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THEME: "200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF BORODINO"

Prepared by: Kirill Shinkarenko, Class 10“a”

Подготовил: Шинкаренко Кирилл, 10 «а» класс

Class leader: Olesya N. Ilyicheva

Классный руководитель: Ильичёва О. Н.

Teacher-consultant: Nataliya V. Kirilova

Учитель-консультант: Кирилова Н.В.



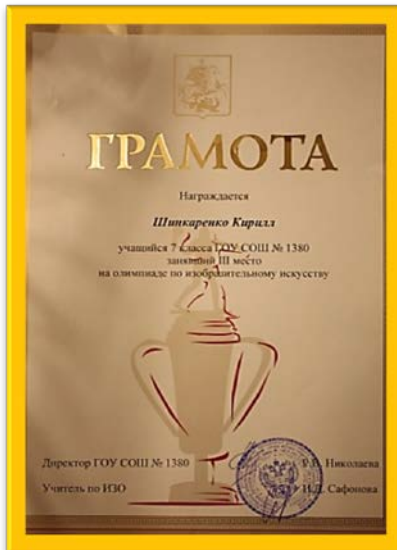


I'm Shinkarenko Kirill . I am 16 years old. I chose this topic because I'm interested in the history of my country because our history is very important and that people do not have a future if they do not know their past. So I think that Battle of Borodino is one of the most important historical event. It left its mark not only in the history of Russia but other countries of the world. The battle of Borodino and the defeat of Napoleon is a symbol of courage and heroism. The war against Napoleon is an example for many generations of the peoples of our country.

I remember the feat of our ancestors, and I'm proud of it.



My achievements and awards.





Purpose: *To know more about history of Russia and its influence world history.*

Objective: *A deeper understanding of English language, to learn new words and expressions, expand my knowledge.*

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“Every nation has critical moments when the strength and nobility of its spirit can be measured”

Russian writer

Vissarion Belinsky.

Introduction.

For Russia, one such moment was at Borodino on 7 September 1812. The battle - with over 280,000 men present on both sides and between 75,000 and 80,000 casualties - proved to be one of the largest battles of the 19th century and one of the bloodiest battles in military history. Its importance in military, political, social or cultural terms can hardly be overestimated.

It is hard to comprehend what is meant by casualty figures on the scale involved. The Grande Armée's central army group—perhaps 450,000-men strong at the outset—came out of Russia only some 25,000-strong. Of 250,000 horses, only 18,000 skeletal mounts and draught animals survived. Of more than 1,000 guns taken over the Niemen River frontier in June 1812, a mere 120 remained with the army in

early January the next year. Possibly the most expensive day in world history, in terms of human loss of life and misery caused by conventional battle, was 7 September 1812—the battle of Borodino. By nightfall a joint total of at least 74,000 soldiers had become casualties, including in their number no fewer than 71 generals.

Poet Mikhail Lermontov romanticized the battle in his poem Borodino. The battle was famously described by Count Leo Tolstoy in his novel War and Peace as "a continuous slaughter which could be of no avail either to the French or the Russians". A huge panorama representing the battle was painted by Franz Roubaud for the centenary of Borodino and installed on the Poklonnaya Hill in Moscow to mark the 150th anniversary of the event. Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky also composed his 1812 Overture to commemorate the battle.

In Russia, the Battle of Borodino is reenacted yearly on the first Sunday of September. On the battlefield itself, the Bagration's flèches are preserved; a modest monument has been constructed in honour of the French soldiers who fell in the battle. There are also remnants of trenches from the seven-day battle fought at the same battlefield in 1941 between the Soviet and German forces (which took fewer human lives than the one of 1812).

A commemorative 1-ruble coin was released in the Soviet Union in 1987 to commemorate the 175th anniversary of the Battle of Borodino, and four million were minted. A minor planet 3544 Borodino, discovered by Soviet astronomer Nikolai Stepanovich Chernykh in 1977 was named after the village Borodino.

The Causes of the 1812 Campaign.

The causes of the 1812 campaign can be said to have had their roots in the military rivalry between France and Russia and the economic rivalry between France and England, but the first shots of this campaign are found in a series of decrees issued in 1806 that gave birth to what was known as the “Continental System.” England and France were fighting for the economic domination of Europe.

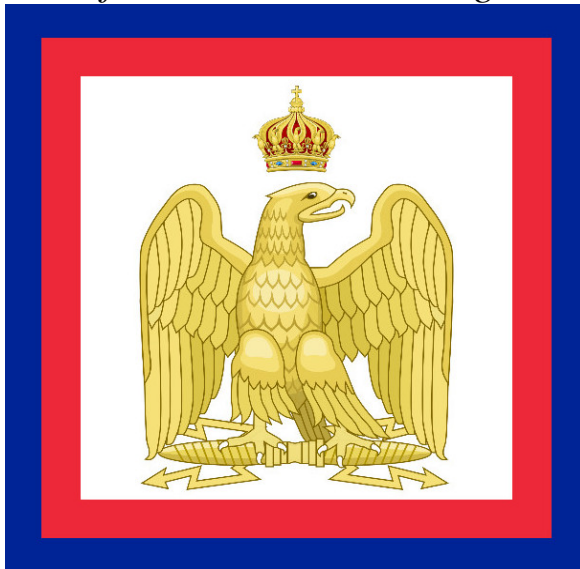
The term “Continental System” was coined by Napoleon to describe the system by which he intended to defeat England after his efforts to defeat the British navy on the high seas had failed. England was not a self-sufficient country and depended on both its imports of raw materials and its continental markets for its existence. Napoleon hoped that by cutting off these markets he could ruin the British economy and force the British to submit to his will. In addition, Napoleon had the second goal of forcing the

Continental states into a total economic dependence on the industrial exports of France, which would give him an economical dominance to match his military dominance of Europe.



The French Emperor Napoleon I in 1812

Napoleon hoped that he could pursue these goals with the cooperation and approval of his Continental allies. He spent much time condemning Britain's maritime policies, such as the exclusion of non-British products from Britain's colonies and Britain's seizure of the colonies of many of the Continental states. Napoleon postured and posed as the defender of the Continental interests against an unprincipled Britain. The institution of the Continental System began with the British declaration that the entire coast of the Continent from Brest to the Elbe was in a state of blockade. This was instituted on 16 May 1806. In retaliation, Napoleon closed the entire north German coast of Friesland to British goods.



The Imperial Standard of Napoleon I



The arms of the First French Empire of Napoleon I

This situation remained unchanged until late 1806, when the Prussians were beaten by Napoleon. When Prussia ceased to be a military threat to Napoleon, he proceeded to seal off the major commercial cities of Hamburg, Bremen, and Lubeck. This provided a “hermetic seal” against British goods on the Atlantic coast of Germany. He also began the process of seizing all of the British goods that were to be found in those territories. The significance of this move was great because those cities were the principal conduits by which Britain shipped her goods into Europe.

The immediate result of these orders was the

seizure of massive quantities of British goods and the enrichment of Napoleon's war treasury. Napoleon's next step was the issuance of the famous Berlin Decrees on 12 November 1806. The preamble of the decree denounced the British blockade of 16 May as a violation of recognized international law. The text of the decree stated that the British Isles were, themselves, in a state of blockade, forbade all trade in British goods, ordered the arrest of all British subjects in allied states, made all British goods liable to seizure, and refused port access to any vessel coming directly from Britain or any of her colonies, or that had called on one of those ports since the issuance of the decree. The decree applied to all of France's allies and, in theory, formed a counterblockade against British financial incursion extending from northern Germany to Italy, excluding Portugal. Lacking a fleet, Napoleon was unable to actually enforce his blockade of Britain, so the results of this decree were felt principally by the neutrals engaged in commerce, who ran the risk of capture by French privateers. Those Continental states that were not allies also felt pressure to comply with the decree. Napoleon's victorious armies provided a strong incentive, often stronger than the state's desire for British trade.

Napoleon's aim was to expand the economic

isolation of Britain by eventually sealing off every Continental state. Napoleon knew this endeavor would result in serious economic privations for France and her allies, but he also knew that the impact would be even greater, fatal he hoped, on Britain.

Britain's only defense against this decree was to penetrate the blockade with as much commerce as possible. Napoleon's seal on Continental trade was not complete.

The Battle of Friedland (June 14, 1807) saw Napoleon I's French army decisively defeat Count von Bennigsen's Russian army about twenty-seven miles (43 km) southeast of Königsberg. Friedland effectively ended the War of the Fourth Coalition (1806–1807) against Napoleon. After nearly twenty-three hours of fighting, the French took control of the battlefield and the Russian army retreated chaotically over the Lava River. The War of the Fourth Coalition, the 1805-1807 campaigns, was terminated by the Treaty of Tilsit. On July 7, 1807, Russia and France signed the first of the Treaties of Tilsit, which made the two nations allies after two years of war. The public terms of Tilsit mentioned the warm feelings between Napoleon and Alexander I. After the signing of the treaty, only Austria, Portugal, Denmark, Sweden, and parts of Italy still traded with Britain.

Of these states, Denmark had special significance. Its geographical location at the mouth of the Baltic forced the British to act quickly. Britain offered Denmark a secret defense alliance. In return for this alliance, the Danes were to turn over their fleet to the British for safekeeping until peace was reestablished. Needless to say, the Danes refused to submit to those humiliating terms. Britain's response was to invade Denmark and seize its fleet on 5 September 1807. This action gave much credence to Napoleon's charges and resulted in the immediate conclusion of a military alliance between Denmark and France. Denmark was now in the Continental System.

As Napoleon began his plans for the invasion of Portugal, Emperor of Russia Alexander I declared war on Britain. Russia was unable to actively engage British forces, but chose to make military moves against Sweden, who still traded with Britain. Russia invaded and took Finland, which it had long coveted. The successful conquest of Finland left only Portugal as a major port of entry for British commerce to Europe, and Britain was faced with the need to devise other methods to penetrate the Continent. Britain responded with a new set of Orders in Council that were to do to France's commerce what France was doing to Britain's commerce. All ports that were closed to British commerce were declared blockaded

and subject to the same restrictions as if a British fleet were actually posted in their roads. All trade articles from states adhering to the Continental System or their colonies were declared lawful prizes, as were the vessels that carried them. This last move further penalized the neutral states. However, in an effort to win over the neutrals, Britain permitted direct neutral trade between any British port and any enemy colonial port, other neutral port, or enemy colonial ports not actually blockaded by a British fleet. In addition, trade with Continental ports was permitted, but this could be done only if the neutral vessel put into a British port and paid charges that were essentially equal to the import duties into Britain, before proceeding to the enemy ports. This system favored British products, since they did not require a reexport certificate, and especially favored sugar, coffee, and cotton carried in British bottoms. The principal thrust of this plan was to force all goods bound for the Continent through British ports.

The next move was Napoleon's. On 17 December 1807 he issued the Milan Decree. This declared that all ships that submitted to a search by the British on the high seas lost their national character, were "denationalized," and were declared lawful prizes if captured by a French or allied privateer. The decree

went on to state that every vessel that put into a British port or a British colonial port was also a lawful prize.

The Milan Decree was the logical conclusion of the economic war that was building in intensity. It was declared that there were no more neutrals and forced a declaration of alliance by all states.

As a result, many neutrals now faced economic ruin. In response, the United States of America issued the Embargo Act of 1807. This resulted in so much self-inflicted punishment that it was repealed in March 1809. The Americans replaced it with the Non-Intercourse Act, which prohibited trade only with Britain, France, and their colonies. It was repealed in 1810, and new legislation was written which stated that if either belligerent repealed its decrees against American shipping, the Americans would reinstitute the sanctions of the Non-Intercourse Act against the other belligerent.

Napoleon's concern now became how to maintain his system's airtight seal against British trade and how to bring those few states outside of the Continental System into it. His next step was to invade Portugal in 1808.

The year 1808 saw broad advances for Napoleon's Continental System. Portugal was quickly overrun

and Austria was forced to break with England and join the System. The Kingdom of Tuscany was annexed, as were Corsica and Elba. In Italy, only the Papal States were outside the System. This was quickly changed by a total occupation of the Italian peninsula by the end of 1808. France also occupied the Adriatic island of Corfu, another point of entry. During his negotiations at Tilsit, Napoleon had encouraged Alexander's hopes of taking Wallachia and Moldavia away from the Turks. Negotiations did not result in a ceding of this territory to Russia. Alexander then directed his minister in Paris to demand that France recognize the Russian occupation of those provinces as well as the French evacuation of occupied Prussia. Napoleon refused. This was the first crack in the Franco-Russian alliance. Napoleon stated that his occupation of Prussia was covered by a separate treaty, to which Russia was not privy. He stated that he was willing to recognize the Russian occupation of Wallachia and Moldavia only if they reciprocated by permitting France to receive compensation in Silesia at Prussian expense. Accession to these demands would strengthen France's position in central Europe by enlarging the newly created Grand Duchy of Warsaw. Alexander I could not countenance this and refused, keeping his troops on the Danube. This act

permitted Napoleon to propose various military arrangements to the Turks, while posing as friend to both countries. Napoleon realized that he and Alexander I had conflicting goals in the east, but Napoleon knew that he could not afford to provoke the Russians until the Spanish problem was resolved. Napoleon felt that once this was accomplished, he could renew discussions regarding the fate of the Turkish (Ottoman) Empire. In the meantime, he required the active cooperation and support of Russia in his efforts against Britain. Napoleon sought to renew his influence over the czar by another personal interview. To gain time and tantalize the czar, he sent a letter to Caulaincourt, the French ambassador in Saint Petersburg, directing him to propose a joint Franco-Russian action against the Turks. The proposal suggested that after partitioning Turkey, France and Russia should invade India, which Britain had recently conquered.

These proposals were sufficient to entice Alexander to the interview, but the date was not fixed. Before the final arrangements could be made, Napoleon was obliged by political developments to go to Bayonne and ply his wiles on the Spanish royal family. The outcome of those negotiations was disastrous and led to serious problems in Spain, requiring his full attention. His plans for beguiling Alexander had to

wait.

The Spanish blunder rapidly grew in magnitude. It was eventually to tie down major elements of Napoleon's armies, keeping them in Spain for the next six years, when their presence could have been decisive in central Europe.

The British government realized that Napoleon's Spanish blunder was a unique opportunity to open the Continent to British goods as well as to harass Napoleon. They immediately gave promises of aid to the Spanish juntas that arose and dispatched a small expeditionary force. This force defeated Junot's army and drove him out of Portugal. At the same time the French suffered another humiliating blow at Baylen, when the Spanish armies, the military joke of Europe, surrounded and captured a complete French division. Humiliation followed humiliation when the captive Spanish division under General La Romana, posted on the Danish coast, was spirited away by the British navy and returned to Spain, where it joined the fight against Napoleon.

These humiliations shook Napoleon's and France's prestige. This was positive evidence that the French were no longer invincible, encouraging Austria to push its rearming and attracting the attention of Prussia. Napoleon was forced to return his attention

to central Europe before he could finish with the Spanish problem. Disturbed by the rising of nationalism in Prussia, Napoleon withdrew some of his troops from Spain and forced a new treaty on Prussia in September 1808. This set Prussia's war indemnity from the 1806 campaign at an impossibly high figure, forced the surrender of several Prussian garrisons on the Oder, and limited the Prussian army to 42,000 men.

In a small gesture to Alexander, Napoleon withdrew his remaining troops from Prussian territory. The immediate result of this was the convening of the delayed interview with Alexander. The interview was held on 27 September 1808 and lasted until 14 October.

The existence of friendly relations between France and Russia was critical to the peace in Europe. Napoleon strove to renew the alliance forged at Tilsit. The situation was quite different now. Napoleon was no longer flushed with the moral superiority of Jena-Auerstadt, and Fried-land. Indeed, French military prowess had been damaged by the reverses in Spain. Alexander had made up his mind to curtail his alliance with France. He had begun to recognize that the best foreign policy for Russia lay in an alliance with Austria, which would provide a counterbalance to Napoleon's growing hegemony over western

Europe. To this end, Alexander employed every diplomatic game he could. He realized that if Napoleon were able to subjugate Austria, Russia would be next. Alexander realized that Russia was essential to Napoleon's plan and that he could use this to obtain his way with the Turks. With the possibility of realizing his goals in southern Europe so near at hand, Alexander feared that his plans might be upset by Austria's growing militarism and desire to avenge herself for Austerlitz.

