

1-1-2004

Mechanised Horsemen: Red Cavalry Commanders and the Second World War

Stephen M. Brown
University of Wollongong, sbrown@uow.edu.au

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/artspapers>



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#), and the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Brown, Stephen M., Mechanised Horsemen: Red Cavalry Commanders and the Second World War 2004, 477-491.
<https://ro.uow.edu.au/artspapers/600>

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: research-pubs@uow.edu.au

Mechanised Horsemen: Red Cavalry Commanders and the Second World War

Stephen Brown (University of Wollongong)

A casual observer could be forgiven for thinking that there were two Red Armies in the Second World War. By the end of September 1941, the Red Army had effectively lost Ukraine, eastern Poland, Byelorussia, the Baltic States, much of European Russia and about half of the five-million-strong force with which it began the war three months earlier. It was seemingly powerless in the face of the Nazi invasion. The Red Army of 1943-45 reconquered all of this territory, albeit at the cost of millions of lives, and drove the Nazis back to Berlin achieving total victory in May 1945.

As for why the Red Army did so badly in 1941, there is no single cause. Some historians argue that superior technology gave the Germans an edge, others that the combat experience gained by the Germans in the conquest of Western Europe in 1940 was decisive. Post-Stalin Soviet writers emphasised Hitler's successful surprise attack. In a spectacular blunder, Stalin allowed himself to think that the three million foreign soldiers on his border represented Hitler's way of testing his commitment to the Nazi-Soviet Pact of August 1939. The Red Army was unsure whether to focus its efforts upon building fortified positions at the frontier or to rely upon its tanks to manoeuvre against the enemy. In the event, the Red Army did neither and its soldiers either were killed or captured to no good military purpose.¹

The Red Army's rapid expansion after 1934 was not accompanied by the necessary increase in the number of competent officers needed to prepare the new recruits for their tasks, a shortfall that was exacerbated by the arrests and executions of the late 1930s.² The Red Army was purged in 1937-38 of its best and brightest officers. In their place, Stalin promoted his own buddies from the era of the Russian Civil War of 1918-20. Stalin's choice

of Red Army leadership centred on the Red cavalry, an arm of service fanatically loyal to Stalin but seemingly hopelessly out of date because of the mechanisation of warfare.

One of these factors, the role of the Red cavalrymen, is the focus of this paper. Many commentators have criticised the pernicious role of a politically loyal but militarily inept clique of veteran cavalry officers who dominated the Red Army for much of the inter-war period and whose influence was accentuated by the purges. It is a staple of writing about the Second World War that the Red Army suffered from its Civil War heritage, especially its reliance upon cavalry.³ Stalin first attached himself to the Red cavalry during the Civil War, the last war in which horse and rider played a decisive role. It was an alliance that benefited both sides. Stalin was determined to build both a reputation and a support base in the Red Army. In Stalin, the Red cavalrymen found a valuable political patron. After the Civil War, Stalin and the Red cavalrymen advanced in tandem, each a crucial pillar of support for the other. K.E. Voroshilov was the most prominent of the Red cavalrymen, serving as Peoples Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs from 1925 to 1934 and as Commissar for Defence from 1934 to 1940. Voroshilov has often been criticised as an ignoramus on horseback, presiding over a reactionary military establishment dominated by cavalrymen and unwilling to come to terms with the new military technology of tanks and aircraft.⁴

The influence of the Red cavalrymen was especially pronounced after the notorious military purge of 1937-38 led to the arrest and execution of thousands of senior officers. The principal victim of the purge was M.N. Tukhachevskii, the Red Army's leading authority on mechanised war and Voroshilov's great rival. Ninety per cent of the Red Army's most senior command was removed. Of the ten members of the Chief Military Council who survived, seven were veterans of the First Cavalry Army, the Civil War cavalry force commanded by Voroshilov and his life-long friend and ally, S.M. Budennyi. The cavalrymen benefited from the purge in that they experienced rapid promotion in the years 1937-41. On the other hand, exercising control of the Red Army at this time was a poisoned chalice given the chaotic state of an army that had suffered the loss, often permanent, of more than forty

thousand officers. When Voroshilov was removed from his post as Commissar for Defence after the costly Winter War against Finland in 1939-40, he had to admit to his successor that the situation of the Red Army could hardly be worse.⁵

