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## **TWO TYPES OF INDIVIDUAL ARMED COMBAT OF THE KUBAN COSSACKS BEFORE WORLD WAR I: REASONS, CONTENT AND ESSENCE**

**Abstract.** *The purpose* of the article is to reveal the reasons for the existence and content of two types of individual armed combat of the Kuban Cossacks before World War I and to identify the differences of their distribution and significance in the Cossack environment. **The methodology of the study** is based on the basic principles of historical knowledge (science, historicism, systematic, etc.), associated with the use of a number of general and special-historical methods (the most important were the comparative and typological ones and author's approach to the reproduction and reconstruction of the Cossack individual armed combat. **The scientific novelty** is that for the first time, on the basis of little-known sources (in particular, unpublished materials of the archival institutions), the reasons for the appearance and the essence of two types of individual armed combat of the Kuban Cossacks that existed at the beginning of the XXth century have been determined, as well as the differences in their distribution in the Cossack environment and the consequences of this process have been analyzed. **The Conclusions.** At the beginning of the XXth century among the Kuban Cossacks there were two types of individual armed combat due to the traditional division into cavalry and infantry, inherited from previous Ukrainian Cossack formations, and due to new conditions of armed struggle and imperial unification of military training. We mean, first of all, a good use of sabers and rifles by the Cossack cavalrymen, and by the Cossack infantrymen – rifles and bayonets during combat. The Cossacks achieved a high level of a combat skill owing to a long-term training during service and owing to their own militarized environment. The methods of using cold weapons became the basis for the emergence of Cossack martial art (a military-applied fencing using a saber and a bayonet). The individual armed combat of the infantrymen during that time reality was inferior to cavalrymen, but it was a striking manifestation of the identity of the Kuban Cossacks. Under new conditions the individual armed combat of the infantrymen had prospects for a further development. In the future, it is appropriate to continue investigating the individual armed combat of the Kuban Cossacks during World War I and the Revolution.

**Key words:** *the Kuban Cossacks, cavalrymen, infantrymen, rifle, bayonet, sabors, armed combat, World War I.*

## ДВА РІЗНОВИДИ ІНДИВІДУАЛЬНОГО ЗБРОЙНОГО БОЮ КУБАНСЬКИХ КОЗАКІВ НАПЕРЕДОДНІ ПЕРШОЇ СВІТОВОЇ ВІЙНИ: ПРИЧИНИ, ЗМІСТ І ЗНАЧЕННЯ

***Анотація. Мета статті** – розкрити причини існування і зміст двох різновидів індивідуального збройного бою кубанських козаків напередодні Першої світової війни та виявити відмінності їх поширення й значення у козацькому середовищі. **Методологія дослідження** ґрунтується на основних принципах історичного пізнання (науковість, історизм, системність тощо), пов'язаних із застосуванням низки загальнонаукових та спеціально-історичних методів (найважливішими стали порівняльний і типологічний, а також авторський підхід до відтворення-реконструкції прийомів індивідуального козацького збройного бою). **Наукова новизна** полягає у тому, що вперше на основі маловідомих джерел (зокрема, й неопублікованих матеріалів архівних установ) розкрито причини появи та сутність двох різновидів індивідуального збройного бою кубанських козаків, що існували на початку ХХ ст., проаналізовано відмінності їх поширення у козацькому середовищі та наслідки цього процесу. **Висновки.** У Кубанському козацтві на початку ХХ ст. завдяки традиційному поділу на кінноту і піхоту (пластунів), успадкованому від попередніх українських козацьких формувань, новим умовам збройної боротьби та імперській уніфікації військової підготовки існували два різновиди індивідуального збройного бою. Йдеться про вправне застосування у бою козаком-кавалеристом передовсім шашки і гвинтівки, а козаком-піхотинцем (пластуном) – гвинтівки і багнета. Козаки досягали високого рівня бойової майстерності завдяки тривалому навчанню під час служби та у власному воєнізованому середовищі. Прийоми використання холодної зброї стали основою для виникнення козацького бойового мистецтва (військово-прикладне фехтування шашкою і багнетом). Індивідуальний збройний бій пластунів у тогочасних реаліях за рівнем престижності поступався кінному аналогу, але був яскравим виявом самобутності Кубанського козацтва і в нових умовах збройної боротьби мав перспективи для подальшого розвитку. В майбутньому слушно продовжити дослідження індивідуального збройного бою кубанських козаків у роки Першої світової війни та революції.*

