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Two Centers of Center: Romanov and Bourbon Military Brotherhood

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A little-known and insufficiently studied page in the biography of the Russian emperor-sufferer Nikolai Alexandrovich Romanov is his warm long-standing friendship with the Spanish king Alfonso XIII. We would like to tell readers about only one episode that emphasizes the kinship of the souls of two warrior monarchs!

In 1908, the rapprochement of the monarchs of countries located on opposite ends of Europe received its symbolic military-historical expression. This fact is practically unknown in Russia, but it is worthy that after 110 years we would proudly recall it. The exchange of honorary military ranks in the most famous regiments at that time was a common practice among European monarchs and agreed upon in advance. On January 23, 1908, on the day of his birthday, the Spanish king Alfonso XIII received a telegram in French from the Russian autocrat, which said: "I send your Majesty the most sincere congratulations on the occasion of your Angel Day and I am pleased to inform you that in accordance with the decree, which will be published tomorrow, I appoint Your Majesty the colonel chief of the 7th Olviopolsky Uhlan Regiment. "

On January 10, 1908, this military unit was named the 7th Olviopolsky of His Royal Majesty King of Spain Alfonso XIII of the Lancers.

The regiment received its name in honor of the city of Olviopol (today it is the Ukrainian city of Pervomaik). It was formed on May 9, 1812 from peasants and raznochintsy Kiev and Podolsk provinces. He took an active part in many military campaigns, including the Patriotic War of 1812. In the company of 1813-1814, the regiment participated in the battles of Katzbach and Leipzig, in the capture of Paris.

During the Russian-Turkish war of 1828-1829 he participated in the siege of Boailov and Shumly. Particularly, the regiment distinguished itself during the capture of the city of Enos, capturing 54 enemy guns, for which it was bestowed with new standards "For Distinction"!

In 1831, the Olviopolsky Lancers became famous in the battle of Vilna and during the capture of Warsaw and were awarded honorary badges for hats. Then there was participation in the Hungarian company and in the Eastern War. In 1949, for his distinction, 19 award silver pipes were given to him. Olviopolis again distinguished themselves during the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878 under Khoji-Oglu and Bazardzhik. All of their military exploits can not be counted.

Documents outlining the history of his regiment were handed over to Alfonso XIII, for which he thanked the Russian Tsar for such an honorable appointment. At the same time, the Spanish monarch

informed Nicholas II that he, in turn, was appointed honorary chief colonel of the 5th Farnes Cavalry Lancer Regiment. The regiment exists today. Now it is called the 12th Farnesian and is housed at the El Empesinado military base near the city of Valladolid.

The date of its formation is March 7, 1649. On this day, the Hessian-Habsburg third was formed, which became the forerunner of this regiment - the oldest cavalry unit in Spain and one of the oldest in the world. For three and a half centuries, the regiment became famous in many battles. Under the cry of this regiment "Altas las frentes, Alto el Coraz? N!" ("To the sky of the head, to the God of the heart") we continue to study the history of the friendship of two monarchs.

The decree signed on January 25, 1908 by Alfonso XIII on the appointment of Nicholas II as Honorary Colonel literally reads as follows: "I want to demonstrate with dignity the exceptional evidence of my sincere friendship and emotional disposition to His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of the Russian Empire Nicholas II and appoint him Honorary Colonel of the 5th Farnese cavalry . Given at the royal palace on January 25, 1908. Alfonso. " Immediately preparations began for the exchange of visits by delegations of the two regiments with the aim of meeting them and expanding friendly ties and cooperation. The Count de Vinyasa, then the Ambassador of Spain to Russia, coordinated this process. Nicholas II appointed his cousin, Grand Duke Boris Vladimirovich, as the head of this military-diplomatic mission. He was to be accompanied by Colonels Tomashevsky and Massalsky. The trip of Grand Duke Boris Vladimirovich, according to the documents of the archive of the royal palace in Madrid, was given great importance.

The delegation arrived in Madrid by train on March 28, 1908. In the afternoon of the same day, a brief meeting ceremony was held in the Gasparini hall of the royal court, at which King Alfonso spoke in French with a greeting to the emperor Nicholas and his representatives. The Grand Duke presented King Alfonso XIII with the uniform of a colonel in his Uhlans regiment, after which a banquet was organized.

A reception was also held on behalf of the Russian ambassador to the Kingdom of Spain. In May 1908, the return Spanish delegation headed by the cousin of King Alfonso Infant Don Fernando de Bavier and Bourbon, as well as General Milans del Bosch, went to St. Petersburg. It also included officers of the Farnese regiment.

