

The Soviet Military Advisors in Mongolia 1921–39

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Military advisors from Russia played an important role in the creation and development of the Mongolian Army. The first military advisers in Mongolia were Lyatte, Litvinsteu, Kosich, Sorkin, Sheko, Pokus, Kangelari who were the commanders of 5th Army, which fought its way from the Volga up to Lake Baikal in the Russian Civil War. They helped in the creation of the Mongolian Army, which had defeated the army of Baron Ungern.

Military advisors and instructors in Mongolia became especially active after 1925, when Red Army units were removed from Mongolia. At this time here especially appreciable were L. Vainer, K. Rokossovsky, V. Sudets, V. Gordov, K. Zimin. They helped to transform the Mongolian Army into a modern mechanized force.

According to the Protocol on Mutual Aid between USSR and Mongolia in March 1936 the Red Army again entered Mongolia, the new groups of advisers and instructors included: I. Pliev, M. Tikhonov, V. Panyuchov, I. Nikitin etc. Due to their activity the power of the Mongolian Army increased significantly by 1939 and in that year it acted successfully with the Red Army against the Japanese armies in the Nomonhan (Khalkhin-Gol) region.

In March 1921 four cavalry regiments were formed from isolated partisan groups in the area of the city of Maimatchen (in the far north of Mongolia SE of Lake Baikal). These formed the nucleus of the new Mongolian National Army, which was led by the talented national leader D. Sukhe-Bator. The new Mongolian Army was created as the Armed Forces of the Mongolian National Revolution by virtue of a decision made by the 1st Congress of the Mongolian National Party. At the time of its creation, the Mongolian Army relied heavily in its training for future combat on the extensive combat experiences of the Red Army, which had recently arrived along the borders of Mongolia.

For its part, Soviet Russia provided extensive and diverse assistance in terms of arms, ammunition, equipment, and staff training to the fledgling Mongolian Army. Since the Army's command and staff cadre lacked

significant experience in staff work, the Soviet command provided an officer named Lyatte, who was Chief of the Soviet 5th Army's Operations Department, to assist the Mongolians. As noted in the work entitled *50 Years of the Mongolian National Army*, 'on 12 March 1921, the Russian expert Lyatte was nominated to be the Chief of Staff of the Mongolian National Army.'

In fact, Lyatte was the first military adviser the Soviet government assigned to advise indigenous forces in Mongolia. He served in this position from April through August 1921, when he was replaced by the former commander of the 2nd Sretenskaia Cavalry Brigade of the National Army of the Far Eastern Republic, Pavel Ignatevitch Litvintsev, who called himself by the Mongolian names Erdene or Erdenedorzh. These two initial advisors were instrumental in forming the first regiments in the Mongolian National Army, preparing them for ensuing combat operations against the Chinese, which involved a liberation campaign to the capital Urga (now Ulan Bator) in July 1921, and mopping-up forces of the foreign military interventionists and White Guards in various portions of Mongolia.

The liberation of Mongolia permitted the temporary Mongolian National government to begin the revolutionary transformations of the country. This transformation also effected the new Mongolian Armed Forces, which had to be strengthened to deal with the continuing threat of foreign intrusions. During this period, the Mongolian Army grew in size, and the cavalry regiments were converted into brigades. In August 1921, a special military school was created in the Mongolian capital to prepare command and staff cadres for the army. The War Ministry (Commissariat of War or Ministry of Defense), which was headed by D. Sukhe-Bator, and the Revolutionary National Council (*Sovet*) handled all questions related to the military formation and outfitting]of the Mongolian National Army.

During these stormy post-revolutionary conditions after the Russian Civil War, the fledgling Mongolian Army required the assistance of skilled military experts in many matters, but, first and foremost, to train it. In September 1921, Vladimir Aleksandrovich Khuva became the Chief of Staff of the Mongolian Army.

Khuva had served as a lieutenant colonel in the former Tsarist Russian Army and had served in both the Russo-Japanese War and World War I. After the Russian Revolution of 1917, he became a member of the Executive Committee of the Yenisei Council of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in Siberia. During 1920 and 1921, Khuva was the Chief of the Department of Reserve Armies in the Eastern Siberian Military District and Inspector of Infantry in the Bolshevik 5th Army. Khuva successfully performed his duties as the Chief of Staff of the Mongolian Army for an entire year. He was then appointed head of the Mongolian War Ministry and

a member of the Revolutionary Military Council. In recognition of Khuva's contributions to the strengthening of the army, the Mongolian government awarded him the Order of Erdeni-Batchir and the title of 'count'.² The Soviet government did likewise, by awarding him the Order of the Red Banner, 'for selfless work and participation in combat actions together with our armies in the Mongols' struggle against White gangs during the recent fighting in northwestern Mongolia.'³

The growing volume of work required in order to form and equip the Mongolian National Army urgently required the participation of many Soviet military experts. The Mongolians particularly needed military advisors who possessed combat experience in the Russian Civil War and keen combat-administrative and pedagogical qualities. Therefore, at the official invitation of the Mongolian government, in 1923 the Soviet Union despatched its first 12 military advisors to Mongolia. These military men were D. I. Kosich, V. I. Dmitrienko, L. Ia. Vainer, N. M. Glavatsky, A. O. Petrov, A. S. Orlov, N. S. Sorkin, A. I. Iakimovitch, Boiko, Beloglazov, Petrovsky, and Shamin.⁴

All of these officers possessed extensive combat experience and excellent theoretical training. For example, Kosich, Dmitrienko, and Vainer had graduated from higher academic courses at the RKKA (Workers and Peasants Red Army) Military Academy, Beloglazov from the Higher Cavalry School, Petrov from the Military Communications School, and Glavatsky and Boiko from the 'Vystel' (shooting) courses. Orlov had completed the Military-Medical Academy before World War I and had considerable practical experience.⁵ Since 1919 Sorkin had taken part in the heavy fighting against the forces of the White General I. A. Denikin in southern Russia and against the Poles. After the Civil War, he commanded an artillery battery.⁶ In 1923 Sorkin graduated from the Red Army's Higher Artillery School, the same school that Iakimovich attended. Only the cavalry commanders, Petrovsky and Shamin, had no formal military education.

