
THE RUSSIAN WAY OF WAR
FORCE STRUCTURE, TACTICS, AND MODERNIZATION OF THE RUSSIAN GROUND FORCES
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FORWARD

In 1984, Lieutenant General William Richardson, the commander of the U.S. Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), authorized the creation of an office modeled after the British Army's Soviet Studies Research Center (SSRC) in order to provide unclassified material from primarily Russian sources for U.S. Army training and education. The Soviet Army Studies Office (SASO) opened at Fort Leavenworth in 1986 and was staffed with civilian academics and U.S. Army foreign area officers who were proficient in Russian, understood Russian and Soviet histories and military institutions, and had traveled, studied or lived in the Soviet Union. I was assigned to SASO at its inception and was privileged to serve as its director from 1989 to 1993, during which the office was transformed and expanded into the Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO). During that period, FMSO produced most of the U.S. Army unclassified studies related to the Ground Forces in Russia and the Soviet Union on training, tactics, and military thought.

In particular, I was part of FMSO's development of the study entitled The Soviet Conduct of War: An Assessment of Soviet Military Capabilities (1982-1987), which became an enduring document as the end of the Cold War shifted the U.S. military's focus elsewhere. Now, more than a quarter of a century later, FMSO has produced a new appreciation of the Russian Federation's military under the rubric The Russian Way of War: Force Structure, Tactics, and Modernization of the Russian Ground Forces. This new study combines the seasoned insight of FMSO's long-time Russia hand, Dr. Les Grau, with the exceptional skills and talent of Mr. Chuck Bartles (a younger hand) in an ambitious book that is designed to mitigate the decades-long gap in comprehensive unclassified understanding regarding how the Russian army organizes and trains to fight. In short, while acknowledging the fact that the new Russian Army is not the old Soviet Army, this study recognizes the many traditions, customs, and practices of the past that shape the present and will likely inform the future. Rather than embracing an antagonistic or adversarial point of view, this work attempts to understand an important military organization in an important global region.

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Chapter 1
Personnel System

The Russian Federation has pursued the development of a professional enlisted component in the Russian Armed Forces since the early 1990s. The impetus for this stemmed from the conscription system inherited from the Soviets. After the Second World War the Soviets believed that the future of modem warfare would closely resemble the battles they had fought in the last years of the war, albeit with nuclear weapons. These battles would require vast numbers of troops organized in divisions, army groups, and fronts to execute high speed maneuver warfare to penetrate enemy defenses and then exploit these successes. At this time the Soviets believed that the enlisted force that would be required to fight in future battles would resemble the enlisted force that fought in the Second World War. In order to mass a large army without bankrupting the economy, the Soviets retained their universal conscription system. The intent was that all males would receive a basic level of military training during their two-year stints and would then be able to return to civilian life. These former conscripts would infrequently be called for musters, and would be called *en masse* in the event of a mobilization. This system had an unintended consequence for the strong NCO corps that the Soviets had inherited from the Tsarist Army. The two-year conscription model for enlisted personnel had no real career path for enlisted personnel who desired to serve past their initial conscription length. The strong NCO corps that emerged after the Second World War soon disappeared, as these NCOs either left the service or became commissioned officers. In the Soviet Armed Forces, officers, not NCOs, became the primary small unit leaders and trainers.[1]

This system began experiencing problems as the Soviet Armed Forces began to modernize rapidly in the 1960s and 1970s. Technically advanced equipment requires skilled and well trained labor to operate and maintain it. Since two-year conscription terms were considered insufficient time to train individuals to perform complex technical tasks, Soviet officers performed duties that would normally be performed by NCOs in Western armies. The Soviets believed this was an inefficient way of managing manpower, and decided to create "warrant officer" positions primarily to maintain and operate advanced equipment. These warrant officers, recruited from conscripts who had completed their initial tours, were generally not viewed favorably by the officer corps, since the best conscripts who wanted to continue their military service were enrolled in military academies. Russian warrant officers relieved some of the technical and small unit leadership burdens that were placed on officers, but were never well regarded as an institution and had little in common with Western NCOs and warrant officers.[2] In addition to technical positions, warrant officers filled positions somewhat similar to U.S. first sergeants (albeit with far less authority) and served as platoon leaders for maintenance and supply units. The Russian Federation abolished all warrant officer positions during the 2008 "New Look" reforms and converted all warrant officers into contract NCOs. Warrant officer billets have since been brought back. There has been little reporting about

[1] Aleksandr Pinchuk, "The University for Sergeants," *Krasnaya Zvezda* Online, 23 November 2012, <http://www.redstar.ru/index.php/2011-07-25-15-57-07/item/5984-serzhantskie-universitetyi>, accessed 1 May 2016.
For an excellent description of the professionalism of Russian NCOs in the Second World War, see:
Leonov, V.N., *Blood on the Shores: Soviet Naval Commandos in World War II*, Annapolis, M.D: Naval Institute Press, 1993.

[2] Christopher N. Donnelly, *Red Banner: The Soviet Military System in Peace and War*, first edition. (Coulsdon, Surrey: Jane's Information Group, 1988), pp. 180-182.

how warrant officer and contract NCO positions differ, but there is likely little difference.[3]

Russia has maintained a hybrid system of conscription and contract service to the present day.[4] In this system, officers, not NCOs, are the primary trainers of the platoon. In order to prepare these lieutenants, cadets usually attend four- or five-year military academies that more closely resemble a combination of the U.S. Military Academy and the officer basic course, with a strong emphasis on tactics, then anything practiced in the U.S.[5] As soon as a new lieutenant graduates from an academy and takes command of his platoon, he is expected to immediately begin training and maintaining discipline in his platoon.[6]

Soviet lieutenants filled the leadership, planning, training, and disciplinary roles of both a U.S. platoon leader and platoon sergeant, and so worked very long days. Since the Soviet platoon leader ensured small unit discipline and would leave the barracks at night to be with his own family, a very brutal system of hazing, known as *dedovschina* developed among the conscripts. This unofficial, but deeply institutionalized practice consisted of senior (second year) conscripts hazing the junior (first year) conscripts. These practices often involved theft, beatings, and humiliation, which became somewhat infamous and embarrassing to the government. Although this practice has become less common in today's Russian military, it still occasionally surfaces in the media.

Soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union, former Russian President Yeltsin mentioned abolishing the conscription system. Conscription was very unpopular due to problems with *dedovschina*, and the popularity was even further lowered due to the effects of the turbulent financial situation, which was devastating the Russian Armed Forces. Due to the economic situation, little progress was made towards full enlisted professionalization, but Russia did start its first "contract NCO" program, which allowed enlisted soldiers to serve with better pay and privileges, such as not living in barracks. Russia has maintained a hybrid system of conscription and contract service to present day.

Russia's military leadership has had mixed feelings about the replacement of conscripts with contract NCOs. Some generals have lamented the idea of abolishing the conscription system, because they believe such a reform would deprive Russia of a large strategic reserve with at least some military training. Other criticisms have involved the description of contract NCOs

[3] Viktor Sokirko and Denis Telmanov, "Defense Ministry Approved Positions for Warrant Officers," *Izvestiya* Online, 3 July 2013, http://izvestia.ru/news/552986#ixzz2XyXraoZW, accessed 1 May 2016.
"Warrant Officers Will Service Sophisticated Weapon Systems," *Interfax-AVN* Online, 8 April 2013.
[4] Yuriy Gavrilov, "Lining Up for the Beret: No End to Those Wishing to Serve in the VDV at the Enlistment Offices," *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* Online, 26 April 2012, <http://www.rg.ru/2012/04/26/shamanov.html>, accessed 1 May 2016.
[5] It is not uncommon for a new platoon leader in an airborne unit to join his unit after completing 45 or more jumps at the Airborne Military Academy in Ryazan. See Aleksandr Kolotilo, "VDV: The Valor of the Highest Order," *Krasnaya Zvezda* Online, 26 December 2012, <http://www.redstar.ru/index.php/siriya/item/6608-vdv-%E2%80%93-eto-muzhestvo-vyisshego-klassa>, accessed 1 May 2016.
[6] Andrey Bobrun and Oleg Pochinyuk, "To the Level of the Century," *Krasnaya Zvezda* Online, 6 July 2011, <http://old.redstar.ru/2011/07/06_07/2_01.html>, accessed 1 May 2016.
Vladimir Sosnitskiy, "Regimental Training: Hot Times," *Krasnaya Zvezda* Online, 12 July 2011, <http://old.redstar.ru/2011/07/12_07/2_01.html>, accessed 1 May 2016.

as "mercenaries," a term that is sometime used to describe the U.S. system of enlistment, the implication being contract NCOs are more interested in pay than service to the country (this argument likely carries little weight in the Russian military, as both officers and contract enlisted soldiers sign service contracts).