In St. Petersburg, in the presence of the most august persons, Nicholas II was presented with the uniform and insignia of the Spanish colonel, as well as an album with photographs telling about the life and battles of this military unit with the signatures of its officers. Since that time, friendly relations between the two military units continued to strengthen. Since 1809, new epaulets for officers and lower ranks of the Farnesian regiment were introduced by royal decree, on which instead of the Latin monogram A.XIII appeared the monogram H II written in Cyrillic.

At the same time, King Alfonso ordered the artist Antonio Ortiz his full-length portrait in the form of Colonel of the Olviopolsky Regiment, which was sent in 1912 to the command of the regiment in honor of the next 100th anniversary of its formation.

For its part, the initials of the Spanish king Alfonso XIII appeared on the shoulder straps of the Olviopolsky regiment. In December 1912, another delegation of officers from the Olviopolsky regiment arrived in Madrid with the aim of presenting a commemorative medal and a beautifully executed photo album to King Alfonso. The Russian military, who arrived in Spain, brought with them numerous gifts from Nicholas II for the regiment, in which he was an honorary colonel. The delegation was led by Colonel Bursky. These gifts were presented on May 25, 1914, when King Alfonso XIII arrived at the regiment parade in Valladolid. A copy of the photo album of the Olviopolsky Ulan Regiment, now stored in the regimental military history museum, was also transferred to the Farnesians. Perhaps today it is the only surviving copy of this album.

The regiment's command was also presented with a portrait of Nicholas II in the form of Colonel Farnese Lancers. Unfortunately, a few years later this portrait disappeared without a trace and where it is located is unknown. Later, one of the Spanish artists commissioned a copy of it, which is also stored in the museum of the regiment.

One of the most valuable gifts the regiment is proud of is the personal gift of Nicholas II - a large silver bowl (cup), or as the Spaniards call it, a cup. In the Russian regiment, it was used at military ceremonies in honor of the arrival of recruits. Its full name is the Royal Charm. The author of this work of art is the famous jeweler of the court of his Imperial Majesty Peter Karl Gustavovich Faberge.

Charochka is attached to a small pedestal of dark green color. Since 1914, it was also used at the meeting ceremonies of the recruits of the Farnese regiment and the awarding of the next military ranks to officers. During the Spanish Civil War, this tradition was interrupted, but in 1976, thanks to the officer of this regiment, Major Cepo del Llano, it was restored. Various incompatible types of alcoholic drinks (often vodka and champagne) are mixed in a cup, which should be drunk in one gulp while sitting on the cavalry saddle, after which a song that can be translated literally is performed:

“I, the free Spanish knight,

I came to offer you wine and joy.

Like a real cavalry soldier

take this cup and drink to the bottom. ”

The Spaniards keep this gift of the Russian emperor at their base in Valladolid. Many honored guests, including the current Russian ambassador to Spain, visited this museum and saw imperial gifts. But

there is something more significant and obvious that every day reminds the soldiers of the regiment and the guests of the military base the story connecting them with the last tsar of Russia. It is a central avenue passing through the entire territory of the military base. He bears the name of the royal sufferer of the Russian Emperor Nicholas II.

After the October coup, the fate of Olviopolsky Ulansky, His Royal Majesty Alfonso of the XIII Regiment, developed tragically. In 1918, the regiment was "Ukrainized." Together with the 5th Kinburn equestrian regiment, he became part of the 1st cavalry brigade of the 2nd Volyn equestrian division of the hetman Skoropadsky army. Then for some time his remnants fought in the Armed Forces of the South of Russia (White Army). But only as the Olviopolsky 10th squadron as part of the Combined-Dragoon Regiment. Those of the Olviopolites who managed to survive in the meat grinder of the Civil War reached Spain, France and other European countries. We are sure that the last Olviopolitan heroes joined after the completion of the Spanish monarchy in the ranks of white-emigre military formations, which, with the courage and courage inherent in Russian soldiers, fought on the side of General Franco against the red plague that swept Spain. So on the Iberian Peninsula one of the most glorious units of the Russian Imperial Army completed its glorious path.

The Spanish king did much to help the officers and soldiers of his regiment, when they were in distress, both during the First World War and after its end. Back in 1915, the wife of Lieutenant Colonel Olviopolis addressed the Embassy of Spain in Vienna with a request to clarify the fate of her husband's colleagues who were in Austro-Hungarian captivity. Thanks to the efforts of diplomats, eight soldiers were found. After addressing Archduke Isabella Maria to the Austrian niece Alfonso XIII, they were immediately transferred under her guardianship. Conformal living conditions were provided to the soldiers and decent work was provided.