At first, the Mongolians availed themselves most of the Soviet advisors' military knowledge and expertise. The 12 Soviet officers taught in the Mongolian cavalry and artillery schools, helped in the formation of new units in the Mongolian Army, improved the practical and theoretical knowledge of Mongolian military commanders, and directly supervised military training and the mastery and assimilation of combat experience and military engineering techniques in army units. Thus, in 1923 Iakimovitch, who had six-years of experience in World War I and the Russian Civil War, participated in the formation of the Mongolian Army's first artillery regiment. He then served for five more years in the regiment as a its principal instructor. As Sorkin recalled, 'Despite his [Iakimovich's]

advanced age, this tireless worker remained in the units from early morning until late in the evening helping the commanders and soldiers to master the intricacies of complex artillery engineering.' With fondness, the Mongolian troops (*tsiriks*) called him 'father.'⁷

Iakimovich had commanded a Red Army cavalry brigade during the Russian Civil War and had been awarded two Orders of the Red Banner for his outstanding combat performance. While serving in Mongolia, he played an important role in the formation of Mongolian Army educational institutions and the organization of educational courses within these schools. Before the Civil War, he had been employed as a teacher, and this helped him greatly in his subsequent work.

Under Kosich's direction, a military-scientific society was organized in Urga, at whose sessions Soviet military instructors presented reports on tactical matters. Reports presented by Dmitrienko and Vainer on cavalry tactics generated the greatest interest at these sessions. The Mongolian commanders who participated in the sessions of this society markedly improved their training in military theory. Their knowledge and experience grew noticeably each year because of the 'brotherly' assistance they received from their Soviet colleagues. As testimony to the effectiveness of their work, on the advice of the Soviet advisors, a 23-year-old cavalry squadron commander, G. Demid, who had completed military school in 1922, was assigned as the Chief of the Mongolian Cavalry School. The advisors were not ill-advised in their decision. Subsequently, Demid became War Minister (War Commissar) of Mongolia and rose to the rank of Marshal.⁸

Another Soviet advisor, named V. N. Lubny-Gertchik, who was assigned to Mongolia after the initial 12 advisors, coped perfectly with his duties as a teacher at the Mongolian Artillery School. Unfortunately, he did not serve long in Mongolia, since he fell ill there and died. However, he left an excellent legacy among his Mongolian student officers.

Other Soviet advisors, such Khomutnikov, Davydov, Kikeev, and Vasil'ev worked hard in the army as advisors and instructors of Mongolian cavalry regiments. While assigned to forward Red Army units during the Civil War, these officers had participated in combat against the White forces of Baron R. F. Ungern-Shternberg and had mastered the Mongolian language. This fact considerably facilitated their activity among the Mongolians.

One should note the special role that Soviet military advisors assigned to Red Army Kalmyk cavalry units played in Mongolia. At the end of May 1921, a group of combat soldiers and commanders assigned to the Red Army's 108th Kalmyk Cavalry Regiment, which was led by Kh. B. Kanukov, arrived in Kiakhta (just north of Maimachen), Mongolia. While working

within the structure of the Mongolian Revolutionary Army during June and July 1921, these cavalymen participated actively in combat operations against Baron Ungern's gangs and in the liberation of Urga. The linguistic and ethnic compatibility of the Kalmyks with the Mongols materially strengthened friendship between the Soviet and Mongolian peoples.

After victory was achieved over Baron Ungern's forces in Kalmykia, at the end of 1921, a separate Kalmyk cavalry squadron was formed and dispatched to Mongolia. The soldiers and commanders assigned to this unit provided extensive practical assistance to the Mongols in the formation and training of new regiments, batteries, and cavalry squadrons for the Mongolian National Army. These soldiers and officers worked in Mongolia through 1924. Among these advisors were V. A. Khomutnikov, the commander of 108th Kalmyk Cavalry Regiment, and soldiers and commanders Andrei Driuchkov, Aleksei Khangalzhinov, Timofei Shividov, Kokoldy Lidzhiev, Boris Iunzukov, Dorzhi Martyshkin, Volia Shurguchinov, Badma Manzhikov, Georgii Shapshukov, Petr Ivanov, Keriadyk Safonov, Nikolai Kanukov, Ilia Tevriukov, Ivan Mandzhikov, Zula Karnae, Tsyren-Dorzhi Nominkhanov, Matsak Bimbaev, and others. Their activities are described in detail in the collection of memoirs entitled *With the International Mission*, which was published in 1970 in Elista by the 'Elista' publishing house.

The importance of the work accomplished by these initial Soviet advisors and instructors increased dramatically after 1925, when Red Army forces assigned to Mongolia were removed at the request of the Mongolian government. A note written on 24 January 1925 by the then Soviet Commissar of Foreign Affairs, G. V. Chicherin explained why the Soviet forces were withdrawn. In it he stated that the protection provided by Mongolian and Soviet military units, which had resulted 'from the revolutionary activities of the national government in the country, established necessary order and conditions necessary for the further democratization of the country'.⁹ Consequently, this work, as well as the fact that the (counterrevolutionary) gangs had been liquidated, no longer justified the stationing of Soviet forces in Mongolia.

Thereafter, Mongolia was completely responsible for the maintenance of its own sovereignty and for the protection of its state boundaries. From 1923 through 1932, however, a Soviet military advisor still occupied the post of Chief of Staff of the Mongolian Army. D. I. Kosich filled this post in 1923 and 1924. A Civil War veteran, Kosich had commanded the famous 26th Rifle Division's 226th Rifle Regiment in the equally famous Bolshevik 5th Army. In that capacity, he advanced with the Red Army from the Ural Mountains to the very borders of Mongolia. During operations to liquidate Baron Ungern's forces, Kosich served as military commissar of 5th Army.

Now, in 1923 the Soviet government entrusted the 28-year-old commander and commissar with yet another critical diplomatic task. In addition to serving as Army Chief of Staff, Kosich simultaneously served as the head of all Soviet military advisors and instructors residing in Mongolia. In his memoirs, N. S. Sorkin describes his qualities, stating:

The short, stumpy, and a little bit sluggish, but affable and witty D. I. Kosich, who almost always smoked a massive pipe, impressed his Mongolian comrades. He had unlimited authority within the army command, and his advice was always listened to with great attention. Kosich himself successfully combined the qualities of a commander and a political worker. He could both order [others] and listen to the opinions of his subordinates. People frequently visited him in the large office [yurta] he occupied as the chief of staff to seek his advice and instructions. D. I. Kosich always required high organization [great efficiency] and discipline from us.¹⁰

After Kosich left the position of chief of staff in 1924, an old Bolshevik, Dr V. A. Kangelari, occupied the post in 1925 and 1926.¹¹ Dr. Kangelari had become a military expert after the Russian Revolution of 1917, and, later, a deputy military district commander. The veteran Ia. V. Sheko, who had achieved hero status during the Civil War in the Far East, succeeded Kangelari as Mongolian Army Chief of Staff in 1927. In turn, the prestigious military leader, Ia. Z. Pokus, replaced Sheko in 1930, but in 1933 Sheko once again became chief of staff, a position which he retained until 1935.¹²