Probably the strongest motivator for the Russia's military leadership to support the formation of a contract NCO system is Russia's lessons learned from Chechnya and other modern conflicts. Russia has changed its view on the nature of modern and future war. Local and regional conflicts, rather than large-scale high-speed maneuver are seen as the most likely manifestation of war. In addition, warfare will also now involve "indirect and asymmetric methods" and a general blurring of the lines between the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of military operations. The implication for Russia's enlisted personnel, is that conscripts are unable to be effective warfighters on the modern battlefield, especially since the conscription period in the Russian Federation has been reduced to one year. Russia has vacillated back and forth between desiring a completely professional enlisted force, and continuing with the current hybrid system, albeit with a greater percentage of contract NCOs.[7] Due to greater costs involved with contract NCOs and the aforementioned desire to maintain a mass mobilization capacity, it is likely that Russia will utilize a hybrid system for enlisted manning for the foreseeable future. In 2015, the number of contract soldiers in the positions of warrant officers, sergeants and soldiers reached 300 thousand, for the first time exceeding the number of conscripts.[8]

There is often a Western assumption that Russian contract sergeants are distributed throughout the ranks and are placed in positions of leadership over conscripts. A more accurate term for Russian contract sergeants would probably be "contract soldier," because in the Russian system units are designated as either "conscript" or "contract sergeant," and there is apparently little interaction between these enlisted personnel types. In general, contract NCOs fill "trigger puller" positions, and positions requiring advanced skills and training. Conscripts usually fill positions that require little training, such as drivers, cooks, laborers, or tradesman. Although one-year conscription terms give little time for training, conscripts do not necessarily join the military without militarily useful skills. The Russian Federation, as did the Soviet Union, has "patriotic education," and certain rudimentary military skills (first aid, etc.) are included in the primary and secondary education curriculum for male and female students.[9]

[7] Charles K. Bartles, "Defense Reforms of Russian Defense Minister Anatolii Serdyukov," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 24, no. 1 (2011).

[8] Lieutenant General Vasily Tonkoshkurov, "Important Priority for the General Staff: Is the Current Personnel System Adequate for Modern Requirements?" *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer* Online, 21 October 2015, <http://vpk-news.ru/articles/27609>, accessed 1 May 2016.

[9] Ilya Rozhdestvenskiy, "Parade of Children's Troops: How Children in Russia Are Taught to Love the Motherland and To Fight for It," *Medusa* Online, 7 July 2015, <https://meduza.io/feature/2015/07/07/parad-detskih-voysk>, accessed 28 March 2016. The article has been reprinted in English, and may be found at: <https://meduza.io/en/feature/2015/07/16/russia-s-littlest-soldiers>.

DOSAAF

DOSAAF Flag
Image Courtesy: Russian Ministry of Defense

In terms of training, Russia does have one institution with no U.S. equivalent. The Volunteer Society for Cooperation with the Army, Aviation, and Fleet (DOSAAF) is a government-sponsored sports and outdoor enthusiast organization that promotes and funds militarily useful skills, such as flying, hiking, camping, shooting, skiing, parachuting, driving, and athletics, for young people.[10] The predecessors to the organization were invaluable in the Great Patriotic War (Second World War) by providing skilled servicemen to the Armed Forces. DOSAAF, in one form or another, still exists in many states of the former Soviet Union. It is particularly valuable for the conscription-based manning system that the Russian Federation utilizes to fill its rank and file, but would be an inefficient way of imparting skills to a fully professional (non-conscript) army. Conscripts who have participated in DOSAAF activities gain skills that would be difficult to impart to troops who are only drafted for one year. The DOSAAF system is so well ingrained into the Russian military system that a DOSAAF representative sits on each draft board in order to advise the state on the best way to utilize each conscript. For example, a conscript who has participated in a DOSAAF parachuting club would be more likely to be assigned to an airborne unit.[11] The DOSAAF program declined after the collapse of the Soviet Union, but in the last few years experienced a resurgence. According to a May 2015 article, about 40 percent of recruits enter the military with a military occupational specialty obtained from a DOSAAF program. The desire is that eventually all conscripts enter the military with some sort of military occupational specialty.[12]

Conscripts

The Russian Federation practices a conscription system, but this system differs greatly from the U.S. draft system with which many Americans were familiar from the Vietnam era. While Americans are familiar with the term "Draft Board," the Russian Federation utilizes military commissariats, which is the local organization of military administration responsible for not only the semiannual conscription process, but also documentation of local human and economic resources for the State's use in the event of war. Military commissariats parallel every level of the civilian administration in the military district. They are led by a lieutenant colonel or colonel, with a staff and a council of local officials. In regards to the conscription function of the commissariats, the commission usually consists of a chairman (typically an active duty colonel), doctor, and representatives from the education ministry, Federal Security Service (FSB), Internal Affairs Ministry (MVD), and DOSAAF, and possibly other members. The

10 Viktor Khudoleyev, "Toward New Standards of Mobility," *Krasnaya Zvezda* Online, 30 June 2015, <http://redstar.ru/index.php/newspaper/item/24659-k-novym-standartam-mobilnosti>, accessed 1 May 2016.
11 Ray Finch, "Patriotic Education-DOSAAF," *OE Watch* Online, May 2015
Viktor Khudoleyev, "Much Work Lies Ahead, 87 Years of DOSAAF," *Krasnaya Zvezda* Online, 23 January 2014, <http://www.redstar.ru/index.php/siriya/item/13872-vperedi-bolshaya-rabota>, accessed 1 May 2016.
12 Vladimir Mukhin "Military Commissars to Be Responsible for Service in Installments," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* Online, 25 June 2015, <http://www.ng.ru/armies/2015-06-26/1_voenkomy.html>, accessed 1 May 2016.
"DOSAAF trains 80,000 specialists for Armed Forces annually," *Interfax*, 24 April 2013.

purpose of this commission is to determine the best utilization of the conscript. This requires sorting them for appropriate assignments. In general, the politically reliable are sent to the FSB or MVD, the physically strong to the airborne, those with language abilities to signal intelligence units, etc. The commission composition is intended to best conduct this sorting of human capital. Doctors assess physical fitness, educators describe academic performance, the FSB representative addresses political reliability, the MVD officer mentions any brushes with the law, and the DOSAAF member describes any militarily relevant activities in which the conscript may have participated.[13]

Conscripts in the field
Image Courtesy: Vitaly Kuzmin

In 2013, the Russian Federation decided to take this concept a step further by creating "science companies" to best exploit the brightest and most promising recruits who are and will be entering the Russian Armed Forces. Although there have been few details about the exact role these companies will play, Defense Minister Shoygu has stated that they will become "an incubator for our institutions, scientific research institutes, design bureaus for naval, aviation, and space matters, and on other issues." There are currently twelve science companies in the Russian military, with a total of 561 service members. Conscripted service in the science companies is apparently a gateway to the officer corps, as already 41 former science company service members have been commissioned as lieutenants.[14] The science companies are reportedly participating in 20 research projects, and within one six-month period published 40 articles and prepared eight patent applications.[15]

Unlike the U.S. system, there is no presumption that a conscript does not have any militarily useful skills when entering the military. This difference is in part due to a slightly different civilian education system in the Russian Federation. The Russian system has some commonalities with the German system, which "tracks" students at an earlier age to university or vocational educations. The significance for the Russian military is that in some cases conscripts may already be entering military service with a few years of vocational training in a militarily useful specialty (pipe fitter, welder, machinist, etc.).

