Russian Military Culture during the Reigns of Catherine II and Paul I, 1762-1801

by

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Abstract

This study explores the shape and development of military culture during the reign of Catherine II. Next to the institutions of the autocracy and the Orthodox Church, the military occupied the most important position in imperial Russia, especially in the eighteenth century. Rather than analyzing the military as an institution or a fighting force, this dissertation uses the tools of cultural history to explore its attitudes, values, aspirations, tensions, and beliefs. Patronage and education served to introduce a generation of young nobles to the world of the military culture, and expose it to its values of respect, hierarchy, subordination, but also the importance of professional knowledge. Merit is a crucial component in any military, and Catherine's military culture had to resolve the tensions between the idea of meritocracy and seniority. All of the above ideas and dilemmas were expressed in a number of military texts that began to appear during Catherine's reign. It was during that time that the military culture acquired the cultural, political, and intellectual space to develop – a space I label the "military public sphere". This development was most clearly evident in the publication, by Russian authors, of a range of military literature for the first time in this era. The military culture was also reflected in the symbolic means used by the senior commanders to convey and reinforce its values in the army. The dissertation posits that it was precisely during the reign of Catherine II, "Minerva on the Throne", rather than during the reigns of Peter the Great or Paul I, which are usually associated with wars, armies, and militarism, that a military culture began to become increasingly self-aware, self-reflective, and autonomous in Russia. Paul I's attack on its values, traditions and autonomy did not so much undermine or destroy Catherine's military culture as confirm its existence.

In memory of my mother, Lidia Vidmont.

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I am pleased to express my gratitude to the people whose encouragement, humour, and advice have contributed so much to this project. My supervisor, Heather Coleman, has done more than anyone to shape my infant ideas about Russian military thought into a dissertation project about Russian military culture. Heather taught me the art of asking the right questions, challenged me to justify my answers, and made me think critically about the implications of my conclusion. I have learned a great deal from her not only about Russian Imperial history but also about being an academic and an historian.

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The Russian State Military History Archive could have been an intimidating experience for a new researcher, but the staff and Kirill Tatarnikov especially, were patient, accommodating, and helpful in answering my questions and inquiries. The staff at the department of military literature in the Russian State Library showed a great interest in my project and made numerous suggestions about available literature.

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Throughout my life, my mother, Lidia Vidmont, set an example of the highest standard for intellectual curiosity, personal integrity, and work ethic that I can only aspire to follow. She passed away a year before the completion of this work. It is dedicated to her.

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INTRODUCTION

This study explores military culture in eighteenth-century Imperial Russia. It is concerned with two unexplored questions: was there an autonomous military culture in Russia by the end of the eighteenth century and if so, what form did it take. Throughout that period Russia faced an almost uninterrupted series of largely successful wars that stretched from the Baltic Sea to the Mediterranean and that committed an increasing number of people, resources, and thoughts to its cause. The century began with the Great Northern War, which persisted for over twenty years, where Russia effectively challenged the hegemony of Sweden in the Baltic, and ended with the Russians on the shores of Holland, in southern Italy, and then in the Swiss Alps, on the offensive against the French Revolution. The pages below concentrate on the second half of that turbulent century, specifically on the reign of Catherine II and Paul I, which coincided with seven military conflicts – the two Russo-Turkish wars (1768-74 and 1787-91), the two wars with Poland (1768-72 and 1794-5), the Russo-Swedish War (1788–1790), the Persian Expedition (1796), and the War of the Second Coalition (1798-1802).

While the Great Northern War (1700-1721) could rival this period in military scope, success, and impact, it was only during Catherine's reign that the military began to generate enough cultural and intellectual capital to give shape to an autonomous culture.[1] It was only beginning from the 1760s that the contours of a Russian military

[1] During the Great Northern War Peter gave the military an institutional and legal framework, developed mechanisms for recruitment and organization, and laid the foundations for military promotion and education. However, his greatest achievement, according to James Cracraft, was not the military modernization, which had already begun in the Muscovite era anyway, but the cultural revolutions in visual and linguistic matters. Whether or not the military had a distinctive culture during Peter's reign, and what shape it took, Cracraft does not address directly, which leaves scope for further research. For Peter's military, see Cracraft's chapter on "Military Modernization," which, tellingly, did not earn the label of "revolution." James Cracraft, *The Petrine Revolution in Russian Culture* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 97-143; see also Lindsey Hughes, who likewise sees continuity between Peter's army and its Muscovite predecessor, and Peter's ability to merge old with new. Lindsey Hughes, *Russia in the Age of Peter the Great* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 63-91.

culture became visibly defined, and a critical mass of writing was reached to spark its autochthonous development. If Peter laid the foundations for the modern military in Russia, then it was Catherine's reign that crystallized its culture.[2]

Military culture is a wide-encompassing and nebulous term, and it is helpful to examine its meaning in the context of recent Russian scholarship. In the article "The Phenomenon of Military Culture," Major-General Viacheslav Kruglov suggested that any military culture consists of five inter-dependent components, which include the political culture of the army, administrative culture, disciplinary culture, military-technical and general-staff culture, and the culture of relations within the military.[3] Similarly, another Russian military academic, Anatolii Grigor'ev, reflected that the term military culture "includes language, mentality, ethics, the philosophy of military men, as well as physical culture. In the practical sense it means…the study and organization of how to use laws and precedents in military craft."[4] A. V. Korotenko described military culture as comprising both formal and non-formal cultures, each of which incorporates material and spiritual components, including established value systems, religious-ideological imperatives, and symbolic elements, ensuring motivation and regular military activity.[5] Finally, writing about post-Soviet Russian military culture, E. Romanova further advanced our definition and understanding of military culture. In addition to what Kruglov, Grigor'ev, and Korotenko have written, Romanova added masculinity, totality, duality, regulation of the body, sacramentality (*sakral'nyi*

[2] There is still debate about whether Peter really created a regular army in Russian. John Keep argues there were more continuities than breaks between the Muscovite army and Peter's military reforms. John Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar: Army and Society in Russia, 1462-1874* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 1, 97, 103. Keep argued that Peter did not even create a "well-ordered police state." Keep, 135.

[3] Viachislav Kruglov "Fenomen voennoi kultury," *Nezavisimoe voennoe obozrenie* http://nvo.ng.ru/forces/2015-03-13/10_fenomen.html [Accessed 26 June 2015].

[4] Anatolii Grigoriev, "Chto takeo "voennaia kultura?"," *Zhurnal voennyi i literaturnyi,* http://wv2.vrazvedka.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=138:--q-q&catid=88888906&Itemid=88888919 [Accessed 26 June 2015].

[5] A. V. Korotenko, "Poniatie voennoi kultury: sushchnostnye kharakteristiki i itogovaia definitsiia," *Vestnik Povolzhskogo Instituta,* (2013): 20. See also V. I. Bazhukov, "Poniatie voennoi kultury: problemy stanovleniia," *Sotsial'no-gumanitarnye znaniia*, vol. 1 (2009): 284-296.

kharakter deiatel'nosti) and the ability to influence the culture of society at large as crucial categories for decoding the nature of Russian military culture.[6]

Of the above, the duality (*dvoistvennost'*) of military culture stands out as especially relevant in the context of the late eighteenth century. As Romanova put it, "Duality as a characteristic of military culture finds its expression in resistance to conform to official and unofficial traditions." In general military culture comprises formal aspects such as legal and organizational manuals, prescribed rituals and etiquette, and at the same time informal aspects such as folklore, marching songs, and informal behaviour and symbolism.[7] In the context of the regimented nature of military culture, where many aspects of life are controlled by regulations, codes, and norms, there inevitably emerge instances of counter-culture resisting external pressures. This duality of military culture fulfils an important psychological role, argues Romanova. It is akin to an escape hatch that releases human nature from the pressures of the cruel oppressiveness of everyday military life.[8] In Catherine's army this release was achieved above all through the unconventional behaviour by some of its officers and senior commanders.

In addition to the above definitions from Russian scholarship, this study has been influenced by Isabel Hull's work, which examined the influence of German military culture on German practices in war. Borrowing concepts from cultural anthropology and the subfield of organizational culture, particularly from the works of Clyde Kluckhohn and Edgar H. Schein, Hull defined military culture "as a way of understanding why an army acts as it does in war."[9] However, if Hull was interested in institutional extremism,

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[6] E. N. Romanova, "Voennaia kultura i ee osnovnye kharakteristiki," *Vestnik Samarskogo Gosuniversiteta*, vol. 1 (2008): 213.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid., 215.
[9] Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 93. For Hull's discussion of military culture more broadly, see

or in explaining why the German army resorted to extreme violence in its conduct of war, this study is interested in the ideas, aspirations, values and behaviour that shaped the Russian army's attitudes to war and the profession of arms. With this goal in mind, I use military culture as a unifying term for a collection of processes that helped the military to define its own, distinct and autonomous culture in the last forty years of the eighteenth century.

Following the lead of Hull, Romanova, and others, this study asks what produces military culture rather than what is military culture. Rather than being something that had been achieved or created by the end of Catherine's reign, military culture was the product of cumulative processes that arguably began a century before, when Muscovite Russia was first attempting to create a modern standing army. It takes time for attitudes, values, and beliefs to develop and coalesce, as well as for education, professionalism, and identity to develop. This is why the production of military culture was a question of generations.[10] Rather than being static, military culture was an organic and evolving entity.

The process of formation of military culture in Russia began before the reforms of Peter the Great in the early 1700s. From the middle of the sixteenth century, the Muscovite state attempted to create a more efficient army with the so-called streltsy or musketeers which were supposed to reinforce the noble cavalry. These men were

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94-98. While there is no specific work that addresses military culture in eighteenth-century Europe, there is a broad literature on military culture in general. See for example Thomas W. Britt, *Military Culture* (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2006); Edwin Dorn, Howard D. Graves, and Walter F. Ulmer. *American Military Culture in the Twenty-First Century: A Report of the CSIS International Security Program* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2000); Benjamin Buley, *The New American Way of War: Military Culture and the Political Utility of Force* (London: Routledge, 2008); Richard A. Gabriel, *The Culture of War: Invention and Early Development* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990); Nicola Di Cosmo, *Military Culture in Imperial China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009); Allan D. English, *Understanding Military Culture: A Canadian Perspective* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004); and Martin Van Creveld, *The Culture of War* (New York: Presidio Press/Ballantine Books, 2008). Military culture should be seen as distinct from the studies of strategic culture that examine how national strategies are shaped and determined by cultural factors. For example see Lawrence Sondhaus, *Strategic Culture and Ways of War* (London: Routledge, 2006).

[10] I am thankful to my Moscow host-supervisor, Professor Elena Marasinova, for emphasizing and developing this point in our conversations.

recruited from the non-serf population, instructed according to Western military practices, and equipped with gun-powder weapons. By the end of the seventeenth century the streltsy numbered some 50,000 men, half of them serving in and around Moscow. Yet, as both Russian and Western authors remind us, the streltsy were a semi-professional and semi-standing military force. Whether they possessed the values of military culture as described above is dubious at best. One of the major obstacles that precluded the development of the kind of military culture that emerged during Catherine's reign is what John Keep has labelled as "civilianization."[11] The streltsy were forced to take up trade, or some other commercial activity to support themselves. Therefore war was not their only occupation or concern, and their identity was split between the civilian and military social spheres. As Keep argued, streltsy's political views were "primitive" and their culture revolved around the sacrality of the Russian monarchy and the importance of traditional Orthodox values.[12] Our understanding of the *mentalité* of the streltsy commanders, the *voevody*, is also limited. Therefore, it is difficult to define their military culture beyond a collective adherence to the religious values of Orthodoxy and obedience to the tsar. The seventeenth-century Russian military culture lacked the autonomy, self-awareness, and self-reflectiveness of Catherine's period.[13]

If the age of the streltsy did not develop a strong, thriving, and self-conscious military culture in Russia then what about the real progenitors of the Russian regular army - the so-called *polki novogo stroia*? The "regiments of the new type" were units

[11] Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, 62.
[12] Ibid., 67.
[13] My knowledge and understanding of late 17th-century Russian army and streltsy especially comes from A. V. Chernov, "Obrazovanie streletskogo voiska," *Istoricheskie zapiski Instituta Istorii Akademii Nauk SSSR*, vol. 38 (Moscow, 1951), 281-290; S. L. Margolin, "K voprosu ob organizatsii i sotsial'nom sostave streletskogo voiska v xvii veke," *Uchenye zapiski Moskovskogo oblastnogo pedagogicheskogo institute*, vol. 27 (Moscow, 1953), 63-95; M. D. Rabinovich, "Strel'tsy v pervoi chetverti xviii v.," *Istoricheskie zapiski Instituta Istorii Akademii Nauk SSSR*, vol. 58 (Moscow, 1956), 273-305; and Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar,* chapter 3.

created in the 1630s, and included recruits from Cossacks, boyars, and townspeople, and were commanded by foreign officers. These new regiments were the nucleus of the Russian standing army. Yet their military culture remains largely unexplored and therefore it is difficult to make any concrete conclusions about the values, ideas, and views about war and military craft held in these units. As A. V. Kutishev wrote, religion and service to the tsar were probably the main pillars of military culture of the regiments of the new type.[14] What is evident, however, is that there was no systematic education available to these units, nor did its members produce military writings in the same way Catherine's officers did.[15] So far, the studies of the seventeenth-century *polki novogo stroia* reveal little soul-searching among their soldiers and officers about what it meant to be professional men of war, what values they held, or what they saw as their role in war and in Russian society at large.[16]

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, both the streltsy and the new regiments were caught up in the whirlpool of reforms of Peter the Great, who transformed the Russian military more than any of his predecessors and is generally credited with laying the foundations of a modern, standing army in Russia. While there were no studies exploring military culture during Peter's reign, Lindsey Hughes asked the important question of whether Peter's army had an ethos. Hughes came to the conclusion that it had, as testified by many contemporary sources. Yet she was quick to point out that Peter's military reforms amounted to a combination of trial and error, gut feeling, a collection of orders and directives issued from multitudes of headquarters, and

[14] A. V. Kutishchev, *Armiia Petra velikogo: evropeiskii analog ili otechestvennaia samobytnost'*. (Moscow: Kompaniia Sputnik+, 2006), 61-123, that has an excellent discussion of the new regiments and of role of the seventeeth century as a transitional period in the development of the Russian military.

[15] For example, the military manual that was used for the training of the new regiments appeared in 1647 and was the exact translation of a 1615 Dutch manual. Ibid., 88.

[16] One of the best works on the officer corps in seventeenth-century Russia remains A. Z. Myshchlaevskii, *Ofitserskii Vopros v XVII veke* (St. Petersburg, 1899). For the Muscovite officer class from the 15th to eighteenth century in English see Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, Chapter 2.

improvisation. With the exception of *Voinskii Ustav* (Military Statute) which Peter himself help to draft, he "generally had neither the time nor the inclination to elaborate clear-cut, detailed ideological statements."[17] To sum up, all of this is not to say that there was no military culture in Russia before Catherine's reign – any state with a military force has a military sub-culture. There was war, there was the military, there were professional officers and there were military manuals, but the military culture as defined above was still in an embryonic state.

The streltsy were not a full-time professional military organization whose members systematically addressed the questions of the military profession and strove to improve and advance it. Nor did they identify with military service to the same degree as Catherine's officers. This held true for the later period in the seventeenth century with the regiments of the new type. The development of military culture in Russia progressed during the reign of Peter, not least with the publication of the *Military Statute*, the table of ranks, the promotion of military education, and many other reforms. Yet in Peter's Russia everything was too centralized to allow for organic development of military culture. There was an actively functioning space for the elaboration of military ideas even in the early years of Peter's reign, between 1682 and 1700, but this space was vertically structured and revolved around the tsar. All the key decisions regarding the military were centralized in the hands and the mind of the sovereign, who either rejected suggestions or accepted them for immediate implementation.

This picture contrasts with the later eighteenth century when, during Catherine's reign, military culture was being constructed by officers rather than by the sovereign; by a group of people who had both time and inclination to sit down and reflect on their profession in the military, their place in society and the role of war in their lives. While

[17] Hughes, 76

Peter's army may have had an ethos, its military culture was still far from being developed on its own terms. What was different and important about military culture in Catherine's Russia was its growing autonomy, self-consciousness, and deep self-reflection. This self-reflection was complemented by a dialogue among its members, and sometimes between the latter and the sovereign. Under Catherine there emerged an intellectual, social, and cultural horizontal space where commanders could engage in symbolic behaviour and individual officers could write and publish military texts expressing their ideas and the values of their profession. This was the culmination of a process that began years before.

To understand why military culture matured and blossomed in Catherine's reign, one must points, first of all, to the context of the solidification of noble culture, since the military culture in Russia was created by officers who came almost exclusively from the nobility.[18] One of the first acts that Catherine endorsed when she came to the throne in 1762 was the edict of her late husband that declared a moratorium on compulsory service for the nobility.[19] Later in her reign, the Charter to the Nobility, which was promulgated in 1785, defined nobles' rights and helped further reinforce the corporate identity of the nobility as an estate.[20] And as Robert Jones argued, during Catherine's reign the state began to treat nobles as partners, because Catherine had to rely on that group to carry out her reforms.[21] Therefore, during Catherine's reign the Russian

[18] For the officer class in eighteenth-century Russia, see Christopher Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West: Origins and Nature of Russian Military Power, 1700-1800* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), chapter 6; for the European officer class in general see Christopher Duffy, *The Military Experience in the Age of Reason* (New York: Atheneum, 1988), chapter 2, and Armstrong Starkey, *War in the Age of Enlightenment, 1700-1789* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), chapter 3.

[19] In his famous decree Peter III abolished obligatory state and military service for Russian nobility. PSZ, vol. 15, no. 11444. Also see Raeff, *Origin of Russian Intelligentsia*, 109-110. His argument is that instead of conceding to the demands of the nobility, the state actually made itself independent from it; see also Marc Raeff, "The eighteenth-Century Nobility and the Search for a New Political Culture in Russia," *Kritika,* 1, no. 4 (Fall 2000):769-782.

[20] Isabel de Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great* (London: Phoenix Press,2003), 296 .

[21] Robert Edward Jones, *The emancipation of the Russian nobility, 1762-1785* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973).

nobility, which comprised the majority of the officer corps, had the cultural and intellectual freedoms, as well as the social confidence, that their Muscovite and Petrine predecessors did not possess. As John Keep pointed out, the relationship between the state and the nobles should be seen as one of interdependence rather than simple vertical subordination.[22] During Catherine's reign, out of this interdependence, a social space emerged where military culture had room to define itself and develop.

Second, the development of military culture has to be put in the context of the general cultural and political flourishing of Catherine's reign. For example, in 1765 the Free Economic Society was founded, the first public, voluntary associations in Russian history, which gives weight to the general consensus that Catherine was interested in building a civil society in Russia, even if she imagined it as being in the service to the state.[23] In 1775 Catherine promulgated the reform of local administration, which in the words of Isabel De Madariaga "established the basic structure of Russian local administration and the judicial system which lasted until the reforms of 1864…."[24] The Charter to the Towns that came a decade later decentralized administration, giving local authorities more powers and devolving some of the responsibilities of the central government to the provinces.[25] Coterminous with the general spirit of kaleidoscopic political reforms and internal changes was the relaxation in censorship and publication laws. In 1768 Catherine founded the Translation Society, which published 112 translations. In 1771 the first private publishing house in Russian history opened its doors, and in 1783 Catherine issued an edict that allowed private individuals to own and

[22] Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, 2.

[23] On the Free Economic society and civil society see Joseph Bradley, *Voluntary Associations in Tsarist Russia: Science, Patriotism, and Civil Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009). See also James Arthur Prescott , "The Russian Free Economic Society: Foundation Years," *Agricultural History*, 51, no. 3 (July, 1977): 503-512; and Colum Leckey, "Patronage and Public Culture in the Russian Free Economic Society, 1765-1796," *Slavic Review*, 64, no. 2 (Summer, 2005): 355-379, and Douglas Smith, *Working the Rough Stone: Freemasonry and Society in Eighteenth-Century Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1999).

[24] Madariaga, 281-2.

[25] Ibid., 301.

operate publishing presses without any interference from the government.[26] This is all to say that Catherine's reign was an age of cultural, intellectual, and political development that engulfed the Russian society like a tidal wave, and the military too got swept up in the broader cultural efflorescence of the times.

Third, it is worth pointing out that crucial also was the fact that Catherine, unlike her successors, stepped out of the operational activities of the armed forces and left the business of war to military men and her advisors, such as Prince Grigorii Potemkin. The empress did not meddle in the running of the military on a day-to-day basis, and was instead preoccupied with legal and geo-political projects. While Peter was consumed by the long war which drained his energies and focus, and forced him to subordinate much of state policy to military necessity, Catherine could afford to distance herself from running the war and the military, and concentrate on internal reforms as well as on the diplomatic aspects of the partitions of Poland and the annexation of the Crimea. The above three factors – the development of noble culture and identity, social and political reforms, and the sovereign's willingness to stay out of the inner workings of the military – provided the context within which military culture could solidify itself as a part of the larger public sphere.

By addressing the topic of military culture, this study contributes to several fields of Russian imperial history - the history of the Russian imperial army, especially in the eighteenth century, but also the history of the nobility, and that of Catherine II's reign more broadly.[27] In the last fifty years, scholarly research about the eighteenth-century Russian nobility has concentrated on political dialogue between rulers and

[26] Gary Marker, *Publishing, Printing, and the Origins of Intellectual Life in Russia, 1700-1800* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

[27] For two excellent essays on the subject of imperial Russia and military history see David M. McDonald, "The Military and Imperial Russian History" and Dennis Showalter, "Imperial Russia and Military History," in David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye and Bruce Menning, eds., *Reforming the Tsar's Army: Military Innovation in Imperial Russia from Peter the Great to the Revolution* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2004), 307-327.

subjects, on the structure of Russian society, and on the development of an autonomous elite with aspirations different from the state. Marc Raeff, the distinguished historian of the Russian nobility, argued that the Russian intelligentsia had its progenitors in the eighteenth-century nobility.[28] While he acknowledged that the military was an important part of that noble culture, Raeff did not engage it directly. Similarly, John LeDonne, in his study of Russian absolutism, argued for a command-structure society where nobles, especially powerful noble clans such as the Kurakins and the Saltykovs, ruled the political order, rather than the tsar or the bureaucrats.[29]

Another important work that this dissertation engages is Cynthia Whittaker's study of political dialogue in eighteenth-century Russia. Whittaker argued that by the end of the eighteenth century, autocracy as a form of government had acquired several layers of legitimacy in Imperial Russia.[30] Whittaker examined close to 500 publications, such as histories and plays, but did not include in her analysis the military manuals. Yet these texts were very much in dialogue with official regulations, sometimes even critiquing the military service of her Imperial Majesty. My work shows that the military was also in dialogue with the political rulers of Russia. For example, in at least two cases Catherine took the advice of the military and made their suggestions official army policy.

One study in particular that my works builds on is Elena Marasinova's *Psikhologiia elity rossiiskogo dvorianstva v poslednei treti XVIII veka*, which explored

[28] Marc Raeff, *Origins of the Russian Intelligentsia: The Eighteenth-Century Nobility* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966).

[29] John LeDonne, *Absolutism and Ruling Class The Formation of the Russian Political Order, 1700-1825* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). See also his three important articles about military administration in the eighteenth century: "Outlines of Russian Military Administration 1762-1796." *Jahrbucher fur Geschichte Osteuropas*, 31 (1983): 321-47; 33 (1985): 175-204; 24 (1986): 188-213.

[30] Cynthia Whittaker, *Russian Monarchy: Eighteenth-Century Rulers and Writers in Political Dialogue* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003).

the attitudes and values of the eighteenth-century Russian nobility.[31] Based on epistolary sources, 1,800 letters from 45 different authors, including notable names such as Aleksandr Suvorov, Petr Rumiantsev, Gavrila Derzhavin, Nikolai Karamzin and others, Marasinova attempted to identify certain traits and topics of concern for the Russian nobility. She explored the social psychology of the ruling *soslovie* and how it evolved, focusing above all on the development of elite consciousness. Marasinova also examined the membership of elite groups, the mechanisms that enforced solidarity among the elite, the development of oppositional moods and the ways in which it was expressed. She concentrated on the last third of the century because she believes "it was a unique transitional period in the evolution of the consciousness of Russia's highest social class." Her analysis follows earlier studies done by Western historians – for example by Marc Raeff and Paul Dukes – and it is mostly preoccupied with the nobility's attitudes towards the state, the monarchy (and individual monarchs), favourites, and serfs. In my work I build on Marasinova's approach and supply another category for the analysis of the Russian nobility – that of military culture, which was an important part of noble life and identity.

Finally, my work shows how the first impulses of national consciousness and even patriotism were already evident in the military culture of Catherine's reign, particularly in military writings. As far as the literature on national consciousness in eighteenth-century Russia is concerned, the pioneering study remains the 1960 work of Hans Rogger. Rogger asked whether Imperial Russia in the eighteenth century was concerned "with the problem of national identity", and if so, in what terms this concern was expressed. Rogger discovered that indeed Imperial Russia was struggling to define itself, and argued that the means by which it was attempting to do so were literature,

[31] Elena Marasinova, *Psikhologiia elity rossiiskogo dvorianstva poslednei treti XVIII veka: po materialam perepiski* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1999).

manners, and history. Only one paragraph was devoted to the importance of war in this process, where Rogger acknowledged that the greatest source of pride, self-importance, and orientation for the Russian elite still came from the battlefield and successful wars. Yet this analytical thread ended abruptly and the connection between the search for national character and military culture remained unexplored.[32] More recent studies have picked up where Rogger left off, but the emphasis is usually on the 19th century and beyond, which does not further our understanding of national consciousness in the eighteenth century.[33] Finally, these studies rarely address how the military culture fit into the development of Russian national identity. For example, Astrid Tuminez explored the relationship between Russian nationalism and foreign policy from 1856 to 2000.[34] Her major concern was the question of whether nationalism exerted a malevolent influence on Russian policy abroad. By looking at several case studies, Tuminez asserted that national humiliation in war constituted the true source of Russian nationalism in the 19th century. My dissertation examines the role of military culture as a source of national consciousness in the eighteenth century.

So far there has been only a limited exploration of Imperial Russian military culture in Russia, and virtually none in the English language. As Anatolii Grigor'ev wrote "Unfortunately…except in a few practical aspects, [military culture] is not being studied by us today and systematic research into military culture still has not taken

[32] Hans Rogger, *National Consciousness in Eighteenth-Century Russia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), 258.

[33] For more recent studies that explore the Russian identity, history of nationalism, and national consciousness see Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *Russian Identities: A Historical Survey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) who argues that the meaning of being Russian was constantly in flux, rather than being static. See also Geoffrey A. Hosking and Robert Service, *Russian Nationalism, Past and Present* (New York: St. Martin's Press in association with the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, 1997).

[34] Astrid S. Tuminez, *Russian Nationalism Since 1856: Ideology and the Making of Foreign Policy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000).

place."[35] This is another area where this dissertation makes a contribution. Traditionally, studies of the military of the Russian empire have produced institutional histories, addressing tactics, strategy, technology, and politics.[36] However, with the advent of the "new military history" and the "cultural turn" in history as a discipline, studies of issues of identity, of interaction between society and the military, and the study of aspects of military culture have begun to shine new light on the Russian imperial army.[37]

The literature about the Russian imperial army usually falls into two categories, which sometimes interact and overlap. On the one hand there are studies that examine the army as a political or a military force, elucidate its doctrines, and address tactical and technological dimensions. For example, William Fuller's seminal work examined the imperial Russian military in the context of strategy and politics. Using a Clausewitzian framework Fuller explained how Russian military strategy was formulated with regards to political, social, and economic backwardness. His most important claim as far as the eighteenth century is concerned is that the military success of that period was the product of limited political goals and the successful exploitation of backwardness. By the time of the Crimean War Russia no longer set political goals commensurate with its

[35] Grigoriev, http://wv2.vrazvedka.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=138:--q-q&catid=88888906&Itemid=88888919 [Accessed 26 June 2015]. The exception is the work by V. N. Greben'kov who examined the military culture of the Russian society. His work develops a new concept voennaia kul'tura obshchestva (VKO) or military culture of society. V. N. Grebn'kov, "Metodologicheskii potentsial kontsepta "viennaia kul'tura obshchestva" v istoricheskikh i poleticheskikh isledovaniiakh," *Vestnik Rossiiskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta im. I. Kanta*, vol. 12 (2009), 83-89.

[36] For example, Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West*. Duffy's work still remains the single work on the subjects in the English language. While relying exclusively on published sources Duffy carefully traced the major battles, reforms, and developments within the eighteenth-century Russian military, arguing that it was by force of arms that Russian emerged as a great European power. See also his *Eagles Over the Alps: Suvorov in Italy and Switzerland, 1799* (Chicago: Emperor's Press, 1999). For the classic Soviet study see Liubomir Beskrovnyi, *Russkaia armiia i flot v vosemnadtsatom veke* (Moscow:Voennoe Izdatelstvo, 1958). Important but still relevant works from the imperial period are A. Lebedev, *Russkaia armiia v nachale tsarstvovaniia Ekateriny II. Materialy dlia russkoi voennoi istorii* (Moscow: Universitetskai Tipografiia, 1899) and the works of D. F. Maslovskii, such as his *Zapiski po istorii voennogo iskusstva v Rossii, 1683 -1794* (St. Petersburg, 1891−1894).

[37] For the cultural turn in military history and the "new military history" see Jeremy Black, *Rethinking Military History* (New York: Routledge, 2004) and Donald A. Yerxa, ed,. *Recent Themes in Military History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008) and Stephen Morillo, *What Is Military History?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), 37-43, 61-65, 88-94.

military power, nor could it exploit its backwardness in the world of rapid technological advances.[38] David Stone produced another interpretative survey of Russian military history. Stone focused on militarization in Russian history, by which he meant "the organization of society for war". While avoiding direct analysis of military culture, Stone showed that war was "central to how the Russian elite conceived the state and its role in it."[39] Finally, Brian Davies in his new monograph examines in great detail several military campaigns against the Ottoman Empire, asking what was at the root of Russia's tremendous success and whether there was a military revolution in the eighteenth century that promoted Russian advances. He argues that it was a combination of increasing efficiency of mobilizing resources, adapting tactics, but also of relative Ottoman decline that brought Russia new military glory.[40]

Each of these monographs has enriched our knowledge of the Russian military history and assembled valuable information about the army, its campaigns, functions, leadership, and logistics. Even though the present work is broadly indebted to these studies for putting the army and the military at the centre of Russian history, it shifts the focus from campaigns, strategy, politics, and operational and institutional analysis of the

[38] William C. Fuller, *Strategy and Power in Russia, 1600-1914* (New York: Free Press, 1992). For Russian military thought, especially in the 19th century see Carl Van Dyke, *Russian Imperial Military Doctrine and Education, 1832-1914* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990) and more recent Gudrun Persson, *Learning from Foreign Wars: Russian Military Thinking, 1859-73* (Solihull: Helion, 2010).

[39] David Stone, *A Military History of Russia: From Ivan the Terrible to the War in Chechnya* (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2006), xii. See also Bruce Menning, *Bayonets Before Bullets: The Imperial Russian Army, 1861-1914* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992) Bruce Menning showed how the Russian imperial army failed to modernize during the critical period of the late 19th and early 20th centuries with his detailed institutional and operation analysis. And in a recent study of the Russian general staff in the twilight years of the Russian Empire, John W. Steinberg similarly argued that despite achieving a significant level of professionalism, the Russian Imperial General Staff failed to attain political and social autonomy in the Tsarist regime, an autonomy that was necessary to reform the army and prepare it for the upcoming War World I. John W. Steinberg, *All the Tsar's Men: Russia's General Staff and the Fate of the Empire, 1898-1914* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2010).

[40] Brian L. Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution in Eastern Europe: Russia's Turkish Wars in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Continuum, 2011). For a broad study of development of Russian military power since 1430 and how war shaped Russian government and society in the earlier period see Carol Belkin Stevens, *Russia's Wars of Emergence, 1460-1730* (Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, 2007).

military, to cultural investigation. The task here is to examine the culture of this military, its beliefs, traditions, and values; what form they took; and if they evolved.

Coterminous with this first stream of scholarship, beginning the 1980s,[41] there began to appear studies that gave texture to different cultural and especially social aspects of the military, tracing the impact of the armed forces on Russian society, administration, politics, and culture at large.[42] Elise Wirtschafter, for example, broke new ground with the social history of the common soldier. She examined the soldier as a *soslovie* in its own right and one of her arguments was that the army was a society in itself, and a reflection of the Russian society at large.[43] Whereas Wirtschafter concentrated on the social history of the soldiers, this study attempts to shine more light on the cultural history of the officers. The previously overlooked issue of civil-military relations also received its deserved academic attention. Brian Taylor investigated the role the Russian army played in domestic political struggles and asked why Russia had not experienced a successful military coup in 200 years. He argued that organizational culture and domestic interests worked to make any kind of intervention against Russian

[41] Before the 1980s there were relatively few academic studies of the Russian imperial army in English. John Curtiss, *The Russian Army Under Nicholas I, 1825-1855* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1965), Peter Von Wahlde, "Military Thought in Imperial Russia," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Indiana University, 1966) and Philip Longworth, *The Art of Victory: The Life and Achievements of Field Marshal Suvorov, 1729-1800* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966) being some of the notable exceptions.

[42] John Keep's magisterial study is a good starting point. Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*. In addition to his monograph, Keep also published a series of influential articles but they largely concern the 19th rather than the eighteenth century. John Keep, "The Russian Army's Response to the French Revolution," *Jahrbu□cher Fu□r Geschichte Osteuropas*, 28, no. 4 (1980): 500-523; "The Case of the Crippled Cadet: Military Justice in Russia Under Nicholas I," *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue canadienne des slavistes*, 28, no. 1 (1986): 36-51; "Catherine's Veterans," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 59, no. 3 (1981): 385-396; "From the Pistol to the Pen: The Military Memoir as a Source on the Social History of Pre-Reform Russia," *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 21, no. 3/4 (1980): 295-320, and others. Several collections of essays examining the military from a multi-dimensional perspective came out at the beginning of the 2000s. See for example Frederick W. Kagan and Robin Higham, *The Military History of Tsarist Russia* (New York: Palgrave, 2002) and Eric Lohr and Marshall Poe *The Military and Society in Russia 1450-1917* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

[43] Elise Wirtschafter confined her treatment of the army to peace time and began her inquiry only after Catherine's death 1796. Elise Wirtschafter, *From Serf to Russian Soldier* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990). See also by the same author "Social Misfits: Veterans and Soldiers' Families in Servile Russia," *Journal of Military History*, 59 (1995): 215-36; "Soldiers' Children, 1719-1856: A study of social engineering in Imperial Russia," *Forschungen zur osteuropaischen Geschichte*, 30 (1982): 61-136; and "The Common Soldier in the Eighteenth-century Russian Drama," in J. Klein, Simon Dixon, and M. Fraanje, eds., *Reflections on Russia in the Eighteenth Century* (Cologne: Bohlau, 2001), 367-76.

political leaders, be they tsars or communist party bosses, illegitimate. His book focused on post-eighteenth-century Russia, and the eighteenth century served as a historical background.[44] Janet Harley's recent book further advances our understanding of the role of the military in Russian society. By looking at Russia as a "garrison state" (a phrase applied to Muscovite Russia by Richard Hellie), Hartley examined the burden of sustaining warfare and the armed forces for the Russian state, people and economy. In the process, she also investigated the impact of warfare on the development of the "Russian identity and sense of patriotism."[45]

In addition to the above works on the social history of the Russian imperial army, John Keep has made a sizable contribution to many aspects of war and society in Imperial Russia with his seminal monograph *The Soldiers of the Tsar*. Keep also began to examine aspects of military culture in Imperial Russia in several of his articles, and argued that that by the beginning of the nineteenth century Imperial Russia had acquired the trappings of a highly militarized society.[46] My work engages this important point by providing an account of Russian military culture before the onset of nineteenth-century militarism.

In Russia too advances in the study of the imperial army have been made in recent years. Two works in particular have had an influence on this dissertation. Nikolai Rogulin's study is a close analysis of the development of Aleksandr Suvorov's so-called

[44] Brian D. Taylor, *Politics and the Russian Army: Civil-Military Relations, 1689-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[45] Janet M. Hartley, *Russia, 1762-1825: Military Power, the State, and the People* (Westport: Praeger, 2008), 6. Among some of the other important contribution to the study of the imperial army by the same author, see "The Russian Recruit," in *Reflections on Russia in the Eighteenth Century*, 33-42; "The patriotism of the Russian army in the "patriotic" or "fatherland" war of 1812," in Charles J. Esdaile, ed., *Popular Resistance in the French Wars: Patriots, Partisans and Land Pirates* (New York: Palgrave, 2005), 181-200; and "The Russian Empire: military encounters and national identity," in Richard Bessel, Nicholas Guyatt, and Jane Rendall, eds., *War, Empire and Slavery, 1770-1830*, (New York: Palgrave, 2010), 218-34. For "garrison state" see Richard Hellie, *Enserfment and Military Change in Muscovy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971). Also see his article "The Structure of Russian Imperial History," *History and Theory*, 44, no. 4 (Dec. 2005):89.

[46] John Keep, "The Military Style of the Romanov Rulers", *War and Society*, 1, no. 2 (1983): 61-84, and his "The Origins of Russian Militarism," *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique lien*, 26, no. 26-1 (1985): 5-19.

"Suzdal Regulations" of 1764, his instructional text for his first regiment.[47] The monograph is more of an intellectual and revisionist history of the young Suvorov and a re-creation of the process of training and discipline in the eighteenth-century Russian army, than a study of military culture. Ragulin demonstrated how private military texts written during Catherine's reign were all in dialogue with the *Military Statute* that originated during Peter's reign. While Ragulin has provided an excellent textual analsysis of Suvorov's major text and explained the influence of Western military thought on the military writers, he does not examine the manuals in the context of the emmering military public sphere. Building on Rogulin, I examine the military manuals of Catherine's reign within the broader context of military culture and show how they developed many of the ideas and values from the the *Military Statute*. Finally, the recent work by Nadezhda Aurova began to analyze many aspects of nineteenth-century Russian military culture by examining the cultural milieu of Russian officers especially during the reign of Alexander I.[48] Through a "history of the everyday" approach, Aurova attempts to recreate the everyday life of the Russian officer, and argues that the officer class had its own corporate identity and its own system of values, which remained largely intact for more than half a century. The study concentrates largely on the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and the threads that reach back to the eighteenth-century origins remained unexamined. The historiographical picture that emerges, then, is that of a general acknowledgement of the importance of military culture in Russia, especially in the early nineteenth century, but the absence of a full account of its development in the eighteenth century.

[47] Nikolai G. Rogulin, *"Polkovoe uchrezhdenie" A.V. Suvorova i pekhotnye instruktsii ekaterininskogo vremeni* (St. Petersburg: D. Bulanin, 2005).

[48] Nadezda N. Aurova, *Ot kadeta do generala: povsednevnaia zhizn' russkogo ofitsera v kontse XVIII - pervoi polovine XIX veka* (Moscow: Novyi chronograf, 2010).

To clarify, this study concentrates exclusively on the Russian army, at the expense of the navy, whose military culture still remains to be examined in detail. This project makes use of a wide variety of sources, including previously unused materials from the chancelleries of Catherine's military commanders and secret surveillance reports as well as a plethora of printed materials. The Russian State Military History Archive (RGVIA) in Moscow holds a rich collection of previously un-consulted sources. My interest in military culture inevitably forced me to examine the issue of merit and the best way to do so was to consult the *atestaty* and *chelobitnye* or letters of recommendations and petitions. There is no single fond for such documents and instead they had to be hunted down across a variety of chancelleries, Potemkin's proving to be the deepest gold mine for Catherine's period. The Russian State Archive of Old Acts (RGADA) in Moscow was also consulted for a number of documents, especially for surveillance reports of the military that are collected in the Secret Expedition fond.

In addition to these various archival sources this study draws on a broad array of printed materials. Memoirs and diaries serve as a window into the early years of military officers, to understand their intellectual and cultural upbringing, and their path to military culture. This work also relies on published collections of letters such as the four-volume anthology of Suvorov's correspondence. Finally, military manuals present another set of overlooked sources that this dissertation engages. Sixteen military manuals that were written in Russia during Catherine's reign have been analyzed here for the first time. By combining memoirs and private correspondence with institutional sources such as letters of recommendation and military manuals this study seeks to engage Russian military culture on a personal rather than bureaucratic level, and shed light on the experiences of people who were members of that culture.

Methodologically, investigating the concept of military culture offers the opportunity to approach eighteenth-century Russia from a decentred perspective - neither from below, nor from above, but from the side, where thought and culture, war and bureaucracy, nobility and politics are commingled. It is clear from the all-encompassing definitions of military culture that to provide a meaningful account of its nature is beyond the scope of a single study. This dissertation, therefore, focuses on only four aspects of Russian military culture in the last forty years of the eighteenth century, spanning the reigns of Catherine II and her son Paul I. Taking inspiration from Raeff, the chapters that follow attempt to maintain a feeling of stages of development that all members of the military culture had to follow. The dissertation analyses education and paths into the military and its culture, the role of professionalism and merit, military texts that reflected the values and aspiration of that culture, and the symbolic behaviour of some of its members.

With the above in mind, the study opens with a chapter that traces paths to officership through patronage and education. This journey exposes the values and traditions of military culture during Catherine's reign. The chapter argues that patronage provided a venue to get noticed through informal introductions, mentoring, and recommendations, and supplied young officers with stints of practical service. It was through patronage that some of the most notable and capable men rose to the top of military. Patronage also worked to render military culture independent of regulation from above and gave it more freedom from direct control by institutions such as the War College. In tandem with patronage, the chapter argues, military education introduced aspiring officers to a new identity, often personified by a new uniform, along with specialized professional knowledge, and traditions of hierarchy, subordination, and hard work. Customs and values that were cultivated through patronage and education

coalesced to continue to shape and promote military culture in Russia in the late eighteenth century.

When the induction into the military culture was complete the next stage was the pursuit of promotions, awards, and rank. This is the focus of Chapter 2. Borrowing Rafe Blaufarb's idea of using letters of recommendation,[49] this chapter shows that despite occasional nods to favouritism, the machinery of merit kept steadily humming in the background and the tension between merit and seniority were central to shaping Russian military culture.

Employing methodology from cultural history and anthropology, Chapter 3 analyzes military manuals, not so much their military content, as for what they reveal about the society that produced them. My project is the first attempt to examine military manuals as a part of the much larger cultural and intellectual project of the Russian military culture. Catherine's reign was the first time in Russian history that the military began to produce its own texts rather than import and translate materials from abroad. Military manuals served as an intellectual map for the Russian military. The ideas and aspirations expressed in these texts laid down a web of interconnected values, of systems of personal, social, and intellectual significance that had to be practised and embraced by members of that culture.

Chapter 4 looks at the symbolic side of the Russian military culture during Catherine's reign, part of what Romanova has labelled duality of military culture, and explores how subordination, meritocracy, and other values of that culture were reinforced by the military elite. In its analysis the chapter focuses on the symbolic behaviour of three representatives of Russian military culture – Petr Rumiantsev, Grigorii Potemkin, and Aleksandr Suvorov. Building on the ideas of Richard Wortman

[49] Rafe Blaufarb, *The French Army, 1750-1820: Careers, Talent, Merit* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).

and Iurii Lotman, the chapter argues that officers demonstrated and re-affirmed their power, maintained their positions, and bounded others in subordination through carefully constructed symbolic episodes and behaviour. In the process they promoted the values, customs, and traditions of their culture through informal and unconventional means.

Chapter 5 examines the clash between the military culture as it evolved during Catherine's reign, with its own traditions and values, and the new military culture introduced by Emperor Paul. As a staunch admirer of Prussian militarism and the scourge of inefficiency and unprofessionalism, Paul tried to Prussianize Russian military culture, but the military actively resisted this process. Exile, surveillance, and reprimands were the result of the clash of the two cultures. In the end Paul not so much destroyed Catherine's military culture as modified it, and in doing so reaffirmed its existence.

CHAPTER ONE

"Those who had a chance": Patronage, Education, and Becoming an Officer in the Age of Catherine II

This chapter asks how patronage and education shaped military culture of Catherine's Russia and what specific values and traditions were perpetuated by the combination of these factors. The chapter argues that patronage provided a venue to get noticed through informal introductions, mentoring, and recommendations, and supplied young officers with stints of practical service. It was through patronage that some of the most notable and capable men rose to the top of the army. Patronage was not unique to the military, as John LeDonne has convincingly demonstrated, but within the military it worked to give military culture a degree of independence and freedom from direct control by institutions such as the Military College.[50] Patronage encouraged this autonomy and resisted the enforcement of government regulations. As a matter of fact, it was this independence of the military culture of Catherine's era that was savagely attacked by her son Paul. Connected to patronage, the chapter argues, military education introduced aspiring officers to a new identity, wrapped in a new uniform, along with specialized professional knowledge, and traditions of hierarchy, subordination, and hard work. Traditions and values that were cultivated through patronage and education coalesced to define Russian military culture during Catherine's reign.

[50] During the reign of Catherine II, the Military College had three departments or expeditions that dealt with the administration of the army, garrisons, and military engineering and fortifications. In addition to that it also had departments responsible for awards and promotions, provisions, expenses, and other functions. The college also produced military laws and regulations and attempted to enforce them. John LeDonne called it "the intermediary between the ruler and field commanders." John LeDonne, *Absolutism and Ruling Class*, 46. See also *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar' Brokgauza i Efrona*, vol. 6a (St. Peterburg, 1890-1907): 835. For the history of the Military College during Catherine's reign see D. A. Skalon, ed., *Stoletie Voennogo Ministerstva, 1802-1902*, vol. 3 (Sankt Peterburg, 1902-1911), 163-258.

The number of officers during the reign of Catherine II expanded by more than four thousand, from 8,295 to 12,478.[51] That meant that more than one in ten of the Russian male nobility had served as an officer for at least a part of his life.[52] This in turn meant a steady growth of military culture, dissemination of military values, military education, and military professionalism. In the context of the eighteenth century, Russian officers were a significant group of powerful, often wealthy, and sometimes politically active individuals who had legally sworn to protect and serve the Russian autocracy.[53] They were also some of the best educated people in the empire. The majority of officers of the 1780s and 1790s generation were literate, more than a third was fluent in a foreign language, and more than one in ten had knowledge of at least one branch of science.[54] Yet very little is known about how this unique group was recruited and prepared for military service during its formative years.

In Russian military culture in the eighteenth century, the occasion when a youngster received his first officer rank was the most important milestone in his life. As one foreign observer, Madame de Stael, wrote in the early nineteenth century about Catherine's period: "all education is finished at fifteen; everyone rushes into a military career as soon as possible, and all the rest is neglected."[55] For many future officers, the average age at which formal education stopped was quite early indeed. On the other

[51] Walter Pinter, "The Burden of Defense in Imperial Russia, 1725-1914," *Russian Review*, 43, no. 3 (July, 1984): 253 and 256. According to S. V. Volkov, in 1792 there were 11,537 junior or unter-officers in the guards alone. Yet there were only 400 positions. For example, Preobrazhenskii Guards Regiment had 6,134 *unter-officers* and 3,502 soldiers. S. V. Volkov, *Russkii ofitserskii korpus* (Moscow: Voen. izd-vo, 1993), 55.

[52] Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, 233. Keep calculated the estimated male noble population in 1782, in the middle of Catherine's reign, at 108,000. In 1796, when Catherine died, it must have been much greater. Also the officer corps was comprised almost exclusively of nobles. Between 1755 and 1758, nobles comprised 83.4% of Russian imperial officers. This figure increased to 86.5% by 1812. Alexander Mikaberidze, *TheRussian Officer Corps in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1792-1815* (New York: Savas Beatie, 2005), xxxvii.

[53] For a general survey of the officer class in eighteenth century Europe, including Russia, see Christopher Duffy, *The Military Experience in the Age of Reason*, chapter 2, and Hartley, *Russia, 1762-1825*, chapter 3.

[54] Mikaberidze, xxvii.

[55] Cited in Michael Josselson and Diana Josselson, *The Commander: A Life of Barclay De Tolly* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 9.

hand, those who entered a cadet school were commissioned at the age of 18 or older.[56] When a young nobleman or even a soldier received a commission, he stepped over a line that separated him from the most privileged group of people in the empire. In that one step he changed his very position in Catherinian society – becoming an officer was more important than entering military service, more important than receiving any subsequent promotions, more important than even being promoted to the highest of military ranks. For in socio-legal terms, there was little difference between an ensign (*praporshik*) and a field marshal.[57]

The question of how one entered military service in Catherine's Russia has rarely been raised. Although more recent works have began to undermine the stereotype of officers in the age of the Catherine the Great as licentious womanizers and compulsive gamblers, this old stereotype may have discouraged a systematic curiosity in this area.[58] Examining the processes of officer recruitment can help, if not to reverse the old images, then at least to put them into new retrospective context. Moreover, looking more closely at narratives of recruitment sheds light on several facets of military culture in eighteenth century Russia, including education, the importance of family connections, and the growth of incipient professionalism. Finally, it offers a glimpse into the world of the future vanquishers of Napoleon's Grande Armée and the Decembrists who challenged the autocratic regime in Russia in 1825.

The research into how nobles became officers has been complicated by the fact that official laws provide only schematic and irregular glimpses into this process, and

[56] See Vasilii Khvostov, "Zapiski Vasiliia Semena Khvostova,"*Russkii Arkhiv* 1, no. 3 (1870): 553-4. Gudovich, who was born in 1741 also entered service as an engineer-praporshchik, also at the age of 18. Gudovich, 607. The statistical data compiled for the officers who fought in 1812 by Mikaberidze, even though it belongs to a later period, still shows that the average age officers joining the army was between 17 and 19. Mikaberidze, xviii.

[57] Volkov, 49.

[58] The most recent of which is Aurova, *Ot kadeta do generala*, but this work focuses mostly on the early 19th century.

few eighteenth-century memoirists dwell on their early years. Many diaries and memoirs that have survived concentrate on what the authors thought were the important highlights of their careers, often glossing over what seemed to them trivial details of their youthful years. For example, Aleksei Ermolov, the future hero of the Napoleonic Wars, wrote in his memoirs that "At the age of 22, I became a lieutenant colonel in the reign of Catherine…"[59] How did he become an officer to begin with? Who was behind his rapid promotion? Where and how had Ermolov received his education? All of these questions remain unanswered. Similarly, Nikolai Protas'ev, another nobleman from Catherine's reign, also does not go into the details of how he became an officer, and even Ivan Gudovich, one of the Russian field marshals prominent for his conquests in the Caucasus, stated on the first page of his memoirs that nobody would be interested in his early years and therefore started his reminiscences at the point when he was already in military service.[60] By what path he got there remains unknown. Similarly, Iakov de Sanglen wrote in his memoirs that "to talk about one's youth would only satisfy one's self-esteem, but for the reader it would produce no interest."[61] By using several detailed case studies this chapter attempts to reconstruct the very first stages of how nobles were introduced, recruited, and absorbed by the Russian army and its military culture, or in other words how they became officers and what values they held. It concentrates on journeys that ranged from smooth favouritism of well-connected families to tales of hardship of country gentry, with specific attention to noble entry into the army through patronage networks and into military culture through education.

[59] A. P. Ermolov, "Zapiski,"*Russkii Arkhiv,* no. 3 (1867): 367.

[60] N. Protas'ev, "Stranitsy iz starago dnevnika," *Istoricheskii Vestnik*, 30, no. 11 (1887): 408; and I. V. Gudovich, "Zapiski o sluzhbe," *Russkii Vestnik*, 1, no. 3 (1841): 609.

[61] Iakov Sanglen, "Rasskazy Iakova Ivanovicha de Sanglena, 1776-1796," *Russkaia Starina*, 40, no. 10 (1883): 137.

Enrolment

The very first step that brought young Russian noblemen into contact with military culture was enrolment. Enrolling infants and young boys into military units had been forbidden by a special *ukaz*, or decree, of Empress Elizabeth in an attempt to professionalize the officer corps, but the practice clearly continued into the reign of Catherine II. This practice must have been of some concern to the young empress, who desperately wanted to improve and reform the army after the exhausting and shattering Seven Years' War. In 1762, the year she came to power, Catherine was already writing with the reference to Elizabeth's ukaz that "It is not unknown to us that people younger than 15 have been entered into the guards" and she ordered that the old Elizabethian law forbidding this practice be reinforced.[62] In 1762, Catherine also asked several high-ranking military officers to review the Russian army and offer her their suggestions. General Fedor Bauer, one of the authors of the report, candidly stated that patronage networks were undermining discipline and subordination in the army, where "the family name or the popularity (*znatnost'*)…of the commander" were more important.[63] In other words patronage networks were beyond the control of the government and deeply embedded in Russian culture by the time Catherine came to power. Within the military, they began to create a sphere that operated outside of the laws and regulations of the Military College or the empress. The government was clearly aware of the problem and saw the need to reverse this noble practice but it seems that it could not or did not want to break the patronage networks and enforce Catherine's edict. In 1780 Catherine was still receiving reports that the army was overburdened with supernumerary officers.[64]

Russian efforts were symptomatic of a larger trend in the eighteenth century to curb favouritism in the military. In the Habsburg Empire, for example, "central

[62] RGADA, f. 20, op. 1. d. 232, 1. 1.
[63] RGADA, f. 20, op. 1, d. 228, l. 16-17.
[64] RGADA, f. 20, op. 1, d. 276, l. 13.

authorities had tried to reduce such practice to ensure that "worthy yet poor officers were not completely passed over," but there too government efforts often failed.[65] In England, the dedicated Minister of War, Lord Barrington, tried to regulate the infamous sales of commissions in the second half of the eighteenth century. He prohibited commissions to be awarded to anyone below the age of sixteen, and officers who were discovered to be below that age were "immediately dismissed from service."[66] In France, the practice of venality of office in the army persisted until the revolution in 1789. Military positions were sold by the army, especially to captains and colonels, to raise money forthe state treasury.[67] The fact that the Russian government was grappling with similar issues points to the importance it attached to professionalizing its military.

Patronage

Strong patronage networks were very important in the eighteenth century, and in the Russian imperial army they often made or broke careers of aspiring officers.[68]As Sharon Kettering explained, "Extended families, large households, and formal clientage have disappeared from modern western societies, making it more difficult to understand the

[65] Michael Hochedlinger, *Austria's Wars of Emergence: War, State and Society in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1683-1797* (Harlow: Longman, 2003), 116. The Austrians passed tough legislation to curb some of the abuses associated with purchasing offices and favouritism. For instance, officers could only purchase a rank that was one rank above their current position. See also Gunther E. Rothenberg, "Nobility and Military Careers: The Habsburg Officer Corps, 1740-1914,"*Military Affairs*, 40, no. 4 (1976): 182–186.

[66] Anthony Bruce, *The Purchase System in the British Army, 1660-1871* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1980), 35. The abolition of commission purchase in England was passed only in 1871.

[67] Jay Smith, *The Culture of Merit: Nobility, Royal Service, and the Making of Absolute Monarchy in France, 1600-1789* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 228.

[68] As John LeDonne underlined, patronage networks and the nature of political power have largely been ignored in historiography of Imperial Russia. John LeDonne, "The Eighteenth-Century Russian Nobility: Bureaucracy or Ruling Class?," *Cahiers du Monde russe et* sovietique, 34, no. 1-2 (January-June 1993): 145. Patronage in the military has received even less attention. For a description of three major patronage networks during Catherine's reign, those of the Saltykov, Kurakin, and Potemkin clans, see John LeDonne, "Outlines of Russian Military Administration 1762-1796, Part II: The High Command," *Jahrbucher fur Geschichte Osteuropas,* 33, no. 2 (1985): 183-188.

function of these relationships in early modern societies."[69] In the eighteenth century, a patronage network was deeply engrained into Russian military culture. It was more than just a casual relationship from which benefits were sometimes extracted but "a political system based on personal followers (or clients)." In this system several parties had something to offer each other. Usually, clients offered patrons their political support or money, but "also their deference, expressed in a variety of symbolic forms (gestures of submission, language of respect, gifts and so on)." In return they received hospitality, recommendations, jobs, and protection, from their patrons. This is how the patrons were "able to convert their wealth into power."[70] As John LeDonne summed it up, in a society with a static view of the social order and in the absence of strong legal traditions, "the resulting general insecurity placed a premium on personal relationships that cut across institutional frameworks."[71]Within the army these personal relationships created a system outside of government control; they created a space where a culture with its own rules could develop.

The patronage networks ranged from the powerful familial connections of the pinnacle of the Russian nobility, to weak, broken and sometimes non-existent ones

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[69] Sharon Kettering, "Patronage and Kinship in Early Modern France," *French Historical Studies*, 16, no. 2 (Autumn 1989): 408. For patronage networks in eighteenth-century Russia see Geoffrey Hosking, "Patronage and the Russian State,"*Slavonic and East European Review*, 78, no. 2 (April 2000): 301-312. Hosking defines patronage as "an ongoing hierarchical but to some extent mutual relationship under which a client offers goods, services or support to a patron in return for protection and perhaps promotion of the client's interests or other benefits. It is an informal relationship which contains no element of contract and is unrelated to law as officially understood." Ibid., 301. See also David L. Ransell, "Character and Style of Patron-Client Relations in Russia," in Antoni Maczak and Elizabeth Mueler-Leuckner, eds., *Klientelsysteme im Europa der Fruhen Neuzeit* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1988): 214-224; and Valerie Kivelson, "Kinship politics/autocratic politics: a reconsideration of early eighteenth-century political culture," in Jane Burbank and David L. Ransel, eds., *Imperial Russia: New Histories for the Empire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 5-31.

[70] Peter Burke, *History and Social Theory* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 72. A good example of a formation of a patronage network between Potemkin and Jean le Bon, a French émigré who would stay in Russia after 1789 and later become one of Potemkin's suite, is described by his nephew Aleksei Imberg, "Iz zapisnoi knizhki Alekseia Osipovicha Imberga," *Russkii Arkhiv,* no. 7 (1871): 373-374.

[71] John LeDonne, *Ruling Russia: Politics and Administration in the Age of Absolutism, 1762-1796* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 20. For a good overview of the legal tradition in the eighteenth century see Richard Wortman, *The Development of a Russian Legal Consciousness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), chapter 1.

among country gentry. Through connections of fathers, uncles, brothers-in-law, but also mothers, noble families enrolled their sons into the best regiments, fought for staff positions, and expected swift promotions. Above all the aim was to enter the youth into one of the prestigious guard regiments which meant perpetuation of wealth, status, honour, and of course political power, for the family. It was not only that conditions of service in the elite guard regiments were better (during Catherine's reign they never saw active military service), but also that these regiments protected imperial palaces which gave them incredible political significance.[72] The guard regiments were the places where young noblemen passed through the first ranks of military service, and which carried more weight than serving in the army. After serving in the guards the youngsters were automatically promoted by at least two ranks when they joined the army, so sergeants and corporals from the guards often became ensigns (*praporschik*) or junior lieutenants (*podporuchik*).[73] Furthermore, being in the capital, close to the court, gave the guardsmen the opportunity to participate in power struggles and political intrigues.[74]

Only very few, such as Count Aleksandr Ribopier for example, did not have to worry about patronage networks. Ribopier was five years old when he was promoted to captain in the guard cavalry, but such cases were an exception rather than the rule. Ribopier was the son of one of the twelve *fraulines* at Catherine's court and since only ten boys were the recipients of such royal favours during all of Catherine's reign, they represent a statistical anomaly.[75] The other ten thousand or so officers often had to rely

[72] In the eighteenth century almost all of the Russian monarchs ascended the throne through a political coup d'etat with guard regiments playing the key role. Taylor, 41.

[73] Aurova, 37.

[74] For example, N. A. Salbukov, "Zapiski N. A. Salbukova," in *Tsareubiistvo 11 marta 1801 goda. Zapiski uchastnikov i sovremennkov.* Izd. 2e. (St. Petersburg, 1908), 9. Also Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Prince of Princes: The Life of Potemkin* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2000), 30.

[75] This of course contradicted Catherine's edict about accepting people under 15 years of age into military service. Aleksandr Ribopier, "Zapiski grafa Aleksandra Ivanovicha Ribopiera" *Russkii Arkhiv*, 1, no. 4 (1877): 470 and 474. The other boys who belonged to this group of young captains were all sons and grandsons of field marshals and major political figures. They included four grandsons of the illustrious Prince Potemkin, a son of Prince Saltykov, among others.

on patronage networks. To become a member of this elite group, called the officer corps, commonly required some influential patrons. The memoir of Prince Petr Volkonskii is a good entry point into the world of strong patronage networks that seamlessly carried young nobles to officership in the guards. Born in 1776, Volkonskii was enrolled as a sergeant into the Preobrazhenskii guard regiment on the day of his baptism.[76] Clearly the two events had the same significance in the minds of Petr's parents.

The Preobrazhenskii and Semenovskii regiments were founded by Peter the Great at the dawn of the eighteenth century, and were considered to be the oldest and the most influential regiments in the Russian army. As Volkonskii clarified in the first pages of his memoir, only those nobles "who had a chance" could take advantage of the opportunity of early enrolment, especially when it came to the most prestigious regiments of the empire. In his case this chance was presented by his uncle, Prince Dmitrii Volkonskii, who was an officer in the Preobrazhenskii and who successfully lobbied on Petr's behalf. After formal enrolment, little Petr was given a leave of absence (*uvolnitelnyi passport*) until the end of his studies after which he had to return the regiment.[77]

Whereas most families would have been ecstatic at the prospect of their son serving in the Preobrazhenskii regiment, Petr's candidacy was pushed further still. His own father was an officer in the royal cavalry regiment, and evidently wanted his son to follow in his footsteps. The royal cavalry regiment was considered to be the most prestigious and glamorous service among the Russian nobles, Catherine herself being its colonel. Due to his father's close friendship with Ivan Mekhelson, the famous vanquisher of the Pugachev rebellion and a major in the royal cavalry, Petr was

[76] P. M. Volkonskii, "Rasskazy P. M. Volkonskago," *Russkaia Starina*, 16, no. 5 (1876): 176.
[77] Ibid.

transferred from Preobrazhenskii into the guards cavalry with the rank of *vits-vakhmeistr*.[78]

In 1792, when Petr was sixteen years old, Uncle Dmitrii once again had a chance to intervene by mobilizing an extensive network of family and friends. As it turned out, Dmitri was related to General Nikolai Saltykov, brother of the Field Marshal Ivan Saltykov and of Sergei Saltykov, who in the 1750s was the first lover of the empress. Another helpful connection was General Aleksandr Rimskii-Korsakov, a relative of another of the empress's favourites. With such a pedigree behind his back, Petr was destined to serve in the oldest and the most prestigious regiment of the Russian army and his place in the elite guards regiment was assured.[79] In 1793 Petr was promoted to the rank of ensign, and the next year, at the age of 18, he became a junior lieutenant in the Semenovskii regiment.[80]

After a quick stint as an adjutant to another of his uncles on a mission to the Prussian court, Petr returned to St. Petersburg and settled into the quiet routine of regimental adjutancy at the Semenovskii regiment. However, when Petr arrived to assume his new duties there were already two adjutants too many. But the four young men - Kristopher Liven, Prince Aleksandr Shcherbatov, Sergei Repninski and the new arrival – managed to work out a comfortable compromise in dispensing their duties. They decided that the workload was to be equally distributed, which meant that each adjutant had only about one working week a month before it was the turn of another officer. This relaxed schedule allowed Petr to visit his parents on their estates for the majority of the month, except when it was his turn to spend the week serving in the

[78] Ibid. The rank was the equivalent of a junior sergeant in the cavalry.