All of these army chiefs of staff contributed significantly to the development of Mongolian Army forces by actively participating in the preparation of instructions, regulations, and manuals, by teaching the Mongolians how to prepare military documents, and by carrying out a wide variety of other tasks. They were popular because of their work not only within the Mongolian Army but also among the other Soviet advisors in the country. For example, the famous Soviet military leader, V. A. Sudets, who served as an aviation instructor in Mongolia during 1933, stated that Ia. V. Sheko was, 'Of immense size and athletically-built, an accomplished rider, an expert shot, and evidenced a steadfastness of character. His high level of education in combination with his sociability and kindness earned for him well-deserved respect and popularity among the Mongolian population.'¹³

Among the other Soviet advisor-instructors working in Mongolia at the end of the 1920s, one should mention, in particular, K. K. Rokossovsky¹⁴ and V. N. Gordov.¹⁵ The former had distinguished himself at the front during the Russian Civil War, when the talented cavalryman had commanded 35th Cavalry Regiment in 1920 and 1921 during the heavy fighting against

Baron Ungern's bands in Transbaikalia and Mongolia. Soon after, Rokossovsky was assigned to command a cavalry brigade.

In July 1926, Rokossovsky was assigned as an advisor-instructor to the newly-created 1st Mongolian Cavalry Division, and he remained at this post for a full two-year tour of duty. V. N. Gordov also served as an advisor-instructor during the same period (1925–26). Together, they significantly strengthened the Mongolian National Army. Later, then Marshal of the Soviet Union K. K. Rokossovsky said the following in his memoirs about his service in Mongolia, as he described, in particular, the difficult lives of the 'instructor-internationalists':

We are always together. At the request of the Mongolian national government, the Soviet commanders rendered assistance in the formation and organization of the army. They were involved as instructors, and the scope of tasks and duties performed by the instructors' staff was extensive and varied. To create anew a Mongolian Army that could respond to modern requirement was a complex and responsible matter, and this was clearly understood by our commanders. They neither skimmed in their work nor did they count the days of their assignment, for they were trying to transfer the extensive experiences of the Soviet Armed Forces as fully as possible in order to help the Mongolian people to prepare their national military staff [headquarters].

The problems involved [in preparing] command and staff cadre were the most daunting. First of all, it was necessary to prepare an officer cadre, beginning from platoon commanders and up. The staff and command cadre training was conducted simultaneously with the formation and organization of units, formations, and headquarters. The Soviet advisor-instructors worked in sub-units from squadron, company, and battery level to regiment, brigade, and division level. Together with their Mongolian comrades, they shared all of the pleasures and burdens of combat and political training...

The Mongolian government provided continuous and immense assistance to all of the instructors' staffs, and this fact facilitated the performance of our missions of forming and training a new type of army capable of defending adequately the interests of the people and the honour and freedom of their native land.¹⁶

With this brotherly assistance from the Soviet Armed Forces, the Mongolian National Army improved and became stronger with each year. In addition to the traditional type of forces such as cavalry, new armored, artillery, and air units were formed in the army. As a result of this effort, by 1931 the Mongolian Army consisted of four cavalry divisions (in place of the

previous single one), as well as a separate transport regiment and a separate tank regiment.¹⁷ The Soviet Union provided the National Mongolian Army's units with all of their required artillery, tank, and aviation equipment and weaponry and with all required ammunition.

As early as 1925, a group of Soviet military experts headed by Soviet pilot Lapin (Lapinysh) formed the first aviation group in the Mongolian Armed Forces. The group's staff personnel were drawn from a pool of Mongolian pilots who had completed their training in Soviet higher aviation schools. In 1932 this aviation group was expanded further into a full aviation brigade. A group of Soviet pilots, engineers, and observers, who arrived in Mongolia in 1931, provided significant assistance to the Mongolian pilots as they mastered complex aviation and engineering tasks and fighter and bomber tactics. These advisors included the pilots Grebnev and Maikov, the engineer-technicians Stepachev, Dmitrienko, Maev, and Listopadov, and the pilot-observer Boguslavsky. The latter was assigned to the post of instructor-navigator of the air group and, later, the aviation brigade. In order to accelerate the preparation of a national cadre of pilots, in January 1934, the Mongolian government decided to train its aviation staff, pilots, and technicians in Mongolia proper. Therefore, the Soviet Union sent a new group of Soviet aviation instructors, including the pilots Delnov, Kolokol'tsev, Tsapko, and Karnaikhov, the engineer Glebov, the technician Dobrov, and several others to Mongolia.¹⁸

Ia. I. Alksnis, the Chief of the Red Army Air Force, provided invaluable assistance in the formation and development of Mongolian military aviation. The Mongolian government later recognized his personal contributions to this program when, in May 1935, it awarded Alksnis with the Order of the Red Banner 1st Degree.¹⁹

V. A. Sudets also played an instrumental role in the training of Mongolian aviation cadres and in strengthening the combat power of Mongolian aviation forces. Sudets was appointed as an instructor-advisor of the new Mongolian Aviation Brigade in 1933. Simultaneously, he supervised the group of Soviet air instructors. At the time he took command, Sudets was already a skilled aviation commander with eight years of aviation experience. He was assigned as the commander of a separate aviation group shortly after his graduation from the N. E. Zhukovsky Air Force Academy. While serving in Mongolia, Sudets was able to inspire all of the instructors to perform their international duty and resolve the many diverse problems associated with military education and, in particular, aviation combat training. In Mongolia, even the development of parachute sports remains associated with his name.

In the summer of 1934, when counterrevolutionary bands intruded into Mongolia from China and began provoking disorder, the Aviation Brigade's

staff distinguished itself while conducting air reconnaissance and air combat operations in support of Mongolian cavalry forces fighting against the hostile bands.²⁰ Sudets's assistance was of vital assistance to the Mongolian pilots who carried out these missions.

From 1935 into 1937, Sudets commanded an aviation group in support of the Soviet forces in Mongolia who repelled Japanese aggression in 1936. In return for his great contributions to the strengthening of the country's defensive capability, the Mongolian government awarded Sudets with the Order of the Red Banner, the Order Sukhe-Bator, and, in 1971, the honorific title of Hero of Mongolia.²¹

The victory of the Mongolian Communists in their Revolution of 1921 certainly did not mean that the revolution's opponents meekly laid down their arms. In fact, more than once thereafter, reactionary elements attempted to weaken Communist national authority. To suppress these activities, in 1922 the Mongolian government transformed its state internal security organs into the Ministry of Internal Affairs, whose mission, in addition to providing internal security, also included protection of the state borders. Since the new Mongolian government lacked any experience in dealing with such security matters, it turned to the Soviet Union for help.

