

# RUSSIA'S FAR EASTERN LEADERS



*S. Makaroff*

## HOW VICE ADMIRAL MAKAROFF WON HIS SPURS IN THE RUSSO-TURKISH WAR

(Written for the Deseret News by a retired officer.)

There is hardly one of the Russian military leaders now on the field of war, or proceeding thither, who has not won his spurs in battle, or distinguished himself remarkably by his technical knowledge. The reputation that "kissing goes by favor" in the Russian service is wrong. There is no service in which all subordinate officers have a fairer chance of promotion. The officer who displays initiative in a marked degree is practically certain to advance to the highest ranks.

Alexis, Kourapatkin, Makaroff and their principal lieutenants have all won their spurs by sheer force of merit, by distinguished bravery and ability. Nobody in the Russian service owes their right to lead.

Admiral Stepan Oskopkov Makaroff, the new commander of the Port Arthur fleet, is generally considered to be the best sailor in the czar's service. He has won two great and distinct reputations—the first by his heroism and skill during the Russo-Turkish war, and the second by his invention of the "Yermak" and other ice-breakers.

When the war with Turkey broke out he was a lieutenant, and was given command of a small merchant steamer of 150 tons, called the Grand Duke Constantine. This was his flagship, and he collected a flotilla of small vessels, with which he assailed the Turkish fleet in the harbors of Batoum, Sulina, Nikolai and Sublim Kala.

Torpedo work had never been done before, practically speaking, and Makaroff had to invent his own tactics and find out by experience the best way to fight ironclads with bombs. His men had to tow the torpedoes in their boats and explode them against the sides of the battleships, for the destroyer and the automobile torpedo were undreamed of. Makaroff was obliged to think out for himself every detail of his torpedo warfare, even to inventing the armament and equipment of his ships and the mechanism for firing the torpedoes.

Dozens of attacks were made upon the enemy, and several ships were blown up. Makaroff was in the thick of the fighting all the time, and it is a marvel that he and his daring followers escaped alive. As a matter of fact, only a few of them perished, but the peril to which they were exposed was certainly greater than that in modern torpedo warfare.

Night after night they dashed into the Turkish harbors, lowered their torpedoes, either by actual contact with the ship's side—the torpedo being fixed in a long pole—or by attaching the torpedoes to the vessel and igniting a time fuse. Three times out of four they were detected by the Turks before they could reach their objective, and were driven back by a heavy fire of cannon and musketry.

One dark night two of Makaroff's boats attacked his own ship, the Grand Duke Constantine, by mistake, and were on the point of blowing her up when he shouted to them and convinced them that he was not a Turk. Makaroff was well rewarded for his desperate bravery and conspicuous ability by the czar. He was given the Cross of St. George—most prized of all Russian decorations—a gold sword of honor, and the rank of captain. After that, he was marked out for distinction, and was rapidly promoted through various important offices until he commanded successively the Baltic, Mediterranean and Pacific squadrons.

Makaroff comes of a distinguished naval family, his father having been a flag captain. Throughout his long career he has shown remarkable professional ability and great skill in the handling of fleets. He is also famous in all the navies of the world as an inventor of naval appliances, of which at least a couple dozen are now in use aboard Russian warships. He made two trips to the Arctic circle to test his ice-breaker Yermak against the eternal ice of the Polar zone. That is a good illustration of his character. He leaves nothing to theory or chance.

Admiral Makaroff was commander at Kronstadt, the Russian Gibraltar, before he was ordered to the far east, and had held that post for many years. Unlike many Russian naval officers, he takes the keenest interest in the welfare of the enlisted men, and can be approached by them with petitions and grievances at any time. At Kronstadt he used frequently to pay surprise visits to the ships in port and eat some of the dinner served to the men, in order to make sure that the pursers and cooks were doing their duty.

In person, Makaroff is a tall, finely-built, broad-shouldered man with bushy grey beard and whiskers. He looks 10 years younger than his age, which is 56. His manner is genial and friendly, whether he is talking to an officer of his own rank or to an ordinary seaman. Admiral Skriloff, the present commander of the Black Sea fleet, who is expected to take out the Baltic fleet to

the far east, was a junior officer under Makaroff in the torpedo campaign against the Turks, and has risen along with him to the highest ranks in the Russian service. He has copied his old commander's methods to a great extent, and, like Makaroff, believes firmly in taking the initiative in warfare when it is possible.

that point during the spring campaign. The grand duke has a great reputation in the Russian army for bravery. He saved the lives of two of his men during the fighting in the Caucasus by going to their rescue in person when they were wounded and overborne by a party of Turks. He got to their aid ahead of his staff by hard riding, and was himself wounded

before they could assist him in dispersing the Turks. Although he has been a soldier for 10 years, he is said by those who know him intimately to have the strongest aversion to war, and he is credited with a share in influencing the czar to publish the peace rescript.

The Grand Duke Alexis is high admiral of Russia and has worked very hard in that capacity. Russian naval officers say it is a mistake to suppose that he delegates the direction of the navy to his subordinate, Vice Admiral Tyrtov, the head of the ministry of marine. Like Makaroff, he goes aboard the ships constantly on surprise visits, and eats the men's dinner, inspects the purser's stores, and even looks into the technical details of the working of the engine room.

Alexis is well known in this country, to which he paid a visit when he was a young man. He cultivates intimacy with Americans in St. Petersburg, and always receives American visitors with enthusiasm. He likes to operate with Gen. Kourapatkin from before they could assist him in dispersing the Turks. Although he has been a soldier for 10 years, he is said by those who know him intimately to have the strongest aversion to war, and he is credited with a share in influencing the czar to publish the peace rescript.

