

The Second Kuban Campaign

The Second Kuban Campaign began on 9 (22) June 1918 with the advance of units of the Volunteer Army from the Mechitinskaya area to the Kuban. After the occupation of the western part of the Kuban region and Black Sea province in August 1918 it finished at the end of 1918, after heavy fighting near Armavir and Stavropol', with the liberation of the entire North Caucasus.

The plan for the campaign had been in development since mid-May 1918. The leadership of the Volunteer Army, represented by its commander, General A. I. Denikin, and chief of staff, General I. P. Romanovskiy, advocated capturing the Kuban region first. The Don Cossack ataman, General P. N. Krasnov, on the contrary tried to persuade the leadership of the Volunteer Army to strike at Tsaritsyn. In the end, in order to secure his rear and replenish the army's ranks, Denikin decided to advance on the Kuban.

Denikin wrote that

Strategically, the plan of the operation was as follows: to capture Torgovaya, thereby interrupting the railway connection between the North Caucasus and Central Russia; then cover ourselves from Tsaritsyn and turn towards Tikhoretskaya. After capturing that important junction of the North Caucasus railway, securing the operation from the north and south by capturing Kushchevka and Kavkazskaya, continue the advance on Ekaterinodar to capture that military and political centre of the region and the entire North Caucasus.¹

Due to the strategic objectives, military operations were primarily concentrated along the railway lines (mainly the Vladikavkaz line) and their junction stations: Tikhoretskaya, Torgovaya, Kushchevka, Kavkazskaya, Korenovskaya and Ekaterinodar²:

In this campaign, despite its small numbers, the army moved along a broad front to clear the area of small groups, to cover the railway communications and to secure the main direction from attacks by small detachments and militias scattered across the region.

Assessing the significance of the campaign, Denikin later wrote:

For twenty months, the North Caucasus was cut off from Central Russia, and the centre of the country was cut off from the breadbaskets of Russia – the Kuban region and Stavropol' province – and from the oil of Grozny. This undoubtedly undermined the economic basis of Soviet power.

The Volunteer Army units were opposed by the 11th Red Army under their commander Sorokin, which significantly outnumbered the volunteers (Denikin estimated the ratio of forces at the start of the campaign as 8,500-9,000 against 80,000-100,000 in favour of the enemy). The result of the prolonged fighting was enormous losses in all units of the Volunteer Army (the composition of some regiments, including the *Markovtsy*, changed several times during the campaign) and an advance to the DonBass at the beginning of 1919.

The first part on the 2nd Kuban Campaign, before the death of General Markov, is printed from E. V. Pavlov's "The *Markovtsy* in Battles and Campaigns for Russia in the Liberation War for Russia".

The second part is from the memoirs of an unknown officer of the 1st General Markov Officer Regiment, stored in the State Archives of the Russian Federation.³ In terms of structure, it was obviously written on the basis of a field notebook or diary of combat operations available to the author and is in several parts. It briefly repeats the events previously described by Pavlov, including the death of General Markov. The author's opinion on the Second Kuban Campaign is interesting, as it differs from the generally accepted point of view (it emphasises the incorrectness of the army leadership's decision to move south, which is seen as the main reason for the defeat of the White movement) alongside its opposition to a pro-German orientation (i.e. an alliance with the Germans to overthrow the Bolsheviks).

¹ Quotes from Denikin's *Очерки Русской Смуты* (The Russian Turmoil).

² Now Krasnodar.

³ GARF F.5827 Op.1 D.96. First published in *Belaya Gvardiya*. 1998, No 3, pp.23-42.



V. E. Pavlov

Back on the Don

On May 8 (21) General Markov held a talk with the ranks of his brigade in the *stanitsa* school building. At the appointed hour the school was literally packed, with many unable to squeeze into it.

“General Markov!”

Holding a folder of papers, he walked briskly into the room, went up to the lectern, greeted those present, and lit a pipe.

“I have gathered you, gentlemen, to share with you information about Russia, which has been collected from various sources,” he began.

In a lively speech, he concisely and vividly highlighted the significance of the Kuban and Kornilov campaigns that had carried out by the Volunteers in the struggle for the liberation of the Motherland.

“The signal has been given to all patriots, and their gathering place is the Volunteer Army.”

It was the duty of patriots and officers to continue the struggle with full effort. Pointing to the bundle of newspapers in front of him, General Markov said that there were other organisations that were inviting officers to their service, promising them promotions, command positions and a large salary.

“As an officer of the Great Russian army and a patriot, I cannot imagine serving in any Crimean or All-Russian Republic which is striving for the dismemberment of Great Russia with their ideas, and even consider it permissible to enter into agreements with and be under the protection of a country that actually took the main part in the destruction of our Motherland.

“What will these fake states give to officers who go to serve in some Tatar or other armies? Do you want to rise in the ranks? Please: go higher than me. But as I was promoted to lieutenant general by the lawful Russian Monarch, and will remain so until a lawful master of the Russian land appears again. What will the officers of those armies do when they are disbanded?”

General Markov went on to say that General Alekseev and the army commander were receiving letters from all sorts of “benefactors” and “patriots” with advice and plans for the salvation of the Motherland, which were brought to the attention of various shady people and into the ranks of the army. However, the Volunteer Army was on the right track and had its own plans worthy of the Motherland and the Army, and he conveyed to the audience General Denikin’s request not to complicate or hinder his hard work.

Then General Markov, pointing to a separate bundle of papers, said:

“There are some requests. They were submitted by some of the members of my brigade. They are tired ... want to rest, ask to be released from further participation in the struggle. I don’t know, maybe now I’m forty my mind does not understand some subtleties. But I ask myself: are they the only ones who are tired? Do they want to rest by themselves? And where, in what place will they find this rest? And if by some chance they find the desired rest, then... Behind whose backs will they enjoy it? And how will these gentlemen be able to look their colleagues in the eye, who did not leave the army at a difficult time? And if after this rest they may wish to re-enlist in the army, I warn you: I will not accept them into my brigade. Let them go to hell, damn it,” and General Markov handed over several such requests to the commanders of the units for the immediate dismissal of those that submitted them.

He added that commanders could authorise short leave of absence for army members. Those wishing to avail themselves of such leave should submit requests. As far as the combat situation permitted, those requests were to be granted.

After that General Markov asked if there were any questions. A “sore point” was raised – about those in the rear of the army, living well behind in the shelter of the men and not coming to their aid.

General Markov mentioned the 400 roubles which the rich of Rostov had given to General Alekseev, and the millions of roubles which they had handed over to the Bolsheviks when the Volunteer Army left the town. How was that to be understood? At a time when blood was being spilled by the army, those behind its back



must pay something, support the army in some way. Our humanity would ruin us. War doesn't tolerate indulgence, and the rear must realise that. But, apparently, in this case we had to demand rather than ask, so that the result of the war would be different.

"Believe me," said General Markov, give the army time to get stronger, gain a little more territory, and I will be the first to ask the Commander-in-Chief to take care of the rear, to improve it!"

The officers also raised another "sore point": the unusual situation where a person of junior rank and service was the superior of one more senior. General Markov answered firmly and decisively:

"My principle is that those worthy will be given the worthy posts. I will nominate a young man for a position of responsibility if he is more capable than a senior one."

In conclusion, General Markov said:

"Our work is only the beginning of the renewal of the Motherland. The Kuban campaign was the first small episode. But believe me, Russia will be great and strong again, will be like a huge, warming and life-giving sun. We should want her, take risks and fight for her.

Then, having said goodbye to his comrades-in-arms, he added: "Don't be late for roll call!"

This conversation, which lasted several hours, had a decisive influence on everyone. Doubts and hesitations disappeared quickly and decisively. With a few exceptions, those who had submitted requests to leave the army retracted them. From that moment on questions about military service and fighting for the Motherland were no longer raised: service had become indefinite and could end only after the liberation of the country and the establishment of order across it. All questions of policy were entrusted to the army commanders, with full confidence and undivided trust in them. The crisis of morale had passed. The army had been preserved.

On the next day, 9 (22) May, on the occasion of the feast day of the Egorlytsky church there was a parade by the troops in the Egorlytsky district. The parade was reviewed by General Markov. A loud and enthusiastic "ura!" greeted and was answered by the General Markov units. They also shouted a loud "ura!" in honour of General Denikin.

After the parade leave for a fortnight was permitted. Unusually, all newly promoted officers were released. Leave was also allowed in the areas under German occupation with the condition that the men were not to wear any badges indicating that they were in the Volunteer Army. This condition soon disappeared: the Germans treated the army very favourably.

Not everyone returned to the regiment from the leave. Those who did not belonged mainly to the 5th Company of the Officer Regiment – young officers promoted in Ol'ginskaya and Egorlykskaya. It turned out that Staff-Captain Parfenov, their former commander in the Junker Battalion before the Kuban campaign, an officer of openly monarchist convictions, had played on the monarchist feelings of those young men and persuaded them to go with him to the Astrakhan Army which was being formed in Rostov, subordinate to the Don command. As extra persuasion he told the young men that the Volunteer Army was in favour of the Constituent Assembly, and therefore was in league with the Socialists and Republicans; that it would not only be unsuccessful in the struggle, but would quickly fail, as no one would join its ranks; and that those who did join would soon leave it. He was believed.

Parfenov turned out to be a "pure" monarchist: at Ol'ginskaya he had refused to serve in the same battalion with the "Socialists" – as he called the Student Battalion. Now he zealously entered service for German money, giving himself to the Germans to fulfil their secret desires. In addition to this, his methods of action were far from honest in the National Army, which was the Volunteer Army. In all this he dishonoured himself, both as a monarchist and as a Russian volunteer.

Parfenov only managed to form a company of 40 men. A month and a half later his company was sent into the battle north of Velikoknyazheskaya⁴ and was swept away by a Red counter-attack. Only seven men and their commander came out of the battle.

⁴ Now Proletarsk, 46.70°N, 41.73°E.



The Volunteer Army became stronger in spirit. It also increased its numbers. Talks and reviews, connected to the one idea, mutually complementing each other, played a positive role. Discipline, in its deepest and most correct sense, was restored and confirmed.

In the evening of 10 (23) May an order was unexpectedly received which caused a lift in spirits. The Officer Regiment, the 1st Battery, the *division* of the Circassian Regiment and the horse *sotnia* of the Egorlykskaya militia⁵ were to prepare to move out in the morning of 11 (24) May. It turned out that a strong detachment of the Reds had gone onto the offensive towards Velikoknyazheskaya and began to push the Don detachment there to the west. The army's rear and communications with Novocherkassk were threatened.

In the morning 11 (24) May the detachment, under command of General Markov, set out to the north-east. The infantry were on carts. Having travelled up to 40 km, it stopped for the night in Korolkov's winter house.

On 12 (25) May the detachment moved on, heading to the government bridge over the Manych River. General Markov's thinking was that when the Reds' main forces had crossed the bridge and were carried away by their pursuit of the Don detachment, that a sudden blow to their rear would allow us to seize the bridge, destroy it and then – together with the Don troops – destroy the Reds. This calculation depended entirely on accurate intelligence data. But the information was wrong, and General Markov's blow came not in the enemy's rear, but on his main forces, which were ready for battle. The fight was fierce and persistent. The Reds could not be defeated: they defended the bridge and were able to withdraw behind the river. The Don detachment captured two guns. The Officer Regiment lost several dozen men.

On 13 (26) May the detachment returned to Egorlykskaya. The Officer Regiment considered this operation a success, but the army headquarters assessed it differently: they had expected a total defeat of the Reds. Headquarters' unfulfilled hope was a real reproach to General Markov and hurt him deeply. General Markov himself realised and was worried about the failure of the operation. There was serious conflict between him and headquarters, which was removed by an official apology from General Romanovskiy. None of this was known to the units.

Reforming the Volunteer Army

General Markov did not seem to rest at all. From morning till evening he could be seen in the village either riding somewhere on horseback or walking somewhere at a brisk pace. There was not a unit in his brigade that he did not visit and talk to.

He began to pay special attention to the Kuban Rifle Regiment, which was increasing in number daily, being filled with Cossacks coming from the Kuban. At one point he entered a house to find some Cossacks playing cards, and others nearby engaged in destroying insects in their linen. The Cossacks jumped up with a bewildered look. The general greeted them cheerfully and fondly and spoke at once:

"Playing cards is not a soldier's business, but this is a soldier's business," pointing to the bug hunters.

Having begun with this half-joke, half-reprimand, General Markov continued joking but imperceptibly moved to a serious tone and an instruction to be ready for battle. The Cossacks answered him with a friendly:

"That is correct! I obey!"⁶

"Well, go on with your business!" he said in conclusion and left. He was escorted by a crowd.

"What a general! What an eagle! I wish we had him as Ataman!" they all spoke together, busy with "their business", but not with the card game.

General Markov also "raided" the Circassians who served in his escort and in the Circassian Cavalry Regiment, with the same good cheer and jokes. Those simple-minded people loved him for his selfless bravery, for his friendly attitude to them, without arrogance, for caring about them, for his cheerful disposition and justice. That is why the Circassians always highly appreciated his praises and thanks and accepted his penalties, punishments and even anger. There was a case during a campaign when the general

⁵ Ополчение, Ополеchnие.

⁶ A traditional response in the Tsarist army.



drove a Circassian out to the steppe with a whip for robbery, warning him that if he returned he would be shot, which caused admiration in them. The Circassians, like all the Volunteers, not only loved and feared their General, but literally deified him and were selflessly devoted to him.

While the Kuban Rifle Regiment was growing rapidly, the Officer Regiment was not receiving any new recruits. Obviously the superior officers hoped for the arrival of officer replenishments – this was assumed in the regiment, although they would have been happy to have *Kubantsy* as well, since those that had joined them in the Kuban campaign had shown themselves to be excellent soldiers – efficient and disciplined. In addition to this, they showed that they had great respect for the officers, both those commanding and those in the ranks, standing side by side with them and carrying out the same tasks. The Cossacks tried to imitate those officers and showed sincere readiness to serve them in every way possible. It seemed that the old, pre-revolutionary times were returning, when Russian soldiers did not have any revolutionary frenzy or licentiousness.

General Markov confirmed the assumptions about the replenishment of the officers in the regiment. Then replenishments began to arrive daily, albeit in small groups. They were presented to General Markov and he asked two or three questions to each volunteer. Those present at one of these introductions remember a rather lengthy conversation between the General and a lieutenant who had just arrived.

“What! Have you decided to follow in your uncle’s footsteps?”

“Yes, sir! As much as I can,” was the lieutenant’s reply.

Once in the company, this Lieutenant Neznamov aroused great interest. It turned out that he was a nephew of General Neznamov, a professor at the General Staff Academy, and had been acquainted with General Markov before the war. The connection between them had been lost during the war, until they met in the Volunteer Army. Lieutenant Neznamov had to tell the officers a lot about the then Lieutenant-Colonel Markov, but in return he questioned them about his service in recent years. Lieutenant Neznamov’s conclusion was the theory of military art which General Markov had expressed before the war, was brilliantly confirmed by his deeds in the following years.

Lieutenant Neznamov pleased the officers with his confidence that a considerable number of officers and volunteers in general would enrol, but mainly with the news of the arrival of Colonel Drozdovskiy’s large detachment, which had almost ten guns and even an armoured car. Doubts about the growth of the Volunteer Army were finally dispelled.

General Markov was busy obtaining all possible reinforcements for his brigade. He brought his 1st Battery up to four guns, having received one gun from the 2nd Brigade and another from the Don. The guns, however, were defective: they could be put into service only after the new campaign had started. To crew them, all the artillerymen assigned to the 2nd Company of the Officer Regiment during the withdrawal from Ekaterinodar were assigned.

General Markov considered his brigade required a small cavalry unit as well. At his request, the commander of the cavalry brigade, General Erdeli, allocated a Kuban Cossack *sotnia* under the command of Colonel Rastegaev, which was called the Independent Horse *Sotnia* of the 1st Infantry Brigade.

“Put on black shoulder-boards on the *sotnia*,” General Markov ordered as he reviewed it. From that time it unofficially began to be called “Markov”, both because its subordination to General Markov and the shoulder-boards of his Officer Regiment.

The 1st Engineer Company grew. It was still an infantry unit, but it began to allocate its men to various specialist services: communications; the railway (a small section on the Torgovaya⁷ – Bataysk line), the armoured *divizion* (armoured cars had started to appear in the army) and even aviation.

⁷ Now Sal'sk.



During May the Volunteer Army continued to grow. On 26 May (8 June) it even added two Cossack regiments, up to 1,500 sabres, with their Imperial standards, who made their way from the Kuban. They were solemnly welcomed by units of the Egorlykskaya garrison with the 1st Battery (the Officer Regiment was at this time forming in Novocherkassk).

Then there was a solemn meeting with Colonel Drozdovskiy's detachment, which had come from Novocherkassk, a detachment of "knights of the spirit, who had come from afar and infused new forces into the army", as General Alekseev said when he met them at Mechetinskaya. At Egorlykskaya they were met by the garrison of that village, lined up along the road, saluting. The "*Drozdovtsy*", as they began to call the new arrivals, marched past the line, then lined up themselves on the left of the standing units. They offered the old units of the Volunteer Army the chance to enter the village first and as they passed in front of them, they saluted them in turn. Everyone was amazed by the strength of the "*Drozdovtsy*" – an officer regiment of 1,300 bayonets; a mounted *divizion* of around 300 sabres; an engineer company; an armoured car (the *Verny*); and unprecedented artillery for the Volunteer Army, with ten light and two heavy guns.

By the beginning of June the army had almost tripled its numerical strength, especially in cavalry. This made it possible to give each infantry brigade a cavalry regiment and to rename the brigades as divisions. The army had following organisation and composition:

1st Infantry Division – General Markov

1st "Markov" Officer Regiment⁸

Kuban Rifle Regiment

1st Officer Horse Regiment

1st Engineer Company

1st Officer Battery

Independent Horse *Sotnia*

2nd Infantry Division – General Borovskiy

Kornilov Shock Regiment

Partisan Regiment

Kuban Horse Regiment

2nd Engineer Company

2nd Officer Battery

3rd Infantry Division – Colonel Drozdovskiy

2nd Officer Rifle Regiment

2nd Officer Cavalry Regiment

3rd Engineer Company

Ten light and two heavy guns

1st Cavalry Division – General Erdeli

Four Kuban Cossack regiments

Horse Brigade – General Pokrovskiy

Two Kuban Cossack regiments

Two guns

Two independent Kuban Plastun battalions

Armoured *divizion* – three vehicles.

The total strength of the Army was about 10,000 bayonets and sabres.

Novocherkassk

"General Markov is going on leave," a rumour spread throughout his brigade. People started talking about it: "He needs a rest!", "If he is going on leave, it means that no fighting is expected in the near future."

⁸ The entry into the army of the 2nd Officer Regiment had caused it to add a number.



He left on 17 (30) May for a fortnight, like all those taking leave. The day before, saying goodbye to his Officer Regiment, he rejoiced: "Soon you will go to Novochoerkassk! The Officer Horse Regiment will go there too." He could not please the 1st Battery as his request had not been granted for them, but he consoled it: "We will only part for a little while."

During the general's absence there was only one action by units of his brigade: the Kuban Rifle Regiment and the 1st Battery moved, along with Don cavalry, towards Gulyai-Borisovka, where the Reds were concentrating their forces. Accurate fire from the battery broke up the enemy's chains, an attack by the *Kubantsy* turned them into flight, and the *Dontsy* massacred them with cold steel.

On 22 May (4 June) the Officer Regiment set out for a rest. Its departure caused great anxiety among the inhabitants of the village, despite the fact that the Kuban Rifle Regiment and cavalry units remained and there were always guards, trenches and a gun in position on its outskirts. The inhabitants calmed down when the arrival of another officer regiment was announced.

It was wonderful spring weather. The steppe was covered with fresh, lush, rich greenery. Birds were singing in the air, filling it with their song. There was joy and happiness in nature.

There was joy in the hearts of the *Markovtsy* – they were going to a big cultural city for a rest, where they would have an opportunity to get away from the monotony of the steppe, villages and farms. Their trek along the dry road, with stops for overnight stays in villages, was not at all tiring. Their thoughts and conversations ran ahead, to Novochoerkassk. General Markov was there, but also their wounded friends and their secret assumptions.

The regiment went from Egorlykская to Mechetinskaya, then to Kagal'nitskaya, to Khomutovskaya, which they already knew well. In February they had passed in the opposite direction, in impenetrable mud. Then they had no idea where they were heading, "the middle of nowhere". The *Markovtsy* remembered that time. Except that so many of them were no longer in their ranks ... No Kornilov, in particular!

From Khomutovskaya the regiment did not take the old road to Ol'ginskaya – the Germans were there – but turned to Manychskaya, from where, having crossed the Don by steamer, it headed to Novochoerkassk.

During one of the marches the regiment's column stopped and an order went to line up along the road. Another column with the national flag⁹ in front was coming towards it. Word came that it was Colonel Drozdovskiy's detachment. Commands were given, and a loud "ura!" was heard. The 1st Officer Regiment welcomed their new comrade-in-arms, the 2nd Officer Regiment.

Delight shone in the faces of the soldiers of both regiments. After all, both regiments had travelled more than 1,000 kilometres before their meeting. They had not halted for obstacles, but had headed separately towards the same goal, and now they would head towards it together. Hurrah!

