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# ARMY TALKS



*Alexei Kulikov, Red Army Man*



RESTRICTED • EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS • UNITED STATES ARMY

## A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR OF



Dear Major :

This ARMY TALK is a narrative. It's a story of Combat Orientation, learned the hard way. We think it has a punch—but we'd like to know what you think of this topic. We have met Alexei Kulikov, Russian Soldier, just as you are meeting him, through reading this issue.

"The flight of a bullet, and hence, the flight of death has its own law, and you must know this law," says Alexei. "But the coward under fire rushes about; the coward sees nothing and any bullet can find him. He lies down in a fire-swept area . . . even with the rifle he is unarmed. . . . He is no fighter, he is a target."

Maybe the Russian idea of a "coward" is a soldier who lets his unit and his companions down through neglect of training.

What do you think of this ARMY TALK as a discussion subject to stimulate appreciation of an ally, to increase understanding of what we are fighting for? Do you ever find time to read an occasional issue? If so I would greatly appreciate getting your point of view. Have your company officers made any reports to you

on the reaction of the troops to the various discussion topics presented through ARMY TALKS?

ARMY TALKS are prepared to assist your discussion leaders in fulfilling your responsibility to conduct weekly Combat Orientation discussions in training time. The ARMY TALKS staff prepares discussion material from authoritative sources for distribution down to company level. They seek to present informative material—to give reasons why we fight, who we fight, and how we should fight to attain victory. These are in no sense lectures; they are discussion topics, to stimulate thought and ideas through a free interchange of ideas, not to jam indoctrination down the soldier's throat.

Maybe we're on the right track; maybe we're close to it—perhaps we are missing it in some respects. The answer as to how effective these ARMY TALKS are in helping to fulfill your mission is partly the way they are received by your troops, but mainly the way you and your officers react to them, and use them.

We're trying to hit the mark. You are the judge of our accuracy.

ARMY TALKS are prepared to help you. Will you, in turn, help ARMY TALKS by giving us your estimate of topics presented, and suggestions for future topics?

ARTHUR GOODFRIEND,  
Major, AUS,  
Chief, Orientation Branch

*"It is desired that, consistent with operational requirements, group discussions, through the medium ARMY TALKS . . . be held in all units within this command, using one hour of training time each week . . . unit commanders will conduct an orientation program, using not less than one hour training time a week . . . presentation of this material is a command function. . . . A company officer will be present at each discussion, whether or not he is the discussion leader. . . ."*

BY COMMAND OF GENERAL EISENHOWER.

(Extract from letter ETO, 30 April 1944, AG 352/2 OpGA, Subject: Education in Military and Current Affairs.)





# ARMY TALKS

EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS

## *Alexei Kulikov, Red Army Man*

**T**HIS is the story of a GI in the Red Army. In it, you see what a Russian soldier thinks and feels, and you understand better his success in killing Germans.

Kulikov is not unlike an American GI. He loves his country and wants to go home. He is hungry for news of the home front. He is afraid, but he overcomes his fear and tolerates everything in his fellow soldiers except cowardice in the face of the enemy.

He develops skill in scouting, shooting, killing. He senses the importance of the team and knows the joy a soldier feels as his artillery and airforce join with him in battle.

Gradually his outlook broadens and he realizes the world-wide scope of the war. He appreciates his Allies and learns about his enemies. And what he learns about Germans adds fuel to his burning hate.

This ARMY TALKS is from a story by Boris Gorbатов, a Red Soldier.

### *Story By Boris Gorbатов*

His name is Alexei Kulikov, and he comes from Penza. He is a private in First Lieutenant Subbotin's company. Everyone knows him around here.

He was called up on the very first day of the war, so that his family didn't even have time to shed the usual tears. And when the troop train crawled over the Ukrainian steppe, Kulikov's thoughts were all with his home and his farm. And he was annoyed with the Germans : ekh, they had attacked at the wrong time ! The harvest not yet in. And he kept reckoning up the work days, and how many were lost now.

But it seemed to him that the war would be short and not too terrible, something like the autumn manoeuvres.

The first time Alexei Kulikov was under fire it wasn't so much that he farked it, as that he was simply at a loss. At first he hardly realized what was taking place, but then a comrade fell beside him, and Kulikov saw blood, a smashed skull, glassy eyes. . . .