The disastrous performance against Finland and the spectacular success of the Nazi invasion the following year would seem to be convincing proof that the legacy of the Red cavalry was one of great harm to the Red Army. Nonetheless, the suggestion made in this paper is that the influence of the Red cavalrymen should be viewed not only in terms of the defeat of 1941 but also in terms of the victories of 1943-45. It will be argued that cavalrymen played a significant part in the Red victory, that the majority of Red cavalrymen did not fit the stereotype of conservative horsemen resistant to the mechanisation of warfare, and that their training and outlook made them well suited to their new tasks when, from 1937, Red cavalrymen were redeployed in large numbers to the mechanised corps and other ground forces. They brought with them a cavalry culture that aided rather than hindered the Red victory.

To make this point, it is necessary first to re-examine three myths concerning the Red cavalry on the eve of the Nazi invasion. The first myth revolves around Voroshilov and his alleged role in prolonging the stultifying influence of an anachronistic Red cavalry. Voroshilov's legacy to the Red Army was a complex one and he was guilty of significant errors of judgement. Promoting a conservative cavalry culture was, however, not one of his faults.

From the evidence made available from Soviet archives, it is clear that Voroshilov was neither hostile to the mechanisation of the Red Army nor an advocate of the Red cavalry. The transcripts of the annual Red Army reviews conducted by the Chief Military Council and its predecessor reveal that Voroshilov, far from being obsessed with old-style cavalry warfare, was pragmatic, realistic and critical of the "Don Quixotes" as he liked to call those who thought that cavalry would dominate the battlefield of the next war.⁶ Like nearly everyone else, Voroshilov knew that the internal combustion engine would supersede the horse and any nostalgia he might have felt for the days of the Civil War was tempered by a measured appreciation of the significant weaknesses displayed by

the mounted arm in the war against the Poles in 1920. Voroshilov believed, correctly, that cavalry would have a niche role in the coming war but one that would support the infantry, tanks and planes, not substitute for them.

During his fifteen years in charge of the Red Army, Voroshilov presided over and actively encouraged the mechanisation of the Red Army. The Red Army could call upon only 100 tanks in 1928. In 1938, the Red Army boasted 15,000 tanks, the largest tank park in the world. Meanwhile the proportion of cavalry remained at the same level throughout Voroshilov's tenure — about 10 per cent of the total — until 1937 when it began to fall not just as a proportion of the total force but in absolute numbers. Voroshilov often crossed swords with Tukhachevskii, but the debate was not about whether tanks were valuable but about how they should be employed.⁷ The Red Army developed the world's first mechanised corps in 1932, an innovation that comprised nearly 500 tanks and 200 armoured vehicles in a single unit. It is true that Voroshilov was sceptical of massed tank corps, an idea championed by Tukhachevskii, and in 1939 readily accepted the opinion of the Red Army's leading post-purge tank authority, D.G. Pavlov, that the mechanised corps should be broken up. Pavlov argued that massed tank units failed the test of battle in the Spanish Civil War and eastern Poland and should be parcelled out as infantry support.⁸ Voroshilov and Pavlov were proved wrong on this point and the decision was quickly reversed in 1940, the first decision made by Voroshilov's replacement as Commissar for Defence, S.K. Timoshenko. To be wrong on particular issues is not the same as opposing the mechanisation of the Red Army.

It is worth noting that when the purge arrived in 1937, it came from outside the Red Army, that is, its genesis lay with Stalin and the NKVD. It is equally true that Voroshilov and the Red cavalrymen, once prompted, became enthusiastic purgers.⁹ Whatever the motives for the purge, its aim was not to restore the cavalry to its former place of glory. The Red cavalry halved in size between 1937 and 1941, at the same time as the remainder of the Red Army grew rapidly.¹⁰ In other words, the purge coincided with a dramatic reduction in the size of the Red cavalry and the

movement of cavalymen to other arms. Cavalymen presided over the purge but the preservation of the cavalry arm was obviously not part of the agenda.