The *Markovtsy* were struck by the strength of the column in front of them – over 1,000 men (the artillery and cavalry of Colonel Drozdovskiy's detachment were marching by way of Aksai). Even more astonishing was the appearance of the soldiers – perfectly and uniformly dressed and with the same equipment. There was vigour and confidence in their faces. Order and discipline. The general impression was of enthusiasm.

The regiments went in opposite directions. The *Markovtsy* had a new topic for conversation: their appearance. It was not cheerful. They noted their motley uniforms, which were also badly worn out. Their miserable equipment ... United in poverty! But would they be sad about it? For they all knew where they had been and what they had suffered. Only a man who attached exceptional importance to appearance could judge or look down on them.

The first participants of the Kuban campaign to arrive in Novochoerkassk were the wounded. The campaign hospital shook them for the last time on carts to Manychskaya, from where they were transported to Novochoerkassk by steamships along the Don to Aksai and further on by rail for several days. Novochoerkassk

⁹ That is, the Russian tricolour.



cordially welcomed the wounded, numbering over 1,500 men, who filled all the city's hospitals. The conditions in which they found themselves, of course, were incomparably better than the conditions in the field hospital. The attention of the residents was gratifying.

The meetings and attitude to the wounded of the female staff at Grushevskaya, where the first volunteers went, were touching.

"The nannies tracked us down. They knew almost everyone on Grushevskaya by surname and first name."

"And what about Nekrashevich, Neninskiy, Kazara?"

"Murdered."

"And Shurka Rashevskiy, Shurka Andreev?"

"Rashevsky killed, Andreev wounded."

"Cadet Bukovskiy, Volunteer Boggaut, Cadet Polyakov – killed. Ensigns Schwerin, Chernykh, Panteleyev with the pince-nez, Krylov with the two Nagants,¹⁰ which the nannies used to laugh at because he otherwise looked quite peaceful – killed. Kozlovskiy, Lieutenant Toporkov with his characteristic Yaroslavl accent – killed ... The nannies were crying ... Their relatives barely know where they died. But still they were mourned from the bottom of their hearts by these Russian women."

Soon General Markov arrived in Novochoerkassk. After his official visits, he immediately began to go around the infirmaries.

General Markov's appearance in the infirmaries brought tears of joy to the wounded. We watched him with pride, and anyone who could, in their tattered uniforms, went out into Moskovskaya Street or into the Alexander Garden to see our favourite leader one more time. There, accompanied by his officers, he struck fear into the "rear patriots".

"Why do you greet a general so carelessly?" General Markov turned sternly to a passing junior officer, and then said ironically, "Never mind, excuse me! You're not a Russian officer, but a republican one!" and he went on his way.

A major change in the general's psyche was noticed: "He seemed different from before, somehow very irritated and even prickly. I don't know whether it was fatigue or whether it was a premonition."

In Novochoerkassk General Markov changed his shoulder-boards from those of an officer of the General Staff to "Markov" black, which prompted all the *Markovtsy* to be greatly interested in the acquisition of such shoulder-boards.

First Additions

The second half of May at Novochoerkassk railway station there were people unloading from the trains coming from the north and south who quickly dispersed. However some singles and small groups, went to the station in no hurry, looking for the station commandant. Some were dressed in civilian clothes, some in military uniforms, with or without shoulder-boards, with little luggage or even without any. They quickly got to know each other: they were all officers and they had all come to join the Volunteer Army.

The commandant gave the address. They went briskly and cheerfully. The city in blossoming acacia trees was a joy; their thick odour intoxicated them ... A lot of hard things were behind them.

At the Registration Office a colonel appeared. The questioning was strict and pointed:

"Why didn't you think it necessary to come much earlier?"

Statements that they came from Smolensk, Moscow, or directly from the front, were not considered valid.

"Are you a colonel? Would you be so kind as to produce two witnesses?"

¹⁰ Revolvers.



These and similar questions somewhat hurt the egos of those who arrived, but the “late appearance” meant that they had to bear it without complaint.

The new arrivals were directed to the building of the Mariinskiy Women’s Institute, where they were met by a young *Markovtsy* officer, modestly and smartly dressed, who took them to one of the rooms, explained everything, and suggested that the most senior in rank should be in charge of the room.

“Any questions, please come to me,” he added.

Through the day and the following day new volunteers arrived, and their numbers exceeded a hundred. They already occupied several rooms. They were all young officers, all front-line soldiers. Almost all had to fight their way through Bolshevik outposts, losing companions on the way. All had been wandering for weeks and months in the south of Russia with one thought in mind – the Volunteer Army! They did not find the army on the Don, and they had to settle down in villages and hamlets, hiding and muddling along – many without money, surviving by begging.

In the morning the dormitory duty officer went round the rooms, asking them to be kept in order and clean. He said that General Markov was in Novocherkassk and very possibly would come to the institute during the day. It was natural to ask, “Who is General Markov?” Not so much the words of his reply as his tone and enthusiastic response told everyone about General Markov’s exceptional character. Judging by the fact that the duty officer ran upstairs to the officers’ rooms and did not linger for more than a minute or two, and then ran downstairs, and also by the fact that the duty officer was somewhat nervous, the officers were involuntarily infected by the mood and anxiously awaited the General’s arrival.

Then the duty officer rushed through the rooms at lightning speed, saying, “General Markov!”

The instantly conversations stopped. Everyone began to tighten their belts and put themselves in order. No one sat. Absolute silence. The clear voice of the duty officer was heard from below:

“Your Excellency! All is in order in the 1st Officer Regiment quarters. There are 126 new recruits.”

“Good morning!” said a young, energetic voice.

“Good morning, Your Excellency!” replied the duty officer.

“Let’s go in.”

Several men came up the stairs at a brisk pace.

“Gentlemen officers!” commanded the duty officer.

The General entered the room. Even if there had been no warning of General Markov’s arrival, everyone would have immediately guessed that it was him.

“How do you do, gentlemen officers!” he greeted cheerfully. The officers responded with a correct bow.

“Sit down!” He sat down on the table and looked round at all those present with his black, penetrating eyes.

“I salute your decision to stand up and fight for the Motherland. It is the business and duty of every honest officer,” said the General.

“Tell me, lieutenant, where did you come from?” General Markov turned to the first officer. “What was known about the Volunteer Army there ? Were others going to come here?”

Such questions were asked to everyone. But his attention was especially attracted to those who had sneaked in from the central provinces: Smolensk, Kursk, Moscow. ... He asked them:

“Are there any organisations among the officers? Do you know the plans of the organisations?”

He asked one who came from Smolensk:

“How and when did you learn about the Volunteer Army?”

Having finished interviewing everyone and saying that they would soon join the ranks of the Officer Regiment, General Markov went to another room.



Everyone's impression of the general was unusually powerful: of youth, vivacity, energy. ... The serious questions he asked, that inquisitive, hypnotising look; the willpower – beyond any doubt. ... The officers had seen a lot of generals, but General Markov seemed to be an exception among them: he immediately made everyone feel good in themselves. He was not a general who stood somewhere high and far away at a command post, but a general, a superior, a commander, who was not only physically, but also spiritually among them. General Markov was gone, but was still there.

All day long there were endless conversations between the new *Markovtsy* and the wounded veterans who had served in the Kuban campaign, who came to the institute during the day to see and talk to their future comrades-in-arms. Their stories revealed more and more deeply and widely General Markov's personality as a man, as a leader and as a fearless fighter. His exploits in the campaign struck everyone's imagination and hearts beat faster at the thought that serving under someone like General Markov would mean a rise in morale and willpower for all of them

The next day the officers were informed that the 1st Officer Regiment was arriving in Novocherkassk that day and would be stationed at the institute. The mood lifted even more.

The evening came and the order came to line up in front of the institute building. For the first time the new officers, about 150 in number, were in formation. For the first time they felt themselves bound together, obedient to command.

"Attention, gentlemen officers!"

General Markov approached the formation and walked along it, greeting it by putting his hand to his tall white cap. Standing in front of the middle of the formation, he said:

"Gentlemen officers! Now you will see and greet those who have scorned death in the name of the Motherland. In the name of and for victory. Those who in difficult conditions won the first victories. You will join their ranks and," he said with emphasis, "I am sure you will be worthy of them. Do I understand you?"

"Yes, Your Excellency!" burst out a loud, friendly reply from the officers, as every unit of the Russian army would answer on such occasions.

"Stand at ease!"

There was complete silence in the square in front of the institute building. And then the sounds of a military march sounded in the distance. Closer and closer. The officers held their breath. General Markov was looking in the direction of the approaching sounds of the orchestra.

"Attention! Gentlemen officers!" commanded General Markov loudly and he himself stood frozen in front of the formation.

The regiment was approaching. No faces were visible, only silhouettes. There were a few horsemen in front. The regiment lined up in front of the officers. A command was heard:

"Attention! Gentlemen officers!"

General Markov marched quickly towards the regiment.

"How do you do, my brothers?"

In the unanimous response of the regiment one could feel not the normal pattern, but the response of people who were genuinely greeting their superior. General Markov embraced someone in a fur coat, *papakha*, glasses, then someone else ...

"Friends!" said General Markov, "we've been given leave. Let's rest, consolidate, recharge ourselves, and then head to new battles for the Motherland!"

The regiment's loud "ura!" was heard in reply.

"Here's the first reinforcements. There will be more!"



Colonel Timanovskiy, commander of the Officer Regiment, who the officers had already heard of, came up to the line of the officers meeting the regiment and greeted them.

“Ura!” shouted General Markov and the two ranks spread their loud, sincere and resounding “ura!” into the quiet night.

General Markov let everyone go to their rooms in the huge building of the institute. The reinforcements for the regiment were not able to fall asleep quickly that night.

General Markov's Report

One day it was announced that General Markov would give a talk in the town theatre. There was no-one who did not want to attend. Owing to the limited number of seats in the theatre, in which the stalls were intended for the city public, and the balcony for the officers of the Officer Regiment, permission to be at the report was granted by the latter mainly to “young *Markovtsy*.” At the appointed hour the theatre was literally packed with people; there was not a single free seat, even in the aisles.

When the lights began to go out in the hall, silence prevailed. A colonel came on the stage, who gave an hour long report describing the events of the Volunteer Army in the Kuban campaign: its battles, its sacrifices; the purpose, meaning and significance of the campaign. He reminded them of the fear the Russian people felt for Bolshevism, not supporting the weak forces of our army and were now convinced that their fear had been in vain. The small army, like a “light in the darkness”, having lost its leader and hundreds of men, had not only preserved itself, but also the honour of the National Flag. The time had come for some to join the army and for others to support it with all their strength, without hesitation, before it was too late.

The lights went back on. The next speaker was General Markov. None of those present in the hall moved from their seats.

As soon as the lights began to go out, there was complete silence and everyone's eyes turned to the stage. But ... again the hall was illuminated with light. A murmur of annoyance passed among those present, which was instantly silenced: General Markov, in his white cap and his campaign uniform, with a gleaming white cross of St George on his chest, walked quickly onto the stage.

Thunderous applause continued for a long time. In vain General Markov bowed, waved his hat, sat down on the table, jumped up, spread his hands ... At last the hall hushed and froze. In the full light of the theatre, he said: “I am used to seeing my listeners,” and began his report.

“I remember, as if today, a huge field on which columns of troops were moving and lining up,” General Markov began in a loud and clear voice. “A sea of red flags were waving above the columns. And behind them, behind them there were none of the old, sacred banners, which had been covered in the glory of victory. The troops were preparing to welcome the Minister of War.”

“Commands sounded. The troops froze and stood at attention. Bands began to play. Standing in a car, the Minister of War drove round the troops, greeting them and listening to their resounding hurrahs.

With colourful strokes General Markov painted a picture of the parade, then the Minister's speech to the troops, urging them “for the glory of the revolution and the Motherland” to fulfil the duty of “the freest army” and “the freest soldiers in the world” in the forthcoming offensive. Then how the troops answered the Minister with their hurrahs. He also painted a picture of the Minister himself, triumphant and confident that he possessed the thoughts, souls and hearts of the soldiers in the revolutionary army.

“Beside the Minister stood an old general – the Commander. The general was gloomy. He was not impressed by the enthusiastic shouting of the troops; he knew and felt how insincere they were. The old general knew the soldiers, their psychology, and knew that the Minister's beautiful words would not induce them to attack.”

Then General Markov briefly, but graphically, explained how Kerensky's offensive turned out to be not only be a defeat, but a rout by its third day. The army quickly collapsed, and with it Russia collapsed, and power was taken over by the Bolsheviks.



Fortunately for the Motherland, it found leaders and warriors who set themselves the task of creating an army in difficult conditions to fight for the restoration and liberation of Russia: Generals Alekseev, Kornilov, Denikin ... officers and young volunteers.

Describing the Kuban campaign, General Markov spoke of the selfless sacrifice and bravery of the rank and file of the army in dozens of battles. He spoke about the victories won by youth in the extremely difficult conditions of the campaign – and the main victory was the army did not die. It showed everyone, that you can fight, and must and that success in the struggle was inevitable.

General Markov ended his more than hour-long report with the following, approximate, words:

“Many have already died in the struggle: in the future perhaps we will die too. But the time will come, and it is already near, when our National tricolour banner will rise again over Russia – a Great and United Russia. And this will not be prevented by the presence in the neighbourhood of an army with a characteristic headdress.”¹¹

General Markov put on his cap and bowed to the audience. A furious “ura!”, shouts of “Markov!”. They would have continued without end if an officer had not come on stage with a bouquet of flowers. Instantly everything quieted down. The officer offered flowers from the ladies, but General Markov did not let him finish, saying loudly:

“Take them to the hospital for the wounded! I am not a singer!”

A new explosion of applause, shouts of “please!” and “ura!”. The officer again tried to approach the general with the bouquet and this time he heard him say imperiously:

“Arrest him immediately!”

Embarrassed, he left the stage with the ladies’ bouquet.

The *Markovtsy* did not immediately go to the institute on leaving the theatre, as they wanted to see their idol once more.

“We will carry General Markov on our shoulders,” they decided. But the old campaigners who knew the general said:

“Don’t even think about it! Or he’ll start swearing.”

They had to abandon their idea.

The report made a tremendous impression on everyone. What many people had had lurking in their subconscious, their instinctive love for the Motherland, was now clearly realised and felt. It remained for their will to be backed up in practice, in battles. And everyone decided to follow through.

“A true son of the Russian people gives the Motherland the most precious thing he has – his life!” General Kornilov’s words, which General Markov recalled.

After then the new “*Markovtsy*” talked only of about General Markov, about the campaign and that they should be worthy of those whose ranks they had joined. There were many examples to follow, both those given by General Markov and those of other participants in the campaign. It remained for everyone to gather his own strength, defeating all weaknesses in himself.

The *Markovtsy* paid attention to one peculiarity of the report: General Markov did not once say a word about himself in his report, as if he had only observed the battles, not commanded and participated in them. Such modesty in relation to himself amazed everyone and was accepted by everyone as a rule for themselves. “Forget Yourself – Serve Russia”, “Modesty and Bravery”.

On the last evening of his stay in Novocherkassk General Markov attended a modest party at the Institute, organised by the 4th Company. He talked with the chief of the institute, while the volunteer young men danced with the pretty hostesses of the house which had sheltered the regiment – young institute girls in white pelerines, modest in their institute uniforms, modest in demeanour, and exceptionally charming.

¹¹ A reference to the German “Stahlhelm”.

General Markov left the evening well before it was over, in spite of the entreaties of both officers and institute girls to remain. He had to make the necessary preparations for his departure to the front the next day. He thanked his superior for the reception of his regiment in the institute building, and he promised to bring his five year old son to those around him. After a while he entered the hall with his son, who was immediately surrounded by the lovely hostesses.

Having once again said goodbye to everyone and, saying to the officers: "See you soon at the front", he left. No-one realised that evening that it was the last time they would see their general alive.

The Second Kuban Campaign: the Beginning

When General Markov returned from his leave, the units of his division thought: soon they would go into action! The question discussed was, in which direction? There were two thoughts: towards Sosyka¹² or to Torgovaya – both on the rail lines. However, no-one really cared. The Volunteer Army forces were counted: five infantry regiments, engineer companies, *plastun* battalions, at least six horse regiments. There were no more than 10,000 bayonets and sabres (according to General Denikin, around 9,000 bayonets and sabres, 21 guns, two armoured cars). There was no idea of the enemy's forces, except the certainty they were many times larger. But this did not affect the mood of the Volunteers at all: there was faith in themselves and faith in their leaders.

Days passed without any apparent sign of an imminent campaign. But on 7 (20) June, two battalions of the Kuban Rifle Regiment and an artillery platoon arrived at Egorlykskaya from the front; as if a reorganisation of the units had begun. And on 8 (21) June there was a real sign of action: a trumpeter passed through the village and announced to the Cossacks an order for each household to prepare half a *pood*¹³ of rusks and to put in order a hundred-weight barrels on wheels.

But why did the 1st Officer Regiment not return? General Markov said nothing, and it was risky to ask him.

Finally, on 9 (22) June in the division's units were told to prepare to march, with everything ready by evening.

As night fell, the north-eastern edge of the village was lined with:

1. Kuban Rifle Regiment.
2. Engineer Company.
3. 1st Battery (two guns).
4. Independent horse *sotnia*.

"Is this the entire division?" was the perplexed question asked, but it turned also attached were:

5. Don foot regiment with one gun, and
6. A small Don horse regiment.

General Markov rode up. He greeted each *sotnia* separately, welcoming them to the campaign and warning them to save water.

"The *Kubantsy* should eat less lard," he joked.

"We ate all ours, and the *Gostropuzikhs* (as the *Kubantsy* called the *Dontsy*) had no salt in their kitchens. It's time for us to go to Kuban for new supplies," answered the *Kubantsy* cheerfully.

A Don Cossack, who was liaison officer for General Markov, objected to this:

"Not at all, Your Excellency! The *Kurkuls* (as the *Dontsy* called the *Kubantsy*) are lying that they ate the lard. They used it all on their heels when they were leaving the Kuban."

Everybody laughed. The march started very cheerfully. It was good and easy to walk in the fresh night.

¹² Now Pavlovskaya.

¹³ About 8 kg.



It was dawn of 10 (23) June. The column continued to march, with short stops. The sun rose quickly and began to burn, most importantly, directly on their faces. The thirst began to torment, and men quickly emptied their flasks. There was a long break. Water was distributed from the barrels – a bucket per horse and per platoon of men. General Markov was present at the distribution of water. People chewed rusks and drank water. The horses “asked” for more water, and General Markov gave it to them.

Back on the road ... There was bare steppe and unbearable heat. The people and horses were no longer walking, but barely weaving. Mounted Kalmyk guides led the column. Someone asked one of them:

“How far left to the winter-house?”

“I don’t know. I have never walked it, but on horseback we will reach it in two hours,” he replied.

And indeed, soon there were signs of vegetation on the horizon. The horses also noticed that and moved faster. For the last two kilometres they even started to trot. Having travelled about 30 km, the column stopped at a large rich winter-house. A rest until night was announced. For seven hours men and horses sat in the water of a large pond, to the great annoyance of the battalion on duty. With nightfall the column moved on again.

Towards dawn of 11 (24) June they reached a large winter-house (Korolkov’s). It was empty: no people, no cattle. The Bolsheviks had already been there and thrown a dead horse into the huge well that supplied the house with water. After a short rest the column moved to another small winter-house, which had been completely destroyed. Everyone knew that the division was approaching the Tikhoretskaya¹⁴ – Tsaritsyn rail line and, therefore, battle was coming soon. The column stayed there until night. General Markov was not to be seen. We learned that he had gone with a horse *sotnia* and a battery to reconnoitre in the direction of Shablievka Station.¹⁵

The small detachment stopped 8-10 km before reaching Shablievka Station. General Markov could see the station perfectly from an elevated position, with the Popov farm two kilometres in front of it, in a gentle gully with a river. No enemy was visible. The picture was of peace. But a train appeared, coming into the station from the south. “Fire at it!” General Markov ordered the battery. The shells fell well short. But with the shots the picture changed rapidly: chains of Reds appeared on the outskirts of the farm and the station. A detachment sent to the left reported Red cavalry. General Markov led the detachment to the left, to the north.

A column of a regiment of cavalry was crossing the detachment’s path. It was about five km away. “Disperse it!” was the order given to the battery. With a rapid and well-directed fire the column was dispersed and galloped away in the direction of the station. The detachment continued its movement towards the Manych River. Soon a detachment of *Dontsy* galloped up and reported to General Markov that the Reds were moving to the southern bank of the Manych River. The detachment headed in the direction indicated and again used artillery fire to force the Reds, obviously their reconnaissance units, to quickly retreat across the river.

General Markov was satisfied: the positions of the enemy’s forces and his possible actions had become known, but the main thing was that the enemy had learned that an offensive with artillery being prepared against them and this would probably induce them to strengthen the station’s defence bringing forces from other sectors, in particular from Torgovaya Station.

All this reconnaissance proceeded rapidly, despite its difficulty, and by evening General Markov was already back with his division. He gave orders for the positions of the units for the night and their security. The engineer company and mounted units were in the winter-house.¹⁶ The Kuban Rifle Regiment and the battery were on its northern outskirts, having surrounded themselves with wagons like an ancient

¹⁴ Now just Tikhoretsk.

