

THE RUSSIAN ARMY IN THE SEVEN YEARS WAR

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Students of European military affairs in the early modern era have long since lost their taste for the smoke of battle. From strategy and high policy they have turned towards the social aspects of soldiering and warfare. Today the focus is on the experience of men in the ranks, whether on campaign or in peacetime conditions. Historians ask themselves how much soldiers were paid, how adequately supplied with food as well as with military goods, how they reached the field of operations, and what proportion of them deserted, fell victim to disease, died while in the service, or survived to become veterans. Another fruitful field of inquiry is the impact of military endeavors on the civilian sphere, which covers such matters as billeting and plunder as well as, more obviously, the relative share of state expenditure on the armed forces, the changes brought about in government administration, or the first efforts to stem international violence.

All these matters are best considered in comparative international context, but where eastern Europe is concerned many of the basic facts remain to be established. Scholarly research has hitherto centered on the western half of the continent, for which sources are more abundant. However, there are at last welcome signs of change in this regard.¹

This paper surveys the Russian army's experience during what contemporaries called the "Prussian War," more generally known as the Seven Years War (1756–63), which for Russia lasted not seven

¹ Matthew S. Anderson, *War and Society in Europe of the Old Regime 1618–1789* (Leicester, Eng. and New York: Fontana, 1988, 2nd ed., Stroud: Sutton, 1998) devotes more space to eastern Europe than Jeremy Black, ed., *European Warfare, 1453–1815* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999). Bernhard R. Kroener, ed., *Krieg und Frieden: Militär und Gesellschaft in der frühen Neuzeit* (Paderborn and Zürich: F. Schöningh, 1996) contains an article by H. Carl on foreign invasion and occupation of German territories during the Seven Years War. On the Russian occupation of Finland during the Great Northern War of 1700 see Christer Kuvaja, *Försörjning av en ockupationsarmé . . .* (Turku/Abo, 1999; summary in English 335–48), which breaks much new ground. In Russia, unfortunately, study of the armed forces and society is still in its infancy.

years but five. Though less traumatic than the great conflict with Sweden under Peter the Great, or the wars with revolutionary and Napoleonic France a century later, this struggle, in coalition with Austria and France against Prussia, was a major test of the new empire's military capabilities and saw Russian forces for the first time undertake extensive campaigning in central Europe. It has received no definitive treatment in either prerevolutionary or Soviet historiography. The standard three-volume study by Dmitrii F. Maslovskii (1886–8)² is poorly constructed, weak in analysis, and suffers from nationalist bias. This latter defect was taken to an extreme (but with Prusso-German militarism rather than Habsburg duplicity as the main target) by Soviet historians, although in the late Stalin era N. M. Korobkov and others edited a valuable collection of documents.³ The present article is a reworked, abbreviated version of an essay that appeared in German in 1989 and contained a more extended discussion of the recruitment system, army organization, command structure, the qualities of successive commanders-in-chief, and their relations with the Conference at the Imperial Court (the supreme policy-making body).⁴ After some remarks on the number of effectives, this article discusses the war from the common soldier's viewpoint, considers logistical problems, and closes with some general remarks about the army's performance and the outcome of the war. Hopefully, this account will encourage more detailed study based on material in Russian archives (closed to researchers until recently) and further comparative work—both on conditions in all the belligerent armies in this conflict and on Russian experience in earlier and later European wars. Particularly valuable would be an examination of the parallels and differences between the Russian and Ottoman empires.

² Dmitrii F. Maslovskii, *Russkaia armiiia v Semiletaniiu voinu*, 3 vols. (Moscow: Tipografiia okruzhnogo shtaba, 1886–91), hereafter cited as RASV; references to vol. 3 are to the German edition: Maslovskii, *Der siebenjährige Krieg in russischer Darstellung mit Autorisation des Verfassers übersetzt und mit Anmerkungen versehen von A. von Drygalski* (Berlin: R. Eisenschmidt, 1888–93).

³ N. M. Korobkov, ed., *Semiletniaia voina: materialy o deistviiakh russkoi armii i flota v 1756–62 gg.* (Moscow, Voennoe izd-vo, 1948), cited as SLV. The standard work on the eighteenth-century army is L. G. Beskrovnyi, *Russkaia armiiia i flot v XVIII v.: ocherki* (Moscow: Voennoe izdatel'stvo Ministerstva Oborony SSSR, 1958).

⁴ John L. H. Keep, "Die russische Armee im Siebenjährigen Krieg," in *Europa im Zeitalter Friedrich des Grossen: Wirtschaft, Gesellschaft, Kriege*, ed. Bernhard R. Kroener (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1989), 133–69.

Effectives and Military Training

Nearly a quarter of a million of Tsarina Elizaveta Petrovna's subjects were called to the colors just before or during the Seven Years War, about a third of whom seem to have succumbed to their burdens, especially to disease.⁵ A contemporary observer who offered a guess of over 100,000 fatalities was in the right order of magnitude.⁶ The Soviet historical demographer Boris Uralnis estimates the total deaths as follows:

18,000	killed in action
5,000	died of wounds ^a
<u>97,000</u>	died of disease.
120,000	Total fatalities ⁷

^a Uralnis takes the ratio of killed to wounded as 1:2.4, of whom 10% may have subsequently died.

According to Dietrich Bangert, the army lost one-half its combat strength in 1758 and one-quarter in 1759.⁸ Unfortunately there are few official figures as to how many men, whether sick, wounded or fit, were discharged. In 1762 the army was apparently about 290,000 strong (including irregulars);⁹ in July 1755 the corresponding figure

⁵ One estimate is 231,644: I. Blinov and L. Sukhotsky, "Istoricheskie materialy, izvlechennye iz Senatskogo arkhiva," *Zhurnal ministerstva iustitsii* (Petrograd, 1915), vol. 21, pt. 3, 251, cited in SLV, 853; Beskrovnyi, *Russkaia armia*, 36-7, who does not cite this source, comes close with 232,234, and gives annual recruitment figures. For the decrees see *Polnoe sobranie zakonov*, coll. I (St. Petersburg, 1830; hereafter cited as PSZ), xiii. 10326 (1755), xiv. 10613, 10785 (1756-7), xv. 10874 (1758). No data were published for 1759; in 1760 only small levies were raised from certain groups, and in 1761-2 only the arrears from earlier levies were collected. Cf. PSZ xv. 10990, 11025, 11099, 11497; Christopher Duffy, *Russia's Military Way to the West: Origins and Nature of Russian Military Power, 1700-1800* (London-Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), 96; SLV, 512.

⁶ C. F. Schwan, *Merkwürdigkeiten der russischen Geschichte unter Peter dem Dritten...* (Narva, 1790), 122.

⁷ B. Ts. Uralnis, "Liudskiye poteri vooruzhennykh sil v evropeiskikh voynakh," in idem, *Narodonaseleniye: issledovaniia, publitsistika: sbornik statei* (Moscow: Statistika, 1976), 156; A. Kahan, *The Plow, the Hammer and the Knout: an Economic History of Eighteenth-Century Russia* (Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 9.

⁸ Dietrich E. Bangert, *Die russisch-österreichische Zusammenarbeit im Siebenjährigen Kriege in den Jahren 1758-1759* (Boppard am Rhein: H. Boldt, 1971), 362.