"What's it all mean, brothers ?" he all but shouted. "Why, they can kill me, too, as easy as all that !" And he looked about him in bewilderment, blinking his eyes.

And all around was smoke and fighting and death. Death whistled, death wailed, death roared, death dropped from the air, crawled over the ground, and it seemed as if there was no escape from it. Alexei Kulikov saw nothing : neither war, nor fields, no comrades—death alone looked him in the eyes, and death was all he saw.

And in this whole world there was nothing else : only death. Death iron-clad, fiery, omnipresent, and Alexei Kulikov, a human being, with frail bones and flesh. How much would it take to snap those bones, tear the tissues, pierce the heart ?

### How Alexei Kulikov Becomes A Veteran

And so helpless, forlorn and solitary did Kulikov seem to himself that he actually burst into tears. His heart ached with pity for his solitude here, on this vast field, where no one had a thought for him, no one would save him, rescue him, weep at his side.

And he was vexed with himself for being big and stout, vulnerable on all sides, the fox hole a tight fit for him, and he an easy mark for a bullet. He lay there and trembled, awaiting death.

But the battle ended and Kulikov was unharmed. He was amazed at this, and felt himself all over, stretched his every limb. Nothing ! Not a scratch.

“Just imagine !” he said to himself with a shame-faced smile.

He tried to tell his comrades about this miracle : “Some business that was, let me tell you ! A hair’s breadth. . . . Just a little bit to the left, and it would have been all up. . . .” But his comrades proved poor listeners.

And Kulikov again became desolate and thought : “If not today, then tomorrow. I’ll be killed in any case. Can anyone even dream of coming out alive ?”



Nevertheless, Alexei Kulikov entered his second battle with hope : perhaps luck would be with him again. And once again death breathed in his face, and again he trembled all over with light guilty tremors as he scurried across the field with his shoulders hunched up to his ears, his



eyes closed, wincing at every shot, bowing down before every shell, and all the time waiting for death, hoping it would at least be sudden. . . .

Only now he was no longer solitary.

Solitude had suddenly vanished. The Germans were bombing Alexei Kulikov at the river crossing, and he lay under a tree, at the water's edge, knowing that this time he was a goner for sure.



But suddenly the air was filled with a droning.

"Those are our planes, our planes up there!" and someone nearby sighed with joy and relief.

Kulikov did not open his eyes immediately. But when he did open them he saw the sky overhead. The sky was enormous, high and so blue that it looked as if it had been freshly painted for the occasion. And in this sky men were thrashing the Germans, and rescuing Kulikov.

It had become strangely quiet on the ground. The waves were scarcely lapping the bank, the trees scarcely rustling, and everything, everyone—the men, the ground, the river—was staring up at the sky. The engines were roaring savagely, red bullets were whizzing, and Kulikov saw a Heinkel breaking up right over his head, breaking up like a matchbox. First one wing flew off, then the other. Suddenly the white cupola of a parachute began to open. (Will he really get away, the dog?" flashed through Kulikov's mind.) But the parachute flared up, collapsed instantaneously as Alexei watched, streamed out long and thin, and like an expiring torch fell to earth somewhere behind the river.

"Ah! Ah!" shouted Alexei then, beside himself with delight. "Aha! Aha! Aha, you snake!" he screamed, with malicious glee and repeating over and over, "Aha, Aha!" And when the Heinkels cravenly fled from the sky, back towards the west, he yelled after them: "Where are you off to? Give it to them, boys! Sock 'em!"

### **Live And Learn To Shoot And Kill**

Now Kulikov began to look around and to listen to the fighting. He no longer blinked or covered his ears. Before then, every shot had made him flinch, now he was able to distinguish between the German shots and ours. And the more frequent and heavy our firing, the lighter Kulikov's heart became, and fear vanished. He was no longer solitary on the vast field; look at the forces that had gathered to save Kulikov!

But just then something twanged thinly right over his head. He did not even realise what it was. He saw a bullet flick the sand. . . . Again and again. . . . That was how raindrops fell in the water, a splash and a widening circle, but the drops kept falling thicker and faster, all around Kulikov, and he saw the twigs of the pine shudder and the needles sprinkling down on the sand. Nearer and nearer fell the drops, in front, behind, and on either side, as if some invisible hand far, far away, was drawing a noose around Kulikov's neck, a noose from which there was no escape.