The actual interview of the two emperors was unusual. Though a timid person, Alexander remained unmoved by Napoleon's entreaties. He avoided accepting any proposal that would engage Russia in a war with Prussia or Austria and other proposals that might require the withdrawal of his troops from the Danube. The interview ended with a superficial renewal of the Treaty of Tilsit.

Despite his resistance to becoming involved in a war, Emperor Alexander I did agree that Russian troops would assist France, should she become engaged in war with Austria. At the successful conclusion of such a war, Napoleon promised to recognize Russia's possession of Wallachia and Moldavia in return for the Russian recognition of his conquests in Spain. With this modest reassurance, Napoleon led some 200,000 of his veterans into

Spain and began a lightning campaign that smashed every Spanish army he encountered. The British, under Moore, were driven to Corunna, where they barely escaped under the guns of the British navy.

After Corunna, Napoleon returned to Paris to put down an antiimperial intrigue. This arose because of rumors of Austria's warlike intentions. The news had reached Paris that the Austrian War Party had won the internal Austrian political struggle and was forcing Emperor Francis I into renouncing the humiliating Treaty of Pressburg signed in 1805 after Austerlitz. This resurgence of pride was closely linked to the rising sense of German nationalism that had begun to appear in the German states along with a call for independence from French dominance. This sense of nationalism had, ironically, been spread by the conquering French armies, as the French had been the first Europeans to embrace the sentiment of nationhood.

Although Napoleon and Alexander seemed to have reconciled at Erfurt in 1808, the fissures became evident the following year, when the latter was reluctant to support France against Austria. Russia was concerned by Napoleon's aggressive foreign policy, especially after the annexation of Holland, the Hanseatic cities and Germanic states, including the Duchy of Oldenburg, whose ruler was Tsar

Alexander's brother-in-law.

Meanwhile, the Continental Blockade, which Napoleon initiated in response to the British blockade of 1806, had a profound effect on Europe, and on Russia in particular. It proved disadvantageous to the Russian merchants and nobility, leading to a sharp decrease in Russian foreign trade.



The arms of Russian Empire in 1812

Britain was the leading trade partner to Russia, exporting 17.7 million roubles' worth of goods in 1802, compared to just 500,000 roubles' worth from France that same year. Prior to 1807, a total of

17,000 great masts were sent from Riga and St. Petersburg to the shipyards in England, but this number sharply declined to 4,500 in 1808, and to just over 300 in 1809-10.



The Russian Emperor Alexander I

Besides timber, Russia also actively traded in grain, hemp and other products with Britain, and in 1800 the British Consul noted in the minutes of a Board of Trade meeting that: 'British merchants had

such extensive dealings in all sorts of Russian articles as to export from two-thirds to three-quarters of the whole in commodities.' Indeed, in 1804, twelve English companies controlled a quarter of Russia's imports and half of its exports, while other English merchants issued long-term credit to the Russian merchants and nobility. Napoleon's protective tariff system, on the other hand, sought to safeguard French manufacturers and industry, limiting Russian imports while boosting French exports. Yet the French could provide neither the volume nor the quality of products required in Russia; neither could they replace British spending power when it came to buying raw materials.

The financial strains created by Napoleon's Continental System quickly developed into a serious problem, distressing merchants and nobles and crippling the Imperial treasury, which struggled to deal with a deficit that increased from 12.2 million roubles in 1801 to 157.5 million in 1809. Such economic tribulations forced the Russian government to gradually relax the enforcement of the blockade, especially with respect to neutral shipping. By 1810 American ships - and English ships with false papers - freely docked in Russian ports, and such 'neutral' trade was finally officially sanctioned by Emperor Alexander's decree of 31 December 1810, which

limited the import of French products and allowed trade in non-French merchandise. As English goods found their way from the Russian ports into Eastern and Central Europe, Napoleon realized that the new Russian policy constituted a heavy blow to his Continental Blockade, and St Petersburg's cooperation in this system could only be enforced by war.

France and Russia also disagreed on several political issues, the most important being the fate of Poland. Russo-Polish relations can be traced back for centuries and they were largely overshadowed by the rivalry between the two states. In the 1600s Polish invasions of Russia were commonplace and Moscow itself was captured in 1612. But just as Russia turned into a first-rate power, the Polish state declined and was partitioned three times by neighbours Russia, Prussia and Austria in the second half of the 18th century. Russia was the prime beneficiary of these partitions, extending its territory deep into North East Europe. Any discussion of a Polish revival naturally threatened Russian strategic interests in the region. Yet the ink was hardly dry on the Tilsit agreement when Napoleon created the Duchy of Warsaw (albeit under the nominal control of the King of Saxony): an act that St Petersburg immediately considered hostile to its interests.

Napoleon's interest in consolidating his control over the Poles was further revealed when, after the defeat of Austria in 1809, he incorporated Western Galicia into the Duchy of Warsaw, which, in effect, further expanded the Polish principality. Polish demands for eventual restoration of their kingdom only increased Russia's concerns that she would be obliged to cede territory. Thus Alexander opposed French designs in Poland and tried to persuade Napoleon to give up his plans. Both emperors spent two years (1809-10) wrangling over this issue and by 1811, the discussions were in deadlock with neither side willing to concede.

Another aspect to Franco-Russian enmity lay in the Balkans, where Russia supported the local Slavic population against the Ottomans. In the 18th century alone, Russia and the Ottoman Empire were engaged in four wars and a fifth had been under way since 1806. At Tilsit Napoleon agreed to give Russia a free hand in the Balkans, but Alexander gradually became convinced that France was far from willing to allow Russian expansion into the Balkans.

Of a minor importance - but still relevant to personal relations between the two emperors - was the matter of Napoleon's marriage to the Austrian princess Marie-Louise. Back at Erfurt in 1808,

Napoleon suggested the possibility of reinforcing a Franco-Russian alliance through his marriage to Alexander's sister. The Russian royal family was reluctant to allow the 'Corsican upstart' to enter its circle and found various excuses to rebuff Napoleon. His initial choice, Grand Duchess Catherine, was quickly married off to the Duke of Oldenburg, while the Empress Mother, Maria Feodorovna, bitterly opposed the marriage of her other daughter, Anna, for whom Napoleon also put in a formal offer. Napoleon considered these rejections as personal slights and a certain distrust began to pervade his relations with the Russian court. Interestingly, when Napoleon eventually married the Austrian princess, the St Petersburg court was somewhat piqued, since it signalled the rapprochement between France and Austria and a decline in Russian influence.

Russia did participate in the 1809 campaign against the Austrians, but Russian troops did little more than occupy some of Austria's eastern provinces.

Napoleon finally crossed the Danube in a brilliant feat of military engineering and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Austrians at Wagram. This defeat, coupled with other setbacks, forced Austrian Emperor Francis I to sue for an armistice. A treaty was signed three months later.

The Treaty of Vienna, signed on 14 October 1809, further humiliated Austria. It severed 3,500,000 of Austria's citizens from her and gave a large piece of Austrian territory to Bavaria, France's ally. Trieste and the strategic coastal area along the eastern bank of the Adriatic Sea were ceded to France to form the Illyrian provinces of France. This last action sealed off southern Europe from British trade from the border of Turkey westward.

The treaty also transferred Galacia to the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, which shocked Alexander, since it was a flagrant violation of Napoleon's verbal assurances that this would never be done. Alexander redoubled his efforts to have Napoleon sign an agreement stating that the Kingdom of Poland would not be restored. This fear was the next major crack in the Franco-Russian alliance.

In 1809 the few remaining portions of independent Italy came under French control. Much of the territories occupied by the French were formally annexed into metropolitan France, as Napoleon began recreating Charlemagne's "Holy Roman Empire." Napoleon's conflicts with the Pope grew, as such conflicts had with every European emperor before him. Napoleon proposed to the Pope that the College of Cardinals not be recruited

predominantly from Italy, but that a third of them come from the French Empire. Pius VII refused and retaliated by refusing to give his blessings to the bishop candidates proposed by Napoleon. In anticipation of the annexation of the Papal States, the Pope drew up a bull of excommunication against Napoleon. When Napoleon learned of this, he retaliated by arresting and imprisoning the Pope. Pius VII was imprisoned in Savona on the Riviera and proved a great embarrassment for Napoleon.

In 1810, Napoleon took action against his brother Louis, king of Holland. Because of Napoleon's long and deeply held belief that the Dutch were not assisting in the financing of his campaigns as much as he perceived they could, and because they had rather blatantly ignored the trade prohibitions with Britain, Napoleon deposed Louis and annexed Holland into metropolitan France.

Russia's bitterness over Poland continued to grow and new concerns grew about Napoleon's dealings with the Turks, with whom the Russians were now at war. Alexander began having serious doubts about Napoleon's designs and intentions for southeastern Europe. He had received reports about a proposed union of the Balkan states similar to the Confederation of the Rhine, Napoleon's collection of puppet German states. Whatever Napoleon's intentions were,

it became clear that it was never his intention to permit Russia to conquer Constantinople. This situation became more difficult as Napoleon began to insist on a more stringent enforcement in Russia of the articles of the Continental System. He urged the confiscation of neutral vessels in Russian ports, and the entire System, which was crippling Russia's economy, became even more unpopular.

Britain had been Russia's best market for wheat, timber, hemp, and tallow. The restrictions on trade were rapidly forcing Russia into desperate straits. The czar refused Napoleon's demands, alleging that Russia's prosperity depended on the trade and goodwill of the neutrals. It is probable that if Napoleon had made any concessions on the Balkan or Polish issues, Alexander would not have made an open issue of the Continental System. Alexander's refusal opened the Continent to British goods and served notice to the world of his decaying alliance with France.

On 31 December 1810 Alexander issued a decree which favored the entry of neutral ships into Russian ports and virtually excluded the imports of silks, wines, and brandy, which were principally exports of France.

During the next year and a half, both emperors

engaged in massive preparations for the pending war. Many Prussian military men saw this growing rift and offered their professional services to Russia, who eagerly accepted them. Alexander's first plans were to carry the war into Germany as had been done in 1806, but the certainty of a hostile Warsaw in his rear made that impossible. These plans were dropped as soon as the Polish intentions became clear. This development pleased Napoleon greatly, for it eliminated the likelihood of a Prussian or Austrian uprising to support the Russian.

In the summer of 1811 Napoleon began preparing for the 'Second Polish Campaign', as he called it, attempting to ensure a rapid victory over Russia. The enormous Grand Army of more than 600,000 soldiers and over 1,300 field guns was gathered in German and Polish lands. Approximately half its manpower consisted of troops from Napoleon's allies, including Austria, Prussia, Saxony, Spain, Bavaria, Poland and Italy. Anticipating an unavoidable war, Russia and France cast around for allies, both seeking support from Austria and Prussia. But the French presence in the Germanic states and the recent defeat of Austria in 1809 left little choice for these countries but to submit to Napoleon.

On 24 February 1812 Napoleon concluded a treaty with Prussia which provided him with a

contingent of 20,000 Prussian troops to join his growing Grande Armee. It also allowed the French to garrison the Silesian fortresses, and it permitted them to march through Prussian territory and to requisition supplies from Prussian territory. A similar treaty was signed with Austria on 14 March 1812. That country agreed to provide 30,000 men on the understanding that Austria would recover part of the Illyrian provinces and some of the territory ceded to Bavaria. Austria was also guaranteed that it would receive part of the Prussian province of Silesia, taken from Austria by Frederick the Great during the Seven Years War. Though successful on those two counts, Napoleon did not succeed with Turkey or Sweden. In Sweden, Napoleon had to deal with Bernadotte, a former French general, who had been elected to the Swedish throne on the death of the previous king. There was little love lost between Napoleon and Bernadotte, who had been feuding since the French Revolution, when only fate had raised Napoleon to the French imperial throne and not Bernadotte. In April 1812 Bernadotte concluded an alliance with Russia and pledged the support of a Swedish corps in northern Germany in event of war.

Napoleon's overall strategy for the war considered the use of Sweden and the Ottoman Empire to form his extreme flanks, but he was unable to exercise

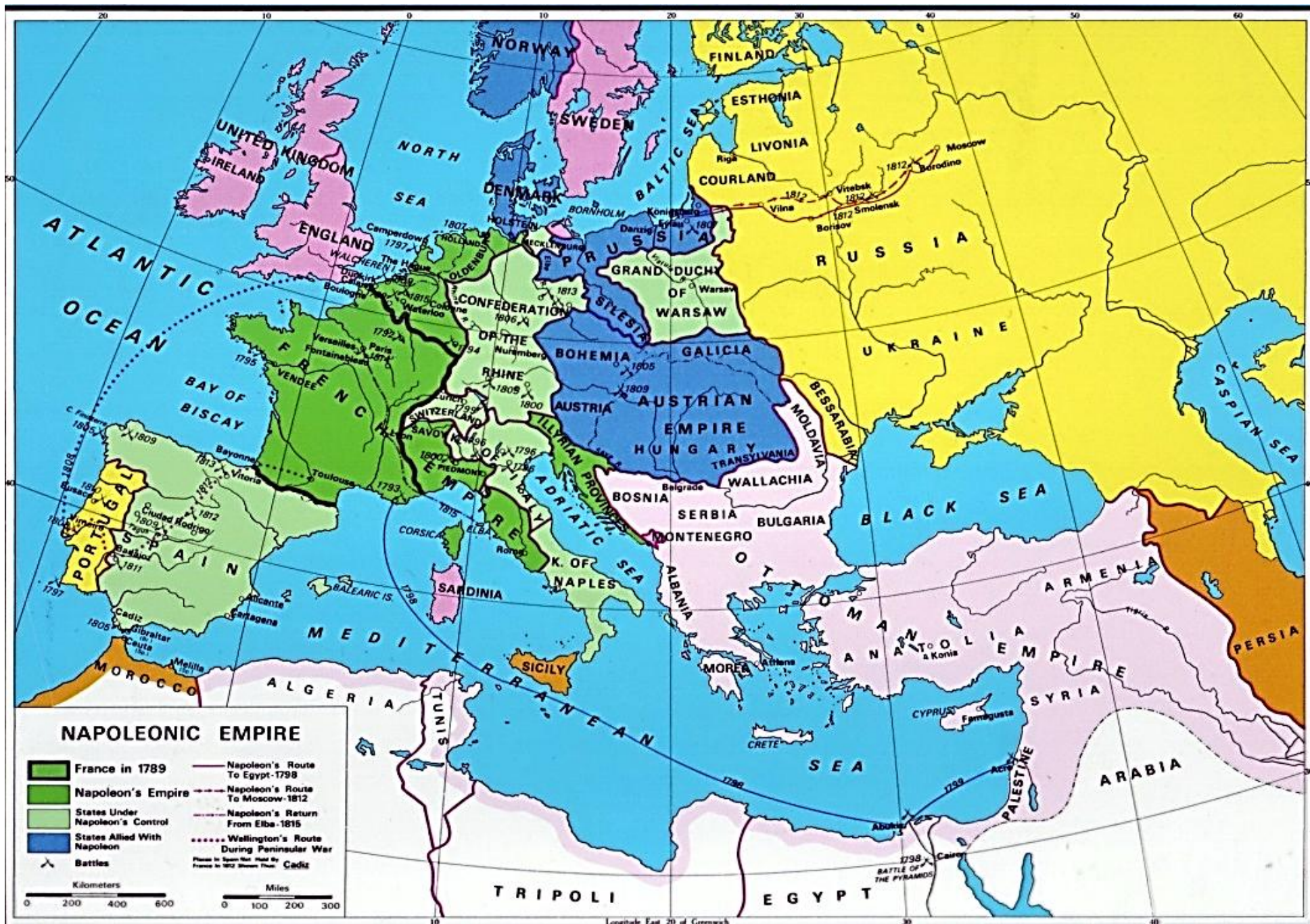
influence on either power. Sweden, protected by the sea and the British Royal Navy, formed an alliance with Russia (April 1812) in return for the promise of Russian assistance in annexing Norway, then in Denmark's possession. As for the Ottomans, they appeared to be a natural ally for Napoleon but their war had been a failure, with their armies defeated by the Russians and their finances exhausted. By June 1812, Alexander I managed to achieve a significant diplomatic success by concluding the Treaty of Bucharest with the Turks. The Peace of Bucharest, signed on 12 May 1812, provided that Turkey would recover Wallachia and Moldavia in exchange for Bessarabia. The sultan had won a lenient peace for his country, and the czar had regained the use of his army for the pending campaign.

