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## THE INTERNMENT OF THE HIGHER OFFICERS OF THE QUANTUNG ARMY TO USSR AFTER THE SOVIET-JAPANESE WAR OF 1945

© Sergey V. Karasev<sup>a</sup>, Sergey I. Kuznetsov<sup>b</sup>, Alexey V. Soloviev<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Irkutsk National Research Technical University  
83 Lermontov Str., Irkutsk 664074, Russian Federation

<sup>b</sup> Irkutsk State University  
1 K. Marx Str., Irkutsk 664003, Russian Federation

<sup>c</sup> Honorary citizen of Zabaikalsky Krai  
16 Babushkina Str., Chita 672000, Russian Federation

**Abstract:** The situation of prisoners of war who found themselves in the Soviet Union after the war with Japan, in principle, did not differ from the situation of prisoners of war who were in Soviet camps after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. However, there are two important points in this matter that have affected the entire history of their stay in the Soviet Union. The first is that the Japanese prisoners of war and prisoners of war of other nationalities who fought in the Far East during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War against the Soviet Union, did not make any single shot on its territory, and it is the lack of anger at them most of the Soviet people facilitated their position in captivity. The second, very important point, as a rule, in many works is not covered: its essence is that prisoners of war avoided the situation with the famine in many territories of the USSR in the postwar period-drought, crop failure, etc. According to the norms of content, they had to, and basically received food in accordance with the established norms. Based on the previous studies on the issues of captivity, it can be concluded that the conditions of detention of Japanese prisoners of war in different regions of the USSR were almost the same. In addition, orders, directives, orders, circular letters, as a rule, concerned all the camps of prisoners of war in the territory of the Soviet Union. The difference was only in the climatic conditions of the camp location, the environmental situation in the region, the sphere of labor use of prisoners of war and the completeness of their food and household supplies.

**Keywords:** *Captivity, captured generals, prisoners of war, Emperor, Mancho-Go, Soviet Union, Soviet-Japanese war, The 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, Japan*

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## ИНТЕРНИРОВАНИЕ ВЫСШЕГО ОФИЦЕРСКОГО СОСТАВА КВАНТУНСКОЙ АРМИИ В СОВЕТСКИЙ СОЮЗ ПОСЛЕ СОВЕТСКО-ЯПОНСКОЙ ВОЙНЫ 1945 г.

© С.В. Карасёв<sup>a</sup>, С.И. Кузнецов<sup>b</sup>, А.М. Соловьёв<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Иркутский национальный исследовательский технический университет  
664074, Российская Федерация, г. Иркутск, ул. Лермонтова, 83

<sup>b</sup> Иркутский государственный университет  
664003, Российская Федерация, г. Иркутск, ул. К. Маркса, 1

<sup>c</sup> Почетный гражданин Забайкальского края  
672000, Российская Федерация, г. Чита, ул. Бабушкина, 64

**Аннотация:** Подход к содержанию японских военнопленных, оказавшихся в Советском Союзе после войны с Японией, был стандартным и по сути не отличался от содержания военнопленных других национальностей. Однако то обстоятельство, что японские военнопленные, а также военнопленные других национальностей, воевавшие на стороне Японии, не сделали ни одного выстрела на территории Дальнего Востока, не вызывало у советских людей гнев, что несколько облегчало их положение в плену. Другим важным моментом их содержания, который не рассматривается в других работах, является то, что, несмотря на ситуацию с голодом, возникшую на территории СССР в послевоенный период из-за засухи и неурожая, они должны были обеспечиваться продуктами питания в полном объеме по установленным нормам. Таким образом, исследования позволяют сделать вывод, что отношение к японским военнопленным в различных регионах СССР было практически одинаковым, как и приказы, распоряжения, циркулярные письма, которые охватывали все места заключения военнопленных. Разница состояла только в климатических, географических, экологических условиях конкретного региона и направления использования труда военнопленных, полноте и регулярности снабжения мест заключения необходимыми составляющими.

**Ключевые слова:** плен, пленные генералы, военнопленные, император, Маньчжоу-Го, Советский Союз, Советско-японская война, Вторая мировая война, Япония

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Captivity and internment along with other problems connected with them represent an important part of the international relation history and are, in fact, the history of countries and nations interrelationship. To study their historical, political, international-legal, psychological and philosophical aspects is very important from both practical and humanitarian points of view.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> World War is no exception in this respect and is characterized by the number of prisoners of war up to the order of 35 million. The Soviet Union and Japan were among the participants of this most bloody armed confrontation.