[79] Nikolai Tregubov was also a guardsman in the Semenovskii regiment during the reign of Catherine II, but he also does not describe his path to officership except by chronological remarks about his promotion. In his case it was the efforts of Count Andrei Tolstoi (1721-1803) that transferred Tregubov from an army regiment to the guards. Nikolai Tregubov, "Dela davno minuvshikh let. Zapiski senatora Nkolaia Iakovlivicha Tregubova," *Russkaia Starina*, 136, no. 11 (1908), 314.

[80] Volkonskii, 177.

regiment.[81] Once again it helps to put Volkonskii's experience into context. In the French army of the same period, for example, most officers "spent at least 4 months a year away from their regiments."[82] The proximity of the Volkonskiis to the throne, an enterprising father and uncle, and single-minded determination to implant the youngest member of the clan at the intersection of political power and military prestige were key to Petr's membership in military culture. Even though the young adjutants spent a lot of time away from the military they still associated themselves with the army and thought about themselves as soldiers, sharing military backgrounds, ranks, and promotions.

Volkonskii's case is probably an extreme example, illustrating the path of a small minority of the Russian nobility, but he was not the only one. Fedor Pecherin also relied on family connections, but his education no doubt played a role as well. Born in 1773, he graduated from Moscow University in 1791 and in 1792 went to enrol in the army. With a letter of introduction in hand from his father, Pecherin went to see an old friend, Igor Markov. Markov and Pecherin's father were once young pages at the court together, and now Markov was a major-general and a major in the Preobrazhenskii guard regiment. He agreed to enrol his old acquaintance's son into service, and Pecherin became a *kaptenarmus* or *capitaine d'armes*, which was a junior officer rank in the supply and provisions department. Pecherin's immediate superior was another family friend.[83] The same could be said of the experiences of Mikhail Zagriazhskii when he was enrolled in the military. One of his relatives was married to the daughter of Field

[81] Ibid., 178.

[82] David Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare As We Know It* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007), 26. And as Bell added, "the army was delighted to see them go," because the French army was suffering from extreme excess of officers. In 1789 it provided "full time employment for less than a third of its 35,000 active officers."

[83] Fedor Pecherin, "Zapiski Fedora Panteleimonovicha Pecherina, 1737-1816," *Russkaia Starina*, vol. 72 (1891, December): 599.

Marshal Razumovskii. Another family friend was Aleksandr Mamonov, the favourite and lover of the empress. In due course these helpful connection produced results.[84]

Lev Engelgardt was similarly elevated to the Preobrazhenskii regiment on the wings of family patronage networks. Engelgardt came from a distinguished and well-connected family that was originally from Courland and had served the kings of Poland.[85] Due to his father's connections the eleven-year-old Engelgardt was enrolled in the Belarusian hussar regiment as a cadet. As Engelgardt wrote, "I still remember my childhood joy and excitement, when I was dressed in hussar uniform; the most thrilling for me was the sabre with sabretache."[86] The young boy was already impressed by the symbolic trappings of military culture.

When Engelgardt was thirteen years old, his uncle became the commander of the very regiment where he served. His uncle was the nephew of the famous Prince Potemkin, the powerful favourite of the empress, and no doubt due to the family's closeness to the prince, young Engelgardt was transferred from the hussars to the elite Preobrazhenskii regiment as a sergeant. In 1783, due to his family's ties with the powerful Potemkin clan, Engelgardt was made one of Potemkin's adjutants at the age of seventeen.[87]

Close ties with Potemkin also played an important part in the journey to officership of Adrian Denisov, the future hetman of the Don Cossack host and a participant in the famous campaigns of Field Marshal Aleksandr Suvorov. Denisov was born in 1763 into a noble and well-connected Don Cossack family. By the age of seventeen his father always took Adrian with him whenever he had to go see his

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[84] Mikhail Zagriazhskii, "Zapiski (1770-1836)," in A. A. Il'in-Tomich, ed., *Litsa. Biograficheskii al'manakh. Vypusk 2*, (St. Petersburg: Feniks, 1993), 98-100.

[85] Lev Engelgardt, *Zapiski L'va Nikolaevicha Engelgardta, 1766-1836* (Moscow: Izdanie Russkago Arkhiva, 1868), 1.

[86] His father was helping another officer, Colonel Drevich, to mange his estates and the latter agreed to enrol his son into his regiment as a favour. Ibid., 6.

[87] Ibid., 37.

superiors or attend the court, clearly with the intent of showing off his son but also so that the young man could make his own connections.[88] In 1783 Denisov and his brother were enrolled in one of the four regiments the Cossacks were sending to the Crimea, probably to bolster Potemkin's army. The boys ended up in the regiment of their uncle, Major Timofei Denisov.

Coming from an important Cossack family, young Denisov was often courted by Potemkin. He was invited to Potemkin's dinners and even attended a general staff meeting at the Prince's headquarters, no doubt the courtesy of his father.[89] Eventually Denisov was made one of Potemkin's orderlies, but since the position of glorified secretary and messenger boy was far removed from the excitement of battle, he managed to ask to be relieved, obtained permission to leave military service and returned home to his parents, where he lived for the next three years.[90]

In 1787 the Second-Russo Turkish war of Catherine's reign was about to begin and Potemkin was gathering forces. The young son of a powerful Cossack family was certainly an asset and Adrian Denisov was called back to the army on the orders of Potemkin himself. Denisov's new job was to recruit and equip 1,400 men (*muzhikov*) for a Cossack regiment. Denisov was sent "enough cloth, hives and belts for the whole regiment," as well as 120 Don Cossacks for training new recruits, but among them was not a single officer. The years of shadowing his father were about to pay dividends. Adrian ordered that it be found out whether there were any literate scribes among the Don Cossacks he was sent, and after finding a few capable men a chancellery was organized. The chancellery was responsible for examining recruits and selecting those fit for service. "After creating a regimental registry," continued Denisov, "I divided it up

[88] A. K. Denisov, *Zapiski donskogo atamana* (St. Petersburg: VIRD, 2000), 31.
[89] Ibid., 35.
[90] In 1784 Denisov received the rank of the Chieftain of Don Forces (*Voiska Donskogo starshiny*), which was the equivalent of a Major in the regular army, but to survive on the annual wage of 50 roubles that came with that rank was quite impossible, according him. Ibid., 36.

into hundreds (*sotni*), chose two elders per hundred troops, and wrote up instructions outlining everybody's duties."[91]

By the beginning of 1788 the regiment was clothed, drilled, and ready for service, but then the Denisovs' patronage network broke down. He was ordered to transfer (*sdat'*) the regiment to another officer, while being excluded from its ranks. To add insult to injury, by order of Potemkin he was summoned to join the army as a volunteer.[92] What had happened was that Potemkin was displeased with Adrian's uncle, the Cossack hetman, and his displeasure extended to all of the Denisov clan. Bitter about such unfair treatment Denisov moped around Elizavetgrad where he visited Prince Iuri Dolgorukov (1740-1830) and General Ivan Gorich (1740-1788). The two were old acquaintances of Denisov's father who promised to intervene on his behalf with Potemkin.

When one patronage network failed to produce results, clients attempted to use another one. Dolgorukov and Gorich must have influenced Potemkin because after a few unsuccessful attempts Denisov was finally asked to show up at Potemkin's headquarters. After anxiously waiting for several hours in Potemkin's reception room, a ritual many men had to endure, a young officer finally walked by and whispered to the visitor: "Do not be sad; you will soon find out that you received a regiment."[93] On the next day Denisov was summoned again to the headquarters and was formally informed that his highness wished him to take over the very same one he had helped to form.[94] At twenty-five years of age Denisov became a regimental commander. His family connections first

[91] Ibid., 40. The extensive bibliography appended to the memoir lists all of the archival documents associated with Adrian Denisov and his campaigns, but there is no reference to his regimental instruction. I have looked for this document in the RGVIA, but was unable to find it. After consulting with the RGVIA archivist specializing in eighteenth century documents, Kiril Tatarnikov, we came to the conclusion that the document has either been lost or is yet to be discovered.

[92] Ibid., 41.

[93] Potemkin's reception room was a place of a symbolic display of the Prince's power. See chapter 4 above for more details. Ibid., 42.

[94] Ibid., 43.

played an important role in becoming close to Potemkin and then the same connections worked against him to undercut his military career, only to be saved by old friends of his father, themselves senior officers in the army.

Another detailed account of the journey to officership comes from the pages of the memoir of Ilia Glukhov, who was born in 1760. Glukhov and his older brother represented another typical case of well-functioning family patronage network. When Ilia was ten years old his father took him and his older brother to Moscow where there lived an old family friend whom the father had known since his days in military service. The boys were enrolled at Moscow University and the father returned back to his estate. It was the passing visit of an uncle, that familiar figure in patronage networks, which put the boys on the path of a military career.

In 1771 Ilia's uncle Nikolai, who was a captain in the elite Semenovskii regiment, was riding through Moscow and the two youngsters were immediately introduced to him upon his arrival. As Glukhov wrote, Nikolai took them under his wing with "fatherly care" (*otecheskoe popechenie*).[95] Nikolai withdrew the boys from the university and brought them with him to St. Petersburg. As soon as they reached the capital, Nikolai arranged for the boys to enter the Artillery and Engineering Noble Cadet Corps.[96]

Since the Cadet Corps was full and there no places for new students, for the time being the boys had to live on their own and wait until places freed up by graduating students.The good uncle stepped in once again. Before leaving for Georgia, Nikolai gave

[95] I. A. Glukhov, "Zhizn'," *Shchukinskii Sbornik,* 6 (1907): 203.

[96] For a recent history of the cadet corps see Nadezhda Aurova, *Sistema voennogo obrazovania v Rossii: kadetskie korpusa vo vtorii polovine XVIII - pervoi polovine XIX veka* (Moscow: Institut Rossiiskoi istorii RAN, 2003). Most of the book is focused on the 19th century, but Chapter 1 provides a good overview of the institutions in the eighteenth century. Between 1762 and 1800 the Noble Cadet Corps graduated close to 2,000 students, 820 of which became officers. Over about the same period of time 1,500 student of the Engineering Noble Cadet Corps also entered the military. Bruce Menning, "Paul I and Catherine II's Military Legacy," in Frederick W.Kagan and Robin Higham, eds.,*The Military History of Tsarist Russia*,(New York: Palgrave, 2002), 81.

his nephews enough money for food to last the whole year, bought the boys uniforms, and even left them an extra sum for miscellaneous expenses. Ilia and his brother were probably some of the most comfortable students in the capital. The next year, in 1772, the Glukhovs were finally enrolled as full timecadets (*vvedeny v komplekt*), and two years later Nikolai came from the army to watch the boys take their examinations in person.[97]

By 1776 Ilia's older brother Georgii was made a *shtik-junker*, which was the equivalent of junior-lieutenant (*podporuchik*) in the army. The tireless benefactor Nikolai, "who happened to be in St. Petersburg at that time," supplied Georgii with money to buy new uniform and soon Georgii was sent to join his new regiment, stationed in Kazan'. In the same year Ilia also passed his general examinations. The Glukhovs were the lucky beneficiaries of a well-connected family. First a friend of their father helped them to enter Moscow University, and then their uncle helped them to enrol in the Cadet Corps, gave them money, monitored their academic studies, and then set the older brother up for military service.

It often happened that the task of preparing children for military service fell to mothers. The most famous example of this matriarchal power was probably Princess Ekaterina Vorontsov-Dashkov (1743-1810). Her husband was killed in the opening campaigns in Poland against the Confederation of Bar in 1768, which left Ekaterina in charge of preparing her son, Pavel (1763-1807) for his military career. She did this with obsessive persistence. When Pavel finished his studies in Europe, Catherine began to exploit her good relations with Potemkin and her friendship with the empress to find a good place for him in the army.[98] At the age of seven Pavel was made an ensign in the royal cavalry regiment, the same one where Petr Volkonskii was to serve as a junior-

[97] Glukhov, 203.
[98] Ekaterina Dashkov, *Zapiski* (St. Petersburg: Azbuka, 2011), 191.

lieutenant, and the empress promised to gradually raise Pavel through the ranks while he was studying abroad. When Pavel was almost eighteen, his mother wrote letters to the empress and met with Potemkin in person to find out to what rank her son had been promoted and to what regiment he was to be assigned.[99] A few days later she received a formal letter informing her that Pavel was now a staff-captain in the elite Semenovskii guard regiment.[100]

Prince Pavel Dashkov was not the only officer in Catherine's army who owed his successful career to the stubborn efforts of a matriarch. Sergei Mosolov was another young man who advanced through the connections of his mother.[101] Mosolov was born in 1750 into a family with a military heritage but humble background. His father was a retired artillery captain and died when Sergei was ten years old. But before Mosolov senior passed away he called in his son to bless him with his old military marching icons (*pokhodnye skliadni*). It is very probable that this ritual marked Sergei for a military career and began the mental preparation for military service, a preparation that was continued by his mother, Daria. Sergei remembered how she told him about the military career of his father and about how he had fought against the Prussians in many battles of the Seven Years' War.[102] Family stories clearly had a major formative influence in introducing young nobles to military culture.

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[99] Dashkov evidently had a back-up plan in case Potemkin could not help her. She contacted another powerful figure, Petr Rumiantsev, and also asked him about the possibility of Pavel serving as his adjutant. As Dashkova wrote in her memoirs "Field Marshal Count Petr Rumiantsev went to the Military College with the request to make him [Pavel] his adjutant." But she did not know if this request had been fulfilled. Ibid., 203.

[100] Ibid., 205.

[101] Another example of the importance of mothers in their son's military career is the story from an earlier generation, of the famous poet Gavril Derzhavin. Derzhavin's father, a retired colonel, died when his son was four years old which meant Derzhavin's road to officership was long and difficult. His mother, however, went to see a local official, encouraged education, and pushed the young man in the direction of military service. Eventually Derzhavin became a regular soldier in the Preobrazhenskii regiment, in 1762, when he was 18 years old. In his case it was both patronage and education that helped him become an officer. Gavril Derzhavin, *Zapiski Gavrila Romanovicha Derzhavina, 1743-1812* (Moscow, 1860), 6-16.

[102] S. I. Mosolov, "Zapiski," *Russkii Arkhiv,* 1 (1905): 124. Mikhail Petrov also wrote about the role of his parents, especially his father, in him becoming an officer. Mikhail Petrov, "Rasskazy sluzhivshago v

Utilizing family connections, Daria Mosolov went to see Sergei's older brother, Ivan, in the city of Arzamas where he worked in the civil service. The young Sergei was left there for two years under the auspices of his brother and his bride. "To tell the truth," confessed Sergei in his memoirs, "it was very difficult for me to live there on account of the fact that the bride was exceptionally mean." Eventually the older bother took Sergei back to their mother, probably at his young wife's insistence or perhaps because there was no gainful employment for the young man in the city.

When the first attempt at securing patronage failed, Daria Mosolov continued to rely on family connections and the next winter took Sergei to Moscow. There she met with an old acquaintance, Countess Praskoviia Saltykova, the wife of Field Marshal Petr Saltykov. Their friendship dated back to the days when Saltykov and Mosolov senior had served together in the Seven Years' War. Saltykov kindly agreed to enter Sergei in the Arkhangelgorodskii regiment as a musketeer. Sergei clearly did not belong to the high nobility to qualify for a guard regiment.

The old field marshal himself took Sergei by the hand and led him to one of the colonels, by the name of Neronov, and requested "that he take care of me and teach me everything that is required for military service." Neronov took Sergei with him and asked if he knew anybody in the regiment, clearly an attempt to identify a patron for the new recruit. The young man answered that his mother had told him"that you have a junior-lieutenant (*podporuchik*) with my family name, Andrei Mosolov." Once again the guiding hand of Daria Molosov was apparent, for Andrei was another one of Sergei's older brothers.[103] In winter 1785, at the age of fifteen Sergei Mosolov was finally enrolled in a regiment. The new uniform caused him as much excitement as it did young

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1-m egerskom polku polkovnika Mikhaila Petrova o voennoi sluzhbe i zhizne svoei i trekh rodnykh bratiev ego, zachavsheisia s 1789 goda," in F. A. Petrov, et. al., ed. *1812: Vospominaniia voinov russkoi armii* (Moscow: Mysl', 1991), 116.

[103] Ibid.

Lev Engelgardt. "When they dressed me in the uniform of a soldier it made me so happy, that now I cannot even explain it," recollected Sergei.[104] The psychological and emotional influence of the uniform and its role in drawing young nobles into military culture should not be underestimated. Andrei Bolotov (1738-1833) who belonged to an earlier generation, recounted in his memoirs the full effect that dressing in his first uniform had on him.

> One way or another, for me the call of a soldier was the highest honour, and once they tailored me a small uniform, and found a corporal's trim, I did not know what to do with myself from joy. Thus I entered military service, even though I was ten years of age, but already I began to think about the military and in my free time entertained myself with such things that were relevant to it.[105]

Finally, as Mikhail Petrov, a noble officer in Catherine's Russia, wrote about his own experience, "The arrival of our father's brothers for home leave, one in the red uniform of an infantry officer and the other in the fine (*kazistom*) hussar attire, delighted us about our future fate…"[106] Sergei Mosolov was not the only one who fell under the spell of the military uniform, and the symbols, values, and aspirations that it presented. The uniform was a part of the material culture of the broader military culture of Catherine's reign and would become an issue of contention after Catherine's death because of what it represented.

When Daria Molosov came to visit her son in his new regiment, he was already well on the way to becoming an officer and fully immersed into the military culture.[107] In the spring of 1785 a rifle-swinging and uniformed Sergei Mosolov was ready to show off his newly acquired skills to the regimental commander, Colonel Neronov. Sergei performed several drills for which the colonel praised him and promoted the youth to the

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[104] Ibid., 126.
[105] Andrei Bolotov, *Zhizn' i Prikliucheniia*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1870-3), 76-77.
[106] Petrov, 116.
[107] Mosolov, 125.

rank of *podpraparshik* or sub-ensign, the rank just below commissioned officer. The same day the mother whisked her son away from the regiment and once again took him on a career-building trip to Moscow. There Sergei thanked both Field Marshal Saltykov and his wife, wearing his spiffy uniform and new epaulets (*pozumentami*).

Daria Molosov must have been satisfied with her efforts. Her sixteen-year-old son was now on a steady path to becoming a professional soldier, he belonged to a good regiment, and he could always count on the help of his older brother, whom she once again reminded not to leave Sergei in want.[108] In 1767 the regiment began its march into Poland to put down the uprising, and two years later Colonel Neronov, probably with a nod from the old Saltykov, finally promoted Molosov to an adjutant when a vacancy opened in the chancellery of Field Marshal Petr Rumiantsev.[109]

The cases examined so far describe strong patronage networks and extensive familial connections, but what happened when patronage networks failed, or familial connections did not exist? The following two cases of Aleksandr Pishchevich and Ivan Migrin illustrate that even for nobility of the old regime the path to officership was often a long and arduous affair. Pishchevich wrote that he was the first in his family who could call himself Russian. He was born in 1764 to Serbian parents who had immigrated to Russia during the exodus of the 1750s, during the reign of Empress Elizabeth.[110] Pishchevich senior served in the armies of Prince Potemkin during the First Russo-Turkish War (1768-1774) of Catherine's reign and retired as a colonel. His sons were given the privilege of enrolling in the most prestigious regiments of the army: the young Aleksandr was given the rank of ensign (*praporshchik*) in the hussar guards regiment

[108] Ibid., 126.
[109] Ibid., 127.
[110] A. S. Pishchevich, "Zhizn' Pishchevicha." *Chteniia v Obshestve Istorii i Drevnostei Rossiiskikh,* 1 (1885): 8.

and his brothers were made sergeants in the elite Preobrazhenskii regiment.[111] Despite this seemingly privileged position at such a young age, Aleksandr's path to officership, which he described with surprising candour and humour, would be one of the most laborious of his peers.

In 1782 Aleksandr's enterprising father took him to St. Petersburg and began feverishly to search for a regiment for his son. Pishchevich does not explain why he could not serve in the regiment he was enrolled in as a child, but most likely it had to do with the fact that guard regiments were bursting at the seams with extra officers, as described by Petr Volkonskii.[112]Artillery was the father's first choice and so the retired colonel went directly to Prince Orlov, Catherine's favourite, to ask to enter his son into an artillery regiment.[113] Orlov declined this request, explaining that since Aleksandr was not trained in artillery, the enrolment of someone from a different branch would offend artillery officers waiting for a spot. It was an excuse given to a man with a poor patronage network. Disappointed, the father went to General Fedor Bauer (1734-1783), the author of the 1762 memoranda to Catherine about the army reform, to see if his son could be entered into the general staff. Bauer's answer was similar to Orlov's. There was a long line of people waiting for a place. Cleary Pishchevich's connections were not enough to jump to the front of the line. When these venues were barred, the father decided to enrol his son into a guard regiment, just like the parents of the great nobility. With this in mind he made a request to see Prince Potemkin himself. But unlike Princess Dashkova, Pishchevich senior was not granted an audience with Potemkin in person, but had a meeting with one of his adjutants instead. Predictably, the answer he received "was also unsatisfying," wrote Pishchevich. All these rejections brought his father into

[111] Ibid., 17

[112] Similarly, Petr Volkonskii also does not explain why he was shuffled from the royal cavalry regiment to the Semenovskii regiment.

[113] Presumably Pishchevich meant Count Fedor Grigorievich (1741–1796). Ibid., 22.

deep bitterness against Orlov, Bauer, Potemkin, and his son. When it became evident that the patronage networks had collapsed the decision was reached to enrol the young man into a line regiment.[114]

Finally, an old acquaintance and a relative of Prince Potemkin, Pavel Potemkin, agreed to enter Pishchevich into the St. Petersburg dragoons regiment of which he was the commander, and promised that in a few months Pishchevich would be made a quartermaster, and after that a senior adjutant. [115] In six months General Pavel Potemkin sent Pishchevich a letter informing him that he had finally been accepted to the St. Petersburg dragoon regiment, but instead of making him an adjutant or a quartermaster, Aleksandr was enrolled as a regular junior officer.[116] In the meantime, the father forbade his son to return home, and was told to stay with his maternal, Croatian uncle.[117] From that moment on, the uncle assumed the burden of preparing the young man for service.[118]

Pishchevich's path to officership was certainly a lot more turbulent than that of Volkonskii or Engelgardt. If there was anything that he had in common with the young men from the high nobility, it was his affectionate uncle. Aleksandr's father was turned down by three people he tried to contact, and in the end, the fourth patron, Pavel Potemkin, delivered only half of what he had promised.

What happened when there were no kind uncles to offer lodging, to lend money, or write letters of introduction? Ivan Migrin, a nobleman and a Black Sea Cossack, left

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[114] Ibid., 23.

[115] Ibid., 24. Paul Potemkin owed a great deal to Pishchevich's father, who used to lend him money when the latter was a poor officer in the early 1770s.

[116] Ibid., 25.

[117] Ibid., 32.

[118] The uncle's first advice to Aleksandr was to gallop to his regiment immediately and ask permission from the colonel for more time to get ready for his service. To this effect the uncle wrote a letter of introduction to the commander of Aleksandr's regiment. Expulsion from service was a very real danger. See for example Anon., "Nachalo vospominanii neizvestnogo, pisanykh v 1859 godu," in *Sbornik Starinnykh Bumag, Khraniashchikhsia v Muzee P. I. Shchukina*, vol. 8. (Moscow, 1901), 170-1, whose author was enrolled into the Izmailovskii regiment as a child in 1784 but then was expelled from military service for absenteeism.

probably one of the most interesting records of one's incidental journey to become an officer in the Russian army in the late-eighteenth century. Migrin was born in 1770 into a military family, where his father and his grandfather were both ensigns (*praporshchiki*). By the age of eighteen, he had gainful employment in the local administration and was ready to settle for an unexceptional life as a provincial clerk.[119]

It was the time just before the beginning of the Second Russo-Turkish War (1788-1791) and it was a chance encounter that changed Migrin's life and brought him into the Russian army. One day an old acquaintance, a young man by the name of Evtushevskii, who was then serving as a medic (*lekar'*) in the army stationed in Moldavia, was passing through Migrin's town on the way to his estate. The two struck up a friendship and since Evtushevskii soon had to go back to the army "he began to convince me to come with him, promising to help me enter a regiment where after a year of service I would attaintthe rank of ensign (*praporshik*) and come home as a military officer," wrote Migrin. Eventually he succumbed to the smell of gun powder and the glitter of the military uniform, and secretly left with Evtushevskii without saying anything to his parents or his employers in the local administration.[120]

By the time they arrived in Moldavia, where Evtushevskii's regiment was stationed, it turned out that the regiment had already found a new medic and Evtushevskii was supernumerary (*za shatom*). Another ten days lapsed in anxious waiting for a reassignment. By this point the young soldiers of fortune were almost penniless and starving. On top of this "Evtushevskii accused me of eating his half [of food]," complained Migrin.[121] "My situation was most difficult," he continued,"one can

[119] Ivan Migrin, "Pokhozhdeniia ili istoria Ivan Migrina chernomorskogo kazaka,"*Russakia Starina*, no. 9 (1878): 1.
[120] Ibid., 2-3.
[121] While they were in Bender arguing over food ratios, Ivan met one of his countrymen who was already a junior officer and who invited him to join his regiment. But just like Sergei Tuchkov, Ivan

even say, desperate. Far away from my homeland, without any connections, without money and even bread, I did not know what to do with myself." But this was about to change. One day he saw a boat full of Black Sea Cossacks coming ashore and when it docked a man with the Cross of St. George jumped off. It was Colonel Golovatyi, the head of the Cossack infantry in Potemkin's army. A casual conversation between the two strangers would be life-changing for the young adventurer.

Migrin was evidently still well dressed and so Golovatyi going past him wanted to know who he was, and what was he doing here. "I explained to him, that I was a nobleman, had come to foreign lands, that I had neither money or food, was almost dying from hunger, and wished to enter military service," wrote Migrin. After finding out that he was literate and well-educated by the standard of the day, and that he formerly worked as a secretary in a land court. Golovayi needed literate officers and in a few hours Ivan Migrin was officially enrolled in the army with a job as secretary to an alcoholic colonel.[122] One of Ivan's assignments was to make a careful inventory of the regiment's ammunition, food, and other supplies.[123] He evidently proceeded with great thoroughness and honesty for Golovatyi was pleased with the result. He recommended that Ivan be entered onto the list of *khorunzhik*, a Cossack equivalent of a junior-lieutenant. In another example of relative autonomy of the military culture during Catherine's reign, Migrin wrote that "This is an officer rank, and should have required the approval of the highest authority - but back then it was simpler - just by the appointment of Golovatyi I became an officer."[124]

Migrin wanted to join the cavalry and so turned this opportunity down. Furthermore, there was no guarantee his friend could actually secure him a commission. Ibid., 3.

[122] Ibid., 5.

[123] Eventually the regiment complained collectively about the drunkenness of the colonel who was called to explain his conduct to Golovatyi himself. He showed up drunk, made rude remarks to the Cossack chieftain and was summarily dismissed. Ibid, 8.

[124] Ibid., 9.

The evidence found in the memoirs points to the importance of family and patronage in bringing individuals into the orbit of military culture. Fathers, mothers, and the ubiquitous uncles all tried to open doors for future officers. They also introduced youths to military culture by sharing stories about wars and campaigns, by glorifying Russian military heroes, and by dressing up the youngsters in uniforms, among other things. Patronage networks played an immensely important role. Without good family connections, and powerful friends, the journey to officership was a complicated affair, as Pishchevich and Migrin had found out. There is enough evidence to demonstrate the importance of patronage networks, explain how they worked, and to suggest that at least at times military culture operated independently from the central authority. However, patronage was not the only ticket into the exclusive club of the officer corps and military culture.

Education

In the eighteenth century, in addition to patronage, education also played a crucial role in forming and perpetuating military culture and in preparing young nobles for their entry into it.[125] Especially in Russia, a nobleman's service record began the day he finished his studies. When later in their lives officers would write petitions and ask for letters of recommendation, they would cite their 30-or even 40 year-old service record, which started after the youthful years of their education.[126] There were three kinds of educational strategies that were available for preparation for military service.[127] The families occupying the top pantheon of the nobility relied exclusively on tutors, mostly

[125] For example see Dennis E. Showalter ""No Officer Rather Than a Bad Officer": Officer Selection and Education in the Prussian/German Army, 1715-1945," in Greg Kennedy and Keith Neilson, eds., *Military Education Past, Present, and Future* (Westport: Praeger, 2002), 35-61.

[126] For example, RGVIA, f. 53, op. 1/194, d. 59, ch. 1, l. 39. The officer wrote that he had served for more than 44 years but at the time of the petition he was 63 years old. That meant that he began his service at the age of 19.

[127] See also Raeff, *Origins of Russian Intelligentsia*, 126.

foreigners. The middling nobility used a combination of private tutoring and boarding schools called *pansiony*. The lesser country gentry often put the education of their children under the auspices of a local priest, or in the hands of a regimental commander.

Princes Petr Volkonskii and Pavel Dashkov undoubtedly belonged to the first group. Volkonskii remembered how he was educated "in the house of my parents who always tried to find the best tutors and, within their means, never spared any expense for this purpose."[128] Volkonskii does not go into any other details of his intellectual development, but because he came from a wealthy, princely family that valued education, it would be safe to assume that the Volkonskiis had an extensive library, and his father's connections and family wealth afforded the best tutors in the country. Furthermore, there is significant evidence to indicate that Petr Volkonskii's education was often supplemented by practical knowledge when the boy finished his studies. By the age of fifteen, Volkonskii's studies were over and his diligent father decided to introduce his son "to real service" by enrolling him in a series of regiments. The education of Pavel Dashkov was even more privileged. His mother, Ekaterina, was both wealthy and educated and took her son abroad. Even contemporaries were impressed by Pavel's erudition. For example, Filip Vigel', the famous Russian memoirist, commented that Pavel, "at the behest of his mother received a diploma in law from Edinburgh [university]."[129] There was a growing emphasis on formal knowledge in the late eighteenth century, and it was clearly seen as beneficial in the military profession.

The advantages of home education were significant, but only a small number of the nobility could afford it, due to the high costs associated with hiring tutors.[130] But such education usually was considered superior to boarding schools and cadet corps.

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[128] A similar path was taken by a representative of an earlier generation of nobility, Dolgorukov, 482-3.
[129] Fillip Vigel, *Zapiski,* vol. I (Moscow, 1928), 8.
[130] The cost of hiring tutors was quite expensive and often one tutor was hired for several children. N. V. Aleksandrova, "Spetsifika vospitaniia i obrazovaniia rossiiskogo dvorianstva v posledneii chetverti 18 veka," *Vestnik Cheliabinska*, no. 1 (1998): 26.

Sergei Tuchkov, the future lieutenant-general, a senator, and a mason, left probably the most detailed record of home schooling military education of his time. Tuchkov's mother left the young boy in the care of his grandparents and moved back to her own estate. At the age of 3 Sergei was taught the alphabet and catechism. The next year Tuchkov senior returned from the Russo-Turkish war and took the whole family with him to St. Petersburg.[131] "Here my father and my mother began to ponder – should I be enrolled in the cadet corps, some other public school, or be home schooled?" wrote Sergei. The parents decided on the latter, and in the meantime their son was enlisted into the artillery regiment as an *unter-officer* (a non-commissioned officer rank, under-officer) and was granted leave for home schooling.[132] It was not the quality of instruction in the corps that decided the issue of Tuchkov's education, but family relations. "One had to be enrolled there [in the cadet corps] for 18 years in order to receive the rank of officer. Such prolonged separation in my youthful age from the family seemed too much for my mother, and that is why it was decided to educate me at home," he explained.[133]

When the family moved again, the father hired a local priest and an officer to teach his five-year-old son how to write and read in Russian. "Both of them had not the slightest ability to make their scarce knowledge either relatable or interesting," remembered the student.[134] After two years of such riveting education, Tuchkov was enrolled in a school run by a Protestant pastor. This "respectful man" knew Latin, French, German, Russian, and Swedish, in addition to history and geography. After two years Tuchkov's father was promoted to major-general and was transferred again, this

[131] Sergei Tuchkov, *Zapiski Sergeia Alekseevicha Tuchkova* (St. Petersburg, 1908), 4.
[132] Ibid., 5.
[133] Ibid. The courses in the cadet school were focused on military sciences that would prepare young men for public life and military service, and the German and French languages were taught there quite well, commented Sergei. The actual time students had to spend in the cadet corps was closer to 14 years.
[134] Ibid., 5.

time to Kiev. On the way there the Tuchkovs stopped in St. Petersburg to find a permanent tutor for their son. It was a common practice to advertise for a tutor in the city's newspapers, wrote Sergei, and soon enough the Tuchkovs' apartments were flooded with potential instructors. Few agreed to the father's conditions of moving to Kiev and, more crucially, preparing his son to pass the military academy exams, which was necessary if Sergei was to be granted a commissioned rank.[135] To gain a commission aspiring officers had to pass exams depending on what branch of military service they wanted to serve in. The examinations for the army were taken either at the Noble Cadet corps or the Engineering corps. The rank of the graduate depended on how well he did on the exams, which included subjects such as languages, mathematics, history, geography and others. For example, in the Noble Cadet Corps there were seven exams and successful completion of all of them earned the graduate the rank of a lieutenant.[136] Tuchkov knew the importance of the exams and finally a tutor of Dutch extraction was found to school him. This man agreed to all the conditions; the only problem was that he did not speak a word of Russian.[137]

In Kiev Sergei began to study French, and continued to study the German and Russian languages, along with history and geography. As far as the traditional subjects of eighteenth-century education were concerned, Sergei's father was quite unconventional. He forbade his son to learn fencing, explaining - "I don't want my children to duel." And he scoffed at horse-back riding lessons - "Our Cossacks never set

[135] Ibid., 6.

[136] If the candidate passed five out of the seven exams he graduated as a junior-lieutenant, and if he passed only two out of seven exams, he graduated as an ensign. A. I. Kamenev, *Istoriia podgotovki ofitserskih kadrov v Rossii* (Moscow: VPA im. Lenina, 1990), 29-30. See also M. S. Lapatev, *Istoricheskii ocherk voenno-uchebnykh zavedenii, podvedomstvennykh Glavnomu ikh upravleniiu*, vol. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1880).

[137] As Tuchkov wrote, "My tutor was very well traveled, and had been several times to America, India, and Africa but as was soon discovered, he seemed to be slightly mad." It turned out that the Dutchman was a member of a secret society and practised alchemy with relish. "Since he had no knowledge of chemistry," observed Sergei facetiously, "all of his experiments were a total failure, but he never gave up." Tuchkov, 7.

foot in the ménage, but are sturdier than other nations on the horse and know how to manage it without any lessons."[138] Finally, in the eyes of Tuchkov senior poetry, philosophy, and music were considered to be quite useless in the upbringing of a future military officer.[139] The army was a place for dedicated professionals, not philosophers and flute players.[140] Like many high administrators of his time, Sergei's father had a large chancellery inside their house, where he kept many of his engineering projects, graphs, and drawings. This was a natural meeting place for his friends and subordinates. Taking advantage of frequent guests, Tuchkov senior managed to convince some of these gentlemen to teach his son arithmetic, geometry, fortification, artillery, and drawing.[141]Armed with this knowledge, at the age of seventeen the home-schooled Sergei Tuchkov passed the military exams and was made a lieutenant in the artillery.[142]

Immediately below this privileged group of home-tutored young officers resided men like Lev Engelgardt and Adrian Denisov, who belonged to the middling nobility. Just like Tuchkov, Engelgardt was brought up by his grandmother until he was five years old. "My physical education was in line with the teachings of Rousseau, even though my grandmother had not only never read this author, but barely knew Russian grammar," remembered Engelgardt. He confessed that he barely learned anything during that time and was the most spoiled grandson.[143]

At the age of nine, his education began in earnest. Engelgardt was taught Russian grammar by a local priest, which took him almost two years to master.[144] A year later

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[138] Ibid., 8.
[139] Ibid. The twelve-year-old Sergei developed an interest and love for poetry and music. He secretly read and wrote out Derzhavin's poems, and even tried to write his own. His father discouraged such activities.
[140] When Sergei taught himself to play the flute and read music, his father objected that it could be detrimental to his health. "My father forbade me to do this, with the excuse that I have a weak chest," he wrote. Ibid., 11.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid., 21.
[143] Engelgardt, 3.
[144] Ibid., 5.

his father hired a tutor for sixty roubles a year, a retired lieutenant who taught Lev Russian writing, basic arithmetic, and the German language. To learn French Lev first studied with a Jesuit priest. When the efforts of the Jesuit and the lieutenant showed no results, Lev began to study with his sister and her French governess, who was hired for five hundred roubles annually.[145] The next year Lev was brought to a boarding school where he stayed for another year, terrorized by a despotic German headmaster. The students studied a smattering of subjects including the catechism, grammar, history, geography, and mythology, all without the slightest explanation (*tolkovanie*) by their instructors. One redeeming feature of this school, in Engelgardt's eyes, was the almost military discipline in which the whole place was kept. The students were beaten without any remorse with the leather soles of shoes, with wooden shovels, and with knouts, and were made to kneel for three or four hours for the pettiest infraction.[146] All the learning was predicated on beatings (*na paboiakh*). "Such splendid education left many students maimed," sardonically remembered Engelgardt, "however, it seems that I needed this to change my lazy nature"[147] By the time he left the school, Lev excelled in arithmetic and geometry, and was a good dancer and fencer. He had also acquired fluency in French, which was admittedly easy to do, because speaking Russian in the school was forbidden.[148]

Meanwhile, Lev's father was promoted to vice-governor of Mogilev and sent his son to the school of General Zorich, a wealthy Serbian émigré who had opened an impressive military academy for young cadets. Lev praised the school for its good

[145] Ibid., 6.
[146] Ibid., 7.
[147] Ibid., 8.
[148] Ibid., 7. Another product of the boarding school system was Iakov de Sanglen, whose father died when he was only four years old. His mother sent her son to Reval (modern day Tallinn) which was a thoroughly German town in the eighteenth century. De Sanglen finished his education at the age of 17 and was accepted into the navy, as a translator for Vice-Admiral Spiridov, probably Alexei Grigorievich (1753-1828). Sanglen, 445-446.

teachers and quality of instruction. It contained 300 pupils and later the school would be officially renamed the 3rd Cadet Corps and its graduates would be given officer commissions in the army. "Many of these officers came out with much knowledge, especially in mathematics," added Engelgardt.[149] After a year at Zorich's school Lev spent a short time studying practical geometry with one of his father's friends, at which point his formal education was over at the age of fourteen and the duties of a guardsman were about to begin. However, Engelgardt would continue to advance his military education while serving with the army. In his spare time, during the winter, he read up on recent tactical works, fortification treaties and other books about military science. Many of them came from the library of his acquaintance, Prince Pavel Dashkov.[150] Engelhard was not the only officer who continued to pursue military knowledge on his free time. In this he was part of a generation of officers who began to share the idea of military enlightenment and value professionalization as an end in itself. It was this generation of people who help to make Russian military culture more self-conscious and autonomous.

However, it was not until he was twenty years old that Engelgardt, now a second-major, received a proper military training from a relative. His brother-in-law, who was a brigadier-general, explained to him the perils of his position - of becoming a major and not being familiar with the customs of military service. He reminded Engelgardt that if he became a colonel and a regimental commander, he would not be respected by his peer officers and, what is even worse, he would be despised by his subordinates.[151] Engelgardt's brother in-law invited the young man to join his regiment and learn the duties of military life first-hand, to which Engelgardt readily agreed and

[149] Engelgardt, 9.
[150] Ibid., 59.
[151] Ibid.

"went to live a camp life".[152] Lev performed the whole service of a line officer which included guard duties in the camp, drill instruction, standing on pickets, and soon got a taste of the front-line life. By the time the regiment was ready to leave the camp, Lev was executing all the duties expected of a major. "I could now be sent to any regiment and without shame hold on to my rank," he proudly remarked.[153] At last the spoiled grandson became a professional officer. This self-inflicted component of practical military education showed how professionalism was slowly taking root in the Russian military culture. Even the scions of the powerful elite like the Volkonskiis were occupied with imparting some military training to their sons' education. It reflected how the ideas about what constituted an officer and attitudes to military service were tilting in the direction of more specialized knowledge. The expectations of an easy-going life were giving way to the realities of the growing technical requirements of war. Moreover, merit, respect, and obedience were something that Engelgardt and his brother-in-law clearly valued as part of their identity and their profession.

The educational experience of Adrian Denisov in many ways was similar to that of Engelgardt. He studied the alphabet until the age of seven, but he confessed that he did not entirely master it and he could barely write before the family moved away with his father's regiment. By the age of twelve, his education continued in the regiment's chancellery, where Denisov was taught reading by a competent officer in his father's suite.[154] When the family moved to St. Petersburg Denisov was given into the care of the Aleksandr Nevsky Monastery, where he studied Russian and German. After several months he was taken out of the monastery, for reasons that he did not discuss, and enrolled in a boarding school under the supervision a Frenchman, where he spent more than a year. But due to the hot temper of the headmaster, by which we can presume

[152] Ibid., 95.
[153] Ibid., 60.
[154] Denisov, 29.

regular beatings, his father transferred him to a different boarding school where, under the benevolent guidance of a new headmaster, Adrian discovered an aptitude for arithmetic. Once he had finished studying "cubes and squares" he asked his father to begin studying geometry.[155] Unfortunately, Denisov senior had no knowledge of this subject but promised his son that he would ask around if any of his friends could tutor him.

By the age of seventeen the future leader of Cossack armies summed up his education as a smattering of several subjects, most of which he knew only superficially: some knowledge of the French language, in which he could not write, arithmetic, some knowledge of geography and religious history, and fluency in Russian, in which he could write and read.[156] And even though he was no longer a student, Denisov's father still attempted to sponsor his education. "My parent, after taking me away from the boarding school, never ceased to concern himself with my education, never left me out of his sight, and ensured that I spent my free time reading and writing," he recalled.[157] Denisov's father clearly wanted his son to continue reading books even after his formal education was over, but unfortunately did not posses a home library. Instead he requested his officer friends in St. Petersburg to send his son their books. However, most of what Adrian received in the mail was novels and romances, instead of the serious literature the young man hoped for.[158]

Families who could not afford to hire private tutors for their sons or pay for boarding schools, but still wanted them to embark on a military career, sent their

[155] Ibid., 30.
[156] Ibid., 31.
[157] Ibid., 30.
[158] Adrian recalled the books he received were mostly romance novels "full of useless wonderment (*negodnymi prelestimi*)." Ibid.

children to cadet schools.[159] Petr Poletika's memoir is the only detailed description we have of life in the cadet corps during Catherine's reign, and offers a compelling contrast to the experiences of officers like Tuchkov who were home-schooled. During Catherine's reign there were three major military education institutions. The Noble Cadet Corps (*Sukhoputnyi Shchliakhetnyi korpus*), the Artillery and Engineering Noble Cadet Corps, and the military academy run by General Zorich. Throughout the eighteenth century these institutions graduated over five thousand officers.[160]

Petr Poletika was born in 1778 and his father was a courtier and a medical doctor who studied in Holland to receive his degree.[161] Due to lack of means to educate their children at home, the parents were forced to petition to education institutions to accept their sons as pupils. Petr and his older brothers were finally accepted into the Noble Cadet Corp, and in 1782 the four-year-old Petr was brought to St. Petersburg to enrol.[162]

The student cadets were divided into five age groups, each separated by three years. This meant that in theory the cadets were about twenty-one years old when they graduated as junior officers. Petr did not remember much about his first three years, aside from the harsh beating by the governesses, and the fact that he almost died from what he called "education fever." Unsurprisingly, the small and weak Poletika made

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[159]For more information about how rule and regulations of the cadet corps, see the regulations, co-author by Catherine, *Ustav Imperatorskogo Shchiakhetnogo Sukhoputnogo Kadetskogo Korpusa* (St. Petersburg, 1766).

[160] By 1800 the Noble Cadet Corps was renamed as the 1st Cadet Corps, the Artillery and Engineering Cadet Corps became the 2nd Cadet Corps, and the Zorich school became the 3rd Cadet Corps and was transferred to Moscow. Aurova, 86. The Navel Cadet Corps graduated 3,036 officers between 1753 and 1802. Aurova, 88-89. For an excellent overview of military education establishments in the eighteenth and 19th centuries, see M. Lalaev, *Istoricheskii ocherk voennykh zavedenii* (St. Petersburg, 1880). The most recent study of the Cadet Corps is Vladimir Danchenko and Gleb Kalashnikov, *Kadetskii korpus. Shkola russkoi voennoi elity* (Moscow: MiM Del'ta, 2007).

[161] P. I. Poletika, "Moi Vospominania," *Russkii Arhiv*, 3, no. 11 (1885): 306. Peter's godfather was Ivan Boltin, famous for his works about Russian history, which meant he did come from a relatively well-connected family. For the importance of Boltin and his works see Rogger, 228-238 and Whittaker, chapter 5.

[162] Poletika, 307. Even though the earliest age of enrolment was six, Peter was accepted due to his father's connections.

only marginal progress in these early years, but he managed to learn how to read and write in two languages, French and Russian, and some basic arithmetic.

In 1785 he was transferred to the second age group. The change in staff meant that the French governesses were now replaced by French tutors who were poorly educated (*nevezhdy*), rude, and cruel in treatment and punishment of their charges. The only Frenchman from this collection of educators that Poletika remembered was a man by the name of Jaquino (*Zhakino*) who later became well-known for establishing a famous boarding school (*pansion*). Under his guidance Petr developed a taste for reading books and began to make progress in his studies.[163] Speaking Russian in the cadet corps was forbidden, so the knowledge of French was reinforced. Despite the harsh early years, Petr wrote that "I cannot complain regarding myself during this stage of my education." Echoing the words of Lev Engelgardt, Poletika wrote "To tell the truth, it was beneficial for me." Clearly the necessity for discipline, sometimes even in its most brutal form, was approved as a part of preparation for military service.

In 1791 he was placed in the third age group where French tutors were replacedby army officers. At this point the cadet corps received a new director, Count Anhalt-Dessau, an enlightened foreigner serving in Catherine's government. The new director pursued an innovative education policy. He dedicated to the corps "his unbounded attention and, one could even say, fatherly care."[164] His approach to educating the future officers was symptomatic of larger trends of the Enlightenment. In the recreation hall, books about history, geography, and languages were left for the students to read in their spare time, and the walls were decorated with maps. The most creative part of the new director's approach to education was the so-called "talking

[163] Ibid., 308.
[164] Ibid., 309. Also V. Selivanov, "Iz davnykh vospominanii," *Russkii Arkhiv,* no. 1 (1869): 162-3.

wall."[165] The walls of the garden were specially painted with astronomical drawings and moralistic expressions extracted from different books.[166] "In other words, useful, even though superficial information of different kind always struck one's eye, so that even those pupils who were less disposed towards learning than others, unwittingly accumulated at least some knowledge," summed up Poletika.[167]

In the meantime, by 1791 Poletika continue to ascend the seniority ladder of the cadet corps. He was now in the fourth age group and the study acquired a markedly military air: the boring, grey tunics gave way to green military uniforms, and military discipline, along with military exercises, were introduced.[168] In 1794 Poletika finally reached the last age group. During this time the old, kind, Anhalt died and was replaced by Mikhail Kutuzov, the future hero of the Napoleonic Wars.[169] In these last years the desire to graduate and leave the cadet school was so great that it completely consumed Poletika. "During my lonely walks in the cadet yard I could think of nothing else," he remembered. The cadet school began to acquire the trappings of a prison.

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[165] See also Sergei Glinka, *Zapiski Sergeia Nikolaevicha Glinki* (St. Petersburg, 1895), 72-73.

[166] In addition to his talking wall, there was another curious custom practised under Anhalt. The cadets had to write their thoughts about what they had read throughout the week on special blackboards and every Sunday there was a public reading of everything that had accumulated on the blackboards throughout the week in the presence of the corps director. The verdict of F. N. Glinka in his memoirs is perhaps one of the most penetrating. He wrote "Separated by their wall from the civilian world, the pupils (*pitomtsy*) of science and theory were left behind this wall without venturing outside for about a decade, taking with them from their exile feelings of sensitivity, kindness, often so fool hearted that it was amusing, and an inclination for romantic day dreaming…" F. N. Glinka, "Vospominania," *Moskvitianin*, vol. 1 (1846): 46. As Aurova suggests in her book *Ot kadeta do generala*, "Anhalt's system meant that 'the day dreamers' under certain conditions could become 'political day dreamers' as it actually turned out in the end." Even though it could be dangerous to draw a straight line between these two events, the reference here is of course to the Decembrists, the heirs to the unique military culture of Catherine's Russia. In other words military culture as it evolved in late eighteenth century played an important role in the intellectual rebellion by the officers in the 19th century. Aurova, 144. As Hartley concluded "The result was that far from creating a "praetorian guard" or "janissaries" of the rigid and limited thinkers or actors, the Russian officer corps produced free thinkers, some of whom then went on to challenge the nature of the state that had educated them." Hartley, *Russia, 1762-1825*, 68.

[167] Poletika, 310. Eventually Anhalt published a small pocketbook, under the name *Muraille Parlante*, comprised of all the sayings expressed on his garden wall. Peter proudly kept this little book in his library even as an adult. See also A. A. Pyl'nev, "Rekreatsionnyi zal Impertorskogo Sukhoputnogo Shchliakhetnogo korpusa v iskhode proshlogo stoletiia," *Pedagogocheskii sbornik*, no. 4 (1883): 244.

[168] Poletika, 310.

[169] For Kutuzov's tenure as the director see Pavel Zhilin, *MikhailIllarionovich Kutuzov: zhizn' i polkovodcheskaia deiatel'nost'* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1978), 54-56. Also Liubomir Beskrovnyi, ed., *M.I. Kutuzov: dokumenty*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Voen. izd-vo, 1950), 345-374.

When Poletika was eighteen years old there "finally came the hour of liberation." And it came from the most unlikely source. On 6 November 1796 Catherine II died of a heart attack, and a few days later, with barely the crown on his head, her son, the new emperor Paul, was already inspecting the classrooms of the cadet corps. One time Paul dropped in during a night-class, and caught the students, including Poletika, in their drawing course (*v chertezhnom klasse*). The emperor inspected the blueprints of the students, including Poletika's, and ordered that five top pupils be released immediately for service. "Even though I was among the best students in the class, I almost got excluded from this group of graduates due to the fact that I was not distinguished in my drawings," wrote Poletika.[170]He was saved by the director of the school who, seeing how devastated the young man was, felt sorry for him and decided to intervene on his behalf. Kutuzov gave Emperor Paul a special recommendation about Poletika which put him in the ranks of the graduates.

While the recommendation letter Kutuzov wrote for Poletika to Paul has probably been lost a long time ago, in an attempt to reconstruct its content it is worth looking at similar documents from the period. A case in point is the recommendation issued for Rudolf Ilmer. Ilmer, like Poletika, came from Polish nobility, and just like Poletika he was in the 5th age group when he received the recommendation discharging him to the regiment of his choosing. In July 1786 Rudolf was 24 years old "and in his position showed himself to be diligent and deserving of a reward (*nagrazhdeniia*)". The letter went on further to state:

> …in view (*vrassuzhdenii*) of the fact that he has carried out his difficult duties in this cadet corps with distinction, this corps asks that the above

[170] Peter described a sad episode of how one of his close friends at the cadet school, who was repeatedly denied graduation due to his poor marks, finally committed suicide by shooting himself in the head. Ibid., 313. V. Selivanov wrote that when Mikhail Kutuzov became the new director of the cadet school there was a revolution of sorts and the relaxed atmosphere of the Anhalt years gave way to strict discipline and severe punishments. Selivanov wrote that he had heard that two cadets had jumped out of the windows and killed themselves. Selivanov, 165.

> Ilmer be promoted to ensign (*praporshchik*) in the Uglitskoi infantry regiment to which according to his wishes he should be sent without any delay; as it states in the attached document he is 24 years old, from the Polish nobility, served as a *podpraporshchik* [sub-ensign, a non-commissioned rank] since November 1, 1780, and as a sergeant from November 29 same year; has never been court-martialed and is definitely worth the promotion (*k povysheniui dostoin OPREDELINNO*).

The letter concluded with the order to adminster the oath of alliegence for the new officer, and to issue the diploma for his new rank (*nanovopozhalavovannoi chin uchinit' prisiagu, za povysheniezhe i patent vychet' posle ukazu*).[171] Poletika's recommendation letter, authored by Kutuzov, must have also cited his dilligence in studies and his good behaviour, among other things. So ended Poletika's fourteen years of unbroken instruction at the cadet corps. Many years later the author confessed to having nightmares in which he was still a student at the cadet corps and waking up in cold sweat with a great sense of relief that it was only a dream.[172]

Aleksandr Pishchevich traced an education path similar to Poletika and the Glukhov brothers.[173]At the age of ten his stern father hired him a French tutor and at the

[171] RGVIA, f. 314, d. 8369, l. 7. Another, shorter example of a reccomendation for promoting 2 young cadets can be found in Ibid., l. 9. Their dilligent behaviour and effort in studies were the basis for their recommendtaion for promotion to the next rank.

[172] Poletika, 312. At the same time it's important to remember that not everybody had the same gloomy experience at the cadet corps. For example, for a contrast with Poletika's sombre tone, see the diary of the illegitimate son of Catherine the Great and Count Orlov, Aleksei Bobrinskii, who it seemed spent more time dining outside the walls of the cadet school than studying within them. Aleksei Bobrinskii, "Dnevnik grafa Bobrinskago vedennyi v kadetskom korpuse i vo vremia puteshestviia po Rossii i za granitseiu," *Russkii Arkhiv*, 3, no. 10 (1877): 116-131.

[173] Ilia Glukhov, who also became a student in one of the cadet corps, did not leave such a detailed chronicle of his education in his memoirs as Poletika. Yet in many ways he traced a path similar to Poletika but in the Artillery and Engineering Noble Cadet Corps. He was educated by a combination of home tutoring, probably with a help a local parish priest. As a child he was taught how to read Russian and do rudimentary arithmetic. In the first year at the corps the Glukhovs were taught geometry and algebra, Russian grammar and syntax, geography, the German language, and had drawing and dance lessons. Next year the course of studies intensified. History was now added to the list of subjects, and a year after that artillery and fortification along with French language were also studied. In 1774 the Ilia and his older brother took a break from their studies and went to visit their parents. Their father was on his death bed, which probably explains why the uncle played the paternal figure in boys' lives. After spending a month and a half with their parents the cadets returned to St. Petersburg and drowned the sad news of their father's death in doing mathematic exercises and history homework. When Ilia turned eighteen he passed his general examinations and a year later he was finally awarded the rank of engineer-ensign, which he reminded his readers was an equivalent of junior lieutenant (*podporuchik*) in the army. Glukhov, 202-204.

age of thirteen, in 1777, Pishchevich left his home to join the cadet corps.[174] He entered the engineering cadet corps when the Glukhov brothers were now in their senior year. Pishchevich confessed that he felt indifference and boredom whenever talk came to algebra and other mathematical subjects, but that he was an avid reader of history and geography. "By the age of fifteen I was already familiar with all the great military leaders," boasted Pishchevich. His favourite was Prince Eugene of Savoy.[175] It was a telling sign of the influence of military culture that the young man's hero was a famous Habsburg military commander from the age of Louis XIV.

While living with his uncle and waiting to join his regiment, similarly to Lev Engelgardt, Pishchevich also voluntarily enrolled in the regiment of his relative to become accustomed to military service. He too sought to compliment his cadet education with practical skills. He spent his free time reading and conversing with his uncle about military sciences, in which the latter happened to understand a great deal. Furthermore, Aleksandr often joined the drills of the Macedonian regiment which was then under his uncle's command, and "which supplied me with good practice for my future service".[176] This regiment was drilled and educated according to the teachings of General Rzhevskii, whose military manual and ideas will be examined in chapter 3.[177] Dedicated study and even practical stints in service were an importance part of Russian military culture during Catherine's reign. An officer not only had to know how to socialize with his superiors and how to find his way around a ballroom, but also had to show himself to be proficient in drill, and knowledgeable in weapons, fortifications, tactics, and other subjects of military craft. Above all he had to strive to be respected by his men. Engelgardt and Pishchevich volunteered to serve in their relatives' regiments to

[174] Pishchevich, 11.
[175] Ibid., 14.
[176] Ibid., 33.
[177] Ibid., 34.

learn the customs of military life, to acquaint themselves with realities of service, and attempted to read the latest literature on the subject. Even the illustrious Volkonskii decided to introduce his son to military life early on. If anything this trend points to the incipient growth of a sense military professionalism in the age of Catherine II, even if it was for now displayed by only a few.

Finally, at the very bottom of the educational pyramid were young people like Sergei Mosolov, whose widowed mother could not afford to send him to a military school let alone hire a private tutor. Sergei was born in 1750 into a family with a military heritage and like many of his peers, was educated by the village priest in the nearby church. His father was a retired artillery captain who had a sound knowledge of fortifications, astronomy, and mathematics. He was also fluent in German, and as Mosolov remembered from his childhood, their country house was a cultured destination of many dignified guests. By the age of ten, when his father died, Mosolov had learned to read and write in Russian. No doubt he benefited from his father's erudition and family library.[178] To further introduce her son to the profession of arms Daria told him about the military career of his father and even gave him all of his father's military books along with his hand-written notes.[179] It was an attempt to pass on not only knowledge but also values, heritage, and customs of military culture.

Mosolov's education continued in the army. His memoirs present the only account we have so far, and probably the only one we will ever get, of education in an eighteenth-century Russian regiment. The commander of the regiment, Colonel

[178] The subject of home libraries is explored in Nadezhda Aurova, "Pomeshchich'i biblioteki v kontse xviii-nachale xx vv.," in *Sel'skaia Rossiia: proshloe i nastoiashchee* (Moscow, 2010), 53. Yet there is still no comprehensive study examining what were the most important military books that were read by this generation of Russian officers and the nature of their influence upon their readers. A ground-breaking study by Ira Gruber attempted to do just that for the British army. Ira Gruber, *Books and the British Army in the Age of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010). Gruber based his work on case studies of 42 officers. In the case of Russia during the same period, identifying the same number of detailed memoirs is a challenge.

[179] Mosolov, 124.

Neronov, collected all the young nobles in his headquarters and founded a gymnasium. He brought a teacher from Moscow who taught the students mathematics, the Russian language, rhetoric, and later arithmetic, geometry, trigonometry, algebra, history, and religion. Moreover, the colonel also ordered books and different study instruments from Moscow for his regimental gymnasium. Military preparation was not neglected either. The students practised their soldierly duties, which included standing on guard, marching, rifle training, and musketeering. Eventually a large hall (*fligel'*) was built to house the school, which was divided in two parts: one part was for the children of nobles and the other part for the children of regular soldiers. Sergei wrote that there were about seventy young nobles and almost as many other children in the school. What was even more impressive was the egalitarian tuition system that Neronov introduced for his pupils-the colonel paid for poor nobles out of his own pocket.[180] A regiment was more than a military unit, it was a place where military education was received, military values were inculcated, and military culture perpetuated. For his excellent performance during the exams, which were held in the presence of the colonel and all the staff officers, Mosolov was promoted to the rank of sergeant. Furthermore, the headmaster made him the tutor for other nobles who were struggling with their studies. Mosolov continued to learn French, horseback riding, and ballroom dancing, until 1767 when the regiment began its march into Poland.[181]

The picture that emerges from the available sources is that while patronage networks still played an important role in becoming an officer, knowledge itself was also beginning to become a cultural ticket into military. Just like Ivan Migrin, the Black Sea Cossack whose education propelled him into the officership in the imperial army,

[180] Ibid., 126. Alexander Suvorov, the famous military hero of Catherine's reign, also set up schools when he was a regimental commander, as must have many other colonels.

[181] Ibid., 127. For a brief description of another regimental schooling see Ivan Andreev, "Domovaia letopis' Andreeva, po rody ikh, pisannaia kapitanom Ivanom Andreevym v 1789 dogu," *Chtenia v Imperatorskom Obshchestve Istorii i Drevnostei Rossiiskikh,* 5, no. 5 (1870): 74.

the French émigré Iakov Sanglen's entrance into the officer club was predicated on his education rather than patronage networks. The author confessed, however, that his studies at first were very slow due to being conducted completely in German. But soon the 12-year-old-youth fell in love with the 25-year-old daughter of one of the professors in the boarding school, who cleverly informed her suitor that she would answer his advances only if he became a top student. This evidently had an electrifying effect on Sanglen, for in four years he passed all his courses with top marks and even received a silver sword on completion of his school for outstanding scholastic achievements. At his graduation he presented the governor-general of Reval, Nikolai Panin, with one of his poems, after which the young scholar was invited to dine with all the distinguished members of the city. In 1793, at the age of 17, Sanglen earned a comfortable position in the staff of the famous naval hero, Vice-Admiral Spiridov, no doubt due to his studies.[182]

By the time Catherine ascended the Russian throne, education was continuing to grow in its social and practical importance.[183] Education, whether with a tutor, who often was a retired military man, in a boarding school, or in a cadet corps, introduced young men to the basic principles of military culture – strict hierarchy, the award of the next rank after a certain number of years, and the unconditional subordination to one's superior.[184]All of this played an important role in the formation of military values and identity.