Consequently, in 1927 P. E. Shetinkin, the Chief of Staff of the Siberian Border District, was dispatched to Mongolia to advise the Mongolians on internal security matters.²² A former Siberian partisan who had participated in the struggle with Baron Ungern in Mongolia in 1921, Shetinkin provided assistance to the Mongolians by organizing their border guards service and strengthening State internal security organs. Unfortunately, Shetinkin was not engaged long in these activities since he died on 30 September 1927 at a military post. Many years later, in July 1982, the Mongolian government paid homage to the distinguished Soviet 'Chekist' by erecting a monument to his memory in Ulan-Bator on the 60th anniversary of the country's public security organs.²³ Thereafter, another Soviet 'Chekist', V. V. Gridnev, continued in Shetinkin's footsteps by further strengthening border security in 1932.²⁴

During the earliest years of Soviet-Mongolian cooperation, many of the initial military advisors also imparted their experiences in conducting party-political work to Mongolian forces. Subsequently, the Soviet Commissariat of War also sent skilled Red Army political workers to Mongolia. For example, K. N. Zimin, who had considerable Red Army experience, shared his expertise with the Mongolians from 1933 to 1935.²⁵ Ziman served as chief advisor to the head of the Mongolian Army's Political Directorate and, for his service, the Mongolians awarded him with the Mongolian Order of the Red Banner, 1st Degree. Recollecting Zimin's contributions, V. A. Sudets later wrote, 'K. N. Zimin, who possessed uncommon professional

knowledge and also extensive experience in party-political work earned the well-deserved respect of his Soviet and Mongolian comrades.²⁶

A tense atmosphere existed in the Far East during the 1930s. In the early 1930s, the Japanese seized a portion of China and created the puppet state of Manchukuo on Chinese territory in Manchuria. Then the Japanese aggressors transformed this territory into a bridgehead for future advances further to the north and west, thus threatening Mongolia and the Soviet Far Eastern territories. Japanese border provocations became more frequent along the eastern and southern border of Mongolia, and reactionary elements within the Mongolian Republic increased their activities in the expectation that the Communist government could be overthrown. In this threatening situation, in March 1936 the Soviet Union and Mongolia signed a ten-year protocol for mutual assistance.

The Mutual Assistance Pact provided for mutual military action on the part of both parties in the event of foreign aggression against either party. In this sense, the pact updated an agreement that had existed since 27 November 1934. It provided for, 'Mutual support with all forces in the matter of preventing and deterring aggression.'²⁷ According to the terms of this pact, the Mongolians requested that the Soviet Union station Red Army troops on its territory. Once again, as in 1921 through 1925, Soviet forces responded positively in order to protect the security of the Mongolian people, as well as the Soviet Union's own national security. Also at the request of the Mongolian government, the Soviet Union increased its deliveries of arms and ammunition and military advisors to Mongolia. At the same time, the Mongolian government undertook measures to strengthen the country's defensive capabilities and the Mongolian National Army.

Among the many preparedness measures was the Mongolian decision to institute a system of progressive military ranks for all individual commanders up to the rank of Marshal of Mongolia. The new rank system markedly improved the army's discipline, morale, and effectiveness. At the time, the rank of Marshal of Mongolia was conferred on Kh. Choibalsan, the First Deputy Prime Minister, and G. Demid, the Minister of War. Simultaneously, at the Mongolian government's request, the Soviet Union significantly increased the number of advisors it assigned to serve in Mongolia. Whereas the Soviet Union had sent 110 military advisors to Mongolia in 1936 and 139 more in 1937, by 1939 it increased the number of assigned advisors to 681.²⁸ In addition, in 1935 Corps Commander L. Ia. Vainer replaced Ia. V. Sheko as chief military advisor to Mongolia.²⁹

When Soviet forces entered Mongolia in significant numbers in 1936 and 1937, the Soviet military contingent consisted of 36th Motorized Rifle Division, the 6th Cavalry Brigade, the 11th Tank Brigade, and the 7th, 8th,

and 9th Motorized Armored Brigades. The Soviet command then combined these units into 57th Special Rifle Corps, commanded by L. Ia. Vainer. Simultaneously, Vainer was replaced as military advisor to the Mongolian Army High Command by Corps Commander I. S. Konev,³⁰ who served in this capacity during 1937 and 1938. In turn, Division Commander N. V. Feklenko replaced Konev and commanded the special corps in 1938 and 1939.³¹

During the few years prior to the 1939 war with Japan, many distinguished Soviet instructors continued to work as military advisors in Mongolia. The tireless efforts they made to strengthen the Mongolian National Army's combat readiness and to prepare it for future combat with the Japanese succeeded, as the 1939 Battle of Khalkhin-Gol clearly proved. Among the many Soviet advisors and experts who worked in Mongolia during the 1930s and paved the way for that victory were M. F. Tikhonov,³² P. A. Navrotsky,³³ K. I. Novik,³⁴ I. A. Pliev,³⁵ V. V. Panukov,³⁶ and many others.

All of these military figures except I. A. Pliev had amassed extensive combat experience during the Russian Civil War. All had received sound military education and training in military theory and all had been well decorated for their prior military feats. For example, Tikhonov, Novik, and Navrotsky had graduated from Red Army cavalry schools and courses, and Pliev had had completed the famous Leningrad Cavalry School and the Frunze Academy. They treated their assignment to Mongolia with the utmost seriousness and considered the work they performed to be their high international duty.

Unfortunately, many of these and former military advisors also fell victim to the wave of Stalinist repression that engulfed the Red Army from 1937 through 1940. Brigade Commander Nikitin was a prime example. Prior to this troubling period Brigade Commander I. S. Nikitin had served as chief military advisor in Mongolia from March 1935 through October 1937. Before occupying this position, he had commanded a Red Army cavalry brigade and then 5th Cavalry Division.³⁷ Nikitin coped successfully with his new duties in Mongolia, and was awarded the Order of the Red Star in January 1937.

However, the Soviet military authorities in Moscow recalled Nikitin from Mongolia abruptly in October 1937, well ahead of schedule. Ostensibly, they did so because he 'could not cope with his work'. Regimental Commissar Sorokin, the Deputy Chief of the Red Army's 9th Intelligence Directorate justified the condemnation of Nikitin in a Party fitness [efficiency] report that he prepared on the chief advisor. The report read, 'While serving as a member of a bureau in the instructors' collective, Comrade Nikitin failed to criticize actively the illegal practices of Vainer and his associates.'