The army of up to 1 072 000 strong was bunched by Japan in the Far East region of the USSR with the purpose of leading active warfare to withstand persistently the advancing military units. The Soviet troops (the RAWP) and some subunits of the Army of Mongolia of the overall strength reaching 1 685 500 confronted the army of Japan.

The military campaign was of a short duration and swift and resulted in many thousands of captives being interned in the USSR.

As for the total number of prisoners of war and interned people, who were found in the captivity in the USSR in 1945 after the Soviet-Japanese war, the figures differ significantly in various sources. Thus, you

can find the number of 609 448 in regard of Japanese captives (163 generals, 26 573 officers and 58 720 petty officers and privates) in the cover-letter by S. Perevertkin, the USSR Home Affairs Vice-Minister, to N. Khrushchov, the First Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee. There is a somewhat different figure to denote the prisoners of war captured at Zabaikalsk, First and Second Far East fronts in Volume 11 of the “Second World War History”. These statistical data are represented in Table 1.

Our work with the documents having custody of records in the Central Archives of the RF Ministry of

**Table 1**  
**The number of prisoners of war captured by the troops of The Worker-Peasant Red Army**  
**Таблица 1**  
**Количество военнопленных, захваченных войсками Рабоче-крестьянской Красной армии**

	Front		Total number of Prisoners
	1 <sup>st</sup> Far Eastern	2 <sup>nd</sup> Far Eastern	
	220 135	107 891	265 964
			593 990

*Based on the Data: The History of World War II, 1930–1945, 1980, p. 253.*

Defence allowed us to make certain figures more precise and identify the number of prisoners of war which is represented in Table 2.

The data regarding the number of prisoners of war issued by department heads of the PCDA at the fronts are somewhat different from the ones submitted in Table 3.

One of the documents having custody of records in the State Military Archives of Russia gives the most detailed picture of enemy prisoners of war and civilians capturing. Taking into consideration the indices found in this document as well as the number of the captives on nationalities in the accounts pertaining to the fronts involved into the military affairs in the Far

East in the period of August-September 1945, it is possible to make the conclusion that 640 369 were taken captives during the whole period of the territory being occupied by the Red Army troops, among them Japanese making up 609 825, Manchurians – 10 263, Korean – 10 668, Chinese – 9 080, Mongolian – 450; other nationalities – 83 (State Military Archives of Russia. F. 1/п. Invent. 01-e, f. 40, s. 18). However, the line of “other nationalities” seems to be a disputable issue. Only 83 people are indicated here (State Military Archives of Russia. F. 1/п. Invent. 01-e, f. 40, s. 18).

It is known that while the 1<sup>st</sup> Red Banner Army reported of finding 83 Russian people in the camps for

**Table 2**

**The number of prisoners of war captured by Soviet troops in the military affair with Japan in 1945**

**Таблица 2**

**Количество военнопленных, захваченных Советскими войсками в военных действиях против Японии в 1945 г.**

Front	Nationalities captured, number of individuals				Total number
	Japanese	Chinese	Koreans	Manchurian	
1st Far East	224 285	6 319	7 326	9 297	267 227
2nd Far East	112 190	–	–	9 627	121 817
Zabaikalski	No nationalities	Were indicated	In the end of the Military affair	Military affair	220 114
Total number					609 158

*Basing on the materials having custody of records at the Central Archives of RF Ministry of Defence, F. 210, 234, 238.*

**Table 3**

**The number of prisoners of war according to the data issued by department heads of People's Commissariat of internal Affairs regarding the prisoners of war cases at the fronts**

**Таблица 3**

**Численность военнопленных по данным начальников отделов Народного комиссариата внутренних дел по делам военнопленных на фронтах**

Front	The total number of captured	Japanese among them
1st Far East	267 225	224 285
2 <sup>nd</sup> Far East	121 817 (an error is in the document. One should read: 121 816)	112 190
Zabaikalski	225 371	209 484
Total	614 413	545 959

*From the Central Archives of the RF Ministry of Defence: F. 210. Invent. 3152, f. 52, s. 194; F. 234. Invent. 3213, f. 422, s. 7; F. 238. Invent. 1584, f. 139, s. 13.*

prisoners of war on the occupied territories (State Military Archives of Russia. F. 1/п. Invent. 01-e, f. 15, s. 46), the 36<sup>th</sup> Army reported of 65. (Central Archives of RF Ministry of Defense. F. 210. Invent. 3152, f. 52, s. 54). Besides, one prisoner of war, a Ukrainian, was not mentioned in the reports (State Military Archives of Russia. F. 1/п. Invent. 01-e, f. 15a, s. 96).