The final step in the journey to becoming an officer, once the promotion has been confirmed and the education finished, was the taking of the military oath. As General Reingold Iogan von Meiendorf wrote in his military treatise in 1777, "The

[182] Sanglen, 445.
[183] The empress took a personal interest in the Cadet Corps and the education of future officers. Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West*, 144.
[184] Aurova, *Ot kadeta do generala,* 365.

military oath is the premier and most important union of a soldier with his regiment and with his government…"[185] Taking military oath was a process that tied the nobility closer to the institution of Russian autocracy, both legally and psychologically, for every officer was required to sign an oath of allegiance (*kliatvennoe obeshchanie* or *prisiaga*). It was a document of surprisingly powerful language that was designed as a contract with the existing political system and served as a ticket into an exclusive club. The following oath of service was signed by Ensign Fedor Toskisovskii in January 1763:

> As below named (*Az nizhneimenovanny*) I promise and swear before Almighty God on his Holy Bible that I want and must serve, diligently and honestly (*nelitsemerno*), her Imperial Majesty, my gracious and great monarch, Empress Catherine Alekseevna, the Russian autocrat, and her imperial highness' son Tsarevich, Grand Duke Paul Petrovich, the lawful heir of the Russian throne; not to spare my stomach until the last drop of my blood…and try to promote in the best way everything that concerns Her Imperial Highness or her government… I shall keep all of the military secrets that come to my knowledge…I promise not to act in contradiction to my oath and thus conduct myself as an agreeable and dependable slave and subject of Her Imperial Highness….[186]

The Russian oath of allegiance was not that different from other oaths in eighteenth-century Europe. For instance in England the oath was as follows:

> I swear to be true to our Sovereign Lord King George, and to serve him honestly and faithfully, in Defence of His Person, Crown, and Dignity, against all His Enemies or Opposers whatever: And to observe and obey His Majesty's Orders, and the Orders of the Generals and Officers set over me by His Majesty.

Despite the largely formulaic phraseology, what seems distinctly Russian about the military oath is that it was more detailed. It began with a declaration of importance of

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[185] Reingold Iogan von Meiendorf, *Opyt nekotorykh razsuzhdenii o voinstve voobshche, i osoblivo o ustroenii ispravnago polku v nastavlenii molodym ofitseram* (St. Petersburg, 1777), 20; also Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar,* 117.

[186] RGVIA f. 53, op. 1/194, d. 3, l. 60, 60ob. I have been able to find several variants of the oath, even though there was a standard prescribed model both in *Artikul Voinskii* and in general edicts. For example see, PSZ vol. 16, no. 11722. All of them were signed by the swearing new officer, and always by several witnesses, who included a senior officer and a priest. For example, RGVIA f. 53, op. 1/194, d. 3, l. 1066 and RGVIA f. 53, op. 1/194, d. 3, l. 418. For an example of a Catholic officer taking a military oath, see RGVIA, f. 52, op. 1/194, d. 301a, l. 160.

God and religion in the military, covered the keeping of military secrets, and exemplified a great degree of personal subjugation to the autocratic authority. In Russia the oath of allegiance was often administered by a priest; if the soldier was of a different confession, a religious representative specific to that confession was called to administer the oath, which was signed by several witnesses who usually included officers. Each document had subtle variations in its phrasing but many of their points coalesced around clear rhetorical blocks. References to God, Catherine, and Paul, to giving blood, to preparedness to sacrifice one's stomach, the promise to keep military secrets, and the physical and moral submission to the sovereign were common to all of them. Those soldiers who refused to take the oath or who later renounced it were excluded from military service and exiled.[187] There was a whole ritual surrounding this important step of entrance into the military culture. "Put the left hand on the Bible," instructed the *Military Statute*, "and the right up in the air with two fingers raised. And soldiers need only to raise their right hand, and repeat after the reader of the oath, and at the end to kiss the Bible. This oath is made to the general staff in the military chancellery, or to Staff, Ober, and Unter-Officers and other soldiers in front of the regiment or a battalion, with flying colours."[188] As one nobleman from Catherine's reign, Mikhail Petrov, remember in his memoirs, "The time of the beginning of my service in the Smolensk Regiment remained memorable for me…as pleasant and holy…." As Petrov explained,

> for there, for the first time, glistened and sounded on my young shoulders (*ramenakh*) a soulful desire and the magnificent adornment of a nobleman – a military weapon, entrusted to me by the Fatherland for its protection. There, under the standards, I uttered the oath of a warrior, requiring one to sacrifice one's tranquility, blood and life in defence of the Tsar's throne, the Fatherland, and the Holy faith.[189]

[187] For example, the case of soldier Mikhailov who renounced his military oath and was sent to Siberia in 1797. RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3034, l. 1.
[188] Anon., *Artikul Voinskii* (1777), 3-4. A sample of a military oath is presented on page 4.
[189] Petrov, 118.

The ritual of taking the military oath clearly had a profound effect on the nineteen-year-old youth, both psychologically and politically, and it also signalled the beginning of cultural and social identification with the military. After the oath of allegiance a cadet or a soldier recruit became a warrior and a member of the military culture.

Even though military oaths did not prevent officers from toppling Catherine's son, Paul, when he became the new emperor, their language was designed as a covenant welcoming new members to the service of the Russian royal house and binding them to the throne. They were perhaps one of the key documents that points at the existence of a military culture in eighteenth-century Russia, a culture with its own values, laws, and regulations, a culture that was designed on purpose to be distinct and different from the civilian sphere.

Conclusion

Looking at case studies of how young nobles became officers and how they became inducted into the military culture through the prisms of patronage networks and education brings to light how the military culture was being formed, reinforced, and perpetuated and what were the shared values intrinsic to that culture. First, there is some indication of tensions between the central government trying to reform the system of recruitment and enrolment of nobles into the army, and the active resistance by the nobility. While Catherine and her government were aware that patronage and favouritism were undermining the imperial army and were steadily passing edicts to curb the worst of the abuses, the letter of the law was consistently ignored, as exemplified by most of the authors' experiences. Patronage networks persisted in Catherine's Russia, and granted the military culture, among other institutional cultures, a degree of independence.

Second, regardless of family means, the authors unequivocally refer to their education, because it was seen as an important pre-requisite for a military career. This was the result of a pattern that began earlier in the century with the education reforms of Petr the Great. At first there was some resistance during Petr's reign, which was followed by acceptance during the reigns of Empresses Anna and Elizabeth, and finally ended with active noble pursuit by the time Catherine came to power in 1762.[190] Values of persistence, initiative, hard work, and education were beginning to coalesce. Knowledge was often a determining factor for young men who came from undistinguished backgrounds. Migrin, Mosolov, Poletika, and de Sanglin were all good examples of the growing importance of schooling to a military career. Literacy, knowledge of languages, and arithmetic were seen as vital. Frequent mentions of exams, supplementary readings, and voluntary field service further testify to the development of military culture. The fact that young officers volunteered to augment their education with service was telling. To this effect Senator Nikolai Tregubov, writing about his own early days in the army, commented that it was impossible to prepare for military service by reading books alone - "To really get to know it, one must be present with the ranks at exercises and do guard duty (*v stroiu na uchen'iakh i karaulakh*)."[191] As Marc Raeff summed it up, "the obligation to serve also implied the obligation to be educated."[192] This new obligation, in turn, was changing the face of military service, the definition of the officer, and Russian military culture. The experiences of officers in their earlier years point to the fact that during the reign of Catherine II patronage and education

[190] See for example Igor Fedyukin, "Learning to Be Nobles: The Elite and Education in Post-Petrine Russia," (PhD dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2009), who argued that during Anna's reign the government undertook a systematic policy to fashion a modern, Westernized nobility out of the Petrine elite. Even after Peter's reign the majority of nobles were not interested in opportunities for education offered by the government, especially in the Noble Cadet Corps, founded by Anna in 1731. However, by the time of Catherine II this situation has changed. As this dissertation shows, parents began to actively push their children to acquired wide and specialised knowledge. See also Raeff, *Origins of the Russian Intelligentsia*, especially chapter 5.

[191] Tregubov, 315.

[192] Raeff, *Origins of the Russian Intelligentsia,* 131 and Aurova, *Ot kadeta do generala,* 237.

served to broaden and reinforce the incipient military culture. It was a time when war began to shift from being the preserve of amateur adventurers to the field of concentrated study by dedicated professionals. When aspiring young men finally joined the military in one capacity or another, they also entered its culture, where the cut-throat race for promotions, awards, and ranks was just as desperate as that for receiving the first commission.

CHAPTER TWO

"Your Excellency needs only to wish it": Promotions, Awards and the Meaning of Merit

In the 1790s Prince Nikolai Repnin sent one of his favourites, a major, to Count Aleksandr Suvorov, the rising star in Catherine's army, with a recommendation letter to promote him to colonelcy. Suvorov met the major with extreme courtesy but at the same time tried to test his worthiness, his wit, and his ability to think on the spot. Suvorov was trying to see if the major was one of the *dontknowers* (*nemoguznaiki*), a word of his own invention that he used to describe the people unable to stand up to the onslaught of his bizarre questions. Suvorov tried hard but he could not fault the major as a *dontknower*. On the questions of how many stars were in the sky or how many fish were in the sea the major steadily supplied astronomical numbers. Finally Suvorov asked "What is the difference between Prince Repnin and me?" The question was a difficult and sensitive one, but the major did not lose his nerve and replied: "The difference is that Prince Repnin wants to promote me to colonel, but he cannot, and Your Excellency need only to wish it (*Raznitsa v tom chto kniaz' Repnin zhelal by proizvesti menia v polkovniki, no ne mozhet, a vashemy siiatel'stvu stoit lish zakhotet'*). Suvorov was satisfied with this witty reply and the major received his promotion.[193] This story sheds an interesting light on the meaning of merit, promotions, and awards, which still remain an unexplored part of Catherine's military culture.[194]

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[193] Anon., *Istoricheskie rasskazy i ankedoty* (St. Petersburg, 1885),362-363.

[194] For a recent Russian dissertation that examines ranks (*chinoproizvodstvo*) within the legal context see Lev Levin, "Chinoproizvodstvo v Rossii XV-nachala XX vv: Istoriko-pravovoi aspect,"(PhD Dissertation, St. Petersburg University, 2004), especially chapter 2.2 that covers the military ranks. From the military perspective, N. Glinoetzkii, "Istoricheskii ocherk razvitiia ofitserskih chinov i sistema chinoproizvodstva v Russkoi armii," in I. I. Efermov, ed., *Offitserskii Korpus Russkoi Armii* (Moscow: Russkii Put', 2000), 13-20. Since there is no work that examines the meaning of merit in the context of Catherine's reign, I searched eighteenth-century Europe in general for some broad examples and analytical models. Most helpful was the literature about revolutionary and pre-revolutionary France.

From the start of Catherine's reign, when her favourites such as the Orlov brothers were promoted to high military ranks, to its last days, when her young, handsome lover, Count Valerian Zubov, led an incursion into Persia, merit seems to have been peripheral in military culture.[195] Diaries and memoirs present a picture of almost total disregard for merit in the army where, ostensibly, favouritism and patronage ruled the fortunes of officers and soldiers. For example, Aleksandr Lanzheron wrote that generals promoted their hairdressers and cooks to sergeants, who later became officers and adjutants. He accused the same Suvorov of appointing 600 staff-officers in two years, and wrote that Suvorov's favourites openly sold ranks. Prince Grigorii Potemkin, Catherine's most illustrious favourite, apparently promoted officers for good dancing skills.[196] Was there no room for merit in Catherinian military culture?

This chapter shows that despite occasional nods to favouritism, the machinery of merit kept steadily humming in the background. As a matter of fact, Catherine's reign left behind a significant amount of evidence that points to the gradual development of a meritocracy and the articulation of merit in the military culture. To gain access to the

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Scholars of *ancien-regime* France have a long tradition of examining the role of merit in French aristocratic society and military culture. The most recent work is Blaufarb, *The French Army, 1750-1820: Careers, Talent, Merit* which asserts, among many things, that the idea of a "career open to talent" did not originate with the revolutionaries of 1789 but was formed by aristocratic reformers in the Old Regime army. Furthermore, the concept of merit that was espoused after the revolution did not rest on talent alone, as the myth suggests, but combined with education, patronage networks, and even social standing. See also Guy Chaussinand-Nogaret, who argues that the French nobility appropriated the idea of merit from parvenu commoners and emerging bourgeoisie classes, and thought that it could be used to their advantage. Guy Chaussinand-Nogaret, *The French nobility in the eighteenth century: from feudalism to enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). Perhaps one of the most conceptually interesting works on the subject is the one by Jay Smith, *The Culture of Merit: Nobility, Royal Service, and the Making of Absolute Monarchy in France, 1600-1789* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996). For our purposes, his most important claim has to do with the development of merit in the French army, in the second half of the eighteenth century. Smith argued that as military reforms, committees, and debates sought to articulate the meaning of merit in the army with the clear goal of improving its efficiency, they were simultaneously undermining the very foundations of the old regime.

[195] Varvara Bakunina, who accompanied her husband on that military expedition, complained that only one officer was ever promoted due to merit (*poluchivshii otlichie po zaslugam*). Thereafter rewards were given only to the favourites of Count Zubov "who, it should be pointed out, did not deserve them at all." Varvara Bakunina "Persidskii pokhod v 1796 godu. Vospominaniia Varvary Ivanovny Bakuninoi," *Russkaia Starina*, 53, no. 2 (1887): 357.

[196] Aleksandr Lanzheron, "Russkaia armiia v god smerti Ekateriny II," *Russkaia Starina*, 83, no. 3 (1895): 166; and no. 5 (1895): 186.

culture of merit is not easy. In many ways merit is a slippery concept because it is an idea, a value, something that is very difficult to fix or define. How does one document and convey merit, verify its existence, and analyze it? I decided to examine various forms of recommendations, especially personal letters of recommendation called *atestaty*, which are scattered across the personal chancelleries of Catherine's military commanders. Letters of recommendation allow us not only to document merit but also to evaluate the language used to describe, assess, reward, and convey it. They are important sources of cultural history because they speak about the shared values of military culture during Catherine's reign, of how individual merit was evaluated, and about how it was recorded and analyzed.

The Machinery of Promotion

Throughout Catherine's reign the army, along with the number of officers, continued to grow to meet new international challenges of her expanding empire.

Table 1: The Increase in the Number of Senior Officers during the Reign of Catherine II[197]

Years						
Ranks	1762		1774		1792	
Field Marshals	3	4%	4	4%	2	1%
Full Generals	8	10%	10	11%	14	9%
Lieutenant-Generals	18	23%	19	20%	41	26%
Major-Generals	48	62%	61	65%	101	64%
Total	77	100%	94	100%	158	100%

A quick quantitative analysis of available data in Table 1 reveals that while the absolute number of senior officers continued to grow during Catherine's reign, the proportions within the seniority pyramid remained remarkably stable. For example,

[197] The data for the table has been collected from RGADA, f. 20, op. 1. d. 219, ch. 1, l. 46 and 57-71; and ch. 11, l. 1. The percentage numbers have been rounded off.

while the number of major-generals increased by a factor of two between 1762 and 1792, it still constituted roughly 63% of the general officers. The data from the General Staff rolls also reveals that on average these men served for 30 years before being promoted to the general's rank. That being said, the years of service were counted from the time the young men began their studies. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the age could range from as early as 3 to as late as 18, depending on when the children were officially enrolled in a regiment. There were, of course, a few exceptions to this pyramid of promotions, such as Count Razumovskii who became a Field Marshal after only 7 years of service, or Major-Generals Mirian and Shemben, who served for 7 and 3 years respectively before becoming generals. But they were most likely foreigners and received their rank based on their previous experience abroad. On the other side of the scale was Fridrikh Numsen whom it took 56 years of service to reach the rank of Lieutenant-General. He entered Russian service in 1733 and was promoted to his final rank by Catherine in 1789.[198] If we ignore a few of these obvious anomalies associated with favouritism and foreign transfer, it appears that to become a senior officer in Catherine's army was a long and arduous affair. But we know relatively little about how the machinery of promotions worked, where it succeeded, and where it failed. This chapter will attempt to reconstruct the practices, means, and deliberations used for earning rewards in the military culture of Catherine's Russia.

The promotion process during Catherine's reign was both formal and bureaucratized. It usually began with an officer asking for a promotion in a document called *chelobitnaia*, or petition, where in several numbered paragraphs the applicant provided information about his service, described his skills, and finally justified the reason for asking for a promotion. The next step was to secure a letter of

[198] RGADA, f. 20, op. 1, d. 219, ch. 11, l. 1.

recommendation or *atestat*, or preferably several such letters from his superiors, which detailed the best qualities of the candidate, his acts of bravery, leadership characteristics, and how long he had been known to the referee.[199] The next step was requesting the record of service history (*posluzhnoi* or *formuliarnyi spisok*) which resembled a detailed curriculum vitae and documented the length of service in each rank, education, age, and whether one had ever been court marshalled or not. When the package was ready it was sent to a higher authority, such as to the chancellery of Prince Potemkin. The package was usually accompanied by a cover letter, called *raport*, written by the regimental commander which briefly summarized the contents of the package and what was being asked.[200] If the candidate got promoted to the next rank, received an award, or when he retired, he received an official "patent" with the royal stamp.[201] An excellent example of a complete document package is the one submitted by the Hussar Lieutenant-Colonel Leshievich in 1771. His package consisted of a petition letter asking for a promotion, a brief summary of his service record based on his *formuliarnyi spisok*, and three short *atestaty*: the first letter was written by Quartermaster-General Vokhovskii, the second by Major-General Zorich, and the third by Major-General Shcherbinin. All three attested to the bravery, good leadership skills, and unwavering service to the empire by Leshievich.[202]

The machinery for determining promotion in the military was coming together at the end of the 1760s and the beginning of the 1770s. It was outlined in official military manuals such as the *Military Statute*, *Military Articles* and crucially in *Instructions of*

[199] For example, a man by the name of Petrovich, who was just a humble major, managed to get several short recommendations including one from a general and another from a prince. RGVIA, f. 52, op. 1/194, d. 59, ch. I, l. 116.

[200] A good example is the package received by Potemkin's chancellery which can be found in RGVIA, f. 52, op. 1/194, d. 250, l. 114-116.

[201] For example, RGVIA, f. 53, op. 1/194, d. 15, l. 455. Also see PSZ vol. 13, no. 9690; vol. 15, no. 10952; and vol. 23, no. 17355.

[202] RGVIA, f. 52, op. 1/194, d. 59. ch. 1, l. 7-9. The high military ranks of the referees were impressive, and should have helped the lietenant-colonel to recieve his promotion. Zorich was Catherine's favourite, which suggests that Leshievich may have been a member of his patronage network.

the Infantry Regiment to the Colonel and the *Instructions of the Cavalry Regiment to the Colonel* which went through several editions throughout Catherine's reign and were authored by an impressive collection of experienced soldiers from the War College.[203] In addition to official government regulations, a score of private military manuals reinforced the ideas of merit, ability, and professionalism. These documents outlined the underlying legal framework for qualifying merit in Russia's eighteenth-century military culture. In general, non-nobles at the beginning of Catherine's reign had to serve for at least twelve years before becoming eligible for a promotion to the lowest officer rank, which was an ensign (*praporchik*). By 1766 the twelve-year rule was relaxed, and children of soldiers and priests had to serve only eight years to petition for an officer commission, while university graduates and foreigners could do so after only four years of service. For nobles, three years was the minimum time of service needed to enter the officer rank, and these were usually fulfilled by private studies and exams, or in cadet schools, as we saw in the previous chapter. As far as the Guards regiments were concerned, during Catherine's reign officers of the Guards still came exclusively from the nobility, but the majority of rank-and-file guardsmen began to be comprised of commoners.[204] As stated earlier, the major privilege enjoyed by the guardsmen, officer or not, was that upon enlisting in the army they were eligible for an automatic promotion

[203] *Ustav Voinskii* (St. Petersburg, 1776) and *Artikul Voinskii* (St. Petersburg, 1777). For the *Instructions,* see PSZ, vol. 16, no. 12289; vol. 22, no. 16586; vol. 17, no. 12543, as well as *Instruktsiia Polkovichiia* (St. Petersburg, 1764). Its authors included Count Razumovskii, Prince Alexander Golitsyn, Count Zakhar Chernyshev, Petr Panin, Kirill Volkonskii, Vasilii Suvorov, the father of the famous Aleksandr Suvorov, and Baron Thomas von Diz. Many of them were veterans of the Seven Years' War.

[204] Jerry Lee Floyd, "State Service, Social Mobility and the Imperial Russian Nobility, 1801-1856," (PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 1981), 65. Even though Floyd covered the eighteenth century only as a background, his dissertation traces venues of ennoblement and examines the dilemma of successive rulers trying to keep ennoblement open to talented commoners. Ennoblement was a great incentive for hard work, and was in the interests of state. On the other hand there was the pressure put on the rulers by the old nobility to close these channels. Floyd shows that it was only during the reign of Nicholas I that the assault on ennoblement began.

of up to two military ranks. So, for example, a lowly ensign in the Guards could become a senior lieutenant in the army overnight.[205]

However, as Jerry Lee Floyd correctly pointed out, such laws were "honoured more in the breach than in the observance."[206] The almost continuous wars during Catherine's reign ensured a steady attrition of officers and rendered some of the rules a dead letter. Catherine's commanders in the field often circumvented official regulations and promoted the most fitting candidate with little regard to ceremony and bureaucratic red tape. Sometimes commoners were promoted to the rank of ensign and the twelve-year rule was forgotten. This practice was called promotion *zauriad*.[207] It referred to people performing the duties of an officer without legally having an officer's rank. It originated due to the high demand for officers during the wars against the Turks, for which there were not enough noblemen to plug the holes in the officer corps.[208] Clearly, to many Russian commanders bravery and ability in the field weighted more heavily than adhering to the instructions of the War College, whose responsibility it was to enforce the military regulations.[209] Merit and ability, and not birth and seniority often guided the decisions of commanders in the field.

In addition to the official regulations and military manuals, the government and the empress herself often took a keen interest in rewards and promotions. For example, in 1773, a year before the end of the First Russo-Turkish War of her reign, Catherine requested Prince Aleksandr Viazemskii, the conscientious Secretary-General of the Senate, to send her his notes about military officers and civil administrators, along with

[205] PSZ vol. 22, no. 16163.
[206] Floyd, 64. Also, Volkov, 53.
[207] Andrei Petro, *Russkaia Voennaia Sila* (St. Petersburg, 1892), 157.
[208] Volkov, 56.
[209] Glinoetskii, 275. Also see Bruce, Menning, "Paul I and Catherine II's Military Legacy," in Frederick and Higham, 80. By 1764 the War College actively recruited foreigners to plug holes in the Officer Corps and by 1784, due to continuous dearth of officers, the War College resorted to recruiting merchants and low-ranking civilians servitors into officers.

comments about their ranks, how long they had served, who recommended them, and for what promotion. Viazemskii sent the empress his notes but apologized that they were eight years old. Catherine was probably looking for patterns and qualities that served as promotion triggers after the end of the Seven Years' War in 1762. Upon submitting his list to the empress Viazemskii added that he did not make any comments about those whose merit and dignity were not familiar to him, so that he "would not have a guilty conscience afterwards (*chtob ne imet' posle v sovesti narekanieia*)." Clearly, Viazemskii took the idea of merit very seriously. As far as the standards by which people should be promoted, the general-secretary wrote "I think those who have remained in their current rank since 1763 and have been deemed worthy and shunned vice, should be transferred from the Vth rank to the IVth rank."[210] In other words, in Viazemskii's eyes only those with a record of eleven years of uninterrupted and unblemished service qualified for a promotion. It is clear Catherine was trying to establish some basis for the rewards and promotions that would come at the end of the war, and she and her government were soliciting advice and information for this purpose. And indeed two years later, after the successful completion of the war, there followed an orgy of promotions and awards, based in part on Viazemskii's recommendations.

A similar attempt to evaluate merit came after the Second Russo-Turkish War (1789-1792), when a rough note, probably in the hand of Aleksandr Bezborodko, Catherine's workaholic secretary and foreign policy advisor, was sent to the War College. The note requested from the War College lists of generals, brigadiers and colonels along with a description of where they had served, what units they had commanded, and "when they had distinguished themselves." The lists had to be

[210] RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 246, l. 60-60ob.

approved by the Senate, and then delivered to Catherine herself.[211] Furthermore, in the upcoming celebration to mark the Russian victory over the Turks, Catherine was presented with a memorandum of how to best dispense royal favour "to the people in general, and to the army in particular (*kak obshche dlia naroda, tak i osobo dlia voiska*)". The document consisted of five points for Catherine's consideration. The empress was encouraged to reward the navy and the army in a similar manner, to avoid any jealousies. The document, like many of its kind, was noteworthy for its rhetorical nods to the "loyalty", "bravery", "manliness", and "dedication", of the imperial troops. It prescribed the rewards for every act of bravery in great detail. For example, for the capture of a regimental or battalion standard, Bezborodko recommended rewarding soldiers with 20 roubles. For capturing enemy insignias (*znachki*) soldiers were to be given two roubles.[212] Every military act was carefully recorded, investigated, reported, and weighted. All awards had to correspond to the act's worth.

Recommendations: Battle reports and *atestati*

How the information that helped to determine merit was fed into the bureaucracy? The most important way that information about merit and rewards reached the state bureaucracy was through letters of recommendation, which came in two main forms: battle reports directly from the field and individual letters of recommendation called *atestati*.

Usually battle reports were sent by the commanding generals directly to the Empress and there rarely was a better way to recommend a soldier than by mentioning his name in a document that was read by the eyes of the sovereign. There are many examples of battle reports that were sent to the empress upon successful conclusion of

[211] RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 249, l. 306.
[212] Ibid., l. 319.

combat. A good place to start is the dispatches sent by Count Petr Rumiantsev during the First Russo-Turkish War (1768-1774), partly because it was the first major war of Catherine's reign but also because Rumiantsev was very restrained when it came to dispensing rewards and praise, which makes his letters an insightful case-study. Even to become a captain was not easy. As Aleksandr Turgenev wrote, "Zadunaiskii [Rumiantsev's victory title] gave out the patents for the rank of captain with great selectiveness and it was not easy to receive them."[213] Lev Engelgardt, who campaigned with Rumiantsev, added that promotions and medals were rare in Rumiantsev's army, but at least every decoration was distributed according to merit and "every award was received with utmost satisfaction."[214]

In many cases battle reports said much in terms of the culture of merit and the language used to describe it. Battle reports gave detailed descriptions of military engagements and usually concluded with a list of names deserving the recognition of the monarchy for their personal contribution to victory. After a major battle, these lists could be quite long. In the summer of 1770, after a major Russian victory engineered by Rumiantsev at Riabaia Mogila, a burial ground in present-day Romania, Catherine received a full report of battle.[215] Rumiantsev described the action with intense and captivating language, and showed the empress how her army had defeated the Turks blow by blow. Finally, he wrote "I cannot remain silent before Your Imperial Majesty about the witnessed praise (*zasvidetel'stvovannoi khvaly*) from individual commanders, for Major-General Podgorichani, Potemkin and Tekelli, Hussar Colonels Chorbe, Satin, Lieutenant-Colonels Elchaninov, Pishchevich, Fabritsian, Majors Vuich, Misuiriv and

[213] Aleksandr Mikhailovich Turgenev, "Zapiski," RGB OR, f. 261, k. 19, l. 4.
[214] Engelgardt, 93.
[215] For more information about Riabaia Mogila and its importance see L. G. Beskrovnyi, *Russkaia armiia i flot v vosemnadtsatom veke* (Moscow: Voennoe Izdatelstvo, 1958), 472-476, and Iu. R. Klokman, *Feldmarshal Rumiantsev v period Russko-Turetskoi voiny, 1768-1774* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1951), 92-96.

Zorich, Captains Gangablov, Chalinovich, Bantysh, Trebinskii and Pulevich, Lieutenants Shutovich, Vukotich, who was wounded..." A few names from old Russian noble families and that of his Quartermaster-General also made it to the list.[216] Considering that it was a major battle that involved close to forty thousand Russian troops, the list of recommendations is thin indeed, and the words of Engelgardt seem to ring true.[217]

In a similar letter to Catherine about another monumental Russian victory at Larga, which took place less than two weeks later, Rumiantsev wrote: "In the end I also must not remain silent before your Majesty about praise, because rewards are in order first of all to the Corps commanders Lieutenant-Generals Plemiannikov and Prince Repnin, and the Quartermaster-General Bour. Their example and courage served all their subordinates as a model...." Rumiantsev continued with his list from the top, all the way down to the most junior of officers and even foreign volunteers in the Russian service. In total ninety-five people were cited for rewards.[218] Humble soldiers were also rewarded. Each Corps received a thousand roubles to be parceled out to deserving soldiers. The spoils taken at the Turkish camp also went to the soldiers as rewards for their brave actions.[219] A few weeks later Rumiantsev delivered yet another hammer-blow to the beleaguered Turkish army at Kagul, which in the long term brought the

[216] "Rumiantsev to Catherine, 20 June, 1770," in P. K., Fortunatov, ed. *P. A. Rumiantsev*, vol. II (Moscow: Voennoye Ministerstvo SSSR, 1953), 315.

[217] Compared to Rumiantsev's scant recommendation lists, other commanders appear more generous. In 1792, General Ivan Gudovich presented the War College with a list of people who had distinguished themselves during the siege of Anapa, a fortress on the coast of the Black Sea. Out of about twenty thousand people under his command he recommended close to 200 for promotion to the next rank. RGVIA, f. 24, op. 1, d. 249, l. 39.

[218] "Rumiantsev to Catherine, 12 July, 1770," Fortunatov, vol. 2, 336. In addition to Rumiantsev's recommendations, 19 people also received the orders of St. George of various classes, including Rumiantsev himself. "MilitaryCollege to Rumiantsev, 30 July 1770," Fortunatov, vol. II, 348 and "List of bestowed military order…," Ibid., 349.

[219] "Rumiantsev to Catherine, 12 July, 1770," Ibid., 338.

Turks to the negotiating table.[220] After the battle Rumiantsev once again sat down to write a customary report to his empress. "Now all that remains for me is to give credit before your imperial highness, in the first place, to the commanders of divisions and Corps General and Cavalier Olits, Lieutenant-Generals Plemiannikov, Count Bruce, Count Saltykov...." This time Rumiantsev mentioned twenty-six officers who distinguished themselves in battle.[221]

After 1771, Rumiantsev crossed his Rubicon, the river Danube. It was such an important event that Catherine penned a letter to Voltaire in which she shared her satisfaction with the Russian victories over the Turks and that her armies had finally crossed the Danube. "Rejoice with me, monsieur Voltaire, on this occasion of the crossing of the Danube," she wrote. "The feat is as striking as the crossing of the Rhine by Louis XIV, and even more impressive. According to the chronicles, for eight hundred years the Russian army could not set foot on the other side of the Danube."[222] Constantinople must have seemed not that far away, and rewards for this feat were awaiting their recipients.

As Rumiantsev's star continued to rise, so did the tally of his victories and the number of recommendations. In 1774 he was again writing to the empress, from the other side of the Danube, about the latest battle of Bazardzhik. "It is my duty, Most Gracious Empress, in this case to give fair credit to the diligence and enterprise of Lieutenant-General Kamenskii with which he has distinguished himself, [and] who,

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[220] For the battle of Kagul see Beskrovyi, 479-483 and A. Baiov, *Istoriia Russkoi Armii, Kurs Voennykh Uchilishch. Vypusk Pervyi* (St. Petersburg, 1912), 88-91 is also helpful. Klokman has a neat summary of the 1770 campaign, 109-11. For the analysis of the treaty that brought the war to an end with great gains for the Russians see Roderic H. Davison, "Russian Skill and Turkish Imbecility: The Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji Reconsidered," *Slavic Review*, 35, no. 3 (September, 1976): 463-483.

[221] "Rumiantsev to Catherine, 31July, 1770," Fortunatov, vol. II, 358. It were not only the large battles that warranted recommendations. Even smaller skirmishers about which commanders reported to Catherine had mentions of the heroes of the day. For example, "Rumiantsev to Catherine, 14 May 1771", Ibid., 440.

[222] Y. N. Liubchenkova and V. I. Romanova, eds., *Anekdoty o general-feldmarshalakh P. A. Rumiantseve i A. V. Suvorove* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi Bizness Tsenter, 1990), 21.

according to prisoner reports, managed to forestall (*upredil*) the numerous enemy with his quick manoeuvre." In his letter Rumiantsev also incorporated recommendations sent to him by Kamenskii, for the following brave warriors: "General-Major Raize, who skilfully used his avant-garde position to draw out the enemy, First-Major Denisov, the Cossack Colonels Ilovaiskii and Ustinov, Second-Major Schulz, from the Kharkov Hussar Regiment…Captain Rindin and Lieutenant Belinsgauzen." Furthermore, Kamenskii wrote to Rumaintsev that in recognition of special efforts (*viashchim trudam*), the two above-mentioned Colonels Ilovaiskii and Ustinov were worthy of "a golden medal for their zealous service...."[223] Rewards and promotions were grounded in observation and witness reports – Rumiantsev's subordinates submitted their recommendation to him just like the field marshal was submitting his to the empress.

Not only monumental battles produced dispatches. Catherine received information even about the smallest of engagements and even the tiniest victory warranted rewards. For example, after a skirmish by a small force under the command of an obscure lieutenant-colonel in the battle of Galats, Rumiantsev did not hesitate to single out deserving men for promotion. In November 1769 he wrote to Catherine, that according to the lieutenant-colonel and his superiors, there were a number of people who had distinguished themselves in that battle: "Majors Vuich, Geiking, and Levashev, and Hussar Lieutenant Trebinskii, and other officers and soldiers, who were with him in battle, whom I will not hesitate to reward as truly worthy…and the above-mentioned colonel I dare to present to your imperial majesty's good will."[224] Furthermore, promotions and rewards served symbolic and even Machiavellian functions. In one letter to Catherine concerning the Cossacks, Rumiantsev neatly summed up this other purpose of awards and his reasoning for giving them out. In summer 1769, at the beginning of

[223] "Rumiantsev to Catherine, 10 June 1774," Fortunatov, vol. II, 748.
[224] "Rumiantsev to Catherine, 15 November, 1769," Ibid., 180-1.

the war with the Ottomans, Rumiantsev decided to reward the brave actions of some of the Cossack forces under his command. "The brave deeds described in the attached letter by the Zaporozhian Cossacks were worthy, it seemed to me, of a reward, which I granted to them in the name of your imperial majesty," explained Rumiantsev to his empress. "I wanted to present this reward to them, and to all others, as an example of how magnanimously your imperial majesty rewards [her subjects] for courage and true bravery…to motivate them and others into similar action."[225] In addition to once again underlining the autonomy of military culture where senior officers were allowed to promote and reward individuals in the name of the sovereign, this practice served as a symbolic gesture to inspire confidence and loyalty and as a motivation for further exertions.

In addition to battle reports, Catherine received recommendations from more private channels, but here too merit and ability played an important role. During the heat of the Second Russo-Turkish War (1787-1792), Potemkin dispatched several short notes with recommendations from his headquarters at Jassy to Catherine. "In recognition of service by *Storshyn*-Brigadiers Dmitrii Martyev, Amvorsii Lukovka and Lieutenant-Colonel Iakov Sulin of the Don forces, I take courage and humbly propose to graciously promote the first two to Generals-Major, and the latter to Brigadier."[226] On February 9 Potemkin fired off another note to the empress, recommending Lieutenant-General Krechetnikov for the task of supervising the recruitment levy in *Malorossiia* or the Little-Russian province of the empire. "For the recruitment of people into existing regiments and for the formation of new regiments, so that it would be done successfully and without taxing the population too much, there must be a commander there that could

[225] "Rumiantsev to Catherine, 23 August, 1769," Ibid., 130. For the integration of Ukraine into Russia that was happening during that time, see Zenon E. Kohut, *Russian Centralism and Ukrainian Autonomy: Imperial Absorption of the Hetmanate, 1760s-1830s* (Cambridge: Distributed by Harvard University Press for the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1988).

[226] RGVIA, f. 52, op. 2, d. 16, l. 11.

cut out the abuses that harm military service and the oppression of people, and bring everything to good order," he wrote.[227] In Potemkin's opinion Krechetnikov had the qualities needed and was recommended for this challenging job. Furthermore, Potemkin probably calculated that this post should have given Krechetnikov ample opportunity to earn awards and promotions. On April 17 Potemkin once again wrote to Catherine with a recommendation, this time to replace a retiring governor with Major-General Levanidov. "He is quite a worthy man for this kind of job, and considering the proposal for the formation of forces in that region, he will be useful there with great effect for he has excellent skills for such a purpose."[228] Potemkin was apparently the master of matching "skills" to "purpose".

On March 10 he sent the empress a note about recruiting a Polish senior officer, Major-General Kosakovskii, into the Russian service.[229] "I esteem it necessary to always have trustworthy people in Poland," Potemkin had written to Catherine the previous month.[230] Potemkin wanted to have the Polish man in Russian service, but understood that Kosakovskii was no young adventurer, but a general. In his case Potemkin exhibited a clever resourcefulness. He clearly did not want to transfer the Polish general's rank equal to that of Russian rank, but rather to offer the man a rank just below his current station. But Potemkin was not sure if he would accept. "If he will not accept the rank below Major-General in our service, then he is still really worth his [original] rank…And so I ask to create edicts (*ukazov*) for both of these occasions, one for

[227] Ibid., l. 39.
[228] Ibid., l. 43.
[229] Numerous laws governed the transfer of foreigners into Russian military service. See, for example, PSZ vol. 23, no. 17022, no. 17138.However, the issue with transfer from one country to another was of course that of rank. An interesting story about the transfer of foreigners into Russian services comes from the time of the Second Russo-Turkish War. One of Potemkin's recruitment officers in the Mediterranean, General I. A. Zaborovskii, was approached by a young Corsican by he name of Napoleon Buonaparte who like many others from that region was prepared to join the adventures of Potemkin's armies. The Corsican demanded only that his Russian rank would be equal to that of his current French rank. His request was denied and Napoleon never joined the Russian service. For more information about this curious episode see Montefiore, 393.
[230] RGVIA, f. 52, op. 2, d. 16, l. 74.

Brigadier's rank and the other for Major-General's rank."[231] Here was Potemkin at his best. It was a test to see how desperate the Polish officer was to join the Russian army. What Potemkin intended to do was to offer Kosakovskii the job, but with a lower title, and if the candidate had the courage to stand up for himself and call Potemkin's bluff, Potemkin would produce another edict respecting his current position.

In addition to battle reports and letters sent directly to the empress, a steady flow of individual letters of recommendation, or *atestati*, was overwhelming the slow bureaucracy of the War College. Many officers who were not singled out in commander's reports describing breathtaking battles resorted to asking their superiors to write them individual letters, recommending them for an award or a promotion. Some officers felt they were overlooked and this was their chance to rectify that injustice. They ranged from powerful generals to obscure provincial officers and men in lower ranks, who were also part of the broader recommendation culture. Colonel Nikolai Kozhyn wrote an *atestat* for one of his captains. "Captain Mansurov has been under my command since May 1774 and during the villain Pugachev's rebellion he was sent to find rebels and to put down the Bashkir revolt," wrote Kozhyn. The captain was not only "diligent and hard working" in his search for rebels, but in many situations showed himself to be "especially industrious." In the execution of his tasks he was also wounded. He then was sent to repulse the Kirgiz rebels from one of the fortresses in the steppe, and defeated them, causing heavy casualties and taking many of the Kirgiz rebels prisoner. "During all the time that he was under my command, he conducted himself with integrity, to which I give him this attestation," concluded the Colonel.[232]

On 20 April, 1778 Prince Aleksandr Prozorovskii wrote a recommendation letter for one of his colonels, a man by the name of Repninskoi. Repninskoi and his regiment

[231] Ibid., l. 106.
[232] RGVIA, f. 52, op. 1/194, d. 59, ch. I, l. 49.

were put under Prozorovskii 's command in 1774. For four years the Prince observed the colonel's performance. During this time Repninskoi had ample opportunity to prove himself to his commander. In 1774 Repninskoi and his regiment crushed a strong detachment of Turkish soldiers. The next year the colonel was transferred to take up command of the Kinburn detachment. With the forces that have been entrusted to him, Repninskoi "demonstrated his considerable experience in the military craft." In two years, between 1775 and 1777, with his tireless (*neusupnykh*) efforts, Repninskoi had turned his detachment into the best possible shape and "he [had] finally discovered his full abilities as an independent commander, and is both trustworthy and commendable." The Price concluded, "I have been observing all this with great satisfaction, and in this I give him credit as a capable officer, and think him worthy of any great distinction…."[233]

In 1775 Potemkin received a letter about Lieutenant Klebek that began with these words: "This deserving officer asked me for a recommendation to your Excellency; and in light of his reasoning about his fine qualities, good behaviour, and his labouring in the current rank for nine years, I could not deny him his fair request…."[234] The examples of Mansurov, Repninskoi, and Klebek show how referees evaluated both the skill and bravery of their subordinate as well as length of service, dedication, and leadership qualities. To give just praise was considered a matter a professional duty. And Prince Prozorovskii and Colonel Kozhyn were actually proud of the accomplishments of their subordinates.

Not all recommendation letters were as detailed or magnanimous as those above, nor did they all carry the same weight. Some were very short, sometimes just stating the dates of service, reflecting the relatively unknown status of the candidate.[235] Others

[233] RGVIA, f. 52, op. 1/194, d. 59, ch. I, l. 34.
[234] Ibid., l. 115. Signature is unintelligible so it is difficult to acertain who was the referee in this case.
[235] For example, Brigadir Medem's *atestat* for one of his lieutenants was very short, just stading the dates the man was under his command. Clearly the lieutenant was not well known to the Brigadir. Ibid, l.

concentrated on one particular trait like good behaviour, hardly a cause for significant reward.[236] Yet others recommended officers for promptly bringing discipline to the troops and keeping regiments in good order.[237] In some cases recommendation letters named several people simultaneously.[238] In 1790 Colonel Selunskii sent his report to Potemkin where he asked to consider for promotion some of his lower ranking officers. "Almost all of the people in my volunteer cohort received promotions except the following: Lieutenant Ivan Batyst-Bozhika; Ensign Pantelei Iakov Frandzha, and Bairaktar Kostia Fila, who from the beginning of the current war with the Turks worked for me and were part of the Ochakov campaign and participated in all the battles…." The three men had diligently dispensed all the tasks that they had been charged with by Selunskii. "With respect to their continuous labours, I humbly ask not to leave them behind in promotions," wrote the Colonel.[239] What all letters had in common was an attempt to provide an evaluation of ability and personal skills of the candidates to the best of referees' ability.

It was not only front line officers who received letters of recommendation: fortress commanders, supply officers, military doctors, and even military translators all asked for and received recommendations from their superiors. Not all officers participated in battles. Many toiled humbly tucked away in far-away posts and never had a chance to fight in the great campaigns of their time, but still thought they deserved

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91. In another instance Major Ivan Vriukov wrote a very short atestat to one of his relateivley low ranking Cossacks on May 21, 1774. Ibid., l. 1.

[236] For example RGVIA, f. 52, op. 1/194, d. 571. ch. II, l. 49. (17 December 1788)

[237] For instance RGVIA, f. 52, op. 1/194, d. 250, l. 98ob. Writing to Potemkin, Fedor Denisov, a Cossack chieftain, who already had received the Order of St. George was recommended again for another award, this time for the Order of St. Vladimir. The recommendation was based on the fact that Denisov brought his Cossack regiments serving in Tauride region under discipline. The methods by which Denisov had done it had been left to Potemkin's imagination. Whatever the Cossack did, "the local population has been so content that they did not have any complaint about his command."The document did not have a date, but was most likely written between 1777 and 1785.

[238] RGVIA, f. 52, op. 1/194, d. 571.ch. II, l. 9.

[239] Ibid.

promotions and recognition. In their mind, their work was as essential as that of battle-field officer, even if it was less glamorous.

People serving in supply services behind the front lines were also important, and their efforts did not go unnoticed by the machinery of merit. In December 1777 Major-General Iakovin wrote a long letter to Potemkin recommending a *praviantmeister* (provisions-master) by the name of Grikhvostov to the next rank. "I cannot, your Highness, but recommend him into your good graces," wrote General Iakovin. "Even though the order to supply the troops of the line came too late, and even though he did not receive money from the chancellery to do it, he still somehow managed to deliver all the provisions and supplies on time," wrote the Major-General. What Grikhvostov had done, according to Iakovin, was to charm the local population to such an extent that the locals agreed not only to supply the necessary provisions but also to help deliver them to their destinations. Iakovin did not describe the methods by which Grikhvostov managed to convince the local population to such magnanimity, but we can safely assume that it was done either by threats to use force, or by promises that the peasants and merchants would be paid back in full with interest. Either way, the provisions-master Grikhvostov was unstoppable in dispensing his duties. "I give him full credit for this, for in doing so he greatly helped me out in reinforcing the line, and if he did not manage to attract the suppliers with his kind actions, the delivery of supplies would have been quite small indeed, and consequently there would have been a great need in everything," admitted the general. To sum up, Grikhvostov's prompt actions had helped to avert starvation among the front-line troops.

Furthermore, Iakovin pointed out that Grikhvostov had already received recommendations from the governor of Kazan province, Prince Okercheskii, which he attached to his own letter. The Prince also testified to the almost magical abilities of

Grikhvostov. For example, even during the disturbances caused by the Pugachev rebellion, Grikhvostov proved himself up to the task of supplying the troops. Moreover, in addition to feeding the passing troops, he also managed to supply three nearby provinces simultaneously, including Kazan. And the praise did not stop there. "In addition to feeding the local population, which back then was experiencing a great scarcity of bread, he managed to put aside for them enough supplies so they could plant it as a crop themselves." Everything that had been thrust upon the shoulders of the provisions-master had been successfully accomplished, "but he still has not received any awards," pointed out Yakovin. At the end of the letter the general confessed to Potemkin that he needed Grikhvostov and was afraid that he might leave his service, or that his efforts might begin to slack on the account of not being rewarded. "I summon the courage to ask that Your Highness seek the *ober*-proviantmaister rank for him," concluded the letter.[240] This was a compelling recommendation and the general made a strong case for his subordinate, based on the latter's merit and ability.

The long wars with the Turks and the annexation of the Crimea, with its large Tatar population, necessitated the use of many reliable translators. They too received recommendation letters. The case of Khalik Badirov is a good example. Badirov wanted a promotion to the next rank and in the fall of 1781 and wrote a lengthy and detailed petition stating his case. Attached to the petition were seven recommendation letters, one of them written in Tatar by a local chief, which Badirov transalted into Russian. Major-General Fedor Faritsanz wrote the longest one describing how Badirov had always been always loyal to the Russian cause even when it had required him to go against the wishes of his kahn during the rebellion of the Kuban people, and how Badirov had been used many times as a courrier on life-threatening missions. In all this

[240] RGVIA, f. 52, op. 1/194, d. 130, l. 9-9ob.

he remained a true servant (*rab*) of Her Imperial Highness. His loyalty and service to the empire, therefore, should be rewarded with fulfilling his request for a promotion.[241] It appears that Khalik Badirov chose the right side to fight on, and joined the Russian cause and abandoned the doomed rebellion by his kin at the right time. Now he felt the time had come to collect his compensation. In his case the claim was based on loyalty as much as merit.

After the war with the Turks in 1792 numerous lists were sent to the war college with recommendations. They were surprisingly thorough in recognizing even the smallest ounce of intelligence, hard work, and initiative when it came to the contribution to the war effort. In a list (*spisok*) probably dating to 1792, we read about the marshal of nobility, Second-Major Ivan Kramin, from the Aleksopol'skii district of the Ekaterinoslavskaia province. Kramin had done his part during the war by labouring behind the front. When Potemkin besieged the Ochakov fortress in 1789, Major Kramin had collected horses from nearby counties, which were used to transport sick and wounded soldiers to different quarters. He had also helped to transport regimental baggage, and cannons to the site of the siege. In addition to all this, Kramin had "prepared magazines full of bread crumbs and fodder for feeding government horses in the steppes during severe winter; and also collected reed that kept the people warm; in all this he showed adroitness, hard work, and faultlessness in executing the tasks entrusted to him."[242] The hard work of the marshal of the nobility was not in vain. His efforts were noticed, recorded, and were singled out as meriting a reward.

[241] Ibid., l. 93-97ob. The seven recommendation letters, even though four of them were quite short, were written by a local chief (*voevoda*) by the name of Khamzin, Liutenant-General Demedem, Major-General Aleksei Stupishyn, Major-General Nikolai Potatov, Major-General Fedor Faritsanz, Colonel Fedor Parners, and Colonel Ivan Shtenberg. An impressive list of referees for a humble translator.

[242] RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 249, l. 274. No clear date is indicated on the document, but probably from 1792.

The deeds of medical personnel also did not go unnoticed. In 1792, General Iosif DeRibas wrote a recommendation letter for his private physician, Major Viktor Podzhio. DeRibas based it in on his personal observations and on reports of other witnesses. The recommendation letter commented on 2 years worth of Podzhio's work. In his rather long and detailed account, DeRibas wrote that when the Russian Black Sea Fleet was anchored near the Ochakov fortress in June 1790, his physician had established a hospital (*lazaret*) where he tended to the sailors of the fleet before it left for the Danube. After the siege of Ochakov was over, Podzhio was already near Izmail, the site of the next major battle. "From the beginning of the siege of the city of Izmail, he was employed to take care of the wounded on the batteries, that were located on the island opposite of the city, where he, during uninterrupted cannonades, often put himself in danger," wrote DeRibas. Moreover, on December 11 along with marines the good doctor was involved in the storm of Izmail, and on the next day, after the city was taken, he opened another field hospital. The hospital treated both soldiers and sailors wounded in the siege. "And despite difficulty and lack of medical resources, his alacrity and skill benefited the patients with great success, as I have been told by the ships' captains," added DeRibas. By January 1791 Podzhio was already working in another field hospital he opened in the port city of Galats, and with total absence of any other medical personnel or subordinates, and usual lack of medications, did all he could to "cater to the welfare of the sick (*podoval bol'nym vsevozmozhnii posobii*)." On the 31st of January the doctor was on the scene of another siege next to the island of Brailov. In August he was back in Galats where he set up three field hospitals to treat 1,700 people. As DeRibas concluded, "Finally, he was by my side when we were taking Turkish prisoners of war who arrived from different cities and were sick, and many of who enjoyed his great

care."[243] The Herculean labours of Podzhio clearly merited recognition. To once again reiterate the argument, letters of recommendation show how merit was an important part of military culture during Catherine's reign, how merit was systematically collected, examined, and summarized. In addition to that, the language of merit made reference to good behaviour, zeal for service, dedication, hard work, courage, timely execution of orders, wounds, manliness, but also intelligence and skill.

Letters of recommendation reveal how rewarding was a matter of honour and writing an *atestat* was a professional obligation of superiors. They showcase the mentality of military men, their values, how they evaluated military service, and what qualities and deeds they thought deserved an award. Referees were basing their recommendation on concrete personal characteristics, grounded in observable and witnessed behaviour. Prince Aleksandr Prozorovskii referred to the military craft and the importance of discovering one's abilities. Viazemskii, the Procurator-General of the Senate, refused to comment on merit of those he was not familiar with, displaying a considerable degree of professional standard. General Iakovin described several instances where Grikhvostov distinguished himself under his command, clearly demonstrating a pattern of excellence. DeRibas wrote in his recommendation letter that he had not only witnessed his doctor's efforts on the front lines first hand, but also made a reference to other witnesses to back up the candidate. There was an understanding that if hard work went unrewarded, morale and dedication would gradually decline, and undermine the very heart of the military culture.

Pleas and Petitions

[243] RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 246, l. 521-2ob.

When recommendation letters failed to produce results, there was one, last recourse to fall back on – petitions, and sometimes even pleading and begging. This process usually started with a document called a *chelobitnaia* or petition. The *chelobitnaia* had a standard form comprised of several points, to be filled out in a pre-determined manner.[244] It began with a brief description of service as a justification for petitioning, followed by the description of an injustice incurred, and concluded with a request or a plea to a higher authority to rectify the injustice. A good example of such a document was the petition filed by Major Ivan Astef'ev, a Baltic German, in the early 1790s.

> Most Serene Highness, Empress Catherine Alekseevna, the Great Autocrat of All-Russia and the most Gracious Sovereign.
>
> Ivan Astef'ev, son of Numero, Major of the Imperial Noble Land Cadet Corps submits this petition on the following points.
>
> 1.
>
> I come from the Livonian gentry (*iz lifliandskiia dvorian*), from a family of retired Majors from Giessen (*iz Gessenskikh Otstavnykh Maerov*), and joined the Military Service of Your Imperial Majesty, as *Rotmistr* on November 25, 1776.[245] I have been in the rank of Cadet Lieutenant in the mentioned Cadet Corps since March 26, 1779. On April 11, 1780 I was promoted to the rank of Cadet Captain. Due to a state of ill health I was discharged from the army on July 15, 1781 in the rank of the Lieutenant-Colonel. On February 3, 1783, upon improvement of my health I was reinstated in military service in the rank of the Lieutenant-Colonel. On December 9, 1784 I was assigned to the above mentioned corps in the rank of a Major. In 1783, together with the Siberian Infantry Regiment I participated in the march from Riga to Guman, in the Polish Ukraine, in the reserve corps under the command of General Prince Nikolai Vasil'evich Repnin. I have never been court marshalled or arrested, am literate in the Russian language both in writing and reading, and am 35 years old.
>
> 2.
>
> And since Prince Dmitry Lobanov-Rostovsky, Lieutenant-Colonel since April 1, 1783; Count Karl Mellin, Lieutenant-Colonel since December 25, 1783; Christopher Miller, Lieutenant-Colonel since April 21, 1784, and others who were even in lower ranks, were promoted to Colonelcy on April 21, 1789; I too dare to humbly ask for the following:

[244] Many laws governed the process of petitioning in general and to the Monarch in particular, which was one of the rights all Russian nobles shared. Catherine had created a legal framework for the process of petitioning to her directly. See PSZ, vol. 16, no. 11590, no. 11868.

[245] Livonia was a Baltic province, or *gubernia*, of Imperial Russia that included parts of modern-day Latvia and Estonia.

> That Your Supreme Imperial Majesty would order to consider my petition based on the above-mentioned Lieutenant Colonels' promotions to Colonelcy on April 21, 1789, and to promote me to the rank of Colonel with the same seniority.
>
> Most Gracious Sovereign, I am asking your Serene Highness to grant Your benevolent decision on my petition of December 1791….[246]

In addition to writing to the empress, numerous officers wrote to Potemkin. In August 1775 Potemkin received a letter from Brigadier Andrei Meduz. "Passing over in silence the fact that many junior and less capable colleagues had been promoted from quartermaster ranks to the highest ranks ahead of me, I will only report on my service record starting with when I became a colonel," began Meduz.[247] In August 1775 Potemkin received a letter of petition from the commander of the Kursk Infantry Regiment, Colonel Andrei Vaneniaz. He was asking to be considered for the Order of St. Vladimir. "I humbly ask not to forget about me….so that I too could be awarded with this order; and with this I could make up for my shame before the youngest of my peers who have already received it…."[248] The same year Second-Major Fedor Iribnere was offended that he had not been promoted to the next rank, especially since many others who were younger than he were already Lieutenant-Colonels.[249] These letters, like many others, demonstrates the tension between ability and seniority, which created life-long jealousies among officers and put the government on the spot, when it came time to resolve them.

In addition to conflicts over seniority and ability there was the issue of the limited number of spots for each rank in the army. Even when officers had the qualifications for a promotion and the seniority to receive it, there was sometimes no place to put them. A case in point was a letter of petition from a captain, whose

[246] RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 249, l. 193.
[247] RGVIA, f. 52, op. 1/194, d. 59, ch.I, l. 168.
[248] RGVIA, f. 52, op. 1/194, d. 250, l. 297. (2 November 1785)
[249] RGVIA, f. 52, op. 1/194, d. 59, ch. I, l. 129-130. (24 May 1775)

signature remained unintelligible. The captain began by stating his qualifications, which included thirty years of zealous service, being free of court marshals, and his involvement in several wars and many battles. This impressive background was used as the major reason why he should be rewarded. His commander had sent his promotion request along with all the necessary documents to the War College for consideration, and the War College had resolved to promote the captain to the rank of major but so far, wrote the captain, he had remained in his current rank. "Probably there are no vacant positions," wrote the captain with understanding and simultaneous acquiescence to the fact that his superior "could not promote me as a supernumerary (*sverkh komplekta*)." Returning to the old theme of seniority, the Captain noted that his peers (*sverstniki*) had long served as Lieutenant-Colonels and Second-Majors, and requested the following: "I humbly ask to take into consideration my long military service and reward me at least as supernumerary [First-Major]; and if it is impossible to give me the higher rank, than with Second-Major."[250]The captain was fully aware of the fact that ability and seniority sometimes were not enough for a promotion. Sometimes there were simply no open spots for new candidates, no matter how qualified they are.

Even the great heroes were not beyond begging for awards. In May 1773, after the battle of Turtukai, Suvorov penned a letter to his commander, General Saltykov. "Don't forget, Your Excellency, little father, about my dear comrades, and don't forget about me also, for God's sake. It seems that I have really earned the Order of St. George, second class, even though I am the last to praise myself, I really think I have." In the usual whining style that Suvorov invariably deployed when communicating with his superiors, he complained to Saltykov about his weak chest and broken ribs, which all hurt him a great deal. His head also seemed to have swelled up. "Please forgive me, if I

[250] Ibid., l. 68-68ob. (18 November 1774) The left margin of the document had crumbled away so it was difficult to make out some of the words.

go to Bucharest for a day or two to sweat it out in a bathhouse."[251] While making sure his laurels were recognized, Suvorov's eye keenly monitored how others received their awards, and a few months later he was again writing to Saltykov, complaining about another officer whom he felt did not deserve his laurels.[252]

Other, more tactful petitioners, had a keen sense of their legal rights and due process, and based their petitions on legal precedent and martial laws. It was an attempt, no doubt, to intimidate their superiors and challenge the status quo. For example, in 1768 Aleksandr Leontiev sent his petition to Catherine. He was a retired colonel working in civil service, but now wanted to return to the army. As if to remind the Empress, he slyly concluded his request with a short legal observation: "In the name of the blessed memory that is worthy of eternal glory, Sovereign Emperor Peter the Great's Ukaz from 11 November 1724, ordered that those who are transferring from civil service into the army should transfer with the highest rank achieved in the civil service…"[253] But since he had already served in the army, before entering civil service, Leontiev no doubt wanted to come back with his old rank of colonel, which entitled him to a regimental command. Leontiev knew his rights, and was reminding Catherine of laws and customs governing Russian military culture. He received no answer and in 1771 he wrote another petition and another one in 1774, where he repeated his major concerns and requests. Leontiev once again hammered in his point about his right to promotion according to Peter's decree, "according to which those from civil service who want to transfer to the army should be awarded same rank of seniority from the day of their promotion in the civil service." In the second point in his petition he wrote that he was "against the promotion of those junior to me to the rank of a Major-General…"

[251] "Suvorov to Saltykov, 12 May 1773," in G. P. Meshcheriakov, ed., *A. V. Suvorov*, vol. I (Moscow: Voennoye Ministerstvo SSSR, 1949), 621.
[252] "Suvorov to Saltykov, 19 June 1773," in Ibid., 651.
[253] RGVIA, f. 52, op. 1/194, d. 59, ch.I, l. 3. I was unable to find the law Leontiev was referring to in PSZ.

Above all he felt wronged that despite his unblemished and zealous thirty-year long service men of lesser seniority were getting promotions and high salaries.[254]

In December 1792 First-Major Ivan Kiraver also made a reference to customs of service, but he did not go into detail about what specific laws, regulations, or documents he was referring to. He began by stating that he knew that the "attention of Her Imperial Highness extends to all the servants (*vernosluzhashchikh*) and offers each rewards commensurate with their merit (*kazhdomu dostoinoe za zaslugi vozdoianie*)." The major was asking if he could be added to the ambassadorial staff. "For this I ask as per the custom of service, and also because I have remained here for eight months and have experienced and still experience want of very kind." In the meantime, he had observed how "others less distinguished in service than I, received different rewards," and felt offended (*chuvstvuiu sebia obizhennym*) by this injustice.[255]

Similarly, in 1786, Captain Ivan Delptso wrote a petition to the War College. He was employed at the infantry cadet corps and wanted to be released into the army as a Lieutenant-Colonel. He justified his petition on the bases of "Corps Charter (*ustav*) chapter LII, item 7, point 1: in accordance with which, I humbly ask to reward my five-year, diligent service in the current rank in the corps, and to consider my promotion to the earned next rank." The captain went on to add that he felt offended that in the last bouts of promotions people younger than him received ranks of Lieutenant-Colonels, while he was side-stepped.[256]

What do these references to legal codes tell us about promotions, meritocracy, and military culture? About individual self-worth and the view of the government? Officers clearly took offence that people younger than themselves were promoted. There

[254] Ibid., l. 46.
[255] RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 246, l. 528-528ob. (14 December 1792)
[256] RGVIA, f. 314, op. 1, d. 8369, l. 6. (27 July 1786). For the Noble Cadet Charter see PSZ vol. 17, no. 12741.

was a sense of self-worth, and dejection about not receiving a reply to their earlier petitions. Connected to the feeling of self-worth was a heightened sensitivity to promotions of people of lesser ability. Moreover, even though the age when careers were open to talent was still far away, there is a hint that Russian officers felt insulted when their talents were not recognized. Finally, above documents demonstrate the existence of a consciousness and a feeling that military men belonged to a culture different from civilian society, a culture with its own set of rules and special laws, a culture governed by codes among which merit figured prominently.