Subsequently, this talented and learned commander remained in limbo and disgrace for almost two years. All the while, he was assigned to a pool of reserve officers assigned to the Soviet Commissariat of War. In late 1938, however, Nikitin was one of those few who were fortunate enough to be cleared of the heinous charges. The Red Army leadership then assigned Nikitin as commander of the Western Special Military District's 6th Cavalry Division and, later, its 6th Cavalry Corps.

Despite the rigors and ravages of the purges, some of the Soviet military advisor-experts participated actively in thwarting Japanese aggressive attempts to violate Mongolian sovereignty. For example, in December 1936, V. Kh. Tairov, the plenipotentiary representative of the Soviet Union in Mongolia, informed the Soviet Commissariat of Defense about the military advisors' accomplishments. He wrote, 'During the past two years, our commanders who are assigned to Mongolia have performed immense work in improving the combat capabilities of the Mongolian National Army.' The outcome of the ensuing border disputes and incidents with the Japanese and Manchukuoan forces, which occurred in 1935 and 1936, and, in particular the results of the heavy fighting which occurred on 29–31 March 1936, remain as testimony to their work. The advisors inspired their brave comrades in the Mongolian Army, commanders and soldiers alike, with their own personal bravery.³⁸ Military advisor M. F. Tikhonov described his advisory work in Mongolia in a report, which is now in the archives, writing:

I was sent to Mongolia in 1935 as an advisor to the commander of a cavalry division. At that time, the army did not yet possess a trained command staff.

The conditions under which the military advisors worked was very difficult. The basic means of training our Mongolian comrades was by personal example. Quite literally, each man had to demonstrate how it was necessary to work in this or that situation. What were the contributions made by the advisors? Ultimately, the National Revolutionary Army was able to fight with the Japanese aggressors as a well-trained regular army.³⁹

By the summer of 1939, the Japanese aggressors developed concepts and plans for a carefully prepared their attack on Mongolia. Accordingly, on 11 May 1939, Japanese forces intruded into Mongolian territory in pursuit of their far-reaching aims. The Soviet government honored the commitments it had made to Mongolia in its Mutual Assistance Agreement and ordered its forces stationed in Mongolia to protect the Mongolian borders as if they were their own.

Subsequently, side by side, Soviet and Mongolian forces engaged the Japanese aggressors. Mongolian units and formations and their commanders

demonstrated their combat readiness and combat skill in the heavy fighting that took place in May and June 1939 in the region of the Khalkhin-Gol River. The Mongolian Army's divisions, brigades, and regiments were well-equipped to participate in the ensuing combat by virtue of the hard work of their Soviet advisors. The Soviet advisors also took active part in the ensuing combat together with the Mongolian soldiers (*tsirliks*) and their commanders, all the while inspiring them with their own personal bravery and courage. The Mongolians were thankful for the assistance, and their combat performance against the hated Japanese enemy proved that they had mastered their lessons well.

Colonel D. Nyantaisuren,⁴⁰ the commander of 8th Mongolian Cavalry Division, later recalled:

I was young and had no experience. The fighting was severe, and it was difficult for me to command so large a military formation. However, our Soviet friends and comrades, including my faithful teacher, our division's instructor, Petrosiants,⁴¹ who was a skilled cavalry man and commander and had been a participant in the legendary campaigns of Budenny's Cavalry Army during the Civil War, was always nearby. I have learned much from him. I have learned how to defeat an enemy.⁴²

It is now possible to support this testament written by a participant in the famous battles with documentary data from the archives. After the battles, when N. G. Petrosiants was awarded the Order of Lenin, the citation read:

During the period of the fighting, he did much to educate the Mongolian command and staff. He demonstrated stability and personal courage and bravery during the battles. In June he was the first to conduct a raid on the Samurai piquet [outposts] at 'Ulan-Khuduk', he seized a radio station, important documents, and other trophies [captured equipment]. Under Petrosiants' supervision, the combat performance of his division in battle clearly demonstrated its capability for defending the independence of the Mongolian people. Comrade Petrosiants has earned the deserved respect of the Mongolian and Soviet fighters.⁴³

In early July 1939, the Japanese sought to expand their aggression in the Khalkhin-Gol region. They committed a large force into the region, including 23rd Infantry Division, two regiments of 7th Infantry Division, 3rd and 4th Tank Regiments, and 8th Border Guards Regiment, with powerful artillery support. The force totaled up to 38,000 officers and soldiers.⁴⁴ The Soviet-Mongolian command responded by bringing up fresh forces, and, on 15 July 1939, united them under the command of 1st Army

Group, which Corps Commander (*Komkor*) G. K. Zhukov commanded from 31 July 1939.

The Mongolian 6th and 8th Cavalry Divisions, supported by armored and artillery batteries, participated in the initial fierce fighting in July. During this fighting, the Mongolian troops, cooperating closely with Soviet units and formations, demonstrated their improved defensive capabilities at the Bain-Tsagan Mountain on the eastern bank of the Khalkhin-Gol River. They displayed numerous examples of combat courage and resoluteness during those difficult days. Having studied military science alongside the skilled Soviet soldiers, the Mongolian commanders and *tsiriks* tried to prove that they were their equals.

At that time, the following Soviet military leaders were among the many Soviet advisors who fought within the Mongolian units:

- V. F. Kalashnikov, a distinguished political advisor to the artillery battery;
- I. F. Kirichenko, the advisor of the armoured battery;
- K. E. Sudarev, the advisor of 6th Cavalry Division's 17th Cavalry Regiment;
- S. Ya. Kravchenko, the advisor to the same division's 15th Cavalry Regiment;
- P. D. Stepanov, the advisor to 8th Cavalry Division's 23rd Cavalry Regiment;
- I. T. Chepiga, the advisor of 8th Division's 22nd Cavalry Regiment;
- S. Ya. Mishen'ov, a platoon advisor in the same division; and many others.

Archival documents describe the initiative and courage of these advisors. The citation accompanying the award of the Order of the Red Banner to I. F. Kirichenko,⁴⁵ stated:

Works diligently. Demonstrates great responsibility for his assigned duties and is disciplined and industrious. The armored battery initiated its combat action with 40 per cent of its assigned strength, but fought well. During the fight on 28 May 1939, the battery attacked six times and accomplished its mission. On 3 July, it also participated in an attack to smash the Japanese defense.⁴⁶

A citation accompanying the award of the Order of the Red Banner to S. Ya. Mishen'ov, a platoon advisor in a Mongolian cavalry regiment, read:

On 20 July 1939, Mishen'ov led the platoon against an advancing enemy who was trying to envelop our flank. By virtue of a clever and courageous decision, he delivered a shattering strike against the Samurais who had advanced too far. They were not able to withstand

the courageous attack and fled disgracefully, leaving their killed and wounded on the field of battle.