Two prisoners of war of german nationality were mentioned among the ones listed in the former Japanese Army reference of captivity. They were on the territory of Buryat-Mongolian ASSR, though they had arrived there from the European part of the USSR and were not in relation with any prisoners of war captured by the former Japanese Army, nevertheless they were entered into the statistical data (State Military Archives of Russia. F. 1/п. Invent. 01-e, f. 15a, s. 96). Thus, 167 is the number of prisoners of war mentioned in the graph of "other nationalities", whereas the total number of prisoners of war is given in Table 4.

Thus, it can be assumed with a high degree of

**Table 4**

**The total number of prisoners of war captured in the run of the Soviet Union-Japanese war of 1945**

**Таблица 4**

**Общее число военнопленных, захваченных в ходе Советско-японской войны 1945 г.**

Nationality	Number of individuals
Japanese	609 825
Manchurians	10 263
Koreans	10 668
Chinese	9 080
Mongolians	450
Malayans	11
Russians	148
Buryats	5
Tunguses	2
Ukrainians	1
Total	640 453

Compiled basing on the data of the State Military Archives of Russia. F. 1/п. Invent. 01-e, f. 15, s. 46; f. 15a, s. 96; f. 40, s. 18; Central Archives of RF Ministry of Defense F. 219. Invent. 3152, f. 52, s. 54; The Journal of Military History, 1991, no. 4, p. 69.

faithfulness that the total number of prisoners of war reached 640 453, 609 825 Japanese including.

From this number, 15 986 captives died at the fronts, and 12 318 prisoners were departed to the Government of Mongolia (according to the State Military Archives of Russia, F. 1/п. Invent. 01-e, f. 40, s. 257), 2 822 of them having died (according to the data of State Military Archives of Russia, F. 1/п. Invent. 19 τ, f. 6, s. 2). 64 888 were released and sent off directly from the fronts (the State Military Archives of Russia, F. 1/п. Invent. 01-e, f. 15a, s. 96). On the basis of all this, about 547 261 captives could be moved onto the territory of the Soviet Union.

In addition to the captives of non-commissioned ranks and officers, both generals and admirals of the Japanese Army and Fleet and other persons equal to them in the rank in regard of their positions occupied before the capture were departed onto the territory of the USSR. Their numbers, too, differ considerably depending on the sources. Thus, the newspaper of "Pravda" of September 12, 1945 shows their number to be 148, whereas the Report of the USSR Home Affairs Ministry to the Government of the Soviet Union of October 12, 1956 informs of 170 generals (The Journal of Military History, 1991, no. 4, p. 67), while the Report of the USSR Home Affairs Ministry of October 13, 1 056 specifies their number in accordance with the data given in Table 5.

In the course of our work with the documents having custody of records in the State Military Ar-

**Table 5**

**The number of captured generals with regard to their nationalities**

**Таблица 5**

**Количество захваченных генералов с учетом национальности**

Nationality	Number of individuals
Japanese	163
Chinese	24
Korean	1
Mongolian	3
Total	191

Based on the Data: The Journal of Military History, 1991, no. 4, p. 68.

chives of Russia (RSMA) a document was found which allows not only determining a more precise number of generals captured by Soviet troops during the Soviet-Japanese War in 1945, but also making the motives of inconsistent numbers out concerning this category of captives. The document is mentioned in Inventory 1a of the 463/n fund under the title of "Accounting records concerning released and deceased captive generals of the Western and Japanese armies for the period of 1943–1972". The family names of generals, admirals and high rank civilians of Japanese, Chinese, Korean and Mongolian nationalities were listed in it as the ones having accounting records of proceedings in addition to the list covering the names of those captured and interned who belong to the same category and are only supplied with registration cards. Besides, a list of captive generals was separately represented in this inventory without the nationality being indicated.

The investigation of this document revealed that

the notion "captured generals" covers not only service personnel serving in the army in these military ranks, but also retired generals, marshals along with the persons whose position is equated to that of a general. More than that, Manchjow-Go, the Emperor, himself, some of his relatives and just civilians are registered in this list.