After the war, part of the officers and soldiers of the 7th Olviopol Uhlan Regiment ended up in Berlin, from where they sent a telegram to the Spanish king, in which they expressed their respect and devotion to him. From Germany they were transferred to the North of Russia, where they joined the troops of General Eugene Karlovich Miller who fought there.

After the defeat of the White Army on July 25, 1920, Alfonso XIII received a letter from a group of officers and soldiers of the Olviopolsky Regiment that they managed to evacuate, including with wives and children, to Constantinople. They asked the Spanish king for help, as they were in a distressed and hopeless situation. On his instructions, the Embassy began to help them with money, food and medicine. At the same time, an attempt was made to identify them in the army in other countries. However, their situation deteriorated sharply by September 1923, when they were dismissed from service already in the south

Slavic army, being before this in one of the units on the border with Albania. Then their commander, Colonel Solodovnikov, turned directly to the august chief of the regiment with a call for help.

The king's response was not long in coming. To evacuate them to Spain, a special ship was sent, which delivered the colonel himself and a group of officers with families, as well as six lower ranks to his new homeland. There they received the personal patronage of the monarch, decent maintenance and housing. Some of them entered the service of the personal guard of the Spanish king. When a French delegation later visited the Royal Palace, many drew attention to officers of a clearly non-Spanish appearance. Alfonso answered their surprised questions: "these are Russians. "They used to serve in the cavalry regiment, of which I was an honorary colonel."

The description of this conversation fell on the pages of the Paris edition of the Daily Mail, and the news reached the Olviopolis who found themselves in exile in France and other European countries. They wrote a letter to Grand Duke Boris Vladimirovich, who had a long friendly relationship with Alfonso XIII and then lived in Paris, with a tearful request to help them. And he, in turn, sent him to Madrid on June 22, 1927.

We do not have official documents confirming the participation of the monarch in their future fate. But, given the love that he had for the officers and soldiers of the 7th ECB of the King of Spain, Alfonso XIII of the Olviopol Uhlan Regiment, the care that he had shown to his officers and soldiers before, there is no doubt that the Russian soldiers who signed the letter emigrants found their second home in the Pyrenees! Today we began the search for their descendants living in Spain in order to collect their memories and find, perhaps, new unknown documents and relics. We hope that luck smiles on us in this noble cause.

Chef Colonel Olviopoltsev made many attempts to find and save the standard and documents of his regiment, which, according to information received, his last commander, Colonel Solodovnikov, handed over to the Honorary Consul of Spain in Kiev (then all relations were broken). He, in turn, forwarded the package with the standard and documents to Odessa to General Anton Ivanovich Denikin. Then the king's plenipotentiaries tried to find them first in Belgrade, then in Constantinople, from where they turned out to be in Romania and were eventually transferred to the Spanish ambassador to that country. He sent the standard of the Olviopolsky Uhlansky Regiment to Madrid to his august chief. But already in 1921, Alfonso XIII returned him, at the request of the commander-in-chief of the Russian Army, Baron Pyotr Nikolayevich Wrangel, to Belgrade, where many Russian emigrants, including Olviopol officers, temporarily found refuge.

In 1925, the standard of the Olviopol Lancers with honors was placed in the newly built Holy Trinity Church in the Serbian capital. And in 1944, he was taken out by the Nazis along with other imperial banners, values and relics of the White Movement to Germany, in Dresden.

At the end of World War II, the standard was discovered in Germany along with other banners of the Russian Imperial Army by fighters of the Red Army and in 1945 returned to their homeland. A quarter of a century it was kept in the Central Museum of the Armed Forces of the USSR. And in 1971 he was transferred to the Leningrad Military History Museum of Artillery, Engineering Troops and Signal Corps. There, thanks to the dedicated work of museum workers and researchers, despite the years of communist stagnation and democratic hardship, the standard was restored and preserved to this day in excellent condition. We are happy that in the course of our research we got the opportunity to find this historical relic and even kneel to touch it.

And further! In 2005, at an auction at Hermann Historicos, a lot with Olviopolians' main pipe boards surfaced. We will continue to track their path and search for current owners. We hope that someday we will be able to transfer these priceless relics to the military history museum of the Spanish Farnese regiment, where the memory of the Russian emperor, chief of the regiment Nicholas II, is sacredly honored to this day, courageously and humble, as befits a Christian war hero who ascended a hundred years ago at Russian Calvary!