On 23 July the enemy attacked the platoon's defenses, but was greeted with machine-gun fire. Compelled to forget their Samurai honor, they ran, abandoning seven men killed, eight rifles, and other equipment. On 29 July Mishen'ov was ordered to penetrate into the enemy's rear to determine his forces and fire weaponry. He fulfilled the order and determined the presence there of an aviation station, anti-aircraft and long-range artillery, and a refueling base for automobiles and armoured cars.⁴⁷

Another such citation said that instructor-advisor K. S. Sudarev, who was assigned to a cavalry regiment, 'attacked and always served as a personal example. He trained commanders and *tsiriks* how it was necessary to carry out combat tasks. He was wounded during the fighting on 25 July.'⁴⁸

During the heavy combat that raged throughout July 1939, the Soviet and Mongolian fighters disrupted the Japanese Command's plans to attempt to seize bridgeheads on the western bank of the Khalkhin-Gol River. Thereafter, having brought additional forces and equipment forward, on 20 August 1939 the Soviet and Mongolian forces commenced a powerful offensive operation that ended with the complete encirclement and destruction of the large Japanese force grouping.

Hence, Japan's planned aggression against Mongolia and the Soviet Union utterly failed. During the climactic battles along the Khalkhin-Gol River, Soviet military advisors and instructors applied all their efforts and talents to execute successfully the Soviet-Mongolian Command's joint plans. Many of these advisors distinguished themselves in the battle.

For example, Captain I. M. Afonin⁴⁹ was an instructor in the Mongolian 8th Cavalry Division when the battles began and was an advisor to the Mongolian Army General Staff's 1st Department during the battle's final stage. An archival report on his role in the combat noted:

[H]e carried out significant work in the training of the combat soldiers and commanders and in improving their military and political training, a task for which he was repeatedly praised. While serving as an instructor of the General Staff's 1st Department he demonstrated exceptional clarity and initiative in work. While in the combat area, he kept close track of the course of combat and carried out the responsible missions assigned to him by both the Mongolian Command and the Army Group regarding the direction of army units participating in the battles.⁵⁰

During the combined operation that ended in so remarkable a victory,

Soviet-Mongolian combat cooperation became even stronger. Undoubtedly, this was because of the serious work and strenuous efforts of both the Soviet military advisors and instructors. As we have seen, the Soviet Union sent the best of its military cadre to assist the Mongolians. There is no question but that the Mongolian government appreciated their efforts greatly.

Accordingly, the government presented many of these officers with awards and medals. They conferred the highest honors on I. S. Konev, I. A. Pliev, and V. A. Sudets by awarding them the rank of Heroes of Mongolia. The Soviet military advisors also rendered considerable assistance in training Mongolian command and staff cadres. Among those distinguished Mongolian commanders who benefited from initial training and subsequent education at the hands of the Soviet military advisors were Army General Dorzh, Colonels General Zh. Lkhagvasuren, Zh. Endon and B. Tsog, Lieutenant General Ts. Samdangeleg, Colonels L. Dandar and D. Nyantaisuren, Major Tch. Sharibu, and many others.

Their extensive work in Mongolia also proved to be ideal training for the Soviet military advisors. They also developed their talents and skills, and, after they had performed their international duty in Mongolia, many of them became notable and even famous Soviet military figures. However, some of their number, such as L. Ia. Vainer, also suffered the indignities of Stalin's purges and cult of personality and were repressed. Others among these officers fell in combat on the fields of battle during the Soviet Union's Great Patriotic War against Germany.

Many of the remainder were tested in the war and became famous Red Army leaders and commanders, while they continued to perform their mission of strengthening the defenses of their homeland. These distinguished 'graduates' of the Mongolian experience included Marshals of the Soviet Union I. S. Konev and K. K. Rokossovsky, Marshal of Aviation V. A. Sudets, Army General I. A. Pliev, Colonel General V. N. Gordoy, Lieutenants General I. M. Afonin, I. F. Kirichenko, M. F. Tikhonov and N. V. Feklenko, and many others. Throughout their careers, these men never forgot about the years they spent in Mongolia, where they served the interests of brotherly friendship between the Soviet and Mongolian peoples.

NOTES

1. *Mongol ardyn армиин 50 жил* [Fifty Years of the Mongolian National Army] (Ulan-Bator 1971) p.76.
2. Ibid.
3. *Soviet-Mongolian Relations 1921-1974: Documents and Materials*. Vol.1 (Moscow: 1975) p.71.
4. *Mongol ardyn армиин* (note 1) p.76.
5. N.S. Sorkin, *V nachale puti* [At the beginning of a path] (The Notes of an Instructor in the Mongolian Army) (Moscow: 'Nauka' 1970) p.6.

