morale. For the first time in the war, the enemy was defeated and rolled back tens and hundreds of kilometers. The German general Gunther Blumentritt recalled:»Now the German political leadership needs to realize that the days of a blitzkrieg are over. We are confronted by the kind of an army which, with due account of its fighting capabilities, is superior all to all other armies which we had ever fought before».

Yes, the year 1941 was extremely hard. A major part of our country was occupied, the frontline advanced closely to Moscow and Leningrad. The Soviet citizens had constantly received the message that the Red Army was invincible. It was bitter and scary to watch how the Red Army was retreating and bleeding, how it was unable to defend its home towns from the occupiers. However, the people were able to withstand the onslaught. The blitzkrieg plans crushed against their indomitable courage, heroism at the frontline, hard work of civilians in the rear.

On the very first day of the war Viacheslav Molotov, the deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers, in his radio address to the nation coined a phrase: «Our cause is just, the enemy will be defeated, victory will be ours». From this time on to Victory Day, this phrase was repeated time and again by the Soviet leaders and ordinary people, fighters, and generals. This is exactly what indeed finally happened.

In honor of the anniversary of the Soviet counter-offensive against the German fascist forces in the battle of Moscow, the day of December 5 is considered the Day of Military Glory of Russia.

# The Battle of Stalingrad

one of the most important battles,  
the operation to encircle the German force  
which was advancing towards Stalingrad

1942–1943





**T**he defense of Stalingrad became one of the fiercest battles of the war. By the end of street fighting which lasted from August through November, the Soviet troops were able to cling to only three isolated footholds on the right bank of the Volga River. The 62nd division defending the city led by General Vasily Chuikov had only 500 to 700 men left instead of the original 10,000 but the Germans failed to drive them into the river. At the same time, beginning September the Soviet high command started preparations for a powerful offensive codenamed «Uranus» to encircle the German force which was advancing on Stalingrad.

The offensive began in the morning of November 19, 1942, while by the evening of the 23rd the Soviet tank corps did seal the ring.

November 19, 1942, the Soviet troops launched an offensive north of Stalingrad, while the next they did the same South of the city. November 23 the shock armored spearheads of the Soviet troops did finally merge by the city of Kalach what heralded the encirclement of the enemy's Stalingrad force. In the course of the offensive, five Rumanian divisions were either routed or captured, however, the chief «catch» proved to be far greater i.e. the Stalingrad Cauldron engulfed the entire Sixth German Army and part of the Fourth Tank Army, a total of 330,000 enemy soldiers and officers. This became the turning point of the war.

In December of 1942, the German high command attempted to relieve the encircled force, however, the Soviet troops repulsed their offensive. The fighting around Stalingrad lasted until February 2, 1943. Some 90,000 enemy soldiers and officers surrendered including twenty-four generals, the captured servicemen were, for the most part, wounded, frostbitten, starving, and almost devoid of any signs of a human being.

The Soviet trophies included 5,762 artillery pieces, 1,312 mortars, 12,701 machine guns, 156,987 rifles, 10,722 assault rifles, 744 airplanes, 166 tanks, 261 armored personnel carriers, 80,438 vehicles, 10,679 motorcycles, 240 tractors, 571 two trucks, 3 armored trains, and other military hardware.

In honor of the defeat of the German fascist forces by the Soviet forces in the Battle of Stalingrad the day of February 2 is considered the Day of Military Glory of Russia.



**The Battle of Stalingrad**

# The Battle of the Kursk Bulge

one of the greatest in the history of the Great Patriotic War, signified a turning point in the course of the warfare. Following the battle, the strategic initiative was fully taken over by the Soviet high command

July 5 through August 23, 1943



**T**he Battle of the Kursk Bulge is one of the greatest in the history of the Great Patriotic War which heralded the turning point in warfare. Following the battle, the strategic initiative was completely taken over by the Soviet high command. By building the momentum gained at Stalingrad, the Soviet troops launched a wide-scale offensive on the front stretching from the city of Voronezh to the Black Sea. At the same time in January 1943, the siege of Leningrad was lifted.