***Ключові слова:** Кубанське козацтво, кавалерія, пластун, гвинтівка, багнет, шашка, збройний бій, Перша світова війна.*

**The Problem Statement.** At the beginning of XXth century the Kuban Cossack army was one of the largest in the Russian Empire. Due to the preservation of the heritage of the Black Sea Cossack army (the largest Ukrainian Cossack formation during the first half of the XIXth century), which became the basis of the Kuban Cossacks, the latter had also numerous infantrymen before World War I. I would like to emphasize that at that time the other Cossack formations did not have any infantry, they had the cavalry only. Under such conditions, only the Kuban Cossacks were divided into cavalrymen and infantrymen, who were significantly different in their military specialization, when preparing and carrying out their military service. This division involved mastering various military-applied skills and abilities, including the use techniques of individual rifles and knives. Its set and the use priorities for the cavalryman and the infantryman differed significantly, as did the content of the correspondent training. All this contributed to the creation of different in content and prestige types of an individual military applied art of an armed combat in the Cossack environment. The analysis of the causes, content and consequences of the creation of the above-mentioned types of armed combat of the Kuban Cossacks before World War I will have not only a scientific cognitive context but also a military-applied context in view of the possibility of applying the certain conclusions and recommendations in a modern military-applied training.

**The purpose** of the article is to analyze the causes of appearance and existence of two types of an individual applied art of armed combat; to reveal the content of two types of an individual applied art of armed combat of the Kuban Cossacks before World War I, as well

as to identify common and different trends of distribution and its importance in the Cossack military-privileged environment.

**The Analysis of Recent Research and Publications.** The military history of the Kuban Cossacks attracts attention of more and more scientists gradually. Most often, the researchers studied the issues of the appearance and further development of this formation, as well as the fate of its atamans. F. Shcherbyna and E. Felitsyn were the first representatives of the cultural elite of the Kuban Cossack army (Scherbina, & Felitsin, 2007; Scherbina, 2012). Modern historians continued to investigate the similar issues too, but taking into account the latest developments in special historical disciplines and a wider range of sources (Avramenko, Frolov, & Chumachenko, 2007; Malukalo, 2003; Ratushnyak, 2006). There is also the study of the participation of the Kuban Cossacks in the military conflicts (Bardadym, 1993; Matveev, & Frolov, 2007). I will also note a rather detailed study of B. Frolov on the issue of the Cossack weapons (Frolov, 2009). The attempts are made to analyze and train the Cossack units, but without paying attention to the issues of an individual Cossack warrior training (Shahtorin, 2008). The author of the article has investigated the military traditions of the Kuban Cossacks and their use of cold weapons for a long time (Zadunaiskyi, 2006; Zadunaiskyi, 2008; Zadunaiskyi, 2018). Thus, in historiography there has not been done yet a comprehensive analysis of the causes and consequences of the formation and development of two types of individual armed combat of the Kuban Cossacks in the context of their military specialization under the influence of their own traditions, the imperial reality of that time and the new demands of war. That is why these issues will be analyzed in the article presented. The above-mentioned issues determine the topicality and novelty of the study.

**The Statement of the Basic Material.** The Kuban Cossacks were formed in 1860 on the basis of the Black Sea Cossack army, of which more than a half was Cossack infantry (Avramenko, Frolov, & Chumachenko, 2007, p. 395). Then to the latter was added a part of the Caucasian Cossack troops, consisting mainly of cavalry. Nevertheless, the Cossack infantry still played an important role in the Kuban army. Subsequently, the situation changed and instead of 13 infantry battalions that existed in 1861, after the reorganization of 1870 only 2 remained (Kazin, 1992, pp. 120–125). But the peculiarities of the military organization and combat experience of most Cossacks, the specifics of their region of application and the socio-economic realities of life changed the position of the Russian Empire. Since 1882 there had been a steady increase in the number of infantry battalions. Therefore, at the beginning of World War I, the Kuban Cossack army had a powerful infantry again. This is evidenced by the composition of the main units and divisions of the first line of service of the above-mentioned army: 11 horse regiments, 6 infantry battalions, 2 hundred of Emperor's convoy, 2 hundred Kuban Division and 5 cavalry divisions (Eliseev, 2001, p. 44). In terms of numbers, infantry battalions were slightly larger than the cavalry regiments, that is why the infantry Cossacks made up more than a third of the total number of Cossacks of the Kuban Cossack army.