⁹ A. Lebedev (ed.), *Russkaia armia v nachale tsarstvovaniia imp. Ekateriny II: materialy dlia russkoi voennoi istorii* (Moscow, 1898), 2-3, gives data for different branches of service; the Guards need to be added—say 12,000.

had been 323,000.¹⁰ Adding the recruits and subtracting Uralan's estimate of fatalities, we arrive at a figure of 144,000 survivors, or rather less than one-third of all those involved. In addition, losses through desertion were officially estimated at seven percent of total losses in 1757, and probably rose later.¹¹

All eighteenth-century data on military strength are liable to a high margin of error, partly because officials tried to mislead opinion at home and abroad, partly owing to over-reporting by commanders, who could pocket sums allocated to such "dead souls," and partly from sheer inefficiency. Establishment strengths existed only on paper and the real figure might fall short by one-quarter or more.¹² Christopher Duffy notes that the active army's size increased as the war progressed, reaching a peak of *circa* 100,000 in 1761.¹³ Many of the new fighting men were drawn from garrison regiments, which were designed to provide a reserve of trained manpower.

Despite the fact that loading—let alone discharging—a musket required a great deal of technical skill (loading a heavy (5.7 kg.) musket necessitated no less than 17 successive manual operations), training in the Russian army was elementary.¹⁴ The results were clear. In one exercise at marksmanship held by the Kiev regiment, for example, 2,709 bullets were fired, of which only 691 hit the target; the average for several units from the southern provinces was between 15% and 35%.¹⁵ One critic writes disparagingly that rather than improving their marksmanship, for Russian soldiers "the height of perfection was the carrying out of [firearm] movements on command, when the signal was given; each time the men had to 'slap their satchels' or 'strike their weapon firmly,' [which led them to] damage their muskets by cutting holes in the butt and stuffing them with pieces of glass and metal."¹⁶

¹⁰ *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova*, vol. 3 (Moscow, 1871), 657–58; A. K. Baiov, "Ocherki voennogo iskusstva i sostoianiiia russkoi armii pri blizhaishikh priemnikakh Petra Velikogo," *Istoriia russkoi armii i flota*, 16 vols. (Moscow: Obrazovanie, 1911–13), vol. 2, 26 gives only 260,000.

¹¹ RASV 2(2), 5–7.

¹² For estimates at nine different junctures of the war, see Keep, "Die russische Armee," Appendix 1.

¹³ Duffy, *Russia's Way*, 118.

¹⁴ Baiov, "Ocherki," 28. My count is 23 to the moment of firing; see "Opisanie pekhotnogo polkogo stroia," PSZ 14, 10494e, 83–85.

¹⁵ Beskrovnyi, *Russkaia armia*, 160.

¹⁶ N. V. Anisimov and A. K. Zinevich, *Istoriia russkoi armii: epokha Petra Velikogo, 1699–1762* (Chuguev, 1911), 23.

In the cavalry the main problem was the poor quality of mounts: the horses were as a rule undersized and too weak to carry heavy loads or to support their riders well in battle. The Cossack light cavalry and native troops (Bashkirs, Kalmyks, etc.), which served as scouts and provided a defensive screen for the army when on the march, displayed more initiative than the regulars but posed serious disciplinary problems. They maintained a "wild West frontier" lifestyle and "pursued goals of their own" (a euphemism for looting). With time, army commanders managed to bring these embarrassing and harmful depredations under better control, and native cavalry played a vital role in reconnaissance.¹⁷

Russia's artillery was traditionally of high repute. It benefited considerably from the powerful Peter Shuvalov's patronage. Shuvalov closely supervised development of howitzers (called "unicorns") and was particularly proud of his "secret weapon": a gun which had a slit instead of a round mouth and was designed to fire shot at approaching infantry with devastating results. Opinion as to its merits varied, and it was removed from the inventory lists after the war, once its patron had fallen. As early as 1757 von Rall, the Austrian military attaché, noted that some Russian artillery units could fire 18 rounds a minute, a rate as yet unparalleled.¹⁸ The army also had its engineering corps, with equipment for building pontoon bridges and improving roads, as well as other support units. Foreign observers were surprised at the size of its train (*oboz*), which absorbed a high proportion of effectives; but there were good logistical reasons for this seeming extravagance.

¹⁷ RASV 1(2), 195; Duffy, *Russia's Way*, pp. 71, 96, 102, 119; Bruce Menning, "The Origins of the Modern Russian Military Tradition: the Eighteenth-Century Army" (unpub. paper, ca. 1980), 32. On native troops' and Cossacks' depredations: A. T. Bolotov, *Zhizn' i prikliucheniia* (Moscow, 1870-71, repr. with cuts Moscow-Leningrad: Akademiia, 1931), vol. 1, 490-92; T. I. Belikov, *Kalmyki v bor'be za nezavisimost' nashei rodiny, XVII-nachalo XIX v.* (Elista: Kalmgosizdat, 1965), 84-9, where they are exonerated as "progressive"! An Insterburg churchman reported that the Kalmyks "ate all kind of carrion" yet committed fewer atrocities than the hussars. A. Rogge (contrib.), "Der Schreibkalender des Erzpriesters Hahn: Beiträge eines Augenzeugen zur Geschichte der russischen Invasion im Jahre 1757," *Altpreussische Monatsschrift* 20 (Königsberg, 1883), 648.

¹⁸ E. von Frisch, *Geschichte der russischen Feldzüge im Siebenjährigen Kriege, nach den Aufzeichnungen und Beobachtungen der dem russischen Hauptquartier zugeteilten österreichischen Offiziere, vornehmlich in den Kriegsjahren 1757-1758* (Heidelberg, 1919), 27.

The Experience of the Common Soldier

The Seven Years War was one of maneuver, in which opposing armies marched to and fro across the east German plain to threaten enemy concentrations, or to cover themselves against the risk of surprise attack, rather than to seek decisive battles. This cautious, uninspiring strategy did the commanders credit, in so far as they were conscious of the need to conserve valuable manpower and supplies. The sources do not reveal what soldiers themselves felt about the endless marching and counter-marching, but common sense suggests that their morale depended largely on such mundane matters as the number of rest days allowed, the amount of equipment they had to carry, and the availability of food supplies.

According to A. W. von Hupel, an authority on Catherine II's army, Russian soldiers marched 30 versts (30 km) a day; as every third day was set aside for rest, cooking, etc., their overall speed was 20 km per day—although forced marches of 40 km, without rest days, were not unheard of.¹⁹ During earlier stages of the "Prussian War," the pace seems to have been more leisurely. In May–June 1757 Bolotov's regiment took a month to move 240 km from Riga to Kovno (approximately eight kilometers per day), but this was because of "incorrect distribution of [vehicles] in the column, which led to multiple halts and made the move very tiring."²⁰ On the other hand the troops that marched on Königsberg, across frozen ground, the following January took only six to nine days for 200 km (22–33 km per day). Similar speeds were recorded in 1760 by some of the units involved in the raid on Berlin, who had left their heavy baggage behind.²¹ In 1758 the main army, which was encumbered by its vast train, took 12 stages with 13 rest days (10 km per day) to cover 230 km.²² In 1759, Duffy writes, "the daily rate of march increased from four or five miles to a respectable ten [16 km];"²³ he attributes this

¹⁹ August Wilhelm von Hupel, *Beschreibung der russisch-kaiserlichen Armee nebst anderen kürzeren Aufsätzen* (Riga, 1782, reprinted Hanover-Döhren: Hirschheydt, 1972), 55.