While the 80,000 cavalry remaining, at least on paper, in 1941 represented a tiny fraction of the five million strong Red Army, it might be argued that this was 80,000 too many. One reason the cavalry survived as long as did was that even the tank's most ardent supporters acknowledged its tendency to break down and its continuing vulnerability to enemy fire. As G.K. Zhukov would later recall, there was a lot to criticise about the tanks in the possession of the Red Army even in 1938:

They were fast and had considerable firepower. Indeed, our probable adversaries had nothing to equal them in this respect in the same class. However, they were not manoeuvrable enough, vulnerable to gunfire, and broke down much too often. Besides they had petrol engines, which made them easily inflammable.¹¹

A second myth is that the Red cavalry received special treatment from Stalin who overvalued his Civil War experience. Exaggerating the importance of the Civil War is one of the errors usually attributed to Stalin and his cavalymen allies. The Red cavalry, the symbol of the Civil War, is often described as Stalin's favourite arm of service¹² In reality, Stalin was too knowledgeable about modern war to be sentimental about the cavalry. When in April 1940 Stalin appeared at the party-military conference organised to review the disastrous war against Finland, the Soviet dictator noted that in modern war, artillery, air power and tanks were what counted. About the experience of the Civil War, Stalin was wholly negative. As he put it:

People are still dominated by this cult of the traditions and experience of the Civil War and it deprives them of the psychological possibility to adjust to the new methods of waging a contemporary war [...]¹³

Stalin singled out M.P. Kovalev, a former cavalryman who was trying to carve out a new career as an army commander:

Comrade Kovalev performed worst. As a good soldier who had fought in the Civil War and become a hero and gained fame, he found it hard to shake off the experience of the Civil War that has

become inadequate today. The traditions and experiences of the Civil War are absolutely inadequate and those who believe them adequate will certainly perish.¹⁴

Stalin was not the first to criticise the Civil War experience. Rather than glorifying the Civil War, it was a standard rhetorical device for Red Army commanders in the inter-war years to point out that the coming war would be nothing like the Civil War. M.V. Frunze, L.D. Trotsky and Voroshilov himself routinely made statements criticising “Civil War attitudes” just as Stalin would do in the quotations above. Red Army commanders lived in fear of being charged with trying to re-fight the wars of the past.

Stalin, if anything, undervalued the contribution that the Civil War military experience might make to wars of the future. His tune only changed after the Second World War. Commentators noted that the Second World War repeated the pattern of the Civil War; the Red Army could not hold ground at first, was driven back towards Moscow but then manoeuvred successfully to punch holes in the defences of an overstretched opponent. Soviet writers after the Second World War often drew comparisons between the cavalry of the Civil War and the tank operations of 1941-45. With its sixteen thousand sabres and its supporting cast of infantry, artillery and machine guns, the First Cavalry Army constituted, for Soviet writers, an example of strategic cavalry, that is, capable of operating independently on the broader theatre of war and not limited, like most other cavalry, to reconnaissance, battlefield charges, pursuits and raids.

After the Second World War, Stalin’s propagandists even claimed that the operations of the First Cavalry Army, by combining mobility, firepower and mass to outflank and encircle the enemy, was the real basis for the concept of Deep Operations in the 1930s and the successful tank battles of the Second World War.¹⁵ While the connection between cavalry operations in the Civil War and tank operations in the Second World War was exaggerated in order to avoid any mention of Tukhachevskii’s role, these post-war claims suggest that the value of the Civil War as a laboratory for war in the future almost certainly was underestimated rather than exaggerated before 1941. P.A.

Rotmistrov, a former cavalryman and celebrated tank commander in the Second World War, summed up this view when he praised the experience of the cavalry in the Civil War, especially its characteristic:

massing in the decisive direction, sudden and quick blows using manoeuvre, seizing the flanks with the aim of ensuring his complete defeat. These principles lay at the basis of the working out of a theory of using new means of struggle, tank warfare.¹⁶

A third myth is the prevalent idea that cavalrymen are by definition conservative because their arm seems to change so little with the passage of time. The popular image of the European cavalryman after the Napoleonic Wars was that of a pampered aristocrat clinging to an outdated mode of warfare. The image captures only part of the story of an arm of service that made strenuous efforts to modernise. This was true especially of the tsar's cavalry. The Russian cavalry was the first to remodel itself on the basis of the lessons of the American Civil War of 1861-65, training to engage the enemy both mounted and dismounted and to make more use of firepower to complement the more traditional mass formation charges. These lessons did not enable the cavalry to impose its stamp upon the trench warfare of the First World War but would prove invaluable in the Russian Civil War.

