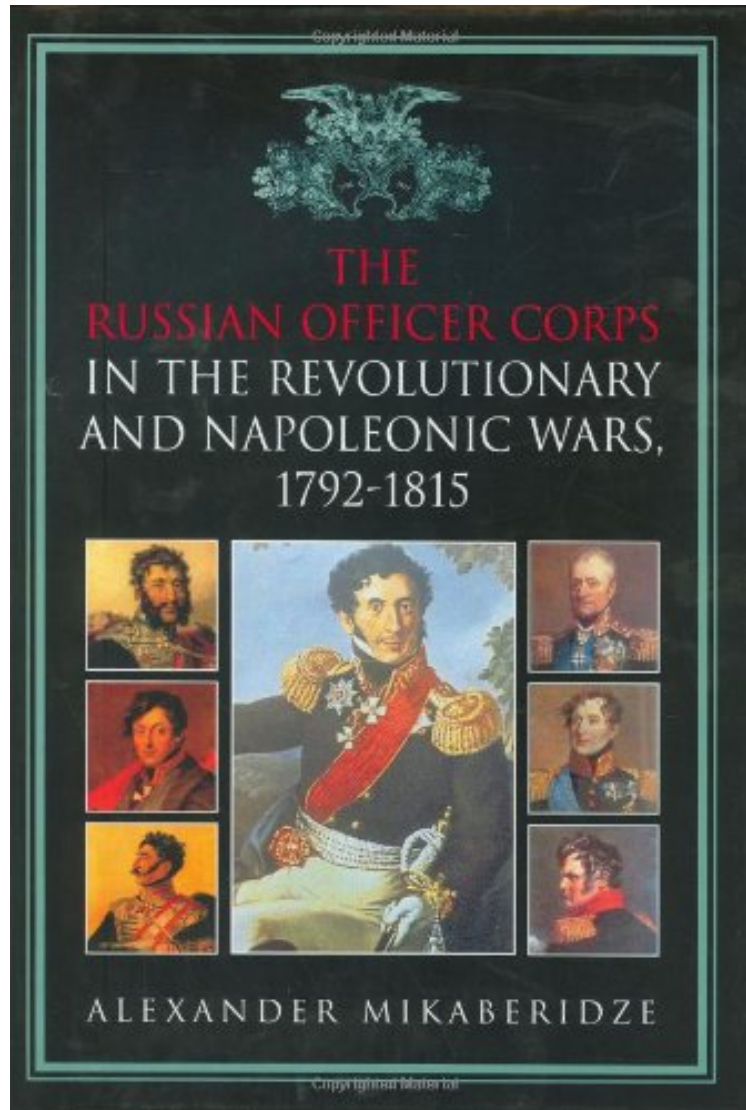


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# The Russian Officer Corps in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1792-1815

Alexander Mikaberidze

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**Alexander Mikaberidze : The Russian Officer Corps in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1792-1815**  
before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Russian Officer Corps in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1792-1815:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Top notch reference sourceBy SiriusIf you have any interest in learning about russian officers who fought with Napoleon, run to get this book. I needed to learn more about some of

these guys, and for one of them I could not find the info anywhere else and he was here, sooo happy. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Packed with useful and interesting information

**By Avon Napoleonic Fellowship**  
This book is packed with useful information from the introduction to the end. Mikaberidze's somewhat patriotic introduction sets the scene, describing the importance of the Russian army in the period of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars and noting some of the better-known officers who served and, in some cases, "paid the ultimate price for the well-being of Russia". The author's note prior to the start of the book proper discusses the Russian habit of "numbering" their officers. Mikaberidze points out that this was due to the large number of officers with the same last name, an interesting piece of information that I had not considered previously. I found it particularly interesting, and somewhat strange, given the Russian habit of referring to people by their 'son of' (-ich) middle name--no doubt the need for brevity lead to the numbering system!

A 66-page history of the Russian officer corps precedes the main, biographical section of the book. In this section Mikaberidze discusses the origins of the Russian officer corps (which began with the reforms of Peter the Great), the level of education, social composition, ranks and military orders. As a mild "arithmomaniac" I particularly enjoyed Mikaberidze's inclusion of numerous tables and graphs in this section. These, along with the line drawings of the decorations associated with the various military orders, add greatly to the look and content. The tables and graphs are packed with information; for example the age of officers at enlistment, which ranged from 2 years of age(!) to 36 and was a reflection of the nobles' habit of enlisting their children in guard units to accelerate their promotion!

The bulk of the book, 480 pages, is dedicated to the A to Z of Russian officers of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. There are, according to Mikaberidze's introduction, "more than 800 biographies", ranging from one or two paragraphs for the 'lesser' officers, to a single column or both columns of a page for 'mid-range' commanders, and up to two pages for officers who featured in numerous campaigns and/or held high command--the likes of Peter Ivanovich Bagration, Leontii Leontievich Benningsen or Mikhail Illarionovich Golenischev-Kutusov. Each biography includes the usual, expected but critical information of dates of birth and death, details of military service and particular achievements or incidents and concludes with awards and orders received. Entries for the more significant generals also include a summary and concluding assessment of the officer's worth; or otherwise! More than half of the biographies are accompanied by a well-produced portrait of the officer. As would be expected in such a publication, the writing is straight forward and factual. There are a few typos and grammatical errors, such as missing articles, incorrect tense and the odd spelling error, e.g. "loosing two thirds of his troops", but none of those that I found related to more important information such as names, dates, places or 'facts'. Overall I found this section to be complete, sufficiently detailed and, like any encyclopaedic dictionary, the sort of work to be browsed through or used to check a specific entry.