In sum, the Russian conscription system has little in common with the U.S. enlistment or draft systems, which assess a new serviceman's potential based primarily on a single test (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery). Instead, the Russian system takes a more holistic approach. The implication is that although the Russian Federation has only a one-year conscription, there still is substantial value that can be had from the individual conscript.

13 Christopher N. Donnelly, *Red Banner: The Soviet Military System in Peace and War*, first edition. (Coulsdon, Surrey: Jane's Information Group, 1988), pp. 155-176.
14 "The Realization of the 'Scientific Companies' Project Begins on Friday," *Interfax-AVN*, 4 June 2015. Viktor Khudoleyev, "Serve Worthily!" *Krasnaya Zvezda* Online, 1 April 2016, <http://redstar.ru/index.php/newspaper/item/28331-sluzhite-dostojno>, accessed 1 May 2016.
15 Vladimir Ivanovsky and Oleg Falichev, "Rear Service Eagles: MTO Academy Navigates 'Invisible Bridges,'" *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer* Online, 13 April 2016, <http://vpk-news.ru/articles/30195>, accessed 1 May 2016.

In 2016, it was reported that 20,000 of the 155,000 conscripts inducted in the spring draft already had valid military occupational specialties.[16]

Contract NCOs

The Russian Federation has practiced several different means of recruiting contract NCOs. Initially, upon conscription, conscripts were given the option of serving their conscription period or becoming a contract NCO (receiving more pay and privileges, but serving a longer term of service). There was much criticism of this method of recruiting, because many contract NCOs enlisted simply for better pay and living conditions and left the service immediately after their initial enlistments. Regulations were then changed so conscripts could opt for contract service after six months of conscripted service. In 2016, policies were again changed to allow newly inducted conscripts to immediately sign two-year conscription contracts (instead of their one-year conscription period).[17] The most likely recruiting pools for contract NCOs are conscripts who have successfully completed their conscription and civilians who have some sort of militarily useful vocation. There appears to be strong recruiting efforts at vocational schools, including for females who may fill noncombat positions. One interesting aspect of recruiting is that it is not uncommon to see the wives of contract NCOs and officers enlist as contract NCOs. These spouses often serve as uniformed cooks, admin support, and radio/telephone operators (in garrison). This is beneficial for the spouses for financial reasons, as they earn more as uniformed service members than performing the same duties as civilians, and beneficial for the government, because it does not have to provide additional housing allowances, which is a significant cost savings.[18]

In the Russian system, if a person wants to lead he should become an officer; if he desires to be a "trigger puller" or perform a vocation, he should become a contract NCO. If a contract soldier desires to be a missile crewman, he will be a missile crewman for his entire career. The Russian system encourages specialization and technical expertise. There does not appear to be any out-of-branch or broadening assignments for enlisted soldiers or officers. Such practices would be contrary to the mission to develop experts at their chosen profession. Although this appears to be a "dead-end" for Westerners, it is not so much for Russians. Russian contract NCOs appear to be content with this system, likely in part due to the Russian military pay system (discussed later), which is well structured for this contract NCO system. The Russian

Contract NCO
Image Courtesy: Russian Ministry of Defense

[16] Viktor Khudoleyev, "Serve Worthily!" *Krasnaya Zvezda* Online, 1 April 2016, <http://redstar.ru/index.php/newspaper/item/28331-sluzhite-dostojno>, accessed 1 May 2016.

[17] Yelena Loriya, and Dmitriy Litovkin, "Two Years for One. For the First Time, Conscripts Given Right to Turn Down Draft Service Immediately and Sign Two-Year Contract," *Izvestiya* Online, 26 February 2016, <http://izvestia.ru/news/605056#ixzz41HhAj5bx>, accessed 1 May 2016.

[18] Anatoliy Yermolin, "Russian Paratroopers' Participation in International Airborne Troops Competitions of 2015 and Preparation for 2016 Contests ," *Ekho Moskvy* Online, 28 November 2015, <http://echo.msk.ru/programs/voensovet/1666594-echo>, accessed 1 May 2016.

contract NCO system is ideal for retaining individuals who do not want to command, lead large units, or move from assignment to assignment. It is designed to retain individuals who simply want to be experts at doing their jobs.[19]

Since Russian contract NCOs fill a different niche than Western NCOs, they are trained differently. The Russian Federation has several different career paths for Russian contract NCOs (who are sometimes referred to as "officer assistants"), but the small unit "leadership" path involves the NCO graduating from an academy whose program lasts two years and nine months. (In the Russian system, contract NCOs are sometimes referred to as "officer assistants") This amount of training is comparable to the amount of education/training a new lieutenant receives while attending a military academy (4-5 years). Hence, although the Russian Federation has a different vision of enlisted professionalization, this does not mean that Russia does not value training and educating its contract NCOs.[20] One thing that does appear certain is that the Russian Federation is not interested in the U.S./Western officer/NCO model: the latter has been observed, evaluated, and rejected.[21]

Officers

If the backbone of Western armies is their NCOs, then the backbone of the Russian Army is the officer corps. Officers are the primary trainers, disciplinarians, and repositories for institutional knowledge in the Russian Armed Forces. The Russian officer education system emphasizes developing expertise in the officer's particular specialty, and begins when the officer is a cadet. Russian military academies do not impart a general university education, as similar institutions do in the West, but instead create competent leaders and experts who immediately begin leading and executing their duties after graduation. The Russian emphasis on specialization precludes such practices as branch details, branch transfers, and out-of-branch assignments.

Airborne cadet in training
Image Courtesy: Vitaly Kuzmin

A system that has a weak or nonexistent NCO corps and relies on a strong officer corps inherently requires a larger number of officers, but, due to this reality and a much

[19] "Sergeant's of a New Formation," *Krasnaya Zvezda* Online, 15 January 2013, <http://www.redstar.ru/index.php/nekrolog/item/6718-serzhantyi-novoy-formatsii>, accessed 1 May 2016.

[20] Charles K. Bartles, "Noncommissioned Officers in the Russian Armed Forces," *OE Watch* Online, March 2016. Anatoliy Yermolin, "Russian Paratroopers' Participation in International Airborne Troops Competitions of 2015 and Preparation for 2016 Contests ," *Ekho Moskvy* Online, 28 November 2015, <http://echo.msk.ru/programs/voensovet/1666594-echo>, accessed 1 May 2016.

[21] Charles K. Bartles, "Balancing: Conscription, Contract Service and a Reserve System," *OE Watch* Online, August 2015.
Vladimir Mukhin, "Military Commissars to Be Responsible for Service in Installments," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* Online, 25 Jun 2015, <http://www.ng.ru/armies/2015-06-26/1_voenkomy.html>, accessed 1 May 2016.

different Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) these officers are distributed throughout the ranks much differently than in Western militaries. In the Russian system, units (battalions, companies, platoons, squads, etc.) tend to be smaller in order to facilitate the officer's command and control, since there is no substantial NCO leadership. Another major difference between Russian and Western armies is that Russian staffs are substantially smaller than their Western equivalents. The combination of these factors means that Russian maneuver officers get ample opportunities to lead.