And what was it to Kulikov now that our artillery was pounding away thick and fast? All the same the noose around his neck was not to be



undone. The enemy tommy-gunner kept cracking and cracking, drawing closer and closer to Kulikov's throat. . . . And suddenly, as if he had been choked, fell silent.

The twigs ceased their quivering and the bubbles disappeared from the sand. Timidly, cautiously, Kulikov looked around and saw his neighbour grinning broadly, as he put another cartridge in his rifle.

"Was it you who stopped him?" asked Kulikov with amazement and respect.

"It was me all right," came the proud answer. "How was it? Not so bad, eh?"

And it was only then that Kulikov recalled that he had a rifle himself, lying there right beside him. Until now he had not even given it a thought. Nor had he thought of it during the fighting of the day before. He had dragged it along, because he could not throw away state property, but he had not fired a single shot.

Now he seized it hotly and eagerly, as if in it lay safety from all misfortune, and began to fire. He fired away, hastily and feverishly (only his hands shook) tracing a circle of fire, around himself like some old crone encompassing herself with the sign of the cross against the Evil One. And it seemed to Kulikov that now death would be unable to break through to his throat, for it would not be able to step over the fiery tracery.

That evening Kulikov went up to the commander, and, shifting awkwardly from one foot to the other, asked:

"What do you think, Comrade Lieutenant, does it take a lot of metal to kill a man?"



The commander looked at him in surprise, then smiled, and replied :  
 "For the coward—a stray bullet's enough. For the brave man a ton's too little."

Kulikov thought long and hard on these words.

He soon observed that the coward really did perish more easily than a fly. The flight of a bullet, and hence the flight of death, has its own law, and you must know this law. But the coward under fire rushes about, the coward sees nothing, and any bullet can find him. He lies down in a fire-swept area, and runs into random shots in a panic. Even with a rifle the coward is unarmed. He does not reply to fire with fire. He is no fighter, he is a target.

## Cowards Perish—Brave Men Pull Through

Alexei saw how the cowards perished, and in every case he thought :

"A feeble thing, man. Like a bit of dandelion fluff in a field. A puff of wind and he's gone."

But once Alexei went to the dressing station to have some slight injury attended to, and there he saw Sergeant Chernov, about whom the whole regiment was talking that day. There wasn't a whole spot on the Sergeant. His whole body had been riddled and punctured ; but still he fought, and the Germans just couldn't kill him, and had not killed him.

Kulikov gazed at his wounds with awe and shook his head in wonder. He kept wanting to see, to feel with his hands, what sort of bones this man had that they could not be broken.

But Chernov tossed about on his straw pallet and muttered hoarsely between clenched teeth :

"You lie ! You lie ! I will pull through ! You lie !"

"He's fighting with death," guessed Kulikov. "Man has a proud soul." Turning to the surgeon he asked :

"Will he really live ?"



"Certainly !" replied the surgeon confidently. "And he'll be fighting again, too."

This incident astounded Kulikov to such an extent that he related it to his comrades at great length when he returned to them from the dressing station.

“Man, you know, is a feeble thing, yet look, it’s impossible to kill him if his soul is proud. The way I see it, if you want to live you’ve got to fight for life. The enemy eggs death on to you, and you egg death on to him. And then you see whose hide is the tougher!”

## How Kulikov Meets A Strange Friend

No one in the Company could understand how the first-rate veteran soldier Kulikov could make friends with Afanasi DUBYAGA.

This DUBYAGA was positively the last man in the Company. In battle he showed himself a coward. A man with a petty soul. He lived apart from everyone, sullen, unwilling to share an extra crust with a comrade, not laughing at jokes. If you clapped him on the shoulder he took offence.

They say a friend is a person who will share his last shred of tobacco with you. But Kulikov’s pouch was open to everyone, and the pouches of all in the Company were open to him.

They say a friend is someone who will rescue you in battle. But Kulikov had often rescued soldiers whom he did not even know, and whose names he never found out in the heat of the fighting.

DUBYAGA neither shared his tobacco, nor rescued him in battle. Why then did he take Kulikov’s fancy? No one in the Company could explain this, and as a matter of fact Kulikov himself could not have explained.



