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Documents of strategic war games of the Russian General Staff 1906–1914: composition and methods of source studying

## Annotation

The article describes documents of strategic war games of the Russian General Staff before the World War I (1906—1914), analyzes their basic varieties and develops methods of source studying. It shows their significance as primary sources on history of Russian war planning. We can distinguish two groups of documents of strategic war games – upon their organization and upon conduct. The first group includes the correspondence upon the organization of war games, reports, programs, instructions to the participants and intermediators, lists of participants. The second group includes operational documents - tasks, battle orders (dispositions and directives), battle reports, war game logs, maps, accounts, which are considered documents of the highest informational value. The main method of their source studying is a comparative analysis of their content with the data of planning documents of the Russian General Staff. We come to the conclusion, that the documents of war games have great importance for the study of Russia's preparations for full-scale European war. They help to understand the reasons of failure of the East Prussian operation and indecisive result of Galician battle. Also they help to characterize Russian war planning and to reveal errors, committed by the Russian General Staff before the First World War.

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Thursday, 19 October 2023 00:00

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Key documents of strategic war games were planned with the Russian General Staff, the  
Mykhailovskaya, and the Ministry of War. The documents were prepared by the General Staff and the General Staff of the Imperial Russian Army.