Even though the sum of the collective voices found in petitions had to do with the pursuit of *chin* or rank, these documents reveal important facts about the nature of Catherinian military culture, in which officers were left with recourse and leverage. To pressure the authorities and justify why they deserved to be rewarded, petition-writers referred to military laws and customs of service, cited powerful patrons and their recommendation letters, but also put in thinly veiled threats of leaving service if their requests were not fulfilled. For example, Dmitrii Repalovskii wrote to Potemkin in 1774 or 1775, after he had not received any answer from the War College, that "…in view of the above I have taken this last recourse, to bother Your Serenity about equating me with my peers by promoting me to the rank of a lieutenant with seniority. This grace of Your Serenity (*svetlosti*) would encourage me to continue further my diligent service to her Imperial Highness!"[257] It is doubtful that Potemkin's chancellery ever answered such pleas; at least I was unable to find any letters sent back to Repalovskii. That being said, threats to leave service had to be taken seriously, especially after the Russian nobility was no longer required to serve the state after 1762. In a way the government machinery had to respond to the pleas and petitions of their officers or they would lose

[257] RGVIA, f. 52, op. 1/194, d. 59, ch. I, l. 50.

heart and trust in the system and retire to their estates at the first moment of convenience, or stay in service with a feeling of bitterness, shying away from any exertions beyond the required minimum. The government was therefore forced to play a difficult balancing act between promoting people with ability and paying homage to people with seniority.

Seniority or Ability?

By now it is clear that there were two competing conceptual principles by which achievement and worth were measured in Russian military culture during Catherine's reign. On the one hand there was merit. It would have been dangerous to completely throw away the principle of personal merit, even though as a concept it was a subjective calculation at best. Superiors could write splendid recommendations in their letters of reference in exchange for bribes or out of pressure by patronage networks. Merit was in the eye of the beholder, and the functioning of a meritocracy depended on the honesty and good faith of superiors in their evaluations and recommendations. As such, it was a system easily subverted and taken advantage of. On the other hand there was the rigid practice of promoting according to seniority, which worked like clockwork, but which completely overlooked merit, ability, and intelligence. While almost completely objective and independent of personal influences and evaluations, it overlooked less tangible but equally critical factors.

Balancing the two systems was a philosophical dilemma deeply embedded into the military culture that Catherine inherited from the times of Peter the Great. As Lindsey Hughes reminds us, there are still many misconceptions connected to Peter the Great and the Table of Ranks, the main one being "that it demonstrated a firm commitment to 'meritocracy' to the detriment of lineage, or even more radically, raised

commoners at the expense of nobles…..In reality Peter was far from consistent."[258] Even though the Tsar insisted on orderly promotion according to merit, Peter had to balance his need for qualified personnel and the demands of the elites.[259] Catherine similarly decided to compromise and the Russian army began to practise promotion according to "seniority and merit" whereby especially distinguished officers and soldiers could be recommended for promotion outside the seniority framework (*vne ocheredi*).[260] The same year Catherine came to power, she reiterated an edict from the days of her predecessor Empress Elizabeth. It concerned promotions in the civil, naval, and military services. Catherine made it clear that promotions from then on were to be made according to seniority and merit (*po starshenstvu i zaslugam*), thus reinforcing the consideration of both concepts in the evaluation of merit, even if seniority still came first. The edict also described a scenario where someone was recommended for promotion due to seniority but otherwise did not deserve it. In this case, it had to be explained exactly why the candidate could not be promoted due to seniority alone.[261]

There was, then, a duality in the meaning of merit that needs to be exposed and analyzed. One good example of the tension between seniority and merit is from the private notes that Potemkin sent Catherine in the 1790, which reveal insightful awareness and Machiavellian calculations behind many of the issues concerning the tension between seniority and ability. On 23 January 1790 Potemkin wrote to Catherine "That since Senator Aleksei Shcherbatov, who is one of the Lieutenant-Generals employed in civil service, is senior to Lieutenant-General Krechetnikov, will it not please Your Imperial Highness, due to the former's long service in that rank to graciously (*vsemilostiveishe*) promote him to Actual Privy Councillor. As far as the

[258] Hughes, 182-3; Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, 96-7.
[259] Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, 119.
[260] Volkov, 74.
[261] RGVIA, f. 53, op. 1/194, d. 1, l. 411. The year is unclear/undated but most likely it was written in 1762, as it is in the same *sviazka* as other documents from that year.

general officers in civil service are concerned, who have seniority equal to those in the military, taking into account the hardships of war, the civil servants have the same right to promotion as the people from the army."

Potemkin went on to explain his position to Catherine: "Army officers often have a chance to fill in a vacancy after their brothers-in-arms, with whom they share misfortunes in danger and death, are killed or wounded, and cannot consequently be part of preferential promotion."[262] One should not give priority for promotions to ex-military officers who transferred to civil service. Both army officers and officers who were in civil service had equal rights in equal ranks, as the hardships of war were equally shared by all of them at some point. And army officers had an additional "source" or opportunity for promotion as a result of their fallen comrades, so there were no grounds for their preferential treatment.

Another example is the career of Aleksandr Suvorov. There is hardly a record that presents a better case study or demonstrates the struggle between the two concepts more thoroughly than Suvorov's. He became a Field Marshal at the age of sixty-four and eventually a generalissimo, a rare and unprecedented rank he shared with Joseph Stalin. Suvorov's bumpy road to fame serves as a powerful lens that illuminates the promotion culture in Catherine's army and the meaning of merit in eighteenth-century Russian military. It is also a career that has been very well documented, which allows for a greater scope of exposition and analysis.[263]

[262] RGVIA, f. 52, op. 2, d. 16, l. 9. 23 January 1790. Actual Privy Councillor was a civil service rank equivalent to full general in army.

[263] The case of Suvorov's promotion record which, as some have argued had been slow due to machinations at court, was not the only one, though it is perhaps the best known. For another example see the note attached to the biography of Petr Panin, "Zapiska o ne shchastlivom prodolzhenii sluzhby generala Grafa Panina v sravnenii ego sverstnikov," which also sheds light on the "unfairness" of the seniority system. P. A. Geisman and A. N. Dubovskoi, *Graf Petr Ivanovich Panin (1721-1789)* (St. Petersburg, 1897), 115-119.

The tensions between merit and seniority in Suvorov's case began to bubble to the surface in 1774, at the end of the First Russo-Turkish War when Catherine's senior generals and their massive egos began to vie for authority in the field. A famous incident involved the bickering Suvorov and the haughty Mikhail Kamenskii, while the calm and forceful Rumiantsev was caught in the middle, as their commander. Rumiantsev ordered the two men to co-ordinate their efforts in anticipating a Turkish offensive in the middle of the summer of 1774. Suvorov had just been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-General, the same rank as Kamenskii, but the latter had held the rank longer and therefore was considered senior, even though he was younger than Suvorov and had a less impressive service record. Rumiantsev's letter dating from May 21 clearly stated that "it was up to the senior commander to decide the necessity of dividing, reducing, or adding from one force to another."[264] Kamenskii was designated as the senior commander.[265] A copy of this order was sent to Suvorov as well.

As Philip Longworth, the rare English-language biographer of Suvorov, put it, Suvorov "was not a man to underrate his own talents, or overrate those of other generals."[266] When Kamenskii ordered Suvorov to reinforce him because he feared being attacked by the Turks, the latter refused. Rumiantsev reminded Suvorov of his previous order in which he nominated Kamenskii as the senior general, and concluded his letter with a prompt warning – "I recommend that you, in view of the above, act precisely according to orders and requests of Lieutenant-General Kamenskii, as should one general who is subordinate to another."[267] In the polite and reserved style of the eighteenth-century nobility, this language was resounding indeed. If Rumiantsev had

[264] "Rumiantsev to Kamenskii, 21 May 1774," in Meshcheriakov, vol. I, 692.
[265] For a more positive account of Kamenskii's actions see a book by his living descendant, Nikolai Kamenskii, *Deviatyi vek na sluzhbe Rossii: Iz istorii roda grafov Kamenskikh*(Moscow: OOO "Velinor", 2004),28-40.
[266] Longworth, 91.
[267] "Rumiantsev to Suvorov, 1 June 1774," Meshcheriakov, vol. I, 697.

cause to be upset with Suvorov's insubordination, he was equally annoyed with Kamenskii for failing to demonstrate his will and ability in subordinating a junior officer. To Kamenskii's complaints about Suvorov, Rumiantsev replied "I am surprised that Your Excellency, having received my order from May 30th, at the end of which your seniority is clearly stated...still asks me about the subordination to you of the said general." Rumiantsev continued with a rhetorical question: "Can you really, considering such written orders, and knowing the customs of military service, still consider him to be independent of you?" Rumiantsev concluded his letter to Kamenskii with a reminder "not to lose the opportunity to exercise [your] authority over a junior."[268] Rumiantsev ended up having to chide his senior generals the way a headmaster disciplines his trouble-making students on the playground.

Another example of conflict between ability and seniority was the deliberation between Prince Potemkin, who replaced Rumiantsev as the commander of the Russian armies in Ukraine, and Catherine about how to reward Suvorov for his efforts during the battle of Kinburn in 1787. Even before the Turks attacked the Kinburn fortress, Potemkin was already writing to Catherine in their private correspondence about Suvorov. "Truth be told: here is a man, who serves with his sweat and blood. I will welcome the opportunity, when God gives me a chance to recommend him."[269] And indeed God gave Potemkin just such a chance. A week after a bloody and closely-fought battle of Kinburn, which took pace on 1 October, Potemkin was writing to Catherine: "The efforts and bravery of Aleksandr Vasil'evich must receive their fair credit. He, being wounded, did not leave the battlefield to the end, and in doing so saved

[268] "Kamenskii to Suvorov, 4 June 1774," Ibid.
[269] "Potemkin to Catherine, 16 September 1787," in S. Lopatin, *Ekaterina II i G. A. Potemkin: lichnaia perepiska, 1769-1791*(Moscow: Nauka, 1997), 230.

everyone."[270] Taking the hint that Potemkin meant for Suvorov to be rewarded for his actions at Kinburn Catherine wrote back to her "dear friend" and shared her thoughts on how to reward the brave general. Her letter brought to the fore the sensitive nature surrounding the dispensation of awards and the meaning of merit:

> It came to my mind, why not send Suvorov a ribbon of St. Andrew, but then there is another consideration, namely that Prince Iuri Dolgorukov, Kamenskii, Miller, and others who are senior to him – do not have one. I am even more hesitant to send the Large [cross] of St. George. And so, I can not make up my mind, and am writing to you asking for your friendly advice….[271]

The Order of St. George had been established in 1769 by Catherine herself, as the highest military honour in the Russian Empire. It had four classes, the first being the highest.[272] Over ten thousand people have been the recipients of this prestigious award over the 250 years of its existence, but only twenty-three of those received the first-class award, Prince Grigorii Potemkin and Prince Mikhail Kutuzov being the most famous.[273] Besides, Suvorov had already won the Order of St. George, second-class, in the battle of Turtukai in the summer of 1773.[274] To give him first-class would single Suvorov out as a favourite, and upset a score of powerful noble families: the Dolgorukovs, the Repnins, the Saltykovs, and many others. The same consideration governed awarding the Order of St. Andrew, the highest award for chivalry established by Peter the Great, the Russian equivalent of the Austrian Order of the Golden Fleece. The empress was clearly vacillating between the two very concepts she herself had decreed that the army respect

[270] "Potemkin to Catherine, 6 October 1787," in Ibid., 239. For more detailed correspondence about the battle of Kinburn see, D. O. Maslovskii, *Pis'ma i bumagi A. V. Suvorova, G. A. Potemkina, i P. A. Rumiantseva, 1787-1789 g.g. Kinburn-Ochakovskaia operatsiia* (St. Petersburg, 1893). For Suvorov's battle report with recommendations of officers to Potemkin see page 51.

[271] "Catherine to Potemkin, 16 October 1787," in Lopatin, 342.

[272] PSZ, vol. 18, no. 13387.

[273] In 2000 the Russian president Vladimir Putin resurrected the order by a special decree.

[274] "Catherine to Suvorov, 30 July 1773," in Meshcheriakov, vol. I, 677.

– seniority and merit – and in the end decided to defer to the counsel of Potemkin, who had a better vintage point of the situation from the front.

On 1 November Potemkin replied with a letter that bore the full stamp of the energy and conviction he was known for. "Before I share my thoughts with you, I will describe in detail his heroism," began Potemkin. He vividly illustrated how for two days Suvorov had hid his forces in the Kinburn fortress and forbade anyone to come out; how he and his men had endured a severe bombardment by the Turkish fleet for more than a day without firing a single shot back; how the enemy had finally thought that the fortress was either empty or undermanned and decided to land its forces; how only when the entire enemy force of over five thousand disembarked Suvorov had opened the gates and his soldier poured in a desperate counter-attack; how the Russians had been driven back seven times; how Suvorov's presence in the front line had held his soldiers in place; how he had been wounded with a bullet; how he had suffered a concussion from a grapeshot and still had not left his place; and how he finally had driven Turks backs into the Black Sea. After interrogation of the surviving Turkish prisoners, Greeks, and others who observed the battle from the nearby fortress of Ochakov Potemkin calculated that out of five thousand troops that were sent against Suvorov, only 800 were left alive. Such vicious battle and shattering defeat forced the rest of the Turkish fleet to retreat. "The General, having already earned all possible distinctions, in his sixtieth year still serves with the vehemence (*goriachnostiiu*) of a twenty-year-old, who still needs to make a reputation," concluded Potemkin. As far as rewarding Suvorov, Potemkin thought that the general was worthy of St. Andrew:

> I await Your justice to reward this deserving and honourable old man. Who has deserved to be singled out more than he?! I do not want to make any comparisons, for a mention of names may embarrass the dignity of St. Andrew: but there are many who have neither faith, nor loyalty. There are many who lack dedication to service, or bravery. It is an honour for the

> order to be awarded to those who deserve it (*Nagrazhdenie ordenom dostoinogo – ordenu chest'*). I shall start with myself – give him mine….The importance of his service is clear to me.[275]

This was a strongly worded and passionate letter endorsing the concept of merit. To Potemkin merit was clearly more important than seniority, and it was a matter of honour to reward his subordinate justly. As Napoleon would do a decade later, Potemkin was prepared to take one of the medals off his chest and give to one of his deserving soldiers.

The same month, in November 1787, Suvorov himself received a letter from Potemkin, which remains one of the best examples we have of how officers were promoted and how rewards were distributed. In a parallel correspondence, Potemkin was writing to Suvorov about how to reward his subordinates, while reinforcing the idea of impartiality and justice. After apologizing for not being able to come visit the hero of Kinburn in person, the Prince wrote:

> …Rest assured that I make it a matter of honour to be just; and of course I will never put you in such a position as to make you feel sorry to be under my command. I have promoted Generals Rek and Commandant Tuntselman on your recommendation. Be assured that their wishes will be satisfied. From the crosses that have been sent, I left one for Lombard, on whose behalf I asked Her Highness…; one I designate for Colonel Orlov; the remaining four I ask you, my dear friend, to give to the most deserving and to send me their names. By God, summon all your powers of justice and judgement (*Boga radi upotrebi tut vsui spravdlivost' i razsmotrenie*). Golden crosses will be sent to the two Don Colonels. Also designate, to whom I could send them in the Navy. With the exception of one, the nineteen silver medals are for the lower ranks, who distinguished themselves in battle. Divide them by six among the infantry, the cavalry, and the cossacks; and give one to the artillery man who sank the enemy ship (*vystrelom podarval shchbeku*). I think it would not be a bad idea for you to collect several soldiers, or ask entire regiments, and see who the soldiers will honour with medals.[276]

There are several interesting points and ideas expressed in this letter that tie together many aspects of reward and promotion mechanism in Catherine's armies. First, the

[275] "Potemkin to Catherine, 1 November 1787," in Lopatin, 246-7.

[276] Sergei Glinka, *Russkie anekdoty, voennye, grazhdanskie, ili poviestvovanie o narodnykh dobrodieteliakh rossiian drevnikh i novykh vremen*, vol. III (Moscow, 1822), 104-5.

sinews of patronage are made quite clear to Suvorov. One of the awards was "designated for Colonel Orlov" who was a member of the Orlov clan of imperial favourites, and one silver medal was also to be given to an unknown beneficiary. At the same time Potemkin reassured the general that the clients of his patronage network, Rek and Tuntselman, were also recommended for awards. Distributing the rest of the rewards was left to Suvorov's discretion, which shows both trust from above and remarkable room for personal initiative and judgement from below. With that being said Potemkin could not help to give some guidelines to Suvorov. Potemkin showed his political tact by asking Suvorov to distribute the awards as much as possible equally among all the branches of the military: the infantry, the cavalry, the Cossack forces, and even the navy. Curiously, Potemkin implored Suvorov to use his "powers of justice and judgement" when distributing the awards. Why did he have to make that reminder to the man who was adored by his troops, who decried jealousies at court, and who ostensibly fought corruption in the army? Could it possibly be a reference to Suvorov's reputation for promoting his cooks to colonels that Aleksandr Lanzheron described in his scathing analysis of Catherine's army? Finally, the last sentence of Potemkin's letter is perhaps the most intriguing. It hints that merit in the lower ranks was self-regulated and self-administered, and the officers were happy to comply with this system of inner selection of deserving candidates for rewards and promotions. Soldiers were consulted to see who in their opinion deserved to be distinguished.

Suvorov's career is a good illustration of how the meritocracy functioned, and how it produced conflict between seniority and ability. However, it was not only the most senior officers who were the beneficiaries of promotion based on merit rather than seniority. Suvorov himself once wanted to promote a humble soldier, Stepan Novikov, to the rank of commissioned officer after the latter saved his life in battle. "There are

heroes in the lower ranks as well," wrote the rising star of Catherine's army in 1771. But the shy man refused this honour, explaining that he was illiterate and instead preferred a monetary reward, which was duly granted to him.[277]

Another example of the inner workings of the machinery of merit was a nomination list for the Order of St. Vladimir sent to the War College by Lieutenant-General Mikhail Potemkin, a distant relative of Prince Potemkin and the head of the *krigs-commissariat* or supply services in the summer of 1785. As Potemkin explained, according to the charter of the Order of St. Vladimir, the Senate, the War College, and the College of Foreign Affairs were supposed to send Catherine lists of people nominated for the above award, along with special forms, and notes documenting their conduct. This was done once a year, on September 8th. All such documents were to be signed off by the candidates' superiors. "In this regard I have the honour to present the War College with a list of names from the army supply services (*komisariatskogo departamenta*) from which you can examine everyone's efforts (*ikh zaslugi*) on individual basis."

At the end of the letter Potemkin subtly reminded the War College that "in the supply department, care (*racheniem*) and diligence that bring considerable profit to the treasury is something that is not immediately obvious, and can be seen only through the comparison of numbers with the previous years. I am not going to burden you with such details because the War College already knows how it is, and that is why these people should be worthy of promotions."[278] Mikhail Potemkin himself received a nod from the War College, in the form of the Order of St. Vladimir for his efforts to balance the

[277] Longworth, 144; "Suvorov to Potemkin, 1 October 1787," Meshcheriakov, vol. II, 339 and "Suvorov to Tekelli, 1 February 1788," in N. M. Korobkov, ed., *Feldmarshal Rumiantsev: Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Moscow: OGIZ, 1947), 157.

[278] RGVIA, f. 52, op. 1/194, d. 250, l. 231-231ob.

books, which actually created a surplus in his department and saved money for the treasury.[279] Being a Potemkin, no doubt, also helped.

Finally, even the empress showed interest in how merit was distributed, especially in the lower ranks. After the successful capture of the Polish capital of Warsaw by Russian troops, bringing an end to the Polish uprising, the empress took immediate care not to leave her soldiers in want of awards and promotions. On 1 January 1795, Catherine penned a letter to Field Marshal Rumiantsev, who commanded the campaign. She wanted to distribute awards according to the established meaning of merit, which she herself had done so much to shape during her long reign. Catherine began by writing that it was important for the high command (*glavnoe nachal'stvo*) to recognize the efforts and bravery of everyone, "from the most junior to the most senior people who serve us."[280] The empress made it clear in her letter that the awards should go only to those who actually took part in the battles and sieges, a phrase she mentioned twice, rather than just to everybody in the regiments, some of whom might have been away or not have participated at all. She then asked Rumiantsev to prepare a report about soldiers and officers who had earned a special distinction. It was only at the end of the letter that Empress turned to Rumiantsev himself, thanking him for taking command of the campaign.[281]

Receiving Awards and Promotions

What did all these deliberations amount to? For example, was Rumiantsev recognized for his military success in crushing the Turks and crossing the Danube? And what about all of those officers he recommended to the Empress in his battle reports? And how was

[279] Ibid., l. 86.
[280] RGVIA, f. 196, op. 1, d. 1, l. 1.
[281] RGVIA, f. 196, op. 1, d. 2, l. 1-1ob.

Suvorov rewarded? What reward did Catherine end up giving him for the victory at Kinburn?

To begin with Rumiantsev, he was rewarded plenty. The three crushing defeats, following so closely one after another, that he delivered onto the Turks in 1770 earned him the rank of Field Marshal. As the President of the War College, Zakhar Chernyshev, wrote to Rumiantsev in the beginning of August 1770, "Her Imperial Highness most graciously deigned to promote you into her general-field marshals for the loyal and assiduous efforts and for the bravery in commanding her forces."[282] And at the end of the month the new Field Marshal received a letter from Catherine herself. Just as Rumiantsev wanted to justly rewarding his subordinates, Catherine too wrote that she must do justice unto him. She justified Rumiantsev's promotion by referring to his intelligence, bravery, his not inconsiderable military art, and his ability to defeat "the countless hordes of unsettled bastards" not with the use of greater numbers but by the application of greater skill. Catherine concluded her letter to the Field Marshal by writing that officers he recommended received just rewards.[283] Clearly, Rumiantsev's recommendations carried a lot of weight in the War College and many of the officers he recommended into the imperial graces were rewarded.

By 1774, after the successful conclusion of the First Russo-Turkish War, the final list of award recipients was compiled. Each reward that descended from the royal favour was prefaced by a clear description of what had been done to deserve it. The rewards were simultaneously symbolic, material, and personal. The name of Field Marshal Prince Golitsyn was listed first, due to his seniority. For his successful

[282] "Military College to Rumiantsev, 2August, 1770," Fortunatov, vol. II, 359.

[283] "Catherine to Rumiantsev, 27 August 1770," Fortunatov, vol. II, 377. In Catherine's time the war college was the home of the 'generalitet' which began to be increasingly synonymous with the general staff. N. P. Glinoetskii is generally a good staring point for the history of the Russian general staff. He wrote a number of studies on this topic. For Catherine's reign see N. P. Glinoetskii, *Russkii General 'nyi shtab v tsarstvovanie Imperatritsy Ekateriny II* (Sankt- Petersburg, 1872). Also PSZ vol. 18, no. 11735; vol. no. 15089; and vol. 23, no. 17177.

command of the First Army and for clearing the Turks out of Moldavia, Golitsyn received a sword encrusted with diamonds, and as a special mark of royal favour, a silver dining set.

Even though Rumiantsev was far from being the court favourite and was junior to Golitsyn, he was rewarded the most for his efforts during the war. The moving spirit behind the Russian victory received a diploma (*pokhval'naia gramota*) that detailed his services during the war; upon the conclusion of peace that he negotiated with the Ottoman representatives, Rumiantsev was awarded the special title of Trans-Danubian or *Zadunaiskii* that was to be added after a hyphen to his name. "For his intelligent military leadership (*za razumnoe polkovodstvo*)," continued the document, Rumiantsev received "a diamond-studded baton. For courageous actions, a diamond-studded sword." Other marks of distinction that were heaped on him were equally symbolic. For his victories Rumiantsev was given a laurel wreath and for the conclusion of peace, an olive branch. And as a special favour from the Empress herself, the Field Marshal received the Order of St. Andrew encrusted with diamonds, and a special medal celebrating his achievement had been minted to set an example for future generations. Then followed the common dispensation of serfs from conquered lands, of whom Rumiantsev gained five thousand in estates in the recently conquered Belorussia. In addition to that, he was granted a hundred thousand roubles from the treasury for the construction of a palace, another silver dining set and paintings to decorate the new palace. Rumiantsev's victories contributed the most to the Russian triumph and the rewards he received reflected their importance.[284]

After the two army commanders received their rewards, the machinery of promotion turned to their subordinates. General Count Panin, for his efforts to subdue

[284] RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 249, l. 430-431ob.

the Pugachev rebellion, received a diamond-studded sword, a cross of St. Andrew encrusted with diamonds, and sixty thousand roubles "for the betterment of home economy" (*na popravleniia domashnei ekonomii*). General Prince Dolgorukov received virtually similar laurels.[285]

Only five paragraphs down, did Catherine begin to talk about her favourites, the Orlovs and Potemkins. Alexei Orlov received the coveted extension to his name – *Chesmenskii* – for his naval victory at Chesma, which annihilated the Turkish fleet in 1770. He also received the by now familiar diamond-studded sword, a silver table set, and sixty thousand roubles for his household. All of his bravery was carefully described as justification for his awards. General Grigorii Potemkin received the distinction of being elevated to Count, "for his kind counsel concerning the peace negotiations," and another diamond sword for his "brave and persistent services in the past war." In addition to all this, Potemkin received a portrait of her Imperial Highness, as a special wink of Catherine's personal gratitude. His nephew Pavel Potemkin, along with Suvorov, and Fedor Orlov all received pensions, diamond swords, or awards of some sort. Numerous officers from lower ranks were granted promotions to the next rank.[286]

As far as Catherine's earlier correspondence with Potemkin about Suvorov was concerned, it too produced an award. Potemkin's forceful letter to Catherine on behalf of Suvorov after the battle of Kinburn and his symbolic gesture of sharing his awards with Suvorov made their point. "Discerning from your letters the details of Aleksandr Suvorov's service, I have decided to send him the order of St. Andrew, for faith and loyalty (*za veru i vernost'*)," wrote the empress. In the end Catherine decided not to challenge the status quo too much. She still was convinced that it would be too dangerous to give Suvorov the Order of St. George even though Potemkin and probably

[285] For Panin's efforts during the Pugachev rebellion see Geisman and Dubovskoi, 58-87.
[286] RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 249, l. 432ob.

she herself thought he deserved it. The Empress compromised with the Order of St. Andrew.[287] So ended the first war of Catherine's reign with the Ottoman Empire.

Twenty years later the two empires clashed once again, and once again after the Russian victory and the conclusion of peace in 1793 there was an explosion of monarchical favour for the military. But this time one could see how the new heroes were replacing the old masters of the 1770s. The sixty-eight-year old Rumiantsev by now had only a shadow of his former power.[288] He was still the nominal commander of the Second Ukrainian Army and he received another diamond studded sword, but not much else. Grigorii Potemkin had died in 1791, but in death he received more than some among the living.[289] Catherine ordered that a diploma (*pokhval'nuiu gramotu*) be written up which was to detail his services to the Russian monarchy during the war, starting with the command of the Russian army and navy in the Black Sea and ending with a detailed list of all the fortresses that he took and all the battles he won. This document was to be kept in the church in the city of Kherson which he had founded in 1778 and where he was buried. Catherine also ordered that a marble statute of Potemkin be erected in the city, that his portrait be hung in the armoury, and that a medal be minted in his honour. Even in death Potemkin's merit was upheld and rewarded.

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[287] "Catherine to Potemkin, 9 November 1787," Lopatin, 252.

[288] In an attempt to remove Rumiantsev from the seat of military power, and from his independent military command in Ukraine, Potemkin cleverly proceeded to undermine the former's supply system. As Jeanne de Cerenville explained, Potemkin, "kept the army of the Ukraine in want of the most necessary articles; and yet, having as president of the council of war the direction of all operations, he expected of the Marshal the performance of movements which required a much larger and better equipped army than the one he had command of." Rumiantsev grew "weary of such glaring injustices," and eventually "solicited his recall," which was promptly granted to him from St. Petersburg. Jeanne de Cerenville, *Memoirs of Prince Potemkin* (London: 1813), 205. The role of logistics in eighteenth-century Russian expansion has yet to receive its deserved academic attention. For a fascinating insight into the topic see Virginia Aksan, "The One-Eyed Fighting the Blind: Mobilization, Supply, and Command in the Russo-Turkish War of 1768-1774," *The International History Review*, 15, no. 2 (May 1993): 221-238. A newer article came out in 2006 by John LeDonne, "Geopolitics, Logistics, and Grain: Russia's Ambitions in the Black Sea Basin, 1737-1834," *The International History Review*, 28, no. 1 (March 2006): 1-41.

[289] When Potemkin died General Anshef Mikhail Kakhovskii wrote a detailed report about the state the army was left in after Potemkin. There were problems, but interestingly enough, the picture is not as bleak as some contemporaries and secondary sources make it look. See the whole file on this matter in RGADA, f. 20, op. 1, d. 328.

The next in line to receive imperial favour was Suvorov, who by now had become a Count and received the addition of Rymnikskii as a victory title to his name, after he crushed the Turks at the battle of Rymnik in 1789.[290] The paragraph began by singling Suvorov out from the crowd of other officers. Using the language of merit it read, "General Count Suvorov, so famously distinguished for his earned merit and his deeds (*stol' znamenitymi zaslugami i delami otlichivshemusia*), is given a diploma detailing all of his feats of bravery." Moreover, as evidence of the highest trust and respect by the Empress, Suvorov finally received the Order of St. George, which was denied to him earlier, and was encouraged to recommend others, "who he considers to have distinguished themselves in military knowledge and bravery" for this award. It was now clear that he had risen above those more senior to him. As further evidence of monarchical favour Suvorov received a ring covered in diamonds. After all the senior officers had been ticked off the list, there followed further lists of names and rewards stretching for thirty pages, extending down all the way to humble majors and even captains.[291]

In addition to a massive outburst of awards and promotions after the completion of wars and campaigns, the machinery of promotions kept humming in the background, slowly enforcing merit and parceling out rewards. Several individual examples should suffice to provide a general picture of this process. Once again the case of Suvorov serves as an instructive example. After Suvorov took the Polish capital of Warsaw by a

[290] For more information on Rymnik see, "Suvorov to Potemkin, 11 September 1789," Meshcheriakov, vol. II, 476-82, Beskrovnyi, 544-550, and also W. Lyon Blease, *Suvorof* (London, Constable and Co., 1920), 99-108. Before Suvorov received the title of a Count, the war title of Rymnikskii and the Order of St. George 1st class, he of course wrote a letter complaining to Potemkin about how disappointed he was that his efforts were never sufficiently rewarded. Using highly allegorical language and comparing himself to half the generals of the ancient Rome and Greece as well as to famous commanders of contemporary Europe, Suvorov concluded "Open the road to my fullheardeness (*prostodushiiu*), I shall be twice better…" meaning he would serce twice as hard if he felt like his efforts were commensurately rewarded. "Suvorov to Potemkin, 18 September 1789," Meshcheriakov, vol. II, 486. The same day Catherine sent Suvorov her letter informing him of his new awards. "Catherine to Suvorov, 18 September 1789," Ibid., 492.

[291] RGADA, f. 16, op. 1, d. 246, l. 467-68ob.

bloody storm, Catherine could no longer keep a marshal's baton from his hands. In a short letter with a dramatic flair for which Suvorov had such a penchant, he informed the Empress about the conquest of Warsaw: "Hurrah, Warsaw is ours!" Witty Catherine decided to indulge the general by writing back an equally short and dramatic reply: "Hurrah, Field Marshal!" This finally signalled the empress's decision to give Suvorov the highest military rank. Suvorov's promotion outraged more senior generals, revealing another example of a conflict between merit and seniority. In January 1795, Prince Aleksandr Vorontsov was already writing to his brother in London about the gossip Suvorov's promotion had caused in St. Petersburg: "The promotion of Suvorov has aggrieved generals senior to him. Count Saltykov, Prince Repnin, Prozorovskii, Prince Dolgorukov, have all asked to be relieved from service. Count Saltykov, due to his more aggressive stance, has already been dismissed."[292] But now Catherine did not care about offending other powerful officers and their noble clans. Suvorov's work was militarily unequivocal, politically important, and with the drama of the siege, sensational.[293] The eyes of many young officers were upon Suvorov. If the government would not have rewarded the hero of the hour, and caved in to the pressures of seniority, it might have had a demoralizing effect on the officer corps as a whole, and undermined the military culture in general. Younger officers could have lost heart and become discouraged by seeing that seniority was valued more than merit by the empress and her government. If Suvorov did not get a just reward for conquering a major European city, what hope for recognition could the rest of the officers have?

[292] A*rkhiv Kniazia Vorontsova*, vol. 12, 144-5.

[293] For eye-witness accounts of the siege, which involved massacres from both sides, see Ia. Kipinskii, "Osada Varshavy v 1794 Gody," *Istoricheskii Zhurnal Dlia Vskekh*, 3, no. 1 (1909): 77-90, no. 2 (1909): 125-136, no. 3 (1909): 235-243, no. 4 (1909):303-309 and 425-437. Also see memoirs of F. B. Bulgarin, *Vospominaniia (1789-1859)*(Moscow: Zakharivm 2001), 681-694. For contemporary coverage see, for example, "Particulars of the Storming Of Praga," *The Times*, Tuesday (23 December 1794): 4. For a military analysis see N. A. Orlov, *Shturm Pragi Suvorovym v 1794 godu* (St. Petersburg, 1894).

Suvorov's career was like a meteor that crashed into the Russian promotion culture during Catherine's reign. His success was so impressive, consecutive, and reoccurring, that in the end it was impossible for the system to enforce the rules of seniority upon this man. In his career merit often triumphed over seniority, but we must remember that his case, if not entirely exceptional, was rare. It would be helpful to take into account a more diverse sample of officers to gain a more balanced perspective.

One such example of how the system was based on ideals of merit comes from the letter sent to Lieutenant-Colonel Dashkov in the spring of 1792. In March 1792 Appolon Dashkov, a member of the Dashkov clan, received a letter from the War College informing him that he was to be awarded the Order of St. George. The letter had the familiar style of meritocratic language and a thorough description of the candidate's conduct. It started with the usual avalanche of carefully selected adjectives to describe the personal character of Dashkov during the past war and then went into a more detailed catalogue of events. Dashkov had distinguished himself at the Battle of Machine with his "dedicated service, brave and courageous feats." He had commanded two battalions during the battle and had acted "with exemplary quickness (*otlichnoiu rastoropnostiiu*) and skill, using field artillery to repulse an enemy horde and cause great harm to their batteries." Moreover, the brave Lieutenant-Colonel Dashkov had had time to repulse another attack and to capture nearby hills, "from which you rushed directly at the enemy camp." The letter ended on the reassuring note, as was the custom. "We are convinced that after receiving from Us this sign of approval you will continue your service, which was worthy of Our Monarchical reverence."[294] Such letters reveal the workings of the machinery of merit behind the scenes of battle. They tell us how the

[294] RGVIA, f. 295, op. 1, d. 1, l. 1. Compare this to the letter Catherine wrote to Rumiantsev congratulating for his victory at the battle of Larga in 1770 and rewarding him with the Order of St. George, first class, "Catherine to Rumiantsev, 27 July 1770," Fortunatov, vol. 2, 349. In a symbolic gesture in the spirit of Potemkin, she sent Rumiantsev her star of St. George, explaining that ostensibly the gold workers in Moldavia were scarce and therefore they would not be able to produce the award locally.

military collected, organized, and processed information. In this case, Dashkov's conduct in the heat of battle was most likely observed by his peers and superiors, recorded in letters and reports, sent off to the War College, and analyzed by the bureaucracy. It was weighed against other contenders for a similar distinction, and finally ranked, which in Dashkov's case warranted the 4th class of St. George.

Young Lev Engelgardt also participated in the Battle of Machine, the same one as Appolon Dashkov. He rallied the troops of his regiment, drove the enemy form entrenched positions and after capturing one of Turks' cannons turned it against them. "All my acquaintances congratulated me on the occasion that I managed to demonstrate my readiness for service in front of the whole army, so to speak, and were confident that, since I was vital in securing this victory, I would get splendidly rewarded," wrote Engelgardt. With the customary pride of a nobleman, he concluded:

> Usually, everybody went to the chancellery of Prince Repnin, to speak to its head, Lieutenant-Colonel Pankrat'ev, and to seek his help to be well recommended; I have never liked to drag myself around chancelleries and seek patronage from their heads. I knew that the commander-in-chief was my witness, I knew that the commander of the center of the army while recommending his Major-Adjutant and others who were present with him, testified to a fair presentation for awards of other commanders; and I was mentioned as one of them. Because of all this I did not want to be bothered, thinking that if I have deserved something, I shall receive it, but to beg for it I considered below me."[295]

Perhaps the young and idealistic Engelgardt should have taken a page out of Suvorov's book and begged for an award, because in the end he was to go home disappointed.

Engelgardt did not receive any kind of reward, and was pressured by his father to petition his superior. When he finally came at the chancellery of Prince Repnin, the Russian commander during the battle, to complain about being by-passed in recognition, the Prince began to talk without allowing his visitor to extend even a word of salutation: "Hello my friend; is it you, who was sent by me during the Battle of Machine to attack

[295] Engelgardt, 121-2.

the hill? You carried it out like a brave officer and zealous servant of Her Highness." Such praise continued to pour out on Engelgardt for about five minutes. At last, Engelgardt was able to open his mouth and say that he had received no award or promotion but only a mention in the honourable list published in a newspaper. To which Repnin fired back:

> What, my friend, you are not satisfied with this? Is it all not the same, orders, swords? – all of this is nothing more but expressions of sovereign's benevolence – just like the lists, but you want to be shown off for your bravery (*vyveskoiu vashei khrabrosti*). A prudent person is satisfied when he knows that his name and service are known to the Empress; you do not need anything else….

In the end all Engelgardt could do was to satisfy himself by venomous venting in his diary, and by comparing Prince Repnin negatively to *Aristides*, the general of Ancient Greece who fought in the Persian Wars and who was known as one of the most just and honourable commanders of Athens. Clearly Repnin was no *Aristides.*[296]

Conclusion

In conclusion, the presence of merit in recommendation letters, petitions, battle reports, and private deliberations illustrates that more often than not it was not enough for "an Excellency to wish it." That is not to say that excellent cooks, graceful dancers, and handsome favourites were not promoted unfairly.[297] Rather it is to say that merit was a crucial part of military culture in Catherine's Russia.

Of course there was the danger that referees could be bribed or pressured to write their letters for undeserving or little-known candidates, or simply write them as a favour. In the letters that I have examined such infractions were mitigated by a system of checks. Most letters had a clear and detailed description of what candidates had done

[296] Ibid., 137-140.

[297] As Keep points out, for example, in the eighteenth century genealogical seniority still could play a role in promotions. Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar,* 124-125.

with a precise date and place, which could be verified against official reports. Letters of recommendation were usually based on several sources that included several witnesses. This expectation represents an attempt by the bureaucracy to weed out stories of hollow heroism and to unmask incompetence. Finally, the merit of the candidate could be cross-referenced because he usually had to produce several letters from different superiors to prove a pattern of leadership, skill, and hard work.[298] The whole process was accompanied by a chronological service record, the *posluzhnoi spisok*, which included dates of previous promotions, legal history, and intellectual qualifications, such as knowledge of languages or mathematics. The evidence left by the trail of documents seems to suggest that Russian military culture in the late eighteenth century was attempting and sometimes struggling to create a very modern system of merit and professionalism.[299]

These documents also illustrate the dilemma of merit. The laws stipulated that seniority was an important factor in consideration for promotion, whereas the army and the government realized that merit was ultimately more important. There was a tension between the two concepts that never got resolved. As a result the War College was inundated with pleas and petitions. The government, Catherine herself, and other upholders of military culture realized the importance of not alienating talent and created enough venues for its recognition.[300] Equally important, this enforcement of merit was controlled and carefully monitored from above by the Empress herself, as is clearly evident from her correspondence and deliberations. It was a tough balancing act that

[298] For example see RGADA, f. 20, op. 1, d. 277, l. 369 for the process of determining the merit of candidates for the order of St. George by the Order's Committee (*kavalerskoi Dumy*) and the importance it attached to letters of recommendation and how it referenced them with reports from commanders in chief and other documents.

[299] For the rise of professionalism in European armies in general see M. D. Feld, "Middle-Class Society and the Rise of Military Professionalism," *Armed Forces and Society*, 1, no. 4 (August, 1975): 419-442.

[300] This seems to support the broader point suggested by John LeDonne in his study of power structures in eighteenth-century Russia. There was regular influx of fresh blood into the army and into the nobility in general, which both rejuvenated the nobility and sustained the political regime. LeDonne, 11-12.

managed to keep, for the most part, the talent happy and the powerful nobility satisfied, while perpetuating the military culture and legitimizing autocracy. Once the race for promotions was behind them, or when retirement seemed near, many of the officers sat down to reflect on the nature of the military profession. They shared their experiences, theirs thoughts and values, and advised younger officer on how to achieve promotions and success in military service. Their military writings further elaborated the nature of Catherine's military culture and reflected its aspiration, principles, and its growing self-consciousness and autonomy.

CHAPTER THREE

"We must distinguish the military establishment from other callings": Values and Beliefs of Military Culture

Every culture needs texts to outline its contours, define its values, contextualize its laws, and manage the behaviour of its members. The emergence of a culture is therefore often linked to texts that serve both didactic and cultural purposes. In military culture these functions are usually performed by manuals and instructions, which in Russia before Catherine's reign were largely translated and borrowed from the West. What made Catherine's reign so different from any previous period in Russian history, at least as far as military culture is concerned, was the intellectual explosion of private tracts about war, officership, and the military. It was the period in Russian history when such texts began to emerge with sufficient vigour and regularity to comment on, give shape to, and define a military culture. The last third of the eighteenth century saw the appearance of more than sixteen works by authors from Russia that concerned themselves exclusively with one or another part of war or the military.[301] Furthermore, circumstantial evidence indicates that the texts that have survived represent only a fraction of the total intellectual output of military culture during that time. For example, we know from Adrian Denisov's memoirs that he wrote an instruction for his regiment when he was a

[301] That is not to say that Russia before Catherine's time did not have military manuals. Since the time of Peter the Great, the *Military Statute* (*Ustav Voinskii*) and the *Military Articles* (*Artikul' Voinskii*) had been reprinted on an almost annual basis. See for example, P. O. Bobrovskii, *Proiskhozhdenie voinskikh artikulov i izobrazheniia protsessov Petra Velikogo* (St. Petersburg, 1881) and D. Maslovskii, *Stroevaia i Polevaia Sluzhba Russkikh Voisk Vremen Imperatora Petra Velikogo i Imperatritsy Elizavety* (Moscow, 1883). Between 1725 and 1800 I have counted 18 military and war related works that were translated into Russian, the majority of them during Catherine's reign. Good examples are Anton Leopold von Oelsnitz, *Ofitserskie Uprazheniia* (St. Petersburg, 1777) that was translated from German; Anglesi's, *Sovety voennago cheloveka synu svoemu* (St. Petersburg, 1787) and Frederick II's, *Tainoe nastavlenie* (Moscow, 1791) that were both translated from French. In 1777 Catherine, with Potemkin's prompting, ordered the reprinting of old Muscovite military texts from 1607 and 1621, *Ustav Ratnykh, pushechnykh i drugikh del* (St. Petersburg, 1777).

young Colonel, but it has been lost.[302] We also know that Lieutenant-Colonel Dibich was also composing a military manual in his retirement, which was mentioned in private correspondence.[303] As S. N. Liutov had pointed out about military literature and military books of Catherine's reign, "Many of them existed in hand-written form and were used within the military that were commanded by, or in which served, their authors. These works were an organic part of the immense, growing military literature of the second half of the eighteenth century…"[304] It would seem that writing military texts was a common practice among Russian officers during that time. However, lack of evidence precludes any further speculation on this matter and it would be difficult to assess how many texts were actually written.

With that being said, the evidence points that starting with Catherine's reign the writings about war reached a critical mass that enabled the emergence of what I call the military public sphere. By this I mean an intellectual and cultural space outside the court and the bureaucracy; something that is not directly controlled by the government; something that had developed under its own momentum; it was nonclandestine and collective in its activity.[305] The military public sphere was part of a culture that emerged around the military and was created by military men from private initiatives. This military public sphere was comprised of a community of officers who wrote, thought,

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[302] Denisov, 40.

[303] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3355, l. 4. I did not find this document in Dibich's *delo* and I was not able to locate it elsewhere. Looking for a personal *fond* under the name of Dibich likewise produced no results.

[304] S. N. Liutov, "Russkaia voennaia kniga vo vtoroi polovine xviii veka," *Voenno Istoricheskii Zhurnal,* no. 10 (2007): 65.

[305] My understanding of the civil society and the public sphere in Russia has been informed by Joseph Bradley, "Subjects into Citizens: Societies, Civil Society, and Autocracy in Tsarist Russiaby," *The American Historical Review*, 107, no. 4 (November, 2002): 1094-1123 and Laura Engelstein, "The dream of civil society in tsarist Russia: law, state, and religion," in Nancy Gina Bermeo, and Philip G. Nord, eds., *Civil Society Before Democracy: Lessons from Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 23-41. My understanding of military culture as a public sphere was influenced by the concept of civil society in the context of Russian Imperial history, or what Marc Raeff labelled intermediary bodies. Marc Raeff, *The Well-Ordered Police State: Social and Institutional Change Through Law in the Germanies and Russia, 1600-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983). Finally, Douglas Smith also argued that Freemasonry contributed to the formation of civil society in Russia. Smith, *Working the Rough Stone*. My own research into military culture has shown that even in this sphere there was room for dialogue and even, to an extent, criticism.

discussed, and often critiqued military culture, and all of this intellectual activity existed in parallel with the official military decrees and manuals. Collectively, the writings of the military men expressed both the aspirations of a group of educated professionals, and the reality of the military life. Some of the manuals, such as the one written by Petr Rumiantsev were actually accepted by the government, while others were used on a regular basis in different regiments. The authors were not talking to the echoes of their own words, but to a specific audience that they often identified in their texts, indicating the existence of specific readerships which shared similar values, concerns and ideas.

This chapter examines military manuals and treatises not from a military perspective but rather from a cultural angle, that is to say that this chapter focuses not on the analysis of these texts as military writings but rather as depositories of an array of codes, beliefs, and ideas that describe Russian military culture during Catherine's reign.[306] With that in mind, the most relevant aspects of the manuals to the above criteria have been chosen for examination and analysis, while leaving others for future study. The aspects examined in this chapter are civilian-military relations, officer-soldier interaction, religion, discipline, and indoctrination. The argument here is that Russian manuals reflected a set of values and ideals. The texts described personal qualities and norms of behaviour, created an alternative legal system, and attempted to construct a new identity for member of military culture. They displayed a surprising level of national consciousness, made numerous statements about enforcing meritocracy, professionalism, and discipline as well as integrated religious indoctrination into

[306] For the analysis of Russian military thought in the eighteenth century see V. A. Zolotarev, M. N. Mezevic, and D. E. Skorodumov, eds., *Vo slavu otechestva Rossiiskogo: razvitie voennoi mysli i voennogo iskusstva v Rossii vo vtoroi polovine XVIII v.* (Moscow: Mysl', 1984). An excellent new analysis of Suvorov's military manual in the context of other works was provided by Rogulin, *"Polkovoe uchrezhdenie" A.V. Suvorova i pekhotnye instruktsii ekaterininskogo vremeni*. For the 19th century seeG. P. Meshcheriakov, *Russkaia voennaia mysl' v XIV v*. (Moscow: Nauka, 1973). For a more general analysis in English see von Wahlde's unpublished dissertation, "Military Thought in Imperial Russia," 1966.

training. Above all the texts sought to advance the military vocation to new levels of autonomy, respect, and professionalism.

Values and Ideals

One of the key military and legal documents in eighteenth-century Russia was the *Military Statute* (*Ustav Voinskii*) which comprised the statutes, a draconian legal code (*Artikul Voinskii*) as well as exercise guidelines. These texts captured the essence of Russian military culture by outlining procedures, duties, ranks, pay, equipment, and many other aspects of military life. Everybody in the army, from a private to a general, had to be familiar with its chapters. Much of the content of the *Ustav* was borrowed by Peter the Great from Western manuals and moulded to fit the Russian idiosyncrasies. It was the first major military document that captured the essence of Russian military culture, which was to be fully formed and developed in the second half of the eighteenth century.

Before entering the world of private military manuals they should be put in the context of formal government regulations, articles, and statutes that were published and enforced by the War College. The *Military Statute* was very important for understanding Russian military culture in the eighteenth century because it began to develop military culture as separate sphere from the civilian culture. It did so by setting up parallel processes, such as martial law and military councils. Military councils stretched back to the early eighteenth century. They empowered the military to make their decisions on the spot, without first getting the approval of the sovereign. The *Military Statute* showed how the military culture was striving for greater political independence and legal and cultural self-regulation. “Major and significant tasks, as well as any plans, should not be set into motion by an individual decision, but always in consultation with Generals and

with the unanimous written approval of the War council members," stated the *Statute*.[307] A whole chapter was dedicated to describing the workings of the military council. For instance, durng its convening had to be carefully taken and all strata of the military were involved in the process, creating a feeling of egalitarianism and transparency. When all was said and done, the final verdict was the product of the majority vote. Similarly the *Statute* developed its own legal processes for the martial law.[308] Reprinted throughout the eighteenth century, the *Military Statute*, along with other government instructions, was trying to define a measure of self-regulation and legal and political autonomy for the military.[309]

The broad and all-encompassing *Military Statute* was accompanied by more nuanced manuals, but they too reinforced the larger value system of the Russian military culture. For example, the *Colonel's Instruction* that was issued by the War College in 1764 made a strong statement about reinforcing military identity and differentiating it from all others. The *Instruction* ordered that all officers, and even those who had quit active service, should always wear their military uniform, and nothing else (*i onogo plat'ia ne imet'*).[310] Furthermore, *Colonel's Instruction*was concerned with *espirit de corps* and called for solidarity and concord within the military society. It stated that "everyday experience shows that unrest in the regiment is often sparked by disagreement among the officers…" Such disagreements and enmity could lead to the destruction of discipline and consequently harm the whole military service.[311] They should be moderated and avoided.

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[307] *Ustav Voinskii*, 16.
[308] Ibid., 62.
[309] The two other important government instructions were *Instruktsiia Polkovichiia* (St. Petersburg, 1764) and *Instruktsiia pekhotnogo polka Polkovniku*, (St. Petersburg, 1764), PSZ, vol. 16, no. 12289, 672.
[310] *Instruktsiia Polkovichiia*, 223.
[311] Ibid., 206.

In the winter of 1764 the War College published another short manual called *Instruction to a Colonel of an Infantry Regiment*.[312] One of the values it emphasized, for example, was merit when it came to promotions so that "Senior and deserving people were not offended (*chtob' starshie i dostoinye obizheny ne byli*)," stated the instruction. In addition to this, the colonel should never write letters of recommendation for those who were unworthy and incapable.[313]

The document also reminded the colonel that "the functioning and vigour (*ispravnost'*) of the whole service depend[ed] on him." That is, the colonel was put in the very center of the promotion mechanism. For example, all *unter-officers* or under-officer ranks, such as sub-ensigns, sergeants, and corporals, could be rewarded and promoted at the colonel's own discretion, but even here the colonel had to make sure that people of superior ability and talent would not be subordinated to their inferiors – "to strictly observe that the unworthy would not be chosen over the worthy ones." It was not enough to rely simply on the recommendations of the company's commander, warned the *Instruction*. The colonel had to discover for himself the merit of each candidate and find out on his own whether he was worthy of promotion or not. From the references to "worthiness", "care", "ability", and other rhetoric of merit it is clear that the government sought to shape the Russian military as a meritocracy and implored its officers to use sound judgement in its enforcement. The military writers picked up many of the central themes found in the official government manual, and refined, extended, and developed them further.

[312] PSZ, vol. 16, no. 12289, 672.
[313] Ibid., 673.

Values and Ideal of Russian Military Culture

One of the first people to write a private manual in Catherine's reign was Aleksandr Suvorov. Suvorov (1730-1800) came from the minor Russian nobility which was a beneficiary of the reign of Peter the Great. Suvorov's appearance did not dispose observers to thinking that one day he would become a great military leader. Short, with small sloping shoulders, wiry, and sickly, Suvorov had more in common with Prince Eugene of Savoy, than with the company of tall, portly giants like Potemkin and Rumiantsev. Suvorov's father, who eventually became the governor of Moscow, was a military intellectual in his own right and took care to carefully home-school his son. Suvorov's superb theoretical education was complemented by harsh experience. His life overlapped with six major wars: the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), the Polish Civil War (1768-1776), the First Turkish War (1768-1774), the Second Turkish War (1787-1792), the Second Polish War (1793-1794), and the War of the Second Coalition (1798-1800).[314] Suvorov was a connoisseur of ancient Greek and Roman literature, and an ardent admirer of Julius Caesar, while being a student and follower of Rumiantsev, even though he was once court marshalled by him.[315] Suvorov career reached the nadir in 1799 when he was chosen as a compromise candidate to head the allied Austro-Russian armies in Italy and Switzerland during the French Revolutionary Wars.

[314] Longworth's work still remains the only generally available biography of Suvorov in English. It is almost half a century old and is in a desperate need of updating. For the 200th anniversary of Suvorov's last campaign, Christopher Duffy furnished a well-researched and balanced account, Duffy, *Eagles Over the Alps*. In Russian see A. Shishov, *Generalisimus Suvorov* (Moscow: Olma-Press, 2003) for a general biography. For a recent and detailed analysis of Suvorov's military campaigns, his theories and tactical innovations, see A. Savinkin, ed., *Ne chislom, a umeniem!: voennaia sistema A.V. Suvorova* (Moscow: Russkii put', 2001).

[315] Count Fedor Rostopchin (1763-1826), the famous governor and the likely arsonist of Moscow during the French invasion, was one of Suvorov's friends. He once wrote to Fuks, Suvorov's secretary, that "Your position is indeed a privileged one; you serve a great man. Rumiantsev was the hero of his century - Suvorov is a hero of all times." Fuks showed this letter to Suvorov, who had a penchant for praise and purple prose. "No," said Suvorov, "reply to him that Suvorov is a student of Rumiantsev." Egor Fuks, *Anekdoty Kniazia Italianskogo, Grafa Suvorova Rymnikskago*, (St. Petersburg, 1827), 41. See also F. B. Rastopchin, "Anekdoty grafa F. B. Rastopchina o Suvorov," in *Russkoe chtenie Sergeia Glinki*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1845), 249.

Long before Suvorov became a national hero, he tried his hand at military writing as a colonel who was confronted by the myriad chaos of commanding a regiment of 1,893 people.[316] Young Suvorov commanded the Suzdal Regiment between 1763 and 1768 and wrote his *Suzdal Regulations* in 1764-5. The *Regulations* are still the best source we have about the inner life in a Russian regiment in the eighteenth century, and as such the document works as a powerful window into material, social, and military culture of the Russian army.

Like many of his later peers, Suvorov stressed education and the importance of mentorship by senior officers.

> The only distinction that an illiterate nobleman has from others in a regiment is that he is punished not with a stick but with a fuchtel [flat side of a sword]…. He is not promoted to a higher rank until he learns to read and write in satisfactory Russian. At the same time a literate nobleman with good references, once he has been assigned by the regiment commander to a detachment, is taken by the detachment commander under his personal care. The commander should order his charge to copy excerpts from Suzdal Regulation and check his knowledge of it, and keep this nobleman under his close supervision, teaching him gradually and kindly, with the help of a sergeant.[317]

Suvorov was describing the mechanism for integrating young nobles into military culture. During this time young officers remained under the close supervision of their superiors and were ordered to write out excerpts from the Suzdal Regulations by hand and their knowledge was later tested by their commanders. Suvorov insisted that even young nobles start at the bottom rungs of the military ladder and advance only when they had mastered their tasks sequentially.

> If a nobleman…has been promoted to the rank of an ensign or a sergeant, or has been assigned to a regiment in these ranks, without having enough knowledge and training, and is found not sufficiently competent…as it happens to people with non-military background, this person is obliged to undergo full schooling in the regiment.[318]

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[316] Aleksandr Suvorov, "Polkovoe Ucherezhdenie," in V. Goncharov, ed., *Russkaya voennaya mysl': VIII vek* (St. Petersburg: Terra Fantastica, 2003), 287.
[317] Ibid., 242.
[318] Ibid., 246.

The young noble had to serve as a private before his superiors deemed his knowledge of the military worthy of a higher rank. From the early years of Catherine's reign her officers stressed the importance of meritocracy, defending the system that was introduced by Peter the Great.[319]

Trying to inculcate pride and self-esteem, Suvorov kept drumming the beat of professionalism and self-worth. "Every officer and every lower commander will realize," he wrote, "that when he holds his entire command in a strict, correct and decent way, what glory he will earn for himself and for the regiment in general." Conversely, any laxness in executing his duty brought the ignobility of demotion to the officer and shame to his regiment.[320]

Suvorov finished his *Suzdal Regulations* with an insightful metaphor comparing the regiment to a human body: "only the accomplished agreement of all the parts within the regiment gives it unwavering strength, and the watchful observation of necessary military rules serves as a soul enlightening a body." As soon as "the firm order of the regiment falls apart, it becomes like a coarse carcass without a soul…"[321] The values that Suvorov put forward in his first foray into the world of military writing touched on several universal points, which were reiterated again and again by his peers: the importance of education and knowledge of military skills, professionalism and

[319] Peter the Great was trying to enforce the idea that every officer should start at the bottom of his famous Table of Ranks and work his way up, one rank at a time, through merit. This system was difficult to enforce and in reality privilege of birth remained important. Nonetheless, it was an important step in the direction of creating a professional standing army. For more information see, for example, Keep, 123-128. For the Petrine army in general see Hughes, Chapter 3.

[320] Suvorov, "Polkovoe Ucherezhdenie," in Goncharov, ed., 209-10.

[321] Ibid., 285. What is interesting is that Suvorov's analogy was not that far away, at least in literary terms, from the one written down by his future oppressor Emperor Paul, who sketched out his own observations in 1774 about the military and the state. RGADA, f. 20, op. 1, d. 276, l. 2ob. See also David Ransel,"An Ambivalent Legacy: The Education of Grand Duke Paul," in Hugh Ragsdale, ed., *Paul I: A Reassessment of His Life and Reign* (Pittsburgh: University Center for International Studies, University of Pittsburgh, 1979), 7-9.

meritocracy, and finally, the importance of coordination and internal cohesion within the military itself.

By the 1770s military manuals were growing in complexity and sophistication of issues they addressed, which went beyond the narrow concerns of how to keep a regiment in good order. A good example of this new sophistication emerged from the pen of a rather curious individual, Fedor Dmitriev-Mamonov, who would later be incarcerated for mental illness. Mamonov was a typical product of the enlightened Russian nobility in the eighteenth century. He was born in 1727 and retired in the late 1770s as a Brigadier. In his retirement Mamonov collected coins and other articles of antiquity in his house in Moscow and wanted to turn it into a museum for willing visitors. But it seemed that few people came. By the late 1770s Mamonov's reputation was on the downward spiral. In 1778 Catherine began to receive reports about Mamonov's cruelty towards his serfs which was forcing some of them to run away. Convinced that Mamonov became mentally unstable she launched an investigation which confirmed him being deranged. As a result, Brigadier Mamonov spent his retirement in a convent and then a village, being watched over by a state-appointed guardian.[322]

However, in 1770, while Mamonov still had a grip on his sanity, he composed *Epistle from a General to his Men* which to this day remains a truly unique document of Russian military culture. The *Epistle* was a military manual written entirely in verse. As a piece of poetry it was wanting, but as an example of a military instruction it remains undoubtedly distinctive. In a systematic and methodical way Mamonov created a holistic narrative covering almost all the aspects of leadership, logistics, uniform, tactics, sieges, and communications. What made Mamonov's work so different from the

[322] A. A. Polovtsov, *Russkii biograficheskii slovar*', vol. 16 (St. Petersburg, 1913), 463-2.

numerous odes about war and military victories by Mikhail Lomonosov, Gavril Derzhavin, and others was that Mamonov was writing a military manual, not a poem. No stone was left unturned in a supreme effort to produce a total manual for training and indoctrination.[323]

Mamonov explained the nature of war in simple binary between good and evil:

> Two kinds of war exist; one war is offensive,
> Another kind is one's defence with only fighting back.
> One country will always have justice on its side,
> Whereas another is guided by avarice and harmful pride.[324]

After explaining the nature of war, Mamonov declared that there were three reasons for it: world domination, augmentation of land, and destruction of a nearby power. Yet again the ever pragmatic Mamonov warned that it was not up to soldiers to philosophize about the reasons for war, hinting that officers and soldiers should stay away from politics. Soldiers should obey orders and limit their discussion of military conflicts to professional topics.

> To dwell on these parables is still not for the army,
> Our only task is to go fight, and win.[325]

The *Epistle* revealed another important aspect, another value in military culture – that of self-sacrifice. Relating a bloody scene he had witnessed years earlier during the Battle of Zorndorf, Mamonov wrote:

> Admirable is the spirit of the Zorndorf battle,
> In which a hero fought alone so many foes,
> All cut, with blood shed over him, he kills the enemies.
> And liberates himself from them like a hero
>
> Your brave spirit derived its strength from honour only,
> You, all in blood and wounds, did not surrender humbly….[326]

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[323] For the analysis of Mamonov's work in Russian, especially in the context of military training, see Ragulin, 97-105.

[324] "Voina est' dvukh rodov, odin rod nastupat',/ Drugoi est' vid voiny, sebia oboroniat'./ Odna strana vsegda imeet spravedlivost',/ Drugaia il' koryst', il' vredu gordelivost'." Fedor Dmitriev-Mamonov, *Epistola ot generala k ego podchinennym ili geneal v pole s svoim voiskom, izdannaia sochinitelem allegorii dvorianina filosofa* (Moscow, 1770), 8.

[325] "Odnako pritchi te ne voisku rasbirat',/ Nam delo lish itti srazhatsia, pobivat'." Ibid., 8.

The lonely hero decided to die in battle rather than surrender to the hated Prussians. This was the ideal soldier, the true Russian spirit and the scourge of Russian enemies. Why was it important to recall this tale to his audience, asked the author rhetorically? The answer was that now they knew the true meaning of heroism, now each of the readers could follow in the steps of this hero. Self-sacrifice along with blind dedication to the profession of war that kept soldiers out of political deliberations and philosophical debates emerged as another theme in Russian military culture during Catherine's reign. A soldier's job was to "go fight, and win" and not to "surrender humbly."