Often DUBYAGA would cry at night. He cried in a thin, faint voice, not even like a woman, but like a cat complaining. Kulikov would wake up immediately, sit up and try to soothe him. Kulikov could not stand men with wet eyes—tears were not for men—but he forgave DUBYAGA even tears. He

forgave him everything, as a mother forgives an unlucky son.

It frequently happened that Kulikov would come in from some mission frozen, hungry, wanting to eat and go to sleep immediately. But he would be told:

“DUBYAGA took your dinner for his.”

Kulikov would go over to DUBYAGA, but the latter would be silent. Kulikov would find the mess-tin—nothing in it.

“You’ve eaten it?”

DUBYAGA would still say nothing. Without another word Kulikov would wrap his greatcoat about him and fall asleep hungry. And this, too, he forgave DUBYAGA. “He’s been terribly unfortunate. Perhaps his only pleasure in life now is eating,” he would say to justify DUBYAGA before his comrades.

Another time DUBYAGA acted in a really base way. It happened that the two of them, he and Kulikov, were caught in a German ambush.

“You won’t have time to use your bayonet, smash ’em with the butt!” shouted Kulikov to DUBYAGA, and suddenly noticed that DUBYAGA was not there. DUBYAGA was running.



Kulikov came out of this skirmish unharmed, though his right hand had to be patched up a bit.

"What's the matter with you, old man?" was all he said when he met Dubyaga. "It's not the thing to ditch a comrade in a fight."

However, even this he forgave Dubyaga, as he forgave everything. "He's got a timid nature, and so he made tracks. In any case, he couldn't have helped me much."

Just about this time an unusual event occurred in the regiment. There was a lot of talk and noise about it: a private was missing. In the evening he had been sitting there right in the dugout, and by the morning there wasn't a trace of him. Missing.

Some said the Germans had killed him, and searched high and low for the body. But they did not find it. Others guessed that he had been kidnapped by the Germans. But many were of quite a different opinion: they said he had deserted.



A conversation on this subject took place between Kulikov and Dubyaga.

"I knew him," said Dubyaga thoughtfully. "He was from our parts. Most likely he's run off to his folks. Home."

"The idea! They're waiting for him to come as a rescuer, and he's run off to them as a deserter, a traitor."

"But if he was terribly homesick . . ." ventured Dubyaga, uncertainly.

"Do you think he'll be bringing any happiness to his family? If he came with the army and chased the Germans out, that would be joy. But like this. . . Perhaps they live in hopes. Perhaps his old woman used to say to the children every night: 'Never mind, my dears, never mind. Our dad will be coming with the army and he'll chase out the Germans.' And perhaps the children used to dream about their daddy.

## What Going AWOL Means In Russia

"Our dad, they'd think. . . And what will he bring them? What, eh? 'You,' he'd have to say, 'had hopes of me. Well, here I am, but there's no hope. I lost your hope running.' His son will ask: 'Dad, where are our men? Have you come with our soldiers?'" And that dad

of his will have nothing to say. He abandoned our men. Betrayed them. As for me, if it was my own father, I'd choke a traitor like that with my own hands. . . ."

"It's easy to talk," muttered DUBYAGA, and sighed. Beads of perspiration appeared in the wrinkles of his forehead.

"No, you just judge for yourself," continued KULIKOV. "Well, let's suppose he got through the German defences. Let's suppose that he was neither shot five times over in doing this, nor hanged. Well, then, he gets to his family.

### **They Make Short Work Of Deserters**

"What will the family do with him? Tell me that. Without him it's bad, but with him it's worse. He can't defend them against the Germans. And his fellow villagers will treat him like a rabid enemy. And as for him, what'll he do? Did he really think out his foolish running off? Will he go into bondage to the Germans? Peg out with hunger at forced labour in Germany? In that case he'll have to part with his family and freedom and honour all over again.

"Will he hire himself out as a policeman to the Germans? Say he does that. Well, if the guerillas don't get him first, we'll be coming, and we'll finish him off. And I'll be the first. And we'll get there, DUBYAGA, don't you forget that. We'll come to every spot in Russia. To the Ukraine, too."

"But maybe he'll join up with the guerillas, eh?"

"The guerillas won't take a man like that. The guerillas wouldn't trust him. There's nothing he can do, DUBYAGA, old man. He's only one way out. The noose."

KULIKOV was silent for a moment, and then added abruptly:

"As for Russia, he's betrayed her, betrayed her."