The book ends with a detailed bibliography of archival, primary and secondary sources. These included sources in English, German, French and Russian. The latter are written using the latin alphabet, with an English translation. Whilst not of interest to every reader, this provides a great pointer for further study for the keen student, researcher or enthusiast. This is a landmark work, a fine reference source and one that we will be 'dipping' into regularly as we plan games involving Russian forces and their leaders. As Donald Horward states in his foreword, "readers interested in the Russian army during the Napoleonic period now have a valuable research tool available". I could not agree more.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. The Unknown Soldiers

**By Tom Holmberg**  
With but a handful of exceptions, the Russian officer corps is the least known of those who served and led in the wars of the Napoleonic era. While careful readers and hobbyists might be able to name most of Napoleon's marshals, they might be hard-pressed to identify even a fraction of as many Russian generals. Georges Six's Dictionnaire of French officers or Mulli's Biographie of early nineteenth century military men, as well as any number of English-language reference tools on the Napoleonic era military have been available to students of history, but no comparable biographical work on the Russian military has been available to the non-Russophone reader. The Russian language, the Cyrillic alphabet and the relative unavailability of Russian sources has presented a barrier to those seeking more information on the Russians who fought Napoleon's armies. Dr. Mikaberidze has written what will undoubtedly be the essential work of reference on the Russian officer corps. He begins with an overview of the Russian officer corps, giving a brief history from its beginnings under Peter the Great through to the Napoleonic era. We learn how Russia's military was trained, as well as the cultural milieu of the officer corps. Mikaberidze manages to pack a great deal of information into this introduction, supplementing the text with numerous tables and graphs. Included is a discussion of the ranks in the Russian military, with a number of tables marking their evolution over time. Finally Russian military orders are detailed with illustrations of their use.

Dr. Alexander Mikaberidze, an assistant professor of history at Mississippi State University, holds a law degree from the Republic of Georgia and a Ph.D. in history from Florida State University, where he was a member of the Institute on Napoleon and the French Revolution. He serves as president of the Napoleonic Society of Georgia. Mikaberidze is also the author of the forthcoming *Lion of the Russian Army: Life and Career of General Peter Bagration*. The Russian officer corps was made up almost exclusively of nobles (86.5 % in 1812), and many had entered the service at the age of sixteen or younger (nearly 500 of the officers serving in 1812 were sixteen or younger at their enlistment-13 had been five years of age or younger). Promotion for the nobility could be relatively quick if the officer had the right connections, while soldiers from the ranks might have to wait a quarter of a century to advance from the ranks of NCOs to commission

officer status. The meat of the books is the 800 biographies of Russian officers who fought against the French, Turks, Swedes, and Russia's other enemies during "our" era (naval officers are included as well). These biographies generally include dates of birth and death, family and educational history, military and civil service including notable battles and events, promotions and awards (including foreign orders) as well as other details of the subject's professional history. More than half the biographies are accompanied by black-and-white portraits. The biographies are arranged alphabetically, in an attractive double-column format. Individual entries run from a single paragraph to a couple of pages. Dr. Mikaberidze has consulted a small library of archival, primary and secondary sources in compiling this unique and solid dictionary. These biographies will be a boon for historians wishing to distinguish, for instance, officers of the same surnames who are frequently identified by numbers (Mikaberidze points out that there were eighteen officers named Grekov, of whom six are detailed here). The volume also includes foreign-born officers serving in the Russian service, including British, Irish, German, Austrian, Polish, Italian, French, Spanish, Greek, Danish Dutch, Serb, and Armenian officers in the Russian military, demonstrating the cosmopolitan nature of war in the Napoleonic era. Attractively produced, well-bound (though it will undoubtedly get heavy use), this work should be in libraries everyone with a keen interest in the Napoleonic wars and Russian history. The Russian Officer Corps is certain to be a standard reference source for years to come. Though I can't recommend this book more highly, I would have liked to have seen an index. An index, for example, would have allowed the reader to locate all the officers who participated in a particular battle. A glossary of Russian military terms might also have been useful.

Presented here, for the first time in any language, are more than 800 detailed biographies of the senior Russian officers who commanded troops in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, together with 440 b/w portraits. This amazing study spans the critical years of 1792 to 1815, but also includes those officers whose service fell before and after this period. Dr. Mikaberidze's *The Russian Officer Corps* is based upon years of research in Russian archives. Each biography includes the subject's place of birth, family history, educational background, a detailed description of his military service, his awards and promotions, wounds, transfers, commands, and other related information, including the date and place of his death and internment, if known. In addition to the biographies is an introductory chapter setting forth in meticulous detail the organization of the Russian military, how it was trained, the educational and cultural background of the officer corps, its awards and their history and meaning, and much more. This outstanding overview is supported and enhanced by three dozen charts, tables, and graphics that illustrate the rich history of the Russian officer corps. This study also includes a Foreword by Dr. Donald H. Howard, and an annotated bibliography to help guide students of the period through the available Russian sources. Stunning in its scope and depth of coverage, *The Russian Officer Corps* will be of tremendous use to historians, scholars, genealogists, hobbyists, wargamers, and anyone working or studying late 18th and early 19th-century European history. Every student of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, as well as every academic library, will find this impressive reference work absolutely indispensable. Serious readers of this momentous period of history cannot afford to be without this exceptional reference work.

About the Author: Alexander Mikaberidze is an assistant professor of history at Mississippi State University. He holds a law degree from the Republic of Georgia and a Ph.D. in history from Florida State University, where he worked at the Institute on Napoleon and the French Revolution. He serves as president of the Napoleonic Society of Georgia. In addition to his numerous articles on various Napoleonic-related topics, Dr. Mikaberidze's publications include a biography of Napoleon in Georgian, two volumes on the Russo-Turkish War of 1806-1812, and the forthcoming *Lion of the Russian Army: Life and Career of General Peter Bagration*

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