Suvorov and Mamonov were not the only ones whose writing reflected the emergence of a culture of values in the Russian military. Another notable work of Catherine's military culture came from the pen of Stepan Rzhevskii (1732-1782) when he was still a young major. At the time of writing, in 1774, he was serving in the St. Petersburg Legion, which was the name of the regiment stationed in the Russian capital. Rzhevskii traced a path similar to many of his later contemporaries. He was home-schooled until the age of fifteen, after which he was sent to a cadet school, where he spent the next nine years. By the beginning of the Seven Years' War he was already a captain, demonstrating bravery, intelligence, and considerable military skill, and ended the war as a colonel. He was considered one of the best military men of his time, and retired as a Lieutenant-General, proudly wearing the Order of St. George, the highest award in the Russian military. A dedicated theatre enthusiast and a respected socialite in both capitals of the empire, Rzhevskii's writings were an important part of Russian eighteenth-century military culture.[327]

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[326] "Ia dukhom voskhishchen, gde byl Zorndorfa boi;/ Gde bilsia s mnogimi odin togda regoi'/ Izrublen i v krovi vragov sam porazhaet,/ I sam sebia ot nikh geroiski svobozhdaet…./ Odnoiu chestiu tvoi khrabroi dukh pitalsia,/ Ves' v ranakh i v krovi, no zhiv vragam ne dalsia." Ibid., 23.

[327] Polovtsov, *Russkii biograficheskii slovar*', vol. 16, 164-5.

Rzhevskii wrote for "staff and ober-officers" so they would understand the existence of certain rules when it came to military movements and above all would apply them in practice.[328] It was as dry and technical as a military manual could get in the eighteenth century, but even here, buried within its text were some illuminating insights about military culture which are worth digging out. These insights and reflections are intermingled with discussions primarily about logistics and movements of regiments and battalions, various drills, and formations of troops.

The *Instruction* hoped to encourage single-minded and ubiquitous commitment to military service and described the qualities of a perfect officer: "supreme desire for service and diligence in military craft, unquenchable and boundless subordination, strictness and politeness among all the ranks, holy reverence for the name of the St. Petersburg Legion, friendship and marvellous understanding among each other." The manual show the existence and development of a shared culture among the military men, the "marvellous understanding" that Rzhevskii and other writers hoped to promote even further.[329]

When discussing the movement of troops it was difficult to avoid the question of parades, uniforms, and the pageantry associated with the presentation of the army. "I make the following conclusion that anything that only brings beauty to the ranks is impractical, unnecessary, and therefore superfluous," wrote the author.[330] Developing the theme of professionalism, the *Instruction* stated that "the service requires movements not only of beauty but also practicality." This was one of the first and rare

[328] Stepan Rzhevskii, *Nastavlenie kakim obrazom v budushchem lagere proisvodit' uchenie kak v pekhote tak i v kavalerii* (St. Petersburg, 1774), 6. For other Rzhevskii's instructions from 1774 and 1775 see K. V. Tatarnikov, *Stroevye Ustavy, instruktsii i nastavleniia russkoi armii xviii veka*, vol. II (Moscow: Russkaia panorama, 2010), 52-63 for other of Rzhevskii's instructions from 1774 and 1775.
[329] Rzhevskii, *Nastavlenie*, 4.
[330] Ibid., 9.

instances of rumbling against the glitter of parades, which would become to dominate military culture after Catherine's death.

Rzhevskii's insistence on professionalism, which was shared among all the military writers of Catherine's age, continued throughout his *Instruction*. He even accused many senior officers of amateurism – "Many regimental commanders think only superficially without going into the delicate details…"[331] This allegation reflected a broader frustration within the military in general, and for his part Rzhevskii demanded that all officers should be able to demonstrate their knowledge of the military profession in practice.[332]

In his conclusion Major Rzhevskii addressed a community of "gentlemen-officers" that he was writing for and was in dialogue with, and who together with the author were members of an emerging public sphere of military culture.[333] Rzhevskii underlined the importance of timing and precision, itself a hallmark of modern professional values.

> I would love the type of colonel…who based the movement of his regiment and reinforced it in such a way that he could find out without fault that from this to that place it would take him a certain amount of time, that his…regiment take this many minutes and so many steps, and finally after sizing up the place where he would contest his enemy, say: I will reach this knoll with my regiment in ten minutes, deploy the column within 200 steps of the enemy in 2 minutes, and quickly tear into the enemy in 2 minutes.[334]

All elements of modern, methodical, professional thinking about war were evident in his work: a call for exactness, a time table, knowledge by commanding officers of geography and tactics, and rapid deployment of troops. The amateur ambiguities were wrestled away in an attempt to professionalize the business of war. Rzhevskii's manual joined other writings of the time in a call to cement enthusiasm for service and to

[331] Ibid., 14.
[332] Ibid., 11.
[333] Ibid., 71.
[334] Ibid., 16-17.

encourage a serious attempt to master military craft and the military thinking that went along with it.

The 1770s were especially fertile years for military writing. The long wars with Poland and the Ottoman Empire caused reflection and soul-searching among the Russian military. Among the influential people of that time was Petr Rumiantsev, who was then at the peak of his military career and political power. Rumiantsev was a typical product of the westernized Russian nobility. He was fluent in several European languages and had travelled to Prussia to join its army during the youthful age of rebellion, before he was brought back to Russia by his stern father. "His ambition is very great," one eyewitness recorded, "yet, in his temper, its violence may be counteracted by attention to present interest. He is friendly and even respectful to his equals; condescending to his inferiors; to his superiors haughty and unpliant." Rumiantsev's talent as a politician was assessed to "perhaps be no less successful than his sword."[335] Rumiantsev was a difficult man. Yet according even to western scholars, his military experience, his theoretical writings, and his victories meant that, he "represented probably the most important single formative influence on the Russian army in the second half of the eighteenth century."[336]

In the 1770s he wrote two military manuals, for the eyes of Catherine herself. The first of these, written in 1770, was a detailed military text that was supposed to govern the everyday activities of his army. It was called *Customs of Military Service*

[335] William Richardson, *Anecdotes of the Russian Empire* (London, 1784), 316-7.

[336] Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West*, 173. There is not a single scholarly treatment of this important statesman or his policies in the English language. In Russian see the recent biography by Viktor Petelin, *Feldmarshal Rumiantsev: 1725-1796* (Moscow: Tsentrpoligraf, 2006). A short military biography was written by Colonel Vasilii Pruntsov after the end of the Second World War, *Polkovodets P.A. Rumiantsev* (Moscow: Voen. izd-vo Ministerstva vooruzhennykh sil Soiuza SSR, 1946). For the analysis of Rumiantsev's military acumen during the Russo-Turkish wars see Iu. R. Klokman, *Feldmarhsal Rumiantsev v period Russko-Turetskoi voini, 1768-1774* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1951). As a governor of the province of Malorosiia (now part of modern-day Ukraine) Rumiantsev was responsible for education and financial reforms, as well as for introducing a comprehensive census and setting up postal services in the region. See G. A. Maksimovich, *Deiatel'nost Rumiantseva-Zadunaiskago po upravleniiu Malorossii* (Nezhin,1913).

(*Obriad Sluzhby*) and it aimed to plug the gaps in the official regulations such as the *Military Statute* and instructed soldiers about everything from marching formations to how to set up pickets at camp. Rumiantsev's second work came in 1777 and was titled *Thought* (*Mysl'*), which for our purposes presents a more immediate interest. If *Customs of Military Service* dealt with mundane directives of micro-management of military life, *Thought* was definitely a teleological text. It was Rumiantsev's arguably most philosophical and long-lasting contribution to the Russian military culture.

In its pages, Rumiantsev tried to coalesce his hitherto abstract notions of the theory and practice of war, which had appeared sporadically in his correspondence, into a comprehensible group of principles and codify them in one all-inclusive text. The document reveals as much about Russian military culture in the late eighteenth century as about military thoughts of its author. The opening page of this overlooked work read:

> The military institution, which is different from all others, has become simultaneously indispensable to all states, according to some European views; however, due to the inequalities in a physical and moral sense, they could not have been in either quantity nor quality similar to one another, and as governments have discovered that the army is a burden on all other components of the state, they now are striving to employ all means to improve the connections among them, an endeavour in which one country has done better than the rest. Since we, due to the extensive territory, mixed and for the most part wicked neighbours, and the sectarian and customary differences of our inhabitants, are least comparable with other states, we should expand as much as it is beneficial and advantageous for us and imitate others only to the extent that it suits our needs.[337]

Rumiantsev began with indicating that the military institution was indeed different from all the others. In addition to that, Russia possessed a different political and social composition from the rest of Europe and therefore could not wholeheartedly adopt the Western way of war, or its military customs. By the 1770s Russian military culture was acquiring a degree of self-awareness which reflected a new confidence.

[337] Petr Rumiantsev, "Mysl'," in Goncharov, ed., 99.

Rumiantsev was clearly aware of and concerned about the influx of foreigners into the Russian army, a feeling shared by many of his contemporaries. Foreigners, especially from Poland, "gather the ranks from Princes" and then sought to transfer into the upper echelons of Russian service. This meant that their merit reflected favouritism instead of ability.[338] Such recruits from abroad were undermining one of the most important values of the Russian military culture – professionalism. Rumiantsev clearly connected the influx of foreigners to the lack of intellectual capital at home. "Due to the shortage of trained professionals of the middle-rank and of tradesmen required for the army, and in view of considerable difficulties in attracting foreign specialists and the high costs of their up keep, it is essential to…establish educational institutions in the fashion of military schools, art schools and vocational schools, in major and other key cities all over the country."[339] As far as advancement was concerned, he recommended a promotion system based on "earned merit." He summed up his view thus: "those who only dispense their service as they should, deserve their regular pay, and nothing more."[340] Doing one's duty did not merit any special reward. Rumiantsev wanted to break intellectual and cultural dependence on foreign militaries and encourage the growth of local talent. He was one of the first military writers to assert national distinctions between Russia and the West, and he was among the first to think about Russian military culture in national terms, but he would not be the last.

The military culture continued to evolve during Catherine's reign. For example, in his private correspondence Rumiantsev underlined the importance of military men being fully developed political animals. Unlike Mamonov's soldiers, Rumiantsev's officers had to be well informed. Rumiantsev interpreted the act of war, as Christopher

[338] Ibid., 114. In part it were the partitions of Poland that were bringing new people of all ranks into the Russian empire.
[339] Ibid., 103-4.
[340] Ibid., 113.

Duffy wrote, in an almost Clausewitzian fashion. The embryonic notion that a military conflict was just one piece of the political calculus and that it did not constitute an end in itself was already evident in Russian military culture as early as 1771, when Rumiantsev wrote to Count Panin:

> A man who simply looks at what lies immediately before his eyes will be unable to see what advantages may derive from the perception of the less obvious attendant circumstances. I could easily go astray if I left myself in ignorance of the political side of affairs, for this lays down the guidelines for the military aspect.[341]

Even though Rumiantsev was a product of his time and his analysis lacked the political sophistication of later Clausewitzian thought, his views on war and politics, with assignation of the leading role to the former, were still quite subtle.

Each professional culture has symbols of distinction, something it uses to mark itself from all others. In the case of military culture it has always been the uniform. Rumiantsev saw the uniform as a major part of military culture. The uniform should serve as a mark of pride to those who are part of that culture, who were in military service, and as a sign of distinction to veterans who had distinguished themselves in long and diligent military service. Wearing a uniform was not a right but an earned privilege. "Therefore," concluded Rumiantsev, for "those who in the fine years of their youth, forsaking the natural burden of their responsibilities and following their whims, left military service…the wearing of the uniform is disrespectful and should not be allowed." Unlike the *Instructions to Colonels* that came from the War College and that maintained that all men who had at one point served in the military had the right and indeed were required to wear their military uniform, Rumiantsev wanted the uniform to reflect a military culture in a narrower sense. Lack of differentiation between active servicemen and dandies who had served for a few years only to earn their epaulets was

[341] Cited in Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West*, 169.

offensive to the real men of war. In retrospect, Rumiantsev developed and reinforces many important cultural values of the military: there was the call for autonomy and independence from the rest of the government, continued insistence on professionalism and merit, but also an incipient assertion for intellectual and cultural independence from the West.

During Catherine's reign the military culture continued to move in the direction of legal, social, and political autonomy in an attempt to carve out a cultural space for its development. Echoing the *Military Statute*, Rumiantsev wanted military culture to be self-regulating and saw the military council as key to achieving this goal. Government involvement should be limited, he insisted. The sovereign should elect representatives and directors and this body should then present the sovereign with its recommendations for the promotion and election of all other ranks. The sovereign, Rumiantsev thought, should not meddle or be occupied with the inner workings of the military. This was a model that Catherine largely followed. In general there seems to be a gap in our understanding of Catherine, as well as of many other Russian emperors and empress, as a "military commander-in-chief".[342] As far as Catherine's relationship with the military is concerned, my research has indicated that she consigned herself to delegating responsibilities, asking direct advice from her commanders in the field, or sending them instructions based on advice from the high-ranking military men such as Rumiantsev,

[342] Bruce Menning identified several research topics in his chapter about the Russian eighteenth-century army, among which he wrote "With free access to Russian military archives, additional studies might extend to thorough-going institutional history of the Imperial Russian Army during the eighteenth century and a larger examination of the role of the star/tsarina as a military commander-in-chief." Bruce Menning, "Chapter 4: The Imperial Russian Army, 1725-1796," in Kagan and Higham, eds., 75. With regards to Catherine II, both De Maderiaga and in Keep, for example, do not advance our understanding of the role of the empresses as the commander-in-chief in the numerous wars that were fought during her reign. Addressing this gap and pursuing this venue of research promises to be a rewarding project that will contribute to our understanding not only of Russian military culture in the eighteenth century, but also of political and diplomatic history of Russia.

Saltykov, or Repnin, and above all Potemkin.[343] She read battle descriptions, wrote back congratulatory notes, and rewarded people her senior commander advised her to reward with her famous "Let is be so (*Byt's po semu*)". She solicited advice and acted based on the collective experience and knowledge of her advisors. It was this ability and willingness of the sovereign to step out of the sphere of military culture that played such an important role in its development.

In 1772, another unique military manual appeared in Russia. It was originally written in German by Baron Reingold Iogan von Meiendorf, who was a Baltic German, Vice-Governor of the city of Riga, and a Lieutenant-General in the Russian army. In his work Meiendorf distilled over thirty years of active service in Russia.[344] By 1777 the text was translated into Russia as the *Some Reflections about the Military* (*Opyt nekotorykh rasuzhdenii o voinstve*) by college-secretary Iakov Khoroshkevich who added his own preface, which put war into economic, social, and legal context. That is to say that Russian military culture began to connect military conflict with a broader socio-political activity. Increasingly, war was seen not as something independent, water-tight, and bereft of social, cultural, and economic activity but rather as a part of the larger life of the state. As Meiendorf wrote, an officer dispenses only half of his service "if his understanding and his knowledge does not touch upon political rules."[345] It was a point of view he shared with Rumiantsev. During Catherine's reign Russian military culture developed an appetite for politics as well as war.

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[343] For the dialogue Catherine had with Potemkin about the military, and the nature of Catherine's role as a military leader, can be gleamed from their private correspondence. For example, during the Second Russo-Turkish war Catherine wrote Potemkin on 29 August 1787, "…as much as you can, you will make full use of your intelligence to extirpate evil and to overcome all possible obstacles. And for my part, I shall not miss a single opportunity to lend help where it may be required," Ibid., 195; on 16 September 1787 Potemkin wrote to Catherine "Matushka, raise no fewer than 60 thousand recruits," Smith, ed., 197; and on 24 September Catherine replied "…my friend, a recruitment levy has been ordered…," Ibid., 201. It seems that Catherine co-managed the military effort with her chief lieutenants rather than assumed exclusive command of the military and the war effort.

[344] Meiendorf, 172.

[345] Ibid., xi.

Meiendorf was trying to break down the notions of noble entitlement and in this he displayed a degree of egalitarianism that first emerged in Suvorov's writings. Meiendorf wrote: "Often they [young officers] have the same thoughts and opinions as Mascarille portrayed by Molière, saying that 'a man of noble birth knows everything and does not require studying.'"[346] He hoped that his work would serve as a kind of guide to young Mascarilles, which would help to navigate around some of the obstacles along the way. A successful officer was patient, hard-working, insightful, and possessed sound judgement. He should be exact, wise, and experienced in many arts and sciences. Moreover officers should be familiar with European politics in general, and of the country where they serve in particular.

All of these qualities were crucial because, as Meiendorf bluntly put it, an officer "will have to inculcate into state service two thousand unenlightened and for the most part callous people for good work, the security of the entire society and national pride…." He would have to teach them the customs of military culture, tame their appetites and turn them into obedient and respectful members of military society. A flawed colonel, for example, would produce an equally flawed regiment, or as Meiendorf put it, "if the original is filled with defects (*porokami*), then its copies will be no less defective (*pogreshny*)."[347] It seemed like a daunting task indeed. The job of a colonel was so difficult, underlined Meiendorf, that in the military manuals of Peter the Great, only colonels received the respectful title of *gospodin* or monsieur.[348]

Building on these ideas, Meiendorf continued to summarize his position that reflected a growing awareness of a separate military sphere in Russian society: "With this high minded thought and only with this actual and existing law of separation, we

[346] Ibid., 87. Mascarille was a character in 17th-century play, *The Blunderer*, by Jean-Baptiste Poquelin whose stage name was Moliere. Mascarille - very close to masquerade - was the classical boastful soldier. The reference Meiendorf was making is clear.
[347] Ibid., 8.
[348] Ibid., 5.

must distinguish the military establishment from other callings…."[349] This was another powerful statement about the growth of a separate military culture within Russian society and an identity based on a set of different values and goals.[350] Meiendorf was consciously and forcefully separating the society in two halves, and arguing that the lines between the civilian and military spheres were not blurred at all. Officers and soldiers were separate from civilian society, they dressed differently, they had different values, and they served a different purpose.

By the 1780s even the busy Prince Grigorii Potemkin wrote a short piece about the Russian military, concentrating on uniform and equipment. Unlike Rumiantsev and Suvorov, who were never court favourites and who were never especially close to Catherine and her circles, Grigorii Potemkin was one of the great darlings of the empress.[351] Potemkin came from the minor gentry and first made his acquaintance with the empress as a dashing guardsman during Catherine's coup against her husband Peter III.[352] He made his appearance again at court during the Great Legislative Commission. Tall, handsome, intelligent and energetic, with a slightly condescending smile carefully captured in several surviving portraits, he was the perfect companion for Catherine.[353] After Potemkin became Catherine's lover, his path to glory and fame was assured. He became a prince, a field marshal, and eventually the president of the War College in 1784. The next year Potemkin became the commander-in-chief of the Russian forces, displacing the old Rumiantsev. In a notable description of the Russian court in 1780 A. von Gerz, the Prussian ambassador to St. Petersburg, wrote that Potemkin "possesses

[349] Ibid., 15.

[350] Once again he made a reference to a distinct social entity, a special calling, signifying a military sphere. "Some young people dedicate themselves to the (*sostoianiiu voinskomu*.)" Ibid., 89.

[351] Several important books were recently published about Potemkin that took the man and his work out of sensational popular histories and placed it in the context of serious historical study. See for example, O. I. Eliseeva, *Geopoliticheskie proekty G. A. Potemkina* (Moscow: Institut rossiiskoi istorii RAN, 2000).

[352] On the first meeting between Potemkin and Catherine see Montefiore, 49.

[353] On emergence of Potemkin see DeMadariaga, 262.

genius and talent; but his mind and his character do not predispose one to love and respect him." Gerz added that "the grand duke, Count Panin, and all of the important people of the nation hate him."[354] But Potemkin was certainly a force to be reckoned with. As another foreign diplomat, Charles Masson, observed, "The nobles who detested him, and who made some figure when he was with the army, seemed at his sight to sink into nothingless…"[355]

Potemkin wrote *Clothes and Armaments for the Military* in 1783 and addressed it directly to Catherine, at her request. The document was as much an example of the evolution of Russian military customs as it was a statement about the material culture in eighteenth-century Russia. For the purposes of this chapter, the most relevant part of Potemkin's piece is the introduction. In the first few paragraphs Potemkin revealed how Russian military culture was beginning to grow more independent from the West, or at least how the military elite had stopped looking over their shoulders for European inspiration.

Potemkin began his analysis with a history of the military uniform dating back several hundred years:

> At the time of the introduction of regular military service, many foreign officers were admitted into Russia. They brought with them the military formalities of that time, and our military men, not knowing the real importance of body armour, considered everything sacred, if not even mysterious. It seemed to them that regular military service consisted of [armoured] plates, hats, flaps, cuffs…and the like. Busying themselves with this nonsense, they did not know until now the most important things.[356]

Potemkin clearly insinuated that following European customs led to the introduction of many unnecessary and absurd items to Russian military equipment, especially in the

[354] Graf von Gertz, "Russkii dvor v 1780 godu, " *Drevniia i novaia Rossiia* (October 1879): 85.
[355] Charles Masson, *Secret Memoirs of the Court of Petersburg*, vol. I (London, 1800), 158.
[356] Grigorii Potemkin, "Ob odezhde i vooruzhenii voisk," in Kirill Tatarnikov, ed., *Materialy po istorii russkogo voennogo mundira, 1730-1801* (Moscow: Russkaia panorama, 2009), 241.

uniform. Explaining to Catherine its evolution due to change in weapons and the nature of war, he concluded that times had changed and the Russian uniform, the visual manifestation of imperial power on the field of battle, should change and adapt as well.[357] During Catherine's reign even military uniform was giving way to rational professionalism, at least as far as soldiering was concerned.

In 1788 Mamonov was back on the scene of military publishing with a more traditional text, a deep reflection on Russian military culture. This time Mamonov asked an important existential question: what were some of the criteria to achieve personal satisfaction in military service. His book, with a lengthy title - *Rules, According to which any Officer Can Fulfill His Military Service with Total Satisfaction* - was published just three years before its author was committed to an insane asylum. This however should not detract us from the validity of observation found in this work. His book aspired to teach what junior officers needed to know to succeed in the military world by teaching them the ins-and-outs of the military culture.[358] Mamonov returned to the theme of merit, and wrote that he saw many officers who deserved to be promoted but who were passed over for people who were inferior to them in ability, because the latter had three qualities that the former lacked: good-natured temperament (*dobrozhelatel'noi nrav*), social graces (*priiatnyia obhozhdeniia*), and knowledge of sciences (*znanie v naukakh*).[359] To explain how to develop these qualities was one of Mamonov's goals.

To Mamonov, low-ranking military men such as lackeys and adjutants were agents of a corrupting environment which acted as a virus that killed virtue, diligence,

[357] Ibid. Catherine evidently liked Potemkin's arguments and instructed him to carry out his program of dressing the whole army in new, simplified uniforms that later became known as "Potemkin's Uniforms." For example see, RGVIA, f. 2, op. 13, d. 86, l. 122-3.

[358] Fedor Dmitriev-Mamonov, *Pravila po kotorym vsiakoi ofitser sleduia, voennuiu sluzhbu s polnym udovolstviem prodolzhat' mozhet* (Moscow, 1788), 29.

[359] Ibid., 6.

intelligence, and merit. Mamonov's rules provided an antidote to the virus of lackeys, from which young men could emancipate themselves in two ways. The first virtue of a young, noble officer was his looks. Indeed here Mamonov was being practical. The first quality that meets one's eyes is "the external appearance". It was not a mark of eighteenth-century noble vanity or popular cliché but rather a statement of professionalism. Following in the footsteps of Potemkin and Rumiantsev, Mamonov thought that proper dress showed that an individual was a member of a larger culture, that he belonged to a certain group governed by codes and rules that distinguished itself from all the others. An officer should never dress out of style, Mamonov warned, so as not to attract attention. Otherwise such young men would be thought of as self-indulgent individuals or men of poor manners. But Mamonov also warned that an officer should never over-dress to impress women, as many young officers tended to do. "In all honesty one can call them brainless Adonises (*bezmozglymi Adonisami*)," quipped the author.[360] Too much emphasis on the uniform would distract from professionalism and too little attention to dress reflected negatively on the professional qualities of the officer.

Referring to the custom in some units of dressing according to the individual whims of their commanders, Mamonov's work supported standardization of uniform across the military.[361] This was another attempt to underline the differences between the military culture, members of which wore a specialized dress, and members of civilian society, who did not. Mamonov clearly wanted to keep them separate, and what better way to do it than through the universal distinction of dress. "And I bravely maintain that it is not commendable when an officer of high standing voluntarily sheds the uniform...." A member of the military should not change his suits like card players, for

[360] Ibid., 8.
[361] Ibid., 10.

his identity was vested in his uniform. If it was up to Mamonov, he concluded, he would stop such practices.[362]

Keeping good company and reading enlightened literature should occupy the free hours of young noble warriors. Spending time in the houses of respectable families was very important to Mamonov. Such houses served as the primary incubators of military culture, with their collections of books, art, mechanical objects, and learned conversations. But to get invited to such places one first had to follow the prescriptions laid out earlier. Crude, simple people and their uncouth habits were rarely tolerated in such houses.[363] To be a full member of the military culture one had to be appropriately dressed, well-mannered, and educated. Mamonov's text was more than just a collection of rules to be followed, but simultaneously an eloquent guide for navigating life in the military and a personal critique of the military culture of late eighteenth-century Russia. In retrospect what Mamonov had created was not necessarily a military manual or a rule book but a program to turn "the brainless Adonises" into professional military men.

By the early 1790s the image of the officer and the outer shell of the military culture were beginning to be more clearly defined. Reflecting the ideals and values of his predecessors, in 1793 Lieutenant-Colonel Grigorii Rzhevskii published a military treatise called *Essay of Lieutenant-Colonel Rzhevskii*, which presented a powerful condemnation of early retirement from military service. It reflected the values that could not be practised in retirement and showed what happened to a member of the military culture once he had left the military world for civilian life.

Rzhevskii was born in 1763, a year after Catherine II came to the throne, and at the age of ten was enrolled in the elite Semenovskii Guards regiment. In 1790 he participated in the Russo-Swedish war and retired as a captain in 1792, at the age of 29,

[362] Ibid., 11.
[363] Ibid., 20-21.

but six months later returned to military service. Like many officers of his time, Rzhevskii was a patron of theatre and a lover of literature, who tried his hand at writing novels and poetry. But as some literary critics had noted, Rzhevskii's literary career was hopeless. His poems and plays did not "reflect even an inkling of talent: everything he wrote is void of content and carries within it a stamp of poor taste…"[364] Rzhevskii was better at writing military manuals than poetry.

Rzhevskii dedicated his *Essay* to Prince Iurii Dolgorukov, a General, and the future Governor-General of Moscow.[365] In the first two pages, Rzhevskii thanked his benefactor heartily for taking him back into military service. "I inwardly cursed the minute I decided to retire from service," confessed Rzhevskii.[366] It took the patronage of Prince Dolgorukov to arrange his return to the army. The happiest day of Rzhevskii's life had been the day when he was taken back into military by the magnanimous monarchy so he could eradicate that dark spot of idleness from his consciousness and could serve his fatherland once again.[367]

The reason Rzhevskii returned to military service was that he felt there was not enough opportunity for him to serve the fatherland on his estate and to distinguish himself. After all, "to strive to distinguish oneself by knowledge and merit is one's dignity and obligation," wrote Rzhevskii, neither of which ostensibly could be fulfilled in civilian life.[368] His longing for service, the idle life, and the little respect he got in his new social position as a civilian made his existence unbearable. He wrote with an emotional appeal to his younger comrades: "Oh you, my young comrades! Your hearts,

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[364] Polovtsov, *Russkii biograficheskii slovar*', vol. 16, 155-156.

[365] Iurii Dolgorukov (1740-1830) left a military memoir about his participation in the Seven Years' War and in the two Russo-Turkish Wars of Catherine's reign. Iurii Dolgorukov, "Zapiski Kniazia Iuria Vladimirovicha Dolgorukova," *Russkaia Starina,* 63, no 9 (1889): 481-517.

[366] Grigorii Rzhevskii, *Sochinenie podpolkovnika Rzhevskoga* (Moscow, 1793), v.

[367] Ibid., vi.

[368] Ibid. John Randolph has argued that by the beginning of the 19th century an idea was emerging among the Russian nobility that one could be still serving the fatherland in retirement in the countryside. John Randolph, *The House in the Garden: The Bakunin Family and the Romance of Russian Idealism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).

inclined to freedom from superiors compel you to resign from service early, whereas only now you are at your prime time to start serving the fatherland with dignity and loyalty."[369] He implored the new generation not to make his mistake, for they would regret it. Being useful was an important element of the Russian nobility in the eighteenth century, and for the member of the military culture it was a crucial part of self-realization.

Rzhevskii tried to show that the respect officers enjoyed from their noble and non-noble subordinates vanished the minute they tended their resignation and traded their uniform for civilians' clothes. This was indeed a harsh indictment. With a stern fatherly voice Rzhevskii added "if you have at least a little honour left, you will be ashamed of yourself too."[370] One of the most important values of Russian military culture was the duty of service by its members to the state, its people, and the Orthodox Church. How could it be fulfilled if one was not in the military? As far as the emotional state of being was concerned, Rzhevskii proposed that:

> let our will and thoughts be limited to the silent compliance with military obedience; let us adorn our souls with military heroes, inspiring discipline; let us fill our hearts not with the swagger (*chvanstvo*) of a military uniform, but with courage and manliness for defeating the enemies of fatherland; and finally, to achieve these noble qualities, let us tie ourselves with an unbreakable knot of friendship and concord.[371]

It was a powerful call to unity and connection based on shared values among the member of the military. Like Mamonov, Rzhevskii encouraged professional preoccupation with the military world and pointed out that real soldiering was more than just the wearing of a uniform – it was a dedication to a lifestyle that came from the heart.

The last military manual of Catherine's reign was written by the most distinguished of its soldier. Just before his exile, in 1796, Aleksandr Suvorov authored

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[369] Rzhevskii, *Sochinenie*, i.
[370] Ibid.,ii.
[371] Ibid., 28.

his famous *Science of Victory*.[372] Suvorov's short manual has become the most celebrated artefact of eighteenth-century Russian military culture. The manual was as eccentric as its author. Suvorov's idioms such as "Shoot rarely, but deadly, with the bayonet stab firmly", "Train hard, fight easy", and "The bullet is a fool, but the bayonet is a fine chap! (*Pulia dura, a shtik molodets!*)" became part of Russian military lexicon.[373] The manual was called *Nauka pobezhdat'* or *Science of Victory* (sometimes inaccurately translated as *Science of Winning*, *Science of Conquering* or *Art of Victory*).[374] The proper translation of the title is imperative, since the appeal to "science" instead of "art" points to the influence of positivism in the Western works that Suvorov read as a young man. In *Science of Victory*, Suvorov established a paradigm that would influence the progress and evolution of Russian military theory throughout the next century and beyond. It influenced the thinking of Russian officers throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, and in 1918 Lenin included parts of *Science of Victory* in the training manual for the Red Army.[375]

Science of Victory was divided into two sections, *Drill Instructions* and *Verbal Instructions*. After the age of Napoleonic warfare, especially when bayonet charges had faded away, the *Drill Instructions* had became largely an archaic collection of tactical directives and in many subsequent editions of Suvorov's book, this highly technical part

[372] For more information about the text itself see A. N. Kochetkov, "K voprosu ob istroii, tekstologii i bibliographii "Nauki Pobezhdat'," A. V. Suvorova" in A. V. Sukhomlin, ed., *Suvorovskii Sbornik* (Moscow: Akademiia Nauk, 1951). For historiography of the text of *Nauka Pobezhdat'* see Kiril Pigarev, *Soldat polkovodets* (Moscow: ORIZ, 1944), 127-128.

[373] Aleksandr Suvorov, *Nauka pobezhdat'* (1796) (Moscow: Voennoe Izdatel'stvo Ministerstva Oboroni SSSR, 1980), 22.

[374] *Science of Victory* has yet to be translated into English. The only commentary available about the text in English is Bruce W. Menning, "Train Hard, Fight Easy: the Legacy of A. V. and His 'Art of Victory'," *Air & Space Power Chronicles* (1986). http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/aureview/1986/nov-dec/menning.html [Accessed 17 August 2011]. See also Longworth, 213 – 221 and Blease, 192-199. The latest Russian biography of Suvorov by Shishov contains a chapter devoted to this work, Shishov, 276-293. There are several versions of *Science of Victory*. After reading four, I decided to use the one published by the Ministry of Defence of the USSR, because this edition provides extensive aid to the reader in the form of footnotes and endnotes.

[375] Suvorov, 13.

was omitted.[376] However, the second part, *Verbal Instructions*, presents a rich source for cultural analysis. One of its striking features was the degree of xenophobia that it displayed. Listing Russia's enemies, Suvorov wrote unflatteringly: "There are also the atheist, wind-bag, maddened, Frenchies."[377] Russian soldiers were religious, down to earth, and quite sane. Suvorov also spilled much ink writing about hospitals and the welfare of the troops, linking them to national characteristics. This time it was the Germans who were the subject of Suvorov's faintly disguised contempt for foreigners. He warned his soldiers, "Beware of hospitals! German drugs are from far away, expired, useless and dangerous. The Russian soldier is not used to them! You have in the *artels*, roots, grasses…Stay healthy!"[378] Suvorov preferred folk remedies such as herbs, roots, clean water, and fresh air. Suvorov's outbursts were part of an emerging national consciousness in eighteenth-century Russia, but it was also a characteristic of Russian military culture during Catherine's reign. In the 19th and early 20th century Suvorov's work became a rallying call for military nationalists such as A. Baiov.[379]

Another trait that Suvorov shared with many of his contemporaries was a highly visible humanitarianism. Suvorov always maintained that the surrendered should be given quarter. Echoing the *Military Articles* that warned against the slaughter of women and children, Suvorov also wrote that "it is a sin to kill indiscriminately, they [our enemies] are human beings too."[380] Soldiers were not murders but protectors of the state, its people, and its religion. At the very end of his manual Suvorov listed a set of military values, in a long column, that the soldiers and officers were required to yell out

[376] See A. N. Kochetkov, "Takticheskie vzgliady A. V. Suvorova," in D. V. Pankov, ed., *Razvitie Taktiki Russkoi Armii* (Moscow: Voennoe Izdatel'stvo Ministerstva Oboroni SSSR, 1957).
[377] Ibid., 18.
[378] Ibid., 28. An *artel'* was a type of soldiers' commune within a company, unique to the Russian army. It was a resource for the soldiers that enabled them to take a better care of themselves. Artel was based on the egalitarian principles of contribution to the common pot which in turn could be shared among the members of the cooperative.
[379] For example, A. K. Baiov, *Natsional'nyia cherty russkago voennago iskusstva v Romanovskii period nashei istorii* (St. Petersburg, 1913). See also Fuller, 303.
[380] Suvorov, 23.

loud in chorus after the public reading of the manual was finished: "Subordination, Exercise, Obedience, Education, Discipline, Military Order, Cleanliness, Health, Neatness, Sobriety, Courage, Bravery, Victory! Glory! Glory! Glory!"[381] Here then were the main values of Russian military culture at the end of the eighteenth century.

Catherine's reign was distinguished by the amount of intellectual autonomy enjoyed by her military, the autonomy that allowed a military culture to further develop in Russia, and to define itself through numerous texts. Suvorov's last manual summarized the values and ideals of the military culture of an epoch. These values included education, merit, professionalism, and personal integrity, loyalty to the sovereign and the state. They reflected an incipient broadening of national consciousness and allegiance to the ideal of utility to the government and society at large. The manuals of Catherine's reign also create an image of the ideal officer. He was an educated man, just and well mannered, a man who wore his uniform with pride, a consummate professional, an ardent patriot who was prepared to sacrifice himself on the field of battle, a father to his soldiers and an unstoppable force of conquest for Russia's enemies.

Solider-Officer Relations: Discipline, Punishment, and Training

In addition to establishing a set of shared values for the military culture, the manuals also provided guidelines for soldier-officer relations, especially regarding discipline, punishment, and training.[382] The *Military Articles* from the *Military Statute* presented a

[381] Ibid., 29. In addition to these, there was also a note that Suvorov wrote to a friend, where he summarized personal qualities he thought an officer should possess: "The afore -mentioned hero is extremely brave but not vehement, he is quick in reasoning, yields to authority with no humiliation, and commands without practicing excessive authority. He is victorious without vanity, ambitious without haughtiness, appreciative without arrogance, firm without stubbornness, modest without pretence…" RGVIA f. 7, op. 2, d. 3119, l. 6. Such truisms stretched for 2 pages.

[382] For a purely military and tactical instruction see the standard regimental training manual published by the War College, *Pekhotnyi Stroevoi Ustav* (St. Petersburg, 1768). It spelled out the commands, evolutions, and regimental training in great detail.

static, legal framework for discipline, training, and punishment of soldiers, that was greatly articulated by the military culture of Catherine's reign.[383] Suvorov's *Suzdal Regulations* of 1764-5 were a case in point. Allied to the importance of military drill and exercise, which were central to his vision of the military, was the idea of enforcing explicit subordination. Addressing company commanders Suvorov wrote, "The bedrock of military governance is derived from subordination, which has to be religiously observed."[384] No subordinate was allowed to argue about, question, or even discuss orders emanating from his superiors.

A great example of the steady method of Suvorov's didactic school that broke down the rebellious and often stubborn spirit of recruits and brought them into the brotherhood of soldiership was his instruction to his captains. The captain had to know his subordinates by name, and be aware of the capabilities of each soldier in his outfit, as well as keep an eye out for people with potential. In addition to that, Suvorov wrote,

> In case it turns out that a new recruit has a vice, like a weakness for drinking, or any other wicked conduct inappropriate for an honest soldier, he [captain] would try to deter the soldier from it by admonishment and moderate punishment. A striving soldier should rather benefit from moderate military punishment in combination with clear and precise assessment of his misconduct, than from cruelty which would drive him into despair.[385]

Suvorov understood that cruelty had no place in the training of soldiers. He made his officers responsible for the well-being and performance of their men, and insisted that

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[383] The *Military Articles* made a strong statement about soldier-officer relations and attempted to legally codify their interaction. Checks placed on the potential abuse of power by higher ranking officers and venues for recourse were given to their subordinates. "Nobody from the officers dares to beat or harm people under their command, without an important and verifiable cause…Those who will not heed this stipulation will be given to the military court; and those who are often found in this abuse will be bereft of their rank; for he has abused the powers of his office." Furthermore, article 53 reminded officers that "command of officers over their men does not extend beyond what is necessary for the well-being of His Highness and His government; and what does not relate to the services to His highness soldiers have no obligation of doing (*dolzhnost' soldatskaia togo ne trebuet chinit'*)." Furthermore there was another system in place to check abuses. Every soldier and officer had the legal right to submit a petition – *chelobitnaia* – about his problems and injustices (article 148). *Artikul Voinskii* (St. Petersburg, 1777), 14, 20, 46.

[384] Goncharov, ed., 209-10.

[385] Ibid., 211.

officers take time to find out the abilities, qualities, and venality of their soldiers, thus solidifying cultural and professional bonds between the people in the ranks and their officers.

By 1770 Mamonov took a step further and began his manual by establishing the psychological link between a general and his soldiers. Mamonov the Brigadier saw troops entrusted to him as his own "children" and they, in turn, were to regard him as their "real father", a benevolent parent who thought only of their well-being. At night the men could sleep well because the general would be up, thinking of how to take care of, and provide for, his soldier-children.[386] He continued to cement the symbiotic relationship between an officer and his soldiers. Together they could cross any mountain, forge any river, overcome any obstacle; together they were strong. It was also the general's job to keep his men healthy, free of hunger and thirst. Indeed, the well-being of troops should be the joyful preoccupation of any senior commander.

> Believe me, my beloved children,
> My happiness is in having you all fit,
> And to provide you food and nourishment,
> My mind and memory must always be on it.[387]

The relationship between officers and soldiers resembled a contract. As long as soldiers followed orders they were protected and taken care of by their officers. The price for this care was discipline and subordination on behalf of soldiers. Superiors and their orders had to be respected not feared, and always obeyed.[388]

Mamonov returned to the theme of merit and seniority, connecting it to obedience and respect for authority. If soldiers disobeyed their orders, the contract that existed between the two groups would be broken. It was a matter of professional

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[386] "Poslushaite druz'ia, poslushaite o deti,/ Vam dolzno vsem menia, otsa vmesto imieti,/ Mne dolzhno vas liubit kak istinnykh detei...," Mamonov, *Epistola*, 3 and 4.

[387] "Tak verte zh mne vy v tom, luibeznye o deti!/ Chto shchiastie v tom moe, chtob zdravykh vas imeti./ A chtob vas legkostiu i pishcheiu snabdit',/ Ia dolzhen zavsegda peshchis o tom i mnit'," Ibid., 3

[388] "Vam dolzhno vse chiny, kotory starei vas,/ Toliko pochitat, kak oko vashykh glaz./ Oni lish durakam i slabym strakh byvaiut,/ No chestnykh vsekh oni i sami pochitaiut," Ibid., 4.

reciprocity and respect. Mamonov warned soldiers and reminded officers about the military laws, no doubt referring to the *Military Articles*, which spelled out the purpose of each rank, and the spectacularly cruel punishments that were associated with disobedience of orders. Men of evil and perverted character were to be hanged, mutilated, or decapitated. But at the same time hanging unworthy soldiers was not the only responsibilityof officers. Mamonov again employed the extended family metaphor:

> What other valid purpose a junior officer would serve?
> He always must present an example of highest honour.
> Like the older brother is ashamed of being worthless,
> A junior officer should be a decent model to follow.[389]

In 1774 young Count Semen Vorontsov (1744-1832), a member of an illustrious and powerful noble family, also joined the group of military writers who were preoccupied with defining soldier-officer relations. Before Vorontsov become famous as a diplomat and as the Russian ambassador to London in 1784, he tried his pen at writing a military manual. As a thirty-year old colonel in 1774, Vorontsov wrote *Instructions to Company Commanders* for his regiment. Vorontsov began with the discussion about the importance of discipline and subordination, reminding his officers to read out loud relevant parts of the *Military Articles* to the soldiers twice a day.[390]

The evolution towards the analysis of the psychological dimension of turning recruits into soldiers that began with Suvorov continued with Vorontsov. "Before developing the mind and cognition relevant to soldiering," wrote the count, "they [soldiers] must first be explained everything that has to do with their body." Vorontsov not only demanded cleanliness and neatness from the soldiers, but also explained why these were important: "The former preserves their health and the latter gives them the appearance both pleasant and noble." He set out in great detail how the physical

[389] "A vot na chto eshche est' nizhnii Offitser,/ Chtob chesti zavsegda dovat' on vsem primer./ Kak bratu starshemu est' stydno byt negodnym,/ Tak unter-officer byt' dolzhen est' dostoinym," Ibid., 5.

[390] Semen Vorontsov, "Instruktsyia Rotnym Kommandiram, 1774," Voennyi Sbornink, no. 11 (1871): 33.

transformation of his soldiers was to take place. The soldiers had to wash their faces, eyes, and hands, rinse their mouths and comb their hair once a day. Twice a week they had to clip their fingernails. They had to wash their feet once a week and twice a month clip their toenails. When soldiers were quartered during winter they had to go to the steam bath once a week and during summer campaigns they had to take regular swims in rivers and springs.[391] Thus the rugged and coarse peasant material was transformed into a clean and polished instrument of Russian military power. Cleanliness was a practical necessity to preserve the lives of new recruits, and neatness in their appearance gave credibility and respect to the image of soldiering. Clean, shiny, uniforms, groomed hair, and shaved faces projected an image of understated power and respectability, which was especially important to the civilian population.

Military culture linked this image of restrained respectability to discipline because bravery alone would not secure victory. With that being said, throughout Catherine's reign manuals trace a gradual move away from the severe punishments of the *Military Articles* encouraging more humane treatment of soldiers. Discipline had to be taught and explained. Using a rifle as a metaphor for military service, Vorontsov summarized: "It is perverse and detrimental when a soldier hates his rifle, and … does not see his rifle as anything but an instrument of his torment."[392] Discipline, while absolutely necessary, had to be moderated.

In 1777 Meiendorf also addressed the theme of the interaction between soldiers and officers in such a way as to instil self-respect in the lowest ranks. For example, if a soldier spotted an officer coming his way, he had to use his left hand "to remove his hat, he should look straight into the eyes of the officer coming his away, and avoid making any kneeling gestures but simply pass him by." Similarly, no soldier should throw

[391] Ibid., 34.
[392] Ibid., 39.

himself on the ground before his superiors for "because of this not only the uniform might get damaged, but also for the soldier this kind of action is demeaning and unbecoming."[393] This was a highly symbolic statement about the code of behaviour that should govern soldiers and officers. Meiendorf wanted a professional interaction by trained soldiers to replace the custom that resembled a slave kneeling before his master.

Notes on Infantry Service in General and on Jager Service in Particular was another little gem from Catherine's military culture. The manual was written, or most likely dictated, in 1786 by Mikhail Kutuzov, the future Prince, Field-Marshal, and defeater of Napoleon.[394] The first pages of this document shine light on the emphasis military writers placed on caring for soldiers, a theme that continued to develop in military culture. "Since caring for soldiers is the first sign of kindness and sturdiness of any military Corps, I designate this to be the most important of subjects and the first concern of the battalion-commanders," stated the first lines of Kutuzov's *Notes*. Being sensitive to human nature and using psychological analysis similar to Mamonov's and Meiendorf's, Kutuzov continued: "a soldier cannot be left unprepared for his duty, and cannot feel anything but faithfulness and readiness to carry out service required from him." Soldier's "faithfulness and readiness" could be achieved only if the soldier received everything that was due to him in supplies and money, insisted Kutuzov. Clearly Kutuzov was aware of the widespread practices by some officers of deducting money from soldier's pay or borrowing from their common pools kept in the *artel'* and then never paying it back. He warned the "gentlemen-battalion commanders" that this had significance for the whole military service, for if a soldier was robbed of his due in food, clothes, medical supplies or money it could lead "to the destruction of his health,

[393] Meiendorf, 170-171.
[394] For the archival history of the text see Iu. N. Iablochkin, ed., *Primechaniia o pekhotnoi sluzhbe voobshche i o egerskoi osobenno* (Moscow: Voennoe Izdatel'stvo, 1955), 4 and 20.

sometimes even life, and consequently can cause irreparable harm to military service."[395]

Kutuzov's approach to training showed how the military culture was evolving during Catherine's reign. When he wrote his *Notes* in the 1780s, it was no longer enough for officers to simply show their soldiers how to perform drills and do exercises. What Kutuzov demanded from his officer was an explanation for each drill and maneuver. As John Keep pointed out, "Modern sociologists have noted the traumatic effect on unexpected transfer to an unfamiliar institutional environment without adequate explanation of the rationale for the change."[396] Officers were being transformed from cane-masters into patient pedagogues. This approach, which can be seen throughout the document, displayed the very highly developed pedagogical dimension of Russian military culture by the 1780s, a dimension that was also evident in Mamonov's *Pravila* from 1788.

Mamonov recommended that instead of carousing with women and losing fortunes in smoke-filled halls and card houses, young officers should spend more time with their soldiers. By then this was a consistent theme in many of the military texts. He called for young officers to show kindness of heart and magnanimity to their subordinates every chance they got. This way the young officer "[would] win their respect and their hearts."[397] Politeness and good deeds created an emotional and psychological bond between the officer and his men.

Each manual added a new aspect, a new perspective, and new ideas to the process of developing a healthy relationship between the recruits and their officers. Meiendorf emphasized the importance of developing self-respect in soldiers, Vorontsov described how officers could affect the physical and mental transformation of soldiers

[395] Iablochkin, ed., 41.
[396] Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar,* 155.
[397] Mamonov, *Pravila*, 36.

through a simple routine, and their role in that process. Kutuzov emphasized the importance not only making soldiers follow orders but also explicating the orders. Officers were teachers, fathers, and disciplinarians. Discipline was both a military virtue and an educational necessity to many of these men, yet a balance had be struck between blind and sadistic punishment and enlightened reprimand.

Civilian-Military Relations

Civilian-military relations was another aspect of Russian military culture that saw development during Catherine's reign.[398] An excellent example of addressing the tensions between the civilian society and the military came from Suvorov's *Suzdal Regulations* from the beginning of Catherine's reign. He ordered company commanders of his regiment to visit their troops every week. In Russia in the eighteenth century, as in many other European armies, the troops would retreat to winter quarters and soldiers would be quartered in villages and towns, in the huts and houses of the local civilian population. This situation created heavy friction with the hosts, whose households were burdened with unwelcome and often rambunctious military men. Suvorov made his officers examine soldier accommodations a week after they had been quartered – each soldier dwelling was to be inspected individually. Officers had to pay attention to "How and where does he [the soldier] keep [his military things] and his provisions, does he keep himself in cleanliness, for piety's sake does he listen to the instructed prayers in the regiment, does he keep well with his hosts…."[399]

Finally, the visiting officer had to talk to each one of his soldiers. This was more than casual small talk, explained Suvorov, but an exercise to discover if the men were

[398] The term civilian-military relations is used here to designate the interactions between the military and civilian spheres, from a cultural and social perspective, which is different from the commonly used civil-military relations, which describe the political tensions between civil and military authorities.

[399] Suvorov, "Polkovoe Ucherezhdenie," in Goncharov, ed., 273-4.

slipping away from the orbit of military culture. A short talk with a quartered soldier would reveal "if he had taken on peasant language, looks, mentality and scheming, and if these detract from military valour." Suvorov used this simple but effective test to discover immediately if the quartered troops, all of them former peasants, were beginning to regress to their previous mental, visual, and lingual state. It was the job of an officer to defend the boundaries of military culture. Suvorov wrote that if any soldiers were found to have lapsed into their former peasant identities, their immediate superiors were to be punished, and the soldiers themselves were taken under the personal supervision of the company commander.[400]

A veteran of fighting in foreign lands during the Seven Years' War, Rumiantsev fully appreciated the importance of smooth civil-military relations in war. With that in mind he wrote in 1770 in his *Customs of Military Service* (*Obriad Sluzhby*) that during marches it was the job of officers to carefully watch their men so that they would not pillage nearby villages. If there were any complains brought by the villagers to the commander, he had to pay for everything that was stolen, and then some, out of his own pocket. [401] The army was not a scavenger but a partner of civilian society; soldiers were not thieves but law-abiding servicemen. This formula was replicated in other military texts and was an important part of Russian military culture.

Meiendorf tried to address civilian-military relations in his work as well. In addition to seeing war as being related to politics, Meiendorf saw it as a result of people coveting the belongings of others, which made the goal of the military to protect civilians from the greed of other nations. How to execute this interaction was a tricky business. Here Meiendorf was entering into the murky waters of relations between civilian and military societies. The military society required proportionally more

[400] Ibid., 273-4.
[401] Rumiantsev, "Obriad Sluzhby,", Ibid., 123

resources than the civilian society, since the military did not produce, but only consumed resources. If the military were to start living beyond its allocated resources, and soldiers and officers started stealing fodder or gun powder to make extra money on the side, they would be digging their own grave. The military would not have enough money to sustain itself and the machine would start encroaching upon the civilian population. People would view the military not as a protector but as a thief, and commanders would have a cause to be concerned for their lives.[402] It was a delicate balance between sustaining the military society and freeing the civilian society from military abuse. Once again trying to underline the difference between civilian and military spheres, Meiendorf wrote that "a soldier does not think of anything but protecting the faith, defending the government, defending its [government's] people…[and] enforcing government laws…" In other words the military as a whole toils for "the general good of society…"[403] Self-sacrifice and respect for and cooperation with civilian society were central values of Russian military culture.

Vorontsov also addressed civilian-military relations in his manual. He wrote that the lot of the military man was relatively hectic, difficult, and dangerous, compared to the civil servant, but at the same time it was distinguished by greater honour and glory. In Vorontsov's mind, just like in many of the other authors', there was a clear demarcation line between civilians and the military. Officers and soldiers "defend their fellow citizens [*sograzhdan'*] from enemies, defend the fatherland and the holy church from the enslavement by heathens, and in so doing win the appreciation of the Autocrat, the thanks of the people [*zemliakov*], and the gratitude and prayers of the churchmen."[404] Unlike the civilians, soldiers worked for the greater good of society, for a higher purpose.

[402] Meiendorf, xiii.
[403] Ibid., 14.
[404] Vorontsov, *Instruktsyia Rotnym Kommandiram,* 35-36.

Finally, in the *Science of Victory*, Suvorov declared "Do not harm civilians: they provide us with food and water. A soldier is not a bandit."[405] With such words Suvorov instilled honour into the profession of soldiering and gave clear guidelines governing the interaction between military and civilian worlds. It is clear that the military culture saw itself as a separate entity from the civilian society, yet simultaneously it saw itself being connected to it, even subservient to it, through the notions of service to the country, defence of its religion, loyalty to the people, and protection of its interests. Military texts attempted to outline rules for harmonious interaction with the civilian sphere that defined the very character and purpose of the military service.

Religion and Military Culture

Mamonov, writing his *Instruction* in 1788, saved his most important point for last. "My last advice is for the young man never to forget the word of God; for whoever forgets about God, God in turn forgets about them."[406] Mamonov's officer was both a soldier and a Christian. Those who were ignorant of the Lord's teachings would do damage to the traditions of honest military service. Clearly religion was an integral part of Russian military culture.[407] For example the 1764 *Colonel's Instruction* had the following to say about religion in the army. "All officers should enter the church with their men and stay there until the services are over; and so that officers or soldiers would not attempt to leave beforehand, place at church door an unter-officer with a halberd." The instruction also explained that if a soldier happened to be of a different confession, he should be

[405] Suvorov, 23.
[406] Mamonov, *Instruktsyia*, 40.
[407] For church and society in eighteenth-century Russia in general see Gregory Freeze, *The Russian Levites: Parish Clergy in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977). See also the recent book by Elise Wirtschafter, *Religion and Enlightenment in Catherinian Russia: The Teachings of Metropolitan Platon* (DeKalb: NIU Press, 2013). For religion in imperial Russia in see Valerie A. Kivelson, and Robert H. Greene, *Orthodox Russia: Belief and Practice Under the Tsars* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003).

sent along with an officer of his confession, if such was to be found, to pray according to his own religious customs. The fact that there was a religious service three times a day and the surprising sensitivity to confessional multiplicity in the military indicates the importance of religion to Russian military culture.[408] Also tellingly, the first article in the *Military Articles* was about religion:

> While all people in general and every Christian with no exception ought to live in accordance with the Christian laws and be honest without maintaining a hypocritical fear of God, soldiers and military men especially must respect these laws earnestly and follow them sincerely. By the will of God they are often placed in a situation where every hour of their service to the Emperor is fraught with deadly danger to their lives, and because every blessing, conquest and well-being originates from the one and only God almighty, the genuine source of all good, the righteous Giver of victory, they must pray only to Him and have all their faith in Him.[409]

Christian virtues were appropriated by the military culture to perpetuate and reinforce its own values and its position within Russian culture in general. God himself would be responsible for Russian victories, and any blasphemy would not be tolerated. The punishments for ignoring the religious code ranged from running the gauntlet to being burned alive.

The *Military Statute* similarly assigned religion a prominent role in military culture and in war. All officers and soldiers had to pray three times a day. All military men had to say a silent prayer twice a day, in the morning and before bed time. It was the job of officers to teach their men how to pray, and even those who were illiterate and who could not memorize all the prayers still had to know the Lord's Prayer. Everyday at

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[408] *Instruktsiia Polkovichiia*, 117. See also Paul W. Werth, *The Tsar's Foreign Faiths: Toleration and the Fate of Religious Freedom in Imperial Russia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) who explains how religious toleration was a defining feature of the Russian empire. See also Robert Crews, "Empire and the Confessional State: Islam and Religious Politics in Nineteenth-Century Russia," *The American Historical Review*, 108, no. 1 (2003): 50-83.

[409] *Artikul Voinskii* (1777), 5. In addition, Article 9 stated that religious services were to take place every morning and every night. They included singing hymns and saying public prayers in churches and in military camps. The military priest was to be a respected member of the army and anyone who dared to disrespect him was punished. Ibid., 7.

nine in the morning a priest had to serve the liturgy in every regiment.[410] Furthermore, prayer services should take place on Sundays and on the eve of great holidays. There had to be a drum roll before each prayer, a clear attempt to mix the military with the religious.[411] The Russian army was a Christian army, and Russian military culture was drenched in religiosity which gave it a set of values around which its members could coalesce and worked as another binding, sociological mechanism just like the military oath.

The *Colonel's Instruction* (*Instruktsiia Polkovichiia*) also maintained that officers had to make sure that each soldier attended one of three daily prayers at least once, and that the colonel had to make sure that everyone in his regiment, including officers, went at least once a year to confession (*ispoved'*) and the Eucharist (*prichastie*).[412] The blessing of new regimental standards also had a religious component that involved a priest, a prayer, and a military oath.[413] Participating in religious ceremonies was a legal requirement for everyone in military culture.

The official military instructions established the role of religion in Russian military culture, but the role of religion was further developed during Catherine's reign by individual military writers. Suvorov, for example, was known for bombarding his soldiers and officers with religious propaganda in his orders, his speeches, and in his military instructions.[414] Being a great churchgoer, an aspired monk, and even somewhat superstitious, Suvorov began to impress the importance of religious service on his soldiers and officers in his *Suzdal Regulations* in the early 1760s. His so-called "church parade" was a ritual. The whole affair was prescribed in eight separate commands. For

[410] Ibid., 98-99.
[411] Ibid., 99.
[412] *Instruktsiia Polkovichiia*, 303-5.
[413] Ibid., 202.
[414] As Geoffrey Best wrote, "Suvorov took [religion] to such a heady pitch" that it was used almost as a blunt indoctrination tool. Geoffrey Best, *War and Society in Revolutionary Europe, 1770-1870* (Leicester: Leicester University Press in association with Fontana Paperbacks, 1982), 44.

example, a soldier had to enter the church on the right, and exit on the left. Each officer had to line up his men before the church door and command that they remove their head gear before entering church. All the hats and helmets were to be placed in one corner of the church instead of being held under the arm.[415] It was an exercise in obedience and respect for the Orthodox Church as an institution but also a way to discipline the mind and behaviour of unruly recruits.

When it came to praying, everybody in Suvorov's regiment had to know at least four prayers by heart: to Jesus Christ, the Creed ("I believe in one God"), the Lord's Prayer, and the Hail Mary. Soldiers and officer had to memorize the above prayers and every day in the morning and at night, pray with these to the All Mighty God, reading all of them "out loud and from memory."[416] But Suvorov did not stop there:

> During important holidays, officers take their men to church at noon. On Sundays and big holidays he [officer] takes his regiment to church for the mass and brings them back, all in full church attire as per Paragraph 15, Part II. If considered necessary he takes the regiment to the night church service as well. During Lent each member of the regiment fasts for a week.[417]

Suvorov continued to emphasize the role of religion in the Russian military and in war in general to the end of his career. As will be described below, writing after the French Revolution and being a deeply religious man, Suvorov began to align the Russian identity and the identity of the Russian military culture with the Orthodox religion. By the end of the century, as one soldier related, every regiment in Suvorov's army had a church tent where a regimental priest presided over services. Suvorov himself went to some of them to pray every Sunday.[418]

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[415] Suvorov, "Polkovoe Ucherezhdenie," in Goncharov, ed., 200-1.
[416] Ibid., 218.
[417] Ibid., 250.
[418] I. O. Popadichev, "Vosspominania suvorovskogo soldata," in Sergei Semanov, ed., *Aleksandr Vasilevich Suvorov: slovo Suvorova, slovo sovremennikov, materialy dlia biografii* (Moscow: Russkii Mir, 2000), 85.

In 1770, Rumiantsev also touched upon religion in his *Customs of Military Service*. His manual had a special section called "Prayer" that outlined the ceremony for religious service. At nine o'clock in the morning everybody had to gather on the parade grounds. Weapons were to be left behind, and only swords were to be worn, probably to reinforce the idea of belonging to the military rather than to civilian society. The men formed a circle, and while the priest chanted his usual prayers, the listeners had to stay on one knee. Furthermore, on holidays, on Sundays, or when it was ordered, brigades could construct their own churches, which were to be placed in the middle of camp.[419]

The most powerful statement about the role of religion in war was made by General Petr Panin in his *Instructions* to his army in 1770.[420] Panin had served in the Russian army since 1736, when he was fifteen years old. He was a veteran of the Seven Year' War, the suppressor of the Pugachev rebellion and one of the most experienced generals in Catherine's army. Panin began his *Instruction* with an unequivocal analysis of his enemy, the Ottomans. Religion was used as an explanation for animosity between the Russians and the Turks and as a justification for the war.[421]

Panin summarized Russia's position against the Turks in religious terms and explained what Russian soldiers should rely on in battle:

> …we should rely: first of all on Christ the Saviour who redeemed us with his blood, and in whose name we fight against the enemy of his Holy name, the church and the Christian faith, that will of course in all instances lead us onwards, and those sacrificing their stomach for Him, will earn

[419] Petr Rumiantsev, "Obriad Sluzhby," in Goncharov, ed., 132.

[420] Petr Panin, *Nastavlenie ot predovoditelia vtoroi armii, General-Anshefa, Senatora i Kavalera Grafa Panina voisku emu vruchennomu, na predvoditel'stvo v nastupatel'nyia deistviia protivu voiska Turetskogo, sochineno pri vstuplenii v nepriiatel'skuiu zemliu, Iiunia 7 dnia 1770 goda* (Moscow, 1770). For more information about Panin see the biography of Petr Panin see Geisman and Dubovskoi. Panin's correspondence with Grand Duke Paul in 1778-9 has also been published, Pavel I and P. I. Panin, "Perepiska Pavla Petrovicha s gr. Petrom Paninym," *Russkaia Starina*, 33, no. 2 (1882): 403-418 and no. 3: 739-764. His letters to his brother, even though they belong mostly to pre-Catherine's Russia are still very informative, P. I. Panin, "Pis'ma grafa Petra Ivanovicha Panina k bratu ego grafu Nikite Ivanovichu," *Russkii Arkhiv,* 2, no. 5 (1888): 65-93.

[421] Panin, *Nastavlenie*, 1.

> their coronets in heavenly kingdom…each one of us will advance fearlessly on this foe and enemy of Christ the Saviour….[422]

Faith would make up for the numerical inferiority of the Russian forces. Like the crusaders of days of old, the Russian armies would be guided by the hand of God against the infidels. The Turks were not Russia's personal enemy, but the enemy of Christ. The Russian soldiers were fighting for something greater than themselves. Even though the use of religion to inspire and motivate soldiers dates to antiquity, in Russian military culture in the eighteenth century it found a special appeal.[423]

David Bell argued that for total war to exist there must be an element of hatred that, in the case of Revolutionary France, was furnished by ideology that produce absolute hatred for the enemy, which enabled the French Revolutionaries to participate in some of the cruellest acts during wartime.[424] In the case of Eastern Europe we can see the incipient flame of hatred being fanned through recourse to religion.