¹⁵ 46.54°N, 41.61°E.

¹⁶ While called a “winter house”, many contained substantial numbers of outbuildings, stables etc.



wagenburg, putting the machine-guns and guns in position. The Don foot and horse regiments in the division went towards the Manych River.

General Markov went round the units. “Engineers,” he said: “We will rest here for the night. We have no desire to fight with the Red bastards today. And tomorrow we will give them such a fight that the sky will be on fire. Sleep well!”

At nightfall General Markov assembled all the unit commanders at the battery, around its fire, allowing the battery’s ranks to be present.

He firstly outlined the situation facing the whole army and the task given to it. The army was to attack the enemy at Torgovaya Station¹⁷ (2nd and 3rd Infantry and Horse Divisions) and Shablievka Station (1st Division). The attack would take place the next day, 12 (25) June. His division, having moved out from its quarters well before dawn, would advance as follows: the Kuban Rifle Regiment would move directly to Shablievka. It was to push the enemy out of Popov’s farm, push him out of his positions on the other side of the river, and then attack and take the station – and the enemy must not be allowed to blow up the bridge. The battery’s task was to support the infantry in every possible way. The Don foot and horse regiments would cover the advance from the north. The engineer company would be in reserve. The mounted *sotnia* would be given its orders during the course of the battle.

General Markov finished with his usual cheerful words:

“Everything seems to be as it should be according to the field regulations. Yes?! My deputies are Colonel Tret'yakov, Tunenberg and you – Mionchinskiy.” Then, turning to the artillerymen, he said to them:

“And I can tell all you gentlemen this: the infantry will be responsible for the assault on the station, and you will have to take the full fire of the artillery and armoured trains in the open field. There will be casualties, but I have nothing to teach you!”

Having released the leaders, General Markov wrapped himself in a *burka*¹⁸ and fell asleep immediately by the battery’s fire.

Battle of Shablievka

The division was raised long before dawn and moved off in the dark with the chains of the Kuban Rifle Regiment guarding in front. When the first shots from the Red guards rang out, the regiment formed fighting order without halting.

It was getting light. A farm appeared ahead, and soon machine guns and massed rifle fire crackled from it onto the advancing troops. Then the enemy battery, positioned near the station, opened fire. The riflemen were forced to advance by shuffling across the open and level ground. The attack seemed certain to deliver heavy losses. General Markov saw this and ordered the commander of the horse *sotnia*, Captain Rastegaev, to ride round the farm from the south-east and attack it, pointing to the low land to the right.

The *sotnia*, having made a preliminary manoeuvre along the plain, threw itself into the attack on the farm from a distance of almost a kilometre. It struck the left flank of the Reds’ position. The Reds’ shells were bursting behind it. The infantry fire from the opposite bank of the river hardly inflicted any losses on it when it galloped into the southern edge of the farm, immediately capturing two machine-guns and around 150 prisoners. The *sotnia* could not get deeper into the farm, but its blow forced the Reds to abandon their positions in front of the farm.

Seeing this, General Markov raced towards the farm with a group of mounted men who were with him. Staff-Captain Sperling’s gun and the battery machine gun galloped after the general, overtaking the riflemen’s chain. The mounted group with General Markov was met with fire as it raced towards the farm house. Two fell from their horses. Machine-guns and cannons opened fire on the barns where the Reds had lingered. The enemy’s artillery also helped, with its shells falling on the Reds. The chains of riflemen ran up

¹⁷ Modern Sal'sk.

¹⁸ A heavy coat, generally made of felt.



soon afterwards. The farm was occupied. The riflemen kept running and crossed the bridge on the heels of the fleeing Reds and continued their attack onto the station.

During this time the 1st Battery shelled a train coming up from Torgovaya, hit its locomotive and showered shells on the Reds who had jumped out of it and were running to the station. It silenced the Red battery, which withdrew from its position. But the farm was still being shelled by artillery fire – from the Red armoured train.

General Markov came out of the farm to see the riflemen crossing the river. He gave orders to the *Kubantsy* and the battery. Shells were bursting nearby. Captain Rastegaev, who was with him at the time, barely persuaded General Markov to go back into the farm, but even then as soon as he had moved away from one building a shell burst where he had been.

“Valiant, but too late!” said General Markov.

General Markov had to see the whole battlefield: he had to observe the enemy, its armoured train and the Reds leaving their battered train, as he had just been informed. He climbed onto the roof of a shed, where the battery was setting up its observation post. But he quickly came down: a detachment from the 3rd Infantry Division had arrived. Having heard their report about the situation at Torgovaya Station, he told them to report that his division had knocked the Reds from their advanced positions and were proceeding to attack Shablievka Station. He then hurried again to the outskirts of the farm. The Reds’ shells were bursting all around. Their armoured train, positioned at the bridge, was firing. Rastegaev again asked Markov to leave a place so easily observed by the enemy but, having received a task for the horse *sotnia*, then left him.

It was about 06:00. The artillery battle was in full swing. The 1st Battery had already lost 9 men and 7 horses. The Kuban riflemen were attacking the station, and suddenly ...

A Kuban rifleman, Lieutenant Yakovlev, who was with his platoon protecting the battery, wrote:

One of the enemy shells fell to the left, three paces from General Markov. There was an explosion and the general fell to the ground, as if knocked out. Next to him was his white cap.

Seeing that, I raced forward with Sub-Ensign Petropavlovskiy, who was next to me, and we ran up to General Markov. At first we thought he was dead, as the left side of his head, neck and shoulder were smashed up and bleeding badly, but he was breathing heavily. We immediately picked up the wounded man and were about to carry him back behind the barn, when another explosion sounded to the right. We fell down involuntarily, covering the general with our bodies. After the shrapnel had gone, we shook off the dirt covering us, picked him up again and carried him to shelter.

The Reds’ armoured train stopped firing at the farm and moved off to the north.

General Markov’s Death

The wounded man was carried into the house. The doctor was horrified at the sight: there was a shrapnel wound to the left side of the back of the head, and a large part of the left shoulder had been torn off.

“The situation is hopeless,” he said.

Those standing there crossed themselves. General Markov was breathing heavily. Two hours later he regained consciousness.

“How is the bridge?” he asked.

The commander of the Kuban Rifle Regiment brought the General’s icon, which was always carried by his orderly, up to his face. General Markov kissed the icon and said curtly:

“I am dying for you ... as you are for me ... I bless you ...” It was impossible to make out what he was saying.

In a few minutes he was gone.

Meanwhile, the *Kubantsy* had stormed the station and driven the Reds north across the river. The railway bridge was undamaged. General Markov’s division had fulfilled its task, but at a heavy price!



On 12 (25) June 1918 General Markov was mortally wounded and died soon afterwards near Shablievka.

Everyone was shocked by his death. Tears flowed uncontrollably from the engineers and artillerymen, and sobs from the Kuban men covering battery, who had loved the general zealously from the first moment they came under his command.

Colonel Tret'akov, who replaced the general, could scarcely muster the strength to direct the battle, which was not yet over. He ordered that the battery should ride rapidly to the station, for the immediate support of the *Kubantsy*. With difficulty it limbered up.

The news of General Markov's death reached the Kuban regiment, which had won a great victory, and spread rapidly through its chains. The riflemen huddled together, losing their will. Anxiety on their faces. Had the enemy gone onto the counter-attack, they would not have held out. Where General Markov had been, there had been victory! Now he was gone ...

An honour guard from the Kuban Rifle Regiment and the Engineer Company stood by the body of the deceased. On it lay a black flag with a white St Andrew's Cross, the flag of the first commander of the Officer Regiment. In the dim flicker of lamp and candles, quiet steps entered and left the room where the leader lay – companions making prayers for the eternal repose of the soul of the deceased.

And outside the walls of the house there were soldiers with heavy thoughts. Listlessly, with deep sighs, they discussed him with great emotion, about their experiences and about their anxieties.

Neither Kornilov nor Markov were present any longer.

Why in this bloody struggle, when there was such a need for strong, authoritative and intelligent people of strong will who set an example of love for the Motherland, did evil fate tear them out of the ranks of the Army?

"My heart sank... There was no despondency, there was no despair, but there was a kind of emptiness. Revenge, revenge! To the many accounts to pay was added another one – a huge one. General Markov did not deserve such a death."

"Our lives have been extended so that we can continue to fulfil our duty to the Motherland, as General Markov and those who have died in battle showed us ..."

The next day, 13 (26) June, the coffin with the general's body was carried to Shablievka Station, loaded into a wagon and sent to Torgovaya Station, which the army had taken the day before. The riflemen, artillerymen and sappers saluted him for the last time. Their rifles trembled in their hands, tears poured from their eyes. A honour guard from the Engineer Company accompanied the coffin.

By 19:00 on 13 (26) June, troops lined up on the street leading from Torgovaya Station to the centre of Vorontsovskoe.¹⁹ At dusk a sad procession moved from the station. Markov's black flag with cross swayed smoothly above the coffin.

They held a service and bade farewell to General Markov, who everyone loved, in the village church.

The army's head priest, with his last words, urged us to take an oath to fulfil our duty to the end. And people took that oath was taken mentally.

A Kuban resident wrote in the newspaper *Free Cossack*

At that moment each of us felt, more vividly than ever, the righteousness work done by the army and left General Markov's coffin with full confidence that the army's work would be completed.

Is it possible to describe the suffering that General Denikin felt when he learnt of General Markov's death and then had to bid him farewell? What self-control must he have had – as the leader of a small army, just

¹⁹ Modern Sal'sk, along the southern bank of the river.



starting a new campaign and then suffering an immeasurable loss on the first day – not to lose heart and give in to despondency?

After the funeral I withdrew to a corner of the dark church, away from the other people, and gave myself up to my grief. Gone, gone, one by one, and the journey was still so long, so hard ...

On that day, 13 (26) June, General Denikin gave the following order to the army:

§1.

The Russian army has suffered a heavy loss: General S. L. Markov fell mortally wounded during the capture of Shablievka station on 12 June.

He was a knight; a hero; a patriot; with a fierce heart and a rebellious soul. He burned with love for the Motherland and served in battle only for it.

Our iron riflemen honour his exploits at Tvorilnya, Zhuravin, Borynia, Peremyshl, Lutsk, Czartoryisk²⁰ ... The Volunteer Army will never forget its favourite general, who led its units into battle in the Ice Campaign, at Ekaterinodar, at Medvedovskaya ...

Enemy bullets spared him in continuous battles in two campaigns. Blind fate willed that the great Russian patriot would fall to a fratricidal Russian hand.

Eternal memory and glory to the fallen!

§2.

To perpetuate the memory of the first commander of the 1st Officer Regiment, that unit shall henceforth be known as the “1st Officer General Markov Regiment”.

The coffin with the body of General Markov was sent at night for burial to the city of Novochoerkassk, where it arrived on 14 (27) June.

The news of General Markov’s death was received by the 1st Officer Regiment in Novochoerkassk during the morning of 13 (26) June. It shocked everyone. A first memorial service was held.

Only a few days previously General Markov had been there: the centre of all conversations, arousing the desire and hopes of all, and especially the “young”, to go into battle under his leadership, to be worthy subordinates, to be able to fight “in the Markov way”.

Now there was a deep and silent sadness.

In the evening the regiment was drawn up. The commander, Colonel Timanovskiy, read General Denikin’s order and then said that from then on every rank of the regiment would bear the name of its first commander. General Markov would not be with them, but he would live in the hearts of all and lead and guide invisibly. They would perpetuate his memory with their sacrificial love for the Motherland, unshakable spirit, by their deeds, following the example which he had set. The ranks of the regiment in his name would do their duty with full faith that Russia would again be Great, United and Indivisible. And at the end of his words he added that to strengthen their spiritual connection with the Leader, the regimental holiday was to be established on his patron saint’s day – 25 September (8 October) – the day dedicated to St. Sergius of Radonezh.

The volunteers felt better somehow.

In the morning of 14 (27) June the coffin with General Markov’s body, along with several other coffins, were brought to Novochoerkassk and placed in the Host Cathedral, and then it was transferred to the house church at the Diocesan School.

²⁰ WWI battles.



Everyone in the town learned about this and went to worship the body of the murdered general, who everyone had known. Colonel Birkin recorded:

I went immediately, almost at a run, to the cathedral. I approached the chancel and saw several coffins in the left wing. I entered the chancel and immediately stopped at the first coffin, as through the glass embedded in the lid I saw the face of my amazing regimental commander.

I do not remember how long I stood over the coffin.

I had no thoughts, but I could not tear my gaze away from the face of the man I respected more than anyone else and feared more than anyone else.

And after a bow to the great warrior and one more look at the man who feared nothing, I went home.

If only all generals were like him, I thought.

After the death of two great men – General Kornilov and General Markov – there is only one left alive, the third – General Denikin, the deputy of the latter and their equal. What awaits him?

Guards of honour from his regiment began to stand by General Markov's coffin in the church of the Diocesan School. All day long the people stretched out of the church, carrying wreaths. The *Markovtsy* came. The church was always full.

The worshippers who filled the church began to crowd together: General Alekseev had entered. He stood by the coffin, prayed, looked at the face of the dead man, and tears flowed from his eyes. Involuntary tears flowed from everyone there. The old leader said goodbye to the faithful son of the Motherland. He bowed low and left the church.

General Markov's Funeral

On 15 (28) June the coffin with the remains of the great Russian patriot was transferred to the host's Cathedral for the last funeral service. There were a great many wreaths around the coffin; there was a row of black pillows with his awards. In the centre of them was a pillow with his Order of St. George, 4th Class.

In the Cathedral were General Alekseev, the Don Ataman, the highest ranks of the Volunteer and Don Armies as well as General Markov's family: mother, wife, children. The cathedral was full. The 1st Officer General Markov Regiment lined up in the square in front.

The funeral service over with a last farewell, and the coffin was sealed. A squad of officers from the 7th Officer Company approached the coffin and took the orders and wreaths. The procession began to leave the church.

In front they carried a wreath from the Commander of the Volunteer Army, General Denikin, and his Chief of Staff, General Romanovskiy, with an inscription on the ribbon: "In both life and death for the happiness of the Motherland". Behind the wreath were the officers with the orders. In front was the Order of St. George with a sergeant-major of the 7th company, also a Knight of St. George.

The coffin was carried out of the Cathedral by the highest ranks and placed on a gun carriage. The regiment stood to attention. The orchestra played "*Kol Slaven*".²¹

To the sound of funeral marches, the procession stretched along Platovskiy Prospekt, heading for the cemetery outside the city. The regiment followed the coffin.

It was a military cemetery. A long alley, to the right and to the left of which there are rows of fresh graves. And there was the grave dug for him.

There were several volleys from the General Markov Regiment.

²¹ "How Glorious Is Our Lord in Zion", an unofficial national anthem, still often played at military funerals in Russia.



The family of the deceased, General Alekseev and everyone else watched the coffin being lowered into the ground with tears in their eyes.

It was difficult for General Alekseev to turn to face those present and he could not begin to speak his last eulogy immediately. He spoke of the Christ-loving warrior Sergius, who "laid down his life for his friends"; he spoke of a faithful son of the Fatherland, for whom life was not precious, "unless Russia could live in glory and prosperity"; he spoke of the example which the warrior Sergius gave everyone. He spoke with a hoarse, choked, broken voice. But then he looked at the dead man's family and finally, making an effort to raise his voice, he addressed the audience:

"Let us bow to the mother of the deceased, who nurtured and nourished this faithful son of the Motherland." Falling to his knees, he bowed to her, and was followed by all present.

"We also bow to his wife, who shared his life with him and blessed him to serve the Motherland." Again he bowed deeply.

"And let us bow our heads to his children, who have lost their beloved father."

Turning towards the grave, General Alekseev placed the first shovel of earth onto the coffin. Earth fell onto the coffin and covered it. It was a new grave with a modest wooden cross, like all the other graves appearing in the Novocherkassk cemetery. There was no inscription on the cross, just a crown of thorns hanging from it.

Everyone began to disperse. The 1st Officer General Markov Regiment returned to its barracks in a long column of 1,500 bayonets. A new period of life and military service was beginning for them. Without Markov, but in Markov's spirit – for each of them according to the rule of "life and death for the happiness of the Motherland." Life – the whole life, all the years of life. Death will always be a part of life, of all life, be ready to accept it.

"For the happiness of the Motherland!"

From now on General Markov's monogram "M" was put on the black Markov shoulder-boards, and the monogram "G.M." for the 1st company of the regiment – the "General Markov Company".



Participation of the 1st Officer General Markov Regiment in the Second Kuban Campaign

A Brief Political Essay on the Beginning of the 2nd Kuban Campaign, that is, up to July 1918.

Exhausted and physically drained by the 1st Kuban Campaign, which was unprecedented in world history, but retaining faith in their leaders and the noble idea of restoring their defiled homeland, the Volunteer Army had found salvation and well-deserved rest on southern edge of the Don region.

On 30 April (13 May) 1918 the Volunteer Army concentrated in Egorlykская, numbering no more than 2,000 bayonets and sabres and only a few guns in total. The Volunteer Army remained in that area throughout May and June, occasionally making raids in certain directions to achieve an advantageous position or simply to expand the area occupied by the army for its own safety and convenience.

In order to better understand the significance and position of the Volunteer Army by July 1918, we need to go back a little and take a quick look at the events that took place in Russia and elsewhere during the period from the overthrow of the Provisional Government by the Bolsheviks, i.e. 25 October (7 November) 1917 until the Volunteer Army launched its 2nd Kuban Campaign, i.e. the beginning of July 1918.

With the Bolsheviks' seizure of power, the collapse of the old Russian army reached its peak. It became clear not only to the Bolsheviks, but to everyone, that the war had to be ended as soon as possible. On 20 December 1917 (2 January 1918), peace negotiations began in Brest-Litovsk between Soviet Russia on the one hand and the Central Powers on the other. The main players in this spectacle were:

For Germany: State Secretary, von Kühlmann and Chief of Staff of the Eastern Front, General Hoffmann.

For Russia: L. Trotskiy, Ioffe and Mrs Bitsenko.

For Austria-Hungary: Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Czernin.

For the Turks: the Grand Vizier, Talaat Bey.

For Bulgaria: Minister of Justice, Popov.

Quite unexpectedly, the negotiations dragged on until February 1918, even breaking down twice due to the intransigence of the Germans and Bolsheviks. Meanwhile Austria was also on the verge of revolution, mainly due to a terrible food crisis. Its salvation came with the conclusion of peace with Soviet Ukraine on 8 (21) February 1918, which sent a special delegation chaired by Rakovskiy to Brest-Litovsk, despite Trotskiy's opposition. Under that peace treaty Ukraine undertook to supply Germany and Austria-Hungary with huge quantities of food and other products. Soon, 2 (15) March, peace was also concluded with Soviet Russia, which was disfigured beyond recognition. In addition to Ukraine, the entire western part of Russia was sliced off, forming a number of independent "buffer" states under the protectorate of Germany. But signing a peace agreement was easier than implementing it. By this time all of Ukraine, like the rest of Russia, was ablaze with the fires of revolution. It was clear that in order to transport the foodstuffs the Germans needed so badly out of the country, it was first necessary to establish at least relative order in the breadbaskets of Russia.

So we see that, while the Volunteer Army was holding out in the boundless Kuban steppes in March and April 1918, several Austro-German corps were rapidly and boldly moving eastward along the railways of Ukraine, scattered across a huge front, striking terror into the Bolsheviks fleeing before them and restoring order in the occupied territories. As if by magic the old bourgeois order reappeared. A brutal extraction and plundering of products from Ukraine (food, fodder, copper, coal) began at once.

By the time the Volunteer Army gathered in Egorlykская the headquarters of a German corps was already in Rostov-on-Don, having captured it on the third day of Easter, 24 April (7 May) 1918. The cleansing of the Bolsheviks from Ukraine was complete. Almost simultaneously with this, with the obvious connivance of the Germans, a *coup d'état* took place in Ukraine, and we saw Pavlo Skoropadskiy, the Hetman of All Ukraine, taking control of the country, replacing the socialist government.

At about the same time, a government was established in Crimea, independent of Ukraine, headed by General Sulkevich. All the bandits and Bolshevik elements, the organisers of countless brutal "Eremeev



Nights”²² on the Crimean coast, fled in advance to the Caucasus, mainly to Novorossiysk, where the Red Black Sea Fleet also fled to from Crimea.

What is happening during this time (March-June 1918) in the Caucasus, Don and the rest of Russia?

The Caucasus was a boiling cauldron of human passions. A series of numerous phantasmagorical republics arose, often hostile to each other. A string of notable adventurers arose (Avtonomov, Sorokin and others), leading armed gangs, plundering everything and everyone, maintaining only nominal obedience to the central Soviet authorities. Of the north Caucasus republics, the Black Sea-Kuban Republic, headed by the frenzied Poluyan, which controlled the Black Sea, Stavropol' and Kuban provinces, was undoubtedly of paramount importance. The cities, especially Ekaterinodar, and the Cossack population groaned under a bloody Soviet terror. There were no significant organised anti-Soviet forces other than the Volunteer Army. But the Kuban and Terek Cossacks were ready to support anyone who opposed the Bolsheviks.

In April 1918 an uprising of Kuban Cossacks led by Colonel Komyanskiy broke out on the Taman Peninsula, overthrowing Soviet power in the region. Unable to resist the Red Army, the exhausted Cossacks turned to the Germans in Crimea for help, who immediately sent two of their regiments with artillery and firmly secured that rich peninsula, gaining a foothold in the Caucasus and threatening Anapa and Novorossiysk.