Budennyi and Voroshilov's First Cavalry Army was the largest and most successful unit of Red cavalry in the Civil War. Budennyi would later find himself saddled with a reputation as a cavalry conservative. However, in the Civil War, Budennyi was criticised by his opponents for sullyng the reputation of the cavalry with his unorthodox tactics of refusing to charge and instead relying upon firepower to win battles.¹⁷ Having failed to attract sufficient numbers of tsarist officers or Cossacks, groups that gravitated towards the anti-Bolshevik White movement in the Civil War, the Red cavalry made a virtue out of necessity by using the firepower of revolvers and machine guns to neutralise the White advantage in horsemanship and swordplay. Budennyi's cavalrymen preferred the revolver to the sword and became expert in using machine guns mounted on peasant carts to soften up their opponents.

In summer 1920, the First Cavalry Army moved rapidly across Ukraine and into southern Poland. When battles went to plan, they followed the pattern noted by an American observer:

Budennyi invariably tried encircling movements in order to reach the rear of the opponent without fighting. If he ran into opposition, he did not persist but tried elsewhere [...] Having four divisions at his disposal, he could feel the line at different points with part of his force while the remainder was in reserve, ready to exploit a success [...] In this method of handling cavalry, Budennyi may be regarded almost as a model to be followed.¹⁸

This cost-effective manoeuvring worked only part of the time. Casualties overall were high, a fact that is not surprising given that the Poles, in particular, had modern weapons, including air power. In the case of the Polish campaign, ten thousand cavalymen, more than half the initial force, were out of action after four months of fighting.¹⁹ In the words of Isaac Babel, the celebrated short-story writer who served under Budennyi, to fight with the First Cavalry Army was to attend “a huge, never-ending service for the dead”.²⁰ The tank armies of the Second World War would fight on these same battlefields and faithfully repeat this pattern of continual movement despite appalling casualties.

During the 1920s and 1930s, cavalry was neither the pampered child of the Red Army nor a stagnant backwater. It was not enough for the cavalryman to know how to ride, shoot and take care of his horse, though these tasks were difficult enough. Cavalry was under constant pressure to improve its performance, to master dismounted action in the 1920s and to work closely with tanks and aircraft in the 1930s. Precisely because they were constantly under attack as anachronistic, the cavalymen knew that they had to justify their existence or be pensioned off. It was an arm that prided itself on initiative and independence, important qualities in a Stalinist setting that was too often characterised by routine and conformity. There was a Sisyphean task for there was simply no way to make cavalry sufficiently safe from bullet and shell to satisfy the critics.

The pressure did not come simply from well-known critics such as Tukhachevskii or V.K. Triandifillov.²¹ Until the purges, the Red Army command was home to lively debate and criticism

concerning the performance of the various arms. In 1928, I.E. Iakir told Budennyi that he “should not curse people who only desire good to the cavalry. We must make radical changes in terms of getting the cavalry’s weapons right and in terms of cooperation with infantry. The cavalry costs us millions and we will simply have to shoot it in time of war.”²² A.S. Bubnov, who formerly served with the First Cavalry Army, agreed, claiming that “if the government viewed a proper evaluation of the cavalry, it would ask us why are we wasting the money”.²³ On this occasion, Budennyi’s only comeback was to insist that “in war-time, we will show you”.²⁴

For cavalrymen passionately committed to their arm, the hope was to prove their critics wrong. They could take comfort in the fact that in 1928, there was no real possibility of abandoning cavalry altogether. In the absence of sufficient numbers of tanks and armoured vehicles, cavalry remained the principal means of mobility on the battlefield and the wider theatre of war. In the 1920s, the Red cavalry attempted to display its expertise in firepower, to be effective fighting dismounted and mounted and to protect itself from air attack. In the 1930s the new Soviet strategy of Deep Battle incorporated cavalrymen who were to work alongside the tanks in penetrating the deep rear of the enemy. The principal trend in the 1930s was the attempt to create a “mechanised” or “armoured” cavalry that would work in tandem with the mechanised corps.