Only by the spring of 1943 Wehrmacht succeeded in halting the Soviet advance in the Ukraine. Whereas the units of the Red Army regained the cities of Kharkov and Kursk and the Russian vanguard units of the Southwestern Front were already fighting in the suburbs of the city of Zaporozhye, at the same time the German forces, by relocating the reserves from other sections of the front, by bringing in troops from Western Europe and actively maneuvering mechanized units, launched a counter-offensive and re-captured Kharkov. As a result, the frontline on the Southern flank assumed a distinctive shape which subsequently became known as the Kursk Bulge. It was here that the German high command decided to deliver a crushing blow to the Soviet troops. The design was to deliver strikes at the base of the bulge thereby encircling two Soviet fronts at the same time.

The German high command was counting on scoring a successful operation through wide-scale deployment, among other things, of the brand new types of military hardware. It is in the Battle of Kursk that the Germans used, for the first time, the brand new heavy «Tiger» and «Panther» tanks and «Ferdinand» self-propelled artillery guns.

The German designers, although very belatedly, were able to design the type of military vehicles which were significantly superior to the Russian KV( named after Kliment Voroshilov, the former minister of defense) and T-34 tanks in firepower and armor. Hitler time and again postponed the offensive waiting for the production and delivery of the new vehicles. The Germans built a formidable force near Kursk for the summer offensive which included 900,000 servicemen, 2,700 tanks, 10,000 artillery pieces, more than 2,000 aircraft. The Germans assembled 70% of all the available tank divisions on the Kursk Bulge.

The Soviet high command was aware of the enemy's plans and deliberately decided to cede the strategic initiative to the enemy. The idea was to wear down the Wehrmacht's shock divisions in the defensive positions which had been prepared in advance and then launch a counter-offensive. Let's face it, the plan did succeed.

Although not everything proceeded as planned i.e. in the Southern face of the Bulge the German tank spearheads were close to breaking through the defense lines, however, overall the Soviet operation was proceeding according to the original design. July 12, 1943, saw one of the grandest tank battles in the world near the Prokhorovka train station which involved over 1,200 armored vehicles on both sides.

In close combat, the Russian tank fighters sustained major losses. It was indeed «a hand-to-hand tank combat». The Soviet troops lost 500 out of 800 tanks in the battle which was 60% of the tanks available. The Germans lost 300 out of 400 tanks(75%). For them, it was a catastrophe. By launching an assault Wehrmacht recklessly wasted the most combat-ready units, lost the best tank crews and ace pilots.

Indeed, the Red Army sustained staggering losses in the battle which stood at 900,000 dead and wounded vs. 500,000 Germans. Nevertheless, this was a victory, although it was gained at a very high cost. The Soviet counter-offensive threw back the enemy, their offensive potential was exhausted. On August 5 our army liberated the cities of Orel and Belgorod, and then the city of Kharkov less than three weeks thereafter.

More than 100,000 fighters in the Kursk Bulge were awarded orders and medals, more than 180 were bestowed the title of the Hero of the Soviet Union. In honor of the victory in the Battle of Kursk on August 5, 1943, Moscow saw the victory salute of the twelve salvos fired from 120 cannons.

In the old times when the Russian troops scored victories, the churches would ring the church bells. Following the liberation of the cities of Orel and Belgorod, a tradition was launched to stage salutes to mark significant successes at the front. In honor of the anniversary of the defeat of the German fascist forces at the hands of the Soviet troops in the Battle of Kursk, August 23 is considered the Day of Military Glory of Russia.