Tensions grew and Alexander issued an ultimatum. He stated that he would negotiate with France only if the French were to withdraw from Prussia. Napoleon responded by marching on the Vistula. The Grande Armée advanced into Polish Lithuania steadily from May until 23 June 1812, when the leading elements reached the Niemen River, separating the Grand Duchy of Warsaw and Russia. There was no formal declaration of war. For three days after the first units swam and marched across the Niemen, a steady stream of French, Prussians, Austrians, Dutch,

Belgians, Swiss, Italians, Neapolitans, Egyptians, Croatians, Spaniards, Portuguese, Poles, Bavarians, Hessians, Württembergers, Saxons, Westphalians, and members of a number of other small German states marched into Russia.

The 1812 campaign had begun.

*The war between Russia and France did not come as a surprise to many contemporaries, since relations between them became increasingly tense after the Treaty of Tilsit of 1807. Emperor Alexander I of Russia did not forget the painful lessons of 1805-07, when his armies were repeatedly defeated by Napoleon, and was well aware of the widespread displeasure prevailing in Russia, particularly in the Army, over the 'ignominious' peace of Tilsit. The Russian nobility was irritated by what it perceived as the Russian submission to France, as **Prince Sergei Volkonsky** described: "The defeats at Austerlitz and Friedland, the Peace of Tilsit, the haughtiness of French ambassadors in St Petersburg, the passive reaction of [Tzar] Alexander to the policies of Napoleon - all were deep wounds in the heart of every Russian. Vengeance, and vengeance alone, was the unshakable feeling with which we all were burning. Those who did not share this feeling - and there were only a few of them - were rejected and despised ..."*





Napoleon's invasion of Russia.

As the sun rose on 24 June 1812, a small figure in an army uniform and bicorn hat stood high on a hill overlooking the Nieman river. Around him, as far as the eye could see, every valley, ravine and hill was covered by an enormous host that swarmed like an anthill.

This colossal army was moving in three columns across the bridges constructed the night before. Many soldiers looked with awe at the distant figure of their leader, Emperor Napoleon, watching silently as the advance units almost came to blows, disputing the honour of being the first to step onto foreign soil.

Napoleon's strategy was simple and resembled that of his earlier campaigns. Keeping the enemy ignorant of his army's exact aims, he intended to concentrate overwhelming superiority at a chosen point, attack and destroy the enemy's field forces, and then dictate peace on his own terms. Knowing the vast scope of the Russian Empire, he sought to engage the Russians as soon as possible. The Emperor had every confidence that he could achieve a desired victory within a few weeks by waging decisive battles in frontier regions. Still, he was well aware of the difficulties ahead. Together with a study of the history and geography of Russia, his previous campaigns in Poland had provided him with experience of fighting in underpopulated areas lacking good roads, and in extreme weather. In 1811 he made extensive logistical preparations and enormous quantities of supplies were amassed in depots in Poland and Germany, and a vast network of supply trains was organized to bring food, ammunition caissons, forges, and ambulances to the Army.

In 1812, Russia's military forces had over 650,000 men, but these were scattered throughout its vast regions. Some were situated in the Danubian Principalities, others in the Crimea, the Caucasus and Finland, leaving approximately

300,000 men with over 900 guns to face Napoleon's army during the initial stages of the invasion. The Russian forces facing the Grand Army were deployed in three army groups along the western frontiers of the Empire. The 1st Western Army of General Mikhail Barclay de Tolly (120,000 men and 580 guns) was deployed in the vicinity of Vilna, covering the route to St Petersburg. The 2nd Western Army of General Prince Peter Bagration (49,000 men and 180 guns) was assembled in the area of Volkovysk and Belostock, covering the route to Moscow. General Alexander Tormasov commanded the 3rd Reserve Army of Observation (44,000 men and 168 guns), deployed in the vicinity of Lutsk, to cover the route to Kiev. This force was later renamed the 3rd Western Army. The three major armies were supported by several reserve corps that constituted a second line of defence. The Russian extreme flanks were covered by Lieutenant General Baron Faddey Steingell's corps in Finland and Admiral Paul Chichagov's Army of the Danube in the south.





General of Infantry Mikhail Barclay de Tolly

1st Western Army under General of Infantry Mikhail Barclay de Tolly:

- *I Infantry Corps of Lieutenant General Peter Wittgenstein*
- *II Infantry Corps of Lieutenant General Karl Baggovut*
- *III Infantry Corps of Lieutenant General Nikolai Tuchkov I*
- *IV Infantry Corps of Lieutenant General Count Pavel Shuvalov*
- *V Reserve (Guard) Corps of Grand Duke Constantine Pavlovich*
- *VI Infantry Corps of General of Infantry Dimitry Dokhturov*
- *I Cavalry Corps of Adjutant General Fedor*

Uvarov

- *II Cavalry Corps of Adjutant General Baron Fedor Korf*
- *III Cavalry Corps of Major General Peter Pahlen III*
- *Cossack Corps of General of Cavalry Matvei Platov.*



General of Infantry Prince Peter Bagration

2nd Western Army under General of Infantry Prince Peter Bagration:

- *VII Infantry Corps of Lieutenant General Nikolai Rayevsky*
- *VIII Infantry Corps of Lieutenant General Mikhail Borozdin*
- *IV Cavalry Corps of Major General Count Karl Sievers*



General of Cavalry Alexander Tormasov

3rd Reserve Army of Observation under General of Cavalry Alexander Tormasov

- *General of Infantry Sergei Kamenski I's Infantry Corps*
- *Lieutenant General Yevgeny Markov's Infantry Corps*
- *Lieutenant General Baron Fabian Osten-Sacken's Infantry Corps*
- *Major General Count Karl Lambert's Cavalry Corps*

Minister of War Mikhail Barclay de Tolly presented his plan of action as early as the spring of 1810, proposing to establish a main defensive line along the Western Dvina and the Dnieper

rivers. He wanted to: 'face the enemy on the frontiers, fight the superior enemy forces in the Polish provinces as long as possible and then retreat to the defensive lines, leaving the enemy in a scorched countryside, without bread, cattle or any other means of supplying itself.' Then, when the enemy exhausted his forces, the Russian armies would launch a counteroffensive. Alexander approved this plan later that year and preparations were carried out between August 1810 and December 1811. Cartographic and reconnaissance works were conducted in Western Russia, fortresses at Riga, Dvinsk, Bobruisk and Kiev were repaired, and large depots situated at Vilna and Grodno and other towns.



French Imperial Eagle

During 23-25 June, Napoleon's army crossed the Russian border at the River Nieman, motivated by the grandiloquent rhetoric of a new imperial proclamation:

“Soldiers!

The second Polish War has begun. The first war ended at Friedland and at Tilsit; at Tilsit, Russia swore an eternal alliance with France and war against England. Today she is violating her pledged word. She is unwilling to give any explanation for her strange conduct until the French Eagles have crossed back over the Rhine, leaving our allies there to her discretion. Russia is led on by fatality! Her destiny must be accomplished. Does she then believe us to be degenerates? Are we then no longer the soldiers of Austerlitz? She places us between dishonour and war. Our choice cannot be doubted, so let us march forward! Let us cross the Nieman! Let us carry the war into her territory. The second Polish war will be glorious for French arms, like the first; but the peace we shall conclude will carry with it its own guarantee, and will put an end to that proud influence Russia has exercised for fifty years over the affairs of Europe.”



French Emperor Napoleon I and his Old Guard



The personal emblem of the Emperor of France Napoleon I

As the Russian armies retreated, discontent about the conduct of the war quickly increased among Russian officers and soldiers. Russia had not sustained a foreign invasion since that of Charles XII's Swedes in 1709, and even that was defeated at Poltava. A contemporary recalled: 'The victories of Field Marshals Peter Rumyantsev and Alexander Suvorov made the very word "retreat" reprehensible.' Throughout the 18th century, Russia fought victorious wars against Sweden, the Ottoman Empire, Persia and Poland. The 1799 Campaign in Italy, conducted by Alexander Suvorov, was regarded as a true reflection of Russian military spirit, and the setbacks in the Alps were overshadowed by heroic Russian exploits. The defeat at Austerlitz in 1805 was largely blamed on the Austrians, while the memories of Friedland were soothed by victories in Finland and Wallachia. So, on the eve of the French invasion, an offensive psychology prevailed in the Russian military. Many officers were unwilling to accept defensive warfare within Russia and were inflamed by a belligerent ardour to fight Napoleon.

On 14 July Barclay de Tolly abandoned the Drissa camp, detaching General Peter Wittgenstein with some 20,000 men to cover the route to St. Petersburg.



Lieutenant General Peter Wittgenstein

Barclay de Tolly then withdrew toward Smolensk, fighting rearguard actions at Vitebsk and Ostrovno. In the south, Bagration withdrew first on Minsk and then to Nesvizh and Bobruisk, eluding Napoleon's enveloping manoeuvres and gaining minor victories at Mir and Romanovo.



The French flag



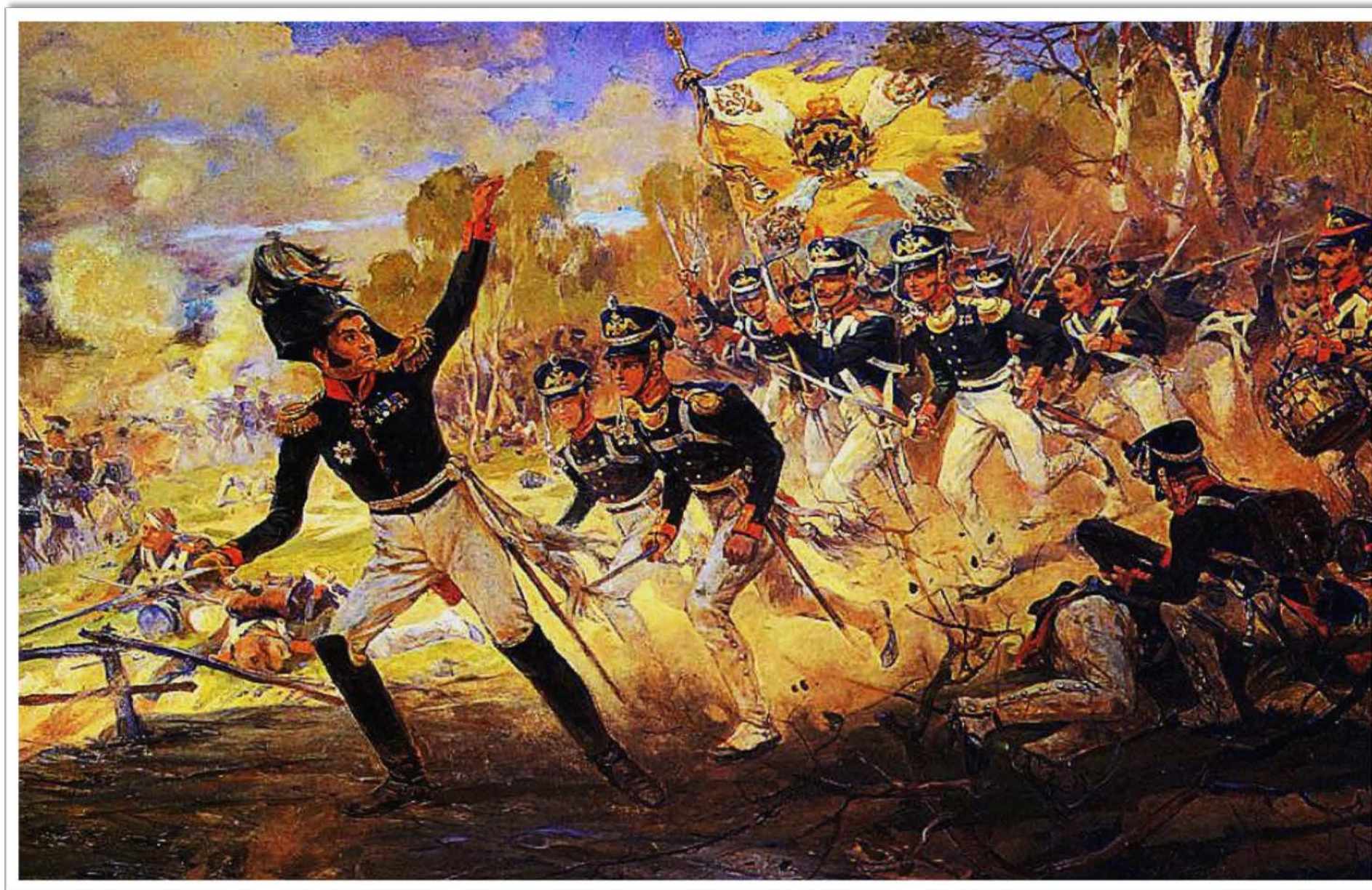
The Russian flag



Fight of Cossacks of ataman Platov at the settlement the Mir.
At the settlement the Mir on July 9, 1812 Cossacks of ataman Platov

two days conducted successful fights against the French vanguard and
forced it to retreat

Art. Krassovsky



The feat of the soldiers of General Raevsky under Soltanovka. July, 23, 1812. In this battle, General Raevsky led to battle his two sons 16

and 11 years. The soldiers saw the courage and boldly attacked French forces. Army of General Bagration without loss of crossed the Dnieper.



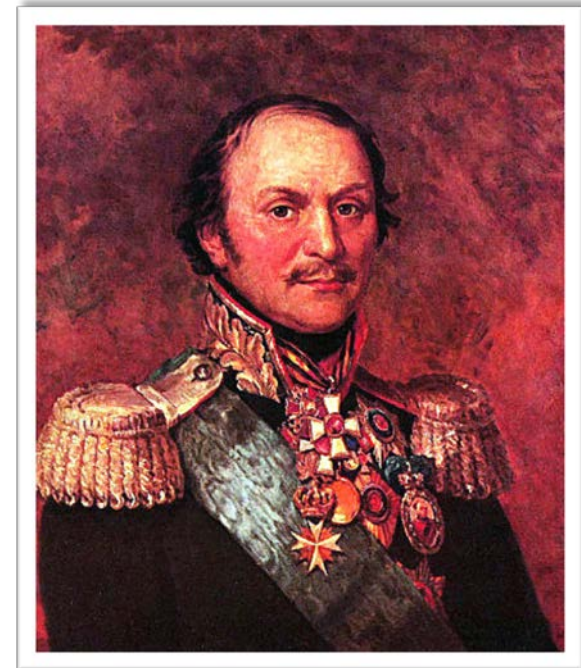
Lieutenant General Nikolai Rayevsky

On 2 August, the two Russian armies finally united at Smolensk, bringing their total strength to 120,000 as opposed to some 180,000 in Napoleon's main force.

Meanwhile, in the north, French forces Marshal Oudinot attacked Wittgenstein, protecting the road to St. Petersburg, taking Polotsk on 26 July. But in combats near Klyastitzy on 30 July-1 August, the French suffered a defeat, forcing Napoleon to divert Saint-Cyr to support Oudinot's operations

And in the Baltic provinces, Macdonald's corps

was fighting near Riga, while the Russians redirected reinforcements from Finland. Finally, in the south, Tormasov defeated French forces at Kobrin and then pinned down Schwarzenberg and Reynier in the Volhynia region. On 31 July Chichagov's Army of the Danube moved from Moldavia to support Tormasov.