*Russian peasants return to their village after it was freed from German terror by advancing Red Army.*



"Well, as for Russia, Russia will remain Russia," said DUBYAGA. "Take Russia under the Tartars, it was still Russia. Well, and suppose it's under the Germans. . . ."

"I don't need any kind of Russia," Kulikov broke in wrathfully. "If you want to know, I don't agree to just any kind of Russia. What I want is a Russia where I will be like I was before, the boss of my own land, where there are collective farms, where there's a hospital if my wife gives birth, and a school when my son has to study. What I need is my Russia, see? As for any other, I don't want it, and you can be sure there won't be any other."

After this conversation, DUBYAGA went around for a long time gloomy and downcast. He kept out of everyone's way. He crouched in the dug-out, thinking his own thoughts. He avoided Kulikov.

### *How Friendship Comes To A Sad End*

A few days later Kulikov and DUBYAGA were sent on a secret mission. They lay about 10 yards from each other and each thought his own thoughts. Who knows what DUBYAGA was thinking? But as for Kulikov, he was thinking that if every Russian killed at least one German soldier, the war would be at an end. There wouldn't be any more Germans.

Dawn was breaking. Slanting shadows played on the snow. Kulikov hugged the ground more closely. He knew that the worst time was early dawn.

Suddenly he noticed that DUBYAGA was crawling. At first he thought he was imagining things. Where would DUBYAGA be crawling to? Nowhere. But Kulikov looked closely and was astounded to see that DUBYAGA really was crawling. He could even hear his heavy breathing.



*Dawn Patrol is carried out by a mounted reconnaissance unit. Cavalry is still in wide use by the Russians.*

"What are you doing? What are you moving about for?" whispered Kulikov after him.

But Dubyaga did not answer. He was crawling along silently, tremblingly clutching the bare branches of the bushes, and panting. This laboured, heavy breathing of his, like that of a driven dog, alarmed Kulikov.



"What's the matter with you? Have you gone nuts?" he shouted, forgetting all caution. "They'll kill you! You'll do for yourself!" And he made a move to crawl out to his rescue.

But just then Dubyaga rose to his feet and began to run. And Kulikov saw with horror that he was running with a white handkerchief in his hand, and waving it over his head, and that he was without his rifle.

"So that's what you're up to," Kulikov murmured softly to himself, and slowly raised his rifle to his shoulder. Kulikov had forgiven his comrade everything, his petty soul, his tearful eyes, his poor friendship, but this he could not forgive.

Deliberately he drew a bead on his former friend, sniper fashion, as he did with the Germans. This loathsome person was worse than a German now, worse than the savage enemy. . . .

A shot rang out.

When he came back from his mission, Kulikov reported to his commander:—

"I finished off Dubyaga. He was a traitor. . . ."

He felt no pity.

## **Hate Is The Answer To German Terror**

Some day, when Alexei Kulikov is an old, old man and his grandchildren are sitting around his knee, while the sun of an Indian summer warms his old bones caressingly, he may be able to relate calmly and in detail the story of the summer of 1942, of the battles on the Don and in the Kuban, of how the enemy rolled down like an avalanche and his own troops wavered.



But now he cannot tell of this calmly. He still sees too clearly those horrible scenes. The steppes are on fire. Acrid smoke curls over Rostov, over Salsk, over Novocherkassk. And German bombers wheel in the skies like vultures, swooping down on their prey. Screeching. And bombs fall on the steppe, on the road, into the Don, and the dead fish float on the surface of the water, and the wheat is on fire, and cities are burning, and grain-elevators and water towers crash into ruins, and there is no ferry over the Don.

And panic stricken flocks of sheep scamper along the steppe roads. Herds low plaintively. There is no one to milk the cows, and no one to drink his fill. And the milk drips on to the steppe, mingling with the wayside dust.

And day and night apples keep falling to the ground with a dull thud from the overloaded branches. The branches are bowed down to the very ground, laden to breaking point. The apples keep falling, and the thud of their falling beats in the heart, pulses in the temples.

And an old, old man, in an ancient pair of breeches with stripes down the side, wearing a St. George Cross on his chest, runs out on to the road along which the troops are retreating, shouting and waving his arms :—



“Stop! Where are you running to? Do you know who you’re leaving things to?”