The Red Black Sea Fleet, stationed in Novorossiysk, received an ultimatum from the Germans to immediately return to Crimea. That humiliating demand temporarily stirred up something akin to patriotism in the bloodthirsty sailors' souls. Under the influence of Admiral Sablin, then in command of the fleet, our flagship raised the historic St. Andrew's flag instead of the red one, preparing to resist the Germans. But a new German ultimatum was already threatening Moscow, and from there came the order for Admiral Sablin to go to Moscow and for the fleet to go to Crimea and surrender to the mercy of the Germans. In May 1918 a great tragedy took place in Novorossiysk: half of the fleet, led by the dreadnought Volya (the former Emperor Alexander III), sailed to Crimea, while the other half, led by the dreadnought Sovetskaya Rossiya (Empress Catherine II), was sunk in Novorossiysk Bay by revolutionary sailors. It was a terrible sight. About fifteen ships were sunk, their masts long serving as a reminder to the world of the consequences of fratricidal civil war.

These events had a huge impact on the later history of the Volunteer Army. The Germans clearing Novorossiysk of the Red Navy ships made it much easier for the Volunteer Army to capture Novorossiysk and the Black Sea coast in general in August. The other half of the Black Sea Fleet, which fled to Crimea when the Germans left, then fell into the hands of the Volunteer Army. Thanks to that, it retained its naval dominance in the Black Sea until the end of the civil war, giving it incalculable advantages, including the ability to safely evacuate the army from Crimea.

The Don, propagandised by the Bolsheviks, fell before the other Cossack hosts. By early February the Don was in the hands of the Soviet authorities, who marked their victory over the Cossacks with a series of brutal acts of violence, punitive expeditions and executions. Disappointed in the Bolsheviks, who had promised them paradise on earth, the Cossacks rose up in rebellion in the southern part of the Don region in late March (early April) 1918, which ultimately ended in success after initial setbacks. A number of villages – Kagal'nitskaya, Egorlykская, Mechetinskaya and others – overthrew the hated Soviet yoke. Then in May and June the Volunteer Army, which had returned from the 1st Kuban Campaign, found a well-deserved rest in their area.

The uprising grew rapidly thanks to exceptionally favourable conditions. Firstly, the Austro-Germans cleared the entire Ukraine of Bolsheviks and then occupied Rostov on 24 April (7 May) 1918, where they remained, drawing significant Red forces away from the Kuban. Only thanks to this was the Volunteer Army able to rest and replenish its ranks with volunteers from Ukraine and Crimea in May and June. Secondly, Colonel Drozdovskiy's officer detachment arrived in the Don, about 1,500 seasoned soldiers of all branches of the armed forces.

²² The name given to the first great Red Terror in the Crimea in which hundreds, if not thousands, of officers and bourgeois were killed more or less at random.



That detachment left Iasi in Romania on 26 February (11 March) 1918 and fought its way across Ukraine, moving several steps ahead of the Germans. On Holy Saturday, 21 April (4 May), it unsuccessfully attempted to seize Rostov but was forced to retreat to Chaltyr'. On 26 April (9 May) it unexpectedly helped the Don Cossacks, who had risen up under the command of Colonel Denisov and were storming Novochoerkassk, to secure it for themselves. In Novochoerkassk the "*Krug*"²³ for the Salvation of the Don" gathered and elected the well-known General Krasnov as Don Ataman. With the help of the Germans he began a brilliant period for the Don in the civil war. The Don region was rapidly cleared of the Reds. By June their units were already fighting on the north-eastern borders of the region, and in some places even crossed them. The Great Don Army, like Ukraine and Crimea, took on a rather Germanophile hue, receiving weapons and equipment from the Germans in Ukraine. Some of the ammunition was secretly transferred from the Germans to the Volunteer Army, which was in dire need of it.

In the winter of 1917/1918 and spring of 1918, the rest of Russia was in complete anarchy and chaos, with local authorities running rampant. The central Soviet government was a mere shadow, still striving to become the actual ruling body. The most intelligent, practical and energetic of all the people's commissars, Leon Trotsky, understood that in order to retain power, an obedient armed force was needed, more than anything else.

The end of 1917 and the beginning of 1918 were significant in that many well-known Russian generals – much to our shame, mostly from the General Staff, such as Parskiy, Gutor, Klembovskiy, Baltiyskiy, Lebedev – offered their services in creating a regular Red Army and establishing more or less relative order in the territory of the state. Their services were graciously accepted.

On 15 (28) January 1918, a decree on the formation of the Red Army was published. In early 1918, on Trotsky's orders, Latvian punitive expeditions led by Podvoiskiy travelled around the provincial cities of European Russia imposing military inspectorates (district military administrations) headed by former Tsarist generals. The latter energetically set about creating the new Red Army. Former officers were registered and conscripted, forced to serve either by money or threats. Young men who had not yet served were mobilised. Everything is supervised by the Supreme Military Soviet under the supervision of the People's Commissar for Military Affairs, L. Trotsky. The extraordinary energy he showed led to the Red Army having 100,000 soldiers by June 1918, in addition to 25,000 internal security troops (sailors and Latvians) plus 150,000-200,000 soldiers in various improvised Red Guard units. This was to have a huge impact on the entire subsequent history of the civil war.

On 15 (28) June the Czechoslovaks, who were being transported across Siberia to the French front, revolted in Penza. Some time later they contacted the Socialist Revolutionaries and created the so-called Volga Front. The newly formed regular Red Army rushed to the rescue, not only preventing a "White drive on Moscow" from developing, but also pushing the Czechoslovaks and the "People's Army" back across the Volga.

This was the situation in Russia at the beginning of July 1918, i.e. when the Second Kuban Campaign was about to start. Central Russia, with its weak Soviet government, was surrounded on three sides by hostile forces. To the west there was Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, and Belarus. To the south-west and south Ukraine was occupied by Austro-German troops ready to advance and crush the Bolsheviks as soon as it was in their interest to do so. To the south-east several tens of thousands of Don Cossacks were successfully advancing north and east (with the help of German weapons and equipment), clearing their territory of the Reds. In the east there was a new enemy, the Czechoslovaks and the People's Socialist Army, were distracting significant Red forces.

The Caucasus was almost cut off from the central government, but had significant Red forces, numbering many tens of thousands of fighters. The most dangerous of these was Sorokin's army, with over 30,000 soldiers, including a large number of sailors. In the southern part of the Don region, the Volunteer Army had been significantly reinforced and rested. General Denikin's published declaration shows that the army was not pursuing any reactionary goals. Hundreds of ideological officers – honest, valiant, intelligent young

²³ The *krug* was the host parliament, often translated as "circle".



people, eager to fight for the liberation of their homeland from the Red yoke – had flocked to the army from all corners of Ukraine and Crimea.

The arrival of Colonel Drozdovskiy's detachment to the Volunteer Army was also of considerable importance. The Volunteer Army then had up to 8,000 soldiers in its ranks – imbued with faith in their leaders, disciplined, and with over 50% officers. Although small in number, it was formidable in its knowledge of military techniques (which the Bolsheviks lacked), united and inspired by the “great idea” of the rebirth of Russia.

So the position of the Volunteer Army during this period changed from hopeless to extremely advantageous, with broad prospects opening up before it. All that was needed was to choose the right direction for further operations towards Moscow and, in connection with that, decide on its attitude towards Germany. Generals Alekseev and Denikin were offered assistance, through the corps commander in Rostov, on the condition that they recognise the end of the war with Germany.

Realpolitik required our leaders to reach an agreement with the Germans. This would immediately have given the Volunteer Army a brilliant starting position, namely the opportunity to transfer the Volunteer Army to the north and western borders of the Don, in close proximity to Moscow, and head in that direction with the Great Don Army. It is unlikely that the Soviet government, which at that time still had an insignificant Red Army, would have withstood the double pressure: the Volunteer and Don Armies from the south and the Czechoslovaks and the People's Army from the east. In this situation the Volunteer and Don Armies would have had their close rear secured by the Germans in the Ukraine and the Don. If this had happened, the fate of Russia may have been different. Having restored a powerful Russia, it would have been possible to revise the agreement with Germany. Any such agreement with Germany was also aided by the fact that at that time the mood among middle and junior officers was undoubtedly pro-German, as was the case with the entire intelligentsia, which had already endured the horrors of the Red Terror.

But ... the leaders of the Volunteer Army considered it to be a successor to the old Russian army and did not consider it acceptable to alter the old alliance obligations. They were unwilling to make any compromises for the sake of the undoubted benefits of *realpolitik*. They considered it dishonourable to adhere to Bismarck's rule that “there is no place for honesty in [foreign] politics.” So an agreement with the Germans was rejected. The Volunteer Army, and later the Russian Army, remained loyal to their allies until the end, but that loyalty brought us nothing but disappointment.

Where then should the army go? North, that is, to the Don and Moscow, or south, to the Kuban? Reason dictated a move north to the Don so that, in spite of the obstacles, it would be closer to the goal of further action – Moscow – before the Bolsheviks had time to firmly establish their power by creating a large regular army. A sense of gratitude called first and foremost to the Kuban, which had become a home to the army. After all, the Kuban had given so many soldiers to the army, who laid down their lives for the liberation of their homeland. So many dear lives rested in eternal sleep in its boundless steppes, and so many dear faces languished in Red captivity in its cities and villages. That feeling prevailed. A second campaign to the Kuban was decided, which, as we know, was crowned with brilliant success – the liberation of the entire North Caucasus and the army's exit, but only after a whole year had passed, on the “Wide Moscow Road”.

These were “Pyrrhic” victories. Step by step, its best leaders, commanders, and ideological volunteers were lost in countless battles, and the moral foundations of the army were destroyed. Conscripted soldiers joined the ranks, among whom there were often many hostile elements. During 1919 the army grew in numbers but weakened in spirit. Most importantly, time was lost. “The loss of time is like an irretrievable death,” said Peter I. The Volunteer Army, rejecting the agreement with the Germans and setting itself a secondary goal (the liberation of the Kuban) instead of the main one (the advance across the Don to Moscow), got bogged down in the struggle in the North Caucasus and lost a whole year. Having begun its offensive on Moscow only in the late spring of 1919, the Volunteer Army encountered not disorganised gangs, but fully organised units of the regular Red Army – which by that time numbered sixteen armies, with a total of about 500,000 soldiers on the battlefield. Despite the weak stability of its units, the Red Army continued to press forward with its mass and dealt a final defeat to the Volunteer Army, which had failed to take advantage of its initial favourable opportunities.



But let us not digress any further and turn now to the 2nd Kuban Campaign itself and, in particular, to the role played in it by the Officer General Markov Regiment.

The Second Kuban Campaign

The history of the 2nd Kuban Campaign is associated with the most glorious pages of many daring deeds by the *Markovtsy*, who not only understood the true legacy of their founder, the brave General Markov, but also demonstrated it in practice.

Here is what the immortal general said when forming the regiment: “It is easy to be honest and brave when you realise that death is better than slavery in a humiliated and insulted Motherland.” Those beautiful words, contained in such a short but powerful phrase, burned in the hearts of the young men, who ached indescribably at the sight of their homeland lying prostrate and, burning with the heat of patriotism, sought to lift up and put on her feet their dear suffering Mother.

Spending May in constant skirmishes with the Reds on the border of the Don Region and Stavropol Province (near Egorlykская), the regiment had only one significant operation during that time: on 9 (22) May the enemy was discovered to be in the area of Zherebtsov and Kornakov hamlets, facing south-west on the edge of the state forest. The units assigned to eliminate it were a detachment of Don Cossacks from Mechetinskaya, the 1st Officer Regiment, the 1st Battalion of the Kuban Rifle Regiment, the Circassian Cavalry Regiment, and one battery. They were to attack the Reds head-on from Mechetinskaya on the morning of 12 (25) May, while the remaining units would strike the enemy’s flank and rear, immediately after the start of the battle while it was in full flow.²⁴

On the night of 11 (24) May, the regiment and its attached units set out on their march and by the morning of 12 (25) May had reached the enemy’s position. They spotted us in time and opened a heavy artillery fire. In view of this, the detachment deployed into battle order and took up its starting positions. The chain formed with the 1st Battalion of the Officer Regiment to the left of the Egorlykская Road up to the Manych River and the battalion of the Kuban Rifle Regiment to their right. The 2nd Battalion of the Officer Regiment was in reserve. Set back on the right flank was the Circassian Regiment. The battery was behind the left flank.

The Don Cossacks did not arrive at the appointed time, so General Markov attacked the enemy’s hills in front of the forest with his own forces at 09:00. After two or three hours of fighting, he threw them out. The Don Cossacks, who had arrived by this time, were ordered to pursue the enemy. The regiment, with the units attached to it, having about 100 men killed and wounded in this battle, returned to Egorlykская, where it remained until 1 (14) June.

On 1 (14) June the regiment, two small battalions (1st Battalion: 1st, 2nd and 5th Companies and 2nd Battalion: 3rd, 4th, and 6th companies) was sent to Novochoerkassk for rest and replenishment, where it arrived two days later. News had spread throughout Russia about the beginning of the struggle against the Bolsheviks mocking the Motherland, attracting the attention of patriotic elements, mainly officers and young students. Reinforcements began to flock from all sides to join the black and white regimental banner, which symbolised sorrow for Russia and faith in its bright resurrection. Cossacks also arrived in groups, having abandoned their homes, which had been turned into ashes by the Bolsheviks.

²⁴ Pavlov wrote of the reorganisation of the regiment in Novochoerkassk, that it deployed into three battalions before its departure on the campaign:

At the time of its arrival in Novochoerkassk, the regiment had five companies with about 500 men. The 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th Companies were to be fully formed – the 6th was to include former Guards officers, and the 7th, 8th and 9th were to become purely officer companies. The plan was to leave the 5th Company as the youngest, i.e. formed from students. The formation of the companies proceeded at a rapid pace, especially the officer companies, which included not only officers, but also officials and doctors. All large arriving groups were assigned to those companies, while smaller groups went to replenish the other companies. Two weeks later the first six companies had about 150 bayonets, and the officer companies had up to 200. The regimental machine-gun *komand* deployed 10, then 15 machine guns (there were also company machine-gun *komands*).



The regiment not only replenished its ranks, but also formed another battalion — the 3rd Battalion, with the 7th, 8th and 9th Companies — and grew into a formidable fighting force. The incredible difficulties in the work, due to the political situation that had developed by that time on the Don, with two opposing trends: one oriented towards the Germans who had occupied Ukraine, the Don, Bataysk and other places, and the other towards remaining loyal to the Allies. Those difficulties only strengthened the regiment's resolve and belief in the righteousness of their cause, without causing any discord within the family.

In the midst of intense work to integrate new recruits, the news of the tragic death of their beloved founder and inspiration, General Markov, who died from wounds sustained during the capture of Shablievka Station on 12 (25) June, struck everyone like a bolt from the blue. The remains of that great knight and patriot were brought to Novochoerkassk, where he was buried on 14 (27) June amid the solemn silence of the entire Markov family. This untimely tragic death of the "God of War," as the young men called him, pierced the hearts of not only the *Markovtsy*, but also of all the Volunteer Army officers. From that moment on the memory of his exploits and his golden words became a guiding star and a sacred covenant. Indignation over this irreplaceable loss grew in the weeping hearts toward the brothers intoxicated by the revolution, whose hands had killed that patriot and general, irreplaceable to the Army and the Fatherland.

By 20 June (3 July) the regiment, with each company having a hundred or more bayonets, was ready and awaiting orders, listening to rumours that the Germans had defeated a Bolshevik landing force near Taganrog, made up of the most revolutionary elements of that period – sailors and Latvians – who had then landed on the shores of the Azov Sea, and were then making their way to the Velikoknyazheskaya – Torgovaya area to relieve the situation of its comrades in that area and join the main forces for further operations.

The regiment was commanded by Colonel Timanovskiy.

His assistant was Colonel Doroshevich.

The battalion commanders were:

1st - Lieutenant Colonel Plokhinskiy;

2nd - General Staff Colonel Khovanskiy;

3rd - Colonel Narkevich.

Finally, on 22 June (5 July) the order was received. In the morning, having assembled at the Mariinskiy Institute building, the regiment marched through the streets of Novochoerkassk to Manychskaya. The heat was unbearable. The tall grass hid us from the enemy on the road across the steppe. And here the sun burned even more painfully, scorching all our skin. An officer horse regiment of 200-300 sabres marched with us. In the evening we reached the Don, crossed to the other side on a steamboat and arrived at Manychskaya, where we settled down for the night, setting up our guards. The regiment was in close proximity to the enemy, who were fighting Cossack militia and General Pokrovskiy's detachment.

The situation on the front required urgent new operations, and so the regiment was deployed. On the same day, at 23:00, the 1st Battalion was sent to be under General Pokrovskiy's disposal at Grachev hamlet.

On 23 June (6 July) that battalion moved to Kagal'nitskaya and by nightfall took up a position three or four kilometres west of it, replacing the Kagal'nitskaya Cossack militia, which was exhausted from the morning's fighting. By nightfall of that day the 2nd and 3rd Battalions also arrived at the village with the regiment HQ and took up quarters awaiting further orders.

In the evening of 24 June (7 July) the regiment received orders that at dawn on the next day it was to attack the enemy, who had surrounded Kagal'nitskaya in a semicircle, and defeat it.

At 03:00 the regiment was already in march positions and arranged: on the right flank, near the railway line, was the officer horse regiment and a mounted *sotnia* from Kagal'nitskaya *stanitsa*; to their left was the 1st Company of the 1st Battalion, then the 2nd Battalion, which crossed the road to Khomutovskaya; then the 3rd Battalion; and on the left flank the Kagal'nitskaya Cossack militia. The 2nd and 5th Companies of the 1st Battalion were in reserve, stepped back behind the right flank of the 2nd Battalion. There were two howitzers at the *stanitsa* mill, which later assisted the regiment by moving into open positions.



The enemy was very persistent and was reinforced overnight by strong reserves. It noticed our movements and opened up a barrage of artillery fire, as well as machine gun and rifle fire. Despite this the regiment did not retreat, but continued to advance, responding to the barrage with a rousing song: "March forward! Russia is waiting! *Markovtsy*, our brothers!" The Kagal'nitskaya *sotnia* overtook the 1st Company and raced past in a charge, but could not withstand the enemy's furious fire and turned back. The regiment advanced energetically, reached the enemy trenches and, despite heavy losses and stubborn resistance from the Reds, defeated them and drove them out in disorder. The most difficult sector was that of the 3rd Battalion, which achieved success due to its military spirit. Having measured its strength against the enemy for the first time, it earned the universal respect of the regiment for this battle.

The Reds retreated in complete disorder to behind Ivanovskaya hamlet, and the regiment stopped at that line, in accordance with an order that arrived. Our trophies consisted of one gun and eleven machine guns. The battle near Kagal'nitskaya was one of the heaviest and bloodiest battles with Sorokin's elite Bolshevik units. At nightfall the regiment was relieved by the Don Cossacks and withdrew to Kagal'nitskaya. The regiment's losses in this battle were very heavy: 31 dead, including the commander of the 8th Company, Colonel Popov, and about 280 wounded.

On 26 June (9 July) the regiment moved to Egorlyskaya, where it spent the night.

On 27 June (10 July) the regiment moved to Gor'kaya Balka in Stavropol' Province.

On 28 June (11 July) General Denikin arrived at the regiment, held a parade and warmly thanked the regiment for its brilliant victory, particularly emphasising the attack by the 3rd Battalion.

On 29 June (12 July) the regiment remained in place. Then on the night of the next day moved by cart to Kalnibolotskaya to clear it of the enemy. At dawn the regiment approached the village. The 2nd Battalion was assigned to carry out the task, deployed into battle formation three to four kilometres short of the village, and moved forward. After a short skirmish the enemy began to leave the village. This operation was assisted by General Erdeli's cavalry, who broke into the village from the north as the battle began. The enemy hastily retreated to Tikhoretskaya. The units took quarter in the houses, posting the 1st Battalion on guard facing Tikhoretskaya. In the evening the 1st Kuban Rifle Regiment arrived at the village.

At midnight on 30 June (13 July), having gathered at the assembly point, our regiment and the Kuban Rifle Regiment, marched out of Kalnibolotskaya along the road to Nikolaevsky hamlet, with the 1st Markov Battalion in the lead.

At about 05:00 on 1 (14) July our vanguard company cleared the enemy's advanced units out Nikolaevsky, who retreated in the direction of the Tikhoretskaya – Torgovaya rail line. A little later the enemy regained its senses and showed an intention to retake the hamlet, at which point the entire 1st Battalion turned around and moved towards the enemy. The enemy retired, heading in the general direction of the Tikhoretskaya. By noon the *Markovtsy* and the Kuban Rifle Regiment had concentrated in Novoromanovskaya.