²⁰ N. G. Nikolaev, *Istoriia 17-go pekhotnogo Arkhangelogorodskogo polka, 1700–1900* (St. Petersburg: Tip. P. P. Soikina, 1900), 144.

²¹ G. G. Frumenkov, "Rossiia i semiletniaia voina," *Voprosy istorii*, no. 9 (1971), 117. See also his *Rossiia v XVIII v.: voiny i vneshniaia politika, ekonomika i kul'tura* (St. Petersburg, 1996).

²² Bangert, *Zusammenarbeit*, 85; but cf. 87: Posen-Pinne (40 km.) in 11 days, or only 4 km. a day!

²³ Duffy, *Russia's Way*, 120.

to the fact that regiments now marched by divisions in separate columns.

Another key factor was the food supply. Russian soldiers lived mainly off biscuit (double-baked bread) or half-baked dough cakes with a kind of stew or porridge (*kasha*), which they prepared themselves, by ingenious ways, in their *arteli* (informal messing communities) during halts. The frequency of halts can be reconstructed from official sources and the account compiled by J. G. Tielke, a Saxon engineer who accompanied the Russian forces. He noted that the biscuit "requires good teeth and better gums" and that the dough cakes were "moist inside and not fit to eat," adding admiringly: "our soldiers, who are used to better living, would not relish this sort of food; the Russian is not only content with it, but he will undergo hunger and the greatest hardships without murmuring, if he is told that the Empress has ordered it."²⁴ Despite his purported enthusiasm, Quartermaster-General von Weymarn, a knowledgeable and reliable observer, reported that already when leaving Riga in 1757 the men "were so tired and weakened that many of them, having stowed their packs and cloaks on the *artel'* carts, found it hard to carry their weapons in proper order, even though the daily marches were so short." The debility was due, he correctly noted, to their having been kept for months in close quarters in Livonia, to excessive drill in wintry months, and to deductions from their paltry pay for cleaning materials rather than this being spent on extra food and beverages.²⁵

Such dietary supplements were vital since the official ration (*port-siia*) consisted of little other than cereal products (milled or unmilled grain and groats); when distributed in full, the ration sufficed in quantity but was otherwise inadequate to maintain health.²⁶ Unit quartermasters were expected to use their own initiative to obtain meat, alcoholic beverages and anything else they fancied. For such purposes they received extra funds, although these were less clearly

²⁴ J. G. Tielke, *An Account of Some of the Most Remarkable Events of the War Between the Prussians, Austrians and Russians, from 1756 to 1763 . . .*, tr. C. & R. Crauford (London, 1787), vol. 2, 99–100n.

²⁵ A. W. von Hupel, ed., *Ueber den ersten Feldzug des russischen Kriegsheeres gegen die Preussen im Jahre 1757* (Riga, 1794), 24–26 (von Weymarn's statements to officials investigating his suspected malfeasance).

²⁶ J. L. H. Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar: Army and Society in Russia, 1462–1874* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 113, 185.

distinguished from the men's pay than had been the case in Peter I's army. Cattle and sheep were distributed among units after a successful engagement; for example, on June 30, 1758, "each regiment received 60 head of cattle and 150 of sheep collected in Pomerania."²⁷ These beasts will hardly have been slaughtered and consumed all at once.²⁸ Sutlers (*markitanty*) followed the army on the march, but their wares were usually too expensive for the average soldier.²⁹ According to an official schedule of 1761, they were to charge one kopek for a *charka* of beer, two kopecks for a cake (*kalach*, weighing 614 grams) or pie (*pirog*), 7½ kopecks for a chicken, 12 kopecks for 15 eggs, and 50 kopecks to 1.20 rubles for a *shtof* of vodka: remarkably, caviar cost no more than fish or soap (10 kopecks per *funt* = 409.4 gr)—but one wonders how often it was available.³⁰

As for quarters, each regiment was supposed to have enough tents for its full complement (the men sleeping 25 to a tent in the infantry, 16 in the cavalry).³¹ However, during the campaign season, which normally lasted from May to October, the heavy baggage might well be left far behind and the troops billeted on the local population or bivouacked in the open. It was the quartermaster's job to select camp sites, a task that was not always performed well, especially where the ground was swampy. The annual withdrawal to winter quarters (from 1758, on the lower Vistula) had good logistical and security reasons. Neither Pomerania nor the central Oder valley had enough food stocks from which to feed a large army for several months (see below); nor did they offer a network of fortified places to shelter the invaders from harassment by enemy troops or partisans.

Irregular food supply, deficiencies of clothing and footwear,³² fatigue and exposure to the elements while on the march were all major causes of sickness—far more lethal, as noted above, than injury in

²⁷ Tielke, *Account*, vol. 2, 83; cf. 105, 109, 127; RASV 2(1), 105; SLV, 286, 304.

²⁸ Von Weymarn records that on an earlier occasion his men suffered health problems from a surfeit of meat, washed down with poor-quality water. (Von Hupel, *Feldzug*, 60.)

²⁹ SLV, 276.

³⁰ RASV 2(2), 166–67.

³¹ Keep, *Soldiers*, 108.

³² "As far as soldiers' boots are concerned," a general reported after an inspection tour in April 1759, "the generals and colonels say that the poor men have to pay 15 to 30 kopeks to have them repaired." This service was likely provided by artisans in the unit—if they were able to acquire scarce leather through regular supply channels. AKV 7, 355–6; SLV, 224, 491; RASV 1(2), 208–11.

battle. Arrangements were made to pick up those wounded on the battlefield and to escort or transport them to dressing stations in the rear.³³ After Zorndorf the Russians are said to have recovered more of their casualties than their adversaries did (85.5% as against 76.6%),³⁴ although these figures seem suspiciously over-precise. What was a surgical operation on the battlefield actually like? Pastor Täge of Marienwerder, who had been induced to serve as a chaplain with the Russian forces and was captured at Zorndorf, some days after the battle noticed a Russian soldier, both of whose legs had been shot to pieces, crawling towards the town of Küstrin. "Despite the indignation against the Russians, he was carefully entrusted to a [Prussian] surgeon . . . While an incision was made on his leg with a curved knife he bravely bore the pain, but as the bone was sawn through he uttered such terrible cries that I had to turn away."³⁵ Those lucky enough to survive such treatment might be taken (two men to a cart instead of four from 1757 onwards) to one of several base hospitals. These institutions are known to have existed in Königsberg (two) and in five other places in or near East Prussia, and in the deep rear at Riga, Mitau and both capitals.³⁶ The army's medical services, run by two German doctors, I. A. Ungebauer and his successor Kühlmann,³⁷ comprised both qualified and semi-qualified personnel, including veterans who acted as nurses. According to Müller-Dietz there was one attendant for every 200 men;³⁸ but one wonders how accurate this figure can be, since the infantry regiment establishment provided for only one doctor (*lekar'*) and two assistants (*podlekari*)³⁹ and a generation later (1776) the army still had a total

³³ Von Weymarn notes casually that at Gross Jägersdorf the wounded "received bread, medicines, and other necessities." (Von Hupel, *Feldzug*, 106.)

