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Frontline Daily Life of First Lieutenant V.G. Morozov: A Diary from the Collection of the Novorossiysk Historical Museum-Preserve

Abstract

The recent years have seen major changes in the Russian historiography of the Great Patriotic War. Due to development of such research areas, as social history, military history anthropology, microhistory, gender history, scientists' interest to documents of personal provenance grows. Among these are diaries of ordinary Soviet citizens, participants of the Great Patriotic War. Frontline and rear areas diaries dating from 1941–1945 are of great historical value. Firstly, they are sufficiently rare; secondly, they provide unique information on various aspects of the military daily life, of the emotional sphere of the Soviet people, of their survival strategies. This proves the significance of diaries publication and their introduction into the scholarship. Objectively analyzing contents of a personal provenance source for compliance with established facts is of particular importance, as it allows unite “personal” and “official” points of view on wartime events, which is especially important when studying the fighting front. This article analyzes diary entries made by first lieutenant Vasily Morozov in 1943, during the battle of Novorossiysk. Lieutenant Morozov's diary doesn't merely chronicle the fightings, it allows reconstruct other realities of frontline daily life as well. The entries include several information layers (emotional, everyday, etc.) showing the war through the eyes of its participant, an infantry officer with better opportunities to die than to keep a diary. Analysis of the diary material allows identify some features of frontline diaries: conciseness in relation of the events, little attention to utilitarian issues, contemplation of life values. The contents was affected by such factors as vicissitudes of the author's pre-war life, his frontline career, rank and position, intensity of the fighting at a certain time. The author believes that the diary of V.G. Morozov allows reconstruct the realities of wartime daily life of officers to whom ordinary Red Army soldiers entrusted their lives in 1941-1945.

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Keywords

Personal provenance sources, the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945, frontline diary, V.G. Morozov, the Red Army, officers, offensive, daily life, emotional experiences, injury, personal military experience.

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