The pressures upon the Red cavalrymen did not let up. In 1936, for example, Voroshilov complained that “the horse is too vulnerable to the air, to enemy firepower and to chemical warfare, so much so that it will be difficult for the cavalry to wage war at all”.²⁵ The cavalry division already had an artillery regiment, a tank regiment and was well equipped with machine guns. The next step, Voroshilov proposed, was to get rid of one of the three cavalry regiments and replace it with an infantry-machine gun regiment. The following year, the cavalry commanders themselves acknowledged how difficult it was to defend itself against air attack. Their demand was for an anti-aircraft division using tank tracks that would keep up with the cavalry. Cavalry meanwhile had to focus its attention on movement at night, the only avenue it had

to avoid detection from the air. Changes to the cavalry's organization and tactics were sometimes implemented successfully and sometimes revised or shelved altogether. What was constant was the frantic race to find a winning formula for the beleaguered horsemen. For some, the sensible response was to admit defeat but, according to Zhukov, for the best and brightest of the cavalrymen, the challenge was to prepare better for modern war.

As Inspector of Cavalry, Budennyi was indefatigable in his efforts to publicise the virtues of the Red cavalry even if that meant denigrating its rival, the tank. Budennyi could barely contain his glee when at the review of 1936, he was able to seize upon a report that "the speed of tanks is a concern because in mountain conditions the tank only moves at one and a half kilometres an hour". Budennyi noted that "at that rate, it will be vulnerable not only to artillery but to spears".²⁶ Yet even Budennyi effectively surrendered in 1937 when he accepted promotion out of the cavalry to the command of the Moscow Military District. Budennyi's legacy was not a nineteenth-century cavalry capable only of charges and sabre rattling but a mounted force that would have been unrecognisable even to those who fought in the Civil War. On the eve of the Nazi invasion, a standard cavalry division, apart from its 9,240 cavalrymen, comprised thirty-four tanks, eighteen armoured vehicles and 136 pieces of artillery. Far from being cocooned from the realities of modern war, Red cavalrymen were well acquainted with their inevitable replacement, the tank.

The Red cavalry therefore was dynamic out of necessity, more undervalued than overvalued and treated with much more scepticism by its military and political masters than most commentators recognise. Most importantly, it produced some good soldiers. It is certainly true that former cavalrymen were in charge of the Red Army that was defeated in 1941. When the Nazis invaded, Stalin placed his trusted cavalrymen in command of the Soviet frontier. Voroshilov commanded the North-West Front at Leningrad, S.K. Timoshenko was in charge of the West Front at Minsk and Budennyi led the South-West Front protecting Kiev. Like the Red Army as a whole, the veterans of the First Cavalry Army failed in their efforts to repel this devastating attack.

On the other hand, it was a younger generation of former cavalrymen who commanded the Red Army when it was winning. The turning-point battle of the Second World War was Stalingrad in 1942-43. Three of the principal Red commanders at Stalingrad were G.K. Zhukov, K.K. Rokossovskii and A.I. Eremenko. All three were recycled Red cavalrymen who attended the Leningrad Cavalry School together in 1924 and later made a successful transition to command mechanised units. Arguably, the most famous and successful soldier of the Second World War was Stalin's wartime Deputy Commissar for Defence, Zhukov. Zhukov was trained as a cavalryman, fought in the Civil War and even commanded the Fourth Cavalry Division, formerly the spearhead of the First Cavalry Army. He left the cavalry only in 1939 when he fought the Japanese in the Far East. In his memoirs, Zhukov pointed out that his transition from Red cavalryman to Soviet marshal was not a fluke. Because of its prestige from the Civil War, the cavalry attracted many of the best and brightest volunteers.²⁷