³⁴ H. Müller-Dietz, *Der russische Militärarzt im 18. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1970), 41.

³⁵ "K istorii Semiletnei voiny: zapiski pastora Tege," *Russkii arkhiv* 2 (1864), col. 302.

³⁶ AKV, vol. 3, 377; SLV, 149, 413, 587 (para. 12); on carts: RASV 1(2), 206. On conditions in Moscow, see the devastating picture drawn by Ia. P. Shakhovskoi in his *Zapiski, 1709-1777* (St. Petersburg: Russkoi stariny, 1872), reprinted with introduction by R. E. Jones (Cambridge: Oriental Research Partners, 1974), 88.

³⁷ SLV, 314, 575.

³⁸ Müller-Dietz, *Militärarzt*, 40.

³⁹ SLV, 33. For headquarters staffing and pay rates: PSZ, vol. 14, 10611 (28 Sept. 1756), 10668 (11 Dec. 1756), 10675 (17 Dec. 1756), 10690 (7 Feb. 1757), 10728 (15 May 1757). Civilian doctors were mobilized, too: PSZ, vol. 15, 11032 (15 July 1760). Qualified doctors in the operational zone received 25 rubles a month (RASV 3(1), 280), as much as the lowest officer of staff rank.

of only 42 "staff-surgeons," 406 ordinary surgeons, and 120 battalion orderlies.⁴⁰

The figures found in official sources for the ratio of invalid to healthy soldiers should also be treated with caution. In May 1757 Apraksin reported 10,600 men sick, of whom 4,450 were in two base hospitals and the rest "with their regiments," i.e. in lazarets.⁴¹ By July the figure had reached 12,800 and by October of that year, during the retreat, over 17,000,⁴² evidently excluding men in base hospitals—this out of a force perhaps 80,000 strong.⁴³ Commanders of this era were concerned less with rehabilitating the sick than with obtaining substitutes for them, which may account for apparent discrepancies in their reports.

The figures for casualties sustained in four major battles are also of interest. The most lethal was Zorndorf (1758), where 11–12,000 were killed and rather more than that wounded. At Kunersdorf a year later the figure for wounded was much the same but fatalities were only a quarter as high.⁴⁴ A proportion of wounded (say 10%?) should be added to allow for those whose wounds proved fatal. The official casualty data relating to minor affrays are often less plausible. For example, P. D. Yeropkin claimed that at Friedberg (July 1758) his troops killed 105 enemy for the loss of four men; the next summer a colonel commanding a party of hussar and Cossack raiders operating in Silesia claimed a "kill ratio" of 41 to nil!⁴⁵

Battles were confused affairs, especially as seen from the viewpoint of the common soldier.⁴⁶ In their subsequent official reports commanders naturally endeavored to impose logic on the course of events, and professional military historians have followed them, attempting to trace the evolutions of various units, speculating on their chiefs' motives, and estimating the degree of operational "success" achieved. The utility of such reasoning seems dubious. What combat was really

⁴⁰ PSZ 20, 14839 (14 Feb. 1779); cf. Müller-Dietz, *Militärarzt*, 59.

⁴¹ SLV, 149; this estimate is reiterated in a letter from S. F. Apraksin to I. I. Shuvalov of 7 July (I. N. Tolstoy (contrib.), "Iz bumag Ivana Ivanovicha Shuvalova," SIRIO 9 (1872), 468, where he states curiously that 500 cases were "serious" yet the less grave ones were not responding to treatment!).

⁴² SLV, 157–59, 210.

⁴³ For five later junctures in the war we have breakdowns of sick and healthy: cf. table in Keep, "Die russische Armee," 150.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 151.

⁴⁵ SLV, 303, 437.

⁴⁶ Cf. the civilian Täge's account of Zorndorf: "K istorii," cols. 294–300.

like can be gauged from a point in General V. V. (Wilhelm) Fermor's "general dispositions" of July 14, 1758, that, "if a soldier should dare to [break ranks], he shall at once be despatched on the spot" by an NCO; parties of such men were kept in reserve between the lines for this purpose.⁴⁷

As in other wars of this era and later, men under intense stress sometimes performed feats of valor (*podvigi*, literally "exploits"), which were more likely to be remembered than supposedly "dishonorable" acts such as giving way to panic.⁴⁸ Tielke expressed amazement that Russian troops would deliberately stand up on the counterscarp of a fortified place to draw enemy fire, and commented: "in this army rash bravery is much respected, and if an officer wishes for the esteem of his troops he must expose himself with them in a manner that would be reckoned absurd in any other army."⁴⁹ Two hundred years later the Soviet historian Frumenkov respectfully cited the Prussian captain Archenholz's praise of Russian soldiers who, "having expended all their cartridges, stood firmly . . . Fresh regiments took the place of the fallen and seemed anxious to share their comrades' fate . . ."⁵⁰ He and his colleagues could not have admitted, as A. K. Baiov could do in 1911, that at Kunersdorf Shuvalov's grenadiers "rushed in complete disorder down the Mühlberg to the swampy bank of the Oder, carrying with them other regiments in the Observation Corps."⁵¹ An even less inhibited picture of "the face of battle" was given by von Weymarn, writing in self-vindication after Gross Jägersdorf. Many regiments "were terribly cut up . . . and so disorderly that it took a lot of work to rally them again;" the rough country around "was full of men who had absconded and stayed behind to kill Prussian wounded and to undress and plunder both the enemy dead and their own."⁵² On the long retreat to Memel and Tilsit the men's morale cracked; the troops were on the point of fighting one another when Generals Petr A. Rumiantsev and V. V. Fermor intervened to restore calm; even so, some infantrymen whose

⁴⁷ RASV 2(2), 188-93, paras. 8-9; also in SLV, 310-14.

⁴⁸ For the former see N. M. Korobkov, ed., *Iz boevogo proshlogo russkoi armii: dokumenty i materialy o podvigakh russkikh soldat i ofitserov* (Moscow: Voennoe izd-vo, 1947), 32-57.

⁴⁹ Tielke, *Account*, ii. 88-9, 134 nn.

⁵⁰ Frumenkov, "Rossiia," 114.

⁵¹ Baiov, "Ocherki," 39.

⁵² Von Hupel, *Feldzug*, 97, 99.

carts had got hopelessly stuck in the mud were ridden down by Cossacks and crushed to death.⁵³

Soviet military historians claimed that Russian troops demonstrated "the complete superiority of their tactics over those of the routine-minded Prussians," who adhered to the formation of the curved line.⁵⁴ Yet we know that Russian troops, like their adversaries, went into battle drawn up in (generally two) lines and that their commanders moved formations about the battlefield, and drew upon reserves to reinforce threatened sectors of the front, as the Prussians did. The tactical differences between the two armies were really of slight account and, as often happens in warfare, the combatants were quick to learn from each other's techniques.