The typical early years of a career for a maneuver officer will involve a succession of assignments that have the officer commanding and deputy commanding platoons, companies, and battalions. Only after mastering his specific branch of arms (motorized rifle, tank, artillery, etc.), will he be sent to a yearlong training course, such as the Combined Arms Academy, to learn the skills needed to command a combined arms unit, such as a regiment or brigade. Non-maneuver officers have similar career paths. In today's Russian Army, the practice of having relatively small staffs and the development of the institution of NCOs and warrant officers to conduct technical tasks (in conjunction with the 2008 "New Look" reforms, which condensed regiments and divisions into brigades and removed most "cadre units" from the books) has likely created a Russian Armed Forces with a ratio of officers to enlisted soldiers on par with most Western Armies.

The Russian General Staff System

One of the most interesting differences between the armies of the post-Soviet Union and the West is the presence of Prussian-style General Staffs. These general staff systems provide far more than just a planning apparatus; they also function as doctrine and capability developers. The U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff is often equated with the Russian General Staff, but this is a great understatement of the Russian General Staff's importance. The Russian Chief of the General Staff has far more authority than any flag grade officer in the U.S. military. In terms of equivalency, the Russian General Staff has the same responsibilities for long-term planning duties conducted by the U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense and unified combatant commanders; elements of strategic transportation performed by USTRANSCOM; doctrinal and capabilities development, as well as equipment procurement for all branches of the Ministry of Defense. It even has an inspector general-like function for ensuring that its standards and regulations are adhered to.[22]

Emblem of the Russian General Staff
Image Courtesy: Russian Ministry of Defense

[22] The term "doctrine" in this paper refers exclusively to doctrine at the tactical and operational levels. The General Staff publishes field manuals (Боевой устав по подготовке и ведению общевойскового боя) covering these activities. Russia's official "Military Doctrine," as was published in December of 2014, much more closely resembles a U.S. "National Security Strategy" document than U.S. military documents such as "AirLand Battle." Russia's official military doctrines are produced by the Russian Security Council, albeit likely with input from the

In the Russian system, the General Staff is responsible for operational-strategic level planning. Russia has a fairly nuanced view of the differences between the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of military science. It believes that the difference between these levels is based upon the scope of mission, not simply the size of the unit. For example, a brigade fighting under an Army Group would be considered a tactical asset, but the same brigade fighting independently in a different situation could be considered a tactical-operational asset. Generally speaking, the General Staff's operational planning duties typically involve echelons above brigade level, or, in Russian parlance, "operational art."

Proponency for strategic planning resides with the Russian Security Council, which is an inter-ministerial body that is chaired by high-level officials, weighted heavily with the intelligence and security services. Although the Russian Security Council is the chief proponent of Russian strategy, the Chief of the Russian General Staff does sit on council, bridging operational art to the national security strategy. The General Staff does far more than just plan operations. It also has responsibility for the use of "foresight" to develop the theory and practice of future war.[23] In Russian military thought foresight is directly linked to military science, with military science being the science of future war.[24] The General Staff's responsibility to predict the nature of future war makes it the logical place (in the Soviet/Russian system) for doctrine and capability development for the entire Ministry of Defense.

Just as important as what the General Staff does is what the General Staff does not do. It does not have operational control of the force. Although there were Goldwater-Nichols-like reforms that removed operational control from the branch chiefs (Ground Forces, Air Force, etc.) and placed the operational control of most forces with regional commands, little has changed with the General Staff's role as operational planners and capability and doctrine developers since Soviet times. Probably the biggest change in the last several years has been downsizing to better align the size of the staff to the size of the military that it plans for, and the removal of some finance responsibilities, due to a few high profile corruption gaffes.[25] The Chief of the General Staff does have day-to-day control of the Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU), a directorate of the General Staff, which, in turn, controls the GRU Spetsnaz Brigades and several strategic assets, including the Russian Airborne, which functions as a strategic reserve. In combat however, these war-fighting assets would be operationally controlled by the appropriate field commander, not by the Chief of the General Staff.

The General Staff Personnel System: How Russia Does "Joint"

The Russian General Staff system is based upon the Prussian-style general staff system, and so has retained its personnel system. Unlike the U.S. military, officers do not rotate through "joint" assignments. In the Russian system, "joint" matters, such as operational-strategic level planning and capabilities and doctrine development, are handled exclusively by General Staff personnel. Officers who serve in the prestigious General Staff are usually selected at

General Staff.

[23] *Military Encyclopedia*, Moscow: *Voyenizdat*, 1983, 585.

[24] Dr. Jacob Kipp, *The Methodology of Foresight and Forecasting in Soviet Military Affairs*, Soviet Army Studies Office, 1988, <www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a196677.pdf>, accessed 30 October 2015.

[25] Charles K. Bartles, "Defense Reforms of Russian Defense Minister Anatolii Serdyukov," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 24, no. 1 (2011).

the major/lieutenant colonel level (late twenties/early thirties). They permanently replace their branch insignia with general staff insignia and become General Staff personnel. Since matters of military doctrine and procurement are decided by the General Staff, it is considered essential that officers break their fixation with their branch of service (Ground Forces, Navy, Air Force, etc.) and branch of arms (infantry, armor, artillery, etc.) in order to avoid the "trade union mentality" that hinders military doctrine and procurement matters in Western armies.[26] Once selected for the General Staff, a Ground Forces officer will usually spend the remainder of his career doing staff work at the Army Group, Military District, and General Staff Headquarters in Moscow. (Officers in other branches of service will have slightly different assignments.) These officers are subject matter experts about the branches of service and specialties in which they have previously served, and will be closely associated with these specialties, as planners, for the remainder of their careers (i.e., a signal officer in the General Staff, will typically always work signal issues). High level positions of leadership within the General Staff (for example, Chief of the Main Operations Directorate) are exclusively held by officers from maneuver (tank, motorized rifle, artillery, missile) branches, but specialty directorates, such as topography and electronic warfare will be led by an officer of the appropriate specialty.[27]

This system develops a caste of professional planners for handling operational-strategic matters, while freeing the remainder of the Russian Armed Forces officer corps to continue to specialize in their particular branch of service and arms at the tactical level. An obvious implication of this personnel system is that there are different career paths for officer advancement. Although selection for the General Staff is prestigious, it is not the desired path for all officers. Maneuver officers who enjoy command may best serve by not pursuing assignment to the General Staff. On this path officers get a chance to hone their tactical skills, since there is no necessity for service in joint or out-of-branch assignments. However, there still are educational requirements, such as attendance in a combined arms academy. Promotions typically happen much faster in the Russian military than in the U.S. (it is not uncommon to see a 32-year-old battalion commander), and command tours have been known to last up to six years. In this system, a brigade commander (on the tactical path) would have more years of command experience than his U.S. counterpart due to the ability to specialize in tactical leadership.[28]

Although the Chief of the General Staff is in charge of the General Staff, he does not necessarily need to be brought up through the general staff career path. Whatever career path an officer is on, if he reaches the highest ranks in the Russian military, invariably he will have several assignments in the General Staff. An interesting example of how career

[26] Although this system does alleviate many resource allocation problems within the Ministry of Defense, there are still significant battles for economic resources that the Ministry of Defense must contend with. Due to its Soviet heritage, Russia has powerful militarized intelligence and security services (FSB, Border Troops, MVD-VV, etc.) that directly compete with the Ministry of Defense for resources. This resource competition is especially acute now, because Russia no longer believes that the primary threat to its sovereignty stems from overt military invasion, but instead from social movements in the flavor of the "color revolutions," the Arab Spring, and the Maidan movement. This perception of threat could increasingly divert certain funds away from the Ministry of Defense to militarized security forces with more of a dedicated internal security mission.

[27] Donnelly, 139-145.

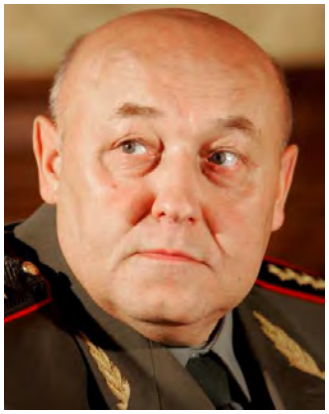
[28] Dr. Lester Grau and Charles K. Bartles, "Tactical Combined Arms Leadership in the Russian Army: Operational Flexibility Through Tactical Rigidity," publication forthcoming.