By the way, due to the division of the Cossack military service into three lines, the combat potential of each of the 11 troops was significantly reduced during peacetime. After 1882, the above-mentioned service lasted for 12 years and was divided into three stages of 4 years each, of which only the military units of the first line were permanently in order, and those belonging to the second and third lines were dissolved and were sent home (Kazin, 1992, p. 128). This approach was partly correspondent to the current trends in the state resources saving by the formation of mobilization reserves in case of a large-scale war. For example,

since the outbreak of World War I the Kuban Cossacks sent to the front 37 cavalry regiments and 51 separate hundreds, 24 infantry battalions and other units (Avramenko, Frolov, & Chumachenko, 2007, p. 404). Because of this division, the Cossacks were able to deploy three times the number of military units in a short time. I would like to emphasize separately that the mobilized Cossack contingents significantly outnumbered the usual reservists' combat capability because they consisted of the first-class warriors.

As you know, becoming a good warrior is not easy – it takes a long time to master the appropriate skills and abilities and gain a combat experience. It should be emphasized that combat training of a warrior depends directly on his military specialization, which determines the content of an individual military-applied art of the use of personal weapons during the combat. Similar approaches were topical for the Kuban Cossacks.

The presence of the Cossack cavalry and infantry units in the Kuban Cossack army naturally caused the existence of qualitative differences in the military specialization of those, who served in them. The Cossack cavalry still focused on prioritizing the combat using horses. The well-known General A. Shkuro recalls the realities of an everyday combat training in the Kuban regiments during 1907 – 1910 (Shkuro, 2004, pp. 55–56). Instead, the infantrymen fought exclusively without horses, in a pedestrian way. To carry out such combat missions, each cavalryman and infantryman had a suitable weapon. The first ones were armed with sabers, daggers and Cossack “Mosin” carbines (the model of 1891 without bayonets); the second – “Mosin” rifles (the model of 1891 with bayonets) and daggers (Zadunaiskyi, 2008, p. 22; Frolov, 2009, pp. 67–73). As we can see, the arms of the cavalry and the infantry were significantly different. The reasons for this were due to their different combat specialization.

Before reviewing the content of the individual training of the Kuban cavalrymen, I briefly analyze the general trends in the development of cavalry training at the beginning of the XXth century. The classical cavalry in the second half of the XIXth century was still aimed at conducting the combat riding a horse and having a cold weapon. The use of a carbine was also mandatory, but it retained signs of minority, especially during the combat. However, due to the active spread of new firearms models from the end of XIXth century changing the “picture” of the combat changed. A rapid fire reduced the significance of a horse-ridden action by the use of cold weapon. The new circumstances of a combat clash required from the classic rider to use firearms more often and be ready to fight on foot. And such priorities of military use of cavalry constantly expanded in Europe. A clear testimony to this fact was the French command's approach to combat use of the cavalry, with an emphasis on its supporting role (for infantry) in the order, which dates back to 1905. (*Prakticheskoye rukovodstvo dlya sluzhby frantsuzskoy kavalerii v pole 1905 g.*, 1907, p. 6). The Charter of the German cavalry (1909) is about the need to fight not only by means of cavalry but infantry as well (*Novyyi stroevoy ustav nemetskoy kavalerii 1909 g.*, 1910, p. 8). By the way, the Charter was immediately translated into Russian and published in the Russian Empire to study the military training of cavalry of a hypothetical enemy. Therefore, at the beginning of World War I, these tendencies increasingly dominated in the military-applied training of the cavalry of European leading armies.