Supply Problems

Russian strategy was predicated on the inability to field an army in central Europe for more than a single campaign of a few months' duration. This limitation was due principally to the "supply difficulties" that feature so prominently in the correspondence between the courts of St. Petersburg and Vienna, as well as in the historical literature. It is not easy to ascertain the degree to which the army's growing needs for foodstuffs, forage, equipment, weapons and so on were met at different junctures in the war, or the importance of the different methods employed to this end.⁵⁵ There seems to have been a mix of impromptu self-help measures and supply through regular channels. For much of the war the army lived from hand to mouth, constantly exposed to the risk of critical shortages; but matters evidently improved in the last two years, with the construction of a network of magazines and the adoption of more consistent policies in regard to both requisitioning and provisioning from the rear. The troops generally carried 10 days' supplies on their backs, and the regiment brought along enough for another 20 days.⁵⁶

⁵³ Ibid., 111-14.

⁵⁴ A. A. Stokov, *Istoriia voennogo iskusstva* (Moscow: Voennoe izd-vo, 1966), 97; Beskrovnyi, *Russkaia armia*, 288.

⁵⁵ For the following paragraphs see also our "Feeding the Troops: Russian Army Supply Policies during the Seven Years War," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 29 (1987), 24-44.

⁵⁶ RASV 1(2), 11, 88-90, 281.

The *Glavnaia proviantskaia kantseliaria* (GPK), which was responsible for foodstuffs, and the *Glavnyi krigs-komissariat* (GKK), which handled pay and auditing, the provision of uniforms, weapons, equipment, medical services etc., were autonomous entities within the War College bureaucracy; in 1764 they had a staff of 115 in the two capitals.⁵⁷ Matters were complicated by the establishment in October 1758, on Fermor's initiative, of a Field Proviand Chancellery;⁵⁸ and by 1760 the Senate was trying to exercise a greater degree of control. The result was administrative confusion. Supply officials, many of them officers deemed no longer fit for combat, were often reluctant to obey the orders of the commander-in-chief, to whom they were formally subordinate, or other field officers, especially when such orders were issued in ignorance of practical realities. Conversely, field officers, who derived little prestige by concerning themselves with such mundane matters as supply, looked down haughtily on the personnel in the support services, whom they suspected of malingering and malfeasance.

In peace-time, the army obtained most of its cereal requirements from sales by civilian suppliers at prices determined according to a schedule which the local governor could adjust to meet seasonal and geographical market fluctuations. The procedure was laid down in detailed regulations of 1758, which codified earlier practice.⁵⁹ The purchasing authorities preferred to deal directly with producers (mainly land-owners) rather than merchants, whom they distrusted as alleged profiteers.⁶⁰ Stocks were held in a network of magazines classified as follows:

⁵⁷ Ibid., 53. The chief officials concerned with such matters were Major-Generals F. G. Ditz (Thomas von Dietz) and P. P. Iakovlev; Lieutenant-Generals A. A. Menshikov, V. I. Suvorov (father of the later Generalissimo); and S. F. Volkonskii; Brigadiers Kh. F. Shtofel' (Ch. F. von Stoffeln) and N. Khomutov; and Colonel M. Ia. Maslov. Unfortunately next to nothing is known about their personalities or their official and unofficial relationships.

⁵⁸ PSZ, vol. 15, 10895 (28 Oct. 1758).

⁵⁹ *Proviantskie reguli dlia uchrezhdennoi pri Observatsionnom korpuse komissii generala-proviandmeistera-leitenanta, genvarii [9] dnya 1758 g.*, 3rd ed. (St. Petersburg, 1821) [also in PSZ, vol. 15, 10788].

⁶⁰ Ibid., sec. IV, § 2, sec. V, § 11.

Table 28: Schedule of Magazines (1731)⁶¹

Type	Number	Total stock (<i>chetvert'</i>) ^a	
		flour	groats
Main	13	400,000	25,000
Regimental (<i>polkovnye</i>)	15	155,000	9,687
Campaign (<i>putevye, pokhodnye</i>)	22	37,500	2,337
Total	50	592,500	37,024

^a1 *chetvert'* = c. 130 kg.

This would have been sufficient for one year's consumption (at the rate of three *funt* of flour per man)—if all the magazines had existed in reality, which Beyrau doubts, on good grounds.⁶² Rear or base magazines are known to have existed at Riga, Libau, Rezhitsa, Dünaburg, Minsk, Velikie Luki and Smolensk, as well as in the two capitals, and there were "intermediate" (*sic*) ones at Keidany, Vilkamir, Vil'nius and Grodno.⁶³ As the war progressed, magazines are known to have been set up in a number of other places.⁶⁴ Most of them seem to have been small and temporary; some were taken over from the Prussians. Russian storage techniques lagged behind those of the West, where military authorities could draw on the experience of farmers and merchants.⁶⁵ At one time the magazines set up in Königsberg could not hold all supplies received, so that great heaps of cereals were left in the public squares; "the Russian soldiers often regarded these stocks as communal property and sold some of the produce to the inhabitants at very low prices."⁶⁶

⁶¹ PSZ, vol. 14, 589 (2 August 1731); for slightly different figures see D. F. Maslovskii, *Materialy k istorii voennogo iskusstva v Rossii*, fasc. 2, *Tsarstvovanie Ekateriny II* (St. Petersburg, 1894), vol. 2, 37; cf. also D. P. Zhuravskii, "Statisticheskoe obozrenie raskhodov na voennye potrebnosti v Rossii s 1711 po 1825 g.," *Voennyi sbornik* 9 (1859), 59.

⁶² Dietrich Beyrau, *Militär und Gesellschaft im vorrevolutionären Russland* (Cologne-Vienna: Böhlau, 1984), 78.

⁶³ Beskrovnyi, *Russkaia armia*, 268. For independent confirmation of the stores at Dünaburg, Grodno and Kovno see AKV, vol. 6, 444; Frisch, *Geschichte*, 103; SLV, 123, 222.

⁶⁴ See map in "Die russische Armee," 169.

⁶⁵ Beyrau, *Militär*, 77–78.

⁶⁶ G. von Frantzius, *Die Okkupation Ostpreussens durch die Russen im Siebenjährigen Kriege, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der russischen Quellen*, Inaugural dissertation (Berlin, 1916), 80.

In any case food resources were scarce in Russia, where the output-seed ratio was only 3 to 3.5:1 in normal weather conditions. Famine might afflict whole regions, as it did the northwest in 1756, hindering the buildup of stocks during the crucial first winter of the war.⁶⁷ Matters were not improved by adherence to the lower procurement prices fixed in 1731.⁶⁸ When General Stepan F. Apraksin set out on the first invasions of East Prussia he was accompanied by two GPK and three GKK officials "with their pertinent servants [= staff] and a sufficient sum of money." Simultaneously von Weymarn, the Quartermaster-General, was sent to Poland to drum up additional supplies there, by duress if need be. Much aid was expected from the traditionally pro-Russian Lithuanian magnates. Vehicles and foodstuffs were to be obtained on promise of "prompt payment," but with the stipulation that otherwise "you [Apraksin] will regretably be forced to take them by coercion . . . for you have the right to demand everything [you need] in Poland, especially since you are going to the defense of its king."⁶⁹ Much of the army's needs were indeed met from this source over the next two years, but only at the cost of antagonizing local opinion and provoking diplomatic protests, seconded by France.⁷⁰ In 1758-9 there were problems over the prices which commissariat officials offered to contractors, the most important of whom were Jewish; the latter did not get all the money they were promised, partly due to a shortage of specie and partly, one suspects, to bureaucratic ill will or incompetence. In practice the line between voluntary purchase and forced requisitioning was blurred. Suppliers and contractors protested. Meanwhile at the top there were complaints that the military authorities were spending *too* much money on goods purchased from contractors, and suggestions that it would be more economical to squeeze the local inhabitants harder.⁷¹

In East Prussia the invaders were under less restraint than in Poland-Lithuania. In some places payment seems to have been made, or at least offered, but soon the soldiers were simply taking what

⁶⁷ Kahan, *Plow*, 46, 48; von Hupel, *Feldzug*, 20.