6. *Voenno istoricheskii zhurnal* [Military-historical journal], No.1 (Jan. 1973) p.67.
7. Sorkin (note 5) p.98.
8. G. Demid (1900–37), Marshal of Mongolia (1936), was born in Arat, Mongolia, and graduated from both the cavalry school in his native land and the Red Army Cavalry School in Tver in 1929. He participated actively in the Mongolian national liberation struggle and combat against the forces of Baron Ungern. In 1932 he was appointed as Mongolian War Minister and Chief Commander of the Mongolian National Army. Demid died in Aug.1937, supposedly of food poisoning, while he was traveling by train from Irkutsk to Moscow. At the time, he was unjustifiably accused of anti-revolutionary activity. His family was also subjected to repression. (See *Krasnaia Zvezda*, 9 July 1988).
9. *Soviet-Mongolian Relations* (note 3) Vol.1, p.104.
10. Sorkin (note 5) p.99.
11. Valentin Aleksandrovich Kangelari (1884–1938) was the son of a mechanic from Kerch. He graduated from the medical faculty of the University of Khar'kov, but then embarked on revolutionary work and participated in World War I. After 1917 he commanded a group of Bolsheviks from Omsk, and he then took part in the fighting during the Civil War on the Eastern Front as a regiment and division commander and a staff officer. He was awarded with two Orders of the Red Banner for his combat performance during the Civil War.
 Later, during the suppression of the Kronstadt revolt, he served as the Deputy Commander of the Northern Group of Armies and then, successively, as the Chief of Staff of the RSFSR and as the Deputy Chief of the Red Army's Intelligence Service. After returning from Mongolia, he became the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Caucasus Army, the head and military commissar of the Military-Medical Academy (1930), and the First Deputy of the RSFSR's National Commissar of Public Health Services. Together with National Commissar G. K. Kaminsky, he bravely resisted the Stalinist repression and, for his efforts, was arrested and killed.
12. Iakov Zakharovich Pokus (1887–1938) worked as a village school teacher after completing pedagogical courses. Prior to World War I, Pokus was called up for military service, and, after graduation from the ensign's school, he was sent to the front. He participated in the 1917 Revolution in Petrograd and, in Jan.1918, was demobilized. He then took part in the Civil War in the Far East where he was assigned to command 2nd Amur Rifle Division.
 During the armed incidents along the Chinese Eastern Railway in 1929, Pokus served as the deputy force commander and then commanded a military district. After studying in a military academy, he was assigned to command 22nd Rifle Division in the Northern Caucasus Military District, and, immediately prior to his assignment to Mongolia, he served as deputy chief of combat training management.
 Upon his return from Mongolia, Pokus served as Military Commandant of the city of Vladivostok, Deputy Commander of the Soviet Pacific Fleet, and the commander of a rifle corps. In March 1938 he was assigned to the General Staff Academy as a tactics instructor. While teaching at the academy, he was purged and killed in 1938.
13. *USSR-Mongolia: Pages of Brotherly Friendship* (in Russian) (Moscow: 'Nauka' 1981) p.89.
14. Konstantin Konstantinovich Rokossovsky (1896–1968) joined the Red Army in Feb. 1918 after participating as a non-commissioned officer during World War I. He commanded a cavalry group, squadron, and regiment during the Civil War and later, while commanding 35th Cavalry Regiment, he participated in the rout and capture of Baron Ungern. After the Russian Civil War, Rokossovsky commanded a cavalry brigade. Upon his return from service in Mongolia, he commanded a cavalry division and corps and studied at the Frunze Academy. In 1937 Rokossovsky was purged, but survived his ordeal and was reinstated into the Red Army in 1939.
 During the Great Patriotic War, he commanded a mechanized corps, an army, and a series of *fronts*. After war's end, he commanded both Polish and Soviet forces. He became a full Marshal of the Soviet Union in 1944, a Marshal of Poland in 1949, and was twice made a Hero of the Soviet Union.
15. Vasilii Nikolaevich Gordov (1896–1951) joined the Red Army in 1918 after taking part in World War I and the Russian Civil War. During the 1920s he commanded at company, battalion, and regimental level. He was dispatched to Mongolia immediately after

completing a senior command and staff course.

After his return from Mongolia, Gordov served in various command positions and, from 1939, served as Chief of Staff of the Kalinin and Volga Military Districts. During the Great Patriotic War, he commanded a number of armies and, for a time, the Stalingrad Front. After war's end, he commanded the Volga Military District. Gordov rose to the rank of Colonel General in 1943 and became a Hero of the Soviet Union in 1945.

16. *Molodost' drevnei Mongolii* [The youth of ancient Mongolia] (Moscow: 1964) p.197.
17. G.K. Plotnikov, *The Mongolian National Army* (Moscow: 1971) p.31.
18. *USSR-Mongolia* (note 13) pp.92–4.
19. *Pravda*, 3 Sept. 1971.
20. *USSR–Mongolia* (note 13) p.97.
21. Vladimir Aleksandrovich Sudets (1904–81) joined the Red Army in 1925 and attended a technical school and the N.E. Zhukovsky Military Aviation Academy. After returning from advisor duty in Mongolia, he commanded an aviation brigade and took part in the Soviet–Finnish War (1939–40). During the Great Patriotic War he commanded an aviation corps and an air army. After the war ended, Sudets attended the Academy of General Staff (1950) and served as the Chief of Staff and Deputy Commander of the Soviet Air Force and, later, Commander of Air Defense Forces (PVO Strany). During his career, he became a Hero of the Soviet Union (1945), a National Hero of Yugoslavia (1964), a Hero of Mongolia (1971), and achieved the rank of Marshal of Aviation (1955).
22. Petr Efimovich Shetinkin (1885–1927) served in the Tsarist Army from 1906 and participated in World War I, when he was awarded with four Crosses of St. George and two French awards. After Oct. 1917, he was the Chief of Criminal Investigations in Atchinsk. During the subsequent Russian Civil War Shetinkin commanded a partisan group, became deputy commander of an army, and fought against the forces of Baron Wrangel. In 1921 Shetinkin was appointed to command the forward group of Soviet forces in Mongolia. Thereafter, from 1922 to 1926, he served as Chief of Staff of the Siberian Border District. During this service he was awarded with the Order of the Red Banner.
23. *Novosti Mongolii* [The news of Mongolia], 20 July 1982.
24. Viatcheslav Vasilevich Gridnev (b.1898) was a participant in the Russian Civil War. After war's end, he worked for the Moscow Extraordinary Commission (Cheka) as a bodyguard for V. I. Lenin and, later, transferred to border guard service in the Transcaucasus region. During the Great Patriotic War, he commanded a separate special designation brigade and fought in the 1945 war with Japan. He entered reserve status in 1960 as a major general. During his career, Gridnev received many awards and medals from the Soviet Union and Mongolia.
25. Konstantin Nikolaevich Ziman (1906–44) entered the Red Army in 1920. Before being assigned to Mongolia, he served as the chief of a rifle division's political department. During the Great Patriotic War, Zimin was the Member of the Military Council [Commissar] of a Transbaikalian Military District with the rank of lieutenant-general.
26. *USSR–Mongolia* (note 13) p.89.
27. *Soviet-Mongolian Relations* (note 3) Vol.1, p.340.
28. Plotnikov (see note 17) p.37.
29. Leonid Iakovlevich Vainer (1897–1937) served in the Red Army during the Civil War as the commander of a Red Guards partisan group and, thereafter, in command of a regiment and a brigade. After the war, he commanded 41st Rifle Brigade, completed a higher commanders course, served as head of the North Caucasus Mountain Cavalry School, and commanded 9th and 6th Cavalry Divisions, and then 3rd Cavalry Corps. He received two awards of the Order of the Red Banner for his outstanding service during the Civil War. Despite this stellar record, Vainer fell victim to the purges in 1937.
30. Ivan Stepanovich Konev (1897–1973) joined the Red Army in 1918. After serving in the Russian Civil War, he took part in the suppression of revolt at the Kronstadt naval base. He served in the 1920s as military commissar in the headquarters of the National Revolutionary Army of the Far Eastern Republic (1922) and as military commissar of a rifle division. He completed a course at the Red Army (RKKA) Academy and later commanded a rifle regiment and a rifle division. Between his return from Mongolia and the Great Patriotic War,