At the beginning of the XXth century more and more attention was paid to the use of firearms in the Cossack cavalry training, similar to the use of firearms in the infantry units. I would like to emphasize that under such circumstances it was precisely the Kuban Cossack cavalry that could study the experience of the fraternal infantry. However, even then, in case of a close-handed fight, the Cossack cavalrymen used sabers (*Nastavleniye dlya vedeniya*

zanyatiy s kazakami v uchebnykh sborakh, 1911, p. 2464). The reason for this was not only that they always carried these weapons, but also the lack of bayonets in the Cossack carbines. This way out was quite logical and functional.

Thus, the priorities of the military-applied specialization of the Kuban cavalry determined the primacy of riding a horse during the armed combat, and then fighting on foot. The combat collision was carried out primarily by means of a sapor and then a carbine. It is clear that this was directly related to the skillful riding, which also had its own specificity. It is not only about an excellent horse equipment and how to control a horse, but also the technique of training (including the Cossack jiggling) and the behaviour of the Cossack during the combat (“Iz kozatskoi mynuvshyny” (spohady ukrainskykh kubanskykh kozakiv), 2006, p. 9). All this differed significantly from the analogs of the army cavalry, even in the Russian Imperial Army.

I briefly dwell on the peculiarities of the military specialization of the Kuban Cossack infantryman. The very being an infantryman implied the need to fight on the battlefield on foot. It was also very important that the combat specifics of an infantry soldier included the use of a rifle as the main weapon. That is, there was a greater unification of arms. An infantryman had to use his rifle not only for firing (a special attention was paid to it), but also for a close-handed (bayonet) fight (State Archives of the Krasnodar Region – SAKR, f. 443, d. 1, c. 22, p. 15). Therefore, the individual armed combat of the Kuban infantryman was only associated with a rifle, and firing was of a paramount importance, although a bayonet combat.

By the way, all Kuban Cossacks (both cavalymen and infantrymen) still had daggers. The presence of these weapons emphasized their military-Cossack affinity. However, the actual combat use of the dagger at this time was of a secondary importance because of the correlation of its parameters and the needs of the cavalry and infantry combat (Zadunaiskyi, 2018, pp. 256–260). Therefore, the presence of a dagger did not have a significant impact on the military-applied training of the Kuban Cossacks, which was focused on the formation of basic skills of an individual armed combat both in cavalry and infantry.

A particular attention should be paid to the fact that the military-applied specialization of the Cossack cavalymen and infantrymen caused a clear difference in the use of certain methods of the armed combat. It means that the infantrymen used their weapons for both fire and a hand-to-hand combat being on foot, and all the time they were trained for such a combat. As for the cavalymen, they preferred the use of a sapor during the combat, and shooting was more typical of an infantry combat. Taking into account the above-mentioned facts, I think that the infantrymen training was not only more unified, but it also provided the highest quality of the correspondent combat conditions. Instead, the training of the cavalymen was varied, but not equivalent. The consequence of this difference could be that the cavalymen had higher conditions during the cavalry combat, especially having sapor, and they were weaker in shooting and fighting.

Thus, the differences in the military specialization of the Kuban Cossacks cavalymen and infantrymen became one of the decisive prerequisites for the formation of two separate types of an individual armed combat. And it is quite interesting, the fact of presence of the Kuban Cossack infantry, and therefore the corresponding type of armed combat, became a fundamental difference between the military life of the Kuban Cossacks and the rest of the Cossack troops. All other Cossacks remained cavalymen before World War I.

By the way, the content of the Cossack military-applied armed combat was not completely unified and concerned the general principles of warfare with the help of individual standard



firearms and cold weapons. It is clear that the psychophysical properties of a particular Cossack warrior affected the certain aspects of the use of weapons, depending on the characteristics of a particular Cossack environment. Not only family, village and military-historical features (a certain ancestral combat heritage) are meant, but also an excellent military service experience in specific regiments and battalions. F. Yeliseyev, the authoritative Kuban Cossack colonel drew attention to all this (Eliseev, 2001, pp. 18–20). But a particular combat experience of each Cossack warrior gained a special importance. The imperial military leadership, together with the Cossack command, controlled the unification and fixation of only the foundations of the correspondent individual armed combat, and did not restrict its improvement. Therefore, the realities of the Cossack military privileged being of that period should have contributed to this as well.