And hundreds of defenceless people trudge along the roads. Children hang on to their mothers’ skirts. An eight-year-old orphan carries her year-old brother in her arms. Wounded soldiers, holding their hands over their eyes, ride by in waggons. And bitterness fills the heart.

Ashes, ashes, ashes . . . bitter is the smell of the charred steppe. And the smoke of burning wheat curls over the fields. And there is the thud of apples falling only to rot.

Some hearts cracked in those days, but still more became adamant. A handful of men had remained around Kulikov. The rest had been killed, or had not been able to hold out, and had fled. The political officer was

dead. He had died at the ferry, and his body was floating down the Don to the sea.

Kulikov and his comrades retreated back to the very mountains. In the mountains a stream was rushing wrathfully. Lieutenant Dubrovin, the company commander, told Kulikov with a bitter smile that many proud verses and songs had been written about this little river.

### “We Will Hold Out To The Death”

“What songs will they sing about you and me, Kulikov?” And Kulikov saw tears in the lieutenant’s eyes.

Turning to the lieutenant, he said : “Well, comrade lieutenant, it’s for you to decide.”

“I can’t retreat any further,” said the lieutenant with anguish in his voice, gritting his teeth so as not to break down. “Understand me, Kulikov,



I can’t. I can’t go over the mountain. How could I ever look people in the eyes again? After all, I’m an officer. We will hold out to the death!”

Kulikov replied : “Hold on to the death !”

And they remained at the pass.

It is easy to fight when behind you, like a wing, is military luck, success in battle. You are carried along by the fighting. But much strength is required to fight when around you is only misfortune and disaster. And no soldier in the world fights as staunchly as the Russian in times of big setbacks.

Happy-go-lucky we may be, lackadaisical, free and easy in our ways. But when misfortune comes and the enemy is pushing and rejoicing, already sending out stories of victory, from somewhere the Russian soldier finds strength, and rage, and wrath, and skill! Gritting his teeth, he says to himself : *I’ll stand to the death.* And he stands. Stands like a rock.

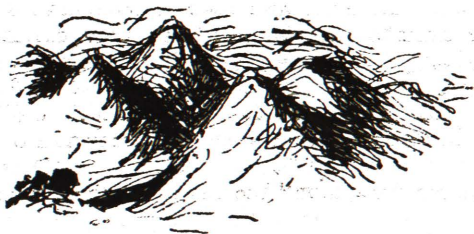
There are people who have a great deal of strength for life, but little strength for death. The unsuccessful, ill-starred, battered person still clutches at life, still hopes for a better life, and this hope gives him strength to live.

It takes much more strength to say : *I will stand to the death. Here I will*



*die, but I shall not budge.* Colossal spiritual strength is needed to fight at one's grave and say : *Over the hill is life, but I shall not go over the hill.*

Some day people will come to visit this pass, to inspect the field of battle. And they will point out to one another : here is where Lieutenant



Dubrovin's machine-gun stood, here behind this rock was Alexei Kulikov's trench. Kulikov dug it himself with his spade. Here in this ridge in the rock Alexei Kulikov placed his moth-eaten sniper's rifle and picked off the oncoming Germans.

*Here the life blood of Mitrofan Lozovoi, party organizer, drained away. Here is the grave of Nikolai Rudenko. Hats off! He was a mere lad, yet he died like a warrior.*

Along this path the Germans crept forward.

"Surrender!" they shouted, but Dubrovin and Kulikov replied with laughter and bullets. And the mountain echoes repeated their laughter over and over again, so that it seemed as if the very mountains were laughing at the Germans. And bullets, grenades and stones rained down on the enemy as if the very mountains were defending themselves. Blood stained the rocks.

### **" . . . . And Russia Will Not Be Lost "**

They fought as if this pass were the last patch of Russian soil, and they the last Russian soldiers. "Surrender!" the Germans shouted to them, and they replied with laughter. And dying, the Germans still could not understand why these two Russians were so stubborn. It is not given to the Germans to understand the greatness of the Russian soul.



Of what lay over the mountains, Alexei Kulikov knew nothing. Perhaps there were none of our troops there. Perhaps the Red Army was indeed surrounded, and everything was over. But he told himself: *I will stand*

to the death, and stood. No, Russia cannot be lost. We shall still live on free Russian soil !

Thus they held out a day and a night, and towards morning a company came from somewhere and relieved them. And only then did Kulikov feel that he was wounded all over, and bloodstained, and utterly exhausted. He hung on the arms of the orderly, and they carried him over the mountains.