> …and so there is not much else left to us in this current position, than to call upon our Christ the Saviour, in whose name and in whose faith we now more than ever, are going into battle, be happy about those whose life his Holy will deigns to prolong, they will be the maker of victories and fame; but those who will be sacrificed, those will receive eternal peace in His heavenly Kingdom.[425]

Panin used the language of religious struggle; the document does not even mention Russia or the empress. Describing the mentality of the Turkish warrior, Panin painted the following picture:

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[422] Ibid., 7-8.

[423] This emphasis on Orthodoxy in military culture, perhaps, went hand in hand with emphasis on religion in Catherine's foreign policy and her promises and assertion of support for Orthodox subjects in Ottoman Empire. See Madariaga, Chapter 32.

[424] Bell borrows the concept of "absolute enmity" from the German philosopher Carl Schmitt. Bell, *The First Total War*, 8-19 and 14-15. Religion was one of the reasons for the increasingly brutal, and all-consuming wars in Eastern Europe that saw the clashes between armies of different faiths. Some historians have seen these wars and as possessing some of the elemets of the total war total war during the French Revolution. See for example Robert A. Kann, "Reflections on the Causes of Eighteenth-Century Warfare in Europe," in Gunther Erich Rothenberg, Bela K. Kiraly and Peter F. Sugar, eds., *East Central European Society and War in the Pre-Revolutionary Eighteenth Century* (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 1982), 33.

[425] Panin, *Nastavlenie*, 8.

> …this murderous, barbarous foe and the scourge of the Christian race, … does not give it any mercy, but kills it for the sake of acquiring for every Christian head a monetary reward established by his commanders, and for the general promise of heaven for the murder of Christians….[426]

The Russian army, of course, would not participate in such barbaric customs as cutting off the heads of their enemies; Russian soldiers were professionals. Panin gave his soldiers a choice between a desperate fight to the death or a victory achieved by calm subordination and methodical discipline. In Russian military culture religion served to arouse the fighting spirit of officers and soldiers, but also to inspire and motivate them.

By the 1770s the concept of divine leadership was being further entrenched in Russian military culture.[427] For example, in 1777 in the preface to his translation of General Meiendorf's work, Khoroshkevich wrote that now "enlightened with Godliness [soldiers] no longer fear infidel tribes that pervert the law and piety", but feel the power of God, "who guides their hands in battle."[428]

Meiendorf's writing also bore the stamp of piety, which was commingled with enlightenment optimism. "No matter how much his soul is darkened…every human being has natural qualities, and enters on the path of enlightenment, if only he can be given true and real conviction." It should not be impossible for an insightful and enterprising colonel "to imbed thoughts about God into the soldier, to explain to him about His kindness and his sacrifices, about punishment and rewards coming from Him, and about the soul and eternity."[429] If an officer had to sometimes double as a missionary, it was for the greater good of the military culture.

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[426] Ibid., 9.

[427] This practice continued during Napoleon Wars. For example, Ivan Skobelev wrote during the Battle of Reims, "Turning to my companions, I then said "Repeat the oath, my friends! Let's pray fervently to the Lord so he may show his innumerable favours on the loyal subjects of the Russian Tsar; may He infuse our hearts with new strength, and courage, and may He raise our spirit and mind above the perils that surround us! Until now we have shown how the Russians fight, let's now show how they die!"." Ivan Skobelev, "Rasskazy Russkogo Invalida," in Alexander Mikaberidze, ed., *Russian Eyewitness Accounts of the Campaign of 1814* (London: Frontline Books, 2013), 194.

[428] Meyerdorf, vii.

[429] Ibid., 16.

Meiendorf expanded his point about religiosity and connected it to two very important subjects: humility and loyalty. Teaching soldiers religion would mean that even during war they would not become so heartless as to kill wounded enemy soldiers (or decapitate them for a monetary reward) because they would realize it would contradict the teachings of faith. On a more practical level, unless soldiers were fully introduced to religion, they could not and should not be allowed to take the military oath. For how, Meiendorf asked rhetorically, can one bring a person to the military oath, if he is unenlightened and does not possess reason or consciousness? The military oath was seen as a personal covenant between the soldier, the military, the sovereign, and God. If a person had not been humbled by religion, he could cause great damage to military culture. For Meiendorf religion was one of the methods by which to enlighten the rough and coarse Russian peasant recruits. Religion was one of the pre-requisites, along with discipline and education, to membership in the military culture, especially for officers.[430]

Finally, perhaps the greatest advocate of introducting religion into the military culture was Suvorov. He composed a cannon of nine songs and even crafted a wooden cross for the church of St. Peter and Paul in Ladoga.[431] As Bruce Menning observed, Suvorov recognized and reinforced religious and patriotic sentiments and tried to awaken them in his recruitsto strengthen "common identity and loyalty to shared values."[432] Geoffrey Best also remarked that Suvorov took religion to such "a heady pitch" that it almost served as brainwashing mechanism.[433] Suvorov wrote to his soldiers in *Science of Victory* in 1796: "Pray to God! He delivers us victory. Wonder-heroes!

[430] Ibid., 19-20.
[431] Maria G. Zhukova, *Tvoi esm' az: Suvorov* (Moscow: Izdanie Sretenskogo Monastyria, 2006), 146 and 160.
[432] Menning, "Train Hard, Fight Easy: the Legacy of A. V. and His 'Art of Victory'."
[433] Best, 44.

God is our general!"[434] The soldiers should die for "the Mother of God, for the mother, for the Holy Kingdom of God!"[435]

Russian military writers saw religion as an indispensable part of military culture. Many of them were genuinely religious men, but that was beside the point. Religion to them served a practical purpose. In addition to being an organized collection of beliefs and a source of comfort, it served as a tool for moral teaching, for transforming men into soldiers, and into servants of the state. Religion was seen as a tool to reach into the soldier's soul and to make it receptive to military values of respect for authority, self-sacrifice, and humility. In many ways then religion played an important part in the indoctrination process, which was also clearly outlined in the military manuals.

Methods of Indoctrination

Another important function of military culture was indoctrination, propagation, and defence of its values. Many of the military manuals developed a method and provided guidelines for indoctrination of new members, both officers and soldiers, into military culture. *Instruction to the Colonel of an Infantry Regiment*, for example, made several important observations on this matter. Upon the arrival of a new soldier to a regiment, the officer of the company to which the new soldier had been assigned had to have several short conversations over a period of time to figure out the soldier's manners and abilities. The next step was to pass the new man into the hands of an older soldier. The latter would show him not only proper military behaviour, but also the mundane details of military life - how to put on his shoes, how to dress, and how to look like a military man. He would teach the recruit not to be lazy, to be brave, prudent and easy-going. The goal was to eradicate what the military perceived as devious peasant habits – shiftiness,

[434] Suvorov, 29.
[435] Ibid., 23.

grimacing, scratching during conversations – and replace them with military values of restraint and self-discipline.[436]

The *Instruction* showed how to bring new recruits into military culture, how to make them embrace their new military identity and its associated values:

> During the readings of the *Military Articles* … explain to them [the crecruits] their power and their contents, especially…the nature of soldier's service and the necessary uninhibited bravery, and that no hardships and fear can dent the courage of Russian soldiers…Teach such a newcomer the names of the generals, names of regimental staff and ober-officers, and especially of his company officers, so he without timidity and with confidence may approach them and talk to them if there is a need for it, and so that he may always remember that he is not a peasant, but a soldier, the calling and rank of which give him an advantage over all his previous positions.[437]

Official regulations were not the only ones concerned with indoctrination and changing serfs into soldiers. In his 1764 *Suzdal Regulations* Suvorov put a lot of emphasis on indoctrination, on turning exhausted, often violent, Russian peasants into professional soldiers. The best way to do it was through military drill. Perhaps Suvorov thought that by changing men's physical habits - by altering how they looked and how they talked - he could alter their mental state as well. To achieve this metamorphosis from an unwilling recruit into a willing soldier required a change in consciousness, and to make recruits feel like soldiers officers first had to make them look and act like soldiers. Military exercise moreover, had to take on the character of a game. Suvorov insisted that "this exercise was made into a fun activity for all (*chtob onoe uprazhnenie voobshche vsem zabavoiu sluzhilo*)."[438] Suvorov realized that the monotony and harshness of

[436] PSZ, vol. 16, no. 12289, 681.

[437] PSZ, vol. 16, no. 12289, 681-3. See also Wirtschafter, *From Serf to Russian Soldier* which explores what the author calls the soldier estate from around 1796 to 1850.

[438] Goncharov, ed., 192. See also V. V. Kurasov, "Suvorovskie printsipy obucheniia i vospitaniia voisk," in *A. V. Suvorov: iz materialov, opublikovannykh v sviazi 150-letiem so dnia smerti* (Moscow: Voennoe Izdatel'stvo, 1951).

military drill would plant the seeds of aversion to military service among newcomers, and so he tried to turn drills into an enjoyable affair.

When the games were over, the indoctrination of the regiment continued: "At the encampment, each Sunday and during holidays before the liturgy, he [officer] orders that the following chapters and listings be read in front of the regiment for three or four hours: one or two chapters from the *Military Articles*; one chapter from the 1763 *Regimental Regulations* (*polkovogo stroiu*)…and one chapter from the Suzdal Regulations …"[439] Every week even those recruits who could not read were made familiar with all the necessary regulations, military statutes, and laws, as well as with all the new orders coming to the regiment from the government. What we have in Suvorov's manual is a mechanism that systematically, unhurriedly but steadily, aimed to drain the soldiers of their previous identity, lifestyle, and civilian customs and instead poured in a mixture of military values, including obedience and professionalism.

Panin's 1770 *Instructions* also served propaganda and indoctrination purposes. One of Panin's strategies throughout the *Instruction* was methodically, and deliberately to deconstruct, reduce, and render powerless his Ottoman opponents.[440] The Turkish strength in numbers was made irrelevant by Russian superior discipline and organization. Ottoman soldiers had no military training or familiarity with the practice of military craft prior to recruitment. For example, "according to their Asiatic inclinations," wrote Panin, the Turks were drawn to pillaging and other such un-soldierly behaviour. Russians and Turks were contrasted with phrases like "recorded

[439] Goncharov, ed., 212.

[440] For the Turkish army see Virginia H. Aksan, *Ottoman Wars, 1700-1870: An Empire Besieged* (Harlow: Longman/Pearson, 2007) and Mesut Uyar and Edward J. Erickson, *A Military History of the Ottomans From Osman to Ataturk* (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2009). For how the Russians orientalized the Turks see Victor Taki, "Orientalism on the Margins: The Ottoman Empire under Russian Eyes," *Kritika*, 12, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 321-351. For the creation of the other out of Eastern Europe see Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

manliness" and "despised cries", or "steady, regular, firepower" and "irregular barbarians."[441] Catherine's soldiers were indoctrinated to think of their enemy as loud, unprofessional, pathetic opium addicts. Against their habits the Russians emerge as steady, calculating, prepared, determined and professional.

To make sure his ideas were disseminated and the indoctrination could take place, Panin's instruction was distributed and read out loud to the whole army. The General demanded that "…not only…all ranks and positions carried out, observed and enforced, but also read this entire instruction before the regiments, companies, and commands, and carefully explained it to all ranks, and especially to the lower ones." Throughout Catherine's reign military culture produced increased emphasis on indoctrination and began to develop more sophisticated ways of doing it through instructions and manuals.

The same year as Panin was distributing his *Instruction*, Mamonov was indoctrinating in his *Epistle*. Arguably the most interesting part of the whole *Epistle* occurs when Mamonov began to meditate on the life of the soldier, using surprisingly graphic language. Rhetorically his style drove home some of the ideas and values discussed by other military writers. Furthermore, the language was designed to expose young officers who danced at balls, played billiards at their uncles' headquarters, and showed up to examine their soldiers only during the parades to the real hardships of military service. To these gentlemen, the difficulties of everyday military life swam unknown past them. Here, perhaps, Mamonov wanted to bring the two worlds together. At least three times Mamonov reproached his readers for not knowing the difficult life of regular soldiers.

> You cannot comprehend from the tranquility of your place,
> What labour, great and tough a soldier has to face.

[441] Panin, *Nastavlenie*, 4.

The soldier has, like you, his soul alive and heart.
You are asleep; he moves ahead, his road is being hard.[442]

In addition to hard labour, the soldiers had to contend with painful and miserable death. Soldiers crying out of pain and begging passers-by to kill them are familiar scenes of eighteenth-century warfare:

You hear countless horses' strident neighing,
Sounds of vociferous command, and moaning of the wounded.
Sometimes the wounded beg with all their soul,
To terminate the lives in which they suffer so…
The entire battlefield is covered with lifeless bodies,
Between the corpses flow rivers of blood and brains.[443]

These gruesome but emotional scenes were intended to work as mechanisms of indoctrination. They were meant to convey a set of ideas to the officers about the fate of soldiers, about their own responsibilities, but also about the meaning of war. In the above macabre scene, both officers and soldiers were reduced to ornaments of the field of battle. They had laid down their lives for "the fatherland, the faith, and for the legacy of their father and grand-fathers."[444]

Neither did Mamonov forget to ask the most important question - why soldiers fight wars - and immediately provide an answer. First of all, it was not the soldier's job to pontificate on such philosophical matters. Soldiers fought for their fatherland and faith, for the memory of their fathers and grandfathers. They fought to defend their ancestral lands, their homes, their wives and children. "What is more dear than the fatherland to us? (*Liubeznye chto est' otchizny nam svoei?*)" asked Mamonov rhetorically.[445] The *Epistle* was a vehicle for indoctrination but also for propagation of

[442] "V pokoe sidia vam togo ne mozhno zret',/ Kakoi velikoi trud soldat dolzhen imet',/ Kotoriu est' kak vy s zhivoiu ze dushoiu,/ Vy spite, on idet s vsei tiagostiu svoeiu," Mamonov, *Epistola*, 15.
[443] "Veliko rzhanie premnozhestva konei,/ Komandy krepkoi glas, ston rannenykh liudei./ Poslednii inogda dushoi vsei umoliaiut,/ Chtob zhizn' im prekratit', v kotoroi stol' stradaiut… Vse pole mertvymi pokryto est' telami,/ Krov' s mozgom mezhdu ikh techet vezde rekami," Ibid.
[444] Ibid., 19.
[445] Ibid., 4.

military values and military culture because it described the ideal of noble death, comradery, patriotism, and in general prescribed the mindset for officers and soldiers.

Indoctrination methods continued to develop in the 1770s and 1780s. For example, Count Vorontsov also wrote that before beginning to indoctrinate soldiers with ideas of honour, service, and loyalty, it was first necessary to exorcise the peasant spirit (*dukh krestianstva*) which remained deeply engrained not only in recruits, but even in some of the old soldiers. To remedy this, the young count came up with a comprehensive socio-psychological mechanism to eradicate the roots of civilian past in his soldiers. First, he followed Suvorov's strategy and recommended that officers interact more often with their soldiers, especially on an individual basis. This would teach soldiers the military jargon of the military language, and would diminish barriers between officers and soldiers. Frequent interaction would also alleviate the anxiety and fear of officers in the ranks. An officer should not be some rare apparition on the parade ground or a distant and impersonal figure, but an everyday sight in the camp. Contact with officers would demonstrate to soldiers their duties, their rights, and who their direct superiors were and what their names were. Officers should also tell their men stories about the exploits of field marshals of the Russian army to generate pride and loyalty to imperial arms. In addition to that, soldiers must be inculcated with the love for their regiment and the best way to do so, reasoned Vorontsov, was by telling recruits the history of their regiment, the battles it had fought since its formation, and all the honours it had won in the past. Recounting the history of the regiment would impart these ideas of the values and pride of service to the newcomers. It would give them a feeling of belonging to an institution older than they were, to something that would exist when they were gone. By being a member of the group of warriors each would be individually responsible for subscribing to the larger military culture. "This forces each grenadier

serving in this regiment to conduct himself honourably and with courage, so that with his behaviour he would not blemish the reputation of the regiment as a whole," concluded Vorontsov.[446]

In many ways Meiendorf continued the work of his peers in developing indoctrination methods for officers and soldiers. Once religion was introduced as an important part of the military culture, the second step was to teach soldiers critical thought. This had to be accompanied by constant reminders about the importance of military service, and ignite in the deepest recesses of soldiers' thought feelings of pride about their profession.[447] The propaganda work continued around the clock in the military camp. When not learning about religion or military drills, soldiers should be reminded about possibilities of advancement through the ranks, and about how they were united by military service with the entire nobility in defence of the government, the sovereign, the faith, the fatherland and its laws.[448]

Meiendorf also advised that older soldiers be used as conduits of ideas and instructions. Younger soldiers and new recruits often looked up first to their older and seasoned brethren, and listened to them more than to their noble officers.[449] But this should not discourage officers from conducting political and ideological work with their troops. Meiendorf gave an example from his own military experience. In the evenings he invited old soldiers to dine at his table and during these artificially created interactions he indoctrinated his dinner guests about military service – he discussed "all of the circumstances of service that they could encounter. These moral teachings began to

[446] Vorontsov, 36.
[447] Meiendorf, 23.
[448] Ibid., 24.
[449] Ibid., 17.

spread around the regiment, when old soldiers under the guise of their own thoughts repeated them to all the younger and unenlightened recruits."[450]

Another strategy was simply making small talk with soldiers. "If during drill, guard duty, or at some other opportune moment, you talk kindly to the soldiers," wrote Meiendorf, "ask them about their service, about their behaviour, their life, their health, their family, and accompany the answer with some degree of encouragement" it would go a long away in making them conscientious servants of the state and make them feel accepted by the military culture.[451]

Training and indoctrination reached its apogee in the 1790s with Alexander Suvorov. To cultivate the dedication of the Russian peasants to the profession of soldiering was not an easy task, and Suvorov understood that perhaps better than anyone else. The language Suvorov used was part of the indoctrination mechanism. For example, here is how Suvorov described the storming of a fortress:

> Break through the abatis[452], throw down your hurdles over the wolf traps[453]! Run, fast! Hop over the palisades[454], throw down your fascines[455], go down into the ditch, put up ladders! Marksmen, cover the columns, aim for the heads! Columns, fly over the walls to the parapets, bayonet! On the parapet form a line! Guard the powder cellars! Open the gates for the cavalry! The enemy runs into the city – turn his cannons against him! Hit him hard, lively bombardment! Don't do it for too long. The order is given – get down into the city, cut down the enemy in the streets! Cavalry, charge! Don't enter the houses, attack the enemy in the streets! Storm where the foe has hidden! Occupy city square, put up guards. Put up pickets immediately, by the gates, cellars and magazines! The enemy has surrendered – give him mercy! The walls are ours – now to the loot![456]

[450] Ibid., 120.
[451] Ibid., 84.
[452] Abatis was a part of eighteenth century siege fortifications. It usually took the form of trees laid down in line with branches directed at the enemy. The purpose of abatis was to slow down the enemy and expose him to the fire of the defenders.
[453] A hole with sharp stakes dug in its bottom.
[454] A wooden fence or an earthwork.
[455] A bundle of wood tied together. It was carried by soldiers for negotiating such obstacles as ditches.
[456] Suvorov, 24-25.

There was a hidden psychological undertone throughout the text. In *Science of Victory*, Suvorov used a writing style that allowed him to extract incredible physical and mental efforts from his soldiers. The troops were never supposed to concentrate on the difficulties of their tasks, because they were made easy by the author. In Suvorian terminology, soldiers were called *bogatyri* or wonder-heroes. The heavy infantry backpack was called "the wind" (*veter'*); regiments did not move out from their camp, but "jumped up, put on their winds, and ran forward"; the ditch was never "too deep", and the parapet was never "too high";[457] the columns "flew" over the walls, and soldiers "hopped" over the parapets. These clever linguistic formulations blew a cool breeze of simplicity and excitement over the dangers of battle. Suvorov cleverly detached his text from the hardships of military life.[458]

As Prince Dmitrii Mirskii wrote in the 1920s, Suvorov's "writings are as different from the common run of classical prose as his tactics were from those of Frederick or Marlborough."[459] The short sentences Suvorov used reflected the brisk mind of their author and the fast pace of battle. The passivity of a typical military manual was replaced with an active present tense. The language was calculated to be accessible not only to the officers, but also to the regular soldiers. As one of Suvorov's biographers claimed, *Science of Victory* "is the first known written record on the art of war intended not only for officers but for every serving man."[460] To further indoctrinate his troops, Surorov used familiar folk idioms to drive home his message, such as "Ignorance is darkness – knowledge is light!" and compared the craft of war to the

[457] Ibid., 24. Suvorov preferred to avoid long sieges, and instead strove for decisiveness that could be guaranteed by a storm. This approach was clearly in accord with his highly aggressive military thought.
[458] See the introduction to the 1980 publication of the *Science of Victory* by the Soviet Ministry of Defense, Ibid., 3-14.
[459] Dmitrii Mirskii, *A History of Russian Literature*, 5th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964), 59.
[460] Longworth, 220.

peasants toiling in their fields.[461] For the peasant recruits the metaphor was effective and relatable.

Furthermore, from the first day that recruits were torn away from their families, they were subjected to constant bombardment of slogans, aphorisms, and catch-phrases. The best description of Suvorov's indoctrination work was left by an old soldier, a veteran of Suvorov's campaigns. If the source is to be believed, many years after Suvorov's death he still remembered the sayings of his old commander. The retired soldiers related how, during training, Suvorov would ride through the ranks and say:

> "Good job, boys! Good job!" We usually yell back at him: "Hurrah! Happy to please you, your excellency!" "Good job, boys!" continues Suvorov, "they give us two for a trained soldier – but we refuse it, they give us three – but we refuse, they give us four – we will take them, go and smash all the others! The bullet is crazy, but the bayonet is a fine chap, you can miss with a bullet, but never with a bayonet. Keep the bullet in the barrel for two or three days, for the whole campaign; shoot rarely but deadly, but with the bayonnet stab firmly…."
>
> This is what he said while he rode around the front on a horse….It would happen that he would pace back and forth and wave his arms around and talk without a break, repeating the same thing: shoot rarely, he would say, but with a bayonnet strike firmly! That is the kind of a person he was; never missed a chance to tell us these truisms (*pripovesti*)."[462]

By the time his army was about to enter Italy in 1799, Suvorov had largely achieved its indoctrination. Even many decades after Suvorov's death soldiers remebred his aphorisms and sayings.

In addition to written texts, Suvorov also produced a visual manual that has not yet received the attention it deserves. The drawings must have been drawn sometime after the French revolution since one of them makes an explicit reference to 1789. Most

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[461] Suvorov, 29.

[462] *Pripovesti* is a church word in Russian meaning tales, which is not easily rendered into English. I used here truisms as the closest word in this context. Popadichev in Semanov, ed., 87. As the old soldier added, upon his arrival in the army in 1799, just before the allied campaign in Italy against the French, Suvorov continued his old practices. "Hello, boys! … I have again came to serve with you! Let's go defeat the enemy! Do not worry! You are trained – they give us two for a trained one, we don't want them, they give us three – we'll take it, they give us four – so be it, we'll beat them all…" He loved to repeat these sayings, as I have already once told you, very often, and here, after a long absence from us, he once again repeated them, as if he was afraid we would forget them!" Ibid., 99.

likely Suvorov drew them in the mid-1790s. The drawings were first published in 1913 and subsequently reprinted in 1996. In the introduction the editor of the collection pointed out that the original documents from which the drawings were copied came from the family archives of K. L. Nonnenman, who provided some interpretations.[463] Drawings were an extension of Suvorov's ideas about training and indoctrination of Russian soldiers, who were often illiterate peasants.

Since the drawings often depicted scenes of peasant life or used elements familiar to rural dwellers, they were immediately comprehensible to the new recruits. At the same time they could be explained by literate officers to their men using the small descriptions underneath. Many of the explanations were simple rhymes, and popular sayings (*poslovitsy*), which Suvorov clearly had a knack for, as is evident from his correspondence and his general quips. Unfortunately the originals have not survived or have yet to be found, and the images are early 20th-century copies of the original drawings by Suvorov.[464]

This chapter leaves the analysis of the Suvorov's visual legacy to another study, and instead uses a few examples to show what the drawings reveal about Russian military culture in the closing years of the eighteenth century and what values they were

[463] The drawings were donated by the Nonnenman family to the military publishing house of V. Zhukov.Unfortunately I was not able to find the original drawings in the RGVIA or the RGADA. I examined the collection of personal fonds in the Russian archives both under the names of Zhukov and Nonnenman but was unable to discover anything under those names. I consulted with Kirill Tatarnikov, the archivist at the RGVIA, who is the archive's eighteenth-century specialist, about the possibility of finding the original drawings. Tatarnikov pointed out that pre-revolutionary documents from personal fonds, let alone small publishing houses, are notoriously difficult to track down and most likely have been lost due to neglect or relocation. Some archives left the country along with their keepers during the emigration after the revolution, others rotted away in damp conditions. Finally, a large portion of RGVIA documents, including those relating to Suvorov, are in Siberia, where they have been moved in 1942, and are not accessible to researchers.

[464] K. Nonnenman wrote the commentary and copied the drawings. K. Nonnenman, ed., *Science of Victory* (1913) (Moscow: Ankil-Voin, 1996). So far the only study that examines the images of war in Russian history is Stephen Norris, *War of Images: Russian Popular Prints, Wartime Culture, and National Identity, 1812-1945* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006). Norris does not use Suvorov's drawings but analyzes a unique source of Russian visual culture, the *lubki*, for representations of war and what he calls the "visual language of nationhood." However, the book focuses on the 19th and 20th centuries since these are the periods where the majority of the lubki were created.

Picture 1

Picture 2

trying to convey.[465] Suvorov used his drawings to reinforce the main values of the military culture which he internalized over a period of thirty years of service in Catherine's armies. In other words, he "asserted in the memory of the illiterate, notions about the real superiority of the Russian state system and the abnormality of the system accepted by other governments, about the character of the relations superiors should have with their subordinates, about service duties" and about religion, discipline, and education.[466] The visual subtext of the images presented an excellent tool for indoctrination of soldiers and officers with the values of Russian military culture.

For example, Suvorov used a drawing of flugers, or weather vanes, popular in peasant culture, to convey a moral teaching about the nature of the relationship between subordinates and superiors. The drawing bore the title of *Sycophant Service* (*Sluzhba v podobostrastii*) and underneath it read "Try to please superiors with honest service, instead of dishonest friendship, or unlike the popular saying: "where the wind blows the wane turns; where the wane turns the horsey follows. ""[467] (Picture 1)

In another drawing Suvorov underlined the importance of setting an inspirational example for the rest of the troops by using a handful of the first-rate soldiers (*peredovikov*). To convey this message visually, he drew a fire raging over a log.

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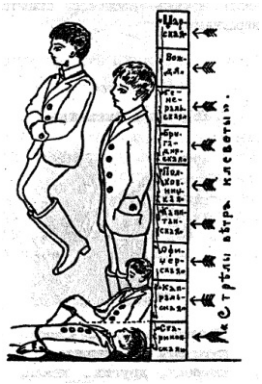
[465] For instance, Suvorov used illustrations to depict many tactical and military laws. Suvorov developed his three rules of strategy and seven laws of war. Nonnenman, 2-12.

[466] The only analysis of the drawings I could find is the article by A. Iu. Golubev which has been translated in English, A. Iu. Golubev, "Suvorov's canons of army and state governance," *Voennaia Mysl'* 14, no. 2, (April 2005) http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-135818498.html [Accessed 31 October 2014].

[467] "Ugozhai nachal'nikam vernoiu sluzhboiu, a ne krevoiu druzhboiu, ne po poslovitse: kuda veter' tuda i petel'; kuda petelok', tuda i konek'!," Nonnenman, 25.



Picture 3

Picture 4

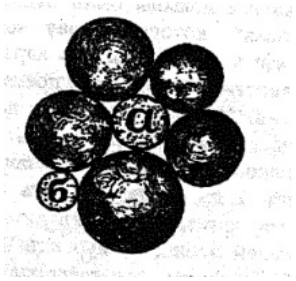
Underneath was the caption, once again a popular Russian saying, "With dry splinters you can set fire to wet wood." (Picture 2) A group example by the finest comrades had the power to inspire the entire mass of soldiers, whereas "wet", or poorly trained, soldiers could undermine the whole army.[468]

Another telling drawing was called the "Wall of Protection" (*stena zastupleniia*). (Picture 3) The caption read "A loyal superior – a solid wall which will always defend with honour an honest man from the winds of slander." The slander was illustrated by flying arrows. On the other side of the wall, were human figures ranging from a man lying down to one levitating in the air. The wall was composed of labelled bricks: elder, corporal, officer, captain, colonel, brigadier, general, leader, and finally the tsar. The height of the "Wall of Protection" was different for each rank. For example the wall of the elder soldier (*starik*) was so low that he could only protect a man lying down, a broken man.[469] An officer had the power to offer protection to soldiers, "the wonder heroes," under his command while the Tsar had the power to protect even his chief leaders. In other words, Suvorov considered it a matter of honour for any superior to protect the rights of his subordinates and he used these clever illustrations to get the message across to his officers and soldiers.

[468] "Pri sukhikh shchepkakh i syroe derevo razgoritsia," Ibid., 34.
[469] Ibid., 36-7.

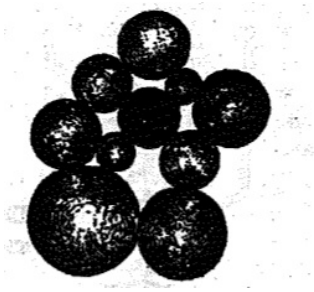
One of the most interesting of Suvorov's sketches was a combination of four inter-related drawings: a brush, a tongue, a blade, and an Orthodox cross set on what seemed to be a church dome or the orb. (Picture 4) The explanations were jagged mixtures of Suvorov's quips, popular sayings, and biblical quotations. The brush symbolized the Russian army and bore a caption that read: "the threads are thin, but together they cannot be broken: likewise together the soldiers provided serenity, support, and glory to fatherland." Quoting a passage from the Bible Suvorov exclaimed "God is with us!" He then used another popular Russian saying "One leg helps the other, one arm makes the second strong!" He finished off with another Bible quotation from Psalm 116, "O praise the Lord, all ye nations!" Written on the tongue was "iazytsy" or nations, relating to the caption underneath which stated "In the peoples lies the eternal glory to Russian arms." The blade of the sword being sharpened carried yet another symbolic meaning. Suvorov explained how an undisciplined and uneducated army is like a blunt sword. "Strengthen and preserve the health of the wonder-heroes, especially from debauchery. Educate with astuteness," wrote Suvorov, "lack of sharpening and rust cause as much damage to a blade as cutting. Fortify the soul with the Orthodox faith of the fatherland: to educate a heathen army is the same as trying to sharpen a damaged sword."[470] The final drawing in the set again reinforced the religious theme in Suvorov's teachings. The holy church could help overcome even the unconquerable obstacles: "praising earthly powers without praising the Lord is like a tree without its roots: praise the heavens before you praise earthly powers."[471]

[470] Ibid., 39.
[471] Ibid., 40.



Picture 5

Picture 6



Picture 7

Finally, Suvorov also touched upon leadership. In this particular case he used three different drawings of what seemed to be cannon balls or spheres. The first sketch was titled "Accessible Leader (*nachal'nik dostupnyi*)" and Suvorov did not supply any other explanation. (Picture 5) However, it is easy to deduce that the interconnectedness between the spheres symbolized accessibility. The sphere labelled "a" was the leader and the sphere labelled "b" was a subordinate. The leader was open to advice and counsel from other spheres which made him accessible to information and the opinions of his subordinates. The fact that the spheres surrounding the middle "a" sphere were larger was supposed to represent the fact that a good commander surrounded himself with advisors with more experience than he had himself, and openly used their cumulative knowledge.[472] In the second leadership sketch, one sphere was isolated in the middle from all the others. (Picture 6)The title for the drawing read "Untouchable Leader" (*nachal'nik bezprikosnovennyi*). Using his usual convoluted and double-meaning language Suvorov explained: "Those who use long-tail strategy, fond of sikurs tactics, or given to parade ground manoeuvres, should be purposely sent away on unimportant assignments." In other words, those who favoured creating long lines of communications and lacked initiative in strategy, those who preferred to wait for tactical reinforcements instead of attacking piece-meal, and those who were the so-called parade-ground generals, clearly lacked leadership qualities.[473] Finally, there was a

[472] Ibid., 48.
[473] Ibid., 56.

sketch of the "Unreachable Leader" (*nachal'nik nedostupnyi*) exemplified by a sphere tightly surrounded, almost suffocated, by small and large spheres in no particular order. (Picture 7) By an unreachable leader Suvorov meant someone who was not inclined to take counsel from others. His unwillingness to take advice came from insecurity about appearing weak and uncertain before his subordinates, someone who was intimidated by people of superior intellect and knowledge. Instead of using them as a resource he shunned them. A leader became unreachable when he chose to surround himself with individuals of his own mediocre ability or less, as was evident by how the central sphere touched others of its size and much smaller ones.[474] The complicated messages of Russian military culture were laid bare and made accessible by the crude and simple sketches for all to see and examine.

Conclusion

Cynthia Whittaker has advanced the idea of a political dialogue in eighteenth-century Russia between autocrats and their subjects. She counted about 250 authors who participated in this practice over the span of the entire century, publishing more than 500 works.[475] The authors discussed above, and their writings, were not among them. Yet many of the above texts fit the genre of advice literature. All of the military writers offered their opinions, critiques and sometimes advice. Indeed, in at least two cases, with Rumiantsev and Potemkin, Catherine implemented their ideas. The ideas and aspirations of the emerging public sphere of military culture laid down a web of interconnected values, of systems of personal, social, and intellectual significance that had to be practised and embraced by members of that culture. Military texts offered an ideal type for the Russian officers and soldiers, developed indoctrination systems, and

[474] Ibid., 59-60.
[475] **Whittaker, page #.**

served as a platform for incipient national consciousness, expressing cultural anxiety about Western Europe. Rumiantsev, Potemkin, and Suvorov, for example, explicitly juxtapositioned Russia and the West and encouraged cultural and intellectual independence from foreign ideas and foreign servicemen. Throughout Catherine's reign military culture developed and perfected indoctrination mechanism, and continued to appropriate religion for its purposes. To make sure the values and rules were embraced by the members of the group, these texts and the ideas they contained were often required to be read by officers out-loud on almost daily basis. At the same time, the writers exhibited a tension between the need for political awareness and dedicated professionalism on behalf of Catherine's officers.

Finally, many of the manuals clearly and actively sought to carve a military culture out of a broader social sphere. They wanted people of the military to wear uniforms, to talk and behave in a certain way, and to possess a different identity from their civilian counterparts. In other words, the military writings of Catherine's time reflected increasing autonomy of military culture and self awareness and self-reflection by its members. Military manuals showed that the military was not a static monolith but a cultural space that was developing into a sphere where private views were publicly expressed and ideas were exchanged. As time went on, some of these ideas and views began to spill over into symbolic displays by the most senior members of Russian military culture.

CHAPTER FOUR

"Fantastic forms of folly": Symbolic Displays and Military Culture

Military manuals were not the only channels that produced and reinforced military culture in Catherine's armies. There were two more mechanisms. One was coercion. For example, if Lanzheron is to be believed, General Mikhail Kamenskii possessed "the ferocity of a tiger. He was seen biting soldiers during manoeuvres and tearing out their flesh with his teeth."[476] Coercion and violence through cruel brutality – the cane, running the gauntlet, and the fear of the gallows – was, of course, a habitual part of eighteenth-century military life. It was also an important part of the disciplinary mechanism, and many contemporaries had a chance to observe its workings in practice. But Kamenskii was an extreme case, and even if such methods of coercion were effective, they were crude and could not be replicated indefinitely. In addition, such treatment was prohibited when it came to other officers.[477]Indeed, it is difficult to believe that customary strategies, such as military regulations and brute force would have sufficed to establish and preserve control and subordination across the complex military structure in the multi-ethnic Russian army. Nor would they have succeeded in disseminating the ideas and values of military culture in the context of the large and eclectic armies of Catherine's Russia.

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[476] Alexandre Lanzheron, "Russkaia armia v god smerti Ekateriny II," *Russkaia Starina,* vol. 83 (1895): 160. In 2004 the senior member of the Kamenskii family, the elderly Count Nikolai Kamenskii, published a book about the role of his family in the wars of Russia, N. N. Kamenskii, *Deviatyi vek na sluzhbe Rossii: iz istorii roda grafov Kamenskikh* (Moscow: Izd-vo OOO "Velinor", 2004). For Mikhail Kamenskii see, 28-56.

[477] Officers were almost always nobles, and the nobility was freed from physical punishment, such as flogging for example. Abby M. Schrader, *Languages of the Lash: Corporal Punishment and Identity in Imperial Russia* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2002), 12. Also John Keep, "No Gauntlet for Gentlemen: Officers' Privileges in Russian Military Law, 1716-1855," *Cahiers du Monde russe et sovietique*, 34, no. 1/2 (Jan. - Jun., 1993): 171-192. In Russian see N. Vish, "Telesnye nakazaniia v voiskakh i ikh otmena," *Voennyi Sbornik,* 279, no. 10 (1904): 133-42; no. 11 (1904): 113-24; no 12 91904): 113-48.

This chapter suggests that spectacles and symbolic displays, at times in their most theatrical form, were an important part of Russian military culture in the eighteenth century.[478] As one of the greatest students of Russian culture, Iuri Lotman, pointed out, "What is characteristically unique for a Russian in the eighteenth century, is that the noble world leads a life of games, all the time feeling itself to be on stage…"[479] This tendency to be an actor was linked to the strong sense of individualism that possessed Catherine's nobility. As Lotman has convincingly argued, Russian nobles in the last third of the eighteenth century wanted to be unique in their behaviour and expression, and refused to conform to a specific style or mould. This was characteristic of a general desire to be the masters of their own destiny, to assert themselves as independent actors, which produced some very original behaviour.[480] This originality was perhaps most vividly reflected in the army, where commanders demonstrated and re-affirmed their power, maintained their positions, and bounded others in subordination, through carefully constructed symbolic episodes and behaviour. As Scott Myerly had written about military spectacle in the British army in the 19th century "The spectacle's trappings exerted a strong psychological and emotional influence on the soldiers, and thus were a vital tool in maintaining the dependability of the military instrument."[481] In the process symbolic displays and spectacles re-enforced the values, customs, and traditions of military culture. The military elite, their officers, foreign observers, and

[478] My understanding of semiotics or meaning-making in Russian eighteenth-century culture comes from the works of Iuri Lotman, especially *Besedy o russkoi kul'ture, byt i traditsii russkogo dvorianstva* (St. Petersburg: Isskustvo-SPB, 1994), *Izbrannye Statii*, vol. I (Tallinn: Aleksandra, 1992), and *Statii po semiotike kul'tury i iskusstva* (St. Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 2002). On a more general level I have also been influenced by Clifford Geertz and Robert Darnton.

[479] Iuri Lotman, "Kul'tura i programmy povedeniia: Poetika bytovogo povedeniia v russkoi kul'ture xviii veka," in *Izbrannye Statii*, vol. I (Tallinn: Aleksandra, 1992), 250.

[480] Lotman, *Besedy o russkoi kul'ture*, 254.

[481] Scott Hughes Myerly, *British Military Spectacle: From the Napoleonic Wars Through the Crimea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 10. Myerly's work is the only one I am aware of that examines the importance of the symbolic displays in the military. The author argued that spectacle in the British army, even dress and constrictive ceremonials, conveyed messages and performed cultural functions such as inspire solidarity and reinforced discipline.

even regular soldiers were all involved in this "deep play" surrounding the military culture.[482] As evidence shows, the odd behaviour of the Russian military elite was more than just random episodes of eccentricity, but was rather part of a powerful dialogue that helped to define eighteenth-century Russian military culture. Collectively, these episodes describe signs, complex systems of messages, and symbols, that served as tools for criticism and control, for enforcing professionalism, for asserting authority and independence, for communicating displeasure and satisfaction, and for observing, punishing, and rewarding subordinates and rivals.

Reading the memoirs and diaries of Catherine's officers, one is struck by some very interesting and strange episodes of behaviour among the military elite. Some of their actions, sayings, and physical language were truly puzzling. Yet there has been no concentrated attempt to decipher the behaviour of the Russian commanders within the context of military culture. As one prominent cultural historian, Robert Darnton, once wrote, "when we cannot get a proverb, or a joke, or a ritual, or a poem, we know we are on to something."[483] This chapter therefore concentrates on explaining, contextualizing and interpreting the symbolic behaviour of just three individuals - Petr Rumiantsev, Grigorii Potemkin, and Aleksandr Suvorov. I have chosen these particular individuals partly because there are enough sources about them to raise questions and make conclusions about their behaviour, and partly because they embody Catherine's army and its traditions *par excellence*. Even though the evidence is fragmented, the episodes documented by contemporaries begin to yield a fascinating picture of military culture in early-modern Russia.

[482] By "deep play" I mean such behavior that has a meaning within a specific context to insiders. I borrow this term from Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), chapter 6, but also from his "thick description" in chapter 1.

[483] Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), 5.

In a way, symbolic displays were performed, and were allowed to be performed, for very calculated reasons. The unprecedented military success of the "golden age" of Russia's geopolitical expansion in the eighteenth century, as well as the political maturation of the empire, encouraged the creation of a pantheon of distinguished military commanders, the true popular celebrities of the era. As Richard Wortman has argued, ceremonies at court, as well as the artistic and literary production related to the Romanovs, were intrinsic to their rule. These cultural strategies were used continuously to re-affirm autocratic ascendancy and to legitimize its existence in Russia.[484] This chapter supplements the above picture with the suggestion that Russian military culture created its own "mini-scenarios of power" to perpetuate and to legitimize its existence. Military commanders themselves were pieces of military culture whose symbolic displays circulated deep within Russian society. In the process they gave meaning to military culture during Catherine's reign and simultaneously helped to form and define it. The odd conduct of the Russian senior commanders was more than just random episodes of eccentricity, but rather a powerful carrier of ideals, symbols, and values that reflected the political and cultural landscape of eighteenth-century Russian army and these "mini-scenarios" bled into the larger scenarios of Catherine's rule.[485]

Second, these "mini-scenarios of power" from the military culture served an important part in the formation of a patriotic or national myth. In the words of Aleksandra Bekasova, "One of the means of creating a patriotic myth was the continuous formation of a fantastic pantheon of brilliant countrymen (*vydaiushchikhsia*

[484] For the detailed description of a argument see Richard Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy: From Peter the Great to the Death of Nicholas I* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 1-10.

[485] In addition to Wortman, a new book by Vera Proskurina explores the relationship between political and literary symbolism and how the two merged to create a mechanism of representation. For our purposes, chapter five, which discusses Catherine's image in war-time is particularly interesting. It shows how war played an important part in fashioning the image of the great empress and how symbolism represented Russian wars as a missionary task. Vera Proskurina, *Creating the Empress: Politics and Poetry in the Age of Catherine II* (Brighton: Academic Studies Press, 2011), 150-1.

sootechestvennikov), among whom the commanders of Catherine's reign such as Prince A. V. Suvorov-Rymnikskii, Prince G. A. Potemkin-Tavricheskii, and Count P. A. Rumiantsev-Zadunaiskii, were given the most respected place."[486] Therefore addressing symbolic displays and their meaning is vital for a critical understanding of Russian military culture.

Rumiantsev

One of the most famous practitioners of the symbolic display in Catherine's military was Count Petr Rumiantsev (1725-96), who used symbolic displays to reinforce many of the values and customs that he himself wrote about in his military works. As soon as he was given the command of the Russian forces in southern Ukraine at the beginning of the First Russo-Turkish War (1768-74), Rumiantsev set to work constructing an image of himself as a benevolent leader, a simple man, and a good Christian. Rumiantsev realized the significance of spectacle and played his role well. "A general must be easy and affable to his troops, without descending to meanness, or being often seen by them, which must render him less respected," Rumiantsev once said. And as one contemporary added, "he himself had learned so much affability by practice, and so rigidly observed his own rules, that he constantly took off his hat to the very children of his own peasants when they bowed to him."[487] Rumiantsev was the master of this symbolic reciprocity. It was important to maintain the image of humble simplicity for reasons of respect and subordination, but also power. When he rode through the ranks he always greeted the soldiers with the amicable "Hello boys (*zdravstvuite rebiata*)!" and the ranks thundered back greetings to their commander. When one heavily decorated warrior said to Rumiantsev in a familiar fashion "Well little-father (*batiushka*), this is the third war that

[486] Aleksandra Bekasova, "Geroi Zadunaiskii: konchina, pogreblenie i pamiat o nem," *Naukovi zapiski,* 1, no. 19 (2009): 660.
[487] Anon, *General observations regarding the present state of the Russian Empire* (London, 1787), 36.

I am fighting with you [with familiar *s toboiu*]," the general replied "Well, my friend, we shall not war together a fourth time."[488] The field marshal was a peacemaker and with polite wit, he reassured the gathered soldiers that the upcoming military enterprise would result in a victory that would end the conflict.

Rumiantsev used every chance to show his humility and religiosity. He never missed an opportunity to thank the heavens for his numerous victories. When a successful attack on the Ottoman army at Riaboia Mogila in 1770 forced the Turks to retreat, Rumiantsev turned his eyes to the skies and began triumphantly to thank God.[489] A few weeks later, after a bloody victory at Kagul, Rumiantsev hurried to thank Providence – he was quick to offer a prayer in the main bivouac of the defeated Crimean khan. He then constructed a church in its place, consecrating it with a plaque: "We thank you, God."[490] God was the true guiding spirit of Russian armies, never leaving them to misfortune; the victories of Rumiantsev clearly belonged to Him. Rumiantsev knew the importance of emphasizing the religious aspect of war in an army that was constantly cultivating Orthodox piety in its soldiers.

When the Russian army arrived in the neighbourhood of the Romanian town of Jassy, the Turks panicked.[491] Their defeats were still fresh in their mind and they quickly evacuated the city leaving their sick and wounded behind. When Rumiantsev found out about this "inhuman callousness" of the Turks towards their comrades, he ordered that "we shall show humility towards our enemy."[492] The Russians were better than the Turks, they were compassionate and civilized, and their commander knew how

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[488] Engelgardt, 76.

[489] Iurii Lubchenkov and Vladislav Romanov, *Anekdoty o general-feldmarshalakh P. A. Rumiantseve i A. V. Suvorove* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnii biznes-tsentr, Ob'edinenie Kino-kniga, 1990), 12.

[490] Ibid., 10.

[491] For example, John LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire, 1650-1831* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004),94.

[492] Lubchenkov and Romanov, *Anekdoty o general-feldmarshalakh P. A. Rumiantseve i A. V. Suvorove*, 10.

to demonstrate it. As Elena Nikanorova has argued in her insightful and meticulous analysis of Peter the Great's symbolic behaviour, humility towards the enemy has been a characteristic of all great military leaders since antiquity.[493]As becomes obvious from reading military texts, humility and religion were important parts in the value system of Russian military culture, and Rumiantsev strove to uphold them through his symbolic behaviour.

Rumiantsev never hesitated to play the role of the fair but omnipresent commander and father figure (*batuishka-general*); it was a role that his troops had already assigned to him in their marching songs.[494] He never missed an opportunity to reward lowly soldiers, which made a good spectacle for the rest of the army, as he wrote to Catherine in 1769.[495] One of the many examples occurred when a Cossack soldier fought off numerous Turkish attackers and managed to capture one of them. Rumiantsev immediately sought him out and requested that the monarchy reward the hero of the day with an officer rank.[496] Rumiantsev skilfully employed a powerful technique that was used by many military and political administrators of the eighteenth century. Like a lightning bolt, his power to observe, interfere, and reward was clearly demonstrated not only to the object of his attention, but more importantly to the army as a whole, especially to the humble men that populated its ranks. The idea of merit and that just rewards for hard work would be noticed had to be emphasized. Rumiantsev and many prominent members of the military elite reinforced the Napoleonic chimera that all soldiers carried a marshal's baton in their backpack.

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[493] Elena K. Nikanorova, *Istoricheskii anekdot v russkoi literature XVIII veka: anekdoty o Petre Velikom* (Novosibirsk: Sibirskii Khronograf, 2001), 171.

[494] Whenever Rumiantsev would ride past, soldier would start singing one of the military songs, such as "Oh our little father, Count Rumiantsev general…(*Akh ty nash batiushka, graf Rumiantsev general…*)" The full song can be found in O. B. Alekseeva and L. N. Emelianov, *Istoricheskie pesni XVIII veka* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1971), 242.

[495] "Rumiantsev to Catherine, 23 August, 1769," Fortunatov, vol. II, 130.

[496] Lubchenkov and Romanov, *Anekdoty o general-feldmarshalah P. A. Rumiantseve i A. V. Suvorove*, 6.

Rumiantsev was also careful to cultivate his image not only among his soldiers but also among his officers, foreign emissaries, and the powerful nobles that often found their way into his headquarters. Rumiantsev jealously guarded his freedom and independence and often had to employ delicate subterfuge to maintain it. Russian armies usually faced logistical problems and numerical inferiority in their wars against the Ottoman Porte, and often faced the bleak prospect of retreat. Rumiantsev refused to yield; being an ambitious and aggressive commander he wanted to continue the momentum. What he did next, in order to forestall any possible objections, was a stroke of political ingenuity. Rumiantsev used the old military practice established by Peter the Great in his Military Statute (*Artikul Voinskii*) of calling an open council of war.[497] Every senior officer was free to express his opinion on the Russian strategic situation. The junior among them usually spoke first and the commander offered closing remarks. In this egalitarian setting, Rumiantsev carefully presented his thoughts on the matter, and then delivered his rhetorical *coup de grâce*: he said that the pride of the Russian arms forbade standing idly without commencing an attack. He tied inactivity to lack of prestige for the Russian government. He outlined his plan in such a way that the council had no choice but to side with him.[498] The men who gathered in Rumiantsev's headquarters were empowered to think that they had access to the highest orders of decision making, when in reality the power to make decisions had never left Rumiantsev's hands. Perhaps Rumiantsev remembered the words of Frederick II, the hero of his turbulent youth, who once is thought to have quipped "My subjects are free to say whatever they want, as long as I am free to do whatever I want."

In another instance Rumiantsev resorted to an even more powerful spectacle as a mechanism for enforcing the values of professionalism. One early morning he went for

[497] *Ustav Voinskii (1777)*, 16.
[498] Lubchenkov and Romanov, *Anekdoty o general-feldmarshalakh P. A. Rumiantseve i A. V. Suvorove*, 7-8.

an inspection of his military camp and encountered an officer who was wearing nothing but a nightshirt, loafers, and a night cap. An officer should know better than to walk around a military camp without his uniform on. Rumiantsev approached the man and, without making any comment about the latter's strange attire, kindly took him by the arm and began to talk in a familiar manner. Eventually, Rumiantsev took the man to his bivouac where all the senior officers and generals of the army had gathered for the morning's briefing. One can imagine how surprised everyone there was to see the officer's strange attire, and the embarrassment felt by the man in the night cap. In this case the feeling of shame had more effect on this poor creature than any other punishment.[499] The episode was an opportunity for the commander to reassert himself and to impress the importance of professionalism in Russian military culture. Without resorting to formal methods of punishment, Rumiantsev once again demonstrated his personal control of situation and the ability to drive home a message through symbolic display. Just like with rewarding the brave Cossack who had to fight his way through a horde of Turkish soldiers, *batuishka* Rumiantsev never missed a prospect for reprimand and was quick to mete out his creative kind of justice. It was not only the homely-dressed officer who inadvertently found himself in the headquarters, but the men already there, the witnesses, who were the real students of this lesson in professionalism.

Of course the nightcap and unmilitary attire of the officer had little to cause the commander of a Russian army, a man with vast power and responsibility, to put so much effort and time into a seemingly mild symbolic lesson of military etiquette. A court marshal would have been a more common alternative. The episode was an opportunity for Rumiantsev to show the camp and the officers that his eyes saw everything; that he was a benevolent leader of men; that while early in the morning

[499] Ibid., 18.

some go about their personal business, he was already dressed and ready to assume his official duties; and that the dress was an important part of military culture that distinguished its members from the rest of society. In other words, military officers had to dress according to their calling.[500]

Besides its didactic quality, the episode in the camp reflected a deep-seated problem in the Russian army – a dearth of professionalism. Indeed, finding reliable, professional officers in the army was as difficult as staffing government posts with educated and committed civil servants. It was a problem inherent to eighteenth-century Russia. In the army, senior generals such as Rumiantsev had developed their own strategies of sifting the wheat from the chaff. In many instances these episodes were as much spectacles of power as job interviews for the men subjected to them. Engelgardt supplied one such example. During the campaign against the Turks in 1770 Rumiantsev was suspicious and displeased with the quality of service of one of his colonels, a man by the name of Philippi, and decided to put him to the test. Was Philippi, if occasion called for it, capable of executing important assignments? Could he be a reliable and exact tool of the field marshal's will? Rumiantsev gave Philippi a hundred Cossacks and ordered him to reconnoitre the right shore of the river Prut, the same river that was made famous by the defeat of Peter the Great's army by the Turks in 1711. Would it be possible, Rumiantsev wanted to know, to directly bombard (*anfilirovat'*) the enemy camp by putting Russian artillery in Riabaia Mogila, near a major Turkish camp?

What Philippi did not know was that Rumiantsev had so little confidence in his abilities that he had already secretly ordered another officer, Colonel Sivers, to cover him. Sivers rode out ahead of Philippi with light cavalry. Rumiantsev also ordered that if

[500] See also a curious episode related by a British traveller, John Parkinson, who visited Rumiantsev on his estate in 1793. There Parkinson happened to witness a symbolic scene similar to what took place in Rumiantsev's camp, but this time in reverse. It was Rumiantsev who was wearing the night garments. John Parkinson, *A Tour of Russia, Siberia and the Crimea, 1792-1794* (London: Cass, 1971), 206.

there was any danger that Philippi, or any of his men, could be lost, Sivers should immediately deliver Philippi a sealed envelope which contained a signed order by Rumiantsev to return at once without completing his reconnaissance mission.

Without knowing any of this Philippi felt that he was being sent to his death. After riding out for about ten *verst* (one verst is about one kilometre) he asked some nearby Moldavians if there were any Turks on the other side of the river. The river was so shallow, Engelgardt wrote, that it was knee deep for a horse. It should have been an easy crossing. But since the Moldavians answered in the affirmative - there were indeed many enemy soldiers on the other side - Philippi decided to turn back. He arrived at Rumiantsev's headquarters later in the day when a big meeting was taking place with Austrian officers. As soon as he saw Philippi enter, Rumiantsev approached him and whispered in his ear in German: "Sind Sie da gewesen? So did you go there?" Philippi replied: "Nein, Ihre Erlaucht. No, your highness."“Warum? Why so?" Philippi confessed: "Ich furchtete. I was scared." Then Rumiantsev suddenly cried out in Russian: "You [he used informal *ty*] are lucky you said that in their [Austrians'] language otherwise I would have had you executed by a firing squad." After this incident Philippi was never employed for anything again. Rumiantsev had made his point clear. He had demonstrated the importance of merit and professionalism to all Russian officers present, exercised his power to strike down and discredit an incompetent officer, and made a slighting remark about his Austrian allies by implicating them in similar behaviour. Implication for the Russian audience was that such conduct was below them.

After his disappointment with Philippi, the field marshal decided to try out another officer, this time the divisional quartermaster Len, who in the end proved to be more reliable. Earlier in the campaign season the Russian army successfully besieged

the fortress of Hotin, but the garrison was spared. When it arrived safely at the Turkish camp, the *serasker* sent an emissary to Rumiantsev formally thanking him for observing leniency in the rules of capitulation.[501] Rumiantsev decided to use this opportunity, and sent Len with an empty compliment back to the Serasker. Before Len left, Rumiantsev ordered him to use any means to get the plans of the position of the enemy camp. As soon as he reached the advanced posts of the Turkish army he allowed the Ottoman soldiers to blindfold him as was the custom. Len listened carefully; when he sensed by the sounds around him that the escort had brought him to the middle of the Turkish camp, he suddenly tore off the blindfold. Some of the Turkish soldiers charged him, but Len grabbed his pistol and warned that he was prepared to defend himself. He was led to a tent surrounded by a wall to prevent him from seeing anything more, but by that time he had already memorized the whole Turkish camp. When the brave quartermaster returned to the Russian army he was able to sketch the plan of the enemy positions and present it to Rumiantsev. The field marshal wanted to know how he had found this out and when Len related his story Rumiantsev embraced him and vowed personal friendship. Rumiantsev's headquarters was a place known for spectacle and symbolic displays, punishment, and friendship. One had to be blind not to notice the difference in the symbolic treatment of Philippi and Len; it was for everyone to see that bravery, intelligence, and initiative were all part of the value system of Russian military culture. Engelhard certainly took enough note of this to relate it back in his memoirs.

In his book *Command in War* Martin van Creveld develops the idea of the "directed telescope" which he uses to describe the system used by Napoleon "to cut through the regular command hierarchy and take a look, at will, at any part of the army

[501] Serasker was the Ottoman title for a Vizier who commanded an army, the Turkish commander-in-chief. Rhoads Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare, 1500-1700* (London: UCL Press, 1999), 134.

or obtain any kind of information that might be required at the moment."[502] Rumiantsev's morning sojourns and tests of personal character worked like a telescope that he could aim and zoom in at any part of the socio-cultural structure of his army; they allowed him to see, discipline, punish, reward and command the great mass of men entrusted to him by the Russian government. His pupil, Aleksandr Suvorov, would perfect even further this mechanism of power, observation, and management. Contemporaries realized that Rumiantsev's conduct was more than just a random collection of strange and facetious behaviours. The time and place for prayer was precisely chosen, each individual Cossack was singled out and rewarded for a specific symbolic purpose, and each officer was punished through symbolic displays. All of this was done not only for reasons of discipline, but also to reaffirm the values and customs of military culture along with the status of Rumiantsev, of his power to command, and his ability to control the army as a whole. One Russian officer contrasted Rumiantsev's symbolic actions with the more formal conduct of another Russian general:

> It is interesting that even though Count Panin was much more considerate (*sniskhoditelnee*) with the soldier than Count Rumiantsev, he was loved much less than the latter, one could say he was not loved at all; and all this is simply because he [Panin] never talked to the lower ranks. He conducted himself so because of his sombre and reserved character; he tried to win the love of his soldiers, and people in general, only through just and honourable conduct, considering any other means useless and even ignoble (*podlym*).[503]

It seems that Panin was kinder, he was just, and more attentive, but he refused to participate in symbolic behaviour. He did not take his hat off for his peasants, he did not seek out and reward individual soldiers, he did not talk to junior officers, and in general rejected the idea of exercising power through anything but conventional channels. Panin's authority in the army and his leadership ability as an officer were evidently

[502] Martin Van Creveld, *Command in War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 97. For an example of the actual working of the directed telescope system see 75-78.

[503] Gustav von Shtrandman, "Zapiski Gustava fon-Shtrandmana, 1742-1803," *Russkaia Starina*, vol. 34 (1882): 317.

regarded as inferior compared to Rumiantsev, who, as Langeron wrote, "enjoyed a great trust within his army, and even though he is a stern admirer of brutal discipline, soldiers, especially those who served with him, love him and have boundless respect for him."[504]

The ambitious and praise-loving Rumiantsev was removed from active command in 1789. The command of the Russian forces slipped into the hands of his great rival, Prince Grigorii Potemkin. Rumiantsev was offended by the clear show of favoritism by Catherine to her lover, and left the army to live out the remainder of his days in a village on one of his estates.[505] Yet his symbolic displays not only made him a popular and powerful commander, but also clearly reinforced the principal values of military culture that were so dear to him: merit, professionalism, loyalty, courage, and hard work.

Potemkin

Rumiantsev was not the only Russian military commander who practised symbolic display. Grigorii Potemkin (1739-91) was another famous product of Catherinian military culture. When the Second Russo-Turkish War began in 1787, Potemkin being the president of the War College found himself at the helm of the Russian army and navy.[506] Yet despite his political influence, wealth, and authority, or perhaps because of it, he had to resort to the same displays of power as Rumiantsev and Suvorov. Being a favourite was not enough to win the confidence, trust, and respect of officers, foreigners, and soldiers. Traditional methods had to be supplemented with spectacular displays of

[504] Lanzheron, "Russkaia armia v god smerti Ekatiriny II," *Russkaia Starina,* 83, no. 3 (1895): 153-4.

[505] Louis-Philippe de Segur, *Memoirs and Recollections of Count Louis Philippe De Segur*, vol. III (New York: Arno Press, 1970), 39.

[506] As Prince Fedor Golitsyn wrote about Potemkin: "The war college, which had been entrusted to him, is not in a good shape. He inevitably wanted to command an army. With this purpose he re-started the war with the Turks, persuading the Empress to demand from the Ottoman Porte the independence of the Crimea…and so he was given the command of the army. His subordinate was Prince Repnin, on whose shoulders rested the true labours of that campaign." Fedor Golitsyn, "Zapiski Fedora Nikolaevicha Golitsyna," *Russkii Arkhiv,* 1, no. 5 (1874): 1279-1280.

power, forgiveness, punishment, and religiosity, through which Potemkin reasserted himself and the values of Russian military culture.

As Adrian Denisov, the Cossack general, related in his memoirs, Potemkin's headquarters were the principal theatre where scenarios of magnanimity, humility, and reprimand were played out.[507] One time, a general came to Potemkin's headquarters at Jassy just to show himself off to the commander in chief. For some time he appeared repeatedly in the waiting room to see Potemkin and kept asking the adjutant to inform the prince of his arrival; but every time his request was ignored because Potemkin was busy with some important affair. The general, disappointed with his bad luck, complained to one of the adjutants that he was offended by the continuous refusal of Potemkin to grant him audience. After all, he was not a mere corporal.[508]

These words were duly related back to Potemkin. The next morning when the general routinely arrived back at headquarters and asked to see the prince, he was finally let in. The adjutant said that a special order had been given to the effect that the general could always enter Potemkin's office without asking permission to see him. The amazed general hurried to use such an unusual privilege. He had barely walked through the door of the office when Potemkin informed him that he felt like taking a nap. Interrupted in such an unexpected way, the meeting was never resumed.[509] Potemkin should have napped well, because he had made an effective demonstration of his power, carefully prepared and executed with perfect timing. The story of this encounter left Potemkin's headquarters along with the general, and became a warning to superfluous officers. He

[507] As Denisov wrote, while he sat waiting for his fate to be decided "Everybody saw me, but nobody bothered me with questions, though I bowed to anyone who entered. Vasilii Popov [the head of Potemkin's chancellery] often strolled through the waiting room, and even I saw that he sometimes threw a catechizing look at me." Denisov, 42.