Continuing to analyze the types of the Cossack individual armed combat, it is worth mentioning the differences in the military-applied training of the Kuban Cossacks cavalrymen and infantrymen. It should be admitted, this training was the most similar when it was organized in the service department (primarily, of the first line service). In the service department the cavalrymen and infantrymen were daily engaged in a specialized training, including studying the basics of the armed combat. This training was quite diverse and intensive, taking about 5 hours a day (SAKR, f. 396, d. 1, c. 8563/2, pp. 433–35; f. 404, d. 1, c. 46, pp. 3–4). Moreover, this training had its specificity depending on the time of year. In autumn and winter, a stationary training dominated, and in summer it was focused was on field camps, where training was as close as possible to a real fighting. There were also some military-applied competitions organized (SAKR, f. 396, d. 1, c. 8563/1, pp. 162–165). All this laid the foundations for the high individual and collective combat ability of the Cossacks. It is clear that the differences also occurred, but they were manifested in the direction of a military specialization, not the intensity and prestige of the training itself – it was equivalent.

By the way, similar approaches to training can be found in the regular troops of the Russian Imperial Army. One of the evidences of this is the conduct of training in 1911 during the summer period. The training was organized for the guards army cavalry in the form of military-applied competitions (Central State Historical Archive of Ukrain in Kyiv – CSHAUK, f. 1219, d. 2, c. 1149, p. 1). But the content, the intensity and the interest in the correspondent training of the above-mentioned military unit had signs of a minor character.

I would like to emphasize that the military profile training of the Cossacks, unlike the rest of the military population of the Russian Empire, was not limited to the time of service in the units of the first line service. Due to the militarized way of life of the Cossack community, its representatives were trained before and after their service in these units. And the most widespread and unified was the system of the Cossack military training camps. Before World War I, there were only district centers for combat training and retraining of the Cossacks within the correspondent administrative territorial units (Kuban region had 7 districts / divisions). These are the annual Cossack training camps for the privileged units of the second line of service (the third one was exempted from recurrent combat training), a separate category of Cossacks, aged 21 – 25 (released for special reasons from a compulsory peacetime service) and 20-year old young men (during one year they studied extensively the basics of military affairs for further service) (*Nastavleniye dlya vedeniya zanyatiy s kazakami v uchebnykh sborakh*, 1911, p. 2456). The camps functioned annually for 4 weeks and provided the Cossacks with the proper level of skill in both individual armed combat and unit combat.

Let us dwell on the study of the basics of individual military-applied art of the armed combat by the Cossacks. In the camps, the training approach was similar to the first-line

service units, but more intense because of time constraints. Therefore, a considerable attention was paid to both the use of cold weapons and fire use training. The latter was considered a very important component of the armed combat. This was evidenced not only by the daily preparatory training (the techniques, aiming and shot simulation) of up to 15 minutes, but also by firing. So, in the above-mentioned Instruction it was clearly stated about the need for up to 2 shootings per week (Nastavleniye dlya vedeniya zanyatiy s kazakami v uchebnykh sborakh, 1911, p. 2457). In this case, the intensity and duration of the training depended on the age and combat experience of the correspondent category of the Cossacks. Those, who were just preparing to serve in the first line priority units (ages 20 – 21) studied more the initial techniques of an individual firing training and they had a minimum number of combat firing (Nastavleniye dlya vedeniya zanyatiy s kazakami v uchebnykh sborakh, 1911, p. 2472). Instead, experienced Cossacks fired more and imitated the use of firearms while practicing the techniques of tactics in the unit, hundred and regiment.

Despite a considerable attention to the Cossacks fire training, the above-mentioned Instruction confirmed the priority for the cavalymen of combat use of cold weapons. Therefore, training in the use of sabors (blows, pricks and protective actions) dominated fire training in its intensity and duration. I will note not only the daily practiced training of combat techniques during an individual and collective horse riding, but also a much greater amount of time for such training. (Nastavleniye dlya vedeniya zanyatiy s kazakami v uchebnykh sborakh, 1911, pp. 2478–2480). In addition, as it was mentioned above, when learning about infantry tactics, cavalymen also had to use their own sabors in case of a close-handed fight. All this not only provided the Cossack art of an individual armed combat with clear features of a military use, but it also testified to the priorities of the Cossack cavalymen training in special camps.