⁶⁸ Kahan, *Plow*, 53.

⁶⁹ SLV, 64-8, §§ 4, 6, 22, 24, 25; cf. AKV 3, 452, 519; Bangert, *Zusammenarbeit*, 51.

⁷⁰ AKV 34, 118; AKV 6, 370; H. Kaplan, *Russia and the Outbreak of the Seven Years War* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), 95.

⁷¹ RASV 2(1), 340-1; 3(1), 174.

they wanted by force.⁷² The notoriously headstrong Cossacks were mainly to blame, but regulars joined in the depredations of 1757. Von Weymarn (clearly defending his own reputation) stated that "from the very first day that the army crossed the border the foulest acts of violence [took place]; those who had not fled, even if they showed goodwill . . . and had letters of protection were beaten, robbed and plundered, not only by irregulars but also by regulars, including men from the best regiments; hardly a day passed without such excesses."⁷³ At Stallupönen 12 Cossacks were arrested for looting; after summary proceedings two of them were knouted and physically mutilated.⁷⁴ Similar quasi-judicial action was taken elsewhere, but only made matters worse. During the retreat even officers joined in the plundering.⁷⁵

The root of the trouble was a breakdown in the regular supply organization, apparently due to over-reliance on local food sources. The shortages were partly due to the methods employed by the invaders and partly to the natives' timely evacuation of stocks remaining from the 1756 harvest. A partisan movement began spontaneously, as a reaction to the invaders' exactions. One local resident reported that peasants fled to the forests "and made trouble for the Russian army on its march, so that on 26 August Russian irregular troops were sent [after them] into the woods . . . in the 11th week after Trinity they began to lay waste [villages] by fire."⁷⁶ The partisans seem to have won a measure of popular as well as official support. The Russian command had counted on the local elite's cooperation in maintaining orderly administration, but many Prussian officials refused to switch allegiance or fled westward, leaving a vacuum which the occupiers were hard put to fill.⁷⁷

St. Petersburg seems to have learned from these mistakes. After conquering the province in the following winter the government publicly dissociated itself from earlier excesses, set up a board to consider complaints, and installed a governor of Baltic German origin, N. A. (I. N.) Korff(f).⁷⁸ An experienced diplomat, he played his difficult

⁷² Frisch, *Geschichte*, 31.

⁷³ Von Hupel, *Feldzug*, 55.

⁷⁴ Frisch, *Geschichte*, 32–33.

⁷⁵ Von Hupel, *Feldzug*, 57.

⁷⁶ Rogge, "Schreibkalender," 647; cf. Frantzius, *Okkupation*, 24–25.

⁷⁷ Von Hupel, *Feldzug*, 37, 51.

⁷⁸ Manifestos of 31 Dec. 1757 (RASV, 2(2), 19) and 6 March 1758 (PSZ, vol.

role skillfully and did his best to safeguard the province's interests.⁷⁹ An initial "contribution" of one million *taler* was administered by local personnel and did not surpass the revenue previously collected by the Berlin government.⁸⁰ It was, however, followed by other levies which had to be paid off largely in kind.⁸¹ In 1760–1 Russia set about exploiting East Prussia's resources more systematically. This harsher line owed much to V. I. Suvorov, *general-fel'd-intendant*, who succeeded Korf(f) as governor in September 1761.⁸² In December 1760 the value of requisitioned objects was put by General A. B. Buturlin at 400,000 rubles.⁸³ In addition to foodstuffs and forage thousands of horses and vehicles were taken, which seriously damaged the province's agricultural economy—and in turn made the Russian supply authorities more dependent on what they could obtain elsewhere.⁸⁴

Clearly the best way to reach an army operating between Posen (Poznan) and the middle reaches of the Oder was by sea. Naval ships could not very well carry goods, and the fleet was busy with other tasks, such as ferrying troops along the Baltic coast.⁸⁵ However, a flotilla of transport vessels was assembled in Russian Baltic ports, and others were commandeered at Memel. Where were they to land their supplies? Königsberg and Pillau soon lay far to the rear. Danzig (Gdansk), the obvious choice, was keen to preserve its semi-independent status and would accept only limited amounts; a plan to occupy the city and force compliance with Russian wishes had to be abandoned out of respect for allied sensibilities.⁸⁶ This left Kolberg on the Pomeranian coast. But a half-hearted offensive in 1758—"too serious for a joke and too trifling for earnest"—was beaten off. By

15, 10807); the privileges granted to the province are discussed in RASV 2(2), 106–09.

⁷⁹ Frantzius, *Okkupation*, 47–9; PSZ, vol., 15, 10833 (6 May 1758); SLV, 236–37, 252–54; AKV 34, 117–26, 178–87.

⁸⁰ Frisch, *Geschichte*, 55.

⁸¹ AKV, 34, 117–18; RASV 3(1), 64–66; Frantzius, *Okkupation*, 71–75.

⁸² Duffy, *Russia's Way*, 119; Suvorov's office as per SLV, 874.

⁸³ RASV 3(1), 286.

⁸⁴ RASV 2(2), 262–63, 280–1; 3(1), 285.

⁸⁵ N. M. Korobkov, *Russkii flot v Semiletnei voine* (Moscow, 1946), 66. One must discount as propaganda Korobkov's claim that the fleet ensured "a correct planned supply of East Prussia with all kinds of armaments and provisions"—his own evidence clearly disproves the claim.

⁸⁶ Frisch, *Geschichte*, ch. 6; Bangert, *Zusammenarbeit*, 149, 151; SLV, 362.

the time the port fell to Rumiantsev in the last month of the war, it could no longer be of any service.⁸⁷

The other alternative to the lengthy overland route from the western Dvina to the Oder was to secure aid from the Habsburgs. But Vienna would cooperate only on its own terms and showed little understanding of the particular difficulties under which Russians labored when operating so far from their rear bases. In any case, the two armies' magazine chains were too distant from each other for them to cooperate effectively, as Field-Marshal Leopold Daun noted in June 1759,⁸⁸ even if the political will to do so had been there. No joint body was set up to demarcate the areas within which each ally might obtain supplies; such matters were discussed at various levels on an *ad hoc* basis and usually in ignorance of the other's requirements and capabilities. Moreover, Russian leaders were reluctant to reveal the precise extent of their stocks (even if they knew this), lest the information be abused; and their partners, notably Wenzel von Kaunitz, suspected them of deliberately exaggerating shortages in pursuit of their own advantage.