[508] Apparently the line to see Potemkin was a long one. Many waited months for an audience with the great Prince. Some of them spent all their money while living in the town he was staying in order to see him and wrote him desperate letters. See for example, RGVIA, f. 52, op. 1/194, d. 59. ch. 1, l. 156 (17 July 1775).

[509] Anon, "O privatnoi zhizni kniazia Potemkina, o nekotorykh chertakh ego kharaktera i anekdotakh (v poslediee vremia)," *Moskvitianin,* 1, no. 2 (1852): 8-9.

rid himself of an annoying parasite, re-established the image of absolute command, and defended the boundaries of his time and office.

Outside the headquarters Potemkin was just as ready to use symbolic display through which he could dominate his surroundings, show everyone his virtue, his virility, his power, but also demonstrate his adherence to a broader set of values of military culture. During the siege of Turkish fortress of Ochakov in 1788, Prince Charles de Ligne, one of the numerous foreign observers, praised the courage of the Austrian Emperor Joseph II.[510] De Ligne called attention to Joseph's personal bravery during the Austrian campaigns against the Ottomans, especially during the siege of Sabach. He said all this in the presence of Potemkin. It must have been difficult for the prince's ego to remain silent, but he said nothing. On the next day, however, donning a parade uniform with all of his decorations, surrounded by his glittering staff, Potemkin went to inspect a newly built redoubt on the shore of the Black Sea, almost under the very walls of the Ochakov fortress. Cannon balls and bullets were raining down in all directions. Several members of Potemkin's suite, Major-General Senilnikov and a Cossack, were mortally wounded.[511] "Ask Prince de Ligne," said Potemkin haughtily, "if Emperor Joseph was standing any closer to the enemy. Because if he was we can always move a little forward."[512] This episode reflected deeper historical patterns among military commanders who had to show personal bravery in front of their armies, in part to motivate the troops and in part to reaffirm their authority.[513]

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[510] R. M. Tsebrikov left a particularly vivid account of the siege where he expressed his disgust for what he saw with unusual frankness. R. M. Tsebrikov, "Vokrug Ochakova. 1788. (Dnevnik ochevidtsa)," *Russkaia Starina*, 9.no 84 (1895): 147-212.

[511] Sinelnikov was apparently hit in the groin by a cannonball and died two days later. Montefiore,405.

[512] Iuri Lubchenkov and Vladislav Romanov, *Ekaterina II i Grigorii Potemkin: istoricheskie anekdoty* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnii biznes-tsentr, Ob'edinenie Kino-kniga, 1990), 89.

[513] In Russian military history, for example, see Mikhail Miloradovich, *Anekdoty, cherty iz zhizni Grafa Miloradovicha* (Kiev: 1881). Count Mikhail Miloradovich was an officer in Suvorov's close circle and he went on to play an important part in Russia's wars against France. When one time Miloradovich was inspecting forward positions during the Napoleonic campaigns he wandered too close to the enemy with his small suite of officers. The French immediately opened fire. "They are taking aim at you, your

Some historians have dismissed such episodes as empty showing off. Philip Longworth described this scene simply as Potemkin "congratulating himself whenever, in venturing out of his tent, an enemy cannon-shot missed him."[514] But a closer reading of such episodes reveals that the behaviour they describe was part of a symbolic language of military culture by means of which messages and ideas were communicated back and forth. Potemkin certainly made his point, and theatrical bravery was not lost on his contemporaries. Even de Ligne admitted that "One could see nothing more noble and cheerfully courageous than the Prince. I loved him to madness that day."[515] Potemkin's visit to the siege was more than a customary display of chivalry so common to the eighteenth-century nobility. De Ligne challenged Potemkin to a metaphorical duel with Joseph, in front of Potemkin's whole suite. Potemkin had to accept the challenge; he had to re-establish his authority among his men; he had to show himself to be on par with the emperor. The danger had a purpose beyond gallantry. Through an instantaneous symbolic display Potemkin was communicating a message to his captive audience – he was showing himself equal to the Holy Roman Emperor and re-affirming his bravery in the eyes of his subordinates and followers.

When it came to re-asserting the importance of merit and punishing subordinates, Potemkin resorted to a mechanism that allowed him to make it an occasion for the demonstration of his power in full view of the audience. A good example occurred when a general who had earned his rank through connections at court rather than through merit, was given the command of a detachment in Potemkin's army. When

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Excellency!" warned Paskevich, an officer in the suite. The bullets were whistling by, but Miloradovich remained unharmed. He spent a few minutes in the same spot with cool composure and then finally turned his horse and slowly rode back to his troops. After witnessing this, General Ermolov said to Miloradovich, "One must have an extra life in order to be with your Excellency." Ibid., 41-42.

[514] Longworth, 148.

[515] Cited in Montefiore, 405.

another officer, who had distinguished himself in combat, was promoted to divisional commander, the general felt himself unfairly passed over for promotion by Potemkin.

He met Potemkin at a dinner and he began to talk to the prince about how pride always belittles a man. Potemkin immediately recognized the basic thrust of the conversation, and calmly asked what the latter thought about the following: "whose pride is more dangerous to society and government, that of him who bases it on his achievements and his distinction, or that of he who, lacking any of the above, ascends to the top by nature of chance, but holds the same pride as the former?" The general had to agree that the pride of the second was more dangerous. "Good," continued Potemkin. "I, for my part, do not pay attention to which one of my generals is more or less incapable than the other in carrying out his duties; but the government and those who have distinguished themselves by their merit cannot be indifferent to such people who, without any distinction (*zaslugi*), try not only to be equal with them but also to get ahead of them." The general's words gave Potemkin an opportunity to show everyone how he always matched awards to merit. At the end of the dinner Potemkin sent the general away from the army with the following statement "…your place I will try to give to someone who has as much cause to be proud of his merit, as you have in achieving your rank without it."[516]

Just like Rumiantsev before him, Potemkin resorted to clever strategies to reinforce the principles of professionalism. Whereas Rumiantsev discredited Philippi at a staff meeting with the latter's own words, Potemkin did the same with one of his generals at a dinner party. In both cases the situation was exploited for symbolic display with maximum effect. It was not only the troublesome general who was the student of Potemkin's lesson, but more important, it was the people gathered around the dinner

[516] Anon, "O privatnoi zhizni kniazia Potemkina," 7.

table. Potemkin clearly communicated his message about the importance of merit in Russian military culture and his power to decide the fates of his subordinates.

Finally, religion provided another important platform for symbolic display. In 1788 Potemkin was in Novogeroisk and received a message about the first naval victory of the Prince of Nassau, one of many famous foreigners serving in the Russian navy during the Turkish wars. "This was God's will," said Potemkin to the surrounding suite. "Look at this church, I built it in the name of my benefactor St. George, and the battle of Kinburn happened on the next day."[517] There was a clear link between praising the heavens and Russian military success. Soon another message arrived of two more Nassau victories over the Turks. "Did I not say," cried Potemkin in excitement, "that the Almighty does not leave me? Here is one more indication that I am a blessed child of the heavens!"[518] Potemkin refused to attribute Russian victory to the skills of a foreigner. Instead he credited it to himself through God's will. It was yet another spectacle, yet another opportunity to re-affirm his leadership and the importance of religion in Russian military culture.

The favours from above continued. During the siege of Bender, a fortress in Moldova, Potemkin went to the front lines to personally supervise the placement of the siege artillery.[519] The Turks recognized the presence of the prince in the ranks and intensified their fire. One of the cannon balls fell so close to Potemkin that he was splattered with flying earth. "The Turks are taking aim at me," serenely noted the Prince, "but God is my protector. He deflected that cannon ball!" After standing for some time in that same spot and looking around, Potemkin slowly rode along the line, paying no

[517] For Battle of Kinburn see "Suvorov's report to Potemkin about the battle of Kinburn, 1 October 1787," in Meshcheriakov, vol. II, 338; Beskrovnyi, 524-30; in English see Longworth, 140-44.
[518] Sergei Glinka, *Ruskie anekdoty, voennye, grazhdanskie, ili poviestvovanie o nardnykh dobrodieteliakh Rossiian drevnikh i novykh vremen*, vol. III (Moscow, 1822), 91.
[519] For an overview of the siege of Bender within the 1789 campaign year see Beskrovnyi, 549.

attention to the increasing volleys of enemy fire.[520] The power of the enemy arms was discredited on the spot. Potemkin demonstrated that God was clearly on the side of the Russians; he claimed Him for the Russian army. It must have been a magnificent spectacle for the troops and surrounding officers – everyone could see their invincible, bullet-dodging, and unperturbed commander-in-chief.

One time during the siege of Ochakov fortress, Potemkin asked the Prince de Ligne if he would like to accompany him to the trials of new mortars. "I have ordered that a boat pick me up and deliver me to the ship where the mortars will be tested," explained Potemkin. De Ligne accepted the invitation and together they rode off to Leman; but to their surprise there was no boat waiting for them – for some reason Potemkin's order for the boat had not been carried out. The two had no choice but to observe the demonstration of the mortars from the shore. The trials were a complete success, but suddenly several Turkish ships appeared nearby. The sailors on the Russian vessel hurried to prepare for the upcoming naval combat, but evidently forgot about the gunpowder that still remained on the deck of the ship. In the first cannonade the gun powder caught fire and ignited, blowing up the ship and its crew into the skies in a great explosion in full view of Potemkin and his guest. "That would have been our fate," said Potemkin to de Ligne with humble assurance and a great sense of religiosity "if the heavens had not bestowed upon me their favour, and did not bother day and night with my preservation."[521] Potemkin was able to claim the favour of God not only to his troops but also to foreign observers. To the excitable de Ligne and others who heard this story it appeared that Potemkin was indeed truly blessed, and so inevitably, his whole military enterprise, despite the unfortunate sailors who drowned that night.

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[520] Glinka, vol. III, 87.

[521] Lubchenkov and Romanov, 115. Potemkin wrote about this incident to Catherine. "Potemkin to Catherine, 22 August 1788," in Douglas Smith, ed., *Love and conquest: personal correspondence of Catherine the Great and Prince Grigory Potemkin* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2004), 259.

To maintain his position of power against the hateful and envious coterie of nobles, to humble insubordinates into submission, to prove himself in the eyes of the foreigners, and to reiterate the values of military culture, Potemkin resorted to symbolic displays. It was especially important for his command of the military and the management of the amorphous collection of jealousies and daily challenges to his authority and power within it. Once Potemkin received the command of the army and the fleet, he had to maintain it. He had to work hard and use a symbolic language and spectacles of power to help him preserve and continuously re-affirm his position.

Suvorov

In addition to Rumiantsev and Potemkin there was one more officer whose symbolic displays gathered notoriety. Perhaps the most prolific of military symbolists in Catherine's military was Aleksandr Suvorov (1730-1800).[522] Suvorov's impressive military laurels coexisted with puzzling behaviour and enigmatic social conduct. Suvorov is an excellent subject for the analysis of symbolic display because there are many memoirs and diaries that document his behaviour, his actions, and his sayings, at various points in his career. Furthermore, his voluminous correspondence bears the stamp of the same irregularity as his behaviour - his writings were as symbolic as his actions.[523]

[522] Iuri Lotman provided a powerful and fascinating sketch of Suvorov's behaviour within the broader contours of Russian noble culture. This chapter attempts to contextualize his behaviour specifically within Catherine's military culture. Lotman, *Besedy o russkoi kul'ture, byt i traditsii russkogo dvorianstva*, 269-286.

[523] See for example his letter to D. I. Khvostov from the winter of 1797, Aleksandr Suvorov, *Pis'ma* (Moscow: "Nauka", 1986), 318-320. Reading some of Suvorov's correspondence one gets a feeling that the author was developing a different language, a military jargon intermingled with juxtapositions and references to ancient history. This was a general trend that culminated in the formation of a language particular to the military culture. As Lotman had pointed out, by the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the 19th century there emerged so called "guards language" or "gvardeiskii iazyk." Iuri Lotman, "Ustnaia rech v istoriko-kul'turnoi perepiske," in *Stat'i po semiotike kul'tury i iskusstva* (St. Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 2002), 531-2. The subject of the role of terminology in the

Some of the more famous aspects of Suvorov's lifestyle have now become legendary: his bed usually consisted of heap of hay covered by a sheet; he eschewed formal military dress and preferred to wear simple white shirts; he hated mirrors and everywhere he went, from balls to army headquarters, they were respectfully covered or altogether removed; and he was religious to the point of superstition. In the army he began his day by pouring cold water over himself and rolling naked on the grass to dry off. He was also rumoured to crow like a rooster in early daylight to wake up his sleeping soldiers. "You can't oversuvorov Suvorov," joked Potemkin.[524] Suvorov's eccentricity spread across Europe on the back of his victories, and even reached the British Isles, where George Byron described him as a "buffoon," "Momus," and "Harlequin in uniform."[525] As Suvorov's secretary, and a spy for the Russian government, Egor Fuks, concluded, "he remains a hieroglyph even in posterity (*ieroglifom i v potomstve*)."[526]

Suvorov used the veneer of strange behaviour to conceal his real intentions. Suvorov's behaviour was nothing less than symbolic display of power which was intrinsic to the very real power he gained from such spectacles. Indeed, spectacle was inherent to his military success; it was a tool of leadership and administration. Yet some contemporaries refused to believe it. As Engelgardt put it "Generals and people gifted with military acumen have all maintained that it was all luck…."[527] In the words of one foreign observer, Suvorov's "gross and ridiculous manners have inspired his soldiers

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development of military culture has not yet received a concentrated attention of a major study and promises to be a fruitful avenue of future research.

[524] Montefiore, 390.

[525] In Greek mythology, Momus was the god of mockery, satire, and criticism. George Byron, *Don Juan* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958), 239.

[526] E. Fuks, *Anekdoty Kniazia Italianskogo, Grafa Suvorova Rymnikskago* (St. Petersburg, 1827), ii. Fuks was real state councillor (*deistvitel'nii statskii sovetnik*) and Suvorov's secretary during the late 1790s. Fuks had the opportunity to observe Suvorov closely on a daily basis, since he worked with him everyday and sometimes they would work together late into the night. He even left a fascinating sketch titled "One Day in the Life of Suvorov." E. Fuks, *Sobranie Raznyh Sochinenii E. Fuksa* (St. Petersburg, 1827), 92-113.

[527] Engelhard, 184.

with the blind confidence, which serves him instead of his military talents, and has been the real cause of all his successes."[528] However, the consistency with which Suvorov managed the Russian military machine betrays something deeper than a simple token of good fortune. One of the reasons why he was successful across the entire range of campaigns, from the deep forests of Poland to the steep Swiss Alps, was his ability to exercise power through symbolic display, which he used to impress and reinforce the main tenets of military culture. In the process he asserted his leadership, reinforced subordination, maintained control, and won the trust of his followers.

Many contemporaries did not understand Suvorov's behaviour, which went outside the norms of eighteenth-century etiquette, and were shocked by it.[529] Some suspected that his odd behaviour coincided with episodes of binge-drinking.[530] Others thought that Suvorov was mentally unstable, and his own secretary, Fuks, confessed that he himself at one time thought so too.[531] "What would you have thought," he wrote, "if during an audience with the field marshal, he first runs towards you, then runs away from you, in one corner he would start to make comparisons between ancient Greeks and Romans; suddenly you hear about the past dances in the province of Borovintsk; from there he moves on to the battle of Rymnik, the narrative of which you cannot even understand." But "when Suvorov enters his office," continued Fuks, "all of what you

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[528] Charles Masson, *Secret Memoirs of the Court of Petersburg* (New York: Arno Press, 1970), 177.

[529] When Suvorov was still a lieutenant-general, he was invited to a court ball, where he ran, jumped and galloped around, indulging in his usual repertoire of strange antics. One of the elderly ladies at the court, confronted Suvorov after the ball. "Please, Alexander Vasilyevich," she began, "what has happened to you: you acted at the ball so outlandishly that you were the laughing stock of the whole court. As a friend of your parents, I loved you since you were a young man: I grew red and embarrassed for you." Fuks, *Sobranie Raznykh Sochinenii E. Fuksa*, 134.

[530] Engelgardt recalled how Suvorov had a large glass of vodka before dinner, and several glasses of wine during the dinner itself. Engelgardt, 185. Lanzheron also commented how Suvorov liked to drink strong punch, even during the heat of battle, which he called "lemonade." Lanzheron, "Russkaia armia v god smerti Ekatiriny II," *Russkaia Starina,* 83, no. 3 (1895): 159. The degree to which Suvorov's fondness of spirits bordered on alcoholism is unclear and Russian biographies are silent on this matter. See also the letter Rumiantsev's wife wrote to her husband about Suvorov's drinking."Letter from 25 June 1779," in D. A. Tolstoi, ed., *Pisma Grafini E. M. Rumiantsevoi k eia muzhu feldmarshalu grafu P. A. Rumiantsevu-Zadunaiskomu, 1762-1779* (St. Petersburg, 1888), 236. I could not find any definite evidence of Suvorov being an alcoholic. He drank, but no more than his peers.

[531] Fuks, *Anekdoty Kniazia Italianskogo, Grafa Suvorova Rymnikskago*, ii.

have just seen stops." Perhaps Suvorov was not mentally unstable after all. In his office a new act began. "There he dictates the disposition for the upcoming battle, contemplates the strength of the enemy, directs his troops to new positions, assigns them new battle directives, sketches battle plans, or corrects the mistakes of his quartermasters…"[532] Suvorov's office was the reverse of Potemkin's; spectacles were left at the door and secluded work began. Fuks marvelled at how such a cultured and well-educated man turned into a clown and a fool every time he left the confines of his office. "One time," remembered Fuks, "I lost my temper and asked him what is the meaning of this?" Confronted in this way Suvorov dodged, and answered that it meant nothing – "This is my style (*moia manera*)." He quickly changed the subject and sent Fuks out to do chores.[533] Clearly the field marshal refused to be classified, analyzed, or deciphered; he wanted to remain a hieroglyph.

Accounts of British diplomats support this duality in Suvorov's behaviour. One diplomat saw Suvorov within the confines of his office and the other in public. Naturally the two men wrote down almost diametrically opposite appraisals of the field marshal, which reflected the jagged image Suvorov produced through his symbolic displays. The founder of the British Foreign Intelligence Service, William Wickham, met Suvorov in October 1799 for a series of intense discussions about the complicated questions of allied diplomacy. By the end of it Wickham was reporting back to the British government that throughout the whole time the field marshal, who was twice his age, "gave the most evident proofs of a strong and vigorous mind and of a clear and sound understanding as little impaired as it could have been in the prime of life".[534]Sir Gilbert

[532] Ibid., iii.
[533] Ibid., 26.
[534] William Wickham,*The Correspondence of the Right Honourable William Wickham from the Year 1794*, vol. II (London: R. Bentley, 1870), 274.

Elliott, Envoy-Extraordinary to Austria, saw Suvorov outside the confines of his office, in January1800. Writing to his wife from Prague, Elliot began:

> I must not on any account be quoted, but he is the most perfect Bedlamite that ever was allowed to be at large…. I was fully dressed of course, and although I did not expect him to be so, I was not prepared for what I saw. After waiting a good while in an antechamber with some aides-de-camp, a door opened and a little old shrivelled creature in a pair of red breeches and his shirt for all clothing, bustled up to me, took me in his arms, and embracing me with his shirt sleeves, made me a string of high-flown flummery compliments which he concluded by kissing me on both cheeks, and I am told I was in luck that my mouth escaped….What he says is not by any means intelligible, at least it requires a great deal of thought and ingenuity to get a meaning out of it.[535]

As soon as Suvorov stepped outside his office, as Fuks faithfully wrote down, he changed from a "vigorously-minded" diplomat to a "perfect Bedlamite". This duality of Suvorov's behaviour relates back to the important point about the duality of military culture in Romanova's definition. She wrote that military culture often encompasses a counter-culture of sorts that resists preassures of official behaviour and codes.

This begs the question of when and why this Russian aristocrat turned himself into the god of mockery and satire? After the Seven Years' War, the young Suvorov became the commander of the Suzdal regiment in the Ladoga region of Northern Russia. As Fuks found out from old soldiers, Suvorov's strange conduct began during that time.[536] He first attracted attention when he laid siege to an ancient Orthodox monastery. As part of the routine drill, Suvorov wanted to teach his men how to conduct a proper storm of a fortress, foreshadowing the bloody sieges he would become famous for in the 1790s. One day, during an exercise, the regiment came across a monastery, and letting his imagination get the best of him Suvorov immediately ordered his men to storm it. The sight of soldiers wildly pouring over the stone walls must have made an unsettling

[535] Gilbert Elliot, *Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot, First Earl of Minto, from 1751 to 1806*, vol. iii (London: Longmans, Green and co, 1874), 107-8.
[536] Fuks, *Anekdoty Kniazia Italianskogo, Grafa Suvorova Rymnikskago*, vi.

impression on the monks inside. The whole enterprise was a harmless affair, but the incident reached the ears of the empress. Catherine must have been curious for she wanted to meet the man behind the venture. This first recorded episode of unusual military behaviour brought Suvorov to the attention of the Russian court.[537] The affair was hushed up.

It is important to put Suvorov's symbolic displays in the context of Russian military culture. Lotman believed that Suvorov's displays were a combination of deliberate actions and improvisations, that he started out with a specific plan in mind and then got lost in his own performance and overplayed his hand.[538] The spectacle usually began at the very first meeting, which was often a traumatic experience for at least one of the parties. The account left by Count Roger De Damas, one of the French officers in the Russian army in 1788, is one of the best and deserves to be quoted in full:

> I had not seen General Souvarow [sic]…and did not know him. The prospect of presenting myself to him made me feel a little agitated, and I was entirely absorbed in the thought of it when my tent was unceremoniously entered by a man dressed in his shirt only, who asked me who I was….Seeing that I was embarrassed by the fantastic apparition he said "Pray be calm, and do not let me disturb you. To whom were you writing when I came in?" I came to the conclusion that one might be fairly at one's ease with a general in his shirt, so I answered frankly that I was writing to my sister, in the hope that Prince of Nassau might be able to send my letter on the following day…."It is not the Prince of Nassau who will send it," he said. "It is I; but I want to write her a letter too." He seized some paper and a pen, sat down on a stool, and wrote my sister a letter of four pages, the contents of which I never knew. She received it safely with mine, but has since told me that quite half of it was unintelligible…he warned me his invariable dinner-hour was at six o'clock, and that he did not wish me to dine anywhere but with him…on that same evening I arrived at his headquarters for dinner. "You surely made a mistake, monsieur," said his senior adjutant; "it is at six in the morning that his Excellency dines, and he is now in bed."…These two incidents, following one another so rapidly, made me believe, I confess, that I had to deal with a lunatic….At precisely six o'clock on the following morning I was at the

[537] Ibid., 114-6. Duffy weighted in with a military analysis of this episode. He wrote "This was a good exercise, since the monasteries constituted some of the very rare stone-walled buildings in Russia." Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West*, 191. See also Friedrich von Smitt, *Suworow und Polens Untergang*, vol. I (Leipzig, 1858), 215.

[538] Lotman, *Besedy o russkoi kul'ture, byt i traditsii russkogo dvorianstva*, 272. As Lotman put it, "Staring to play, he over did it (*Nachinaia igrat', on zaigryvalsia*)," Ibid., 270.

> general's door. He received me with a series of leaps and embraces that disquieted me a good deal; made me swallow a glass of liqueur that set fire to my throat and stomach; and drank some of the same liquid himself with grimaces that were enough to make a *vivandiere* miscarry on the spot.[539]

Suvorov was famous for such spectacles during first introduction.[540] This "fantastic apparition" not only helped to break the ice - as Damas admitted Suvorov somehow made him feel at ease - but it also helped to establish a rapport with new and often foreign officers. The meeting happened outside the officially prescribed ceremonies and rules, it was casual and informal. The meeting was also a baptism, a ritual by which the guest was welcomed into the army under Suvorov's command, and became a member of an extended family of warriors.

Just like with Rumiantsev and Potemkin, Suvorov's symbolic displays and slapstick at court and in the army can be broken down into discernible patterns, designed to convey or enforce the ideals of Russian military culture. Of these, the ideals of professionalism and merit were especially important for Suvorov. Fuks observed that his sudden, strange behaviour, his jumping around, his sharp jokes, his humorous stories

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[539] Roger De Damas, *Memoirs of the Comte Roger De Damas (1787-1806)* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1913), 28-32. *Vivandiere* in French is a female camp follower, a sutler, a soldier's wife.

[540] With Engelgardt we have another case of Suvorov's antics. This time the scene was almost the reverse of what happened to Damas. Engelgardt showed how Suvorov's symbolic display, "his strangeness" as he put it, sometimes embarrassed worthy people (*ludei dostoinykh*). The author probably meant himself here, for Engelgardt became a victim of Suvorov's eccentricity during their very first meeting. In 1795, after the end of war in Poland, he was bringing a report to Suvorov and was invited to attend the field marshal's dinner, where all the officers were seated according to their rank. Being aware of Suvorov's mania for asking questions, Engelgardt arrived prepared to answer any question that could be thrown his way. When it came his turn to answer how long he had served, Engelgardt spat out without hesitation that he served "6 years, 3 months, and 12 days" in his current rank, and let out a small chuckle (*usmekhnulsia*). Engelhard wrote his memoirs many years after the event, which allowed him to ponder what he had done to cause Suvorov's subsequent displeasure. He concluded that it was his chuckle that displeased the old field marshal. As soon as everyone was seated at the table Suvorov jumped up and ran into a different room with the words "it stinks in here!" His adjutants began to open up the windows and told him that the smell has gone. "No," yelled back Suvorov, "there is a stinker at the table." The adjutants began to walk around and smell the seated officers. One of the adjutants kneeled next to Engelhard and said that he had dirty boots, and that he had to go outside and clean them before returning to the table. "The Count will not come back until you do so," added the adjutant. "You can imagine my embarrassment," wrote Engelgardt. He got up told the adjutant not to expect him back at the table and walked out. "Now think about this yourself," appealed Engelhard to his readers, "was it agreeable for a man with noble feelings (*cheloveku s blogorodnym chuvstvom*) to serve under him?" Engelhard noted that he was not the only one humiliated this way, and among the victims of Suvorov's spectacles were many a good officer. Engelgardt, 185-6.

about irrelevant subjects, often put out the fires of discontent, rivalry, and jealousies before they could flame up.[541] Simultaneously, they served to drive home some point about military culture. For example, in 1799, when during the Italian campaign the Austrian General Kray took the city of Turin, Suvorov praised him generously and raised a glass to his success. At that moment one of Kray's countrymen, who belonged to the eminent and ancient nobility, asked "Did you know that Kray comes from the most common stock and worked his way up from the lowest rank of soldier to that of general?" Suvorov replied that even though Kray did not have the privilege of birth, "after today's deed I would be especially honoured to have him, at least, as a cousin."[542] Similar to the scenes at Potemkin's dinners and Rumiantsev's headquarters, Suvorov publicly undermined some of the deeply-engrained traditions of old-regime armies by insisting on rewards based on merit. The message to the audience at the table was very clear.

Suvorov used and refined the technology of observation employed by Rumiantsev. Suvorov's "directed telescope" was even more powerful, and it penetrated deep into the fabric of the military; and he deployed it everywhere he was sent. For instance, Suvorov liked to walk around the camp incognito, wearing a soldier's jacket or an old, torn coat, and was always satisfied when he passed unnoticed. This behaviour was a well-established trope in military history and Suvorov was probably following in the steps of a long tradition of commanders, from Richard the Lionheart to Peter the Great who walked among the ranks to see if the living conditions of their troops were

[541] Fuks, *Anekdoty Kniazia Italianskogo, Grafa Suvorova Rymnikskago*, vii.

[542] Ibid., 18. General Baron Paul Kray von Krajova (1735-1804) apparently came from a humble Hungarian origins, which would explain the slighting remark by an Austrian officer. Suvorov's views of foreigners are complex. After Admiral Ushakov's victory at Korfa, a foreign officer was sent to Suvorov's headquarters to relate to him the news. Suvorov inquired about the health of Fedor Fedorovich, and this baffled the German officer. Someone whispered him that the conversation is about Ushakov to which he readily replied "Ah! Yes, sir Admiral von Ushakov is well." This made Suvorov angry. "Take back your von and give it out to whomever you want but the victor over the Turkish fleet and the conqueror of Korfa is called Fedor Fedorovich Ushakov." Ibid., 41.

adequate.[543] Of course such methods of observation were much easier to conduct in a century where printed images were rare, and when some soldiers probably never knew what their commanders really looked like. The only opportunity for face-to-face encounters was the parade, where the ranks and officers were usually separated by a great distance. Suvorov must have known this and relished his ability to examine his men and camp in the shadow of anonymity.

He did just that when he was made the inspector of the Kuban frontier. Suvorov decided to go along the military lines and inspect them in person. The word about this began to spread and every commander was eagerly expecting his arrival.[544] But Suvorov disliked pomp, and he preferred to appear always suddenly, unexpectedly, just like he did in Damas' tent. At night he got into a sleigh and arrived at the first station. The captain who was manning the station was an old soldier who did not know what Suvorov looked like. Suvorov explained that he had been sent by Suvorov to prepare horses in advance of the inspection. The old captain received the night traveler in a comradely fashion: he took his guest to his room, offered him a glass of vodka and invited him to supper; the captain made jokes, judged generals and gossiped. Eventually Suvorov left to continue his journey. In the morning the captain received the following note: "Suvorov has passed through here, thanks captain N. for supper and asks for his continuing friendship."[545] Suvorov clearly wanted the captain to know who his late-night guest had been, no doubt so that the gossipy officer would perpetuate the image of Suvorov's omnipresence. In addition to observing everything with his own eyes, undiluted by official reports, Suvorov used his incognito visits as a mechanism for

[543] Nikanorova, 186.
[544] For inspections see Lanzheron, "Russkaia armia v god smerti Ekatiriny II," *Russkaia Starina,* 83, no. 5 (1895): 199.
[545] Alexander Suvorov, *Nauka pobezhdat': mysli, aforizmy, anekdoty* (Moscow: Olma-Press, 1999), 337-8.

collecting information that he did not get through conventional channels. By shedding his epaulets, Suvorov became very well informed indeed.[546]

He continued to perfect his strategies of power through symbolic display. In 1791, after the gory siege of Izmail Suvorov was sent to Finland to inspect the border between the Russian Empire and Sweden and supervise the fortresses in the region. One of the places he had to inspect was the fortress of Nejshlot. The authorities were informed that the count had left his headquarters at Fredrikshamn and would arrive within a day. The next morning the whole town came into the streets in anticipation of seeing the high imperial official. Hour after hour went by. Meanwhile, a small boat tried to dock at the fortress harbour. In it were two Finnish peasants: one was working the oars and the other steering. They were forbidden to use the harbour, most likely due to the important visit by Suvorov, and so the Finns had to find a different place to disembark. Once ashore, the old man who was steering the boat tried to make his way through the crowds to the Town Hall, but was turned away.

At this time a messenger finally appeared on the road, waving his hands and gesticulating widely - Suvorov and his staff were coming. The Burgomeister, the fortress commandant, and the town deputies all lined the main street, ready to receive the long-awaited inspection. Another Suvorian spectacle was about to unfold. As the messenger predicted, the official carriage soon arrived, but Suvorov was not in it. “Has the Count arrived,” asked the arriving officers, “he set out by water some time before us.” The town authorities were now on the alert and the whole procession rushed

[546] Suvorov’s student, Mikhail Kutuzov, the Russian commander during the Napoleonic invasion of 1812, seemed to have inherited his mantle, and have used similar symbolic strategies. Anon., *Anekdoty, ili dostopiamiatnyia skazaniia o ego svetlosti general feldmarshale kniaze Mikhaile Larionoviche Golenshcheve-Kutuzove Smolenskom. Nachinaia s pervykh let ego sluzhby do konchiny, s priobshcheniem nekotorykh pisem, dostopiamiatnykh ego rechei i prikazov*, vol. I (St. Petersburg, 1814), 73-74. Such behaviour had never been documents in relation to Rumiantsev or Potemkin. They would never lie down in the midst of soldiers for a casual conversation. Suvorov had and he was regarded as somewhat of an oddity.

towards the pier to inspect the waters for the upcoming boat bearing Suvorov, but of course the waters were empty.

The general feeling of anticipation was suddenly broken by a cannon shot from one of the fortress bastions, then another, and then another. At that point everybody realized that it was Suvorov. They soon found out that he had been inside the fortress for an hour and had finished his inspections: he had taken stock of the magazines, the food, the condition of the actual the fortress and it works, fortress guns, and its soldiers. "My goodness, this is a good fortress," he concluded.[547] Suvorov's visit was as unconventional as his reputation. Using a diversion, the canny general managed to have free, unobstructed access to every inch of the fortress. When he was done, Suvorov announced his presence with a symbolic salvo from the cannons. Suvorov probably internalized the strategies, tricks, and symbolic behaviour of Peter the Great, among other military commanders, all the way from antiquity including Hannibal and Alexander the Great. Being an ardent scholar of the ancient world Suvorov had no doubt read and re-read histories of ancient wars and campaigns and biographies of great political and military leaders. His personal hero was Julius Caesar, who was famous for talking to his soldiers in comradely fashion and for fighting in their midst.[548]

Suvorov continued his practices throughout his career. Even when he was close to seventy years old, during the Italian campaign in 1799, Suvorov was doing his incognito rounds around the camp disguised as an old soldier, which was another famous trope, another classic pattern, connected to famous ancient commanders in military history. One time he heard a sergeant call him over. The man was trying to deliver some papers from an Austrian General to Suvorov, and asked if he knew where

[547] Suvorov, *Nauka pobezhdat': mysli, aforizmy, anekdoty*, 426-441.
[548] For example, Zvi Yavetz, *Julius Caesar and His Public Image* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 162-3, and Christian Meier, translated by David McLintock, *Caesar* (New York: BasicBooks, 1995), 244.

the field marshal was staying. Suvorov had a reply ready: "Hell knows where he is. Don't give him the papers; he is now either dead drunk or crowing like a rooster."[549] The sergeant was about to beat Suvorov for such a demeaning reply, but the field marshal was an agile sprinter and quickly ran away. In about an hour Suvorov was back at his headquarters, and the sergeant soon realized that he had almost assaulted the great Russian hero.[550] For the people at Suvorov's headquarters such spectacles were disquieting - the field marshal seemed omnipresent.

In addition to wearing disguises, Suvorov also had a predilection for asking sudden and random questions. It appears that Fuks understood why he did this, and wrote down several examples of these sporadic interrogations. The most important thing was not to panic. Suvorov's war on the *nemoguznaika (dontknower)* was well known. It was better to lie or make up a ridiculous answer than to say "I don't know…" or "I can't tell you…" In such cases Suvorov would get mad and verbally abusive. Engelgardt wrote that if Suvorov asked "'Is it far from here to Warsaw?' [one should] say '250 verst, 13 sazhen, and 1 arshin' and he [would] be happy…." It did not matter where exactly "here" was.[551] One time, Suvorov asked a soldier, "How far it is from here to the sky?" The answer he got was "Two campaigns for Suvorov." Another time he asked a night-guardsman on duty, "how many stars are there in the sky?" The soldier did not panic by being so suddenly confronted by his field marshal, and calmly began to count "One, two, three…"[552] Delagardi, the Swedish ambassador, wrote that Suvorov "was very happy when to his question of how many fish there are in the Danube he received

[549] Here Suvorov was playing to popular image his contemporaries had of him. He was effectively making fun of himself.
[550] Fuks, *Anekdoty Kniazia Italianskogo, Grafa Suvorova Rymnikskago*, 41.
[551] Engelgardt, 183.
[552] Fuks, *Anekdoty Kniazia Italianskogo, Grafa Suvorova Rymnikskago*, 165.

an answer of 42.5 million."[553] As Christopher Duffy suggested, it were not necessarily the correct answers Suvorov was interested in but rather he was testing at random the ability of his soldiers and officers to think on the spot.[554]

All of this behaviour was pursued to make a point and reinforce an idea or a set of values that were important to military culture, as Suvorov saw it. In other words he employed extremely symbolic behaviour to impress important points on his audience. Most often Suvorov's spectacles were triggered by his continuous desire to professionalize the Russian army and he made his point clear with his punishments, especially when it came to nobility, which was exempt from corporal penalty. How do you inflict physical punishment on a body that is legally immune from it? When Suvorov was still in the Kuban, a lieutenant-colonel by the name of N___ arrived at his headquarters. He brought with him several letters of recommendation and went to see the general well dressed, perfumed, and wearing heeled shoes (*v bashmakakh*). Suvorov, after having read the letters, welcomed him quite affectionately. "I am very glad! You seem to know all of my close friends. Good! My goodness, good. Let us try to get to know each other," and immediately invited the new arrival to go for a ride. Thrilled by such a sign of friendliness from his new commander, N____ asked permission to quickly change. "No need, no need!" replied Suvorov. So N____ was forced to mount a Cossack horse and gallop merrily behind his new chief. The lieutenant-colonel was soon mortified to realize that the casual ride was turning into a two-day inspection of front-line fortifications on horseback. The coarse saddle not only ruined N___'s attire, but by

[553] Ia. G. Delagardi, "Moe posishchenie russkogo fel'dmarshala kniazia Suvorova," *Russkaia Starina*, 17, no. 12 (1876): 833.

[554] Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West*, 192. Sometimes this barrage of questioning backfired. As the Spanish general Francisco De Miranda wrote in 1786, when he met Suvorov, "the general piled me with stupid questions until the Prince [Potemkin] told him to shut up." Isabel de Madariaga, *The Travels of General Francisco De Miranda in Russia* (London: Kitchen & Barratt, 1950), 7.

the end of the trip his legs were all skinned, bloodied, and torn.[555] Punishment was alloyed with humiliation: a military man had to be ready for action, and the lieutenant-colonel clearly was not. Suvorov was able to inflict pain, humiliation and punishment in creative ways. He was following in the steps of Rumiantsev and Potemkin, before him, and other military writers who were trying to create a class of professional officers out of young noble dandies; they wanted to turn seasonal warriors and soldiers of fortune into conscientious and qualified men of war.

A few years later in 1794, after his brutal but successful campaign in Poland Suvorov was finally promoted to the coveted rank of field marshal, at the age of sixty-six. After grabbing his marshal's baton, he began to skip like a goat and run around. "My goodness, I am so light, jumping so high!"[556] Count Louis Philippe de Segur, the French ambassador to St. Petersburg, related the full scope of the spectacle:

> When he was made Marshal of the Empire, he himself arranged his reception in the presence of the soldiers after a most whimsical manner. Having placed in a church, on both sides of the nave and in lines, as many chairs as there were general officers senior to himself, he entered the building in a waistcoat, and leaped clean over each chair…and after having thus neatly called to mind the way in which he had surpassed his rivals, he invested himself with the Marshal's grand uniform, covered himself with the numerous decorations which had been heaped upon him, and afterwards gravely invited the priests to terminate the ceremony by a Te Deum.[557]

It was the kind of show that made the soldiers love Suvorov and officers feel anxious. Suvorov showed all present at the ceremony the importance of merit. Was there a better way of demonstrating how he had surpassed senior but less deserving rivals?[558] There was something else that Suvorov was attempting to communicate through spectacles such as this one. He was consciously and aggressively carving out an identity for

[555] Suvorov, *Nauka pobezhdat': mysli, aforizmy, anekdoty*, 367-9.
[556] Ibid., 341.
[557] Segur, vol. III, 56. Chairs in Orthodox churches are not common, since the service is performed standing up, so it is possible that Suvorov did the performance in a Catholic church, while still in Poland.
[558] For the reaction of other senior officers see *Arkhiv Kniazia Vorontsova*, vol. 12, 144-5.

himself that was different from other officers in the Russian army. Suvorov had advanced through merit and hard work, and he encouraged others to follow his example.

Three years later, in 1799, Suvorov was sent to Italy to command the allied forces against the revolution in France. Before Suvorov left Vienna, the Military Council (*Hofkriegsrath*), wanted to see his campaign plan for the upcoming war. Suvorov arrived as promised to a big general meeting for a discussion of the campaign. Count Johann Thugut (1736-1818), the powerful chancellor and protégé of old Prince Anton Kaunitz, turned to Suvorov and asked if he had brought his plans with him to share with the council. At this point Suvorov got up, reached under his coat to take out a large piece of paper, unfolded it, and put it on the table for all to see. Everyone was surprised to see it was blank. "I have never made any other plans for my campaigns," explained the old Russian field marshal in his usual prevaricating manner. For the *Hofkriegsrath* it must have looked like an ominous start.[559] An officer of the Moscow regiment, Captain Griazev, left a similar account. The *Hofkriegsrath* sent several officers to Suvorov to show him the council's plans for the upcoming campaign around the Adda river, in the northern-most part of Italy. The officers asked Suvorov to comment on the plan and to make any corrections he saw fit. The field marshal crossed out the whole plan and wrote instead "I shall start by crossing the Adda, and finish the campaign where God pleases."[560] Despite the difference in form, the message remained the same. In an impressive symbolic display Suvorov clearly was trying to assert his

[559] E. F. Komarovskii, "Zapiski Grafa E. F. Komarovskago," *Istoricheskii Vestnik*, vol. 69 (1897): 360-1; another version of this event is in Suvorov, *Nauka pobezhdat': mysli, aforizmy, anekdoty*, 346. For Thugut see Karl A. Roider, *Baron Thugut and Austria's Response to the French Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987). As Christopher Duffy has argued, Thugut's political actions did much to undermine the Second Coalition. Duffy, Eag*les Over the Alps*, 81, 116.

[560] Nikolai Griazev, "Pokhod Suvorova v 1799 g.," in A. V. Suvorov, *Slovo Suvorova. Slovo Sovremennikov. Materialy k Biografii* (Moscow: Russkii Mir, 2000), 161. In the end the Austrian Emperor Francis II managed to make Suvorov follow instructions during the upcoming campaign, giving responsibilities for logistics and rear services to the Austrians, so that the field marshal could concentrate on "the more pressing" matters of war. This was a clever political move which eventually helped to rein Suvorov in.

independence and influence. With his reference to providence, Suvorov refused to be tied down by directives or recognize *Hofkriegsrath* as having any power over him. This was symbolic of a general trend in Russian military culture which by the end of the eighteenth century sought political autonomy and independence.

Suvorov used his spectacles not only to resist pressure from his superiors, but also to re-affirm his authority with regular soldiers. In September 1799 the Italian campaign was over and the Swiss campaign, Suvorov's last, was about to commence. When Russian soldiers began to voice murmurs of dissent after leaving behind the lush valleys of Italy for the cold and slippery mountains of Switzerland, Suvorov responded like lightning. He ran in front of the soldiers and ordered that a ditch be dug out. He jumped into it as if into his own grave, and then said to the surrounding audience: "Bury me, leave your general here. You are not my children, and I am not your father…." This caused enough of a stir among the gathered soldiers that some of them volunteered to go first and set the example for the rest.[561] Suvorov knew the importance of keeping up the morale of his troops, which he did using his symbolic displays. As he admitted to William Wickham, the British diplomat in Italy during the War of the Second Coalition, "neither my troops or officers are fit for this war in Switzerland."[562] Suvorov knew how to skilfully turn complaints into praise and re-assert himself on the spot among his officers and soldiers.

Behind the performances lurked calculated cunning. Sudden questionings bordering on interrogation, the ability to observe without being seen, an aptitude for punishing officers through unconventional methods were all powerful tools that Suvorov used to control and discipline his armies, re-assert his authority among the troops, but also re-affirm the values and customs of military culture. Episodes of Suvorov walking

[561] Suvorov, *Nauka pobezhdat': mysli, aforizmy, anekdoty*, 371-2. Segur also relates this story. Segur, vol. iii, 57.
[562] Wickham, vol. ii, 278.

among the ranks became legends in the Russian army. The control he was able to exercise over the troops must have been quite unprecedented: they always had to be on guard because unless they knew exactly what Suvorov looked like and where he was, every soldier with a dirty, old coat could be a disguised field marshal.

After the analysis of Suvorov's symbolic eccentricity there is little doubt to what end such episodes were performed, but the last word should be left to Fuks, Suvorov's secretary, who came to know the field marshal very closely, and was one of the few people at his bedside when the latter died a hero-in-exile in 1800. Fuks remembered a rare case when old Suvorov talked about himself with rare frankness. "Would you like to know me?" he began. "I will tell you: I was praised by the tsars, I was loved by soldiers, friends wondered at me, enemies cursed me, the court laughed at me. I was at court, but I was not a courtier, like Aesop and La Fontaine: with jokes and beastly language I spoke the truth. Like the fool Balakirov of Peter the Great…I grimaced and contorted (*krivlialsia ia i korchilsia*)."[563]Suvorov had most likely read about Balakirov and used him as inspiration for his own symbolic behaviour that he used to drive home his own moral lessons about the army.[564]Aesop was a popular writer of fables in ancient Greece and Jean de La Fontaine was the renowned fabulist of seventeenth-century France. Both writers used myth and parables in their stories to convey a moral message. Suvorov could hardly have put himself in better company.

The question at this point is whether the audience registered the value of Suvorov's symbolic displays and understood their meaning. There is much evidence that indeed the people who recorded these episodes understood their deeper meaning and the messages they were conveying. For example, after meeting Suvorov, de Segur wrote

[563] Fuks, *Anekdoty Kniazia Italianskogo, Grafa Suvorova Rymnikskago*, 77-8.

[564] Stories about Balakirov were first published in the late eighteenth century. For a complete collection see Anon., *Polnye anekdoty o Balakirove, byvshem shute pri Dvore Petra Velikogo* ,2 vols. (Moscow, 1837).

that Suvorov "formed the strange design of concealing his transcendent merit under fantastic forms of folly."[565] Aleksandr Lanzheron, a Frenchman in Russian service, wrote that Suvorov "is so masterful at playing a mentally disturbed that it became his second nature." He added that while Suvorov played the madman, "in reality he is quite far from being one."[566] And after experiencing some of Suvorov's peculiarities first hand, Lev Engelgardt thought that Suvorov was a "subtle politician (*tonkii politik*)." To the untrained eye Suvorov's behaviour appeared odd and whimsical, but Engelgardt thought he did it "so as not to attract jealousies."[567] Another testament comes from inside the inner circle of the exiled king of France. The Duc de Doudeauville, who was one of the closest aides of Louis XVIII when the French king was living in exile in Russia, also had a chance to meet Suvorov and he too refused to be fooled by his antics and saw Suvorov's behaviour for what it really was. The field marshal paid homage to the King when he was traveling to take up his command in Italy in 1799. He rode through Mittau, the modern day city of Jelgava in Latvia, where Louis XVIII and his court were hiding from the ravages of the French revolution and spent more than an hour there. As Doudeauville recounted,

> This half-wicked hero has coincided within him such antics, that could have easily been ascribed to a mentally disturbed, if they had not proceeded from the calculations of subtle and farsighted mind. For this was a man of small height, thin, frail, poorly-built, with an ape-like physiognomy, with lively, crafty eyes, and with manners so strange and hilariously-funny, that one could not observe him without simultaneous laughter and pity; but underneath this original shell, there hid the gifts of a great miltiary genius.[568]

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[565] Segur, vol. II, 54.

[566] Lanzheron, "Russkaia armia v god smerti Ekateriny II," *Russkaia Starina,* 83, no. 3 (1895): 155.

[567] Engelgardt, 182-3. The prominent military historian Christopher Duffy seems to agree. Alexandr Suvorov's regularly odd conduct, which was duly recorded by contemporaries, served as "occasions to convey some sharp comments or telling lessons." Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West*, 194.

[568] The memoir was published and translated by D. Riabinin, "Sardiniia v epokhu pervoi Frantsuskoi revoliutsii," *Russkii Arkhiv*, no. 9 (1877): 65.

There is a clear sense that the observers of Suvorov understood to what end such symbolic behaviour was conducted and it is also clear that they made a lasting impression on those who witnessed them. Suvorov knew the power of his symbolic displays and he must have known that people wrote down what he said and did, and that stories about him were widely circulated, which only reinforced his commitment to eccentricity and produced more of such behaviour. Indeed, symbolic display was a mechanism of military culture that allowed the performer to criticize without being punished; it allowed for a dialogue that otherwise would not have been allowed to be uttered, to take place; it allowed for the power of the military elite to be exercised; and for values and customs of military culture to be reinforced.

Conclusion

Symbolic display was not necessarily a property of character but rather a strategy of control which was consciously exercised. Like actors changing their costumes, senior officers played different roles and used symbolic displays to maintain their influence, reassert their authority, and exercise their power over the vast and nebulous structure of the army. It was an intrinsic part of Russian military culture, especially during Catherine's reign when individualism had such high currency. It was also a mechanism that served to reaffirm many of the customs, principles, and values of military culture such as the importance of professional conduct, merit, religion, personal bravery, and many others. By staging spectacles of power, commanders observed, punished, rewarded, disciplined, promoted and otherwise reinforced military culture.

Furthermore, the close reading of symbolic displays reveals the spectacle in the army as a process, or a mechanism of power formation. Through their performances the commanders exercised their power over their soldiers and officers. There is also

evidence that symbolic behaviour corresponded to well-established tropes from early military history that Potemkin, Suvorov, and Rumiantsev have all read and internalized. The discourse that was constructed through symbolic performances by Catherine's top-ranking officers underlines a set of values and messages that they were trying to communicate and relate to a broader audience. The very nature of the eighteenth-century army meant that to enforce any kind of control and supervision, senior officers had to continuously resort to symbolic displays, re-enacting their performances, and staging new ones. Spectacles, be they for punishment or praise, had to be directed not just at the person who would be on the receiving end of the exercise of power, but at the same time at a captive audience. Witnessing this very process was vital for its success. Those gathered around became participants in the spectacle by hearing, talking, or writing about the latest show staged by their commanders.[569] Symbolic displays were performances in which the audience was very important – without the audience the display had no meaning. This explains why most of the documented episodes were performed before a large group of spectators and often at carefully chosen time and place, such as a council of war or an inspection. And the meaning of the symbolic

[569] Excerpts from letters bearing the latest news of victory from distant battlefields or witness accounts were often reprinted in newspapers and even reproduced as separate pamphlets. Heroic deeds of military commanders were, no doubt, eagerly consumed by the expanding, literate public in Russia's major cities. Contemporaries carefully collected all these materials, wrote out by hand that which they could not find in print, bounded the pages in separate volumes, and then carefully preserved such booklets in their libraries. Outside urban centers and provincial towns, where literacy levels dropped steeply, the tales of the latest victories by Russian armies and their popular commanders spread by word of mouth in market-places (*iarmarki*) and bazaars. See for example the report from 2 March 1800 about Suvorov's campaigns in Italy, RGVIA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3464 , l. 3. Generals and field-marshals, their military successes and setbacks, were the talk of the court and the country estates. Stories about their symbolic behaviour circulated along with other information. As one nineteenth-century author recalled, "while living in Kiev, during long winter evenings I had the chance to listen to stories about the past; most often the subject of conversation was the century of Catherine II and her contemporaries - Rumiantsev and Suvorov; besides oral tales, many anecdotes and stories have been recorded about them in journals and memoirs by their comrades-in-arms and contemporaries." Anon, "Nekotorye svedeniya o grafe Rumiantseve Zadunaiskom, peredannye ego sovremennikami," *Russkii Invalid,* 127 (1854), 595. See also A. N. Korsakov, "Rasskazy o bylom," *Istoricheskii Vestnik*, 15, no. 1 (1884): 133-143; and Astolphe de Custine, *Letters from Russia* (1839) (New York: New York Review Books, 2002), 5.

displays and their coded messages were clearly not lost on the audience as the memoirs of Fuks, Segur, Langeron, Engelgardt, Doudeauville, and many others testify.

Far from indulging in fashionable eccentricity, Catherine's officers were cunning, confident, and observant leaders. For example, the Austrian general William Derfelden, who knew Suvorov for thirty-five years, offered a surprisingly penetrating analysis of the latter's behaviour. "He knows that his appearances could never equal the stately bearing and eloquence of Rumiantsev; that to try to emulate the greatness and the immense projects of Potemkin, would require countless millions in gold. Trust me," continued Derfelden, "this professed foe of mirrors, seeing in them his unremarkable appearance, sketched out a plan of that role, which he now performs."[570]

It seems that the contours of Richard Wortman's argument, that ceremonies and spectacles were inherent to the power and functioning of the Russian autocracy, also hold true on the lower rungs of political hierarchy. Ceremonies and spectacles were not only essential to the power and functioning of the army but also, as Aleksandra Bekasova pointed out, the army and its commanders were crucial in the creation of symbolic scenarios of power for the regime as a whole.

[570] Fuks, *Anekdoty Kniazia Italianskogo, Grafa Suvorova Rymnikskago*, vi.

CHAPTER FIVE

"The Russians have always beaten the Prussians, why follow them now?" Russian Military Culture and Paul I

During the last years of Catherine's reign an attempt was made to organize the first academic military circle (*kruzhok*) in Russia. In December 1791 the St. Petersburg garrison witnessed the inaugural meeting of officers for the purpose of furthering military knowledge and the military sciences in Russia.[571] Implicit in its agenda was the development of new knowledge and methods to replace outdated, foreign practices.[572] While there is no further information about this *kruzhok*, it suggests that by the time Catherine died in November 1796 military public sphere was clearly emerging in Russia.

This sphere had a set of cultural and intellectual traditions and values such as merit and corporate identity; it had patronage networks that sponsored it and education that encourage specialized knowledge; it had an intricate promotion system that recognized the importance of self-worth; it had a set of texts that advocated, developed and shaped military customs, and a group of senior officers who used symbolic behaviour to reinforce them. Above all, Russian military culture, which created the public military sphere, emerged from the Catherine's reign internally regulating, with minimal interference from the sovereign. Senior commanders such as Rumiantsev and Potemkin, were allowed an unprecedented amount of freedom in almost every aspect of the business of war.

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[571] A. N. Kochetkov, "Russkaia voennaia literatura i voennaia mysl' vtoroi poloviny XVII-nachala XIX v.," in V. I. Shunkov, ed., *Voprosy voennoi istorii Rossii: XVIII i pervaia polovina XIX vekov* (Moscow: Nauka, 1969), 112.

[572] E. Baturin, *Rech pri otrkytii sobranii ofitserov inzhenernykh i artilleriiskikh, bombardirskikh, grebnogo flota, uchrezhdennykh dlia dal'neishego issledovaniia teorii, kasaiushcheisia do ikh zvaniia* (St. Petersburg, 1792).

As Catherine's son, Paul, emerged from the shadows of his estate in Gatchina to take the Russian throne, he set in motion plans that would clash with the above arrangement. Paul's commitment to a program of militarization was inspired by Prussia and his own experience as a Grand Duke. Catherine categorically prevented Paul from assuming any political role in her government.[573] What was especially frustrating, and what probably took a mental toll on Paul as a young man, was that he was educated to be an emperor but was denied even a tenuous venue to participate in military or government affairs. When it became apparent that Catherine would not relinquish her powers or share them with Paul when he reached the age of majority, the Grand Duke retreated to Gatchina where for years he diligently prepared plans for reforms. As Russian historian Aleksandr Kamenskii put it, "As a reasonably intelligent and energetic person, he fretted over his lack of involvement in affairs of state, as with the passage of the years he was forced to observe from the sidelines matters he considered his by right."[574]

While on his two trips to Potsdam and Berlin as a Grand Duke, Paul was impressed by the order and discipline which he linked to the military successes of Frederick II during the Seven Years' War, and on return to Russia he was frustrated by inconsistencies within the Russian army which he connected to inevitable military weakness. Because Paul was looking at Catherine's army from the sidelines, he could only see its outward imperfections rather than its real performance in war. He saw the army on parades and the officers in St. Petersburg. What he witnessed and heard

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[573] For Paul's relationship with his mother see Roderick E. McGrew, *Paul I of Russia, 1754-1801*(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 135-6, 163-4, 178-9, 193-5; and Madariaga, 256-7, 569-70.

[574]Aleksandr Kamenskii*, The Russian Empire in the Eighteenth Century: Searching for a Place in the World* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), 266. Contemporaries almost uniformly perpetuated a negative image of Paul, creating the myth of the mad tsar. However, the most recent biography by Roderick McGrew and even earlier works, such as by Christopher Duffy, are more balanced and threw valuable light on many positive, if failed, reforms of Paul and his reign. McGrew, 355 or Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West*, 200-207. See also Hugh Ragsdale, *Paul I: A Reassessment of His Life and Reign* (Pittsburgh: University Center for International Studies, University of Pittsburgh, 1979).

appalled him. Regiments were trained according to private instructions of their commanders which to him seemed contradictory and confusing, powerful favourites ruled over armies as if they were their own fiefdoms, regiment uniforms and equipment varied greatly, and officers seemed to have little interest in their profession. Already in 1778, Paul wrote to General Petr Panin that in the Russian army "everything goes according to individual whim, which often consists of not wanting to do anything except gratify one's unbridled passions. This is the sorry state which the armed forces have reached."[575] Denied the opportunity to take a field command or visit the front lines to see the army in wartime, Paul was blinded by the shortcomings he glimpsed from afar, and failed to see the real merit of Catherine's army in action, up close.

Naturally, after his mother's death, Paul burst onto the political, diplomatic, and military scene like a tightly wound spring with ideas for kaleidoscopic change, reform, and improvement.[576] The sad irony of Paul's reign was that he actually attempted to address the complaints, concerns, and criticisms of military writers of Catherine's army. He took to heart many of the shortcomings he witnessed as a young man and tried to align the practical reality of Russian military culture with the military ideal that had formed in his mind over the years in exile. When he became emperor, Paul saw a Prussian dose of discipline, goose-stepping, and order as an antidote to the deficiencies, inconsistencies, and laxness of the military culture that had emerged during Catherine's reign.[577] Under Paul the military was to radiate the supreme state of organization,

[575] Quoted in P. S. Lebedev "Preobrazovateli russkoi armii v tsarstvovanie imperatora Pavla Petrovicha, 1796-1801," *Russkaia starina* 8, no. 18 (1877): 577.

[576] See a recent Russian book Evgenii Iurkevich, *Voennyi Peterburg epokhi Pavla I* (Moscow: Tsentrpoligraf, 2007). The book in general follows the revisionist tradition and sympathises with Paul's attempted reforms, but does not use any significant archival material.

[577] Bruce Menning, "Paul I and Catherine II's Military Legacy," in Kagan and Higham, eds., 82.

professionalism and order; it was to be "stern, ascetic, controlled."[578]In the process of achieving his goals, Paul created major opposition to his rule.

Unlike his mother, the new emperor tried to put himself in charge of the military culture, to centralize and subordinate it to his personal vision, which resulted in changes in everything from uniforms and military manuals to the workings of merit and symbolic display, and created an ever-expanding net of persecution and exile of officers. Paul's reforms produced a powerful clash between the ideas, values, and priorities of the new emperor and his image of militarism, and the military culture that he inherited from his mother. In the process of this clash the emperor not so much destroyed the military culture of Catherine's era as reaffirmed its existence and strengthened officers' commitment to it.

Paul's Reform and Militarism

Catherine's death signalled the biggest transformation of the Russian army in more than a generation. Almost immediately there was a feeling that the winds of change were about to engulf the Russian military and its culture, as evident from the notes of one anonymous diarist.

> On November 5th 1796 at midnight (on Wednesday) Empress Catherine Alekseevna II suffered a stroke of such severity that she was left bereft of all feeling. After this she remained alive for 22 hours until 7 o'clock in the morning of November 6th, but during all this time she was rendered speechless….
>
> On November 7th, during the night, the Guard regiments took the oath of allegiance, and by the morning the rest had done so to Paul Petrvovich…The grand dukes are [sic] made colonels in the guards, Aleksandr Pavlovich of Seminovskii, Konstantin Pavlovich of Izmailovskii.

[578] McGrew, 229. See also Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West*, 200-207.

> On the 10th, the sovereign himself led the regiment of his black-booted [*chernonogikh*] soldiers and congratulated them as guardsmen. Awarded many officers the Order of St. Anna….
>
> On the 11th, [Paul] gave his black-booted [soldiers] the same ranks as the guardsmen have in their regiment. The sovereign promoted Captain Durozov, who brought the news of the affliction of the Empress, to colonel and gave him a thousand roubles.[579]

Countess Varvara Golovina, a maid-of-honour at the court of Catherine II, also wrote down a comparable first impression about the invasion of the "Ostrogoths". "The *Gatchinese*…ran about and knocked up against the courtiers who asked each in amazement who these Ostrogoths could be…. A new uniform had already been ordered, that of the battalions of the Grand Duke Paul, which became the models after which the whole army was reorganized."[580] And Prince Adam Czartoryski, a friend of the future emperor Alexander I, added that: "never was there any change of scene at theatre so sudden and so complete as the change of affairs at the accession of Paul I. In less than a day costumes, manners, occupations, all were altered…The military parade became the chief occupation of the day….Soon the little [black-booted] army made its solemn entry into St. Petersburg."[581] Finally, Charles Whitworth, the British ambassador in St. Petersburg, made a similar observation during the first day of Paul's reign. "…the Court and the town is entirely military, and we can scarcely persuade ourselves that instead of Petersburg we are not at Potsdam."[582]

In the observations of contemporaries there is a great emphasis on the cultural and physical changes in military culture. There are references to a new model or organization, to the Ostrogoths, and the appearance of a new style of soldiers clad in black boots. There is also a sense of detestation of Paul's Gatchina soldiers, with their

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[579] RGB OR, f. 178, no. 8634, anon., "1796, diary," l. 70-71. See also Volkonskii, 179.

[580] Countess Varvara Golovine, *Memoirs of Countess Golovine* (London: David Nutt, 1910), 126-7.

[581] Adam Czartoryski, *Memoirs of Prince Adam Czartoryski*, vol. i (New York: Arno Press, 1971), 140-141. Rostopchin, a close associate of Paul, naturally left a more sympathetic account about the first days of his master's reign. *Arkhiv Kniazia Vorontsova*, vol. 8, p. 158-174.