General Gerasimov

1977-1984	Commander of a Platoon, Company, and Battalion
1984-1987	Student at the Malinovskiy Armor Academy
1987-1993	Chief Of Staff of a Regiment, Division
1993-1995	Commander of a Division
1995-1997	Student, Voroshilov General Staff Academy
1997-2001	First Deputy Commander of the Moscow Military District
2001-2003	Deputy Commander, Chief of Staff, Army Group Commander
2003-2005	Chief of Staff of the Far East Military District
2005-2006	Chief of the Main Operations Directorate of the General Staff
2006-2009	Commander of the Leningrad Military District
2009-2010	Commander of the Moscow Military District.
2010-2012	Deputy Chief of the General Staff.
2012-2012	Commander of the Central Military District
2012-Present	Chief of the General Staff & Member of the Russian Security Council

General Makarov

1971-1977	Commander of a Platoon, Company, and Battalion
1977-1979	Student at the Frunze Academy
1979-1980	Deputy Commander of a Regiment
1980-1981	Commander of a Regiment
1981-1991	Deputy Commander of a Division, Commander of Two Divisions
1991-1993	Student, Voroshilov General Staff Academy (graduated with Gold Medal)
1993-1993	Chief of Staff of the Russian Peacekeeping Forces in Tajikistan
1993-1996	Deputy Commander of an Army Group
1996-1998	Commander of an Army Group (2nd Tank Army)
1998-1999	Deputy Commander (for Coastal Defense) of the Baltic Fleet
1999-2002	Chief of Staff, Deputy Commander, of the Moscow Military District
2002-2007	Commander of the Siberian Military District
2007-2008	Armaments Directorate Chief of the General Staff
2008-2012	Chief of the General Staff & Member of the Russian Security Council
2013-Present	Inspector General of the Ministry of Defense



General Baluyevsky

1970-1972	Commander of a Platoon, Company
1972-1974	Operations Officer on an Army Group Staff
1974-1976	A Senior Operations Officer on an Army Group Staff
1977-1980	Student at the Frunze Academy
1980-1982	A Senior Officer in the Operations Directorate of a Military District
1982-1988	A Senior Officer, then Chief of the Operations Branch of the Main Operations Directorate of the General Staff
1988-1990	Student, Voroshilov General Staff Academy (graduated with Gold Medal)
1990-1991	Special Assistant to Deputy Defense Minister Colonel-General Achalov
1992-1993	Deputy Chief of the Operations Department of the Main Operations Directorate of the General Staff
1992-1993	Chief of the Operations Department of the Main Operations Directorate of the General Staff
1993-1995	Deputy Commander of Russian Ground Forces in the Transcaucasia
1995-1997	Deputy Chief of the Main Operations Directorate of the General Staff
1997-2001	First Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces & Chief of the Main Operations Directorate of the General Staff
1997-2004	First Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces
2004-2008	Chief of the General Staff & Member of the Russian Security Council
2005-2006	Chief of the Joint Staff of the Collective Security Treaty Organization
2008-2012	Deputy Secretary of the Russian Security Council
2012-present	Retirement

Images Courtesy:
Russian Ministry of Defense

progression can occur in the Russian Armed Forces is to look at the last three Chiefs of the General Staff, noting the differences in assignments between General Gerasimov (command path) and General Makarov (command path) in contrast to General Baluyevsky (General Staff path). These officers all reached the apex of a Russian military career, by becoming the Chief of the General Staff. Although there are two different ways of achieving this end, neither path is considered better or worse, just different.

General Staff Academy, Moscow Russia
Image Courtesy: Russian Ministry of Defense

Regardless of career path, the selection process for the absolute highest levels of the Russian officer corps is very much predicated upon the officer's performance at the General Staff Academy. The top graduates receive the coveted "Gold Medal," and, although not a prerequisite, the top military positions are often held by former Gold Medal winners from the Voroshilov General Staff Academy. Any mention of General Gerasimov being a Gold Medal winner is conspicuously absent from his posted biographical information, and in this aspect General Gerasimov differs from many of his predecessors; however, his combat experience and success at a volatile time in the North Caucuses apparently have made up for any academic slights.[29]

The role of the General Staff in the Russian system is far more important than the role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the U.S. system. The General Staff is much more than a general's personal staff; they are an elite caste of operational-strategic planners who also guide doctrine and capability development, freeing the remainder of the Russian Armed Forces officer corps to continue to specialize in their particular branch of service and arms at the tactical level. The General Staff system allows officers to specialize as operational or tactical planners. Unlike Western officers, General Staff officers are not required to divide their time between both of these challenging endeavors. Selection for service in the General Staff is considered prestigious, and means that an officer is one of the best in his field; there is no stigma associated with "staff work" in the Russian system. This is best exemplified by the fact that the most coveted position in the Russian Armed Forces is not a senior command, but instead becoming Russia's senior operation-tactical planner, the Chief of the General Staff.

The Reserve System

The Russian Federation Ministry of Defense has been tinkering with wide-scale reforms of the military reserve system for several years. The current reserve system was inherited from the Soviet Union, and was designed for supporting a doctrine that required maintaining a large strategic reserve of troops that could be mobilized in the event of large-scale warfare. It was composed of conscripts and officers who had completed their mandatory service obligation and had been discharged from active service, with rare and infrequent call-ups to

[29] Insights from author's conversation with noted Russian military scholar Dr. Jacob Kipp on 30 October 2015.

test mobilization capabilities. Another consequence of the Soviet Union's mass mobilization doctrine was the necessity to maintain units and equipment for these mobilized reservists. These units were/are manned by small full-time cadres that would keep the equipment serviceable and maintain enough institutional knowledge to bring the mobilized reserve up to some level of combat readiness before deployment. Many of these "cadre units" were disbanded after the 2009 "New Look" reforms, as there was a belief that resources were being wasted on maintaining a mass mobilization capability to the detriment of bringing active units up to full levels of operational readiness.[30]

There has been some debate about whether Russia needs to maintain a large strategic reserve or should switch to more of an operational reserve. Opinions vary between two major camps, the reformers saying that an operational reserve would do far more to enhance security because an operational reserve would be smaller, better trained, more able to quickly become combat ready in a national emergency, and more likely to called in an emergency, while older retired senior officers believe that the capability to mass mobilize should be maintained at all costs. The first talk of an operational reserve was in 2009, when the Defense Ministry announced that 60,000 junior officers were to be dismissed from active service, but would be afforded the opportunity to contract into a reserve status that would pay on average 20,600 rubles ($870) per month. The idea of establishing an operational reserve has apparently gained some traction, based upon pronouncements by General Gerasimov. Reserve reforms may be one of the few instances in the highly controversial arena of Russian military reform, where both conservatives and reformers get what they want. Russia appears to be driving full ahead with a reserve system that maintains the large strategic reserve for potential mass mobilization, while developing a better operational reserve that can be called upon more frequently.[31]

Lieutenant General Vasily Tonkoshkurov, Chief of the Mobilization Directorate
Image Courtesy: Russian Ministry of Defense

[30] Charles K. Bartles, "Defense Reforms of Russian Defense Minister Anatolii Serdyukov," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 24, no. 1 (2011): 55–80.
Yuriy Gavrilov, "The General Staff Has Been Authorized To Report: Russia Is Creating Special Operations Forces," *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* Online, 7 March 2013, <http://rg.ru/2013/03/06/sily-site.html>, accessed 1 May 2016.