### “There Is No End To Our Strength”

They took him in an ambulance along the great and beautiful highway, which seemed to speed away under the wheels. Wild trees such as Kulikov had never seen before grew along the highway, trees such as he had only heard of : cyprus, palms, plane trees. . . . But he did not look at these, nor did he wonder long at them.

He was scanning the road : troops were marching along it to the west. Fresh regiments were marching by with shining automatic rifles and green-painted machine-guns, and after them crawled cannon, both long and short, and mortars that looked like gramophones, and “Katyushas” covered with grey tarpaulin.

Russian tanks were riding by, brand-new, the paint still fresh on them. American trucks were passing by, lacquered till they shone. Alpine troops were marching past in their broad hats with the stars. Cavalrymen were riding past in their shaggy cloaks. Down the road marched Azerbaidjanians, Georgians, Russians and perhaps men from Penza.

Eagerly Kulikov searched the faces in the passing trucks. He no longer felt his wounds, as if they had been anointed with some healing lotion. And all the time a voice kept shouting within him : “Aha ! What did I say : There’s no end to our strength, and no one can conquer us !”

Then he tore the bloodstained bandage from his head so that it would not interfere with his view of the road, and waving it, shouted to the passing troops.

“Hey there ! Comrades ! Neighbors ! Good luck ! Give it to the Germans ! It’s easy to give it to them. And as for me, neighbors, I’ll soon be back. A few light repairs, and I’ll be coming back !”

His name is Alexei Kulikov, and he comes from Penza. At present he is a sergeant-major in Captain Dubrovin’s company. Everyone knows him around here.







## FROM SOVIET WAR NEWS :

### *An Explanation Of The Speed Of The Present Russian Offensive*

Why are we speeding forward so swiftly ? Because we have learned the art of war. We forged our weapons in order to fight, not to bluff. We did not raise a din about Tigers and Panthers. We made good tanks that can smash Tigers. We do not advertise our weapons. We go on quietly making them. We are not out for sensational effects. We did not devise a flying bomb which can kill a hundred women from afar.

We did not reckon on paralyzing the imagination of the German rear with huge wings. We preferred to send our Stormoviks to pulverize German divisions. Psychological attacks are not in our line. We are interested not in Fritzes' psychology, but in their mortal flesh. And it is on their mortal flesh that we are bringing our influence to bear. We know the Germans cannot be enlightened, and we fight them with mortars, not declarations.

We are advancing so swiftly because we are fed up with the Germans. We want to have done with them. We want to live. That is a simple explanation of our offensive, but it is a true one. "This is the fourth summer," we say. "It's enough." And we are doing our utmost to prevent there being a fifth. Our troops dash forward with the secret thought : "Perhaps there won't be a fourth winter." We are seized with great impatience, and it lends us wings.

We are speeding forward because we are at the frontiers of Germany. We are on the threshold of the court house. We are in a hurry to meet the most beautiful of all damsels—Justice.

A wounded mortarman said to me the other day : "What bad luck ! They tell me I will be on my back for a month." I tried to console him. Said we could get along without him, but he answered angrily : "I must get to Berlin. They burned my wife alive."

We are moving so swiftly because not only this mortarman, but all of us are desperately anxious to get to Berlin. And it is now clear that we shall soon be there.

## Oath Taken By Men Of The Soviet Forces

Every citizen on admission to the Red Army (to which the Red Air Force is attached), Red Navy (which also has an air arm) or the Frontier Guard Troops, after studying the army regulations, and not later than two months after joining his unit takes the following oath :—

“ I, a citizen of the U.S.S.R., entering the ranks of the Workers’ and Peasants’ Red Army (or Navy), do take the oath and solemnly swear to be an honorable, brave, disciplined and vigilant fighter, to keep strictly all military and state secrets, to obey unquestionably all military regulations and the orders of my commanders, commissars and chiefs.

“ I swear to apply myself conscientiously to acquiring knowledge of military affairs, to guard unsleepingly the military and national possessions, to remain loyal to my last breath to my people, to my Soviet Fatherland, and to the Workers’ and Peasants’ Government.