At about 14:00 the regiment, with the 1st Battalion in the lead, launched an energetic attack on the village and station of Tikhoretskaya²⁵ – the Bolsheviks' base for the entire Caucasus, thanks to its central location as a rail hub. It was Sorokin's HQ and all the Reds' central institutions were based there, supplying their units with everything they needed. Capturing that strategically important point was a priority, because doing so would not only deal an irreparable blow to the Reds, but also give us access to the huge stores of all the supplies and weapons which we sorely lacked. The Reds took this into account and therefore brought in their best units to defend the *stanitsa*, the "beauty" and "pride" of the Russian Revolution – the sailors – and other highly revolutionary "servants," reinforcing them with large technical resources. Even field fortifications with barbed wire were erected. There is no need to talk about the numerical difference – we could not compete with them in that respect.

The vanguard of the regiment, the 1st Battalion, captured Tikhoretskaya village without resistance from the enemy. This further encouraged the regiment, which was advancing rapidly, although no one

²⁵ Tikhoretskaya village is now called Fastovetskaya, while Tikhoretskaya Station is inside the town now called Tikhoretsk, some eight kilometres away, which presumably was a small settlement at the time.

underestimated the enemy gathered there and did not lose sight of how stubborn the fighting would be for that point.

Upon entering the Tikhoretskaya, the regiment was immediately tasked with taking Tikhoretskaya Station from the northeast, cutting off the enemy's retreat to the north along the railway line.

The 3rd Battalion was assigned to carry out that task, with the 2nd Company of the 1st Battalion attached to it. The 1st and 5th Companies cut the Tikhoretskaya – Novoleushkovskaya line, maintaining contact with the 7th Company and providing support to the north for the entire regiment. The 2nd Battalion remained as regimental reserve. Captain Sperling's battery was with the regiment.

Having taken control of the road between the village and the station, the regiment moved out at 16:00. The Kuban Rifle Regiment led the attack on our left, and to its left was the 3rd Division, along the Torgovaya – Tikhoretskaya railway line. Our movement was detected by the enemy in time and provoked heavy artillery fire, which continued until the end of the battle. The 3rd Battalion advanced energetically, assisted by a company of the 1st Battalion; the enemy's advance guard was overwhelmed by the rapid advance of the 3rd Battalion and retreated behind the barbed wire into the trenches. Twilight fell, and the enemy fired a barrage of rifle fire, supported by heavy artillery. The regiment advanced through tall wheat fields, beginning to lose contact with each other, but despite this and the enemy's stubborn resistance, almost simultaneously with a cry of "ura!" it broke into the Red Army's trenches and drove the stubborn enemy out with bayonets, putting them to flight.

The pursuit in the dark brought us a lot of trouble, because in the turmoil not only was communication disrupted, but everyone was mixed up, and often couriers sent by regiment headquarters to restore communication were mistaken for the enemy and fired upon by their own side. Meanwhile, when the defeated enemy broke through our ranks we would mistake for our units and they would put up stubborn resistance when we neared them, causing losses.

It was only late at night that the regiment headquarters, after great effort, managed to re-establish full communication with its companies, who had captured Tikhoretskaya Station. The captured trophies could not be counted. Our great shortage of weapons and, above all, ammunition was eliminated. Sorokin's army headquarters was also destroyed. The chief of his staff was taken prisoner, but Comrade Sorokin himself, to everyone's regret, slipped through our fingers.

2 (15) July. The regiment rested in Tikhoretskaya. Reinforcements arrived from Novocherkassk.

In the afternoon of 3 (16) July the regiment boarded trains at Tikhoretskaya Station and received a orders to capture Sosyka railway junction.²⁶ Upon reaching Staroleushkovskaya Station, the regiment unloaded and went to spend the night in Novoleushkovskaya.²⁷ A guard of the 2nd battalion was posted facing Sosyka Station.

Late in the evening of 4 (17) July the regiment set off for Sosyka Station on carts.

A heavy thunderstorm delayed their progress, and it was only at dawn on 5 (18) July that the regiment set out for Sosyka Station. Stopping some six or seven kilometres away, the regiment immediately deployed in battle formation, with the 1st Battalion to the left of the railway line, straddling the road between Novoleushkovskaya and Sosyka. To the right of the railway track was the 2nd Battalion. The 3rd Battalion was in the regimental reserve, staggered behind the first battalion. On the right flank was the 1st Officer Cavalry Regiment.

With the support of an armoured train, the regiment moved forward. The 1st Battalion drove the enemy before it, being offered almost no resistance. The 2nd Battalion kept up, despite artillery fire from an enemy armoured train, and pinned the enemy without any effort. Captain Sperling's battery and our battalion

²⁶ Now in Pavlovskaya, 46.125°N, 39.836°E, 40 km to the northwest of Tikhoretskaya Station.

²⁷ The author appears to have swapped the locations of these two villages, as the rail line goes through Novoleushkovskaya, not Staroleushkovskaya. Also the road from Novoleushkovskaya follows the rail line, and so it can only be the one from Staroleushkovskaya that the 1st Battalion reached to in the attack.



forced the Red armoured train to retreat, and by 10:00 the regiment occupied Sosyka and Novopavlovskaya village,²⁸ posting sentries from the 3rd Battalion facing towards Krylovskaya and Ekaterinovskaya.²⁹

The Kuban Rifle Regiment had advanced to the left of our regiment, along the Staroleushkovskaya – Novopavlovskaya road.³⁰ That regiment spent the night in Novopavlovskaya. The village was shelled all night by artillery fire from the Red armoured train.

On 6 (19) July the regiment received orders to capture Krylovskaya and Ekaterinovskaya. The regiment was accompanied by the 1st Officer Horse Regiment and Captain Sperling's battery. The 2nd Battalion was assigned to capture Krylovskaya and the 1st Battalion was assigned to capture Ekaterinovskaya. The 3rd Battalion and the 1st Officer Horse Regiment were in reserve. Early in the morning of that day the regiment left to carry out its mission. The 2nd Battalion marched along the railway line and to its left, heading for Krylovskaya, while the 1st Battalion marched to the right of the railway line towards Ekaterinovskaya. The 3rd Battalion moved along the railway track to its right, followed by the 1st Officer Cavalry Regiment. After marching five or six kilometres, the 2nd Battalion came under enemy artillery fire and deployed into battle formation. After advancing another two kilometres, the battalion encountered enemy infantry units and engaged them in battle. The 1st Battalion, veering to the right along the road to Ekaterinovskaya, after advancing only six or seven kilometres from its starting point, also encountered enemy infantry and immediately launched an energetic attack.

The 2nd Battalion launched a strong attack, and although the stubborn enemy put up a fierce resistance it was overcome with great bravery. The enemy was defeated, and by 16:00 Krylovskaya was occupied. The 1st Battalion, having fought its way for five kilometres, encountered desperate resistance from the enemy and had to halt its advance, engaging in fierce combat with the enemy. The valiant Captain Sperling inflicted enormous damage on the enemy with his battery's fire, but was unable to defeat it. The *General Markov* armoured car, attached to the regiment, provided energetic assistance.³¹ Advancing towards the enemy lines, it inflicted heavy losses and each time forced the enemy's left flank to retreat. Taking advantage of this our right flank advanced, while the rest remained in where they were.

The 2nd Battalion, having occupied Krylovskaya, posted sentries facing Kislyakovskaya and Ekaterinovskaya. The officer horse regiment was redeployed to our right flank. By the time it arrived, the enemy's left flank was retreating. The 1st Company immediately went onto the attack, and at the same time the cavalry's 1st Squadron launched an attack. The enemy stopped its retirement and met the squadron with concentrated machine-gun fire and rifle volleys. The squadron could not take it and turned back, stumbling upon the 1st Company in a quarry, passing through and disrupting it. The Reds took advantage of this and went onto the attack themselves. The 1st Company was pursued by the enemy as it retreated. The other units, although successfully repelling the enemy facing them, could have been compromised by this, as the emboldened enemy sought to occupy the breach that had formed. At this difficult moment the 3rd Battalion arrived and two of its companies (the 7th and 8th) took up positions to the right of the road and engaged in battle, delaying the exceptionally active enemy.

This did not stop the Reds, so the reserve 9th Company was brought into the battle. After deploying it launched a swift counter-attack, dragging the withdrawing 1st Company along with it. The enemy was thrown back, and all the companies halted at their previous positions. The onset of night forced the battle to end without changing positions.

By dawn the 1st and 3rd Battalions had withdrawn and positioned themselves along a country road, with outposts facing Ekaterinovskaya. The 2nd Battalion remained at Krylovskaya. There the regiment once again

²⁸ I think this must just be modern Pavlovskaya, which was a couple of kilometres NW of Sosyka Station at the time.

²⁹ Confusingly, this Ekaterinovskaya is modern Krylovskaya (46.3°N, 39.97°E) and so the reference to Krylovskaya is the railways station in modern Oktyabr'skaya (46.28°N, 39.81°E).

³⁰ According to Pavlov, 87 officers were incorporated into the regiment, in the 8th Company.

³¹ This car was captured from the Bolsheviks by Kuban Cossacks at Novopokrovskaya on 25 June (8 July) and originally called the Black Raven. On 24 July (6 August) it was damaged in battle and blown up by the crew.



encountered the enemy's best units which, after a day of fierce fighting, hastily cleared the village of Ekaterinovskaya during the night.³²

At dawn on 7 (20) July, the regiment received orders to capture the station and village of Kislyakovskaya.³³ Late in the evening the regiment set out on carts to carry out the task.³⁴

Early on 8 (21) July the regiment left the carts some seven or eight kilometres from the *stanitsa* and proceeded in march order along a country road four or five kilometres to the right of the railway line. After covering some distance, the scouts discovered advanced enemy infantry units in independent farms. The 1st Battalion was tasked with clearing the enemy from the farms, which it accomplished without much difficulty. At the same time, a fierce battle broke out to the left of the railway line between the Reds and the Kuban Rifle Regiment, which was attacking the enemy's flank. The 2nd Battalion was assigned to support the *Kubantsy*. It crossed the railway line, turned left and launched an attack along a track towards the village of Kislyakovskaya. By the time the 1st Battalion arrived, the *stanitsa* had been cleared. The 2nd Battalion launched a vigorous attack on the station, driving the Reds out and pursuing them, together with the *Kubantsy*, northwards for three kilometres. There they dug in, cutting the railway line.

After being driven back from the station the enemy, supported by strong reserves, threw its entire weight against the 2nd Battalion. That battalion, exhausted by the fierce fighting and pursuit of the enemy, could not withstand the Reds' rapid advance and began to retreat. The 4th Company was the first to retire, followed by the 6th. Only the 3rd Company, inspired by its commander, charged at the Reds, drawing the 4th and 6th Companies with it. Despite this, the battalion's situation remained dire, and the 3rd Battalion was sent to the front and the 1st Battalion to the flank to support it.

It was only due to the exceptional energy of the commander of the 2nd Battalion, Colonel Khovanskiy, that the 2nd Battalion charged the enemy a second time, repelling it and forcing it to retreat to its starting position. The 1st and 3rd Battalions did not take part in this.

The Kuban Rifle Regiment, after its unsuccessful attack on the Red positions, was counter-attached by the enemy, supported by its reserves, which began to push the *Kubantsy* towards the village. This threatened the flank of the 2nd Markov Battalion. The 3rd Markov Battalion was brought into action, which charged the Reds energetically, defeating them and driving them back in disorder. The retreating *Kubantsy* returned to the attack and, joining the 3rd Battalion, jointly pursued the enemy.

The Reds received powerful support from their armoured train, which bombarded our route with shells. Our artillery, small in number but excellent in quality, hit the Reds' armoured train with its accurate shooting. A carriage full of shells blew up, destroying the entire armoured train – the last of those surviving on that line. The destruction of the armoured train stunned the Reds, who had already been thrown back by our counter-attacks, and they began a disorderly retreat all along the line. In the evening, the regiment entered Kislyakovskaya and settled there to rest, remaining until 10 (23) July.

On 10 (23) July the regiment was tasked with capturing Kushchevskaya Station,³⁵ towards which it marched later that evening. A huge glow was visible above the village.

By dawn of 11 (24) July the regiment had reached Kushchevka Station. Reconnaissance units determined that the enemy had left there during the night and had headed west. The regiment entered the village and took up quarters.³⁶ There they met Don Cossack units, which had arrived almost simultaneously from Kagal'nitskaya.

³² Pavlov writes about the regiment's losses on 6 (16) July: "The losses ... over the whole day of 6 (16) July were enormous, especially for the 3rd Battalion. The 7th and 9th Companies lost about 50 men each, the 8th about 100, i.e. half of its strength. The 4th Company also suffered heavily, losing 48 men. In total, the regiment lost around 350 men."

³³ The station is modern Kislyakovka, 46.39°N, 39.60°E.

³⁴ According to Pavlov, the regiment's losses amounted to 100 men.

³⁵ Now in the village of Kushchevskaya at 46.55°N, 39.61°E, but at the time a couple of km SW of it.

³⁶ Writing about the state of the regiment when it occupied the Kushchevka, Pavlov says: "In the seven days from Tikhoretskaya they covered only 80 km <...> However, during this period, the *Markovtsy* suffered heavy losses:



Early in the morning of 12 (25) July, following orders received, the regiment loaded onto trains at Kushchevka Station and hurried to Platnirovskaya Station.³⁷ It arrived there in the evening and remained until 13 (26) July, without unloading.

On the night of 14 (27) July, the regiment was transferred to Plastunovskaya, a few kilometres to the west of the station of that name. At 12:00 the regiment moved out in march order, with the 1st Battalion in the vanguard, towards Dinskaya. After marching four or five kilometres, the vanguard discovered an enemy cavalry group in the area of the Devichy Monastery, on the road to Vasyurinskaya,³⁸ and launched an attack. After a short skirmish, the enemy group scattered, and the battalion received new orders: move to Vasyurinskaya and capture the crossing over the Kuban River. The 2nd Battalion, having passed Devichy Monastery, stopped two to three kilometres away. Having posted guards, it also spent the night at the station and village of Dinskaya.

Surprising everyone, on 15 (28) July information was received that the enemy had occupied Korenovsk,³⁹ deep in our rear. Units of the 1st and 3rd Divisions were sent to eliminate the Reds in that area. At 19:00 the 2nd Markov Battalion was sent by train to Plastunovskaya station, where it arrived at night and was immediately unloaded. At 18:00 [the 1st Battalion] was withdrawn from the Vasyurinskaya crossing, together with the battery, and by the same order sent at night to Plastunovskaya station, where it unloaded. The 3rd Battalion remained in Dinskaya, covering the rear of the regiment and observing the Vasyurinskaya crossing and towards Ekaterinodar.⁴⁰

Immediately after disembarking on 16 (29) July the 2nd Battalion moved towards Korenovsk and at dawn attacked the enemy, who were positioned three to four kilometres south-west of the village. The companies advanced with the 6th along the railway line, the 4th to the left of the line, and the 3rd to the right. The attack was initially successful, and the enemy, pushed out of their positions, began to retreat towards the village. While we were pursuing the retreating enemy, several hundred Red cavalymen suddenly appeared on our right flank, attacking the 3rd Company's flank and spreading out behind the entire 2nd Battalion. The retreating Red infantry, noticing the decisive attack by their cavalry, recovered and in turn launched a counter-attack to the front. The tenacious 3rd Company repelled the cavalry attack and the battalion, attacked by a vastly larger enemy force from the front and suffering heavy losses, slowly retreated along the railway line and stopped at the railway bridge near Plastunovskaya station. By this time, the 1st Battalion had arrived and taken up a position to the right of the railway line, leaving the 1st Company in reserve on the right flank. The enemy, met with concentrated fire, stopped and regrouped. It then launched several attacks but was unsuccessful each time, suffering heavy losses from rifle and machine-gun fire.⁴¹

An attack on the entire enemy group in this area by units of the 1st and 3rd Divisions was scheduled for the night but, due to the regrouping not being fully completed, it was postponed. At dawn on 17 (30) July heavy

around 500 men, i.e. about 35% of their strength. Reinforcements were needed, and the regiment received about 500 men. The reinforcements consisted entirely of Kuban Cossacks. The Cossacks were incorporated into all the companies, even the purely officer companies (the 7th and 9th), forming a fourth, "Cossack" platoon in them. Now the General Markov Regiment was almost two-thirds Kuban Cossacks."

³⁷ 45.38°N, 39.41°E.

³⁸ 45.12°N, 39.42°E.

³⁹ 45.46°N, 39.47°E.

⁴⁰ Pavlov gives the following deployment for the regiment: "... the 3rd battalion, as the strongest in terms of officers, was to replace the 1st and 2nd Battalions in their positions. The latter, with one gun, was to immediately board the train. <...> The regiment commander [Timanovskiy] and the division commander [Kasanovich] left with them. A detachment under the command of Colonel Doroshevich remained in Dinskaya: a battalion of *Markovtsy* with two guns and the 2nd Officer Horse Regiment.

⁴¹ Describing the regiment's losses, Pavlov writes: "The physical condition of the *Markovtsy* was extremely bad. It had been a day of battle under the scorching sun, without water or food. Their morale was also very low thanks to their unsuccessful attacks; the dozens of wounded left on the battlefield, now occupied by the enemy; being cut off to the rear; an anxiety about the fate of the hundreds of wounded soldiers; and finally, concerns about their own fate. And to top it all off, their ranks had been severely depleted: in one day, the two battalions had lost about 300 men, i.e. almost a third of the total strength."



fighting broke out far to the left, which apparently came as a complete surprise to the enemy. The shooting became louder and louder. Then the enemy rose and attacked, generally directing themselves towards our right flank. The 1st Battalion, which was very low on numbers, met the enemy with accurate fire from its rifles and machine guns. Our artillery bombarded the enemy's movements. Suffering heavy losses, the enemy threw all its forces at our right flank, occupied by the 5th Company, broke into the trenches and drove out the remnants of the company with a sudden attack.

Then, ignoring the rest of our sector, the enemy moved in complete disorder in a south-easterly direction towards Razdorskaya, pursued by our concentrated fire. A half-company of the 1st Company, sent from the reserve, was unable to accomplish its task, because the enemy's disorderly retreat had by now turned into a rout. As it later turned out, the enemy had been dealt a crushing blow on the left by units of the 3rd Infantry Division and the Kuban Rifle Regiment.

The fighting on 16 and 17 (29 and 30) July cost the regiment enormous losses. The commander of the 1st Battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel Plokhinskiy, the commander of the 4th Company, Captain Dudarev, and the commander of the 3rd Company, Staff-Captain Voznesenskiy, all died brave deaths. Colonel Khovanskiy, commander of the 2nd Battalion, was seriously wounded and later died from his injuries.

At the end of the battle, the regiment moved to Korenovsk, where it remained until evening. At night, it boarded trains and arrived at Beysug Station on the morning of 18 July.

After unloading, the regiment moved to Novodevitskaya, where it settled down to rest, with guards posted towards Berezanskaya.

Upon receiving orders on 19 July (1 August), the regiment moved in the direction of Zhuravskiy hamlet.⁴² On the way information was received that the enemy had occupied Zhuravskiy and Malevannyy hamlets⁴³ and Korenovsk with large forces. Our scouts found advance enemy units at Vyselki station. The 2nd Battalion and 1st Company of the 2nd Battalion⁴⁴ were sent into battle, while the 2nd and 5th Companies remained in reserve. The battle continued until evening without any positive results, and both sides remained in their positions.⁴⁵

That battalion remained stationary from 15 to 18 (28 to 31) July. It formed the 10th Company from Kuban Cossacks, which was already on guard duty at the Larisa railway junction area⁴⁶ by 16 July. At 16:00 on 18 July the enemy began shelling the guard posts and our entire position from the direction of Ekaterinodar. A little later artillery fire also began from the west, at the Larisa railway junction, and at about 18:00 dense enemy chains appeared, intending to strike us in the flank. The battalion, mindful of the enemy's enormous superiority in strength, began a fighting retreat northward along the railway line. On the way it received orders to leave the Dinskaya area and join the regiment, operating in the Vyselki station area. The battalion safely boarded a train at Plotnikovskaya and arrived at Kozyr'ki,⁴⁷ where it unloaded under enemy artillery fire. It had joined the regiment by nightfall and was assigned to the regimental reserve.

Having received reinforcements of conscripts and Kuban Cossacks in the evening, in the morning of 20 July (2 August) the regiment resumed combat with the enemy, which lasted continuously throughout the day. In the evening the regiment attacked the enemy, but the first attack was repelled. We repeated the attack four more times, but with no success. Finally, the sixth attack was led personally by the valiant regimental commander, Colonel Timanovskiy. While suffering heavy losses, the regiment reached the enemy's positions and routed the Reds, who retreated in disorder to Zhuravskiy. Twilight prevented further pursuit and the regiment halted.

⁴² From the later positioning, this is Zhuravskaya, 45.58°N, 39.55°E, not modern Zhuravskii (45.59°N, 39.35°E).

⁴³ From the later positioning, this is Kazachi Malevannyy, 45.53°N, 39.55°E, rather than Malevannyy (45.53°N, 39.46°)

⁴⁴ Presumably this was actually the 1st Company of the 1st Battalion.

⁴⁵ Pavlov estimates the regiment's losses during two days of fighting at Korenovsk at 500 men. Captain Dudarev is mentioned as a battalion commander (apparently the 1st), and Colonel Khovanskiy died in his account on 24 July.

⁴⁶ Also known as Loris, 45.09°N, 39.115°E.

⁴⁷ No longer a station, but it was at 45.56°N, 39.61°E, a couple of kilometres south of Kazachi Malevannyy.