General of Cavalry Matvei Platov.
Ataman of the Don Cossacks





Four days lasted the battle of Polotsk. Russian guard attacks the French Jagers and forcing them to flee from the battlefield.

Art. F. Chirka (1890)



In fight under Klyastitza a Grodno Hussar regiment under command of general Kulnev brave attacked the French armies. Kulnev was seriously injured and told before death: **«Friends, don't concede a**

step of the Russian land. The victory expects you». Having learned about his death, Napoleon wrote in France: «General Kulnev, one of the best officers of Russian cavalry, it is killed».



Battle of the Klyastitza. Counterattack Pavlovski Grenadier Battalion.

French troops after two days of fighting, fell back to Polotsk.
Art. P.Hess

Thus, by August 1812, Napoleon's initial plan to destroy the Russian forces in a decisive battle had largely failed. The two main Russian armies eluded piecemeal destruction and united at Smolensk, while the Grand Army suffered high losses from strategic consumption and desertion.

The Battles of Krasnyi, Smolensk and Lubino.

Napoleon's manoeuvre on Smolensk was a masterpiece. He concentrated his corps on a narrow front between Orsha and Rosasna on the northern bank of the Dnieper; then, under cover of a heavy cavalry screen, the Grand Army crossed to the southern bank. Napoleon's plan was to advance eastwards along the left bank, taking Smolensk while the Russians were preoccupied with the northern approaches.

By daylight on 14 August almost the entire Grand Army was across the Dnieper and advancing on Smolensk. However, Napoleon's plan was thwarted by a small Russian detachment led by General Neverovsky, which Bagration had deployed at Krasnyi to watch for any potential flanking manoeuvres. Neverovsky's troops made a successful fighting retreat to Smolensk, 'retreating like lions' as

one French officer described it. Their exploits enthralled the Russian Army, and future guerrilla leader Denis Davidov reflected what many felt at the time: 'I remember how we looked at this division, as it approached us in midst of smoke and dust. Each bayonet shone with an immortal glory.'

Without Neverovky's staunch resistance at Krasnyi, the French might well have reached Smolensk by the evening of the 14 August and taken the city, cutting the Russian line of retreat. However, as a result of this action, Napoleon decided to halt his advance for a day in order to regroup his forces, missing his chance of taking Smolensk by surprise.



General D. Neverovsky



Attack of the 27 th Infantry Division of General Neverovsky.
Art. P. Hess



Battle of Smolensk in 1812.

Art. Alexander Averyanov

Hearing of Napoleon's flanking attack, both Russian armies rushed back to Smolensk. On 15-16 August the Russians repulsed French assaults on Smolensk but were nonetheless forced to abandon the city. Smolensk was almost completely destroyed and of 2,250 buildings only 350 remained intact. Meanwhile, of the city's 15,000 inhabitants only 1,000 remained in its smoking, smouldering wreck. The Russians lost about 10,000 men in the two-day battle. French losses reached a similar figure.

Colonel Benckendorff described: 'Drowned in sorrow, we were abandoning our provinces and their generous population to the enemy's devastation'.

As the Russians withdrew to Moscow, Napoleon attempted to cut their line of retreat but at the Battle of Valutina Gora (Lubino) on 19 August Barclay de Tolly's army succeeded in clearing its way to Dorogobuzh. Once again the fighting proved bloody, this battle claiming over 8,000 French and around 6,000 Russian casualties.

As the retreat continued, Barclay de Tolly concentrated his troops at Soloveyovo, crossing on four bridges to the left bank of the Dnieper. His army was now deployed at Umolye, while Bagration gathered his forces between Mikhailovsky and Novoselok. On the 21st, the 2nd Western Army

proceeded to Dorogobuzh while Barclay de Tolly remained at Umolye until late evening, beginning his movement towards Usvyatye around 9pm by crossing the River Uzha. The French tried to cross the river in his wake but the Russians fought a successful rearguard action at Pnevno Boloto, destroying the bridges. This temporarily reduced the pressure on Barclay de Tolly, who realized a battle would have to be fought before moving much closer to Moscow. He instructed several officers, including Quartermaster-General Colonel Toll, to seek advantageous terrain for battle. As a result, two positions were found: one at Usvyatye, on the River Uzha, and the other at Tzarevo-Zaimische, near Vyazma.

The Grande Armee resumed its advance in three columns. The central column consisted of the Guard, Murat's cavalry, and the I and III Corps. Eugene was to command the left column and Poniatowski commanded the right. Napoleon's main army consisted of 124,000 infantry, 32,000 cavalry, and 587 guns.

The Russian armies have left Smolensk, but Napoleon had no victory. The French army has been exhausted by long marches, constant skirmishes with Russian army. But Napoleon had still not brought the Russians to account in a decisive battle.

General of Infantry Prince Kutuzov

Meantime, Emperor Alexander cautiously followed military events, as the reports from the Army were far from cheerful. Wittgenstein's success at Klyastitzy and Polotsk, and Tormasov's at Kobrin, were overshadowed by the loss of Smolensk and Napoleon's continued march on Moscow. The anxiety in society grew daily, while news from the Army was so disturbing that a new commander-in-chief had to be appointed immediately. In his letter to Alexander on 17 August, General Count Shuvalov, the Tzar's friend and advisor, painted a devastating picture of a grumbling, demoralized and ill-fed Army, blaming Barclay de Tolly for indecision and mismanagement: 'The Army has not the least confidence in the present Commander [...] A new commander is necessary, one with authority over both armies and Your Majesty should appoint him immediately; otherwise, Russia is lost.'⁴¹ The letter reflected the sentiments of a large number of senior Russian officers and motivated Alexander to make a decision. On 17 August he convened a committee to select a new commander. The committee considered only full generals, while excluding two elderly field marshals (76-year-old Count Saltykov and 70-year-old Count Gudovich) on

the grounds of age.

The committee members initially discussed the candidacies of Bagration, Bennigsen, Tormasov, Dokhturov and Pahlen but none of them were supported unanimously. Kutuzov's candidacy was discussed last, since it was a delicate question. Though the nobility and most of the Army had long been talking of Kutuzov's appointment, the members of the committee were well aware that, after the disaster at Austerlitz in 1805, the Tsar disliked Kutuzov, who felt likewise about the Sovereign. For several hours the committee hesitated to make its proposal but finally gathered the courage to recommend Kutuzov. Alexander vacillated for three days before finally signing the decree on 20 August.

Imperial orders were sent to Barclay de Tolly and Bagration, informing them that 'various dire complications occurring after the two armies united, have impelled me to appoint one commander above all others. I have chosen for this post General of Infantry Prince Kutuzov'.

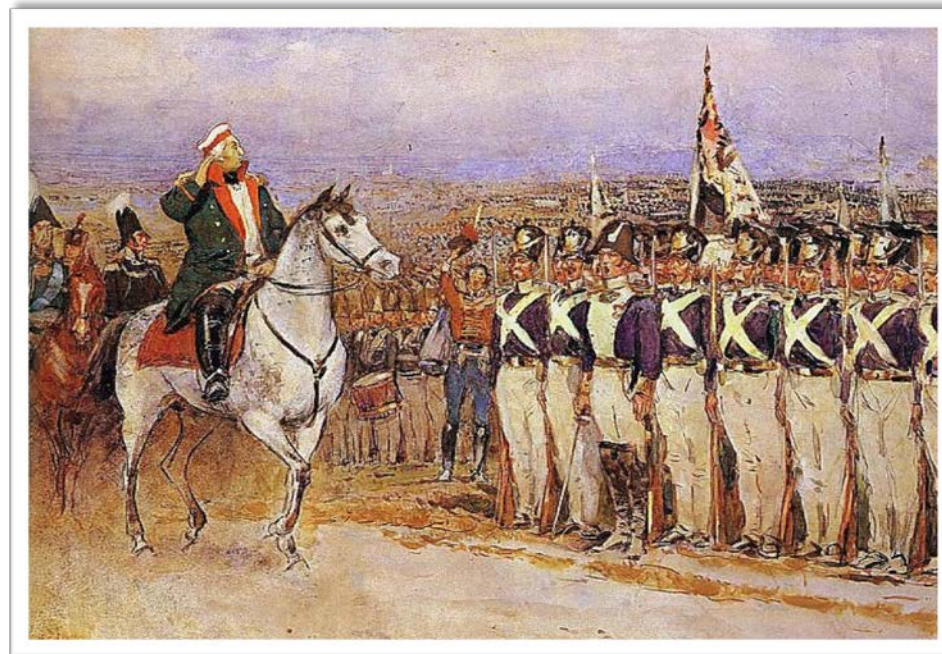




General of Infantry Prince Kutuzov

The Russian armies reached Tzarevo-Zaimische on 29 August 1812. The village may not have been a perfect defensive position, but it had several features to recommend it. Located at the edge of a plain with a virtually unobstructed view for miles around, it was dominated by gently rising ground, which provided the Russians with vantage points for observing enemy movements and for deploying their artillery batteries. Beyond the ridge the Smolensk-Moscow route stretched eastward across marshland and offered an unimpeded avenue of withdrawal in case of retreat. Barclay and Bagration agreed that this was one of the best defensive positions to be found between

Smolensk and Moscow: so they immediately put the soldiers to work, building redoubts and other fortifications.



Kutuzov's arrival in Tzarevo-Zaimische. Art. S. Gerasimov

The same day Kutuzov arrived at Gzhatsk. But then Kutuzov decided to come forward and take up positions in the village of Borodino.

3 September the official Journal of Military Operations recorded that: 'the Army set up its camp near the village of Borodino.'

The position at Borodino, 105 verstas (112km) from Moscow and 279 verstas (297km) from Smolens.

The terrain was rolling, intersected by several streams and sharp valleys, and littered with woods and hamlets. The battlefield stretched from the confluence of the Moscow and Kolocha rivers in the north to the hamlets of Utitsa on the Old Smolensk Road in the south. The Kolocha and several other brooks flowed along the north of the plain, eventually joining the Moscow river. The streams were deeply scored in the ground and marked with steep banks that would have proved serious obstacles for the French attacks, had the hot summer not rendered some of them shallow. There were about two dozen small settlements and four major villages, the most important being the village of Borodino, which gave its name to the battle. The village was noteworthy for its white two-storey Church of the Nativity, the bell tower of which would serve as an advantageous observation point for Russian scouts. The lower stretch of the Kolocha, between Borodino and the Moscow river, had a steep right bank overlooking the opposite bank, which made it easier for the Russians to defend their positions. Beyond the river was a vast field, convenient for cavalry action. Still, the terrain here was hilly with the gullies of the Voina, Stonets and Ognik brooks cutting across it. In the centre the Russians held heights that dominated the surrounding area in all directions. In the south the Russian

positions were covered only by the shallow gullies of the Semeyonovskii and Kamenka streams. The village of Semeyonovskoye occupied a key position on a hill on the east bank of the Semeyonovskii brook, but its wooden houses were useless for defence so they were dismantled. Further south, the extensive Utitsa forest separated Semeyonovskoye from the Old Smolensk Road.

On 1 September, in unbearable heat, the Russians fought a delaying action lasting almost thirteen hours around Gzhatsk, and three days later the rearguard repulsed French attacks at Gridnevo. Meanwhile, Kutuzov's main forces concentrated at Borodino.

The Russian Army was initially deployed in a line parallel to the Kolocha river, with its right flank near Maslovo and the left flank at Shevardino.

The Battle of Shevardino.

On 3 September Bagration called upon all generals of his 2nd Western Army to make a detailed reconnaissance of the position. It was quickly realized that the left wing, anchored on Shevardino, was greatly exposed, since the French could take advantage of the Old Smolensk Road to outflank the Russian position.



General P. Konovnitzin

Early in the morning of 5 September the sound of gunfire was heard from the direction of Kolotsk and by 1pm Konovnitzin's troops came into view, pursued by the French advance guard. As the French advance guard proceeded from Gridnevo to Kolotsk, Konovnitzin called for reinforcements, especially in cavalry, to hold the French cavalry at bay, consequently General Fedor Uvarov arrived to support him. Although senior in rank, Uvarov gallantly subordinated himself to Konovnitzin, telling him: 'This is not the time to discuss seniority. You are leading the rearguard and I am sent to assist you - so command me.' Uvarov's cavalry made frequent charges and the Russian artillery acted with relative

success while, as Konovnitzin reported, 'the infantry largely did not participate in the fighting due to the [broken] terrain.'



Russian soldiers

A Württemberger serving in the Grand Army remembered how: ' [The Russians] chose very advantageous positions. On the left flank, their artillery was covered by a wide building of the monastery that was firmly occupied by the Jagers.'

Numerous cavalry covered the right flank. We unlimbered our guns and the fighting soon turned into a hell. The Russians persisted for a quarter of an hour before they hastily retreated’.

Konovnitzin had no choice but retreat, since he was facing numerically superior forces that were trying to turn his right flank.

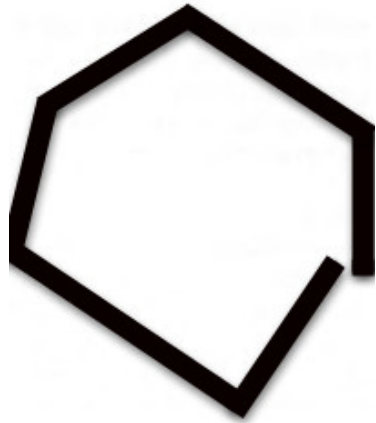
To cover Konovnitzin’s rearguard, the Russian command dispatched the Leib-Guard Jager Regiment to secure crossings across the Voina and Koloch streams. Colonel Karl Bistrom sent Colonel P. Makarov with the 3rd Battalion to deploy in a line along the right bank of the river. To accelerate Konovnitzin’s retreat, Makarov instructed his subordinates to locate fords, since there was only one bridge that could have delayed the Russian retreat.

Quickly retreating from the Kolotsk direction, the Leib-Guard Cossack Regiment and part of Konovnitzin’s cavalry forded the stream on the left side of Borodino, while the Izumsk Hussars led the remaining cavalry across another ford on the right side of the village. This allowed the artillery and other transports to move across the bridge without delay and the rearguard wasted no time in taking up positions on the right bank. The bridge itself was defended by Makarov’s troops.

As Barclay de Tolly reported: ‘the enemy’s repeated attempts to seize the village of Borodino were repelled by the Guard Jagers, the Elisavetgradski Hussar Regiment and an [artillery] battery set up on the right bank of the river.’ Major General Vsevolodsky particularly distinguished himself as he led his hussars in several charges against the French. Supported by artillery and reinforced with three Cossack regiments from Bagration’s 2nd Army, Vsevolodsky was able to defend his position until late into the night.

While Prince Eugene’s troops were engaged in the north, the rest of the Grand Army was slowly approaching the site of the future battle. Near Valuyevo, the French advance guard encountered the Russian skirmishers, firing from bushes and ravines along the Kolocha river.

Shaped like a pentagon, the redoubt at Shevardino was initially designed to anchor the left wing of the Russian positions at Borodino, but eventually became a forward fortification, protecting the approaches to Kutuzov’s left flank. The construction of the Redoubt was begun by some thirty pioneers led by Lieutenants Bogdanov and Oldengren in the evening of 4 September. However, hard ground and lack of manpower greatly delayed the process.



The Shevardino Redoubt

The redoubt's key weakness lay in the fact that it was exposed to the fire from a hill located some 200m away south-west. This spot was not protected and would allow the French to deploy a battery that would inflict heavy casualties on the redoubt's defenders. Napoleon assumed that Gorchakov's troops constituted the left wing of the Russian Army and believed the redoubt at Shevardino would impede the deployment of the French troops.