[582] Cited in McGrew, 208.

symbolic boots that smacked of goose-stepping Prussians. These black-booted men overnight ascended to the same level of traditional importance and prestige as the century-old Guard regiments, which for all intents and purposes they absorbed and replaced. Since to Paul the Guards represented the laxness and laziness of his mother's military, his plan was to eliminate them altogether since they became ceremonial troops with no military purpose.[583] Unsurprisingly, a month after Paul's accession "half the officers in the guards [had] already voluntarily resigned," wrote the Habsburg ambassador to St. Petersburg, Ludwig von Cobenzl.[584] The whole affair was reminiscent of Peter the Great a hundred years earlier when he replaced the corrupt *streltsy* with his new, Western-style regiments. Just like with Peter, the changes Paul was implementing had a very practical meaning for the Russian military. As Bruce Menning pointed out, "Evidently he hoped to create a privileged group of foreigners whose presence would both encourage military change and serve as a useful counterweight to a potentially hostile Russian nobility."[585]

The consensus of the more recent scholarship is that Paul tried to achieve some very real improvement in the Russian military. Whatever his emotional shortcomings, he compensated for them with hard work. During the first year alone he issued 48,000 laws, orders, and decrees.[586] The military received the particular focus of the emperor's attention. Over 40% of all of his edicts during the first year of rule, for example, dealt with military subjects.[587] Almost no item military legislation was left unchanged. Paul made every effort to abolish privileges and special favors enjoyed by officers and undermine patronage networks, which were all prevalent during Catherine's years. Paul

[583] Ibid., 209-210.
[584] Cited in Ibid., 212.
[585] Menning Bruce Menning, "Paul I and Catherine II's Military Legacy," in Kagan and Higham, eds., 80. See also Lebedev, 227-260 and 577-608.
[586] For Paul's daily routine see A. M. Peskov, *Pavel I* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1999), 71-2. Longworth has a rather negative assessment of Paul's reforms, Longworth, 223-4.
[587] McGrew, 228.

wanted officers "to make their military duties their primary concern", and he wanted officers to wear their uniforms at all times. Paul also cancelled the indefinite leaves that were so popular with young nobles, as can be seen from the memoirs of Catherine's officers. Now officers had a choice of either spending their time with the regiment or leaving the military altogether. One week a month of service à laVolkonskii was no longer tolerated. Furthermore, nobles could no longer enroll their sons into the Guard regiments at a young age for the benefit of gaining rank without performing military service. What Catherine could not achieve during her long reign, Paul managed to stamp out in a few years through brutal coercion. The number of aides-de-camp was also limited to one per General (Catherine's lover Count Zubov alone had over 200), and junior officers had to be used solely for military-related tasks. Finally, Paul tried to reform methods of provisioning that cut into the illegal incomes of many officers and went some way to ensure that the soldiers received the food and equipment allotted to them.[588]

If the above changes greatly aggrieved the officers, the ordinary soldiers were equally upset about the introduction of new uniforms that were universally hated: they were tight, unpractical, and bulky. The old uniform reflected the historical roots of the army that could be traced to the times of Peter the Great, and thus was an important part of military culture.[589] Despite minute regimental variations introduced by individual colonels, the uniform designed during Catherine's reign by commanders such as Potemkin gave soldiers a sense of identity and pride. A new system of renaming regiments became yet another factor that distinguished Paul's reign from his mother's

[588] Ibid., 229.

[589] See also Daniel Roche, *The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the "Ancien Régime"*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), especially the chapter "The Discipline of Appearances: The Prestige of Uniform", 221-56.

and further confused the often illiterate rank-and-file.[590] No longer were regiments named after geographical regions, such as Izmailov, or Suzdal, but instead they bore the names of their commanding officers. Renaming regiments and changing uniforms swept away the history, heritage, prestige, and sense of belonging that were affiliated with the old names.

At the same time in his 1796 regulations, the emperor wrote, echoing many of the military writers of Catherine's time, that "The soldier must always be regarded as a human being, for almost anything can be attained through friendly dealings. Soldiers will do more for an officer who treats them well, and receives their trust, then for one who they merely fear."[591] To make sure his orders were implemented Paul instituted inspectors for cavalry, artillery, and infantry. They were drawn from the black-booted Gatchinese and were regarded as spies by other Russian troops.[592] The decentralized military culture of Catherine's Russia was being suddenly replaced by centralized militarism.

There was a sense that the previous culture of rank and merit was also being altered. Volkonskii mentioned the renaming of the ranks in the Guard regiments (*pereimenovaniem voobshche vsekh chinov*) and Princess Dashkova recorded in her memoirs an instance when a young colonel told her that after Paul became emperor, "Soldier, general, and colonel are now all equals…and in the current times it is useless to pride oneself on one's rank."[593] This may have had something to do with the sudden explosion in the number of generals during Paul's reign. With that being said, the

[590] As Semen Vorontsov related, when he went to see some of the Russian wounded soldiers and asked what regiment they belonged to, the men could not answer him. They explained that emperor has given their regiment over to a German general, a reference to the fact that regiments bore their commander's names under the new system. *Arkhiv Kniazia Vorontsova*, vol. 10, p. 470.

[591] Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West*, 207.

[592] McGrew, 227. See also Bruce Menning, "Chapter 5: Paul I and Catherine II's military legacy, 1762-1801," in Kagan, and Higham, 78-86.

[593] Dashkova, 270; Volkonskii, 180.

proportions within the pyramid of high-ranking officers remained almost unchanged after Catherine's death.

Table 2: Breakdown of General Officer by rank[594]

	1799	
Rank	**#**	**%**
Generalissimus	1	0.2%
Field Marshals	4	0.9%
Generals	33	7.9%
Lieutenant-Generals	92	22%
Major-Generals	284	68%
Brigadiers	2	0.4%
Total	416	100%

Just like during the long reign of Catherine, the proportions reminded relatively stable. Field marshals constituted about one percent of the officers, while lieutenant-generals and major-general dominated the senior office corps.

The emperor also tried to change the system of the great military orders. For example, the Order of St. George, the most prestigious award that was established by Catherine, would have been abolished if not for the timely intervention of Paul's close associates. The Order of St. Vladimir, however, was abolished and restored only after Paul's death.[595]

Paul's attack on Catherine's military culture was thorough and complete. Laws, traditions, orders and awards, uniforms, regiment names and manuals were all changed. As McGrew summed it up, Paul succeeded in bringing the army under his personal control, in checking the tyranny of senior officers and colonels, but replaced it by a new brand of tyranny of his own. Similarly his improvement of soldiers' lot was balanced out by incessant drilling.[596] Paul came close to accomplishing his agenda but he paid a heavy price in cultural capital: the military was overwhelmed with reprimands, threats, exile and surveillance.

[594] *Spisok Generalov po Starshenstu* (St. Petersburg, 1799).
[595] McGrew, 238.
[596] Ibid., 231.

Reprimands and Exiles

On the way to his objectives Paul simultaneously departed from the traditions of Catherine's military culture and at the same time continued some of its practices. Unlike his mother, Paul inserted himself at the top of military culture, yet he did so by following in the foot-steps of her military pantheon. Paul used drills and parades to stage his own symbolic displays to introduce and reinforce ideas about the military culture he was creating. As Richard Wortman has suggested, Paul's scenario of power was conquest - of society, politics, and the army - and the parade was key to Paul's self-realization as a conquering monarch: "During Paul's reign, the parade began to take on new meanings. It became a demonstration of the strength of the established order and an imperial ceremony in its own right….At each morning's *Wachtparade*, he received reports and announced favors and punishments."[597] Wortman does not provide any examples of the reports to demonstrate this claim, but I have discovered notebooks where Paul's daily orders during his morning inspections were written down by an adjutant. The material shows that Paul consciously injected himself into the military culture during his *Wachtparades*. Descending to the parade ground from the throne Paul wanted to be in the midst of soldiers and officers, just like Suvorov before him.

Paul's petty outbursts of displeasure were the consequence of an inability to suppress his obsessive commitment to his version of military culture, and his intellectual failure to recognize the need for a compromise with reality. A sample from the notebooks from the year 1799 reveals the scope of his attempt to weed out incompetence, sloth, and ignorance from Russian military culture and instil the professionalism that so many military writers of Catherine's era had called for:

[597] Wortman, vol. I, 182.

"3 January, Expel from the military Engineering Corps. Lieutenant Gorbunov for drunken behaviour and indifference to service";[598] "6 January, Expel from the military Count Elblit Musketeer Regiment's Junior-Lieutenant Sepanov for indecent behaviour";[599] "15 January, His Imperial Majesty recommends to the gentlemen officers not to be late for the inspection and always to arrive at half past eight";[600] "29 January, His Majesty makes a reprimand to Junior-Lieutenant Savel'ev because he took a vacation and came back from it, without going to see Major-General Nedobroi and Colonel Sukin, and recommends that he become better acquainted with the customs of military service";[601] "4 February, His Majesty makes a reprimand to adjutant Agapchevskii for his unbecoming behaviour and recommends that in the future he not bring himself to such reminders";[602] "9 February, for pretending to be severely ill and for laziness in service, Lieutenant Ardabdev of the Zigodev Garrison Regiment is expelled from it";[603] "12 February, Lieutenant Vasilevskii of Major-General Lamzdorf Jager Regiment, for a false report about his superiors, is expelled from military service";[604] "13 February, Benkendorf Grenadier Regiment's Ensign Levershen, is temporarily barred from service for his failure to appear at the regiment";[605] "19 February, His Imperial Majesty recommends to Lieutenant Alsuf'ev, Junior-Lieutenant Malyshev and Ensign Roslavlev of Izmailov Leib Guard Regiment, to not disgrace themselves [*ne opuskat'sia*] and show more diligence";[606]"20 February, His Majesty reprimands the gentlemen-officers who were late for the exercise, and recommends that the gentlemen-battalion commanders pay strict attention to this, and report daily to him about the late ones, who will be arrested. Junior-Lieutenant Kinin and Ensign Nekliudov are taken under arrest as an example for others";[607]"21 February, His Majesty recommends to Lieutenant Tolstoi to be tidier in appearance";[608] "27 February, Leib-Guards Grenadier Regiment is reprimanded for brawling and unbecoming behaviour (the junior-lieutenant of the above regiment is to be court-marshaled, and the regiment's colonel put under arrest)";[609] "3 March, His Majesty reprimands Ensign Ganetskoi for being at fault while on guard duty [*v karaule, byl ochen' ne ispraven*]";[610] "4 March, His Majesty reprimands Preobrazhenskii Regiment Major-General Fedorov's battalion about today's exercises and recommends staff-and-ober officers not to be lazy. Otherwise they will be sent to army regiments";[611] "5 March, His Imperial Majesty reprimands Preobrazhenskii Regiment…and recommends

[598] RGB, OR, f. 95, k. 7, d. 1, I. N. Durnovo, 1799, l. 6. no. 4.
[599] Ibid,. l. 9ob., no 2.
[600] Ibid,. l. 27ob., no. 5.
[601] Ibid,. l. 56, no. 10.
[602] Ibid,. l. 68ob., no. 6.
[603] Ibid,. l. 78ob., no. 6.
[604] Ibid,. l. 84ob, no. 4.
[605] Ibid,. l. 87ob, no. 8.
[606] Ibid,. l. 98ob, no. 8.
[607] Ibid,. l. 100ob., no. 7.
[608] Ibid,. l. 103ob, no. 9.
[609] Ibid,. l. 115, no. 4.
[610] Ibid,. l. 124, no. 10.
[611] Ibid,. l. 125ob, no. 5.

> not to let its standards slide. Lieutenant Iakhotov and Count Tolstoi 3rd of the same regiment are transferred to the Viaz'mitinov Garrison Regiment";[612] "His Imperial Majesty makes a reprimand to gentlemen-officers because they once again begin to be late for the exercises [*k razvodu*] and recommends to everyone to arrive at their posts in such a way so as not to bring upon themselves the shame that befell today the Preobrazhenskiis'";[613] "10 March, …Ensign-Captain Shenshin is put on guard duty for 4 hours for holding the spear next to the standards by its edge";[614] "15 March, His Majesty recommends that gentlemen-officers take off their hats more lively and in a more straight-forward manner when they are standing at the front"; "22 March, Lieutenant Petrov and Junior-Lieutenant Mland are arrested for not keeping their rows in order and for being late in saluting his Majesty with their rifles";[615] "21 April, His Imperial Majesty recommends gentlemen-company commanders to be more vigilant over their men";[616] "22 April, His Majesty recommends to gentlemen-officers to dress better and not to stutter."[617]

It were not only soldiers and low-ranking officers who earned reprimands and were expelled from service:

> "7 January, His Imperial Majesty reprimands General of the Cavalry von der Phalen and Lieutenant-General Prince Golitsyn for faults in Guard Cavalry";[618] "24 January, Engineer Lieutenant-General Churnasov and Ogovsk's commandant Major-General Demidov, for lack of diligence in service and for not evacuating from the run-down barracks that collapsed on volunteers along with the guards who were there with them, are expelled from the military";[619] "12 February, for an obscene act Adjutant-General Prince Golitsyn is expelled from service";[620] "28 February, Leib-Guard Cavalry Regiment's Colonel Raevskii, for laziness and indifference to service, is expelled from it";[621] "2 March, Major-General von Kluge, due to received complaints about impermissible behaviour of stealing supplies is expelled from service";[622] "7 March, Stavropol'sk commandant Major-General Knyshev, for asking for retirement at an inappropriate time, is expelled from service";[623] "8 March, His Majesty makes a reprimand to Prince Shcherbatov for not correcting his mistakes";[624] "21 March, Lieutenant-General Shits is reprimanded for not knowing military service

[612] Ibid,. l. 127, no. 2.
[613] Ibid,. l. 127-127ob, no. 4.
[614] Ibid,. l. 136ob., no. 6.
[615] Ibid,. l. 161ob, no. 13.
[616] Ibid,. l. 221ob., no. 4
[617] Ibid,. l. 224, no. 10.
[618] Ibid,. l. 11ob., no. 12.
[619] Ibid,. l. 45, no. 3.
[620] Ibid,. l. 84ob, no. 5.
[621] Ibid,. l. 117ob., no. 8.
[622] Ibid,. l. 121ob, no. 12.
[623] Ibid,. l. 131ob, no. 6.
[624] Ibid,. l. 134, no. 19.

> and the numbers of the squadrons";[625] "22 March, Major-General and chief of the Jager regiment Baron Gil'delshold has been reprimanded because the officers of his regiment carried sabres";[626] "11 April, a reprimand is made to the Colonel Rakhmanov of the Leib-Guard Preobrazhenskii regiment for not knowing customs of military service";[627] "24 August, the chief of the dragoon regiment Major-General DeUviz' is expelled from service for not knowing the customs of military service."[628]

The above examples cover a period of a little over eight months of Paul's four-year reign. There were praise, awards, and words of encouragement to be sure, but the Sword of Damocles hung over everyone without exception: princes, general, members of the Guard Regiments - none were above a reprimand, humiliation, or even expulsion from the military. The notes show an autocrat grappling with the imperfections that he saw in the legacy of Catherine's military culture and illustrate how he tried to correct them.

In addition to the theatrical and symbolic purposes ascribed to them by Richard Wortman, these actions also demonstrate a desperate and very real attempt to improve military service. As John Keep has reminded us, historians sometimes overlook the importance of parades and drills that developed skills that were essential to armies in the pre-industrial era. Large bodies of mostly illiterate men had to be manoeuvred by complicated signals before they could be brought into battle. Officers had to learn these signals, while soldiers had to practise executing them. Finally, in Keep's opinion, a "sovereign, whether he appeared on the battlefield or not, needed to know the drill-book, or else he would be a mere plaything of his generals."[629] Catherine, of course, was not a "plaything" of any of her generals, instead she chose to delegate military matters to Potemkin, to the War College, and to the State Council.[630] I could not find any record of Catherine's personal involvement in day-to-day life of the military beyond the

[625] Ibid,. l. 159ob., no. 6.
[626] Ibid,. l. 161, no. 8.
[627] Ibid,. l. 201, no. 2.
[628] RGB, OR, f. 95, no. 9467, I. N. Durnovo, "Prikazy po leib-gvardeiskim polkam, 1799," l. 120.
[629] Keep, "The Military Style of the Romanov Rulers," 62.
[630] See, Fuller, 140-141 and Madariaga, 206.

correspondence she had with her top military commanders. She was well informed but let others read the drill-books.

Her son, on the other hand, fit Keep's description well. During long mornings, the emperor transferred nobles from the ceremonial guard regiments to obscure army regiments and garrisons; he encouraged soldiers to dress according to their station, very much like Suvorov and Rumiantsev before him; just like Rzhevskii, Meiendorf, and other military writers Paul admonished the officer for not knowing the customs of military service; he punished for theft, brawling, and other acts of unbecoming behaviour regardless of military rank or noble status. Paul wanted to westernize the Russian army, to centralize and streamline its decision making, to serialize and standardize its uniforms and equipment; he wanted officers to be familiar with military regulations that demanded professional behaviour.

It appears that many of Paul's ambitions were aligned with the ideas of military culture of Catherine's reign. What Paul had in common with many writers and reformers, even with the unorthodox and outspoken Suvorov, was the goal to perpetuate a military professionalism that could serve as sword and shield of the growing empire. The point of contention was that Paul and the officers of Catherine's military culture went about pursuing this goal in very different ways. While Catherine's reformers carved out an independent cultural and intellectual sphere for military culture to develop, Paul, above all, wanted to exorcise the spirit of its independence and subordinate every one of its aspects to the personal control of the ruler. The Russian military culture as it had developed during Catherine's reign, used to so much cultural, political, and intellectual autonomy, was suffocating under the new emperor. By trying to bring Russian military culture to the idealized form, to fit it into a straightjacket, Paul was actually destroying it; what he saw as an attempt at improvement others interpreted

as an attack. It is little wonder that the opposition to Paul walked the streets in uniforms.[631] In the process he not only succeeded in making the ideal the enemy of tradition, but the way in which he went about enforcing his ideal was one of the most powerful catalysts behind his downfall.

Paul wanted to be the final arbiter of military culture and for that it was necessary to destroy the individual influence of its members. One of the ways to do it was through expulsion, exile, and surveillance. Officers of Catherine's reign embodied the military culture of that era in the flesh, and perpetuated and defended its values and its vices. Less than a week after being crowned emperor the attack on the Catherine's military establishment and its culture began. Almost immediately officers came under scrutiny and pressure. The first victim of the emperor's displeasure with the military was Lieutenant-General Mikhail Izmailov who, on 22 November 1796, was forbidden to be in either Moscow or St. Petersburg while Paul was there.[632] On the same day colonel Aleksandr Elagin was "forever" incarcerated in the Peter and Paul Fortress for his "daring conversations."[633]A month later Colonel Aleksei Kopiev was sent there as well, for two and a half years, for getting into a fight with a drunken Major Prince Dolgorukov. When the investigation determined that the prince was at fault, the Kopiev was set free and Dolgorukov was put into the Keksgolm fortress on a diet of bread and water, and his fate was given into the hands of a local civil court.[634] On 13 December Paul ordered the exile of Unter-Officer, Ivan Zass, from the politically untouchable Seminovskii Guards Regiment for writing "daring letters (*derznovennykh pisem*)".[635]

[631] The phrase was originally applied to the reign of Paul's father, Peter III, but holds equally true for Paul's reign as well. Hartley, 63.
[632] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 2906, l. 1-3.
[633] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 2915, l. 1ob. What the conversations were the report did not mention.
[634] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 2909, l. 1, 80, 94.
[635] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 2907, l. 1-2. The file does not describe the contents of the letters written by Zass.

The next year, in 1797, the future hero of the Napoleonic wars, and an officer close to Suvorov, Major-General Matvei Platov was exiled to Kostroma, where he remained under surveillance for two years. Eventually Paul allowed him to return to St. Petersburg and charges against him were dropped, but he came back a broken man.[636] General Passen was another exile, sent to one of his villages where in October 1797 local authorities were instructed to have a secret surveillance of his life.[637] Reports about Passen were similar to reports about other exiled officers. He led a quiet, secluded life, only seldom interrupted by visits from family or close friends, and his actions did not betray any suspicious or anti-government activity.[638]

By January 1798 Lieutenant-Colonel Dombrovskii was expelled from a hussar regiment and put under surveillance with his correspondence monitored.[639] On 23 August Lieutenant-General Maslov was exiled to his village of Shekhotov, and was kept under surveillance by the local authorities.[640] In December, Lieutenant-Colonel Aleksei Ermolov, another future hero of Napoleonic Wars, the conqueror of Caucasus, and the founder of Groznyi, came under the search-light of Paul's suspicions. In 1797 the young Ermolov wrote a letter to his brother, full of "daring expression (*derznovennymi vyrazheniiami*)" which had been subsequently discovered. Even though the investigators found only one such letter, and even though it was unrelated to Ermolov's service, Paul

[636] See for example the sympathetic description of Platov's mental and physical state by the local governor RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3068, l. 15, or Platov's own letter to Prince Petr Lopukhin, the Procurator General, de-facto prime minister, and the head of the Secret Expedition, l. 18.

[637] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3074, l. 2.

[638] For example, RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3074, l. 3, l. 21, l. 31, l. 54. Passen was eventually put under house arrest, and that was lifted only after Paul's death in the spring of 1801. l. 67. The brother of his wife, Colonel Petr Volchkov, was also expelled from military service and deprived of his noble status (*lishennogo dvorianstva*). He was exiled and his behaviour and actions were monitored. RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3456, l. 1.

[639] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3242, l. 1.

[640] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 2047, l. 43.

still ordered to send Ermolov to Kostroma and demanded from the local governor to "establish close surveillance of his behaviour."[641]

The new year brought more exile and surveillance. In January 1799 Lieutenant-Colonel Sukhotin was exiled to his villages and put under surveillance for "his crimes known to His Majesty."[642] In February Captain Stelevskii was expelled from service and exiled to the city of Glukhov where he was under surveillance.[643] In October Lieutenant-Colonel Bol'vil'ere was exiled to Tobolsk. As usual surveillance reports showed there was nothing to report in particular: exiles' behaviour was polite, and their favourite past time was often reading books.[644] Vice-Admiral Litt was another prominent exile, who was sent to his villages along with by now familiar order to monitor his behaviour and report about his visitors.[645] The same year General Golitsyn was expelled from the military. His son soon followed him, due to the latter's indecent actions ("*nepresotinye postupki*").[646] A secret surveillance of Lieutenant-General Zorich, an old favourite of Catherine the Great, the founder of a military school where many of her officers received their education was also conducted. Paul heard that in the town where Zorich was residing there gathered many retired and expelled officers, which naturally raised the eyebrows of the emperor. A trusted servant of the Secret Expedition, the eighteenth century precursor to the Russian secret police, was instructed to find out how many officers lived there and who they were. He diligently compiled a register that included 4 fired generals, 14 discharged officers, and 10 more officers without ranks, along with medical and education staff.[647] The same year Pavel Chichagov, the son of the famous

[641] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3246, l. 10-12. Also RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3246, l. 1.
[642] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3250, l. 1. The report does not reveal what Sukhotin's crime was.
[643] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3245, l. 1. Like others he led a quiet life and there was no malicious intend observed in his behaviour. l. 2-4.
[644] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3354, l. 3 and 5.
[645] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3345, l. 1-1ob.
[646] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3345, l. 24. What these indecent actions were the report does not say.
[647] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3347, l. 1-4.

Catherinian Admiral, Vasilii Chichagov, was interred in the St. Peter and Paul fortress, on false suspicion of wanting to join the British navy and for violent protestation during his interview on this matter with the Emperor.[648]

In the year 1800 the ranks of exiled officers continued to swell. Retired Colonel Petr Chaplits was exiled to his Belarusian villages and surveillance over him was established, as was the norm by this time.[649] Infantry generals Ivan and Nikolai Arkharovs were also put under surveillance.[650] And by the end of the year Major Count Benzel' was exiled to Orenburg and his correspondence was monitored.[651] Those officers who did not follow Paul's instructions or took pity on or sympathized with exiles, prisoners, or the expelled, were themselves subjects of persecution. For example, Major-General Markolovskii, the commandant of the Narva fortress, was court-martialed for allowing one of his charges, Baron Kreist, to receive correspondence.[652]

All of this is to say that dissent, challenges to the new military order, or unprofessional behaviour were immediately suppressed. The above examples represent only a fraction of over two thousand officers who suffered some form of repression during Paul's short reign. By 1799 forty-four general officers had resigned, retired, or were expelled, or about 11% of the senior general staff. By 1801 Paul had purged more than 20% of the officer corps.[653] Naturally, the purges have to be seen against the background of the French Revolution. Many officers of foreign extraction in Russian service, especially if they were French, were discharged, sent to obscure towns and

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[648] Pavel was eventually let go due to personal interference by Count von der Phalen, one of Paul's favourites. RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3398, l. 8.

[649] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3471, l. 1-2.

[650] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3550, l. 1.

[651] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3585, 1.2. Again, there is no information about what he did to earn Paul's displeasure.

[652] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3546, l. 1. Also see RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3471, l. 4-5. The governor who passed on Chaplets' letter to the tsar, out of sympathy, was himself dismissed.

[653] Bryan Tyler, 42. John Keep puts the figures of the purge of Paul's reign at 340 generals and 2,261 officers. John Keep, "The Russian Army's Response to the French Revolution," *Jahrbucher fur Geschichte Osteuropas*, 28, no. 4 (1980): 506.

villages, put under local surveillance, and their correspondence was monitored.[654] However, the majority of officers were Russian nobles whose behaviour offended not so much Paul's political sensibilities as his military priorities. As John Keep put it, "Paul's suspicions were from the start directed against the protégés of Potemkin, Rumiantsev, Suvorov, and Zubov, whom he held responsible – not entirely without foundation – for the "slackness" he detected in the army," which his parades, military regulations, and mass reprimands and exiles were designed to fix.[655] Officers' offences included very real acts of indecent behaviour, drunkenness, and discussing Paul's reforms, often in negative terms. Through exile Paul wanted to remove the trouble-makers and professionalize the officer corps, to purify it, and to mold it according to his own image of military culture. The systematic exile also worked to break apart networks, to compartmentalize officers in watertight, far-away places, to dissolve the filaments of military culture, and to avoid possible concentration of resistance to change.

In addition to other aspects of military culture that came under attack, one of its most vibrant features which gave so much rich texture to Catherine's army – the military manuals – was withering under Paul. Any spontaneous intellectual initiative from the bottom was discouraged, in an attempt to standardize and distil some sort of a unified doctrine that had to accommodate the army as a whole, at all levels. Naturally, in such an environment, home-cooked military texts were unwelcome. They were seen as challenges to the central authority rather than helpful additions to government regulations, as Rumiantsev's *Customs of Military Service* had been regarded under Catherine, for example. During Paul's reign private manuals, such as Suvorov's *Suzdal*

[654] For example, Colonel Dibich who had family and relatives in France. While living in exile he wanted to visit them because he feared for their safety. His request was denied. However, he was discharged with full pension, for which he was grateful to Paul. Another exile, Major Shtakelberg lived near by, and wanted to go to Moscow to get married. His request was also denied. RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3355, 1.1-7.

[655] Keep, "The Russian Army's Response to the French Revolution," 506.

Regulations were banned. To create a new culture the legacy of the previous culture had to be eviscerated; to create a new culture, old texts – the bearers of traditions and values – had to be replaced.[656]

Suvorov was personally insulted by the sea of changes. The old field marshal had expressed his confusion and frustration at Paul's introduction of Prussian-style military reforms, which he interpreted as an attack on the Russian military culture instead of an attempt to improve the Russian military. In a note he wrote in 1797 Suvorov was especially vehement about the use of Paul's book, *Experience in the Field of Military Art* (*Opyt Polevogo Voennogo Isskustva*), as a manual for the whole army:

> A captain from the Prussian service in Pavlovsk (I now recall) demonstrated Prussian exercises that I had not seen, or even heard about. Thus in 20 odd years there has emerged "experience of military art" and, apparently, with it a hare will defeat Alexander.
>
> Merit is no longer necessary, neither is experience, and so, field marshals are equal with junior generals.
>
> Advantage is out the window here, completely absent…The commander enjoys privileges from the tsar; it is insufferable! I will be six feet under before I do that.
>
> What experience from military art terms *point de vue*, in Russian is called an objective. The Russians have always beaten the Prussians, why follow them now?[657]

Suvorov's note yields an array of masked but subtle messages. It expressed many of the intellectual and cultural anxieties and insecurities of late eighteenth-century Russian military. Suvorov showed contempt for the intrusion of foreign culture into Russia, and wrote out *point de vue* in Cyrillic to underline the alien nature of the French language. Why use foreign terms if there are words for them in the native tongue? He felt offended by favouritism, implying the development of values of professionalism and meritocracy

[656] For the broader censorship context see Gary Marker, *Publishing, Printing, and the Origins of Intellectual Life in Russia, 1700-1800* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985).

[657] "Suvorov's note about the introduction of Prussian tactics into the Russian army, 3 January 1797," in Meshcheriakov, vol. III, 570. Suvorov wrote many letters complaining about new military customs that were being introduced into Russian military culture by Paul. See for example "Suvorov to Khvostov, 29 December 1796," Ibid., 566, "Suvorov's note about new Prussian-style military practice introduced by Paul I and about the necessity to retire, 5 January 1797," Ibid., 571 among many others.

in the Russian army were being weakened. By mentioning Paul's new military manual, which was derived almost entirely from a 1767 Russian text mimicking Prussian military regulations, Suvorov mocked the attempt by Paul to graft western ideas and methods onto the Russian army.[658] With the reference to Alexander the Great he contrasted the brainless hare with the wisdom of the ancient Greeks. He sarcastically noted that now to become a military genius, all one had to do was read Paul's manual. Suvorov did not capitalize the title of the manual but treated it with an ironic twist, putting its name in quotations. Finally, by referencing Prussia with a distinct streak of national disdain, he reflected how Russia had developed an autochthonous military culture. The old field marshal concluded that according to the recent "experience from military art", implying the recent successes against the Prussians, Turks, Poles, and Swedes in the last "20-odd years", Russia had no need for unconditional advice from the West or changes to its military instructions.

Paul's curbing of manual writing and the introduction of Prussian texts was part of a much larger project to modernize the Russian army. The problem was that Paul attempted to achieve this goal by borrowing from the West, in the same way his great-grandfather, Peter the Great, had done a hundred years earlier. Paul was a prussophile and a great admirer of Frederick II, and consequently introduced regulations that were authored by Frederick himself. Paul then personally made notes to adapt them to Russian military conditions.[659] Whatever Paul's good intentions, this infusion of Prussianism into Russian military culture had an adverse effect. The manuals were half-a-century old, and what caused even more dismay, they came from a foreign country, an

[658] In 1794 Paul produced a military book called *Experience in the Field of Military Art* which was used as a manual for his Gatchina troops. This book was derived almost entirely *Tactics or Discipline according to new Prussian Regulations* which was first published in Russia in 1767. When Paul came to power he re-published this book as a regulation for the whole Russian army. Ibid., 570 fn.

[659] McGrew, 228-229. Paul's regulations were still in use in 1808, well into the Napoleonic Wars. Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West,* 205.

old foe whom the Russians had bested on the bloody battlefields of the Seven Years' War. The Russia of Paul's years was no longer the Russia of Peter the Great, when borrowing from the West was often the only path to military success. By the end of the eighteenth century there had emerged an incipient corpus of military literature that could have been used for Paul's purposes. To borrow from abroad was humiliating for the Russian military, especially after the continuous victories of Catherine's reign. Paul underestimated, or perhaps lacked the tact to accommodate, the national consciousness and the intellectual initiative in the military community that had begun to emerge by the time he came to power. Replacing military manuals from Catherine's era had been an important step in creating a new military culture. Once that step had been accomplished, Paul then turned to the generation of people who were the products of that culture and who were the carriers of old traditions and ideas.

Paul and Suvorov

There are several cases that bring the tension between Catherinian military culture and Paul's militarism to the fore. By 1796 the old stalwarts of Catherine's army, Potemkin and Rumiantsev, were dead and only Suvorov remained. At first Paul tried to win the old warrior over, and tried to recruit him to his cause. On 15 December 1796 Paul send a short conciliatory letter to the field marshal, calling him an old friend and addressing him with the familiar "*ty*". "Comencons denouveau [sic. Let us begin afresh]," wrote the emperor. "Dwell on the past and you'll lose an eye, though, others had only one eye to begin with. Happy New Year and I invite you to come to Moscow for the coronation, if you can. Take care and do not forget old friends." Only at the very bottom of the letter

was there an ominous line: "Please bring yours into my customs."[660] Suvorov had to implement Paul's reforms in his armies without delay.

Suvorov made his objections to Paul's reforms clear in his notes and in letters to friends, but if written language got him nowhere, Suvorov was prepared to use symbolic display. And he soon got the opportunity to do just that. Paul eventually invited Suvorov to one of his parades as a guest of honour. It was another attempt to win the old hero to his side and to show Suvorov his vision for the Russian military culture. The parade, with its massive audience, was too tempting an opportunity to miss. Using symbolic behaviour that was so prevalent in Catherine's military culture, Suvorov offered his critique of the new rules, uniforms, and equipment, even in the presence of the emperor.[661] When on the parade ground, Suvorov appeared to get confused about his hat, first trying to adjust it with one hand, then with both, and finally dropping it on the ground, to the great consternation of Paul. While the columns marched past, Suvorov jumped up and ran amongst them. Clearly, Suvorov was trying to introduce chaos into the well-ordered machine that Paul wanted to create out of the Russian army. All this behaviour was accompanied by incomprehensible muttering and facial expressions that changed from extreme surprise to deep perplexity. When getting into the carriage he wedged his sword into the door, preventing him from getting in. He opened the door on the other side, but to no avail – apparently it was too difficult to move around with the new swords. All these symbolic displays were carefully watched by the emperor, his court, the officers, and thousands of soldiers. If Paul could ignore Suvorov's notes, he was a prisoner of his spectacles. Paul angrily demanded an explanation of this behaviour

[660] "Paul to Suvorov, 15 December 1796," in Meshcheriakov, vol. III, 563. The reference to people with one eye was made with regards to Potemkin, who only had one eye, and for whom Paul reserved a special loathing.

[661] Aleksandr Petrushevskii, *Generalisimus Suvorov*, vol. II (St. Petersburg, 1884), 390.

from his entourage, but either no one knew what Suvorov was doing or dared not to tell the emperor.[662]

As Longworth summed it up, realizing that Paul wanted to win him over, "Suvorov knew he could afford to behave like this to make his point."[663] He used his performance to open a dialogue, but for one reason or another Paul refused to engage him. It is possible, though doubtful, that the sovereign did not understand what Suvorov was signaling.[664] After all Paul was an accomplished symbolist himself, reaffirming and entrenching his vision of military culture every morning, half past eight. Most likely Paul knew what Suvorov wanted – more power for himself at the expense of the tsar – but it was not something Paul was prepared to give him. Suvorov wanted the privileges he enjoyed under Catherine restored, specifically to promote, demote, and decorate officers. Paul thought such prerogatives belonged to the sovereign rather than his field marshals.[665] Catherine's military culture was clearly being challenged and reformed. Furthermore, the message that Paul was communicating to the military at the *Wachtparades* clashed with the messages Suvorov was trying to convey with his performance. Paul was creating a new culture whereas was Suvorov was trying to take it apart.

The old field marshal soon felt the full pressure of the reforms. Suvorov had to disband his staff and send them off to different regiments. He no longer could use adjutants for personal matters, such as delivering letters – adjutants had to attend to military business only, and not to the errands of their commanders. Finally, Suvorov was warned that he could no longer give his officers leaves-of-absence, as the whole process

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[662] Paul did not like any deviations from prescribed behaviour which made him uncomfortable. Iurkevich, 181.

[663] Longworth, 232.

[664] Paul should have understood symbolic displays very well. As McGrew wrote, "Paul believed in the efficacy of symbols," McGrew, 233.

[665] Petrushevskii, vol. II, 389. Also see Lanzheron, "Russkaia armia v god smerti Ekatiriny II," *Russkaia Starina,* 83, no. 5 (1895): 186.

was now reviewed by the emperor himself.[666] Fed up with this government intrusion into what he felt was his personal sphere of competence, the field marshal wrote a daring note to Paul, saying that since there was no war, there was nothing for him to do in the army, for which he was promptly dismissed in February 1797.[667]

Soon after, he was sent to one of his estates in the village of Borovichi, where he was kept effectively under house arrest.[668] Suvorov's file in the papers of the Secret Expedition contains some 150 pages of surveillance reports, including a unique instruction on how to conduct clandestine surveillance.[669] Suvorov knew he was being watched: he was forbidden to see visitors, he could not leave his village, and his mail was monitored. In September 1797 he was finally breaking down, and wrote to Paul, pleading: "Today Collegiate Counselor Nikolev has arrived. Great Monarch! Have mercy: take pity on the old man, forgive me, if I have done something wrong."[670] Paul made no reply. Suvorov, the most powerful field marshal in the Russian army, who had held so much sway over military affairs, who was until recently the thunder of the Russian armies and the scourge of the Turks and the Poles, had been humbled into submission. Paul made an example out of Suvorov for everyone else in the military. It was not only the field marshal himself who was exiled, but the military tradition, ideas, and practices he stood for. The message was clear – any officer who still subscribed to old traditions would follow Suvorov's fate.

[666] "Paul to Suvorov, 2 January 1797," Meshcheriakov, ed., vol. III, 569; "Rostopchin to Suvorov, 14 January 1797," Meshcheriakov, vol. II, 577; "Paul to Suvorov, 23 January 1797," Meshcheriakov, vol. II, 580.

[667] Suvorov's service record, in Meshcheriakov, vol. I, 22.

[668] For Suvorov's time in exile see Longworth, 228-230.

[669] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3038, l. 49. Here we also find out that Suvorov's annual income was up to 50,000 roubles while his total debts added up to 110,200 roubles, l. 128-128ob.

[670] "Suvorov to Paul, 20 September 1797," in Meshcheriakov, vol. III, 588.

Rumblings in the Regiments

In addition to the ubiquitous Suvorov, there were several other, lesser-known cases that demonstrate both the discontent among the officers with Paul's attack on military culture and the government's attempt to suppress such discontent. The first major instance of reaction to Paul's militarism came a year after Paul ascended the throne, when Major Barnashev, while inebriated, threatened to kill the tsar. The incident happened at a dinner to celebrate the promotion of Barnashev's regimental commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Lykoshin to full colonel. As Lykoshin subsequently reported to the Secret Expedition, many officers were invited for dinner, and:

> Major Burnashov, speaking on behalf of officers of the regiment who had been expelled from military service…all of the sudden cried out loud "I would have knifed the emperor, and raised my hands in the air and said let his soul be damned to hell."[671]

The testimony was signed by eight officers who were there that night, who arrested the major, and reported the incident to the government. For his daring words Burnashov was sent to the Peter and Paul Fortress.[672] This incident revealed a number of important aspects of Russian military culture. First of all, it showed the strong bonds, and corporate identity felt by at least some officers. The fact that the major felt upset about the exclusion of his comrades-in-arms, that he wanted to kill the tsar not on his own volition, but on behalf of those who had been expelled, illustrated a remarkable feeling of belonging and association. Second, this episode showed that military culture was self-regulating, at least in the early years of Paul's reign. There was no need for external agents, surveillance, or pressure – it were Burnashov's comrades who delivered him to the authorities.

[671] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3075, l. 3.
[672] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3075, l. 11.

Another piece of evidence that at least some officers were rejecting the new military culture came from the secret investigation of officers in the St. Petersburg Dragoon Regiment in the summer of 1798. The report submitted to the Secret Expedition was indeed disturbing. The regiment, it claimed, was composed of "young and thoughtless men". Its commander, Colonel Kindiakov, refused to enforce discipline and the colonel's younger brother, who had been expelled from military service, still daringly wore his Catherinian-era uniform, despite Paul's decree forbidding it. What was even more shocking, the younger Kindiakov continuously encouraged other people in the regiment to do the same.

At the regiment's headquarters the situation was even more alarming. Some of these "thoughtless, young men" wore nothing but bathrobes and showed no respect for the staff and ober-officers who gathered there for work. Eventually junior-lieutenant Dogonovskii reached such impetuosity that he dared to offend one of the regimental majors. The colonel refused to do anything about it, and Dogonovskii's mockery finally drove the major to assault him with a knout. Paul's first response after finding out about this incident was an immediate order that officers should "not dare express their thoughts on the new uniform, or pass judgment about the new customs of service…."[673] Paul's second response was to dispatch Nikolev, who had barely finished with his surveillance of Suvorov, to investigate the whole affair.

It is difficult to understand what officers like Kindiakov junior and Dogonovskii were trying to achieve. Did they think they would get away with challenging the new military culture or was it just a public display of disapproval for reforms? On the other hand it could be that the actions of the young officers of the St. Petersburg Dragoon regiment were not unique. Apparently in some circles, as Duffy has argued, appearing in

[673] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3085, l. 1-4.

irregular and untidy dress was used as a demonstration of displeasure with the new military customs, and dismissal was seen a mark of honour.[674] As Carrie Hertz reminds us, "clothing is a silent but visual marker of social identities and relationships."[675] Catherine's military culture was individualistic; each commander had slightly different variations in his uniform to distinguish himself and his regiment from all the others. This striving to find uniqueness, to define oneself against the larger mass of people, reflected the values of Catherinian society more generally. The goal of Paul's military reforms was diametrically opposed to the principle of individuality. He wanted uniformity, conformity, cohesion, and regularity in his military machine. To Paul the uniform was not a mechanism for definition of individuality but a way to suppress it. If anything, the episode underlined the tension between two military cultures, between those used to Catherine's decentralization and independence and those tasked with implementing the emperor's regulations that invaded the world of military culture. The frustration with new rules eventually boiled over into a fight.

When Nikolev arrived to investigate the regiment, he set about his new task with his usual methodical thoroughness. He began by interrogating the officers and found a willing person in no other than Lieutenant-Colonel Lev Engelgardt, something that Engelgardt does not mention in his memoirs. When he had finished, Nikolev produced the following report for the Secret Expedition:

> In February of this year at the headquarters of Colonel Kindiakov he [Engelgardt] found the latter showing something secretly to Major Balk, Colonel Sterlingov, Colonel Kakhvoskii [and other officers] who after looking at it, passed it from hand to hand, exploding with laughter and commenting "Oh what a likeness! (*Akh kak pokhozh*!)." To the question of Major Potemkin – "who drew this" – Colonel Kindiakov answered – "one discontented captain living in Kakhvoskii's village"….[Then Kindiakov] showed him a small portrait in which Engelgardt did not even discover any human resemblance, but Colonel Kindiakov said with surprise: "can you

[674] Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West,* 206-5.
[675] Carrie Hertz, "The Uniform: As Material, as Symbol, as Negotiated Object," 2007, unpublished paper, 1.

> really not guess who this looks like, take a better look…." Engelgardt still could not make the connection, but the colonel exclaimed that this [was] a portrait of the sovereign in caricature. The colonel had big grudges, and had nightly gatherings for drinks, during which the criticism of the current government, military customs, dress, the groaning of the people, and the fact that there [was] not a single person who did not slight the sovereign, were expressed; and especially when his brother, Pavel Kindiakov, arrived, burning with the spirit of liberty (*pylaia vol'nostiiu*), [he] perverted everyone from their path, often praising the French government and discussing numerous times books by Montesquieu and other French authors of evil (*frantsuskikh sochinitilei zla*). On top of this he expressed his view that there [was] nothing more base than to be slaves, for we do not belong to ourselves and what we own is not ours (*ibo my sami ne svoii imenie nashe ne nashe*), but the time [would] change everything, for now people are not stupid, and with similar daring words, Engelgardt thinks, many staff and ober-officers in the regiment are perverted, for more then once he found them in this outrage, from which he was forced to flee.[676]

Another chilling piece of evidence soon came to light. As Nikolev described in his reports, Major Potemkin once visited Colonel Kakhovskii on his estate, when the latter was reading Voltaire's tragedy the *Death of Caesar* out loud and translating it into Russian as he went, to a group of officers. As soon as he finished the part about the assassination of the Roman Emperor, he put his book down, took some snuff tobacco and said "and what about ours (*a kogdab eto nashemu*)". To which Major Potemkin jokingly replied that he would do it right away for ten thousand roubles.[677] The grudges originated with officers and were clearly rooted in changes to military culture, such as the introduction of new uniforms, expulsions from service, and the establishment of new military regulations, and turned into personal grievances.

What the investigation also discovered was that Colonel Kakhovskii approached Field Marshal Suvorov himself with the request to raise the army under his control against Paul, because "the sovereign wants everything to be Prussian-like in Russia and even change the laws…" Kakhovskii urged that after rallying the troops, Suvorov should

[676] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3085, l. 1-5ob.

[677] Ibid., l. 85. As the investigation progressed Colonel Dekhterev was linked to Count Zubov, the last favourite of Catherine. Naturally, Paul ordered that the count and his brother be put under "discreet (*bez vsiakoi oglaski*)" surveillance. RGADA, f . 7, op 2, d. 3252, l. 43.

"march them on St. Petersburg." The field marshal refused to be involved in any sort of coup, which would have probably failed anyway. What is illuminating, however, is the conversation Suvorov supposedly had with the bellicose colonel. It was related by Ermolov, who was Kakhovskii's brother, in the last years of his life.

> One time while talking about emperor Paul, he [Kakhovskii] said to Suvorov: "I am surprised, Count, that you, idolized by the army, having such influence on the minds of Russians, while at the same time having such forces at your disposal, agree to subordinate yourself to Paul." Suvorov jumped up and made the sign of a cross over Kakhovskii's mouth. "Be quiet, be quiet," he said, "I cannot. It will be fellow-citizens' blood!"[678]

Ermolov's implication was that the field marshal chose exile instead of starting a civil war. It is difficult to verify this story, but at the same time it is not impossible to imagine that conversation of this sort could have taken place some time during Paul's reign. The whole affair ended with Paul showing magnanimity to the outrages happening right under his nose, in the imperial capital. As the emperor noted in a letter to the head of the Secret Expedition, "even though according to law they deserved death penalty and heavy corporal punishment (*po zakonu zasluzhivaiushchikh smertnuiu kazn' i tiazhkoe telesnoe nakazanie*)", he decided to commute the sentences of chief offenders to mere exile. Colonel Kakhovskii, Major Potemkin, and Major Bukharov were stripped of their ranks and nobility and were to be sent to Nerchinsk for hard labour. Colonel Kindiakov along with his younger brother, Colonel Sterlingov, Major Balk, and Colonel Dekhterev were to be sent to Siberia, under surveillance by local authorities. Colonel Prince Khovanskii, Lieutenant-Colonel Sukhotin, Lieutenant-Colonel Repninskoi, Captains Visil'ev and Strelevskii were sent to their villages without permission to enter either capitals, where they too were to remain under surveillance. Junior-Lieutenant Dogonovskii was court-marshaled for his verbal offences. The next day Paul commuted

[678] Suvorov, *Pis'ma*, 690-1.

the punishment of the first three men to prison time, instead of heavy labour in Nerchinsk.[679] The entire affair must have only aggravated the already irritated and insecure emperor and committed him to the further destruction of the military culture that he had inherited from his mother's reign, a culture that he saw as rife with insubordination, lack of discipline, and conspiracies. While lack of evidence prevents making any concrete conclusions about how widespread or rare such cases were during Paul's reign, it is very doubtful that the St. Petersburg Dragoon Regiment's case was unique.

It is not surprising that by the end of his reign Paul systematically monitored his military and even encouraged internal espionage. For example, the emperor began to collect notes about the mood of his officers and soldiers, especially in the western parts of his empire. A report titled "What the officers are talking about aloud and what are their intentions," which was the product of surveillance of Russian troops stationed in Poland, is a good example.

> In general all officers are waiting impatiently for September intending to resign, and say exactly the following: Regardless of how long you serve you cannot avoid misfortune, because if you have luck while in the lower ranks, you get into trouble for sure when you achieve a higher position....The salary is barely enough to make ends meet, and the severity of service is such that it is absolutely impossible to keep soldiers from deserting. The commanding officer pays a fine for each runaway, and if ten soldiers desert from his unit he is demoted to the ranks. Where can officers get the money to pay for the run-aways?...This has been causing us serious trouble. What shall we do? Shall we avoid punishing a soldier with beatings when he is at fault, in order for him to refrain from deserting? But if you do not punish them, you will be demoted to a soldier yourself.…[I]f His Majesty would not demand payment for fugitives, and would let officers keep their ranks and be promoted in service as previously, at the same time quartering them in winter, then nobody would resign. Then the service would be good, nobody would be treated unfairly or offended, their

[679] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3085, l. 208-290. Eventually Prince Khovanskii was sent to his estates in Belorussia, to the city of Nevl, where he was under constant surveillance. RGADA f. 7, op. 2, d. 2047, l. 28. Colonel Kakhovskii ended up in the Diunamindsk Fortress where he was under surveillance, but as usual there was not much to report for he, like all the other exiles, led a quiet existence. RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3268, 1. 1-5.

> ranks are kept, and those who can may get well-dressed. These are the exact utterances of officers and soldiers in those locations….[680]

The dilemma the officers faced was that if they did not punish run-away soldiers they themselves could get demoted to the ranks, and if they punished run-away soldiers, it only increased the risk of desertion, which could get the officers demoted all the same. The cyclical severity of the system instituted by Paul was working against his own goals. Uniforms, resignations, desertion, lack of pay, surveillance, diminished power and prestige, but also increased responsibility were again the points of contention.

By 1799 the War of the Second Coalition against France was in full swing and Russian troops were traveling through Europe to the Italian theatre. On 5 January 1799 Paul's government sent a note to Andrei Rosenberg, the commander of the Russian troops, reminding him to be vigilant. Due to the publication of *Les Droits de L'homme* in Berlin the emperor ordered that Rosenberg take all measures to spy on his troops, especially the officers. Paul wanted to know if there were any "harmful discussions or opinions (*vrednykh razgloshenii i mnenii*)" in Rosenberg's corps that was moving through Prussia. In the meantime St. Petersburg also dispatched Igor Fuks, the future secretary of Suvorov, to catch up with Rosenberg. In a parallel correspondence Fuks was instructed "to personally conduct accurate and unyielding surveillance of a discreet nature of officers….who are suspected of evil-doings…."[681] A month later Fuks reported back that he had summoned all his skill and resources to investigate the mental state (*ob obraze myslei*) of the Corps and the behaviour of the officers. He found that Rosenberg kept his whole force tightly disciplined and exercised his surveillance over his officers with the utmost regularity. For example, before buying foreign books they

[680] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3283, l. 182ob-183.
[681] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3378, l. 2-2ob.

first had to be personally approved by Rosenberg himself.[682] Over the next months of campaigning the government received generic reports confirming Fuks initial observations – nothing suspicious that merited the government's attention was happening among the Russian officers.[683] Systematic surveillance revealed the lack of trust Paul had in his officers, in their loyalty, and discipline, but it also pointed to something else – to the fact that Paul was unsure if he had conquered the military culture of Catherine era, if he was able to entirely eradicate it, and if his reforms were taking root.

Conclusion

It was clear that Russia had developed a distinctive military culture during Catherine's reign and that this culture was resisting Paul's militarism. As soon as Paul came to power, contemporaries noted an immediate change in Russian military culture. Paul attacked the permeating laxness that had developed under Catherine, but it was that very laxness, decentralization, and lack of control by the government that allowed for a military culture to define its autonomy in the first place. Paul tried to centralize and militarize Russian military culture and waged a war on military traditions and customs he inherited from his mother. Instead of leaving military culture to be internally regulated, Paul wanted to bring it under his personal control, to make it an extension of the sovereign. He changed manuals and uniforms, he challenged officer privileges, and even wanted to change military orders and ranks. Paul used parades to impress his own set of cultural and professional values on the military and enforced surveillance and exile to break the old culture and its members apart. In the process, military traditions

[682] RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3378, l. 4ob-6. Fuks asked that since he was actually working two jobs, one being Suvorov's secretary, and the second being the eyes and ears of the Secret Expedition, he should be compensated accordingly. Paul agreed. Fuks received 1,800 roubles a year. l. 9

[683] For example, RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 3378, l. 22ob, l. 38ob, l. 56, etc.

and the identity of Russian military came under systematic pressure. When the emperor made his point, some officers were eventually pardoned and others were allowed to return to active duty. Suvorov's surveillance, for instance, was ended as abruptly as it began, and sentences of many others were commuted to lesser punishments. The men from the St. Petersburg Dragoon Regiment were a case in point. What Paul wanted to do was to subordinate the culture of the most powerful and privileged socio-cultural group in the empire, the officers, to his personal, militarized and centralized vision of military culture. The rift with Suvorov showed the tensions between the ideas expressed in Russian manuals over the period of Catherine's reign and Paul's attempt to implement them into practice. But it also showed Paul's inability to finally subdue the traditions and autonomy Russian military culture that emerged during the long reign of Catherine.

CONCLUSION

In eighteenth-century Russia cultural shifts often occurred due to deliberate imperial policy. The new European fashion introduced by Peter the Great, or the introduction of the German and French languages to court by his successors are cases in point. But sometimes cultural development took a more serendipitous path, and the development of military culture during the last forty years of that century is one such example.[684] That was one of the major differences between the military culture of Catherine's Russia and earlier times.

Russian military culture of the seventeenth century and earlier was diluted between political culture, religious culture, and noble culture, which makes its threads difficult to bring into focus. Furthermore, due to weaker corporate affiliations among the streltsy, *polki novogo stroia*, and their respective foreign commander and Russian *voevody*, earlier military culture in Russia lacked the relative autonomy of the later eighteenth-century military culture. During Catherine's reign military culture became an intellectual project, which involved professional participation of the Russian nobility to a much grater extent than before. These individuals were united by a professional self-awareness and self-reflection that defined their identity as somehow different from the larger civilian society. It was precisely this growing corporatism within the officer corps that helped to spur the increasing autonomy of military culture during Catherine's reign. The result of this process was that by the end of the eighteenth century the contours of an autonomous military culture in Russian were finally defined. In other words, the analysis of military culture during Catherine's reign is not designed to imply an absolute

[684] This discussion has been largely inspired by Joanna Waley-Cohen, *The Culture of War in China: Empire and the Military Under the Qing Dynasty* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006) especially xii and Chapter 1, which theorizes the militarization of culture.

change; rather it is intended to show the gradual intensification in the definition of that culture, and the clearer demarcation of its boundaries as seen by its members.

By the end of the eighteenth century the military occupied the most important position in Russian society, culture, and politics, save the monarchy and the Orthodox Church.[685] Indeed the pervasiveness of the military in Imperial Russia forced one nineteenth-century Polish observer to write that "The army is in fact the preponderant element in the state, for upon it rests the Sovereign's power and it is through it that civilization spread within the empire."[686] But the analytical framework which would enable us to provide a cultural account of this "preponderant element", similar to the military and institutional accounts that we already have, does not exist. This dissertation begins to address this gap in our understanding of the cultural world of the eighteenth-century Russian military, specifically during the reigns of Catherine and Paul. This project shows that there was a thriving, active, and autonomous military culture in Russia by the end of the eighteenth century. The discussion has sought to clarify the paths into military culture by examining patronage and education, it investigated the role of merit, analyzed crucial military texts, and grappled with symbolic behaviours and displays by representative figures of Catherine's military. Finally it sought to know what impact Paul I's short reign had on Russian military culture.

Professionalism and education were beginning to be as important as personal connections and patronage networks, and the loyalty to a particular patronage network existed in parallel to the idea of being a self-sufficient and educated professional. Linked to this, in the context of promotions, was the idea that merit should be the crucial factor in dispensation of rewards and awards. Hard work, intelligence, and initiatives, among other factors, were carefully recorded and weighted when decisions about promotion

[685] Bruce Menning "The Imperial Russian Army, 1725-1796," in Kagan and Higham, eds., 47.
[686] Cited in Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, 4.

were made. The military public sphere, exemplified by the publication of military texts and the creation of at least one scientific, learned society preoccupied with the development of military knowledge at the end of Catherine's reign, pointed towards the existence of an emerging public space for military culture to develop. It was a space where ideas about what it meant to be a soldier and a military professional could grow. Some of these ideas were re-affirmed and disseminated through symbolic behaviour and symbolic displays within the military. When Catherine's son, Paul, came to power and launched his attack on the Russian military culture, he succeeded not in destroying it, but only in confirming its existence.

Understanding the development of military culture adds perspective to several important fields of research in Russian Imperial history. It advances our understanding of the development of corporate identities, shows the growth of the sense of professionalism, and helps to contextualize militarism in Russian. One of the most rewarding outcomes of the study of military culture in Catherine's Russia is the perspective it lends to the development of corporatism or horizontal ties within Russian society. This is one of the features that distinguished military culture in Catherine's Russia from its earlier incarnations in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. According to John Keep, the socio-political climate was not favourable to the growth of such ties in eighteenth century Russia. For most of that century the military was bound by vertical ties which manifested in loyalty to the crown, family, or a patronage network. Yet in the behaviour, memoirs, and military writings from Catherine's reign there was a sense that just such horizontal ties were beginning to emerge, and it was these ties that Paul was trying to undermine.

The story of military culture during Catherine's and Paul's reign also contributes to the discussion of professionalism in Imperial Russia in general, and in the military in

particular. To borrow Harold Perkin explanation, professionalism is based on the "exclusion of the unqualified." In other words part of the process of professionalization has to do with claiming expertise "beyond the common sense" in a particular field of study or a job.[687] The officers in Catherine's Russia were clearly engaged in claiming expertise in the art and science of war with numerous references to their experience and knowledge which they used to develop criteria for excluding those people who did not fit in. In his work about the development of general staff in post-Crimean War Russia, David Rich illuminated the tension between the professionalism of a small group of general-officers who were trying to purge the military of the "grand-dukism" and aristocratic dilettantism of pre-modern times, and the institution of Russian autocracy. Their allegiance was more to the ideals of their profession than to the emperor.[688] While there is no similar work about eighteenth-century Russian officers, it is clear from the military texts, correspondence, and even symbolic language of the commanders that many of Catherine's officers were trying to overcome the same archaic elements as Rich's general-staff officers of half a century later. By the end of the eighteenth century, there was a clear realization by a group of nobles of what it meant to be professional officers, what values they needed to embrace, and the level of technical knowledge that was required for their vocation.

Finally, the study of military culture in the eighteenth century helps to place militarism in Russia in the wider historical context. Russia under Catherine and even under Paul, no matter how much the latter tried, was not fundamentally a militaristic society. With that being said, David Bell, writing about Western Europe, noted how beginning in the eighteenth century armies began to professionalize and set themselves

[687] Harold James Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society: England Since 1880* (London: Routledge, 1989), 2-3. For the development of professionalism in early modern Western Europe, see D. J. B. Trim, *The Chivalric Ethos and the Development of Military Professionalism* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

[688] David Alan Rich, *The Tsar's Colonels: Professionalism, Strategy, and Subversion in Late Imperial Russia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

off from the civilian world. "They became societies apart, and societies often considered superior [to their civilian counterparts]", wrote Bell. The readiness of officers and soldiers for self-sacrifice, and the discipline and obedience that prevailed in the military in part explain this new attitude.[689] This process, which began in the late eighteenth century, of separation or decoupling of the military from civilian society was largely complete by the end of the nineteenth century. By that time, the militaries had their own communities, such as military bases, along with housing developments such as barracks. The militaries had separate education systems that included boarding schools, academies, and staff colleges, and they operated under a separate legal system. Uniforms further marked military members from the rest of society and soldiering became a full time profession.[690] Going back to late eighteenth-century Russia, none of this was strictly true during Catherine's reign, or even Paul's, yet theirs was the period of transition, the time when this idea of separation began to develop; it was the time when the first generation of a military intelligentsia began to emerge.[691] During that time military culture began to abstract itself from the noble culture, and develop a set of its own identity centered around specific values, ideas and aspirations.

The current study by no means exhausts the exciting subject of military culture in eighteenth-century Russia. On the contrary, it points to potential future research because there are still major gaps in our knowledge that deserve attention. The literary legacy such as poems, and odes and the informal dimension of military culture such as marching songs, deserve a more thorough investigation; as do the material aspects of military culture. Another topic that requires further study is the role of ritual, both formal and informal, in Catherine's military culture. The study of military rituals should

[689] Bell, 311-312
[690] Ibid., 24.
[691] I borrow this phrase from Keep's *Soldiers of the Tsar,* Chapter 10. The reference here is not accidental. Marc Raeff has argued that 19th-century Russian intelligentsia came from the eighteenth-century nobility.

encompass ceremonies and customs associated with campaign preparation, celebrations of victory (partly covered by Wortman), rituals associated with the induction into military service (partly covered in Chapter 1) but also with death and burial of soldiers and generals and with commemorations of wars and battles. Retirement of officers and their role in the dissemination of the military values in society at large is yet another important aspect of military culture that has been only recently begun to be explored.[692] The dissemination of military culture is another fruitful venue of research. As Keep observed, "from the 1760s onwards the military ethos was often transmitted to the rural milieu by officers who retired to take up farming, or their ex-NCO bailiffs…."[693] Yet there are no studies that clearly outline this process of transmission. Finally, unlike with Peter I, Paul I, or Alexander I, our understanding of the role of Catherine as a commander in chief and arbiter of military culture is still incomplete. To this end, the investigation of the military and officer issues from the Great Legislative Commission at the beginning of Catherine's reign might be rewarding.[694] All of this research will illuminate not only the culture of the Russian military during the defining decades of its formation, but also shed light on aspects of Russian noble culture, and the role of the military in eighteenth-century Russian politics and society more broadly. Lastly, research in this field will show how the military culture overlapped and connected with the Russian society at large, and what influence the former exerted on the latter. Here

[692] This topic has been stressed to me in conversations with Professor Elena Marasinova in Moscow and with Professor Janet Hartley in London.

[693] Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar*, 5. Keep began to address this interesting topic in John Keep, "Catherine's Veterans," *The Slavonic and East European Review,* 59, no. 3 (1981): 385-396.

[694] We know that deputies from the Military College were sent to the Legislative Commission and as Robert Allan has noted, in general deputies with military ranks predominated with about one to four, with middle ranking officers such as majors and lieutenants-colonel appearing most often. Also one of the 15 committees within the Legislative Commission examined military law. Robert V. Allen, "*The Great Legislative Commission of Catherine II of 1767"* (PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 1950), 68 and 199. See also Paul Dukes, *Catherine the Great and the Russian Nobility: A Study Based on the Materials of the Legislative Commission of 1767* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1967).

the larger question concerns the long-term ramification of the developments of military culture during Catherine's reign for Russia in the nineteenth century and beyond.

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