A particular attention is also paid to the fact that in the Kuban Cossack army these camps were held jointly for cavalry and infantry. For example, in 1901, a joint camp was organized for two local cavalry regiments and two infantry battalions of the second and third service ranks near Slavyansk (SAKR, f. 418, d. 2, c. 156, p. 8). Despite the joint camps, not only the content of the training, but also its intensity was clearly different taking into account a correspondent military specialization. For example, the cavalymen from the second line of the service were called for training for 4 weeks, and the infantrymen – only for 3 weeks. That is, the training intensity of infantry privileged categories in comparison with cavalry was significantly lower (30% lower). I assume that the reason for this was the greater complexity of the military-applied Cossack cavalry skills, both at the individual and collective levels. All this was true of the armed combat training. In other words, the above-mentioned difference emphasized the greater importance of the military-applied training of the Cossack cavalry, which increased the prestige of the respective direction of the cavalryman individual armed combat in comparison with the infantry.

Next I will mention the Cossacks training of basic individual military-applied skills outside the military units of all service lines. The need for this kind of training was due to the fact that the certain measures particularly affected the excellent prestige of two types of the Cossack individual armed combat in a wider Cossack environment. First of all, I mean a daily military gymnastics in the village (stanytsya) schools, which was officially introduced among the Kuban Cossacks since 1910 (Zadunaiskyi, 2012, pp. 303–307). Twice a day (1 hour totally) the gymnastics was done by boys of the Cossack origin. Among various components of this gymnastics, a special attention was paid to getting acquainted with a savor and a rifle (SAKR, f. 396, d. 1, c. 10027, p. 149). The very fact that boys, regardless

of their future military specialization, were taught the basics of the combat – the use of sabors, testified to the priority of cavalrymen training over the training of infantrymen.

It should not be forgotten that the youth learned the basics of the Cossack armed combat from their relatives and their coevals (“Iz kozatskoi mynuvshyny” (spohady ukrainskykh kubanskykh kozakiv), 2006, p. 10). This practice was based not only on family customs, but also the realities of the militarized lifestyle of the Cossack community, because it was prestigious to become a skilled warrior. Taking into account the fact that the basics of individual armed combat can only be learned with the use of weapons, it is a very important evidence of certain priorities – the Cossacks had the weapons. In accordance with the imperial requirements for the Cossacks military service, they were required to keep their weapons at home constantly. Such weapon was a savor and a dagger for the Kuban Cossacks cavalrymen, and only a dagger for the infantrymen (Eliseev, 2001, p. 47). The Cossacks did not have “Mosin” rifles and carbines, because firearms were received from the state only during the military service and during the war. Moreover, the imperial authorities controlled the obligatory availability of cold weapons to every service Cossack. It was the very fact that provided the study by the Cossack youth and practicing the skills by the Cossacks only the basics of the combat with the use of sabors (to a lesser extent with the use of daggers). That is, there were grounds for studying the basics of the very types of the individual armed combat of the Cossack cavalryman. Under such circumstances it was quite difficult to study the basics of shooting and melee combat. Thus, the above-mentioned realities contributed to the cavalry profile training of young people and older Cossacks.

Similar tendencies were observed during military-applied competitions. The latter took place several times a year in the first-line service units, training camps and Cossack villages (stanytsya) (SAKR, f. 396. d. 1, c. 8563/1, p. 165; f. 418, d. 1, c. 3084, p. 1; d. 3, c. 58, pp. 1–3). The military-applied competitions were organized on main Orthodox and military holidays. If in the military units the cavalry and infantry had similar conditions for displaying their level of art of individual armed combat, the situation was quite different in the Cossack settlements. In the latter, only horse racing, jiggling and combat use of the savor took place: cutting of willow and clay, pricks in the ring, etc. In other words, the art of an armed combat of the Cossack cavalrymen was predominant as compared to the art of infantry armed combat. This was influenced by the above-mentioned features of military gymnastics in village (stanytsya) schools and the state of affairs with weapons. The activities within the Kuban Cossack Army of a special formation – the “Cavalry Assistance Society” also indirectly influenced this process (SAKR, f. 418, d. 1, c. 5893, p. 10). On the initiative of the society, in 1904, 10 separate horse races were conducted. Such approaches corresponded to the general imperial tendencies. The above-mentioned facts testified to the dominance of the field conditions for military-applied training of the Cossack cavalrymen, rather than infantrymen, which also determined a greater prestige of the correspondent skills of the individual armed combat.