“ I shall ever be ready at the command of the Workers’ and Peasants’ Government to go forward for the defence of my Fatherland—the U.S.S.R. ; and as a fighter of the Workers’ and Peasants’ Red Army, I swear to defend her with courage, with skill, with dignity and with honor, sparing neither my blood nor my life to achieve complete victory over the enemy.

“ If of malice I betray this my solemn oath, then let me be visited with the strict punishment of Soviet law, universal hatred, and the scorn of all working people.”

To this oath Alexei Kulikov put his name when he joined the company of Lieutenant Subbotin.

### ***How to prepare this Army Talk***

**Y**OU will find this a different kind of reading from other ARMY TALKS. You will wonder at the rather old-world language and the unusual expressions. But perhaps the best way to know a Russian soldier is through what a Russian soldier says.

Most of us don’t know very much about the Russians. We have not even seen them ; we have not talked with them. All we know about Russia is what we read. But we do know they have one of the greatest



fighting armies in the world. This simple story, simply told, may help us to understand the kind of man who makes up that army; the kind of man the Germans have learned to fear.

The American and the Russian have one great difference as soldiers. They are both fighting the same enemy. They were both attacked. They use some of the same equipment. But the Russian has had war in his own land. In many cases he has lost his family and his home. He has seen devastation and brutality spread across his countryside. Therefore, he has learned to hate and despise the German with a reality and a completeness the American may never have. This is why the Germans fear the Russians. This is why they dread the day the Russians come to Germany.

No matter whether we are ground forces, service troops, or air force, we are curious about our Russian allies. We all admire them and we have increasing respect for them. Some members of our air force are in Russia and are now meeting Russian flyers and Russian civilians. Despite language bars they are working side by side on the ground and in the air.

One of the most valuable carry-overs of this war will be knowledge of our allies. We need to know them now to win the war. We need to understand them later to win the peace.

This is the second issue of ARMY TALKS in which you have been given material on the Russian Soldier. In "How Russians Kill Germans," Vol. II, No. 21, a different approach was made. From the best available sources we examined the way the Russian soldier destroys his enemy. Compare these two ARMY TALKS; read over the previous pamphlet after you know Alexei Kulikov. Notice some of the quotations from the earlier issue: "The men of the Red Army did not become experienced and hardened soldiers all at once. We had to go through the test of great battles. No difficulties are too great for us now. . . ." (p. 9.) "Mechanized weapons are all very well in their way, but you can't win with these alone. . . . A cool mind and a warm heart are excellent weapons, too." (p. 11.) The two issues will work well together if you give them the chance.

Take ten minutes to introduce the topic. Use some Russian pictures and equipment if possible. Use the ABCA map recently sent to your unit to show how far the Russian line has advanced in the last week or ten days. Read parts of the book to the discussion group, or better still, have the men read parts of the book. Tune in on American Forces Network at 1430 hours on Saturdays.

# **GENERAL MARSHALL EVALUATES MORALE 5 : 1 OVER MATERIAL**



**MORALE** doesn't grow on trees, nor is it something that comes ready-made off the assembly line. To build and strengthen morale takes more than a genuine regard for the men's physical welfare, and all that goes with it. It is one of the requirements of leadership to prepare the soldiers mentally for their job, no matter whether it is in the fighting line, in the air or in the communications zone.

**ARMY TALKS** have become the recognized medium for this task in the ETO. They have proven most successful when widest scope was given to the individual's desire to voice opinions and exchange ideas. Here is an aid to discussion leaders to help them present the essential facts around which the discussion can revolve :—

## **ARMY TALKS IN THE NEWS**

The subject matter of this week's **ARMY TALK** will appear in an illustrated GI digest in the Warweek supplement of Stars and Stripes on **Thursday, 24 August, 1944.**

Purpose : to enable the soldier to enter the discussion with prior knowledge of the subject. Warweek, official orientation organ for the ETO, is striving to make the American soldier in this theater the best informed soldier in the world.

## **ARMY TALKS ON THE AIR**

Tune in on your American Forces Network station for a dramatized presentation of the week's **ARMY TALK**. Tie it up with your talk, use it as a self-starter for the discussion.

Time : **Saturday, 26 August, 1944, at 1430-1500 hours.**

Choose any convenient spot where you have a radio and a room for your platoon to listen in and follow up discussing the subject.

**Warweek**

**AFN**

**1<sup>ST</sup>** *in importance is morale...*

**GENERAL GEORGE C. MARSHALL**