

Irek Baischew, Leipzig

Short presentation

International Forum 17.11.2021, Wijhe, Moscow, Ufa

Thank you for the invitation to participate in the forum. Please let me introduce myself. My name is Irek Baischew. I was born in Ufa and since 1992, I have been living in Leipzig, Germany. I am active as an entrepreneur.

Besides my work as an entrepreneur, I am interested in the history of the Bashkirs and their involvement in the military campaigns of 1812-1815 in Europe. I have also committed myself to the memory of their involvement during this period. In 2003, on the 190th anniversary of the Battle of the Nations in Leipzig, together with Nasur Yuruzhbaev, we installed a memorial to the Bashkirs in Leipzig, next to the Russian Orthodox Church, which I sponsored.

In 2006, I installed a memorial to the Bashkirs in Dresden, as a memory of the participation of the Bashkirs in the battle of Dresden in 1813.

In 2013, during the restoration work on the spire of the Church of St. Lawrence in the city of Schwarzburg in Thuringia, a metal arrow was gilded with the help of my sponsorship. The arrow was originally fired by a Bashkir warrior in April 1814 as a demonstration of his skills in handling the bow and arrow, and was later replaced with a metal one by the Germans. In addition, together with the help of members of the church and my financial support, we installed a memorial plaque describing this event on the church. Now, the golden arrow looks very beautiful, especially in good weather.

During the Napoleon Wars, Bashkir riders fought alongside Russian troops. In the picture below depicts Russian troops crossing the IJseel River in Wijhe, in the Netherlands. In order to cross the IJseel River, the 1st Bashkir regiment, under the command of Gagarin, build a pontoon bridge.

Figure 1: Pontoon Bridge over the IJssel River build by the 1st Bashirk Regiment



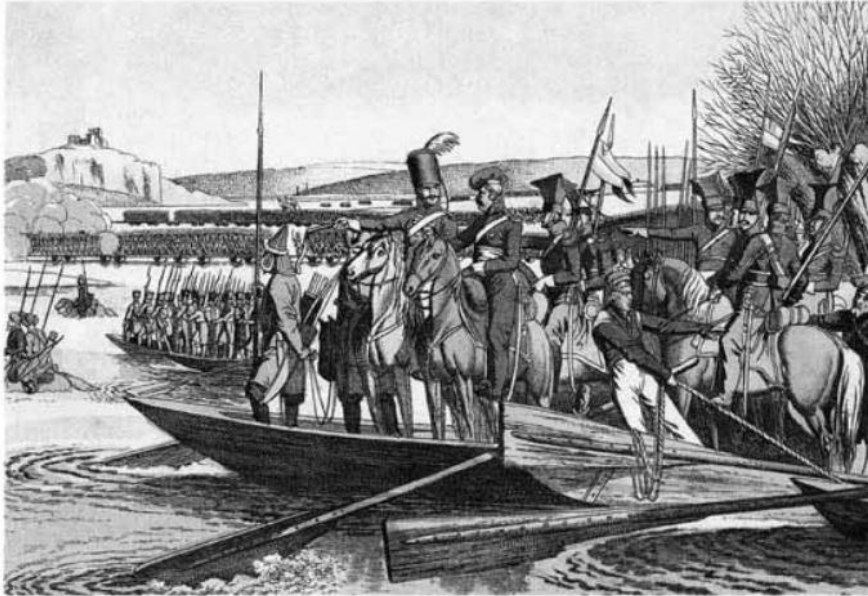
There are two more pictures parallel of these events. The following two pictures show crossings of the Rhine River, where there are also Bashkir soldiers to be seen.

Figure 2: Bashkirs crossing the Rhine River



The third picture shows the passage of the Silesian army of Marshal Blucher across the Rhine, where it can be seen that there is a Bashkir standing in the front of the boat, specifically a boat of Marshal Blucher:

Figure 3: Bashkir and Silesian army under Marshal Blucher crossing Rhine River



Переход союзной армии через Рейн.
Гравюра неизвестного художника
первой четв. XIX в.
ГИМ. (Внизу)

Let's concentrate in more detail on the event of the crossing of the Rhine on the night of January 1, 1814 by the army of Marshal Blucher near the village of Kaup. Here, the Bashkirs played a major role. It was the Bashkirs who very quickly and secretly built a pontoon bridge over which the army could cross and suddenly attacked the French positions. This moment is also well described in the historical novel of the famous German writer Sabine Ebert.

All this suggests that the participation of the Bashkirs in the campaigns of 1812-1814 was not limited to intelligence activities, sending mail, or guarding prisoners. In these campaigns, the engineering skills of the Bashkirs were manifested in the construction of pontoon bridges for crossing rivers. This skill is very important for the rapid transfer of forces.

The ability to rapidly built bridges can be explained by the way life of the Bashkirs as a nomadic people. Bridges built in Europe were usually constructed as a connection of trade routes and in a way to last for very long times. For the Bashkirs in the life of nomads, however, it was necessary to quickly cross the river and transfer wagon trains, herds, people, etc. to the other side and continue their nomadic lifestyle. Therefore, they were masters of fast and easy pontoon crossing, using a light wooden structure covered with linen fabric, treated with tar or leather.

I want to note that there may be other aspects of an active participation of the Bashkirs in the campaigns of 1812-1814, which are not yet known to us, but they are worth studying.

The Russian state is a multinational state, where every nation brings its own unique flavour. Coverage of the contribution to the history of the Russian state by peoples other than the Russian one also has the right to more coverage.

Thank you for the attention!
Best regards,
Irek Baischew