[31] Charles K. Bartles, "Russian MoD Wants U.S. Style Reserve System?" *OE Watch* Online, April 2013.
"Reserve to Be Formed of Officers to be Dismissed from Service," *Interfax-AVN*, 21 January 2009.
"Laid-Off officers Will Be Put on Defense Ministry's Staff Reserve," *Interfax*, 22 October 2008.
V.A. Ordinsky, "A New System to Train and Accumulate Trained Reservists and Their Service in the Reserves," *Military Thought* 4 (2008), pp. 78–82
"Mobilization Vacuum: Military Reform Does not Guarantee the Training of a Highly Skilled Reserve for the Russian Army," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* Online, 2 June 2010, <http://www.ng.ru/editorial/2010-06-02/2_red.html>, accessed 1 May 2016.

Interestingly, the Russian Federation appears to be experimenting with two different models for an operational reserve. The first looks very similar to the US reserve system, consisting of an active reserve component and inactive reserve component (Individual Ready Reserve), with the Russian operational reserve conducting two-week annual training requirements, receiving monthly stipends, and being completely voluntary. The intent is to maintain a cadre of officers and enlisted soldiers who regularly train with particular active units; in the event of their unit's mobilization, the reservist would be called to duty to provide support or backfill as needed. In the Vostok-2014 military exercise, Russia experimented with a new way to use an operational reserve by way of new stand-alone units called territorial-defense battalions (BTO).[32] Territorial defense units have appeared elsewhere in Eastern Europe and usually consist of relatively lightly armed infantry who are assigned to secure critical infrastructure in the rear. These forces are not intended to serve in high-intensity combat operations abroad. The intent of this form of an operational reserve is to unburden the active duty force of these duties, allowing the latter greater freedom of movement to conduct combat operations.[33] Although, Russia is still experimenting with reserve force employment options, it appears to be gravitating toward the territorial-defense unit model.

Pay in the Russian Army

The Russian Federation has a complex system for paying its officers and contract NCOs, which requires some description. The biggest difference between the U.S. and Russian systems of military pay is the concept of base salary and entitlements. In the U.S., monetary entitlements (including housing allowances) are almost always a percentage of the base salary; in Russia the base salary is merely the starting point for calculating entitlements. A few entitlements are allotted by a fixed ruble amount, but the majority are calculated by indexing the base salary by a given percentage. The total sum of these additional entitlements is always many times greater than the soldier's base salary.

The two most important criteria for pay are the serviceman's rank and position held (servicemen receive both salaries). Rank-based salaries are based on equivalent responsibility/skill levels of federal government employees, while the position salary is based upon the soldier's current duty assignment, which must be on a valid TO&E. Positional salaries are typically higher than rank-based salaries, and are set by the Ministry of Defense. (In this system, a lieutenant colonel serving as a battalion commander is paid more than a lieutenant colonel serving in a brigade staff.) Both rank and positional salary tables are pinned to the Russian Federation civilian pay scales and receive equivalent indexes for inflation. Interestingly, officers are legally considered a type of contract serviceman. Their pay and

[32] Charles K. Bartles, "Russia Experiments with Two-Tier Operational Reserve System," *OE Watch* Online, December 2014.
Aleksey Ramm, "It Is Time to Return the Reserve to the Formation," *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer* Online, 8 October 2014, <http://vpk-news.ru/articles/22165>, accessed 1 May 2016.

[33] Charles K. Bartles, "Reserve Capability Development is High Priority for the General Staff," *OE Watch* Online, December 2015.
Lieutenant General Vasily Tonkoshkurov, "Important Priority for the General Staff: Is the Current Personnel System Adequate for Modern Requirements?" *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer* Online, 21 October 2015, <http://vpk-news.ru/articles/27609>, accessed 1 May 2016.

On the March

Image Courtesy: Russian Ministry of Defense

benefits are governed by the same laws, rules, and regulations as their enlisted, non-conscript subordinates, who also serve under contract. Officers and enlisted soldiers serving on contract sign similar contracts for set periods. Although Russian officers and contract soldiers are in the same legal category, there is a sharp distinction between enlisted soldiers serving on contract and officers in the Russian Army; Russian officers are never referred to as "contract officers."

In addition to the base salary officers are paid several additional special pays, which are covered under Article 13 of the Federal Law "On the Status of Serviceman." Most special pays are based on the serviceman's base salary (rank or position). The income a serviceman receives from special pays is often many times greater than the soldier base salary. Article 13 of the Federal Law "On the Status of Serviceman" stipulates that officers receive monthly allowances for the following: length of service, location, hardship and special circumstances duty, exemplary service, and physical fitness, in addition to a supplemental subsistence allowance. There are also several one-time, lump sum payments, and meal and clothing allowances.

The most contentious issue regarding serviceman pay in the Russian military has been housing. In Soviet times, benefits of military service included higher salaries and greater access to fringe benefits, such as free vacation resorts, premium medical facilities, and more educational opportunities for children, but the biggest benefit was access to housing. Housing in the Soviet era was state controlled and difficult to obtain. Military service

guaranteed access to state-provided housing while serving and during retirement. In today's Russia, this arrangement is still maintained, and has stymied some military reform efforts (such as downsizing) due to the legal requirement that officers must be provided housing (usually in the form of an apartment) before retirement. In past years housing has been in such short supply that some officers have been kept on active duty years past their planned retirement dates before housing could be provided. The Russian Federation has made great efforts to right this issue, including the development of a military-subsidized home mortgage program. This issue has been largely resolved, but occasionally embarrassing incidents still come to light. In general, Russia's economic situation has greatly improved since the early years of the Russian Federation, and the currency of stories of destitute Russian serviceman have long passed. Russian military salaries, to include the intelligence and security services, are now dependable and somewhat competitive with the civilian sector. Although the accompanying graphic is intended to display information just for enlisted MoD soldier's serving on contract, many of the pays and allowances are equally applicable to officers and other military personnel serving in other branches of government (MVD-VV, FSB, Border Troops, etc.).[34] Conscripts are paid a small fraction of what contract NCOs and officers earn, but are provided free meals and housing. In 2012, it was reported that most conscripts earned $30-50 a month, but in conjunction with special duty pays, some conscripts could earn up to $200 per month.[35]

Ethics in the Russian Armed Forces

Stomping out military corruption has been a top priority of the Russian civilian and military leadership for quite some time. Due to the Russian Federation's Tsarist/Soviet past, Russia, and by inheritance the Russian military, has developed a nuanced view towards corruption, which makes its eradication difficult. Crimes of theft against individuals are viewed the same as in the West, but crimes of theft against the state are seen as much more tolerable. Although they are seen as somewhat tolerable, they are still embarrassing The most recent high profile military corruption fiasco has involved the recent conviction and sentencing of Colonel General Vladimir Chirkin, the former Ground Troops Commander-in-Chief. Although there have been other high profile gaffes, such as Airborne Troops Commander-in-Chief Colonel General Shamanov dispatching an airborne unit to interfere in the prosecutorial investigation of a family member, the Chirkin case has garnered substantial interest, as it is unusual for such a high-ranking and prominent official to be tried, convicted, and sentenced. One of the most interesting aspects of the case is the involvement of the Chief of the Russian General Staff, General Valeri Gerasimov. General Gerasimov is an adamant supporter of General Chirkin and asked that Chirkin either be found not guilty or, if found guilty, that he

[34] Charles K. Bartles, "Pay in the Russian Military," *OE Watch* Online, November 2015.
"Military Financial Literacy," *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer* Online, 23 September 2015, <http://www.vpk-news.ru/articles/27161>, accessed 1 May 2015.