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How Rear Admiral Makaroff Won His Spurs by Torpedoing the Enemy's Ships in the Russo-Turkish War—A Great Fighter, Also an Inventor and Creator of the Famous Ice Breaker Yermak—A Democratic Man and Beloved of His Men—The Fighting Records of the Grand Dukes—How Generals Grodekoff and Chicagoff Helped Put Down the Boxer Rising—General Rennenkampf's Bloody Record in Manchuria—What General Pilg is Noted For.

talk with them about his visit and the splendid entertainments got up in his honor, but above all of the fine hunts organized for him out west.

He is a man of tall and commanding presence, and a fine athlete and sportsman. Latterly he has grown stout, but he is wonderfully energetic, usually working on naval matters from six in the morning until late at night. Unlike the other grand dukes, he cares little for social relaxations, with the exception of an occasional brief visit to Monte Carlo. He broke the bank there just before the declaration of war.

The Grand Duke Nicholas is to be inspector general of cavalry under Gen. Kourapatkin, a post for which he is well qualified. He is a man in the prime of life, 47 years old, and is the beau ideal of a trooper—tall, stalwart, immensely strong, and as active as a cat. He is one of the best riders in the Russian army, and astonished the members of that hard-riding body, the Quenne Hunt, by his splendid horsemanship, when he hunted with them during a visit to England, three years ago. He shares with Prince Louis Napoleon the reputation of being the chief cavalry expert in the czar's service.

The prince, who now commands a cavalry division in Manchuria, is a general in the Russian army, and is held in high esteem by the czar. Although a pretender to the French throne, he does not actively push his claim, and he never meddles with politics. When President Felix Faure visited the czar, the prince rode past him at a review and saluted him, although, of course, he regarded him as an usurper of his own place. President Faure returned the salute, and they afterwards became good friends, the czar introducing them to each other.

The Grand Duke Boris is well known in this country on account of his recent visit, which supplied so much "copy" to the "yellow journals." He is a lieutenant of Hussars, and has never displayed any particular military ability. The gossip of St. Petersburg are always talking about his sorcery and his love affairs, but he is popular with the soldiers and has a reputation for dare-devil courage. "He is a second Skobelev without Skobelev's genius," said a Russian officer who served with Skobelev and knows Boris well. He is to serve on the staff of the Grand Duke Nicholas.

### HOW GRODEKOFF WON FAME.

Several of the Russian commanders in the far east won distinction during the Boxer insurrection. General Grodekoff, the governor-general of the Ussuri province, directed the operations in that campaign, in connection with Admiral Alexieff. He is a short, well-built, energetic man, white-haired, but full of vigor. His career has been a remarkable one. He fought through five wars in the Caucasus and Central Asia, and rode to Kabul disguised as a Persian to see the Amer of Afghanistan and influence him against England.

He is credited with having caused the

war which broke out soon afterwards between England and Afghanistan, and cost British India twenty-two millions sterling. He has been one of the strongest advocates of a Russian invasion of India, and collaborated with General Kourapatkin in drawing up a secret plan for that invasion which is filed in the war office at St. Petersburg.

Grodekoff is the particular hero of the Cossacks, whom he led to victory over and over again in Central Asia. He is reputed to be one of the few highly placed Russian officials who will not accept bribes or allow any "graft" to go on under his administration, if he can prevent it.

Grodekoff's chief lieutenant is the military governor of Vladivostok, General Chicagoff, a Cossack officer who commanded a division against the Boxers during the subjugation of Manchuria, and won notable victories at Ek-Ho and Aje-Khe. Of the five divisions which took part in that campaign, his was the only one which did not commit excesses. It consisted almost entirely of Cossack troops, but he kept them well in hand.

General Rennenkampf's Siberian regiments were the worst offenders. Rennenkampf gave the town of Algu, on the Amur, to fire and sword, his men driving all the Chinese, men, women and children, into the flames at the point of the bayonet. Similar atrocities were perpetrated by his division at Mergen and Taitshar. General Rennenkampf has gone to Manchuria to command an army corps. His departure led to an enthusiastic demonstration by the officers of his own Transcasian command. They carried him round their mess room on their shoulders, cheering loudly. He is popular in the army, for he is as good to his officers and men as he is ruthless to the enemy.

Another notable man who has gone out to the far east is Prince Esper Esperovitch Utkonski, the guiding spirit of the East Chinese railway and the proprietor of that powerful newspaper, the "Petersburgskii Vedomosti." He has been described as "the Cecil Rhodes of Russia," and he stands more than any other man for Russian imperialism. He accompanied the czar on his trip to the far east when he was crowned, and his influence over Nicholas is said by Russians to be very great.

Lieutenant-General Sakharoff, who is now commanding an army corps in Manchuria, was, perhaps, the most distinguished and successful of the five commanders of divisions who quelled the Boxer outbreak in Manchuria. His troops made the speediest progress of the five separate armies which advanced from different points to the relief of the besieged town of Harbin. He captured by a heroic assault, the strong fortress of Bayun-tun, leading his men in person through the breach made in the mud wall of the fortress by his artillery. The Boxers had a member of Krupp guns, but Sakharoff charged them, sword in hand, and put the gunners to flight. The czar wrote him a personal letter of thanks and gave him a gold sword in recognition of his bravery.

Major-General Pilg, Admiral Alexieff's chief of staff, is not so well known in the Russian service as most of the other far eastern commanders. He attracted Admiral Alexieff's attention by his heroism and resource in the Boxer trouble, and the czar awarded him a sword of honor. He served in Central Asia, but did not see much fighting there. He is best known as a writer on the theory of war, having contributed largely to Russian and foreign military periodicals and published two or three works.

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*Anna Diedrich.*

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