As the French engineers put up bridges across the Kolocha, Napoleon, 'without waiting for the other Divisions of the first Corps to arrive', ordered General Compans' 5th Division of Davout's corps to attack the redoubt from north-west, while the 16th and 18th Divisions of Poniatowski's

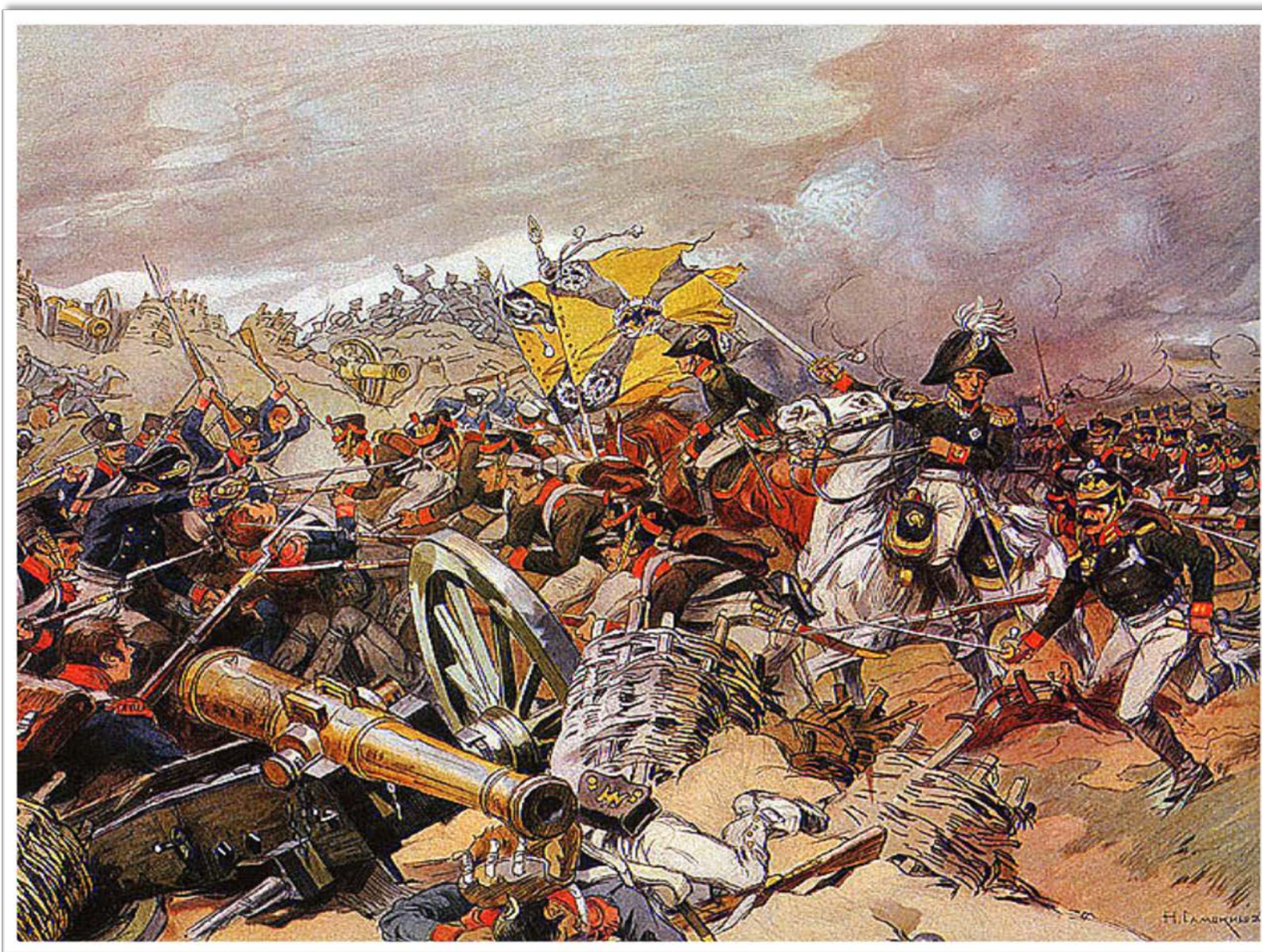
V Corps, which was approaching Yelna, would

make a flanking attack through the wooded terrain from the south-west. Followed by the two cavalry corps of Nansouty and Montbrun, Compans' troops crossed the Kolocha at Fomkino around 3pm. The total number of French forces committed, including Murat's cavalry, was approximately 34,000-36,000 men with about 194 guns. On the Russian side, Prince Andrei Gorchakov, the nephew of the renowned Field Marshal Alexander Suvorov, commanded about 8,000 infantry, 4,000 cavalry and thirty-six guns. The 27th Division was deployed in battalion columns behind the redoubt, with the Odesskii and Simbirskii Regiments in the first line and the Vilenskii and Tarnopolskii Regiments in the second. The 2nd Cuirassier Division was arranged further behind, between the fortification and the Utitsa woods. The Russian reserves included the 2nd Grenadier Division, deployed behind the 27th Division. The 2nd Combined Grenadier Division was initially deployed near the village of Semeyonovskoye, but four of its battalions were later committed to the fighting at Shevardino. Major General Karpov II's detachment of seven Cossack regiments was further south on the Old Smolensk Road.

September 5th Russian troops withdrew after a few fights to Shevardino redoubt, where there was heavy fighting.



Attack of Russian Cuirassiers at Shevardino. Art. A. Averyanov



The redoubt at Shevardino three times passed from hand to hand. But till the night Frenchmen couldn't grasp a redoubt.

Counterattack of the 27th division of the general Neverovsky.
Art. N. Samokish

The Battle of Shevardino was now finally over. Bagraion submitted a glowing report of his troops: ‘although the enemy forces gradually increased and [constantly] reinforcing its columns, endeavoured to overwhelm our troops, they were vanquished everywhere by the courage of the Russian troops. Kutuzov acknowledged in a letter to his wife that ‘yesterday we had an infernal battle on the left flank’

The Shevardino Redoubt was almost completely destroyed and the area around it was strewn with the corpses of men and horses.

The Battle of Shevardino proved to be costly for both sides. Most Russian studies acknowledge that the Russians lost approximately 6,000 casualties and several guns. French losses are usually estimated at between 4,000-5,000 men and some French regiments were particularly hard-hit.

The defence of Shevardino allowed the Russian troops (of the 2nd Western Army) to move to new positions around Semeyonovskoye. This redeployment certainly should have been done earlier, but it was not, and in given circumstances, Bagraion and Gorchakov had little choice but to fight. Kutuzov later acknowledged that the battle gave the Russians time to continue the construction of fortifications at Borodino and determine the direction of Napoleon’s

main attack. Indeed, the loss of Shevardino should have convinced Kutuzov that Bagraion and Barclay de Tolly were right in asserting that the left flank could not be adequately defended.



French captured the redoubt, but they saw only dead Russian soldiers.

Art. A. Averyanov

Battle of Borodino.

The Russian position at Borodino consisted of a series of disconnected earthworks running in an arc from the Moskva River on the right, along its tributary, the Kolocha (whose steep banks added to the defense), and towards the village of Utitza on the left. Thick woods interspersed along the Russian left and center (on the French side of the Kolocha) made the deployment and control of French forces difficult, aiding the defenders. The Russian center was defended by the Raevsky's Redoubt, a massive open-backed earthwork mounting 19 12-pounder cannons which had a clear field of fire all the way to the banks of the Kolocha stream.

Kutuzov was very concerned that the French might take the New Smolensk Road around his positions and on to Moscow so placed the more powerful 1st Army under Barclay on the right, in positions which were already strong and virtually unassailable by the French. The 2nd Army under Bagration was expected to hold the left. The fall of Shevardino unanchored the Russian left flank but Kutuzov did nothing to change these initial dispositions despite the repeated pleas of his generals to redeploy their forces. The Russian position therefore was just about 8 kilometres (5 mi) long with about 80,000 of the 1st

Army on the right and 34,000 of the 2nd Army on the left. The Russian main reserve consisted of the 5th Infantry Corps. The Guard Division was arranged with the Preobragenski, Semenovski, and Ismailovski Guard Regiments in the first line. The Lithuanian and Finland Jager Guard Regiments were in the second line. In addition to the Guard, the reserve contained the 1st Converged Grenadier Regiment which had three battalions drawn from the 4th and three battalions from the 17th Divisions, the 1st Cuirassier Division, and the main artillery reserve, 306 guns.

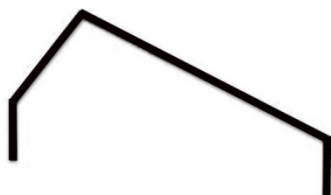


Kutuzov on the Borodino field.

The main Russian position- Bagration's Fleches (Flèche is a French loanword meaning "arrow" or "spire") **and Kyrgannaya Hill (Rayevsky's battery or Rayevsky's Redoubt).**

Bagration's fleches. Built three fleches: northern, southern and rear. Rear fleche was behind the north and south fleches.

Enemy attack



The Southern fleche

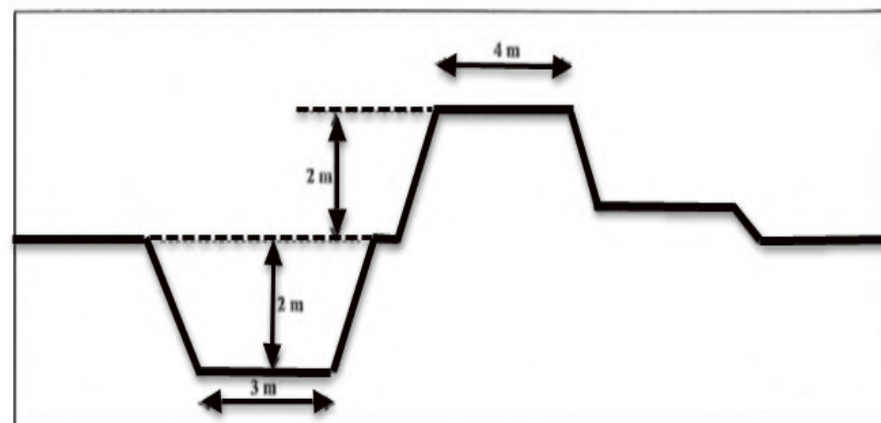


The Northern fleche



The Rear fleche

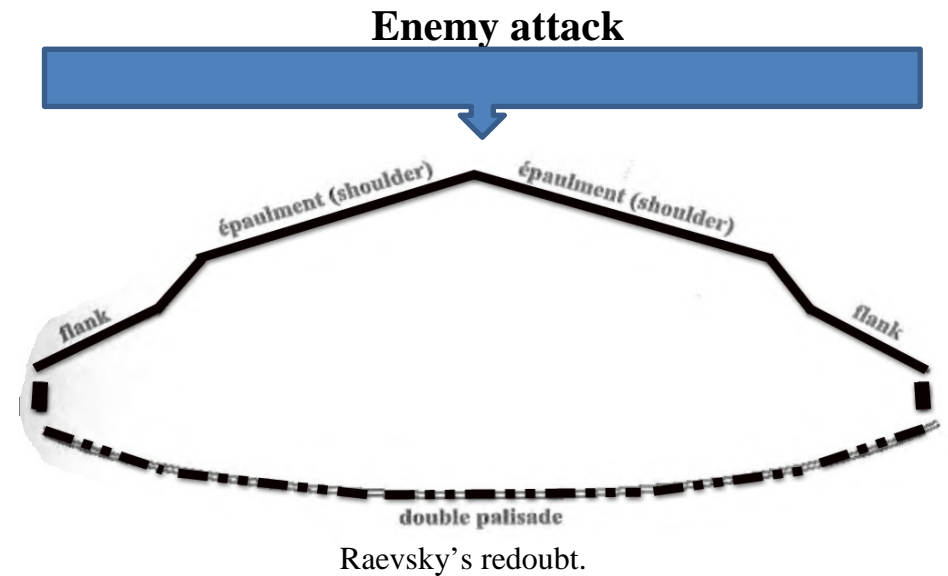
Cross-Section of the Southern Fleche



Russian artillery on the Rear fleche

Rayevsky's Redoubt (or the Grand Redoubt), was built by the troops of the Moscow Opolchenye, under the direction of Lieutenants Liprandi and Bogdanov.

The redoubt was constructed in the shape of a wide 'V' with two 72m-long epaulments (shoulders) converging at a 100-degree angle and reinforced by two 19m flanks. According to Bogdanov, by 11pm on 6 September, the fortification was surrounded by '[a] 3.5 sazhen-wide [7.3m] and 1.5 sazhen-deep [3.1m] ditch'. Sent to help construct the redoubt, Bogdanov was met by Rayevsky, who told him that 'due to the open and rolling terrain, the redoubt can be attacked by the cavalry ...' So six wolf pits (other sources indicate ten) were dug in a checkerboard formation leading up to the ditch. Bogdanov then spent the entire night working on improving the redoubt's defences. He recalled that it was necessary, despite very limited time, to reinforce both flanks with Brustwehr and ditches while the opening in the rear was to be closed by a double palisade, with two openings on the sides [...] We used wood and iron from the nearby villages that were taken apart. By the time the battle began, Bogdanov's men managed to reinforce the flanks and put up a double palisade with 8-foot-high outer and 6.5-foot-high inner walls.



The redoubt was initially defended by twelve guns of the 26th and six guns of the 47th Light companies, though some sources indicate that six guns of the 12th Battery Company might have been deployed here. A Battalion of the Poltava Infantry Regiment was assigned to defend the guns. Inspecting his redoubt a few hours before the battle, Rayevsky turned to his officers: 'Now, gentlemen, we can be assured. Emperor Napoleon saw a simple open battery yesterday but his troops will find a true fortress here today.'

In preparation for the coming battle, Kutuzov toured the army, encouraging it. He was preceded by the Black Virgin of Smolensk icon. Kutuzov read a

proclamation to his soldiers saying, **“Soldiers, fulfill your duties. Think of the sacrifices of your cities to the flames—of your children who implore you for protection. Think of your emperor, your lord, who regards you as the source of all his strength; and tomorrow, before the sun sets, you will have traced your faith and allegiance to your sovereign and country, in the blood of the aggressor and of his hosts.”** Kutuzov’s passage through the ranks was preceded and followed by the incantations and prayers of the Russian Orthodox priests who sprinkled holy water, swung their censers, and blessed the troops and their colors. The Russian army was whipped up to a religious fervor with exhortations to drive the satanic invaders from the sacred soil of mother Russia.