[35] Dmitry Gorenburg, "New Pay Structure for Conscripts Announced," Blog post on Russian Military Reform, January 6, 2012, <https://russiamil.wordpress.com/2012/01/06/new-pay-structure-for-conscripts-announced/>, accessed 1 May 2016.

be given no prison time. In the Russian system, personal connections and loyalties often trump institutional governance, and this appears to be such a case. It is important to note that these views towards "relaxed morals" are not reserved solely for senior leaders, as the Russian military justice system is now being amended to allow some crimes that once required dismissal from service to now allow lesser punishments. There appears to be concern that the previous regulation was weeding out too many good officers who had a few peccadilloes. In the Russian view, it is far better to have an army with the best and brightest, albeit ethically challenged, than an army of the ethical, but less capable. Undoubtedly, as Russia continues experimenting with undeclared wars and indirect and asymmetric methods, there is a need for officers who can operate in the grey area that results when what needs to be done conflicts with the letter of the law.

Colonel General Vladimir Chirkin
Former Ground Forces Commander-in-Chief
Image Courtesy: Russian Ministry of Defense

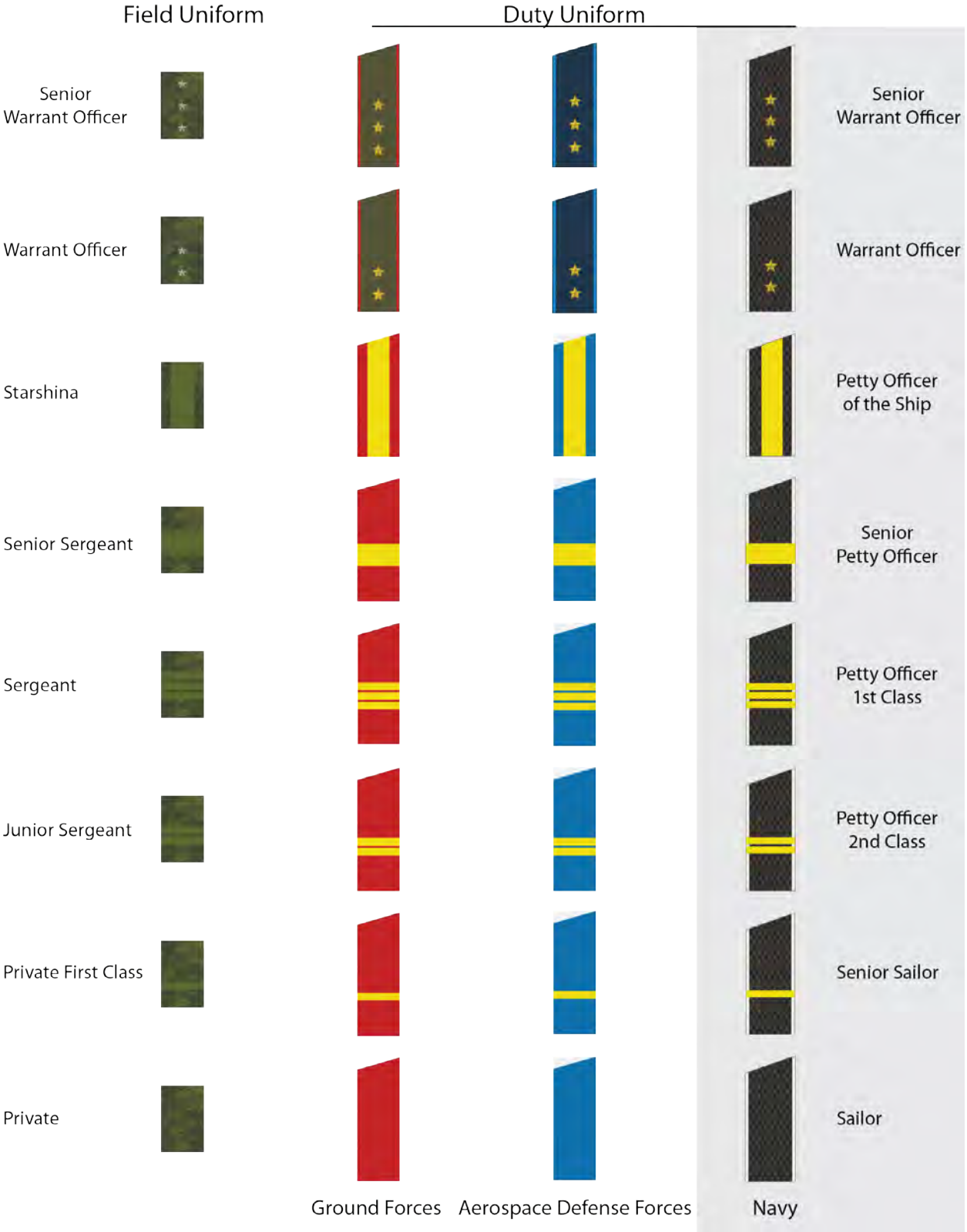
Perhaps the reason that the Russian military is having difficulty dealing with corruption is the view that Russia, and most Russians, have regarding the relationship between what is legally and morally right. These two concepts are very different in the West, but in Russia, whatever is considered "morally right" is usually interpreted to be "legally right." This can be seen in state asset seizures of wealthy oligarchs' property, the annexation of the Crimea, and in the conduct of an undeclared war Eastern Ukraine (in order to destabilize the Ukrainian government, a government which Russia perceives to be illegitimate and installed by the U.S.). This tendency to interpret morally right as legally right make the Russian Armed Forces, intelligence, and security services well suited to operating in the ambiguous "Grey Zone" that many operations are conducted and will occur. However, this way of thinking is certainly making the eradication of corruption difficult, as subordinates see their superiors growing wealthy from graft, and decide that it is only right to take a little for one's self. [36]

Rank Structure of the Russian Armed Forces

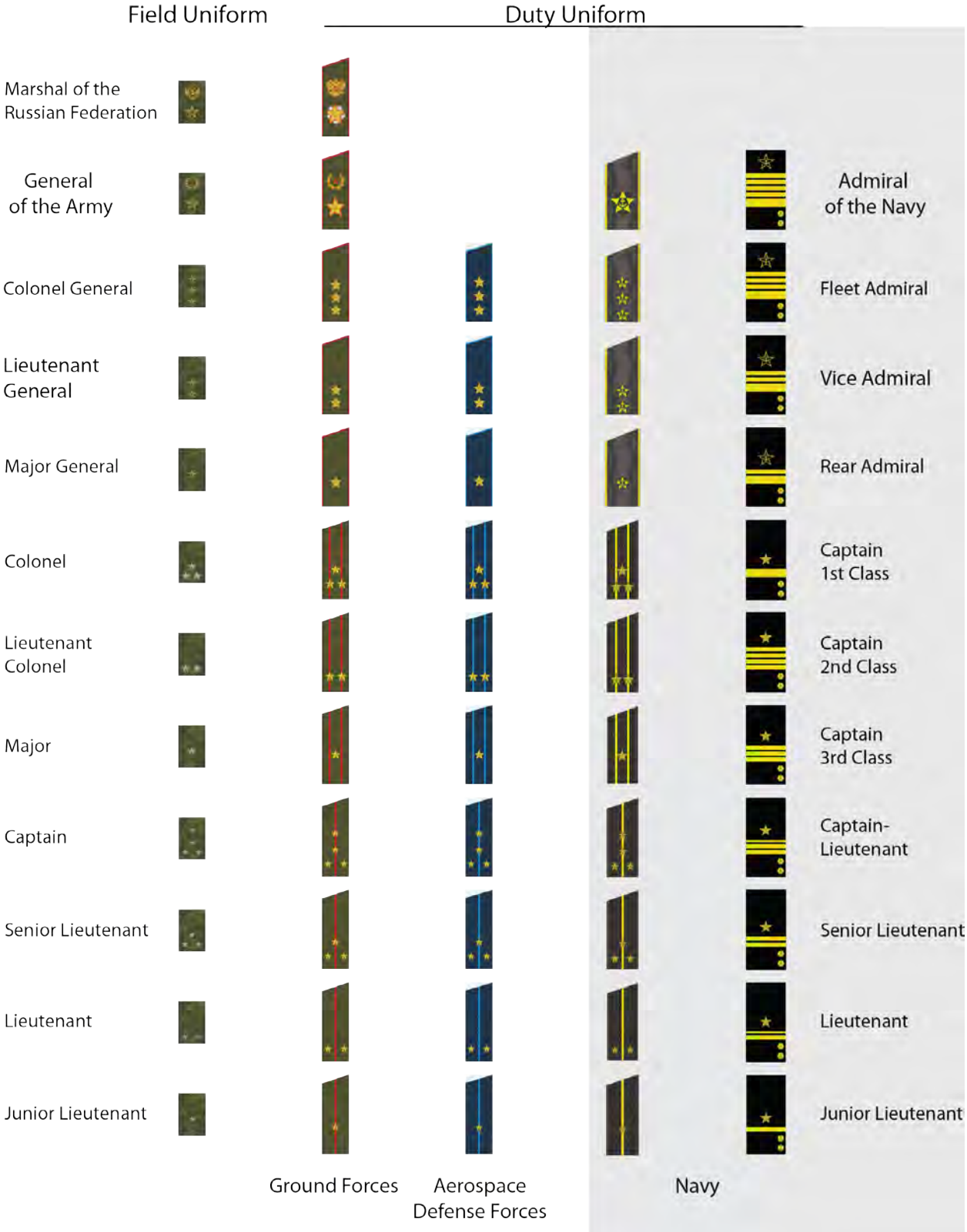
Some Soviet and even Tsarist uniform insignia are now being reintroduced into the Russian Armed Forces. In 2013, the Russian uniform regulations were amended so that a Russian four-star equivalent flag officer would wear one large star, instead of four smaller stars. In

