

A Century of The Russian Ministry of War
1802-1902

General Staff Historical Department

The Reign of Emperor Alexander I Petrovich

Reform During the Period 1801 - 1805

[Translated into English from the original Russian by Peter G.A. Phillips]

30. The Beginning Of The Abolition Of Inspections And The Schedule Of The Army Dated 29 December, 1805 [10 January 1806].

With the departure of 'regiments and sub-units on their designated marches' as we have seen, the control over them by the Inspector ceased,¹ who was informed that these regiments had set out, and soon 'a message was received' that the regiments had been 'assigned to the command of such and such a general.'

In 1805, the first orders 'to move out of permanent quarters' were issued on 11 [23] June,² and thus this date, following which regiment after regiment successively departed, marks the beginning of the abolition of inspections, and by 5 [17] August,³ 86 regiments had already been reassigned to generals. These regiments originated from nine inspections - the Siberia, Caucasus and Orenburg inspections remained untouched, - the Crimea Inspection also assigned sub-unit reinforcements to complete the manning of field regiments and sent some of their troops to Corfu.⁴

The regiments that had set out on campaign did not return to their inspections, but on 29 December [10 January 1806], that is, while still on the 'return march' were allocated to corps. On 29 December [10 January 1806],⁵ Adjutant General Count Lieven forwarded a schedule of forces⁶ 'according to their latest assignment by corps' to the Minister of War for Land Forces, General-of-Infantry Vyazmitinov.

The following corps were designated:

Commander	Squadrons	Sotnia	Battalions				Companies			
			Grenadiers	Musketeers	Jägers	Marines	Foot Artillery	Horse Artillery	Pontoniers	Pioneers
Lt Gen Count Tolstoy	20	18	3	9	6	2 ⁷	4	1½		
Gen-of-Cav Bennigsen	25	17	3	21	6		7		1	2
Gen-of-Inf Kutuzov	75	65	15	66	12		24	5	2	4
Gen-of-Inf Lacy	5	10	3	18 ⁸			3 ⁹			
Gen-of-Cav Mikhelson	45	40		33	2		7	3		

¹ See Part 28e.

² See Part 28e.

³ See Part 28e.

⁴ See Parts 28e & 28i.

⁵ A.C.W.M. classified department, 1805, minute No. 2 (serial 505), memorandum dated 29 December 1805 [10 January 1806], with schedule.

⁶ A table has been compiled, based on this schedule, which is shown here.

⁷ On the Naval Establishment.

⁸ Including Papadopoulos' Garrison Battalion.

⁹ Also including garrison artillery.

Commander	Squadrons	Sotnia	Battalions				Companies			
			Grenadiers	Musketeers	Jägers	Marines	Foot Artillery	Horse Artillery	Pontoniers	Pioneers
Gen-of-Inf Korsakov	25	40		18	3		3			
Gen-of-Cav Meyendorf	50	55	3	27	7		8	2 ¹⁰	1	1
Total listed:	245	245	27	191	30		52	11½	4	7
Not listed: ¹¹	111		9	55	58	2	45		4	11

From this table we see that by the end of 1805 more than half of the army was no longer under the control of the inspectors. However, there is reason to assert that this schedule was never completed, since the armies and corps ended their 'return march' between January and March 1806, yet in early [mid] February 1806 the first schedule by divisions had already been instituted.

And so, from 11 [23] June 1805, the inspections began to fall into disuse by themselves; only garrison troops and about a third of the field force remained under their jurisdiction.

Conclusions.

In the short period from 1801 to 1805, as we have seen, a whole series of reforms took place in the army, which, in the words of Tsar Peter the Great, established 'good order from the foundations.'

This good order was not established by chance, but through a famous system, which was created by the Military Commission in its extensive task of 'examining everything' and presenting 'that which might be usefully introduced.' The establishment of the Commission in itself was a significant achievement, since the construction of the foundations of the reorganisation of the army was entrusted not to one person, but to the outstanding military personalities of that era,¹² in whose 'experience, knowledge and diligence' Emperor Alexander I was 'completely confident.'¹³ But even after the establishment of the Commission, some false innovations had disappeared from the army on the Emperor's initiative, namely:

1. The naming of every regiment after its colonel-in-chief was abolished and the glorious historical regimental designators,¹⁴ with which military tradition and legend were inextricably linked, were restored.
2. The division of cuirassier regiments into companies had been abolished.¹⁵

The activities of the Military Commission were expressed¹⁶ in the drafting of new establishments, in the drafting of two schedules and 'instructions in the event of military mobilisation.'

¹⁰ Including one Don Horse Artillery company.

¹¹ Not counting the Tsarevich's corps.