The idea of economic aid was first mooted early in 1758, in connection with a project (later abandoned), to send a Russian auxiliary corps to help the hard-pressed Austrians.⁸⁹ It was taken up again in the winter and spring of 1759 as part of an Austrian plan to induce Russian forces to cross the Oder, which Fermor rejected on political and strategic as well as economic grounds.⁹⁰ Shortly before Kunersdorf, Saltykov even had to part with some supplies of his own for the corps of Field-Marshal Ernst Loudon; not surprisingly, he regarded the latter's presence "as more of a nuisance than a help."⁹¹ After the battle it was the Russians' turn to raise the matter, now that their forces were at last across the Oder. The Austrian authorities duly set about collecting forage at various magazines and provided 60,000 guilders in cash. But Saltykov was disappointed that the stores held less than anticipated, and after several weeks of inconclusive correspondence ordered his army back to winter quarters.⁹²

⁸⁷ Tielke, *Account*, vol. 2, 361; Duffy, *Russia's Way*, 91–92, 116–17.

⁸⁸ Bangert, *Zusammenarbeit*, 196.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 58–59; SLV, 22.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 144, 182, 317–22; SLV, 419, 427, 434–37.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 373; cf. 228–31.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 260–77, 373–74; SLV, 506, 509. Oddly enough, although the Austrian supply system was much more efficient, the Russians again had to supply their ally with five days' ration of bread at this time. (Bangert, *Zusammenarbeit*, 275.)

This unhappy story explains why in Brandenburg, Pomerania and Silesia the Russian armies employed the same harsh requisitioning policies that they were now increasingly resorting to in East Prussia.⁹³ Their supply authorities also continued to conclude contracts with local merchants, but the main emphasis, it appears, was on more coercive methods: "if the inhabitants refused to sell," writes Maslovskii, "the produce was requisitioned, and the owners were left only with one-third of the cereals for their own needs."⁹⁴ The authorities ordered foragers not to wreak violence on civilians; but to judge by the experience of the Neumark district in 1759 there was a good deal of plundering in rural areas.⁹⁵

The army's logistical problems had many causes besides administrative inefficiency: execrable roads, rivers that flowed "the wrong way" and had to be forded when they could not be bridged, horses that were exhausted by overstrain, and vehicles that were too small and simply constructed for the heavy loads they had to carry. On top of all this there was the risk, in forward areas, of attack by enemy raiding parties.

In the German lands roads were little better than they were in Poland or the Baltic, where according to von Weymarn they were "wholly impracticable" during the spring floods.⁹⁶ Their surface consisted of "crushed sand or of clay, which was either stone hard or else lacking any foundation, according to the season." Nor did roads as yet cross the marshy meadows, lined by steep banks, along the rivers, which were rarely bridged.⁹⁷ Indeed, East Prussian roads were so notorious that some inhabitants at first confidently expected that for this reason alone the Russian invasion would fail.⁹⁸ As for the horse- or ox-drawn vehicles, these were ill adapted to their military role. In normal peacetime conditions a Russian peasant cart laden with produce had a maximum range of 150 kilometers;⁹⁹ now such

⁹³ SLV, 410, 430, 433, 445, 472, 478.

⁹⁴ RASV 3(1), 285-86.

⁹⁵ W. Bruchmüller, "Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Russeneinfalls in die Neumark vom Jahre 1759," *Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preussischen Geschichte* 26 (1913), 226.

⁹⁶ Von Hupel, *Feldzug*, 22, 108.

⁹⁷ G. Köster-Arnswalde, "Die Entwicklung der nordostdeutschen Verkehrsstrassen bis 1800," *Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preussischen Geschichte* 48 (1936), 122.

⁹⁸ Frantzius, *Okkupation*, 21.

⁹⁹ Kahan, *Plow*, 283.

rustic vehicles (and Polish or Prussian ones were little different) were expected to cover much greater distances. They broke down and hundreds of artisans had to be pressed into service to help repair them.

The army also faced the temporary interruption of river traffic when the water level sank too low. There were many islands, sandbanks and weirs, which made the Warthe (Warta), for instance, impassable above Landsberg.¹⁰⁰ When the Russians first reached the Niemen, the river stayed frozen much longer than usual and Apraksin had a hard job dragooning the local inhabitants to strengthen the banks for a bridge to be built. Later, the water level sank so low that the river could not be used for shipping.¹⁰¹ The Russians had better luck with the Vistula, where General A. M. Golitsyn took over and fortified an existing bridge at Thorn (Torun). Other bridges were later built on pontoons, but such constructions were liable to be swept away by sudden storms.¹⁰² The Netze (Notec) was found unsuitable for river transport, and "the great drought caused the water in the Warthe to fall so low that it could be forded at several points," as a Swedish officer in Prussian service noted.¹⁰³ The bridge across the Oder at Schwedt was demolished by Frederick's soldiers, but the Russians managed to repair it speedily with local labor.¹⁰⁴ When they eventually crossed this river it turned out to be a major operation which could take up to four days.¹⁰⁵

In the steppe war of the 1730s the army's baggage train had consisted of no less than 90,000 wagons.¹⁰⁶ This time there were fewer: a hostile critic put the number at 50,000 (1757).¹⁰⁷ He exaggerates, claiming that two-thirds of them were drawn by the soldiers themselves, although according to a more objective witness this practice was not uncommon.¹⁰⁸ Each infantry regiment was supposed to have

¹⁰⁰ Köster-Arnswalde, "Entwicklung," 121.

¹⁰¹ Von Hupel, *Feldzug*, 22, 31, 48. For difficulties on the return in September see Frantzius, *Okkupation*, 32.

¹⁰² Tielke, *Account*, vol. 2, 56, 315; SLV, 399; Nikolaev, *Istoriia 17-go*, 154; AKV 6, 366.

¹⁰³ Comte (J. L.) de Hordt, *Mémoires historiques, politique et militaires*, ed. M. Borrelly (Paris, 1805), vol. 2, 30.

¹⁰⁴ Tielke, *Account*, vol. 2, 124; cf. SLV, 328.

¹⁰⁵ Bangert, *Zusammenarbeit*, 279; cf. RASV 3(1), 141-2; SLV, 443, 445-46.

¹⁰⁶ Beskrovnyi, *Ruskaia armia*, 124, citing Manstein's memoirs.

¹⁰⁷ F. (Capt. Lambert), *O sostoianii russkoi armii v semiletniuiu voiuu* (Leipzig, 1863; also in AKV 6), 20.

¹⁰⁸ Von Hupel, *Feldzug*, 30, 141.