[36] Charles K. Bartles, "Ethics, Military Corruption, and the Grey Zone," *OE Watch* Online, July 2016.
Charles K. Bartles, "A Russian (Pragmatic) View of Army Ethics," *OE Watch* Online, October 2015.
Sergey Shishkin, "Generals' Advocacy," *Kommersant* Online, 3 September 2015, <http://kommersant.ru/doc/2802382>, accessed 1 May 2016.
Velimir Razuvayev, "Punishment Will Be Lessened for Corrupt Army Officers," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* Online, 10 August 2015, http://www.ng.ru/politics/2015-08-10/1_corruption.html>, accessed 1 May 2016.

Conscript and Contract Serviceman Ranks



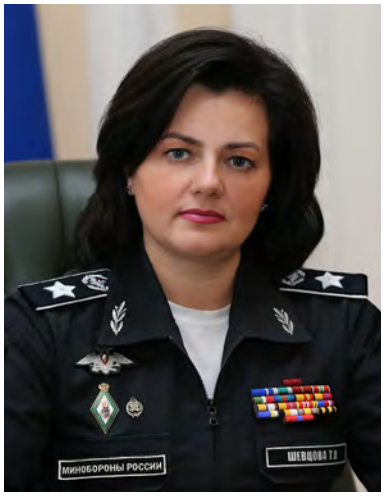
Officer Ranks



late 2016, the Russian Federation announced Russian officers occupying command positions would wear new badges to signify their positions. The new badge has unofficially been dubbed "wings" on account of its appearance, and is reportedly based on traditions from the Tsarist Army. These new badges are worn by commanders-in-chief of branches of the Armed Forces, commanders of military districts and branches of troops, and commanders of divisions, brigades, regiments, and separate battalions. The new symbols also appear on the uniforms of chiefs of military educational institutions and secondary educational institutions (Suvorov and Nakhimov military schools), that are administered by the military authorities. The new badge consists of the Russian tricolor with centrally placed badges of Armed Forces services (Ground Troops, Aerospace Troops, and Navy) or branches of troops (artillery, railroad, engineering, tank troops, etc.) and symbols of military units, military combined formations, and military educational institutions.[37]

Field Training
Image Courtesy: Russian Ministry of Defense

Women in the Military



General Tatyana Shevtsova
Deputy Defense Minister (Finance)
Image Courtesy: Russian MoD

The Russian Federation has a long tradition of women in uniform.[38] Women served in the Soviet military in many capacities in the Second World War. In addition to agricultural and industrial work, women served in noncombat positions such as uniformed secretaries, translators, nurses, and block wardens. Although rare, the Soviet Union was the only belligerent that utilized women in combat roles. Soviet women served as air defenders, in the infantry, and as snipers. There were also three women's air force regiments including the famous 46th "Taman" Guards Night Bomber Aviation Regiment (known as the "Nachthexen" or night witches by the Germans). In the modern Russian military, women still regularly serve, but not in combat arms roles. As previously mentioned, it is not uncommon to see the wives of contract NCOs and officers enlist as contract NCOs. These spouses often serve as uniformed cooks, admin support, and radio/telephone operators (in garrison). But women may also serve in their own right, and are often encountered as medical and communications fields, in officer and contract NCO capacities. Women do not serve in combat arms branches,

[37] Aleksey Ramm, "Officers Will Be Denoted by Wings, *Izvestiya* Online, 6 December 2016, <http://izvestia.ru/news/649705>, accessed 16 December 2016.

[38] One of the most famous was Nedezhda Durova, who disguised herself as a man and served as a Russian officer for nine years in the Mariupol Hussars. She fought in the 1807 and 1812-1814 Wars against Napoleon. Alexsander Pushkin, the famous Russian poet, disclosed her story to Russia. Her book, "The Cavalry Maiden" is well known in Russia and Indiana University Press has published an excellent translation of it.

but this does mean they only serve out of harm's way. Women serve in Russia's militarized intelligence services, and there have been reports of women fighting in various capacities on both sides of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine. Although the U.S. and Russia both utilize women in their Armed Forces, U.S. observers will notice significant systemic differences. It is important to keep in mind that Russian servicewomen serve in the Russian military in the context of a broader Russian culture. It is common for Russian women to wear high-heals and other ornamentation in field uniforms, something that would be unacceptable in the U.S. for many reasons. They are generally treated as women first, and soldiers second. This is in stark contrast to the U.S. system, but it appears to be acceptable by all parties in Russia. Red Star [*Красная Звезда*], the daily Russian military newspaper, runs a weekly picture and short biography of "Miss Red Star," an attractive young female who is serving the Armed Services in uniform or as a civilian. Sexual harassment, in a Russian context, is apparently not an issue in the Russian Armed Forces. And although it almost certainly happens, it likely happens at no greater level than encountered in Russian civil society. In short, there are obvious differences in the way women serve in the U.S. and Russia, but Russian servicewoman are treated as professionals and serve in the Russian military in a way acceptable to the military, women, and Russian society as a whole.

Contract NCOs Conducting Field Training
Image Courtesy: Russian Ministry of Defense

Conclusion

The Russian Federation inherited a conscript system and an officer-heavy military. This system has been converted into a hybrid system of enlisted manning with conscripts and professional NCOs. Although Russia likely could not convert to a full professionally manned army for economic reasons, the Russian higher leadership seems to have little interest in achieving such an end state. While Russian conscripts serve only one year, due to a different civilian education system and the state DOSAAF program, new enlistees do not necessarily enter the military without militarily useful skills as their American counterparts. The Russian Federation still desires to maintain some large-scale mass mobilization capability that a mass conscription system supports well. In terms of the role of its officers and professional enlisted soldiers, Russia has decided to pursue a much different model of enlisted professionalization than the one practiced in the West. Except in regard to small unit leadership, leadership is the sole purview of the officer corps. At a time when the U.S. is broadening the education and experience of its NCO Corps, the Russian Federation is creating enlisted professionals who are experts in their fields, but little else. Russia does not desire to create enlisted leaders, it wants enlisted technical specialists. Russian professional enlisted soldiers' assignments invariably involve learning, practicing, or teaching their trade. In this aspect, the Russian professional enlisted soldiers mirror their officers. The Russian system is not designed to produce "jacks-of-all-trades," the Russian system is intended to create experts in a chosen military specialty for the conduct of war.