¹² The commission was chaired by H.I.H. Tsarevich Konstantin Pavlovich with the following membership: generals-of-infantry Prince Prozorovsky, Lamb, Tatishchev, Golenishchev-Kutuzov, *Proviantmeister-General* Svechin, lieutenant generals Tormasov, Prince Volkonsky, Prince Dolgoruky and Major General Rusanov (Chancellery Director). Subsequently joined by, engineer and Quartermaster General van Suchtelen and Lieutenant General Count Arakcheev.

¹³ For the decree establishing the Commission, see [Part 2](#).

¹⁴ For the listing of regiments, see Appendix 2 to [Part 1](#). With regard to the significance of these reforms, see [Part 1](#).

¹⁵ According to the regulations of 1796, the company was important for administration on garrison service and for the raising of a squadron.

¹⁶ We list here only those related to the reorganisation of the forces.

The commission, strictly speaking, did not create new establishments,¹⁷ but amended and supplemented old ones, while also making some useful innovations.

The work of transforming the infantry and cavalry came under the remit of the Military Commission, but the reorganisation of the artillery belonged entirely to the ‘tireless activity’¹⁸ of the Inspector of All Artillery, Count Arakcheev.

The following reforms occurred in the infantry:

1. Three-battalion regiments were created and this eliminated the need to form combined grenadier battalions.
2. The four-company composition of battalions was formalised.¹⁹
3. The jäger regiments were granted a 12-company establishment,²⁰ whereby the strength of the regiment almost doubled,²¹ while the strength of companies increased by more than a third.
4. The strength of companies, as mentioned above,²² generally increased slightly.
5. Establishments were created for peacetime and wartime.²³
6. Some non-commissioned officers were equipped with firearms.

The following reforms occurred in the cavalry:

1. Half of the cuirassier regiments were disbanded and converted to dragoons.
2. Replacement squadrons and half-squadrons were established, which provided a supplement to cavalry regiments in the event of departure on campaign.²⁴
3. Squadron strength was increased slightly.

In addition, in both the infantry and the cavalry, the transport train was reduced, and with it the number of draught horses and drivers, pack horses were disestablished and the required number of support personnel (clerks²⁵ and craftsmen) were introduced to ensure the administrative well-being of the troops.

The garrison troops were assigned the current roles of fortress,²⁶ replacement and reserve²⁷ forces.

Although a regimental organisation was introduced in the artillery, the company was recognised as the unit capable of independent action.²⁸ The classification of artillery was established ‘in order to form batteries’ or ‘in order to assign them to regiments.’²⁹ Thereafter, precise provisions were made with regard to the trains, regarding horses, some of which were not maintained in peacetime,³⁰ the

17 Detailed establishments and schedules were created by Emperor Paul I even before ascending the throne, and were then developed throughout his reign.

18 Thus the activities of Count Arakcheev were rewarded in 1808 when orders were issued for the Rostov Musketeer Regiment to bear his name (Supreme orders dated 12 [24] August).

19 In essence, such battalions had existed earlier, since the grenadier [flank] companies were almost always detached.

20 These had been on a ten-company establishment.

21 These had a strength of 877 men on the old establishment, while they had 1,584 men on the new.

22 See [Part 6](#).

23 For musketeer and grenadier regiments, see also [Part 6](#).

24 With regard to their role, see [Part 21](#).

25 As at March 1801, the regulatory order was in effect that ‘there was to be no office.’

26 Garrison battalions were located in significant numbers in the fortresses, see Appendix to [Part 2](#) and the schedule for 1803 in [Part 19](#).

27 The regulations stated that: ‘field regiments are to complete their manning from garrison troops’ (see [Part 6](#)). As a result, in 1805, the shortfall of garrison troops was about one sixth (see the Returns for Army Strength as at 1 [13] January 1805 and 1806).

28 There was also a dedicated regulation for this (see [Part 15](#)). ‘The current establishment for the artillery is based on the number of companies.’

29 Three-pounder unicorns were held in heavy companies for the jäger regiments, while six guns were allocated for other regiments (see [Part 15](#)).

30 See [Part 15](#).

number of replacement items per company was determined, and so on.

The pontoon department received a 'definitive resolution for itself.'

In the engineer force, among other reforms, it was important from an organisational point of view to give the company greater self-sufficiency, 'because the companies will be detached from one another.'