Exhausted by the fierce battle, the enemy was passive on 21 July (3 August). In the evening, the 1st and 2nd Battalions were replaced by the 3rd Battalion and the 5th Plastun Battalion. The 1st and 2nd Battalions withdrew to the regimental reserve at Vyselki. Colonel Bleysh took command of the 1st Battalion, replacing the wounded Colonel Sokolov.

On 22 and 23 July (4 and 5 August), there were no changes in the combat situation. The 1st and 2nd Battalions, in reserve, were replenished with conscripted Cossacks, while the 5th Company was transferred to the 2nd Battalion, and the 3rd to the 1st Battalion. On the night of 24 July (6 August), the 3rd Battalion, which was holding the position, joined the regiment.⁴⁸

In the morning of 24 July (6 August) the entire regiment marched to Malevanny, located on both sides of the railway south of Vyselki. Some of the farms, namely those to the left of the railway, were occupied by the 1st Officer Horse Regiment, while the Reds were to the right of the railway. The *Markovtsy* replaced the cavalry regiment, taking up positions parallel to the railway line: the 1st and 3rd Battalions were in the line, with the 2nd Battalion in reserve. At 12:00 the order was given to attack the enemy, who occupied a dominant position. The advance was met with heavy fire, and only the 9th Company reached the Red trenches and moved in with bayonets; the other companies lying down before getting to bayonet range. The 9th Company came under heavy flanking fire and suffered major losses, with the company commander, Captain Zubov, falling in battle. The enemy, wishing to repel the advancing companies, launched several counter-attacks, but each time returned to the trenches after taking heavy losses.

In the morning of 25 July (7 August), without any pressure from our side, the Reds began a hasty retreat to the west. The regiment raced to pursue them, but failed to catch up. Chains of the 3rd Infantry Division appeared to the left of the regiment, striking the enemy in the flank and rear, causing the entire group to flee in panic. In the evening the entire regiment concentrated at Malevanny. In these battles a new element was discovered in the ranks of the Reds – the Chinese. When taken prisoner and asked “why are you fighting?”, replied: “For the beautiful Kuban”.

In the evening of 26 July (8 August) the regiment marched from Malevanny to Kozyr'ki railway station, where it boarded a train and went to Vyselki Station, becoming an army reserve. It remained in the trains there for two days.

At night on 28 July (10 August) the regiment was transferred to Korenovsk station, where it unloaded and left for Stanichnaya, where it settled into quarters.⁴⁹

Upon receiving orders, the regiment loaded onto trains at Korenovsk station on 1 (14) August and left for its designated destination of Dinskaya, where it arrived at noon.

By noon on 2 (15) August the regiment had moved to Larisa Station. Here the *Markovtsy* disembarked and, with the 1st Battalion in the lead, moved towards the city of Ekaterinodar, reaching its suburb of Sady by nightfall. The regiment's task was to capture Ekaterinodar up to the Black Sea railway station.

At dawn of the next day the regiment continued to carry out its mission. The 1st Battalion, assigned to capture the station, reached that point with reconnaissance units and established that on the night of 3 (16) August, Ekaterinodar had already been occupied by units of the Volunteer Army. The regiment then moved towards Ekaterinodar and by 09:00 entered the city from the Pashkov side,⁵⁰ enthusiastically welcomed by the population. In the morning the regiment entered the city and settled in quarters: the 1st and 2nd

⁴⁸ Referring to the 3rd Battalion, Pavlov says: “Colonel Doroshevich's detachment, left behind in Dinskaya, spent 16 and 17 (29 and 30) July in minor skirmishes with the Reds, but on 18 (31) July, the enemy attacked. The battle lasted all day. The 3rd Battalion fought back with counter-attacks and took prisoners, but in the end was forced to retreat across the Kochety River.”

⁴⁹ Summing up the battles of the previous twelve days, Pavlov estimated the regiment's total losses at 800 men (out of action). The losses were partially replenished: “...by reinforcements – two groups of volunteers. One of them, from the city of Ekaterinoslav, consisting of 100 officers, was designated as the 3rd Company of the regiment, with the remaining members transferred to the 1st and 2nd Companies. <...> The other group of 60 officers was distributed among the 7th and 9th Companies.”

⁵⁰ The east.



Battalions in the Real School, the 3rd Battalion in the Girls' Gymnasium, and the regimental headquarters and command in private houses.⁵¹

With the occupation of the city, the General Markov Infantry Regiment, together with an independent cavalry *sotnia* from the 1st Division and the 2nd Battery, was assigned to the army reserve, at the personal disposal of the commander of the Volunteer Army, General Denikin. It formed the garrison of Ekaterinodar, performing guard and patrol duties.

Throughout its stay until 12 (25) September, the regiment conducted drill and tactical training and, gradually replenished its ranks with officers and Kuban Cossacks, expanding to a twelve-company formation. Each company had four infantry platoons and one machine-gun platoon. The 4th Company was transferred to the 1st Battalion, and thus the numbering of the companies corresponded to the numbering of the battalions.

The commander of the 1st Battalion – Colonel Bleysh;

1st Company – Colonel Polyakov;

2nd Company – Lieutenant Colonel Gartier;

3rd Company – Colonel Volnyanskiy;

4th Company – Captain Savel'ev.

Commander of the 2nd Battalion – Colonel Trusov;

5th Company – Colonel Krestov;

6th Company – Captain Kobzelevskiy;

7th Company – Lieutenant Colonel Naumov;

8th Company – Lieutenant Colonel Engel'gardt.

Commander of the 3rd Battalion – Colonel Narkevich;

9th Company – Colonel Bulatkin;

10th Company – Captain Senkevich;

11th Company – Colonel Kleyn;

12th Company – Colonel Kochkin.

Regiment Commander – Colonel Timanovskiy. His assistant – Colonel Doroshevich. Regimental adjutant – Staff-Captain Obratsov.

On 9 (22) August the former officers of the Guard were selected from the regiment and together with a reinforcement company (commanded by Ponamarev) made up of captured Red Army soldiers, which arrived on the same day, were assigned to form the 4th Battalion. That later became the Composite Guards Regiment, commanded by former guardsman Colonel Doroshevich.⁵²

⁵¹ The Real School is a type of high school, presumably for boys, since the Girls' Gymnasium was also a high school.

⁵² Pavlov writes about the reorganisation of the regiment: "From the very first days of its stay in Ekaterinodar the General Markov Regiment underwent major changes, both in terms of its composition and organisation. Significant groups of officers were detached from it to form new units. 1) Former Guards officers went to the 4th Battalion, which later became the Composite Guards Regiment, commanded by Colonel Doroshevich, former assistant commander of the Officer Regiment. 2) Former Grenadiers went to the Guards unit. 3) Sailors went to the armoured trains or the navy, which was to be revived with the army's advance to the shores of the Azov and Black Seas. 4) Some officers were assigned to the newly formed Kuban Plastun battalions, due to a shortage of officers among the Cossacks. 5) About a hundred new recruits were sent to form a special company at the Army Commander's Headquarters, to guard it and carry out honorary guard duties – this company received the same uniform as the General Markov Regiment, but with orange piping and stripes on the shoulder-boards instead of white (black and orange are the colours of the St. George Ribbon). Finally, 6) Those of Polish origin who wished to do so were assigned to the Polish detachment. (The revival of a free Poland had been declared at the beginning of the Great War, and by



On 10 (23) August the entire regiment went to the place of General L. G. Kornilov's death (a dairy farm some three kilometres from the city) for a memorial service for the fallen. After the service General Alekseev inspected our regiment, the 1st Kuban Rifle Regiment, the 1st Markov Battery, and the *Tekintsy* of General Kornilov's former escort. Generals Denikin, Romanovskiy, Kasanovich and others were present at the inspection. The 7th Company was left to guard the railway bridge at the Kuban junction. The 8th Company left for Dubinka⁵³ to guard the crossing over the Kuban River.

On 29 August (11 September) the General Markov Company and the 3rd Company, under the command of Colonel Zhigulin, were sent by rail to Ust'-Labinsk Station to join the 2nd Kuban Plastun Battalion (Guard Colonel Moller), which had been moved to Belorechensk Station as a barrier against the Reds' Tuapse Group, which was moving to join Sorokin's main forces, operating in the Armavir area.

On 30 August (12 September) the companies disembarked at Ust'-Labinsk and on the same day moved to Tsarsky Dar,⁵⁴ where they spent the night, establishing contact with Colonel Moller.

On 1 (14) September, the companies took up positions four kilometres north of Belorechensk, with their right flank resting on the Belaya River and the position of the 2nd Plastun Battalion. The day passed quietly, with the Reds taking no action. At about 17:00 on the next day the Reds attacked the plastuns, unexpectedly appearing in front of the 1st and 3rd Companies, and arriving on their flank and rear. The companies opened a heavy fire, but still had to abandon their positions and, with great difficulty, made their way late in the evening to Tsarsky Dar, where they spent the night, posting a detachment to guard Leont'evskoe.

On 3 (16) September General Pokrovskiy, having outflanked the Reds, eliminated them and cleared the Maykop district.

On 4 (17) September, the companies moved by cart to Ladozhskaya,⁵⁵ where they continued to guard in the direction of Maykop and Armavir. On 6 (19) September, the companies boarded a train at Ladozhskaya station and arrived in Ekaterinodar on the same day.

During this operation, the companies lost six men wounded.

On the night of 1/2 (14/15) September the 10th Company was sent to Kavkazskaya to guard the railway crossing over the Kuban River.

On 3 (16) September the 5th Company left to join the 7th Company, and the 6th Company left to join the 8th Company.

On 9 (22) September the 10th Company returned from Kavkazskaya.

the time of the 1917 Revolution, there was already an entire Polish corps within the Russian army. With the defeat of Germany and the restoration of Poland, this detachment left for its homeland.)

In total about 400 men were taken from the regiment. But at the same time it was replenished with volunteers from the southern provinces of Russia, *inogorodni* (non-Cossacks) from the liberated areas of the Kuban and some POWs. In addition, men were constantly returning to the regiment having recovered from wounds. Having entered Ekaterinodar with about 800 bayonets, three weeks later, the regiment reached a strength of over 3,000 bayonets, not counting the officers of various *komands*. The regiment was organised as follows: three battalions, each now four companies – the 7th and 9th Companies remained purely officer units, with 250 men each, while the remaining companies were mixed units, with over 200 bayonets each; the regimental machine-gun *komand* had 12 machine guns, while the companies had machine-gun platoons of two machine guns; the horse *sotnia* had about 100 horsemen; various auxiliary detachments; and the beginnings of a rear area supply train were received.

⁵³ Now a southern suburb of Krasnodar. I think this was at about 45.00N, 38.96E.

⁵⁴ Now one end of Velikovechnoe, 44.91°N, 39.73°E.

⁵⁵ 45.31°N, 39.93°E.



The Armavir Operation

After the capture of Ekaterinodar, the Volunteer Army and Kuban units fought fiercely in the Armavir and Stavropol' area, and in early September the city of Armavir was captured by the 3rd Infantry Division. Red commander Sorokin, fully aware of the importance of that point, decided to retake it at all costs.

On 11 (24) September he launched an attack against the 3rd Division with considerable forces, and already by 12 (25) September fighting was taking place on the outskirts of the city. The Reds managed to surround it, cutting the Armavir – Kavkazskaya railway line to the north and so severing the division's connection with its High Command.

By the night of 12 (25) September, the 3rd Division occupied the outskirts of the city, pressed against the Kuban River, across which there was only one bridge at Fortshtadt. The division commander, Colonel Drozdovski, taking into account the small size of his division, the extreme exhaustion of his men from the fighting, and the numerical superiority of the Reds, left the city on the night of 13 (26) September, retreating to the eastern bank of the Kuban River and Fortshtadt, burning the bridge.

General Denikin launched a new operation to capture Armavir, and to this end the 1st General Markov Officer Regiment was sent there. Late at night the 3rd Battalion was assembled, sent to the railway station, loaded onto a train during the night, and at dawn on 12 (25) August it was moved via Kavkazskaya towards Armavir.

At around 17:00 on 12 (25) September a train carrying the 3rd Battalion, passing the 283rd *verst* mark on the Kavkazskaya – Armavir line, was fired on by Red artillery. It immediately stopped and unloaded. At the moment our train reached that point the Reds were fighting the 5th Kuban Plastun Battalion (*Ulagaevtsy*), which could not withstand the pressure and began to retreat. The Reds, noticing the arrival of reinforcements, weakened their offensive and soon abandoned it altogether.

The Reds withdrew to their positions, and we restored the line with three companies on the 284th *verst* mark, facing Mikhailovskaya, Armavir and Prochnookopskaya. In the evening, the 2nd Battalion, *komands*, and regimental headquarters were hastily loaded onto a train and sent to join the 3rd Battalion. The 1st Battalion remained in Ekaterinodar.

On 13 (26) September the 2nd Battalion arrived at Kubanskaya Station,⁵⁶ unloaded, and at about 07:00 reached the 3rd Battalion. The regiment commander went with the 2nd Battalion. At around 13:00 the regiment took up starting positions and launched an attack on the hills south and to the right of the 283 *verst* mark, with the aim of capturing them. The 3rd Battalion moved along the rail line, with one company to the left of it, two companies to the right, and one company in reserve. The 2nd Battalion was to the right of the 3rd, with two companies assigned to the regimental reserve, positioned behind the regiment's right flank. The attack was extremely vigorous and after brief and weak resistance, we took the hills and the Reds retreated to the north-western and southern outskirts of the city. Our losses were insignificant. The regiment spent the night on the occupied hills, posting guards and sending out scouts to the city.⁵⁷

At about 04:00 or 05:00 on 14 (27) September the 3rd Division approached the 283rd *verst* mark from the Prochnookopskaya direction. A meeting between commanders was held immediately, and in accordance with previously received directives it was decided to attack and take Armavir that day. The attack was scheduled for 06:00. The starting positions were: the 3rd Division was positioned along the Kuban River up to the railway bridge, with the Markov Regiment to the right of the rail line, in the same order as after previous day's battle, and the 4th Kuban Plastun Battalion to the right of the regiment. One company and two battalions were placed between the 2nd Battalion and the scouts.

The offensive began at exactly 06:00. The Reds opened a devastating fire with artillery and machine guns. Advancing became difficult, and it immediately became clear that the 3rd Division had not yet managed to take up its starting position, and the Reds focussed their attacks on it. That division, having struggled to get

⁵⁶ 45.13°N, 40.98°E.

⁵⁷ Pavlov gives the regiment's losses during the battle on 13 (26) September as 250 men in the 2nd Battalion and 100 men in the 3rd Battalion.

itself into order, made an attack but the Reds were already on the alert and repelled it. At about 10:00 the armoured train *Officer* arrived and at 12:00 the battle resumed with renewed vigour, with the 2nd Battalion managing to take the Salomas factory. The scouts approached Armavir-Tuapse railway station⁵⁸ but did not take it.

The attack paused again. It resumed with renewed vigour at around 16:00. The factory changed hands several times, ultimately remaining in Red hands. The Plastuns attacked the Tuapse railway station several times, but also without success, and only the 3rd Battalion occupied the cemetery half a kilometre from the Vladikavkaz railway station⁵⁹ by evening. The battle subsided.

Both sides had taken heavy losses. The commanders of the 6th and 11th Companies, Captain Kobzelevskiy and Colonel Kleyn, were killed. At about 23:00 the Reds, having stoked up a steam engine, put it at full speed and sent it in our direction, hoping to knock out our armoured train. But the Kubanskaya Station, warned in time, took counter-measures, and the locomotive crashed, derailing it.⁶⁰

At dawn (around 05:00) on 15 (28) September the units that had attacked Armavir withdrew to their starting positions. Our regiment took up its former position and began dig trenches.⁶¹

On 16 (29) September the 2nd Battalion was replaced by the 4th Kuban Plastun Battalion, and in the morning it left for Mikhailovskaya. Not making more than eight kilometres, it spent the night in maize fields, behind the 2nd Battalion of the 2nd Officer Rifle Regiment. The 9th Company was transferred to the right flank and placed in reserve with the regiment near some haystacks. General Denikin arrived and, thanking them for their daring attack, said: "To capture Armavir, we must take the village of Mikhailovskaya".

The 2nd Battalion of the 2nd Officer Regiment and some of the Samurskiy Regiment joined the detachment.

The day of 17 (30) September passed quietly. General Baron Wrangel and his cavalry units fought at Kurganova⁶² and captured it. An attack on Staromikhailovskaya⁶³ was scheduled for the next day. The 3rd Battalion continued to stand guard near Armavir, sending the 10th and 11th Companies to the Otrado-Kubanskoe station, where they boarded a train. Their guard duty was taken over by half of the 9th Company, the 12th Company and the 4th Plastun Battalion. The other half of the 9th Company moved to Kubanskaya Station.

In the morning of 18 September (1 October), Colonel Morozov's Guards detachment began an attack on Staromikhailovskaya. According to the dispositions for that day, the battalion of the 2nd Officer Rifle Regiment led the attack on the village on both sides of the field road, with the *Samurtsy* units to the left and the Markov 2nd Battalion to the rear of the 2nd Battalion of the 2nd Officer Regiment, 800 paces away.

Approaching the hills two kilometres northeast of the village, which were occupied by the Reds, the 2nd Officer Regiment battalion divided into two halves and continued the attack, without informing our battalion. Morozov's men found themselves face to face with the Reds and immediately came under deadly machine-gun fire. There was some slight confusion but, thanks to the calmness of the commanding officers, order was quickly restored. The battalion boldly attacked the Reds, inflicting heavy losses on them, pushing them off the hills and back into the village, capturing several machine guns along the way.

However, the Guards were unable to take the village, as the battalion had suffered heavy losses and were not supported by any other units. After occupying the hills, the battalion halted there and repelled the Reds' weak attacks until evening. The fighting had died down in the evening. Our losses were about 100

⁵⁸ 45.00°N, 41.08°E.

⁵⁹ Maps give no such station, but there was one at 45.03°, 41.09°E on old maps which might be it.

⁶⁰ The regiment's losses during the battle on 14 September amounted to about 250 men.

⁶¹ Pavlov notes the arrival of reinforcements of 500 officers, Cossacks and volunteers for the regiment, after which the regiment's companies approached a strength of 200 bayonets.

⁶² I think this should be Kurgannaya, the former name of Kurganinsk.

⁶³ This is modern Mikhailovskaya, 44.99°, 40.60°. Perhaps the old village was swallowed by its expansion and what were two villages are now one.



men killed and wounded. One company buried 13 dead officers. At 23:00 the battalion moved towards Petropavlovskaya, northwest of Staromikhailovskaya.⁶⁴

Late at night, on the orders of the Volunteer Army HQ, the 2nd and 4th Companies of the 1st Battalion under the command of Colonel Gavrilin, plus a Markov artillery section assigned to him under the command of Captain Tishevskiy, were hastily loaded onto a train at the Ekaterinodar and sent to Torgovaya Station.

On 19 September (2 October) the guard duty of the 3rd Battalion was taken over by the regiment's horse *sotnia* and the 4th Plastun Battalion and it was sent to the Otrado-Kubanskoe station, where it was loaded onto a train. At dawn the 2nd Battalion approached Petropavlovskaya and three kilometres northeast of it took up position in a maize field, setting up outposts.

Colonel Gavrilov's detachment (2nd and 4th Companies and artillery section) arrived at Torgovaya at about 15:00 and took up quarters in Vorontsovskoe.

At this time the situation in the North Kuban area was as follows: the left flank of the Volunteer Army (General Stankevich's detachment) was in Medvezh'e⁶⁵ in Stavropol Province, while the right flank of the Don Army was positioned in the village of Manych. There was a gap of almost 100 km between the two armies, with only Captain Rastegaev's horse *divizion* stationed in it, one *sotnia* of which was in the Ivanovka area and the other somewhere north of Novyi Egorlyk. Zhloba's horse group was heading for that gap, and Colonel Gavrilov's detachment was sent to cover Torgovaya station.

The entire 3rd Battalion was concentrated at Otrada-Kubanskoe station by 20 September (3 October), where it rested until 30 September (13 October). The 2nd Battalion continued to remain near Petropavlovskaya.

At 08:00 on 21 September (4 October) the 2nd Battalion boarded carts and, arriving at the Otrado-Kubanskoe Station at around 14:00, boarded a train. The 4th Company (Colonel Gavrilov's detachment) went to the Bolshoy Egorlyk River line to perform guard duty and took up positions in Sandatovskoe⁶⁶ and Egorlytskoe, maintaining contact to the right and left with units of the Don and Volunteer Armies with the help of Captain Rastegaev's *sotnias*. The detachment remained in that area until 7 (20) October, when the 4th Company, under pressure from the Reds, left the river line and withdrew 6-8 kms to the north-west, concentrating at a hamlet and posting sentries towards the river. During the skirmish, two were killed and four wounded. On 9 (22) October the Kornilov Shock Regiment arrived at Torgovaya station, replacing the 2nd and 4th Companies, and at 14:00 on the next day the companies loaded up and left for Armavir.

On the day of the regimental holiday, 25 September (8 October), a prayer service was held. In the evening the holiday was overshadowed by a telegram announcing the death of the beloved head of the Volunteer Army, General Alekseev, for whom a memorial service was held.

Late in the evening of 27 September (10 October) the 1st and 3rd Companies left Ekaterinodar for Armavir.