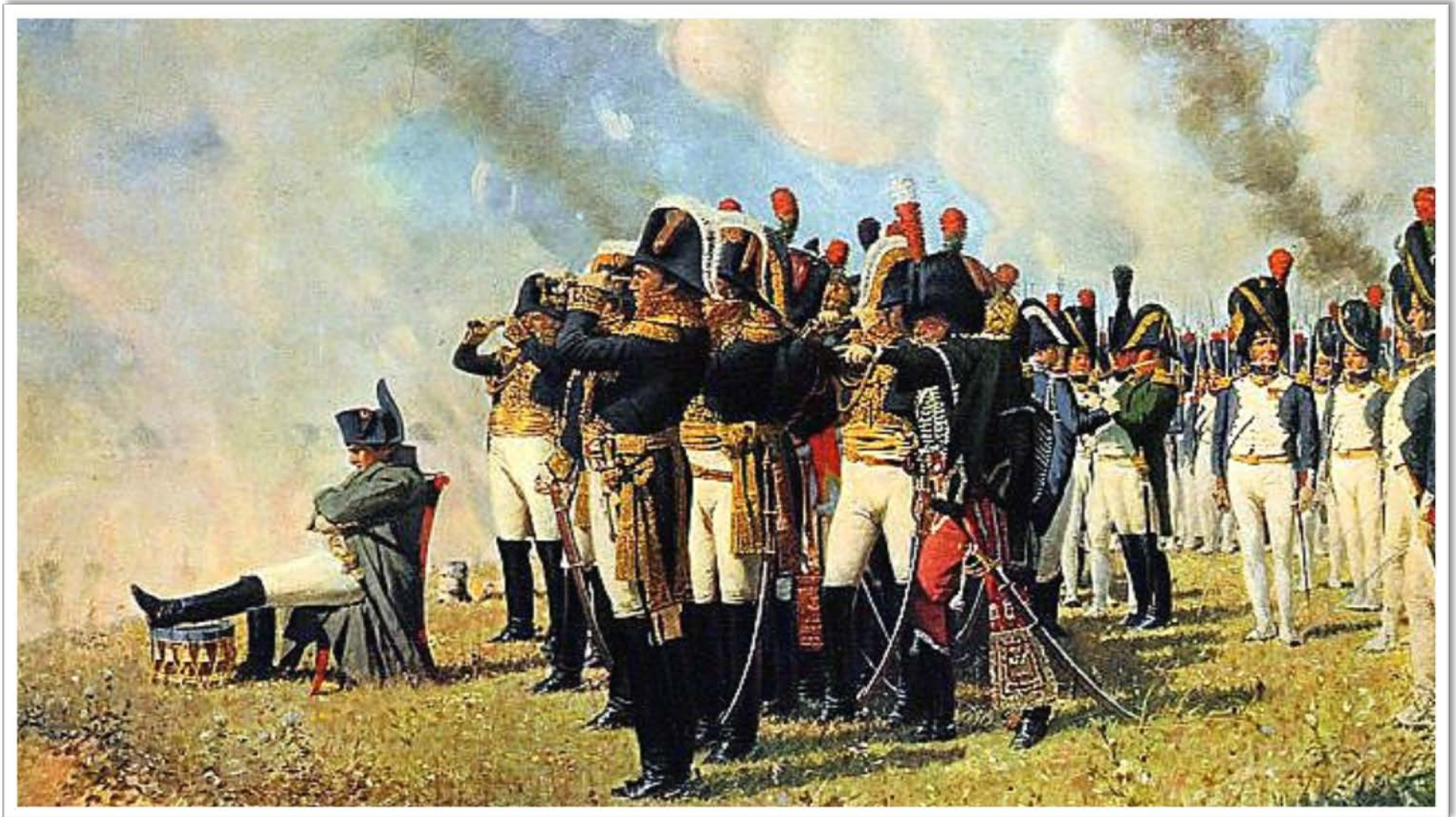
The eve of the battle was a Sunday, and many participants commented on an unusual calmness that descended on their camp that day. To uplift the morale of his troops, Kutuzov had the icon of the Black Virgin of Smolensk paraded through the ranks of the Army. The sight of the famous miraculous icon, accompanied by the robed priests singing Old Russian prayers and swinging their smoking censers and sprinkling drops of holy water, had a remarkable effect on the soldiers. ‘It reminded us of preparations for the Battle on Kulikovo Field’, noted one officer,

referring to the great battle between the Russian and Mongol forces in 1380.

Napoleon also drafted a proclamation that was to be read to the army, which included the statement that **‘victory depends on yourselves... it will give us abundance, good winter quarters, and a prompt return to our country! Conduct yourselves as at Austerlitz, at Friedland, at Vitebsk, at Smolensk, that the latest posterity may relate, with pride, your conduct on this day; that they may say of you – He was at the great battle under the walls of Moscow’.**

Early on the morning of 7 September, however, Ney reported that the Russians were still in position, and that the army was awaiting the order to attack. Napoleon ‘arose, called his officers, and went out, exclaiming, **“We have them at last! Forward! Let us go and open the gates of Moscow!”**’

Kutuzov set up a convoluted chain of command for the battle. Barclay de Tolly and Bagration continued to command their respective armies, and in a general order Kutuzov stated that: **‘unable to be at all points during the battle, I place my trust in the acknowledged experience of the army commanders [Barclay de Tolly and Bagration] and leave it up to them to act as they see fit in the circumstances to achieve the destruction of the enemy’.**



Napoleon at Borodino Height.

Art. V. Vereschagin

At about 5.30am Napoleon took up his command post by the Shevardino Redoubt. The sun rose, and Napoleon exclaimed, ‘Behold the sun of Austerlitz!’

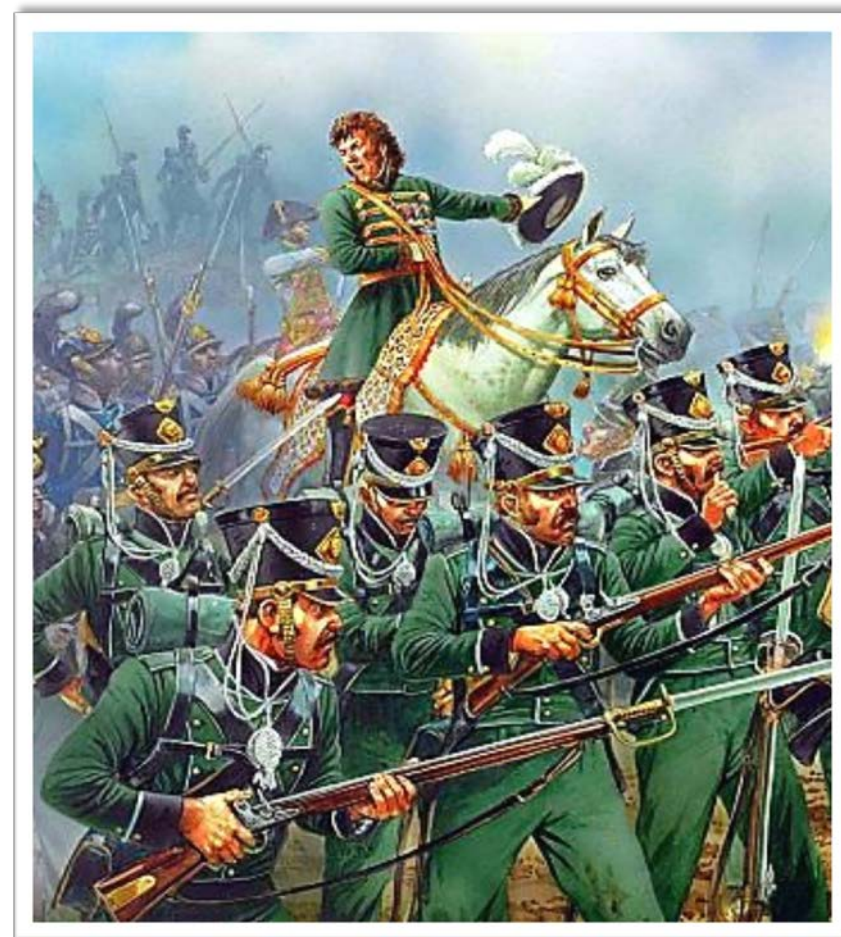
At 6.00 the French artillery has begun bombardment of Russian position. The battle began. The Russians replied, and the bombardment continued, with the exposed dispositions of the Russian army leading to heavy casualties, the troops under fire standing stoically while they were shot down.



Attack of the French infantry.

On the left flank of the main attack the French army was against Bagration’s fleches.

8 times the French armies attacked Bagration's positions. Losses were heavy on both sides.

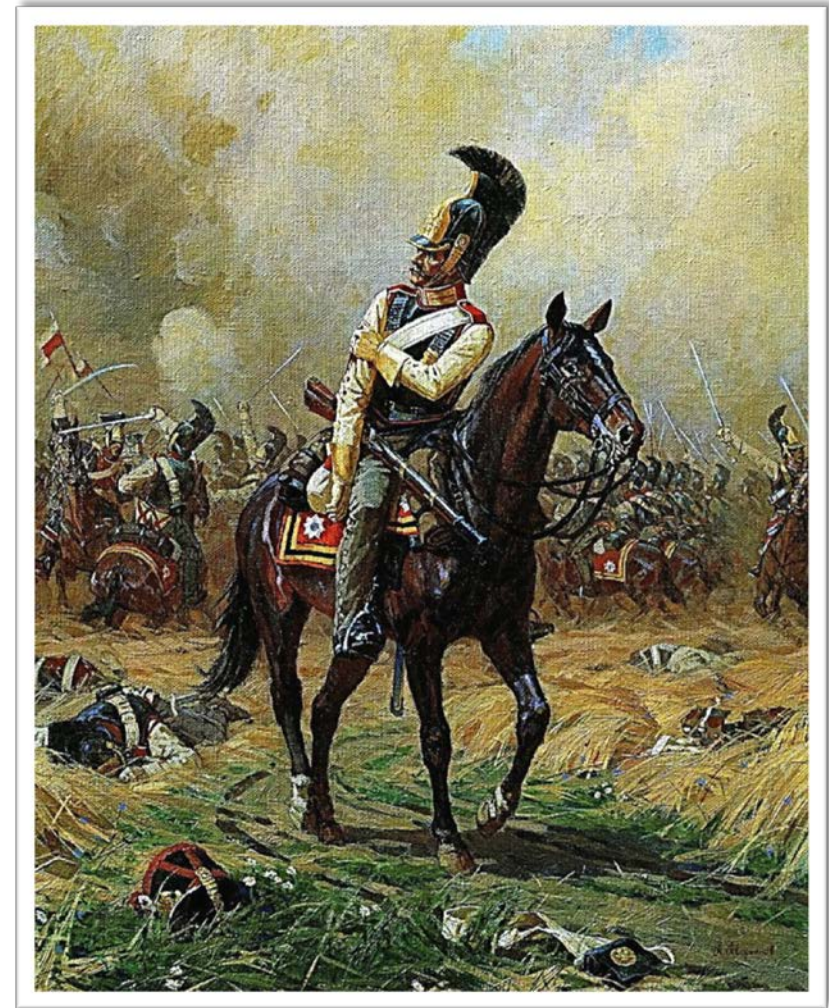


Marshal of France Joachim Napoleon-Murat sends soldiers to Bagration’s fleches.

Two infantry divisions of Joseph Marie, Count Dessaix and Jean Dominique Compans, supported by 102 guns, assaulted the flèches directly. The first attack was repelled by fire from the guns and Russian Jager infantry units.

In the second attempt, the French dragged their artillery closer to the Kamenka Brook and strengthened the troops with three extra infantry divisions from Michel Ney's corps, three from Joachim Murat's cavalry corps and additional artillery. After the attack at about 7 a.m. Compans' troops burst into the left flèche. However the storm was repelled again by Russian infantry, the Akhtyrski hussars and Novorossiyan dragoons. During the struggle, several French generals were wounded.

At about 8 a.m., after a bombardment, the French stormed the flèches again, some being eliminated with canister shot. Compans' infantry retook the left flèche while Francois Roch Ledru des Essarts' troops rushed into the spaces between flèches. The offensive was repulsed by a bayonet counter-attack of soldiers of the 2nd Combined Grenadier and 27th Infantry Divisions.



The wounded Russian Dragoon.
Art. A. Averyanov

At about 9 a.m. Napoleon ordered the fourth assault. The French succeeded in taking the flèches one hour later, but were driven out soon after.



Fight for the Bagration's Fleches. Art. A. Averyanov

During the fifth attempt, at 11 a.m., the French took the right and the left fortifications, and Lieutenant-General Aleksandr Tuchkov was killed. However, Konovnitzin's division managed to counter-attack and repelled the French again.

After regrouping, Jean Andoche Junot's infantry gained the rear of the troops defending the flèches, but it was overthrown shortly after, and Ney's and Davout's frontal attacks were also parried.

The seventh assault was made futile by the Brest, Ryazan, Minsk and Kremenchug Infantry Regiments, while Ney's and Davout's offensives were warded off once more.

The last storming was so powerful that the Russian artillery failed to stop the French columns. Bagration ordered the infantry to counter-attack and not to wait till the French approached the flèches. The fierce combat lasted about an hour. Bagration was badly wounded and evacuated from the battlefield. From 60,000 men assembled for storming the flèches, up to 30,000 were lost. Historians have marked the slaughter as the "grave of the French infantry". This had been the biggest battle ever recorded in terms of the casualty rate, around about half the people on the field of battle ended up as casualties. Against Bagration flushes Napoleon had concentrated

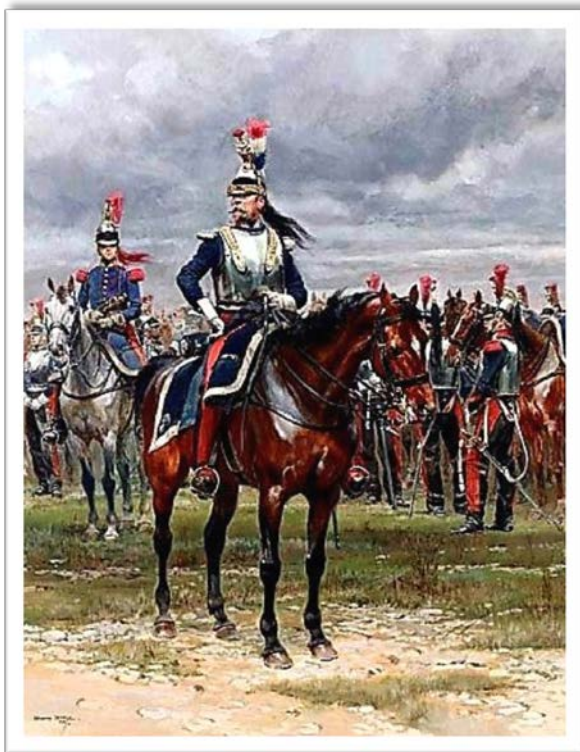
approximately 60,000 infantry, 20,000 Alamo and 297 guns. Davout was destined to carry the burden of the attack, aimed at seizing Bagration's fleches.

By 11:30 a.m. it was clear that the French had finally seized permanent control of the fleches. Konovnitzin withdrew his troops behind the ravine of the Semenovskaya, while General of Infantry Dohturov took command of the 2nd Army of the West. The French had committed about 60,000 men and 400 guns to the battle over the fleches. The Russians had faced them with about 300 guns. The battle had lasted five hours before the French found themselves in indisputable control of the fleches.



Prince Bagration is wounded. Art. A. Vepkhvadze

After success on the left flank, Napoleon sent to battle the French dragoons, heavy cavalry and cuirassiers. They had a special iron protection under the title- Cuirass and iron helmet. And therefore they were called - "iron people".



French cuirassiers.

They were to attack the Russian troops departed to Semyonovskiy ravine after the Defense made Bagration's fleches. Three cavalry corps and a Friant's infantry Division attacked Russian positions.



Attack of the French cavalry.

French cavalry met the fire of the Russian artillery and soldiers of the Leib-Guards Izmailovski Regiment, the Leib-Guard Finlandski Regiment, the Leib-Guard Litovski Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division.



The commander of the Leib-Guard Izmailovski Regiment
Colonel M. Khrapovitsky



The commander of the Leib-Guard Litovski Regiment
Colonel I.Udom

The French cavalry was stopped and had heavy losses. The Leib-Guard Litovski Regiment went to counterattack and forced Frenchmen to depart on initial positions.



The Leib-Guard Litovski Regiment went to counterattack.
Art. N. Samokish



Flag of the Leib-Guard Litovski Regiment



Flag of the Leib-Guard Izmailovski Regiment



Fight of the Polish cavalry and Leib-Guard Izmailovski Regiment.
Art. A. Ejov

In difficult times Guard helped Russian cavalry 1st Cuirassier Division.



Attack of the 1st Cuirassier division against the French troops.
Art. V. Mazurovsky

Guard, the 3rd infantry division and the 27-th division held their positions until 9 o'clock in the evening.

The Polish uhlans and infantry under command Ponyatovsky tried to attack again the left flank of Russian army, but were stopped by the 3th Infantry Corps (general-leutenant N. Tuchkov), Moscow militia (opolchenie) and the suitable reserves. Hand-to-hand fight for the Utitzki Hill (Old Smolensk Road)

lasted more than an hour.



Counterattack of the Moscow militia (opolchenie) against Ponyatovsky's infantry. Art. Keller



Moscow opolchenie. Art. I. Arhipov

By personal example inspired Russian troops their commanders on the left flank.