Certainly, the resulting list mustn't be looked at as absolutely accurate one due to individual documents being inaccessible, but formerly known documents though never before introduced into scientific work were considered during its making. The military rank and nationality distribution of prisoners of war over the USSR territory is represented in Table 6.

From the data in Table 6, it is followed that the greatest number of captured dignitaries refers to Japanese. They make up 81,25 % of the general number of prisoners of war who belong to this category, whereas the least number refers to captured Korean, Manchurian and Buryat generals which is 1 and makes

Table 6

## The militari rank and nationality distribution of prisoners of war

Таблица 6

## Воинские звания и национальность военнопленных

Nationality	Marshal	General-in-chief	General-leutenant	General-major	General	Rear-admiral	Vice-admiral	Total, individuals
Japan	–	2	63	123	2	3	2	195
Chine	1	3	7	13	–	–	–	24
Manchuria n	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	1
Mongolian	–	–	2	1	1	–	–	4
Korean	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	1
Buryat	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	1
Nonidentif.	–	–	4	10	–	–	–	14
Total	1	5	79	147	3	3	2	240

Compiled on the basis of materials submitted by the State Archives of RF, F. 9401. Invent. 2, f. 98, s. 282–283; f. 134, s. 266, 270, 283; f. 269, s. 11–15, 165–167, 202, 370; State Military Archives of Russia. F. 1-a. Invent. 34, f. 10, s. 1; F. 1/n. Invent. 19 m, f. 6, s. 38–39, 41a; F. 463/n. Invent. 1a, s. 5–26; The Archives of Zabaikalsk Regional Security Service Board, archive f. 222, s. 1–23, 25–40, 45, 47, 99–145; the Archives of Vladimir Region Domestic Affairs Department. F. 10, arch. f. 3250, 3093; the Archives of the Information Center integrated into Khabarovsk Region Domestic Affairs Department. F. 13. Invent. 0021, s. 25; the Archives of ОД-1/ Т2, the penal authority under the control of Ministry of Justice, Russia; Bodies of State Security Service in the Great Patriotic War, 8 volumes. Vol. 2, book 1, 2000, pp. 321–322.

up 0,41 % for each nationality. At the moment of capturing, 8 persons were retired which makes up 3,33 % of the total number of the captives belonging to this category.

Before the capture they occupied different positions. From the biographies of generals kept in the Soviet Union it follows that they were real professionals and they had overcome all the stages of "army service stairs" Their loyalty to Japan, the Emperor causes no doubt and one feels deeply impressed with their efficiency when, following the Emperor's Decree, they surrendered their weapons in arms thus showing their complete fidelity to their duty (Central Archives of the RF Ministry of Defense. F. 210. Invent. 3141, f. 75, s. 45, 108; Invent. 3116, f. 265, s. 41, 46, 61).

While working with the documents having custody of records at the SMA of RF, it was found out that 34 out of the total number of captured generals died, 33 of them being buried or cremated in the Soviet Union. One person, a Chinese, Lyui Lyun Huan by name, also died. He was an Envoy of Mancho-Go in China and belonged to the personalities equated with the highest officers in relation of the positions they occupied before the captivity. His death was caused by hypertension and cardiac asthma. He was buried in the graveyard for prisoners of war in Khabarovsk. Lyui Lyun Huan being taken into consideration in the list of generals who died while being captured in the Soviet Union, the figures look as follows: Japanese – 33; Mongolian – 1; Chinese – 1 (the data were calculated basing on the materials of the State Military Archives of Russia. F. 463/n. Invent. 1a).

The data on the causes of their deaths are represented in Table 7.

From Table 7 it follows that cerebral haemorrhage was the main cause of death among the generals and persons equated with them. Tuberculosis as a cause of death was also registered rather often in this group of prisoners of war – 4 death cases. Conditions of life, the psychological factor and age-related acute conditions of previously acquired diseases were among the reasons that caused deaths of the prisoners of war.

The generals, who happened to be made prisoners in the Soviet Union as a result of the war between Japan and the Soviet Union in 1945, were to suffer

different fates. However, the complete analysis of their cases was impossible to be made due to contradictory data relatively the total number of the prisoners of war who belong to this category.