At about 16:00 on 28 September (11 October) the 1st and 3rd Companies arrived at Kubanskaya station. They settled in at Kubanskaya hamlet, where they remained until 1 (14) October.

At around 08:00-09:00 on 30 September (13 October) the 2nd and 3rd Battalions moved towards Armavir. Five or six kilometres before reaching it, the 3rd Battalion replaced the guards of the horse *sotnia*, and the 2nd Battalion took up position at Baron Shteyngel's estate at "Khutory". In the evening, a reconnaissance mission was sent out from the 3rd Battalion, but it yielded no results.⁶⁷

At 18:00 on 1 (14) October the 2nd Battalion marched on Armavir. Preparations were made for a new attack, scheduled for the next day. The overall situation on the Volunteer Army front on that day was: General Pokrovskiy occupied the Labinskaya – Kostromskaya area with his cavalry units and was supposed to advance towards Nevinnomyssk, defeat the Reds and attack them from the flank and rear. General Baron

⁶⁴ Pavlov estimates the regiment's losses during the battle on 18 September (1 October) at approximately 150 men.

⁶⁵ Now Krasnogvardeyskoe, 45.84°N, 41.51°E.

⁶⁶ Now Sandata.

⁶⁷ Pavlov notes that from 21 to 30 September (4 to 13 October) the regiment was reinforced by 250 men.

Wrangel (1st Cavalry Division) occupied the Staromikhailovskaya – Kurgannaya area and was to attack the Red Army positions, break through them and operate behind the rear of the Armavir group. General Kazanovich's 1st Infantry Division was concentrated in the area of Kubanskaya Station and was to attack the city itself and drive the Reds back across the Kuban River. The Kuban self-defence forces of the villages of Prochnookopskaya and Forshtadt, occupying both of those places, were to stubbornly defend them from the Reds, who were trying to cross to the right bank of the Kuban River.⁶⁸ General Slashchev (Kuban Plastun Brigade) was to observe and defend the right bank of the Kuban River from Ubezhenkaya to Nikolaevskaya. The 3rd Infantry Division (Colonel Drozdovskiy) and the 2nd Infantry Division (General Borovskiy) were to hold back the Red Army's advance on the city of Stavropol', and further to the left, General Ulagay (2nd Kuban Cossack Division) was to support the flank of the 2nd Infantry Division.

By the morning of 2 (15) October the units assigned to attack Armavir had taken up their starting positions in the following order: 1) from the Kuban River to the right was the Ulagay Plastun Battalion; 2) further to the right was our regiment; 3) to the right of our regiment's position were the Composite Guards and Labinsk Cossack Regiments, whose task was to attack the Reds along the Tuapse rail line. In our section: the 6th Company was up to the railway line; the 7th Company was in reserve for that section; several light guns positioned were slightly behind, just over a small hill; to the right of the railway line were the 8th, 5th, 11th and 10th Companies, with the 9th and 12th Companies in reserve, in a staggered formation behind the right flank, with reconnaissance sent out to the same area; and the 1st and 3rd Companies were the regimental reserve by the railway between the 280th and 281st *verst* marks,

According to the orders, the advance of the units was to begin at 10:00 on the appearance of our armoured train *United Russia*. However, as soon as *United Russia* began to approach the chains, a rapid and unexpected advance and heavy fire from the Red armoured train *Proletariat* forced the *United Russia* to retreat slightly before had reached the chains, as has been agreed it would. The start of the attack was delayed. Finally, at about 10:30, *United Russia* reached our chains at full speed, firing heavy artillery at the Reds. The attack began.

The 2nd Battalion, supported by the *United Russia*, launched a swift attack on the Reds. The 6th and 7th Companies, paying no attention to the deadly fire from the *Proletariat*, occupied the machine-gun hill, the factory and the cemetery, reaching the Vladikavkaz railway station, but were forced to halt their advance and take cover in the cemetery because the situation to their right was not favourable.

The Composite Guards Infantry and Labinsk Cossack regiments were outflanked by the Red Taman Cavalry Regiments and were forced to retreat. As a result the 3rd Battalion and 5th and 8th Companies were unable to take the Tuapse railway station. The 6th and 7th Companies, which were in the cemetery area, came under heavy machine gun and rifle fire and were simultaneously attacked by a Red cavalry regiment, but they emerged from this situation with honour, repelling the cavalry with firepower, despite the *Proletariat* several times breaking through to their rear. The *Proletariat* subjected the two companies to a murderous fire from the flank and rear. At the same time, a real catastrophe occurred on the right. The Guards Regiment could not withstand the attack of the Red cavalry, ran away, and many fell into the hands of the Reds.⁶⁹ The commander of the Composite Guards Regiment, the former assistant commander of the 1st Officer General Markov Regiment, the valiant Guards Colonel Doroshevich, fell a brave death fighting off the Reds until his last bullet.

Seeing the difficult situation of the 3rd Battalion, the regiment commander, Colonel Timanovskiy, launched an attack by the horse *sotnia* on the Tuapse railway station at around 15:00, in view of what had happened to the Guards Regiment. But the attack failed, and the *sotnia*, having lost several horsemen, returned.

Almost simultaneously with the horse *sotnia*, the regimental reserve (1st and 3rd Companies) was moved to the right flank of the regiment on the orders of the regiment commander, where it took up a reserve position behind the 3rd Battalion. The 3rd Battalion, having attacked the Reds, was forced to retire after the

⁶⁸ The Kuban flows north at this point, so the right bank is the eastern side.

⁶⁹ The Composite Guards Regiment, which had arrived at Armavir at the beginning of October from Ekaterinodar with about 1,000 men, lost at least half of its strength during the battle on 2 (15) October according to Pavlov, after which it was sent to Ekaterinodar for reformation.



destruction of the Guards Regiment. But that was not easy, as the Reds followed them closely and were ready to launch an attack. The counter-attack was very successful, and by evening the 3rd Battalion had safely returned to its original position. The regiment suffered heavy losses. The commanders of the 5th and 7th Companies, Colonel Krestov and Lieutenant-Colonel Naumov, were seriously wounded. The regiment took up its former positions near Armavir.⁷⁰

Work began on strengthening positions, building dugouts, etc on 3 (16) October. The regiment commander, Colonel Timanovskiy, was appointed commander of the brigade of the 1st Infantry Division, and Major-General Khodakovskiy was appointed regiment commander. Early in the morning the 2nd and 4th Companies, under the command of Colonel Gavrillov, arrived at Kubanskaya station (from the Torgovaya area) and took up reserve positions behind the regiment's right flank.

After the unsuccessful attempt on to capture Armavir, the Volunteer Army units that had directly attacked that section withdrew to their previous positions and adopted a passive, wait-and-see attitude.

The general situation on the Volunteer Army front as of 12 (25) October was that General Wrangel's 1st Cavalry Division was also forced to adopt a wait-and-see position, limiting itself to reconnaissance activities. But the Reds were very active near Stavropol', facing the remnants of the 2nd and 3rd Infantry Divisions, numbering about 500 bayonets and 250-300 sabres. The Reds launched an energetic offensive and captured Stavropol' city, our units finding it very difficult to restrain them, then continued their movement westwards, in the direction of Armavir, and northwest along the rail line. Taking into account the situation that had developed, the High Command decided to take Armavir and defeat that Red group, numbering around 15,000 bayonets and sabres. The attack was scheduled for 13 (26) October.

During the night of 12/13 (25/26) October, a regrouping took place, and by dawn the units had taken up their starting positions. The brief disposition were: 1) the 1st Kuban Rifle Regiment, positioned to the right of the Tuapse rail line, attacked the Reds in the direction of the railway; 2) the 1st General Markov Officer Regiment, with its left flank against the Vladikavkaz railway line, attacked the Reds occupying the Tuapse railway station and the Salomas factory; and 3) the Ulagay Plastun Battalion, who stretched from the Vladikavkaz railway line to the Kuban River, attacked the cemetery and along the Kuban River. During the night, the 2nd and 4th Companies moved forward, joining their 1st Battalion, and after regrouping the 1st Battalion was to the right of the railway, with the task of attacking the Salomas factory and Vladikavkaz railway station; the 2nd Battalion was to the right of the 1st, with the task of attacking the Tuapse railway station; and the 3rd Battalion was in reserve.

At 10:00 a shell exploded over the Tuapse railway station, which was the signal for the start of the general attack, and the battalions, supported by artillery and armoured trains, raced forward. The enemy Taman Army did not expect an attack and tried to repel us with firepower. But the momentum and movement of our units were so unstoppable and rapid that the Reds were immediately pushed back and ran away. Some of them were taken prisoner, some were killed, and the rest fled in a state of panic. The attack lasted only 15 minute, and the city was taken. Rich trophies were taken. Our losses were extremely insignificant, about 300 men.

During the night of 13/14 (26/27) October a regrouping took place. The *Markovtsy* remained in their previous position, on the right side of the railway, the *Uлагаevtsy* were on the left, up to the Kuban River, and the 1st Kuban Rifle Regiment crossed to the right bank of the Kuban, occupying Forshtadt. An attack on the Reds, who occupied the left bank of the Urup River,⁷¹ was scheduled for 12:00. Early in the morning the 7th Kuban Plastun Battalion approached the city and took up a reserve position for our division at the Armavir-Vladikavkaz station.

Due to Colonel Timanovskiy becoming ill, General Khodakovskiy took temporary command of the brigade, Colonel Narkevich took command of the regiment, and Colonel Bulatkin took command of the 3rd Battalion.

⁷⁰ The regiment's losses during the battle on 2 (15) October amounted to over 200 men.

⁷¹ That is, to the north of the river.



By morning, the line occupied by the Reds had become clear. Their position ran along a series of hills on the left bank of the Urup River,⁷² with pre-prepared trenches and flat open terrain in front of them. Behind them, the Reds had a steep, high bank and only one crossing over the river.⁷³

At 12:00, with the support of the armoured trains *United Russia* and *General Kornilov*, the regiment began its attack on the positions. The battalions advanced with the 1st to the right of the railway, the 2nd to the right of that, and the 3rd in echelon behind the 2nd Battalion. The attack was so swift that our artillery did not have time to open fire in support of the attackers. The Reds met the regiment with a hail of machine-gun and artillery fire, but they could not withstand the pressure and, abandoning their positions, ran away. Most of the Reds raced to the only crossing. But when they reached it and realised the hopelessness of their situation (the river was a steep ravine about 10 metres deep, there was only bridge, and facing them was a merciless enemy), they launched a counter-attack. However, that was immediately crushed and they were thrown back into the Urup River, where they died *en masse* in the icy water. Another smaller group (about 500 men), separated off, veering sharply to the right and met a platoon of infantry sent by the 3rd Battalion to observe and guard the flank. The platoon hesitated, but their commanders noticed this in time, and two armoured cars immediately rushed into the thick of the fighting. Soon the entire 3rd Battalion arrived, and the Red Army group was eliminated. Some were taken prisoner, some fled, and many died in the river.

The 1st Battalion occupied the railway crossing over the Urup, and soon the entire regiment crossed to the right bank. The 1st Battalion moved to Volniy hamlet, five kilometres southeast of the crossing on the banks of the Kuban River,⁷⁴ while the 2nd and 3rd Battalions spent the night on the hills of the right bank.

At dawn of 15 (28) October the regiment was ordered to advance with the aim of capturing Konokovo Station⁷⁵ and the village of Uspenskoe. On the right bank of the Kuban River was the 1st Kuban Rifle Regiment, on the left bank were the *Ulagaevtsy* and our regiment, and to the right of our regiment was the 7th Kuban Plastun Battalion. At dawn the regiment, with the 1st Battalion to the right of the 2nd and the 3rd Battalion in the regimental reserve, supported by the armoured trains *United Russia* and *Forward for the Motherland*, began the attack. The Reds gradually retreated in order (remaining in chains), without putting up much resistance, and at 16:00 the 2nd Battalion occupied Konokovo Station.

As the 1st Battalion approached the village, the Reds launched a counter-attack, and the fighting raged with particular intensity. But soon the 7th Plastun Battalion arrived, flanking the enemy, and their attack was repelled. The Reds withdrew, and the 1st Battalion occupied Uspenskoe. Our losses were insignificant. The enemy retreated to the southwest, along the railway line. The 3rd Battalion, having taken up position at Konokovo Station, posted pickets. The 1st and 2nd Battalions stopped for the night in Uspenskoe.

Orders were received to occupy Malamino on 16 (29) October.. The regiment left Uspenskoe at 10:00 with the 2nd Battalion in the lead. Malamino was cleared of Reds and occupied by us at about 16:00. Leaving the village, three or four kilometres further on, the vanguard encountered strong resistance from the Reds at about 17:00, and the 1st Battalion was gradually brought in to reinforce the 2nd Battalion, followed by the 3rd Battalion, both deploying to the right of the line. The enemy, who had launched a counter-attack, was repelled, but continued to spread to our right, encircling the flank of the 3rd Battalion, which changed direction to face almost south. It turned out that the 7th Kuban Plastun Battalion, which was marching to our right, had fallen behind by several kilometres, creating a threat to our right flank and rear. The 1st Kuban Rifle Regiment, marching along the right bank of the Kuban River had also fallen behind, and because of this, the Red artillery could fire enfilade down our lines.

At about 18:00 two train-loads of infantry came up for the enemy, immediately disembarking and joining the battle. The forces were extremely uneven. Just before nightfall, in order to avoid being surrounded, the

⁷² "Hills" relative to the steppe. Like much of the western Kuban, this particular area is remarkably flat.

⁷³ This is presumably the rail crossing at 44.97°N, 41.17°E. There had been a road crossing slightly to the north previously, but perhaps it was a ford.

⁷⁴ Actually much closer than that.

⁷⁵ About 44.84°N, 41.33°E, which was a fair distance from the village of the same name at the time.



regiment launched a decisive counter-attack and pushed the comrades back two kilometres. The Reds did not resume their attacks, and by nightfall the fighting had died down.

At about 02:00 the regiment withdrew to Malamino and posted guards from the 3rd Battalion. During the night, in view of the situation to our right and left, the regiment had received orders to leave Malamino and retreat to Konokovo Station. Having begun the retreat at around midnight and covered three kilometres, the regiment then received orders to return to Malamino. The 3rd Battalion did not even have time to leave its positions before the regiment returned and settled down for the night.

On 17 (30) October the Reds were reinforced with their reserves and launched an attack at 08:00 on Malamino, which included cavalry,. The 2nd Battalion, with its left flank in the Kuban River, occupied the hills southeast of the village. The 3rd Battalion was positioned to the right along the town outskirts, and the 1st Independent Kuban *Sotnia* was positioned between them in the rear. The 1st Battalion remained in the village, behind the regiment's right flank. To the right of the regiment, echeloned behind it, was the 7th Kuban Plastun Battalion, out of firing range of the regiment.

Orders were that the battalions were to allow the Reds to approach to a distance of 600 paces, open heavy rifle and machine-gun fire, and counter-attack while the 1st Battalion was to turn to the right and out-flank the enemy. The Red infantry advanced very sluggishly. After letting the comrades approach to the specified distance, the battalions opened fire. A firefight ensued.

Soon, the commander of the 1st Kuban *Sotnia* was killed and the unit, having lost its commander and only officer, became disorganised and abandoned its position, retreating to the village. As a result the connection between the 2nd and 3rd Battalions was broken, and a threatening gap formed between them. The Red cavalry, noticing the opportunity that developed, rushed after the *sotnia* and struck the flank and rear of the 2nd Battalion. At the same time the Red cavalry surrounded the left flank of the 3rd Battalion and raced into the gap between the 1st and 3rd Battalions. The 2nd Battalion, with great difficulty and unable to warn its neighbours of what had happened, began to retreat along the banks of the Kuban River. The 1st Battalion, cut off from the 3rd Battalion by the cavalry, also withdrew beyond Malamino. The 3rd Battalion, attacked on both flanks by cavalry and from the front by infantry, began to retreat through the village, fighting off the Reds on all sides. Entering the village, which had already been occupied by the Red cavalry, the battalion, with great difficulty, using ditches, hedges and other obstacles, withdrew beyond the village and joined the regiment.

It then became clear that the 7th Kuban Plastun Battalion had also withdrawn, exposing the regiment's flank. As a result, at about 15:00 the regiment began to retreat to Uspenskoe, and then to Konokovo, where they arrived at about 17:00. At this time General Denikin arrived at Konokovo Station and, learning of the regiment's difficult situation, ordered us to be kept in reserve. The regiment suffered heavy losses that day. The commander of the 11th Company, Lieutenant-Colonel Tabunov, was killed. Having settled in the village of Konokovo, the regiment arranged itself defensively and settled down for the night, posting guards. The station was occupied by the 7th Kuban Plastun Battalion.

In the morning of 18 (31) October the Reds launched an attack on Konokovo Station. The plastuns could not hold their ground and began to retreat to the Urup River. The regiment also retreated in accordance with orders and held its position on the line of Volniy hamlet in the hills. The day passed quietly.

At 09:00 on 20 October (2 November) the regiment left Volniy with the aim of attacking the station and village of Konokovo, but as it approached the station, it was noticed that the 1st Kuban Rifle Regiment was retreating towards Prochnookopskaya on the right bank of the Kuban River under heavy pressure from the Reds. This created a threat to Armavir from the east and north. In view of this, the regiment waited until darkness fell and then withdrew to Volniy.

The overall situation of the Volunteer Army's front by 21 October could be described as catastrophic. On the left flank of the army there were the units of General Ulagay's 2nd Cavalry Division in the Moskovskoe⁷⁶ area. The units of the 2nd and 3rd Infantry Divisions, or rather, the remnants of them, in the <illegible> area and the remnants of General Slashchev's Plastun Brigade in the Sengileevskoe area, having left the city of

⁷⁶ 45.28°N, 41.92°E.



Stavropol', were crowded by a powerful enemy, barely holding back its attacks. The units of the 1st Infantry Division, having suffered defeat in the Konokovo – Malamino area and sustained heavy losses, had retreated almost to Armavir. It seemed that there was no force capable of defeating the Reds.

On 21 October (3 November) General Wrangel, stationed in the Urupskii area, dealt a crushing blow to the Reds with his cavalry units, broke through their positions around Urupskii village on the right bank of the Urup River and struck the rear of the Red units that were fighting against our 1st Infantry Division and at Konokovo Station. General Pokrovskiy's cavalry units struck in the direction of Nevinnomyssk and occupied it. General Wrangel, having defeated the Reds facing him and the 1st Infantry Division, crossed to the right bank of the Kuban River and helped the units operating in the Stavropol' region. These actions by General Wrangel saved the entire situation.

In the evening of 22 October (4 November) the regiment boarded trains and moved to Ovechka Station.⁷⁷ The 1st, 2nd and 3rd Companies under the command of Colonel Dokukin were transferred to Nevinnomyssk to support General Pokrovskiy's units.

In the morning of 23 October (5 November) the 1st Battalion returned to Ovechka Station. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions, under the command of Colonel Bulatkin, were transferred to Armavir, where they spent the night.

In the morning of 24 October (6 November) detachments of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions disembarked and approached Prochnookopskaya with the aim of driving the Reds out and seizing control of the crossing of the Kuban River. Having advanced almost to the very bank, Colonel Bulatkin called for volunteers and, under cover of machine-gun fire, they rushed to the crossing and captured it. The Reds, offering almost no resistance, cleared the village. The detachment occupied the *stanitsa* and spent the night there.

In the morning of 25 October (7 November) the 2nd and 3rd Battalions left for Armavir, where they boarded a train and were transported to Nikolayevskaya Station,⁷⁸ where the 1st Battalion had already arrived from Ovechka Station.

At about 15:00 on 27 October (9 November) the regiment marched to Nikolaevskaya village, where it spent the night.

At around 09:00 on 28 October (10 November) the regiment set out for Nedremannaya, with the 1st Battalion in the vanguard. Three or four kilometres to the north-east of the hamlet was Mount Nedremnaya,⁷⁹ which the regiment was supposed to capture that day. At about 15:00 the vanguard, having passed through the hamlet, engaged in battle with the Reds a kilometre away from it. To the right (the Temnolesskaya side), General Pokrovskiy was operating with his cavalry units, and to the left (towards Sengileevskaya) was the 1st Kuban Rifle Regiment. The Reds occupied the entire mountain range and put up serious resistance. The 2nd Battalion was thrown in to reinforce the 1st Battalion, and the 3rd Battalion was placed in the gap between the regiment and General Pokrovskiy, stepped back a bit. The advance was slow and came to a complete halt at nightfall. Our chains were half a kilometre from the Reds.

At dawn on 29 October (11 November) the 1st Battalion attacked the Reds without firing a shot. The attack was so swift and unexpected that the Reds quickly left the mountain, inflicting almost no losses on the battalion. But soon, after regrouping, the enemy launched a counter-attack, which was repelled with heavy losses. The Reds launched five counter-attacks up to 08:00, and the 3rd Battalion was deployed to the right and then the 2nd to the left to support the 1st Battalion. All of the Reds' attacks were unsuccessful, and at 08:00 the hill remained in our hands, while the Reds retreated to the Sredne-Egorlykskii hamlet, 12 kilometres from Mount Nedremannaya.⁸⁰ We captured many prisoners, weapons, etc.

⁷⁷ More or less where Zavetnoe Station is now, 44.75°N, 41.60°E.

⁷⁸ 44.88°N, 41.57°E. Note this line has been taken up (though aerial photos show the path it took).