- he commanded an army and the Transbaikal and North Caucasus Military Districts. Finally, in wartime, he commanded an army and number of *fronts*. After war's end, he occupied a series of high posts, including command of the Soviet Group of Forces in Germany (GSFG). Konev became a Marshal of the Soviet Union in 1944, and was made a Hero of Mongolia (1971), Czechoslovakia (1970), and twice a Hero of the Soviet Union.
31. N.V. Feklenko served in World War II as a lieutenant general and commander of the 17th and other tank corps.
 32. Mikhail Fedorovich Tikhonov (1900–71), a participant in the Civil War, served as an advisor to the commander of a Mongolian cavalry division from 1935 to 1938. Upon his return from Mongolia, he completed the Frunze Academy. During the Great Patriotic War, he commanded a brigade, a rifle division, and a rifle corps. After the war ended, he was assigned as the Chief of Faculty of the Military-Engineering Academy and the Frunze Academy. Rising to the rank of lieutenant general, Tikhonov was made a Hero of the Soviet Union in 1945 and received the Mongolian Orders of the Red Banner and Polar Star.
 33. Pavel Akimovich Navrotsky (1900–42) was awarded two Orders of the Red Banner for his heroism in the Russian Civil War. He served as advisor in Mongolia from 1931 through 1936. After returning from Mongolia, he served as the head of a regimental school and a regimental commander. He was then elected as a Deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (1937). During the Great Patriotic War, Navrotsky served as a deputy division commander and division commander. He perished on 5 July 1942 during the initial stages of German Operation 'Blau', while defending with his division near the town of Staryi Oskol.
 34. Konstantin Ignat'evich Novik (1889–1942) joined the Red Army in 1918 and fought through the entire Civil War, for which he received the Order of the Red Banner. He then fought the Basmakhi rebels in Fergana (Uzbekistan) and received the Order of the Red Banner and the Order of the Red Star of the Republic of Bukhara. After returning from service Mongolia, Novik commanded a cavalry division. During the Great Patriotic War, he commanded a division and was a deputy army commander. Novik perished on 27 Aug. 1942, while serving in the Briansk Front and is buried in the city of Efremov.
 35. Issa Aleksandrovich Pliev (1903–79), an Ossetian by birth, joined the Red Army in 1922 and graduated from the Frunze Academy in 1933. From 1936 through 1939 he served in Mongolia as an advisor-instructor in the headquarters and staff of the Mongolian Cavalry School. After returning from Mongolia, he graduated from the Academy of the General Staff. During the Great Patriotic War, Pliev commanded a cavalry division, the famous 5th Cavalry Corps, and a cavalry-mechanized group. In Aug. 1945, he commanded the Soviet-Mongolian Cavalry-Mechanized Group during the defeat of the Japanese Kwantung Army in Manchuria and his troops liberated Beijing. After war's end, he held important posts, including command of Soviet rocket forces in Cuba in the early 1960s. Promoted to army general in 1962, Pliev earned two awards of Hero of the Soviet Union and the title of Hero of Mongolia in 1971.
 36. Vasilii Vasil'evich Panukov served as a senior instructor of the Mongolian Army Main Staff from 1935 through 1937. After returning from Mongolia, he commanded a division and then a corps. During the Great Patriotic War he served as a department chief on the Southwestern Front's staff, an army chief of staff, and commander of a rifle corps. He rose to the rank of lieutenant general.
 37. Ivan Semionovich Nikitin (1897–1942) entered the Red Army in 1918 and fought in the Russian Civil War, when he commanded a cavalry squadron and then a regiment in Budenny's 1st Cavalry Army. He completed the RKKA Academy and was promoted to major general in the infamous class of 1940. When the Great Patriotic War began, he was serving a commander of the Western Front's 6th Cavalry Corps. Nikitin was severely wounded in the initial days of the war and taken prisoner by the Germans in late June 1941. After he led an underground movement in the German Vladimir-Volynsk and Hammelsberg prisoner of war camps, the Germans tortured him to death in April 1942.
 38. *Soviet-Mongolian Relations* (note 3) Vol.1, p.550.
 39. *Krasnaia Zvezda* [Red star], 17 Dec. 1967.
 40. Dugerin Niantyaisuren (1910–85) was born into the family of an Arat cattle breeder. He then worked, successively, as a shepherd, in a veterinary station, and finally in the 'Revsomol'

- (The Mongolian Youth Union). He joined the Mongolian Army in 1934, completed the Soviet Tambov Cavalry School and, later, commanded a squadron, regiment, and division in the Mongolian Army. After participating in the Battle of Khalkhin-Gol, he served as Deputy Chief of the Mongolian General Staff and the chief of staff of an aviation division. In 1942 he graduated from the Soviet General Staff Academy, and, subsequently, he commanded a motorized-armed brigade in the Aug. 1945 war with Japan. After the war, he taught on the military faculty of the Mongolian National University. He retired a colonel and a Hero of Mongolia, a title which he was awarded in 1971.
41. Nikolai Grigor'evitch Petrosiants joined the Red Army in 1918 and rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel in 1941. When the Great Patriotic War began, he commanded 6th Cavalry Division's 94th Cavalry Regiment in the Western Front's 6th Cavalry Corps. Petrosiants perished in the Lomzha region of western Belorussia during the initial days of the war, together with many of his soldiers. During his truncated career, he was awarded the Orders of Lenin, the Red Banner, and the Red Star.
 42. *Sovetskii patriot* (Soviet patriot), 20 Nov. 1974.
 43. *The Central Archives of the Russian Federation's Ministry of Defense (TsAMO RF)*, F. 37837, O. 3, D. 330. L. 12.
 44. M.V. Novikov, *Pobeda na reke Khalkhin Gol* [The victory on the Khalkhin-Gol River] (Moscow: 1971) p.49.
 45. Ivan Fedorovich Kirichenko (1902-81) joined the Red Army in 1919 and fought in the Russian Civil War. He graduated from Leningrad Tank School before his assignment to Mongolia. Upon his return to the Red Army, he commanded a tank regiment. During the Great Patriotic War, Kirichenko commanded a tank brigade and a tank corps. After war's end, he was assigned to a series of positions in the Soviet Army's tank forces. He was made a Hero of the Soviet Union in 1945 and rose to the rank of lieutenant general before his retirement.
 46. *TsAMO RF*, F. 37837, Op. 3, D. 330. L. 41.
 47. *Ibid.* L. 43.
 48. *Ibid.* L. 41.
 49. Ivan Mikhailovich Afonin (1904-79) joined the Red Army in 1926. After returning from Mongolia, he graduated from the Frunze Academy. During the Great Patriotic War, he commanded a rifle regiment, a rifle division, and a rifle corps. After the war's end, he completed the Voroshilov Academy of the General Staff and served in a variety of army command and teaching positions. Afonin became a Hero of the Soviet Union in 1945 and rose to the rank of lieutenant general.
 50. *TsAMO RF*, F. 37837, Op. 3, D. 330, L. 42.