On 11 January 1950, according to the conclusion of the Soviet administration, the state of the total number of generals registered was characterised as follows:

- charged by the Military Tribunal with vigorous intelligence activities and preparation for bacteriological warfare against the USSR – 10 cases;
- died for old age and chronic diseases not connected with the retaining in custody – 21 cases;
- repatriated home – 15 cases;
- kept in prison – 121 cases, of whom 80 cases were subject to be repatriated home due to lack of discrediting evidence and in connection with the poor state of their health (State Archives of RF. F. 9401. Invent. 2, f. 269, s. 8).

The list of generals who, in the opinion of the Soviet Union, were subject to being brought before the court of the Military Tribunal for the crimes against the USSR was divided into the following categories:

- those who organised the transfer of intelligence agents and diversionists on the USSR territory – 20 cases;
- police high-level personnel – 2 cases;
- those who participated in preparing the aggression aimed at the USSR;
- 2 cases (State Archives of RF. F. 9401. Invent. 2, f. 269, s. 14, 15).

On 18 July 1950, 969 prisoners of war from Japan were turned over to Lu Si, a representative of the Chinese People's Republic FA Ministry, on Pogranichnaya station, the group including 17 generals. The handover of the prisoners was performed in the accordance with the act of the record and nominal list with enclosure of the evidence for each of the prisoners (it was impossible to handover two of the prisoners due to their deaths) (State Archives of RF. F. 9401. Invent. 2, f. 269, s. 399). Lu Si expressed his gratitude for the evidence in regard of the prisoners saying: "The availability of these materials will make it possible for the bodies of China Public Safety Ministry to conduct an investigation in a shorter time in regard of these personalities and to make them legally liable for their

Table 7

Pathological conditions that caused death of Japanese and Mongolian generals and other personalities equated with the highest officers taken prisoners by the The Worker-Peasant Red Army troops in August – September, 1945

Таблица 7

Патологические состояния, приведшие к гибели японских и монгольских генералов и других лиц, приравненных к высшим офицерам, взятых в плен войсками Рабоче-Крестьянской Красной Армией в августе – сентябре 1945 г.

Cause of death	Nationality		
	Japanese	Mongolian	Chinese
Suicide	3	–	–
Cerebral haemorrhage	8	1	–
Peritonitis	1	–	–
Rupture of aortic aneurism	1	–	–
Pneumonia and tuberculosis	1	–	–
Non-identified	1	–	–
Tuberculosis	4	–	–
Pulmonary edema	1	–	–
Cardioplegia	1	–	–
Essential hypertension	2	–	–
Stomach cancer	2	–	–
Vast atherosclerosis	3	–	–
Encephalitis	1	–	–
Ulceration, anaemia	1	–	–
Diabetes mellitus	1	–	–
Cerebral inflammation, pneumonia	1	–	–
Cerebral oedema	1	–	–
Essential hypertension, cardiac asthma	–	–	1

Compiled basing on the materials of the State Military Archives of Russia. F. 463/п. Invent. 1а, f. 431, 432, 442, 448–496, 498–650, 656–663.

activities” (State Archives of RF. F. 9401. Invent. 2, f. 269, s. 401).

On 23 December 1956, 1 025 Japanese citizens were repatriated on having been given amnesty, 22 generals and personalities equated with them, 23 officers and 710 soldiers and other personalities being

among them. The handover was performed by Lieutenant-colonel Nikanorov as a representative of the Soviet side and a detective in charge of the Jail Section integrated into the USSR MDA (State Military Archives of Russia. F. 1/п. Invent. 32, f. 1. s. 2, 3).

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The authors declare no conflict of interest.

#### Information about the authors

##### Sergey V. Karasev,

Dr. Sci. (History), senior lecturer, professor of the Department of History and Philosophy,  
e-mail: s.karasev@bk.ru

##### Sergey I. Kuznetsov,

Dr. Sci. (History), Professor, Head of the Department of World History and international relation,  
e-mail: s.kuznetsov@hist.isu.ru

##### Alexey V. Soloviev,

Honorary citizen of Zabaikalsky Krai,  
e-mail: avs1@bk.ru

#### Критерии авторства

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#### Сведения об авторах

##### Карасёв Сергей Владимирович,

доктор исторических наук, доцент, профессор кафедры истории и философии,  
e-mail: s.karasev@bk.ru

##### Кузнецов Сергей Ильич,

доктор исторических наук, профессор, заведующий кафедрой мировой истории и международных отношений,  
e-mail: s.kuznetsov@hist.isu.ru

##### Соловьёв Алексей Владимирович,

почетный гражданин Забайкальского края,  
e-mail: avs1@bk.ru