General-lieutenant
K. Baggovut



General-major
A. Tzvilenyov



General-major
P. Ivelich



Lieutenant-colonel
E. Kern



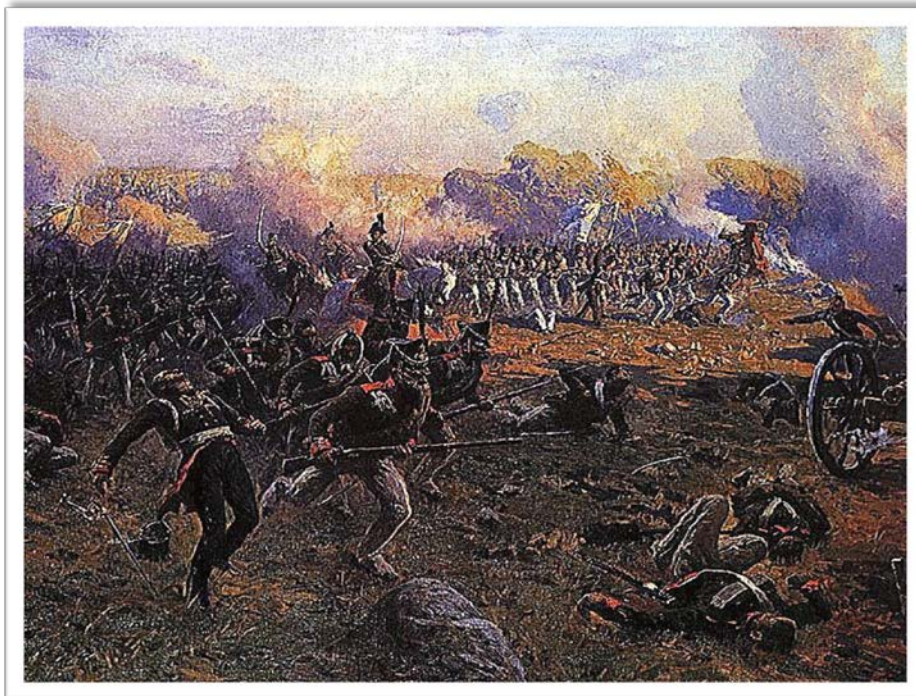
General-lieutenant
N. Tuchkov



General-major
I. Shakhovskoy



Flag of the Leib-Guard Grenadier Regiment

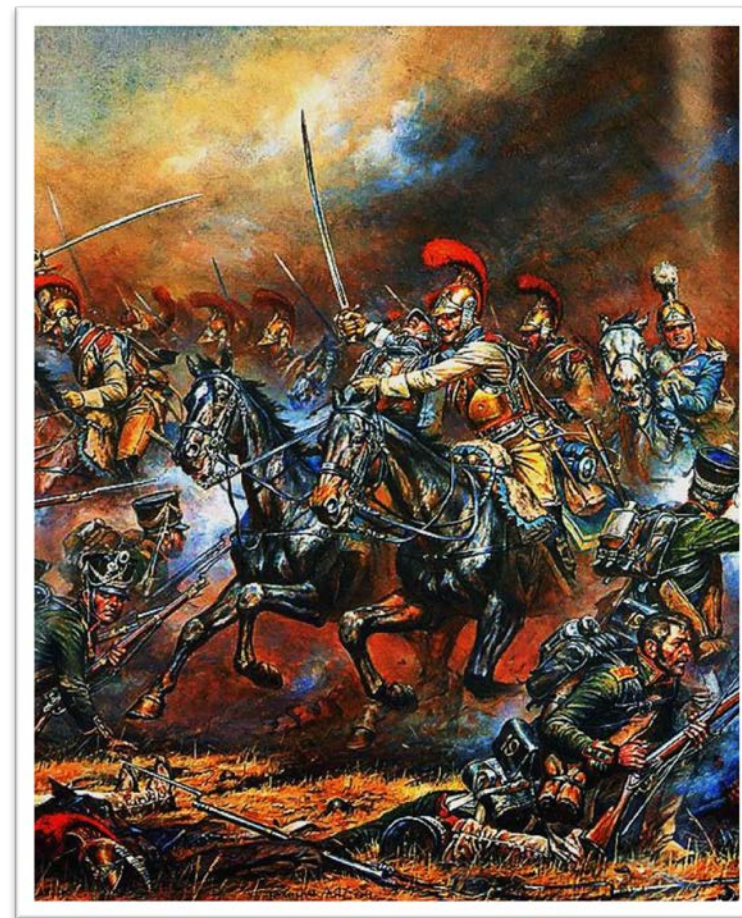


Utitzki Hill. Counterattack of the Leib-Guard Grenadier Regiment
Art. M. Grekov

Napoleon decided to focus efforts on the center of the Russian positions. The blow of the French army was directed against Grand redoubt (Kurgannaya Hill or Rayevsky's Redoubt). The French army attacked the redoubt large forces of infantry and cavalry. Their actions supported 300 guns.

Rayevsky's Redoubt was occupied by the 26th Battery Company (twelve guns) of Lieutenant Colonel Shulman (the Russian troops thus called the redoubt the 'Shulman Battery') and six guns of the 47th Light

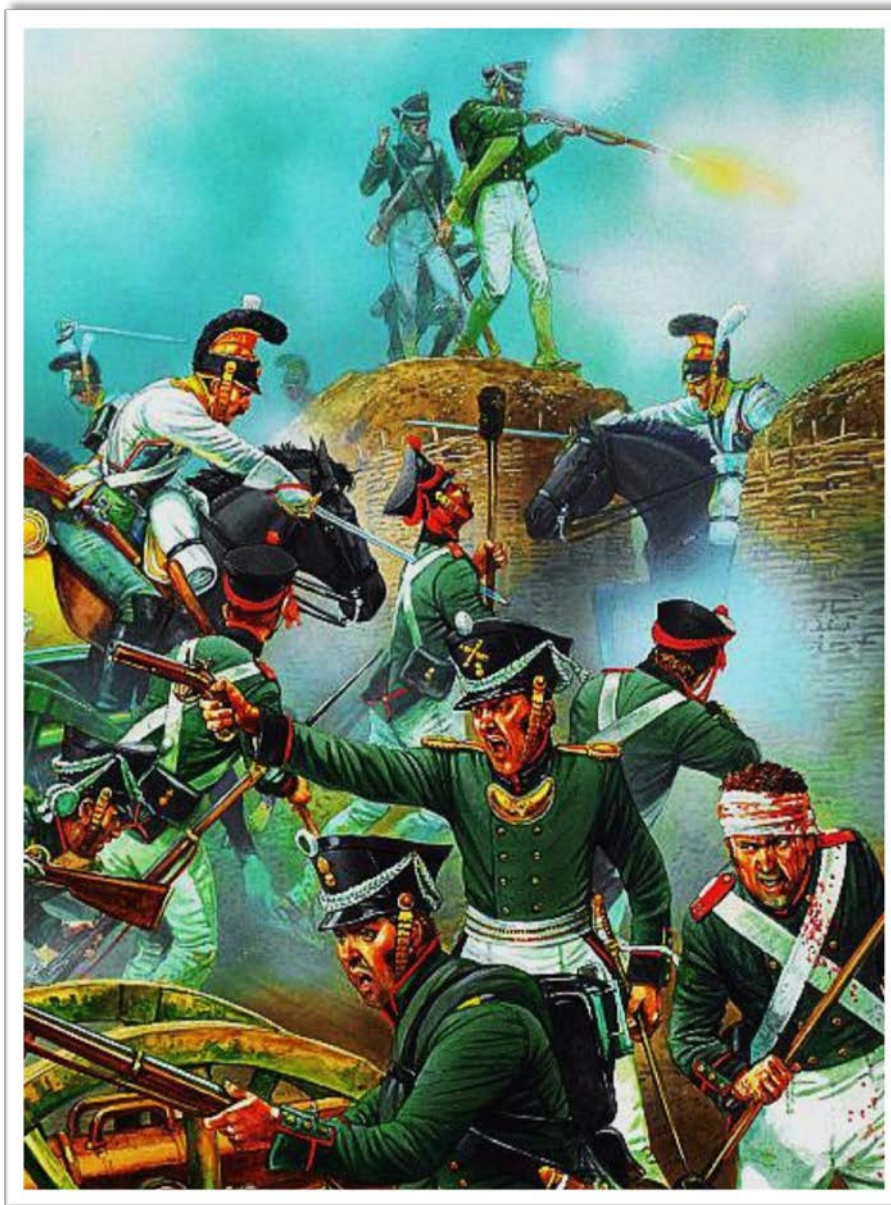
Company, under protection of VII Corps;(the Russians had approximately forty-six guns concentrated in and around the redoubt) additional batteries were deployed to the north of the redoubt and, according to Larionov, the total number of guns between the New Smolensk Road and the redoubt was close to 110.



Attack of the French cuirassiers.

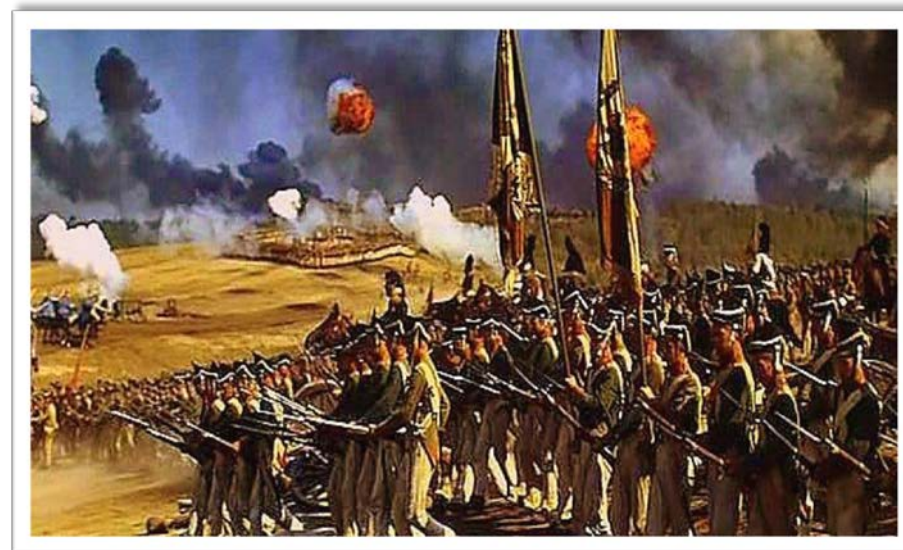


Russian artillery on the Raevsky's redoubt. Art. S. Troshin



The battle for the Grand redoubt.

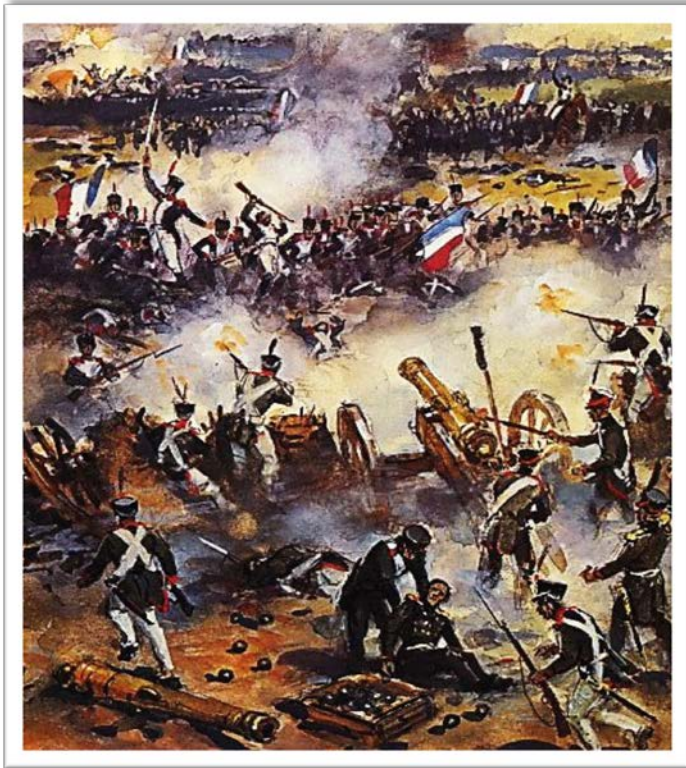
French troops had very heavy losses, but broke into the redoubt and captured it. But the General Ermolov organized a counterattack and the redoubt was returned.



Counterattack Russian troops.



General of infantry and artillery
A. Ermolov



French is not considered loss, and two more times attacked redoubt. Another bloody battle swept over the redoubt. A bloody melee ensued in which all sense of military discipline and organization disappeared. It was a very hard fight. The Raievsky's Redoubt presented a gruesome sight. 'The redoubt and the area around it offered an aspect which exceeded the worst horrors one could ever dream off,' according to an officer of the Vistula Legion, which had come up in support of the attacking force. 'The approaches, the ditches and the earthwork itself had disappeared

under a mound of dead and dying, of an average depth of 6 to 8 men, heaped one upon the other. The French have said that it is a redoubt of death. 60% of the French cavalry was destroyed there. Russian troops had no more forces and retreated. French troops also had no more strength. Their attempts to attack the Russian army then had no success.

Attacks of Frenchmen to a redoubt were prevented by raid of Platov's Cossack and Uvarov's cavalry corps on the northern flank. The raid had little success, but he did not let Napoleon sent into battle Guard.



Attack of the Cossacks .

Art. A. Averyanov



During one of the French attacks, General Kostenetsky, a tall man of extraordinary physical strength, seized a ramrod and led a counter-attack against the Polish Uhlans (Lancers). Art. A. Averyanov



General-major V. Kostenetsky

Napoleon retained some 20,000-30.000 fresh troops (Imperial Guard, the Vistula Legion and I Cavalry Corps) but the remaining forces were exhausted physically and mentally. The French spent the day after the battle tending wounded and resting. Napoleon was in a state of extreme depression. Napoleon and his marshals were amazed at the stubbornness of the Russians and feared the prospect of meeting them again. The battlefield was covered with blood, with horses and men lying singly or in heaps. Dumonceau wrote: "Passing behind the Grand Redoubt we saw its broad interior sloping sharply down towards us, all encumbered with corpses and

dead horses jumbled up with overturned cannon, cuirasses, helmets and all sorts of scattered wreckage in an indescribable confusion and disorder." It was not until the end of battle that many of the bodies could be recovered from No Man's Land having laid there for several hours. Neither Napoleon nor any of his generals had ever before seen such horrors or so many slain in such a small area.



The end of the battle of Borodino.
Art. V. Vereschagin

Conclusion.

The battle was a bloody meat grinder, devoid of the subtle strokes so common in Napoleon's earlier victories in Italy, at Austerlitz, Jena and Friedland. Later, during his exile, the deposed French Emperor stated that out of the 50 battles he had fought, it was at Borodino that "The greatest valour was displayed and the least success gained. Of all my 50 battles, the most terrible was the one I fought at Moscow (Borodino). The French showed themselves to be worthy victors, and the Russians can rightly call themselves invincible."

Kutuzov resolved to sacrifice Moscow in order to save his army. 'Napoleon is like a torrent which we are still too weak to stem' he explained to colonel baron Toll. 'Moscow is the sponge which will suck him in.'

Moscow was in Napoleon's hands but Tzar Alexander I refused to negotiate a truce. Napoleon left Moscow and began a long retreat. Napoleon suffered his first of this scale defeat and the old general Kutuzov was the first general before whom Napoleon was fleeing. Russia had withstood Napoleon's best punch and returned to him a deathblow in the next years crowned with marching into Paris and occupation of France.

No wonder remembers the whole of Russia about the day of the Borodino.

I remember the feat of our ancestors, and I'm proud of it.