Zhukov and his classmates were the advance guard for a large posse of Red cavalrymen whose careers were transformed in the years leading up to the Second World War. After 1939 whole corps and divisions of cavalry became the basis for new mechanised units.²⁸ The migration of cavalrymen to the tank corps was testimony to the versatility of the cavalrymen but also to the fact that the Red cavalry suffered relatively minor losses during the purges compared to the situation elsewhere in the Red Army.²⁹

The Red Army suffered from two great disruptions in the 1930s. Until the early 1930s, the size of the Red Army was about half a million men. In response to the deteriorating international situation, the regular Red Army in 1935 was required to integrate 400,000 extra soldiers. In 1936, the Red Army increased by a further 50 per cent or 400,000 more men. By 1939, there were more than three million in the Red Army and that figure would rise to more than five million two years later.³⁰ The Red Army simply could not find officers to cope with the expansion. By 1935 the Red Army needed 130,000 officers but were 17,000 officers short. At the end of 1938, the Red Army was more than ninety thousand short of the number of officers it required.³¹

The purge made the task of properly leading the Red Army even more impossible. According to the most recent estimates, some 44,000 officers were arrested and 15,000 of these were executed.³² It goes without saying that the purges were a disaster for the Red Army and in particular for its leadership. But it would have been worse had there not been a pool of unpurged cavalry commanders to employ to lead the reconstituted mechanised corps of the post-purge era. The Red cavalry represented an oasis of stability, the core around which the Red command could rebuild. In 1940, four of nine new mechanised corps found themselves under the command of former cavalrymen.³³

It is difficult to know exactly how many cavalrymen moved from the cavalry to other arms. The purges and the outbreak of war coincided with dramatic reductions in the size of the cavalry arm. In 1937, the Red cavalry counted seven cavalry corps and thirty-two divisions. In June 1941, only four cavalry corps and thirteen divisions remained, in other words, less than half the number of Red cavalry four years earlier.³⁴ The thirteen divisions in 1941 required 6,000 commanders.³⁵ Thus at least that number, that is, 6,000 cavalry commanders, were made redundant in the years 1937-41. Some moved sideways within the Red cavalry, some left the Red Army and some were purged. It is most likely that the majority migrated to the infantry and tank forces. Many more would follow after the Nazi invasion.³⁶ The Red cavalry produced fifteen marshals and countless senior officers who made their mark on battlefields from the Caucasus to Berlin.³⁷

The impact of the Red cavalryman upon the performance of the Red Army in the Second World War needs further investigation. It is often remarked that the Red Army in 1941 showed none of the verve and determination it would display later in the war.³⁸ The former cavalrymen, like the rest of the Red Army, started slowly as they grappled with new battlefield challenges. The longer the war went, the more familiar the situation must have seemed to those who fought, or carefully studied, the experience of the Red cavalry in the Civil War. Holding ground at the frontier is not normally a task for cavalrymen. Theirs was a world of manoeuvre against an overextended enemy, of rapid movement and self-sacrificing

determination when cornered. The situation of 1943 was every bit as desperate as that of 1941. On the other hand, the longer the war went, the more it came to resemble the type of operations for which Red cavalymen had trained for twenty years. The former cavalymen appeared less demoralised than other parts of the Red Army, perhaps because the purge touched them less but also because they had long viewed themselves as a committed elite, whatever the critics might say about the decline of the cavalry. They were confident in each other, proud of their cavalry identity and well versed in responding to change.

It is probably fair to say that historians find it easier to explain the desperate situation in which the Red Army found itself in 1941 compared to the equally important question of how the Red Army rescued itself from the brink in 1943-45. The unhappy legacy of a powerful and anachronistic cavalry faction is a standard part of the story told about the Red Army in 1937-41. The argument here is that the cavalymen should be looked upon in a different light. The Red cavalymen proved to be competent and adaptable soldiers when redeployed in infantry or tank corps, a not surprising outcome given their Civil War and inter-war experience. Trained as an elite and to respect both mobility and firepower, the former Red cavalymen were well prepared not for past wars but for wars of the future and were more than adequate raw material for a reconstituted and ultimately successful Red Army.

¹ For an excellent summary of the reasons for the Red Army's defeat see Roger Reese, *Stalin's Reluctant Soldiers: A Social History of the Red Army* (Lawrence, 1996), pp. 187-207.