The Cossack and irregular forces received a more definitive structure³¹ and more solid foundations for internal management.³²

In general, thanks to these reforms and newly raised units, the manning level had increased by the end of 1805 in comparison to 1801: by more than quarter in the infantry, by more than a third in the cavalry, by a little under a quarter in the artillery and engineer forces, while the entire army had increased by more than a quarter.³³ The total manpower strength of the army reached 612,925,³⁴ or some 582,925 men, excluding territorial forces,³⁵ but by the end of 1805 the available strength was given as 509,414 men.³⁶

The regiments were still commanded by colonels-in-chief as 'stewards' while the inspections were commanded by an inspector as a 'supervisor.' The responsibilities of company, squadron and battalion commanders was defined somewhat more clearly - they were obliged to be completely answerable for the units they commanded. The lack of proper permanent formations led to the columns of Austerlitz; this bloody experience proved the inappropriate nature of ad hoc higher formations, which, as we have seen, were composed of individual regiments and sub-units, and therefore it was natural that 'the generals did not know their troops, nor did the officers and soldiers know them' (the generals).³⁷

Every preparatory order, from preparations for the campaign to the assignment of regiments to generals inclusive, went through Adjutant General Count Lieven, who was truly 'the assistant to the Tsar in the war department in its entirety.' We were only able partially to note the significance of Count Lieven's activities in wartime,³⁸ but nevertheless, on the basis of this we can sufficiently assess his outstanding work, which, as Baron Diebitsch put it, consisted of 'many various duties and missions.'³⁹ In general, from 1802 to 1805 the contribution by Adjutant General Count Lieven was enormous and led to him becoming the foremost at military administration.⁴⁰

In 1802, the Ministry of War for Land Forces was established,⁴¹ while soon afterwards,⁴² the Artillery Department was divided into two dedicated ones, each independent of the other 'in order better to improve the course of business in the artillery and engineering departments, and for the

31 The number of regiments was determined, as were new establishments for these regiments.

32 New regulations on subordination to the civil and military departments was introduced, and military chancelleries were established on a new basis.

33 In 1801, excluding territorial forces (about 30,000 men), the regular strength of the army was 448,741 men, while by the end of 1805 it had increased to 582,925 men, that is, an increase of 134,184.

34 Including the territorial forces, the exact number of the latter, as mentioned above, could not be determined, but there were approximately some 30,000 (see the Return for Army Strength as at March 1801).

35 See the Returns for Army Strength as at 1 [13] January 1805 and 1806.

36 Less invalids, the inclusion of whom would push the total to 521,215 men.

37 In 1805, as discussed above, the organisation was constantly changing, due to regiments passing from one general to another, for example, General-of-Cavalry Mikhelson within three months had gone from overall command of three armies to command of a reserve corps 'facing Galicia'; Adjutant General Baron Wintzingerode (who was also given special instructions to declare the will of His Imperial Majesty) temporarily became the commander of General-of-Infantry Golenishchev-Kutuzov's army, until the arrival of the aforementioned general (see Part 28e).

38 To the extent necessary in order to clarify the issue of troop organisation.

39 See Part 28e.

40 In 1808, Count Arakcheev introduced a different organisation.

41 On 8 [20] September 1802 - C.C.L. Vol. XXVII, No. 20406. The ministry consisted of: departments for inspections, the artillery, engineering, provisioning, commissariat, medical and audit; a chancellery; and special provisions (military topographic depot and printing press).

42 C.C.L. Vol. XXVII, No. 20482. Decree to the Military Collegium dated 23 October [4 November] 1802.

most convenient bringing to the desired perfection of all things in these two important military departments.' Thus, the Engineering Department, 'having acknowledged its existence' took 'immediate control of all units, locations and appointments that were dependent upon it...'

Although the Ministry had been established, and there were inspections, military administration was still so centralised that, for example, the distribution of officers to companies and the schedule of company commanders had to go back to the Tsar for approval.⁴³

By the end of 1805, it was quite clearly apparent that the issue of introducing permanent divisions and corps had become overdue - the former were established in 1806, and the latter in 1810.

The inspections begin to be disbanded gradually; the first step towards this was taken on 11 [23] June 1805, that is, during the period that regiments were 'preparing for campaigning' and were 'setting off on their assigned march routes.' In December 1805, the regiments did not return to inspections, but were assigned to generals.⁴⁴

Let us also note that a hundred years ago there were plans in place 'in the event of military mobilisation' that is, considerations of the nature of mobilisation were made. This circumstance was given particular significance because the conditions for quartering troops, thanks to the vast territory of Russia, were such that we had locations referred to⁴⁵ as 'regions completely devoid of any troops.'⁴⁶

A theoretical solution to this issue was developed by Quartermaster General van Sukhtelen - his five scenarios with the detailed calculation of the timings for the 'assembly of armies'⁴⁷ might have served for general discussion, but everything pertaining to this matter was 'kept secret' in a sealed envelope in the office of the Military Commission. The envelope was only opened during the Eastern War [Crimean War] of 1853 to 1856, namely on 15 [27] December 1854...⁴⁸

43 See Part 27.

44 See Part 30.

45 See Appendix 1 to [Part 12](#).

46 See [Diagram 1](#) and Diagram 2.

47 See [Part 10](#).

48 See [Part 12](#).