In the context of the above-mentioned, attention should be also paid to the foundations emergence of the military-applied martial art based on a unified basis of a complex armed combat art. It was manifested in a skillful use of only cold weapons, taking into account the correspondent moral, ethical and spiritual values of the military-privileged Cossack environment (Zadunaiskyi, 2006, pp. 66–69). Therefore, the Kuban cavalry Cossacks were masters of fencing with the use of sabors and the infantrymen – with bayonets. Such realities led to the existence among the Kuban Cossacks of two separate, but typologically related types of applied military martial arts, based on the correspondent varieties of an individual armed combat and were their constituents.



Finishing the analysis of two types of an individual armed combat of the Kuban Cossacks, I emphasize the obvious fact – the higher the level of an appropriate Cossack skill was, the greater were the chances of survival in the battle and destroying the enemy. It is quite evident, the collective combat capability of any Cossack unit also largely depended on the combat skill of each warrior. The military history of the Kuban Cossack formations is full of such examples, and these examples are observed during World War I.

The presented analysis of the content of the Cossack armed combat gives grounds to reflect on the problem of its tradition and prospects for a certain environment. I mean the following: the fact that the infantry tradition seems to be correspondent to the essential foundations of the Black Sea (Ukrainian) Cossack heritage among the Kuban Cossacks. Nevertheless, because of the unification of the military system and the tendencies of the Cossack training, this type of armed combat (based on it and military-applied martial arts) was less developed and systematized, and infantry was inferior to the prestige of the cavalry. However, the prospects of the combat during World War I changed these priorities in favour of the infantry because of the significant restriction on the use of cavalry in the combat. In other words, despite the certain advantage of the prestige of the Cossack cavalry armed combat, the military-applied experience of an individual Cossack infantryman armed combat was not only more traditional but perspective.

**The Conclusions.** Before World War I, among the Kuban Cossacks, owing to specialization in cavalry and infantry, there were two types of an individual armed combat (both with the use of firearms and cold weapons). The cavalryman used mostly a sabre and a rifle during cavalry and infantry combats. The infantryman fought on foot using a rifle and a bayonet above all. The existence of these types of the armed combat was due to the interaction of the Kuban Cossack environment (preserved Zaporizhya-Black Sea (Ukrainian) heritage of the Cossack infantry, which was not typical of the rest of the Cossack formations of the Russian Empire), the new requirements of a combat resistance (strengthening the role of fire and lessening the importance of cavalry) and the imperial unification (uniformity of weapons and bases of military-applied training of the Cossacks). The Cossacks gained a sufficient level of skill in armed combat owing to a long military service and living in a militarized Cossack environment. A high level of an individual combat capability of the Cossacks was to ensure the combat quality of their military units. Appropriate skills in the use of cold weapons became the basis for the emergence of the Cossack martial arts (military-applied fencing by using swords and bayonets). The imperial standards and the realities of life at that time caused a greater prestige of the Cossack cavalry, but it was the individual armed combat of the infantrymen that became a clear manifestation of the military self-sufficiency and identity of the Kuban Cossacks and, taking into account the urgent needs for hostilities, it had the prospects for a further development.

The analysis of two types of an individual armed combat of the Kuban Cossacks illustrates the prospect of a further study of these two types development during World War I and the Revolution.

It seems reasonable during the individual training of modern warriors to pay more attention to fostering some confidence by mastering the techniques of a hand-to-hand combat (including a bayonet combat) following the example of the Kuban infantrymen. It will be also useful to introduce military sports competitions for reservists and youth following the Cossack model.

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