# The Capture of Berlin

**the Berlin Offensive by the Russian troops was comparable in magnitude to the defeat of the encircled German force outside Stalingrad. It resulted in the unconditional surrender of Germany**

**1945**





**F**ollowing the Battle of Kursk the initiative was completely taken over by the Red Army. The German General Heinz Guderian who in Germany was considered the mastermind of the tactics of deep tank strikes into the enemy heartland, once commented sorrowfully that from then on only the Soviet troops were on the offensive and «there was no longer any more respite on the Eastern front».

On the night of April 16, the grandiose Berlin offensive operation got underway which was, in the opinion of many historians, constitutes the largest battle in world history. More than 400 artillery pieces and Katusha multiple rocket launchers were concentrated on each kilometer of the breakthrough area.

The multiple rocket launcher was a formidable weapon that the soldiers of the Red Army would refer to with an affectionate female nickname «Katusha»( little Cathy). Interestingly enough, when the Germans got its first «Nebelwerfer» multiple rocket launcher, the Russian soldiers would give them the nickname of «Vanusha»( little Ivan).

First, the infantrymen mounted an attack, at the same, the powerful air defense floodlights were turned on. Their blinding light was not only a nuisance to the enemy and knocked out the night vision devices, but also helped the advancing troops to get oriented on the battlefield. The suburbs of Berlin were turned into veritable fortresses with reinforced concrete pillboxes along with tanks and self-propelled guns buried into the ground.

The defense was well-thought-out, the Germans would utilize the city structures with thick stone walls to capacity, while in Berlin itself they employed the subway stations. That's the reason the Red Army was advancing at the cost of huge losses. However, they had no choice. Had the encirclement of the capital failed, the defenders of the city would have received reinforcements of 200,000 to 300,000 soldiers from the retreating regular army, and the capture of Berlin would have been tantamount to the effort at Stalingrad. Therefore, the bloodshed would have been far greater. April 25 the ring around Berlin was sealed. Nine Soviet armies, several of them were tank armies, launched a breakthrough assault to the center of Berlin. Fighting continued day in and day out.

The most fierce fighting broke out for the Reichstag or rather the Reichstag Building in the center of Berlin which has been the seat of the German parliament since Germany's reunification. The parliament was also referred to as the Reichstag. It was defended by Waffen SS and Hitler's security detail. Only the third assault on the building proved successful, while the enemy continued its resistance in the basements of Reichstag for another whole day.

As the Soviet soldiers kept their advance, they would install the red banners in the window frames to showcase to the world that those rooms were already taken by the Red Army. The Germans would knock out the banners with their fire but our warriors would reinstall the banners time and again. Finally, early morning May 1 lieutenant Berest, sergeant Yegorov and junior sergeant Kantaria hoisted the flag of the 150th Rifle Division over the Reichstag which the Germans failed to knock down. It is this flag that became the official Banner of Victory which has been preserved up to this day.

Gradually, the German resistance in Berlin would die down. The design to deliver a blow to decapitate the German resistance proved right. Already several hours after Hitler's suicide the German high command initiated the negotiations to unconditionally surrender. On May 2 the capital's garrison did surrender. In the ensuing days, whole groups of armies did surrender. In the evening of May 8 ( it was already May 9 Moscow time) the Act of Unconditional Surrender was signed in the suburbs of Berlin. The most bloody war in the history of Russia was over.

In honor of the victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945, the date of May 9 is considered the Day of Military Glory of Russia.

*Let us commemorate, brothers, those who sacrificed themselves to protect the world  
Who sacrificed eternally their success for our sake  
Let us commemorate them with a prayer so that they forgive  
For not taking us with them thus letting us stay on Earth*

*Let us commemorate them a hundred times with a glass and a tear  
And with the bitterness of the decorations, and for their farewell fight  
Let us commemorate them standing together and bowing over the grass  
They vanished where the light hides behind the twilight*

The lyrics are from the song "Bring back the memory",  
lyrics by Maria Zakharova,  
music by Maria Zakharova and Maral Yakshieva,  
Viacheslav Stepashkin – translation from Russian into English









Finland  
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