102 baggage carts, drawn by 268 horses—a number which in 1761 Fermor ordered to be reduced to 30 carts.¹⁰⁹ In addition, “every *artel* . . . of troops had its jealously guarded cart . . . and each officer was entitled to a private train of ten or more vehicles, a limit that was often surpassed many times over.”¹¹⁰ Apart from the obstacles which this vast vehicle park represented to rapid movement, it required maintenance of countless beasts of burden, including horses, oxen, and even a few camels. “All the grain reaped in the fields has been used to feed the horses,” reported Saltykov from an area near the Brandenburg border in July 1759.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, it was not rare for these wretched animals to be “almost worked down by long and difficult marches,” or by excessive reliance on grass fodder whenever oats ran short.¹¹² This explains the heavy demands for replacements made on the local population: already in the spring of 1758 Fermor said he was short of 10,740 horses (8,440 of them for the cavalry); in the next six weeks he secured 3,500 from East Prussia, Danzig and Kurland, but another month elapsed before the cavalry was ready to march.¹¹³ Cavalry mounts could not be substituted readily for draught animals since they had not been trained to pull vehicles; this was one reason why soldiers sometimes had to drag them along instead.¹¹⁴

On the whole, though, Russian commanders tried to look after their men, so far as they could within the limits of an absolutist and militaristic system. Likewise they endeavored to spare civilians the horrors of war. When it was put to von Stoffeln that Kolberg, then under siege, could be destroyed by setting fire to a magazine of straw and hay, he is said to have replied: “What good would that do? Do you think that a brave commandant will surrender the place because the houses are burned? By such an act we shall draw upon ourselves the epithets of barbarous and inhuman; let us then show that . . . we do not take pleasure in the sufferings of our fellow creatures.”¹¹⁵ Not every Russian officer would have shown such

¹⁰⁹ RASV 2(2), 11, 88–90.

¹¹⁰ Duffy, *Russia's Way*, 98; the last phrase seems somewhat exaggerated.

¹¹¹ SLV, 458.

¹¹² Tielke, *Account*, vol. 2, 100.

¹¹³ Bangert, *Zusammenarbeit*, 74, n. 46.

¹¹⁴ Von Hupel, *Feldzug*, 106.

¹¹⁵ Tielke, *Account*, vol. 2, 338. The store caught fire anyway but happily there was a sudden rain squall which put it out.

self-restraint, and the war produced its share of atrocities (e.g. the burning of Küstrin); yet there was a widespread sentiment that Russia and its army were on trial before European public opinion and that they should show themselves in the best possible light.

Unfortunately Immanuel Kant had yet to develop his plea for international peace by the time the Russians got to Königsberg. It is often said that some of their officers attended his lectures¹¹⁶ but, given Russian nobles' educational level at mid-century, one suspects that those who did so were of (Baltic) German extraction. Did exposure to a more advanced cultural environment leave some impact on their outlook (as it certainly did in central and western Europe half a century later), or was it the other way about? The evidence has only just begun to be explored,¹¹⁷ but already in 1916 G. von Frantzius was complimentary about the Russian influence on the locals: the foreigners' presence, he states, helped to break down social barriers and led to several mixed marriages.¹¹⁸ Even a mere concern to preserve good military order in occupied areas might have a positive effect. In the early stages of the war the Russian authorities required local officials to sign certificates to confirm that their men had behaved properly¹¹⁹—perhaps here emulating Prussian practices, for in the German lands billeting procedures were closely regulated.¹²⁰ Frederick II's depredations in Saxony aroused genuine disapproval in St. Petersburg, where it was also realized that they could be exploited for propaganda purposes: Russia could be represented as a young, more civilized power which stood for noble aims, for the preservation of legitimate rights and for a just peace that would restore the natural order in Europe which the king of Prussia had so rudely disrupted.

Of course things did not turn out this way. Russia neither won the incipient propaganda battle nor did she secure political advantages commensurate with the scale of her military victories. In fact, the outcome of the war could hardly have been more disappoint-

¹¹⁶ E.g. Duffy, *Russia's Way*, 82.

¹¹⁷ See the stimulating sketches by G. V. Kretinin, *Pod rossiiskoi koronoi, ili Russkie v Kenigsberge, 1758–1762* (Kaliningrad: Kaliningradskoe knizhnoe izd., 1996).

¹¹⁸ Frantzius, *Okkupation*, 90–98.

¹¹⁹ RASV 1(1), 6; 2(2), 251 (§ 1); also SLV, 381; V. A. Bil'basov, "Semiletniaia voina po russkim istochnikam," in idem, *Istoricheskie monografii* (St. Petersburg: Tip. I. N. Skorokhodova, 1901), 244.

¹²⁰ On German practices see R. Pröve in Kroener, ed., *Krieg und Frieden*, 205–09.

ing. The sense of national humiliation that so much blood had been spilt for nothing, aroused by Peter III's reckless abandonment of the crumbling anti-Prussian alliance in 1762, contributed to that monarch's speedy overthrow.¹²¹ Although Russia's demonstration of military strength impressed contemporaries abroad and was a decisive factor in earning her great-power status,¹²² Russia's participation in the Seven Years War was an expensive and unnecessary mistake. It cost the treasury some 30 million rubles, which as a "developing country" Russia could ill afford.¹²³ The human cost has been considered above. Prussia did not represent a serious threat to the Russian empire's security. At the worst Frederick might have made Prussian influence predominant in Kurland, a territory on which Russia was gradually encroaching; but the more easterly Baltic provinces were far beyond the king's ambitions. The same was true of Poland: Hohenzollern designs on her western provinces could have been neutralized, at a cost to that country's sovereignty, by corresponding Russian acquisitions in the east, as was done by the partitions of 1772–95. Moreover, any attempt to win lasting control over East Prussia would have brought about an anti-Russian coalition of German states under Prussian and/or Austrian leadership.

Russia's true interest in 1756 was not to help hammer together a belligerent coalition but rather to allow Frederick to humiliate the Habsburgs. This would have made Russia the dominant partner vis-à-vis Austria in their alliance, which in future would then have been oriented more definitely than before towards freeing southeastern Europe from Ottoman rule. Both *Realpolitik* and common sense dictated

¹²¹ Catherine II was careful to adopt a more even-handed foreign policy which took greater account of her empire's presumed "national interests." She fought no war in central Europe yet achieved far more, judged by conventional criteria, than the prosaic and unimaginative Elizabeth could have dreamed of.

¹²² Hamish M. Scott, "Katherinas Russland und das europäische Staatensystem," in *Katharine II, Russland und Europa: Beiträge zur internationalen Forschung*, ed. Claus Scharf (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2001), 14, 20.

¹²³ S. M. Troitskii, *Finansovaia politika russkogo absolutizma v XVIII v.* (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), 231: over 31 million rubles, but the data are incomplete. Fermor put the cost of the 1757–58 campaign at 5 million rubles, which Bangert (*Zusammenarbeit*, 319) reckons at approximately 90% of the annual budget. This may be a bit too high, for even under Peter I and in 1812–13 the share of the armed forces in budgetary expenditure did not exceed 75–80%: see Keep, *Soldiers*, 135–40 and "The Russian Army's Response to the French Revolution," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 28 (1980), 522–23 (reprinted in idem, *Power and the People: Essays in Russian History* (Boulder CO: East European Monographs, 1995), 236).

circumspection, not a military adventure. The army leaders had no great desire to fight their Prussian drillmasters. The decision to intervene lay with the politicians, and the Empress Elizabeth herself was a prime mover in driving Russia towards a belligerent course. As on so many other occasions, the country stumbled into war. None of its leaders expected the conflict to last so long. Their mood of complacent over-confidence in the country's strength made it easy to underestimate the risks of military action.