⁷⁹ The peak is at 44.85°N, 41.90°E, but it is a long ridge rather than single peak, some 300 metres higher than the river level. From what I can tell, Nedremannaya village was only a few houses.

⁸⁰ Presumably about modern Pol'skii, 44.90°N, 41.93°E.



Around noon, after resting up and tidying themselves, the regiment launched an attack on Sredne-Egorlykskii, advancing in chains the entire time. By 16:00 the hamlet was behind us, with almost no resistance, but after that the Reds put up strong resistance as they retreated towards the city of Stavropol'. At about 19:00 our troops occupied Verkhne-Egorlykskii hamlet without a fight, where they stopped for the night, posting a guard from the 2nd Battalion. During the night they took in around 400 defectors.⁸¹

An attack on Mount Melovaya was scheduled for 30 October (12 November). At around 14:00 the regiment, formed with the 2nd and 3rd Battalions in the front line and the 1st Battalion in reserve and began the attack. The mountain has an almost vertical slope, which made it extremely difficult for the battalions to move. Despite this and the deadly fire from the Reds, which reached its peak at around 17:00, the mountain fell to us. Advancing further, with almost no resistance, by evening the regiment had occupied a small part of the southern outskirts of Tatarskaya.⁸² The centre and northern part of the village remained in Red hands. After setting up guards, the regiment settled down for the night. Losses for the day were minor.

Fighting continued in the streets of Tatarskaya throughout the day of 31 October (13 November). The Reds launched several counter-attacks, but were repelled, and by evening they had retreated to the northern outskirts of the village. Losses were heavy, particularly given the small size of the regiment.

At about 07:00 on 1 (14) November the Reds launched an attack and pushed back our guard posts two blocks. The assembled regiment immediately counter-attacked and completely drove the Reds out of Tatarskaya, which we finally occupied at about 09:00, and the regiment took up positions on the rail line.⁸³ At about 14:00 the Reds launched another attack on Tatarskaya, but the 7th Plastun Battalion, which was to our left, quickly caught the Reds with a flank attack, and the latter retreated to Nadezhdenskoe.⁸⁴ The regiment withdrew to Tatarskaya for the night. Guard duty was posted by the 1st and 2nd Battalions.

During the night of 1/2 November, information was received about the capture of Stavropol'. Colonel Geydeman took command of the regiment. At 09:00 the regiment moved in march order to the city. Two kilometres from it the regiment then received orders to immediately attack the Reds who were advancing from Nadezhdenskoe towards Tatarskaya with access to the rear of the city. At about 12:00 the 2nd and 3rd Battalions deployed and launched an attack on Nadezhdenskoe. The Reds immediately halted their advance, took up positions, and a firefight ensued. Soon the 1st Battalion deployed, and the entire regiment moved to attack. The Reds put up strong resistance and soon began to retreat towards the village of Nadezhdenskoe. Our losses were negligible.

At 09:00 on 3 (16) November the 2nd and 3rd Battalions joined the 1st Battalion, and the regiment deployed and launched an attack Nadezhdenskoe. The Reds put up fierce resistance, especially when the 1st Battalion occupied several houses on the outskirts. In addition, the weather took a turn for the worse – rain, snow and fog set in – and the offensive had to be suspended at around 17:00. The regiment spent the night in positions, with each battalion posting sentries. Losses amounted to about 15 men killed and wounded.

The 2nd and 3rd Battalions fought a fierce battle with the Reds on 4 (17) November, advancing with great difficulty through the streets of Nadezhdenskoe, but by evening had captured half of the village. The 1st Battalion remained in place, securing the regiment's right flank. All the battalions posted sentries for the night.

By the morning of 5 (18) November the Reds had been completely cleared from Nadezhdenskoe and the regiment, having occupied it, posted sentries. It remained there until 9 (22) November. Early in the morning of 9 (22) November the regiment marched out of Nadezhdenskoe and arrived in Stavropol' at around 11:00. They took up quarters and performed garrison duty.⁸⁵

⁸¹ The regiment's losses during the capture of Mount Nedremannaya did not exceed 50 men.

⁸² Now Tatarka.

⁸³ This line has been taken up.

⁸⁴ Nadezhda.

⁸⁵ According to Pavlov's estimates, the regiment's losses during the Stavropol' fighting amounted to 500 men, with the actual strength of the companies falling to 30-40 men, with only some of them having 100 men. During its time in



On 16 (29) November the regiment boarded a train and by evening arrived at the Staromar'evkaya Station, where it disembarked. It spent the night in the village of Staromar'evska.

17 (30) November. In the morning, the regiment marched towards Kononovka⁸⁶ with the aim of driving the Reds out of it. To accomplish this task, the 1st Kuban Rifle Regiment was sent to the right and the 2nd Cavalry Regiment to the left. At 10:00 the regiment deployed and all the battalions went on the offensive. The Reds occupied a position on the western edge of the village and the heights to its left. A marshy river flowed in front of the enemy's positions. The Reds met the regiment's attack with deadly machine-gun and rifle fire. The failure of the 1st Kuban Rifle Regiment soon became apparent, as a result of which the Markov Regiment suspended its attack, withdrew to its starting position and spent the night there in battle order. The losses were very heavy. Brigade commander Major-General Timanovskiy, commander of the 6th Company Alabovskiy, commander of the 7th Company Captain Pavlov, and commander of the 9th Company Staff Captain Bortsov were wounded.⁸⁷

On 18 November (1 December) the regiment dug in.

At 15:00 on 19 November (2 December) the regiment, with the battalions arranged in numerical order, began an attack on Kononovka. In front of and parallel to the Reds' positions there was a deep ravine with steep banks. The Reds put up fierce resistance and, due to the extreme difficulty of crossing the ravine, the regiment halted its attack and dug in. At nightfall, sentries were posted, and the regiment spent the night in positions.

General Situation of the Volunteer Army on 16-21 November 1918 and General Wrangel's Strike

With our capture of Stavropol', the next task was the complete elimination of the Reds' still quite formidable forces in the North Caucasus. The operations of the 1st Infantry Division in the Kononovka – Spitsevkа area did not produce the desired results, due to the superior strength of the Reds and the extreme smallness of our units. By the morning of 20 November (3 December), the location of the Volunteer units from Beshpagir to Grachevka was: in the Beshpagir area was General Pokrovskiy's cavalry units; at Kononovka and Staromar'evka was the 1st Infantry Division; and in the Grachevka area and slightly to the north was General Wrangel's cavalry group, about 4,000 to 5,000 sabres.

On the morning of 21 November (4 December), General Wrangel broke through the Reds and struck them in the rear and flank at Kononovka, and the Reds recoiled east and southeast.

The day of 21 November (4 December) began with an exchange of fire. Orders for the regiment were to begin an attack on Kononovka when the 1st Kuban Rifle Regiment, which was fighting quite successfully against the Reds on the southern approaches to that village, approached our line. At about 08:30 the regiment commander, Colonel Geydeman, rode forward to reconnoitre the Reds' position. He was allowed to approach them to close range and was then killed by unexpected volleys. Colonel Bulatkin took temporary command of the regiment.

At about 09:00 enemy chains appeared. The Reds attacked. But soon they hesitated, milled around a little on the spot, turned around and raced away in disorder, leaving Kononovka. It turned out that General Wrangel's cavalry units had done their job. The regiment immediately got up and moved in chains towards Kononovka, passed through it and stopped on its eastern outskirts. At about 10:00 the regiment marched in column towards Spitsevkа, but after marching three or four kilometres it received orders to spend the night in Spitsevkа. The regiment arrived at 15:00 and took up quarters.⁸⁸

Ekaterinodar the regiment had been reinforced by about 800 men (including 300 officers) and the companies had grown to about 100 men, and the 7th and 9th Officer Companies to over 200 men (a total of some 1,500).

⁸⁶ Modern Krasnoe, 45.12°N, 42.44°E.

⁸⁷ Pavlov gives the regiment's losses as 400 men.

⁸⁸ In Spitsevkа the regiment received reinforcements of about 400 *inogorodni* (non-Cossacks) of the Kuban region who had been taken prisoner.



On 25 November (8 December) Colonel Salnikov, former quartermaster general of the Volunteer Army, took command of our regiment.

On 27 November (10 December) the regiment moved to Sergievskoe.

On 28 November (1 December) the regiment moved to Grushevskoe.⁸⁹

At around 07:00 on 29 November (12 December) units of Kochergin's Red Cavalry Division raided the village of Grushevskoe and, thanks to the fact that we had not posted any guards, occupied its eastern outskirts. The entire regiment was immediately assembled in the church square in response to the alarm. By this time the Reds had managed to surround the village, and our regiment began to drive them out from all four sides. By 10:00 the village had been cleared, and the Reds retreated in the direction of Padinskoe. The regiment advanced slightly beyond the outskirts, dug in, and posted sentries to watch the enemy. At about 15:00 dismounted Red cavalry launched another attack on the regiment but, having advanced 800 paces, they lay down and did not rise until evening. Taking advantage of the darkness, the Reds withdrew. The regiment pulled back to Grushevskoe for the night and posted sentries on all four sides.

At midnight on 5 (18) December the 1st Battalion left for Kalinovskoe,⁹⁰ where it arrived at about 03:00 on 6 (19) December. It replaced the 1st Kuban Rifle Regiment, which had been tasked with taking Aleksandrovskoe. A guard was posted facing Padinskoe.

On 12 (25) December the 1st Battalion was replaced by the 1st Kuban Rifle Regiment, which had failed to hold Alexandrovskoe, and it returned to Grushevskoe to join the rest of the regiment.

At around 09:00 on 14 (27) December the 2nd and 3rd Battalions and the 4th Company set out for Medvedovskoe⁹¹ with the aim of capturing it, but due to fog and bad weather, they arrived late and spent the night in the field in front of the village, in the snow. The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Companies and a *sotnia* of the 1st Kuban Rifle Regiment, under the command of Colonel Bleysh, remained in Grushevskoe to stand guard.

At about 09:00 on 15 (28) December, following orders, the 1st Kuban Rifle Regiment, which was to our left, went on the offensive. It defeated the Reds and reached the hills west of Medvedovskoe. But the Reds soon counter-attacked and pushed back the *Kubantsy*. At this time our regiment, with the 2nd and 3rd Battalions in the line of battle and the 4th Company as regimental reserve, launched an energetic attack, defeated the Reds and, at about 10:00, occupied Medvedovskoe, reaching to its north-eastern outskirts. The Reds retreated to Shishkino. We slept in our quarters, while the 1st Kuban Rifle Regiment posted sentries.

At 07:00 on 16 (29) December the regiment marched from Medvedovskoe to Shishkino with the aim of capturing it. The 3rd battalion was in the vanguard. Two kilometres short of the village, the regiment deployed: the 3rd Battalion took up positions on the road, the 2nd Battalion to the left of it and the 7th Company as regimental reserve. And at about 11:00, with the support of artillery and some of General Pokrovskiy's cavalry units, operating one and a half kilometres to our left, we attacked. The Reds put up strong resistance, but we still managed to occupy half of the village.

At that moment a tractor armed with machine guns suddenly appeared in front of General Pokrovskiy's units. The cavalry units could not deal with it and began to retreat. The Reds, noticing the retreat of our cavalry, attacked the 3rd Battalion with great force. It could not take the pressure, and the regiment began to retreat, which was carried out with great difficulty and many casualties. Having retired half a kilometre from Shishkino, we paused and dug in, remaining there until darkness fell. At that time it became clear we were being outflanked to our right. At 22:00 the regiment left its positions and moved to Medvedovskoe, where it took up quarters. The commander of the 3rd Battalion, Colonel Volnyanskiy, and Colonel Mionchinskiy had been killed.⁹²

At about 15:00 Red infantry, supported by small cavalry units and artillery, launched an attack on Grushevskoe from the Padinskoe area. Due to heavy fog the Reds were only spotted a few paces from the

⁸⁹ 44.94°N, 43.04°E.

⁹⁰ 44.87°N, 42.96°E.

⁹¹ Now Gofitskoe, 45.08°N, 43.05°E.

⁹² During the fighting around Medvedovskoe, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions lost 200 men out of 500.



outskirts, and the 1st Battalion had to deploy in the village itself. The ensuing firefight was inconclusive. As darkness fell the 1st Battalion withdrew towards the village church and settled down for the night, placing sentries at all possible enemy entry points. During the battle a defector from the Red Army reported that two infantry regiments and one cavalry regiment would attack Grushevskoe the next day.

At around 07:00 on 17 (30) December the Reds launched an attack on Medvedovskoe. Immediately the 3rd Battalion occupied the hills east of the village. The 2nd Battalion occupied the north-western outskirts of the village, and the 1st Kuban Rifle Regiment took up positions to the left. The main Red Army attack was directed at the 3rd Battalion, which held them off until noon. At the same time the Reds attacked the 1st Kuban Rifle Regiment which, unable to withstand their onslaught, began to retreat at 11:00-12:00, thus threatening the 3rd Battalion.

At noon, under the cover of the 7th Company, the regiment began to retreat to Orekhovka. The 7th Company put up serious resistance, delaying the advancing Reds for two or three hours, and then withdrew to join the regiment. They reached Orekhovka in the evening, where they spent the night, posting sentries facing Medvedovskoe and Grushevskoe.

Early in the morning the 1st Battalion had conducted reconnaissance and, having established the absence of the Reds, reoccupied the entire village posting sentries facing Padinskoe and Medvedovskoe. At 07:00 dense chains of Red infantry with dismounted cavalry appeared from the Shishkino area. Appearing on the horizon, they began to turn to the right, gradually approaching Grushevskoe. Having approached within one and half kilometres, the Reds advancing from Shishkino turned and led an attack directly on Grushevskoe.

At the same time, dense chains of Reds appeared on the hills. The Reds, approaching the village, fired heavily the whole time. We opened fire from a distance of about 1,500 paces. At about 10:30 the 29th Cossack Regiment with the 1st Gun came from the Vysotskoe area to the aid of the battalion. The gun immediately entered the battle, which somewhat restrained the Reds, while the regiment sent out patrols to the flanks, remaining near the church.

At about 12:00 it became clear that Grushevskoe was completely surrounded, and the battalion and Cossack regiment began to retreat along the road to Sergievskoe. Red machine guns, set up on the hills north and south of the village, fired at the retreating troops. Upon leaving the village, the 2nd Uman Regiment deployed and raced to attack the hills west of the village, defeating the Reds, and the remnants of the 1st Battalion managed to slip through the breach that had formed. The losses were enormous. Only four men survived from the General Markov company, 15-20 from the 3rd Company, and the entire 14th *Sotnia* of the 1st Kuban Rifle Regiment was killed. At about 22:00 the battalion arrived in Sergievskoe and settled down for the night. The *Umantsy* posted sentries.⁹³

On 18 (31) December the 1st Battalion moved to Orekhovka and joined the regiment.

At around 07:00 on 19 December (1 January 1919) the Reds attacked Orekhovka and Vysotskoe with large forces. Thanks to the thick fog they managed to get within 30 paces and, moving around the flanks of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, pushed us out with a surprise attack. We retreated to Vysotskoe and occupied its western half. The regiment was quickly reorganised, took up positions and remained there until evening. The Reds did not attack again. At dusk the regiment left the village and withdrew to the hills southwest of it, in the direction of Sergievskoe. We spent the night in the fields.

There was a regrouping on 20 December (2 January). The regiment withdrew three kilometres to the southwest and took up positions in the fields. The 1st Kuban Rifle Regiment was positioned to our left, opposite Vysotskoe, and to our right was a *sotnia* from the 2nd Zaporozh'e Cossack Regiment. There was skirmishing throughout the day.⁹⁴

At about 07:00 on 21 December (3 January) the Reds launched a large-scale attack and, due to our extreme exhaustion, we began to retreat towards Sergievskoe, offering the Reds almost no resistance and suffering negligible losses. At about 07:30 we launched a counter-attack, but it was so sluggish and indecisive that the

⁹³ During 16 (29) December the 1st Battalion lost about 100 men (including 60 from the 1st Company).

⁹⁴ According to Pavlov, by 20 December 1918 (2 January 1919) the regiment had suffered heavy losses, with only 20 to 40 men remaining in each company.



Reds, having retired only a little, attacked us again, and we began to retreat. At about 08:30 a *sotnia* from the 2nd Zaporozh'e Cossack Regiment, finding a favourable moment, charged into the Reds' flank, crushed them and drove them away. The Reds fled headlong. Our regiment immediately launched a counter-attack. It was a complete success. Five hundred men (the entire 5th Taman Regiment) and 18 machine guns were captured. At about 10:00 we reached Vysotskoe and occupied it Orekhovka, posting sentries on the hills. We spent the night in Orekhovka.⁹⁵

The Situation of the Volunteer Army in Mid-December 1918 and General Wrangel's Decisive Strike

In mid-December, the situation of the Volunteer Army in the North Caucasus near Stavropol' was close to catastrophic. At that time the Reds launched a strong offensive across the entire front, from the Caucasus Mountains to the Manych Lakes. On the flanks they were held back, albeit with difficulty, by the corps of Generals Wrangel and Pokrovskiy. Around Nevinomyssk, and especially at Stavropol', the Reds' overwhelming forces were pushing back our exhausted units under Generals Lyakhov and Kazanovich, step by step. There were no reserves in the rear, except for the Kornilov Shock Regiment, which was being replenished in Ekaterinodar – but that was nowhere near enough for such a huge front.

The situation seemed particularly hopeless on 20-21 December (2-3 January), when General Kazanovich's 1st Corps retreated to the Kalaus' River near Sergievskoe. That corps numbered only about 600 bayonets (the Markov and Kuban Rifle Regiments) and 800-900 sabres (the 1st General Alekseev Cavalry and two Cossack regiments), while facing the Reds' entire Taman Army, with a force of at least 20,000-25,000 bayonets and sabres and 100 guns. Involuntarily, I started to think these might be the last days of the Volunteer Army.

The situation was saved by the brilliant actions of General Wrangel's 1st Cavalry Corps. Leaving behind only two or three cavalry regiments to cover the entire vast front, from Pokrovskoe to the Manych Lakes (over 120 km), the rest of the corps (about 10 regiments) made two night-time forced marches through the impassable Stavropol' mud. By 23 December (5 January) they were in the Petrovskoe – Donskaya Balka⁹⁶ area. On the morning of 23 December (5 January) 1918 that entire mass of cavalry (at least 4,000 sabres with 10-15 guns) launched a sudden, swift attack, outflanking the right flank of the Taman Army in the approximate area of "Dry Buffalo"⁹⁷ under the personal command of General Wrangel.

The surprise attack from the north by Wrangel's corps, which the Reds believed to be scattered across a vast front stretching to the Manych River, had disastrous consequences for them. The Reds were unable to regroup, as the attack developed with lightning speed, hitting the enemy's flank and even its rear. Within two days a couple of divisional headquarters, several regimental headquarters, several thousand prisoners and several dozen guns were captured. Command was disrupted in the Red forces as the headquarters of the Taman Army fled east to "Holy Cross".⁹⁸ The units were left to their own devices and, despite often heroic resistance, were destroyed by our numerically weak but well-commanded troops.

A few days later the Taman Army, which had been such a formidable threat to us, fled eastwards towards Holy Cross and "Mineral Waters",⁹⁹ turning into a disorganised crowd of fugitives. The entire Red flank from the Manych to the Caucasus Mountains faltered and collapsed into flight, pursued to the south along the Armavir – Mineral Waters – Vladikavkaz – [Port] Petrovsk¹⁰⁰ railway by General Pokrovskiy's 1st Cavalry Corps. This remarkable continuous parallel pursuit by cavalry on both flanks led to the entire North

⁹⁵ By 21 December (3 January) some companies of the regiment had only about 15 men left, while the total number of men was 300.

⁹⁶ Now Svetlograd 45.34°N, 42.84°E and Donskaya Balka 45.20°N, 42.88°E.

⁹⁷ Sukhaya Buivola, 45.15°N, 42.99°E.

⁹⁸ Now Budennovsk or Budyonnovsk, 44.79°N, 44.16°E.

⁹⁹ Mineral'nye Vody, 44.21°N, 43.13°E.

¹⁰⁰ Now Makhachkala, on the Caspian.



Caucasus being cleared of the Reds in less than two months. The formidable Red Army that had controlled it ceased to exist.

At around 08:00 on 24 December (6 January) the regiment marched to Kalinovskoe and, having settled into quarters, posted a guard facing Aleksandrovscoe.

At around midnight on 25/26 December (7/8 January) Red cavalry successfully raided Kalinovskoe, due to heavy fog. The guard posts of the 1st Kuban Rifle Regiment (around Grushevskoe) were broken through and the cavalry entered the village. But our regiment quickly rallied and cleared the Reds out. There were no casualties. At 10:00, the regiment marched from Kalinovskoe to Aleksandrovscoe.¹⁰¹

In the morning of 6 (19) January 1919 the regiment moved to Sablinskoe, then the Greek hamlet.

On 8 (21) January the regiment moved to the Don coal basin via Rostov-on-Don.

¹⁰¹ At the end of December, about 200 men who had recovered from wounds and frostbite returned to the regiment. The regiment's ranks were gradually replenished with prisoners and convalescents. Around 30 machine gunners were transferred to the training machine gun *komand* at the regiment's reserve battalion being formed in Stavropol'.