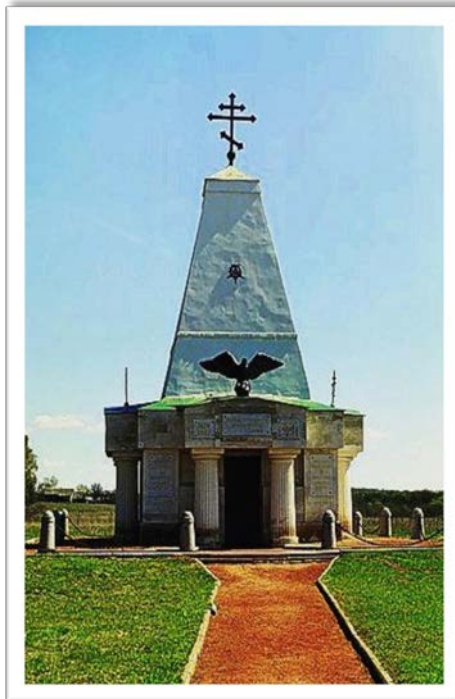




Monuments on the field of the battle of Borodino



The monument of the 1st Grenadier division



The monument to the 1-th and 19-th Jager Regiments



The monument of the 2nd Cuirassier division



The monument to the 12th Infantry Division



The monument to the 23th Infantry Division



The monument to the Astrakhan Cuirassier regiment



The monument to the 24th Infantry Division



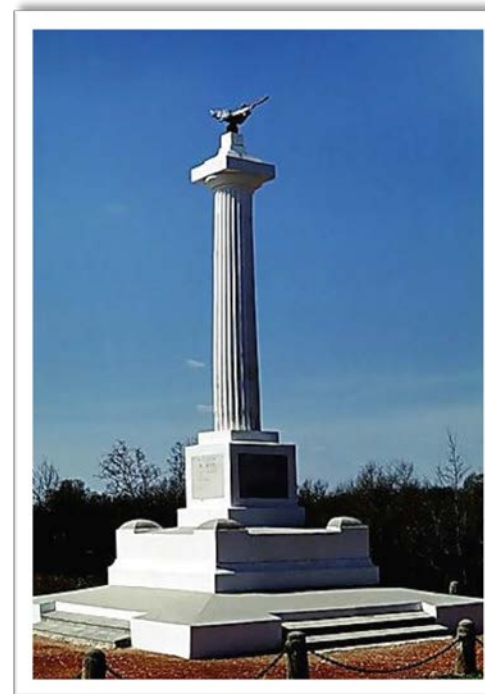
The monument to the Leib-Guard Litovski Regiment



The monument of the Cavalierguard and Horse Guards



The monument of the Leib-Guard Artillery Brigade



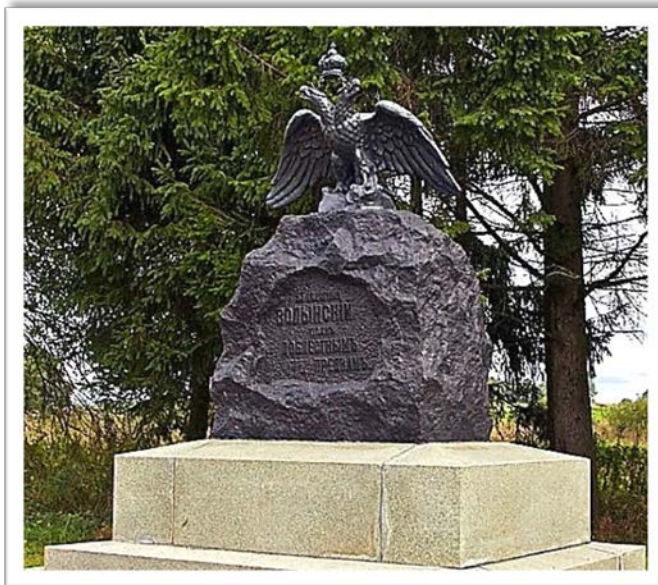
The monument of the Leib-Guard Jaeger Regiment and Sailors Guards



The monument to the 2-th horse artillery battery Leib-Guard



The guns of the French army



The monument of the Leib-Guard Volynski Regiment



The monument of the Leib-Guard Izmaylovski Regiment



The monument of the Leib-Guard Cossack Regiment



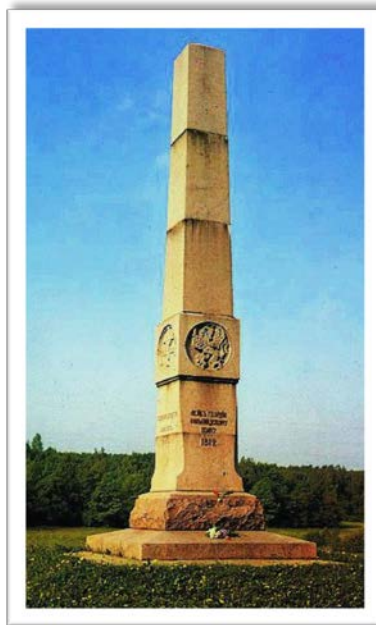
The monument of the Cuirassiers Leib-Guard



The monument on the grave of General Neverovsky



The monument of the Leib-Guard Pavlovski Regiment



The monument of the Leib-Guard Finlyandski Regiment



The monument of the Malorossiyski Cuirassier regiment



The monument of the Muromski Infantry Regiment



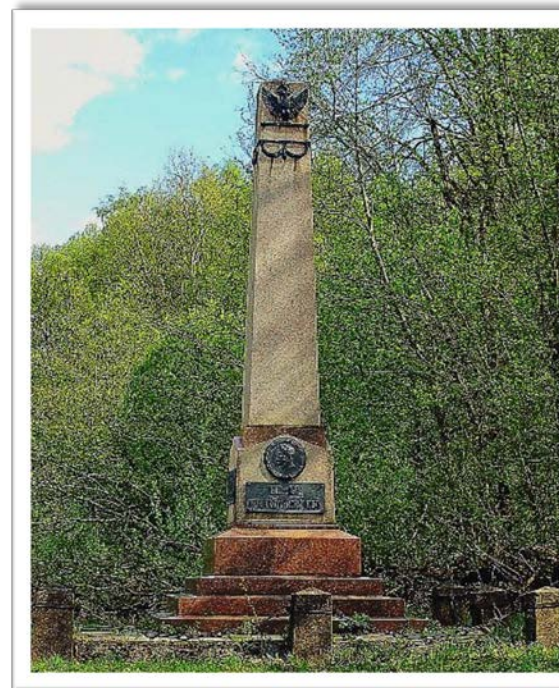
The Bagration's fleches today



The monument of Field horse artillery



The monument of engineering Troops on the fleches



The monument of the Sumskoi Hussar Regiment



The monument of the 4th Infantry Division



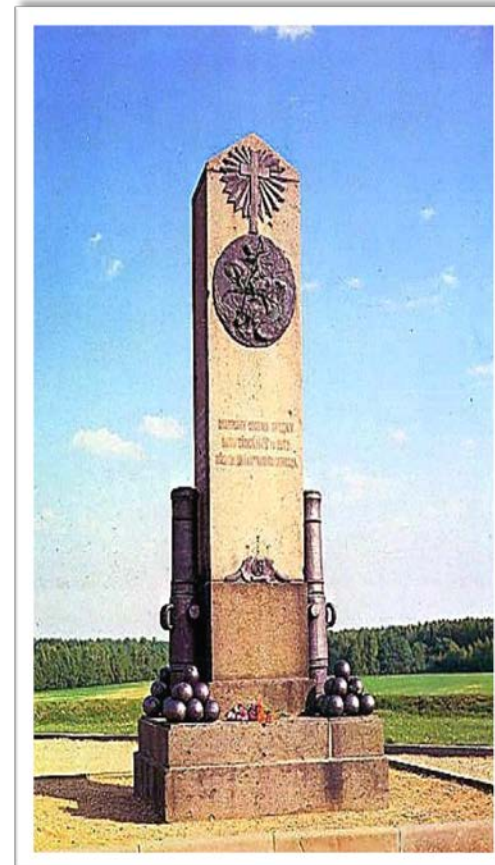
Mass grave 5-th army soldiers died in October 1941 in the battle against the fascists



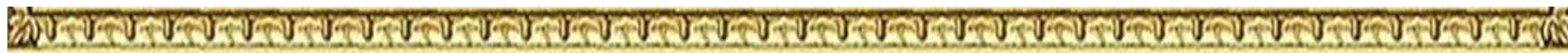
The monument of the Vilenski Infantry Regiment



The monument of the 4-th cavalry corps

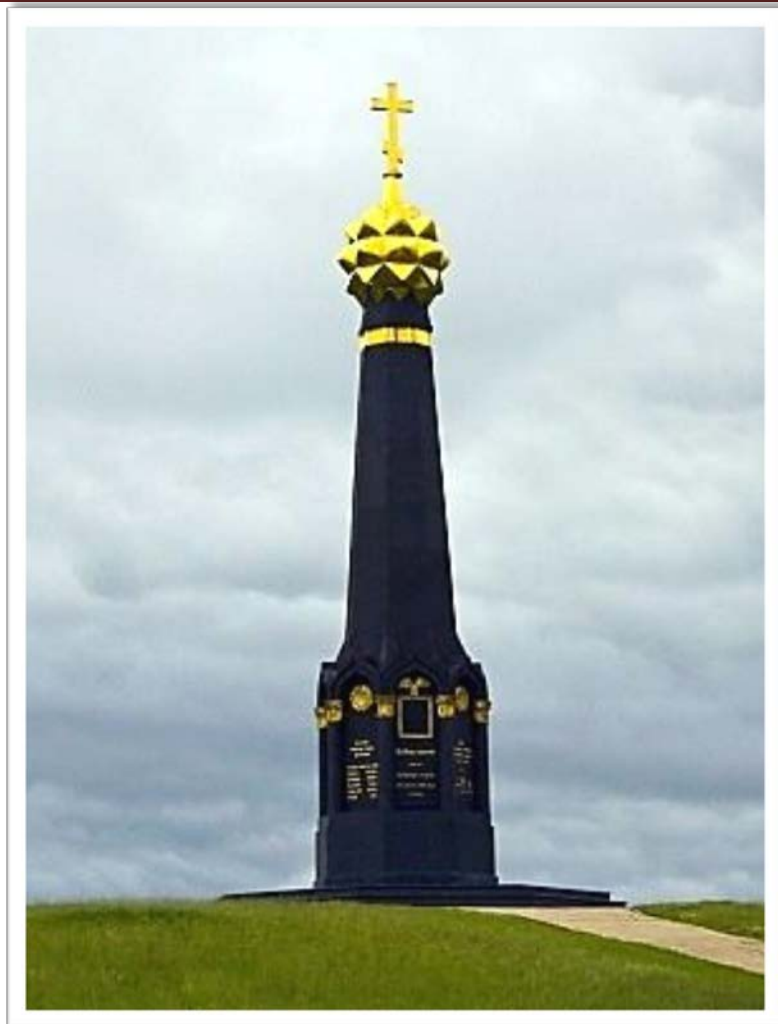


The monument of the 12-th battery company (Shevardino)





The monument on the command point of the Kutuzov in the village of Gorki



The main monument on the Raevsky's battery









The monument in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Borodino.



This great year has passed. But never will be forgotten the past battles and your exploits. Alexander I



1812-1912. August 26 (September 7).
Grateful Russia to its defenders



The monument Moscow and Smolensk opolchenie on the left flank of the Russian army.



The monument on Utitzki Hill the troops under the command of General N. Tuchkov and General K. Baggovut



Mass grave of soldiers of the 32nd Rifle division Red Army died on the Borodino field in October 1941 in fight against fascists.



The monument to the victims of the French army Installed in 1913 with the permission of Russian Emperor.



Uniforms of the Russian army in 1812



*Russian general
of cavalry*



*Horse opolchenie
from Bashkiriya*



*Cossack from Kaluga
(opolchenie)*



*Officer from Leib-Guard
Uhlan Regiment*



*Officer from
Leib-Guard
Izmailovski regiment*



*Unter-officer
from Litovski infantry
regiment*



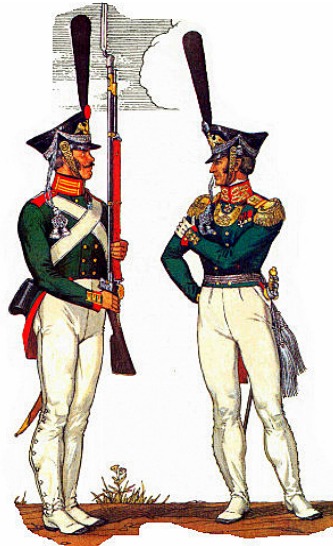
*Private and unter-officer
from Jager regiment*



*Private from Butyrski
infantry regiment*



*Artillerymen from
Guard foot artillery*



*Private and Staff-officer
Leib-Guard Preobrazhenski
regiment*



*Hussars from
Russia-German legion*



*Officer from
Leib-Guard Grenadier
regiment*



Officer and unter-officer from Leib-Guard Jager regiment



Cossacks general



Officer from Dragoon regiment



Russian cuirassier



Russian horse-jager



Private from Polish ulan regiment (Russia)



Officer from Cossack regiment

Uniforms of the French army (Grand armee) in 1812



French marshal



Officer from horse guard



Spain cuirassier



Austria grenadier



Austria jager



German jager



Poland infantry



Saxon cuirassier



Austria hussar



Poland Uhlán



Private of Poland infantry



Private of German infantry



Holland carabineer



Jager officer (France)



Bavarian cuirassier



Cuirassiers general (France)



Spain lancer (uhlan)



Holland cuirassier

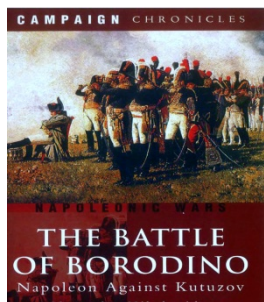


Austrian light cavalry



Holland horse grenadier

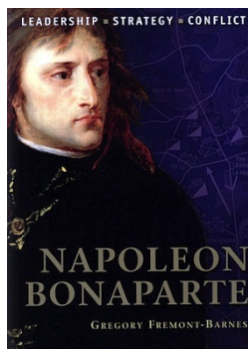
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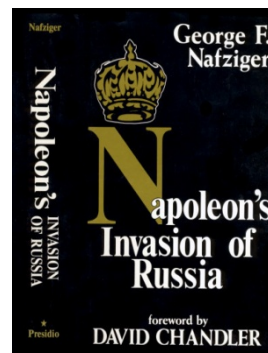
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by George F. Nafziger

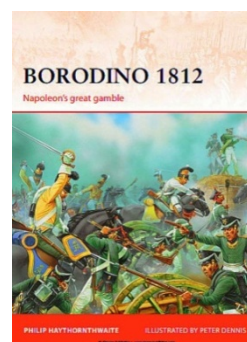
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BORODINO 1812

Napoleon's great gamble

Philip Haythornthwaite

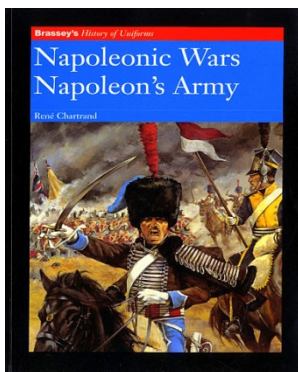
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Napoleon's Army**

By Rene Chartrand

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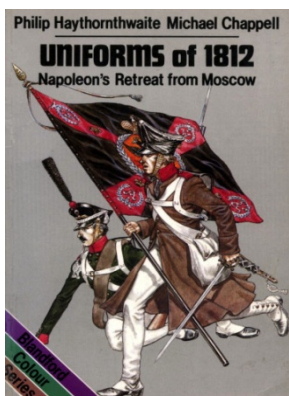
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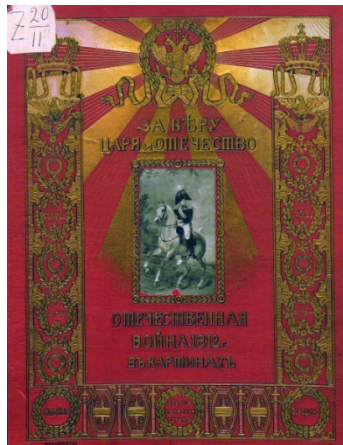
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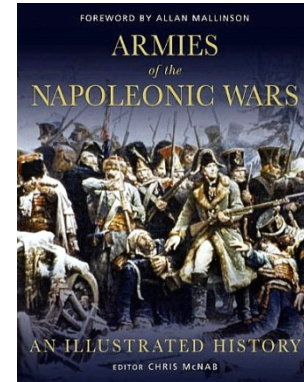
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AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY**

Editor Chris McNab
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