² *Ibid.*, p. 147.

³ See, for example, Harold Shukman, *Stalin and the Soviet-Finnish War 1939-1940* (London, 2002), pp. xxii-xxiii.

⁴ See, for example, Antony Beevor, *Stalingrad* (London, 1998), p. 23.

⁵ David Glantz, *Stumbling Colossus: The Red Army on the Eve of World War* (Lawrence, 1998), pp. 37-38.

⁶ For the case that Voroshilov was not a cavalry conservative, see Stephen Brown, "Klim Voroshilov and the Red Cavalry: Reassessing the Most Incompetent Man in the Red Army", in Christian Leitz and Joseph Zizek, eds, *Writing Europe's Pasts* (Unley, 2003), pp. 313-325.

-
- ⁷ On this point, see Lennart Samuelson, *Plans for Stalin's War Machine. Tukhachevskii and Military-Economic Planning, 1925-1941* (Basingstoke, 2000), p. 145.
- ⁸ Steven Zaloga, "Soviet Tank Operations in Spain", *Slavic Military Studies*, Vol. 12, 3 (September 1999), p. 155.
- ⁹ Shukman, *Stalin and the Soviet-Finnish War*, p. xxiii.
- ¹⁰ Glantz, *Stumbling Colossus*, p. 146.
- ¹¹ G.K. Zhukov, *Reminiscences and Reflections* (Moscow, 1979), English translation, p. 167.
- ¹² Glantz, *Stumbling Colossus*, p. 146.
- ¹³ The transcripts of this review are available in Shukman, *Stalin and the Soviet-Finnish War*, p. 269.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 269.
- ¹⁵ See Harold Orenstein, *The Evolution of Soviet Operational Art 1927-1991: The Documentary Basis* (London, 1995), Vol. 1, pp. 170-73.
- ¹⁶ P.A. Rotmistrov, *Vremia i tanki* (Moscow, 1972), p. 31.
- ¹⁷ See, for example, Pavel Arshinov, *History of the Makhnovist Movement: 1918-1921* (Detroit-Chicago, 1974), pp. 138-39.
- ¹⁸ Elbert Farman, "The Polish-Bolshevik Cavalry Campaigns of 1920", *The Cavalry Journal*, Vol. xxx (July, 1921), p. 231.
- ¹⁹ L Kliuev, *Pervaia konnaia krasnaia armiia na Pol'skom fronte v 1920 godu* (Moscow, 1932), p. 109.
- ²⁰ Isaac Babel, *1920 Diary*, ed. C. Avins, trans. H Willetts (New Haven, 1995), p. 56.
- ²¹ The latter was the cavalry's harshest and most perceptive critic. See V.K. Triandifilov, *The Nature of Modern Armies*, trans. William A Burhans (Ilford, 1994), pp. 59-61.
- ²² The relevant archive is Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Voennyi Arkhiv, the Russian State Military Archive (hereafter RGVA). RGVA, 4/1/756, p. 49.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, p.63.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 65.
- ²⁵ RGVA, 4/18/53, p.714.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 99.
- ²⁷ Zhukov, *Reminiscences and Reflections*, pp. 106-107.
- ²⁸ Glantz, *Stumbling Colossus*, p. 146.
- ²⁹ For a description of this process, see Vitaly Rapoport and Yurii Alexeev, *High Treason. Essays on the History of the Red Army, 1918-1938* (Durham, 1985), pp. 271-282.
- ³⁰ Reese, *Reluctant Soldiers*, pp. 167-68.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 147.
- ³² Shukman, *Stalin and the Soviet Finnish War*, p. xxii.
- ³³ A. Soshnikov et al., *Sovetskaia kavaleriia* (Moskva, 1984), p. 159.
- ³⁴ Glantz, *Stumbling Colossus*, p. 146.

³⁵ Soshnikov, *Sovetskaia kavaleriia*, p.162.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

³⁷ For a list of names, see Soshnikov, *Sovetskaia kavaleriia*, pp. 4-5.

³⁸ Shukman, *Stalin and the Soviet Finnish War*, p. xxiii.