Property of
Sergei Pavlovich Suworov,
Count of Novgorod

- Adam Lemon
April 30th, 1878 - Novgorod

The service finished, and the townsfolk all dispersed. I energetically sprang from the threshold, and mother and I rushed for the station, where Kostya was already waiting. When we arrived at the platform, the train was already in its last stages of being boarded. Hurriedly, my mother had the servant place my bag in my hands, filled with rubles, clothing, and my journal.

Mother embraced me quickly and tearfully told me to make my family and my country proud, and to send her best to her dear Kanya when I arrived in Orenburg.
Young Kostya came and hugged me as well, holding back his tears. I was glad he came. He was the only one of my nine brothers and sisters that were there to see me off. The other eight were either too young to care or too old to be anywhere but at the centers of political action. They were Suworov's after all, a name that carries weight, inspiring and casting a shadow on all of us.

My goodbyes finished, I boarded the train. I found a seat in the quiet back corner of the car and opened my bag. I pulled out my journal. I had it since
I was a boy, always admiring the maps
in the study room, or the famous Surmir
himself in glory on canvas over the
mantle. I always loved my father regaling
me with stories of his battles for Russia,
and of the glory and renown which any
man could not help but look at with envy.

I opened the journal to the first page. It
was a poorly drawn depiction of my father
on horseback, fighting the British in Crimea.

As I flipped through the pages and
down the years, the drawings and thoughts
progressed, but the theme never differed.
I stopped on the last picture I sketched
during my military training. A map,
of Europe and Asia. A detailed one at that. I had loved looking at the seals of the great empires of Europe on the map, and how all the colors of their empires stood against each other on it. But it was always to the center of the map my eyes drew. Turkey, in orange, so large and yet so weak, and its defender in this war and the last, Great Britain, clad in red. Then India too clad in red, the whole axle upon which the British Empire turns, arrayed against a great and holy white wall to the north—the Russian Empire. From this white came broad arrows, into Europe, into Turkey, into Persia—.
and into India. I had always dreamed of Russia marching to the ends of the earth, and I had always dreamed of being a part of it. For me, it is to where the white Russian and the red Britain meet that I must go. I’ve been assigned to a Cossack Battalion in Turkestan, taking the fight to the Asiatic savages on our borders. It is there that I will make a name for myself.
June 18th - Tashkent

After a three and a half day train ride, I finally found myself in Orenburg on May 3rd, the seat of the early conquests of the steppe. There has been so much talk of our war with the Turks. Fear that the British will step in to deny us the Straits and warn that we too might step in against them. When I entered the Governor-General's office at Orenburg, the hustle and excitement surely did little but confirm these rumors. When I finally found the office of my brother Vasily, assistant to the Governor-General himself, he was in a secret and guarded meeting. After an hour, my brother emerged...
Confident, the spring in his step bounding his epaulettes and medals. Upon seeing me, his mustachioed face lit up.

"Seryozha! It is good to see you, little brother! It has been too long. I regret the general has kept me busy with these confidential going-ons. Let us suffice to say it is grand time to be a Russian! Brother, I have pulled some strings with some friends of mine down in Turkestan, and they have set you up with a fine adjutant job with a fine cavalry officer on the farthest frontier!"

I spent the night in Orenburg, bade farewell to Vasthy, and joined a contingent of new recruits heading south down the
long and winding road to Tashkent. I'd rather not dwell on the journey here, as it was as uneventful as it was dry, flat, and agonizingly long. I spent most of the time writing and sketching fictitious battles and conquests in my journal to pass the time. Eventually though, the steppes gave way to the Aral Sea and the road along the Syr Darya. I could not imagine not having had a horse for the whole month and a half trip like the unenlisted men.
June 28th - Samarkand

After two day's rest in Tashkent following the journey, I was summoned to report for duty by the Governor-General's office. Von Kaufmann is a legend with many Russians having commanded Turkestan for more than a decade. As I entered the office, I noticed guards outside the door. When I told the adjutant that I was here to receive my orders from Von Kaufmann, he informed me that the Governor-General was busy in a War Plans meeting. He then told me that he had been given my orders, and that I was to be appointed second in command of the 46th Cossack Battalion. However, he added that we were not to go to our
base along the frontier. He said I was to join my commander, Colonel Ivanovsky and make for Samarkand immediately.

When I asked where I should find this Colonel, the adjutant pointed across the room towards a well-mustached figure with several medals and hair that was slightly grey around the edges. I went over and introduced myself, and he was heartily impressed with my last name, “Suworov.” He remarked, “How appropriate that we have another Suworov to guidew us to glorious victory one more time.”

I was puzzled, “Gloriously, sir?”

“Is it this glorious thing that lies in Samarkand?” Ivanovsky raised a slyly and brought a grin, bemused expression
to bear. " No, Captain. Our glory does not lie in Samarkand. That is merely our staging area. Have you not heard the order? The whole Russian army is Turkestan heads south. Our glory, Sergei Belovitch lies in India.

The road south to Samarkand was relatively short, but filled with excitement. I had always dreamed of living up to or maybe surpassing my brothers, and dreamed of revenging Russia against Britain for its humiliation in the Crimean War. The contents of my journal can attest to that.

When we arrived in Samarkand, Ivanovsky and I encountered a huge military send-off for a great party. Several hundred Cossacks and several hundred
diplomatic staff, led by a man named C. S. Stolletov were on an embassy to the Afghan Emir Sher Ali Khan in Kabul. I could not help but bring myself to be moved by the procession and inspired by the vigor and boldness of bringing an embassy to another. The British considered their vassal. Ivanovsky disliked the move and called it too risky, but I must admit I have been swept up with the “war fever” that is abounding here. For posterity, I drew up the route of the delegation to Kabul, and the routes of my forces when they came through in my journal. This truly is the opportunity I’ve sought all my life!
August 1st - Samarkand
All this long waiting. And for naught.
My first few days in the city were filled
with inspiration, for I was anxious to go on
Baltiain such an historic expedition. Troops
gradually streamed into the city, and raised
up massive camps outside when the city
became full. More and more joined into the
main force under the command of Major-General
Mikhail Trotsky. We would deport Samarkan
for Kabul, which hopefully have been made friendly
to us by Struve's expedition. We could then
prow over the Khuzest Pass into the ripe and
poorly defended lands beyond. This was the
plan. And I had sketched it out a dozen
times already, picturing a thousand
scenarios in arrows of battle maneuvers, numerous ways to show my quality as a Swarov. And all for naught.

However, by late July, little news had come back to us from Stolypin’s bold expedition to Kabul. In addition, a peace treaty between us and Turkey in Berlin had been signed, lowering the need for this great crusade into India. Finally, when only 70% of expected forces arrived at their staging areas, Chancellor Gorchakov got cold feet and ordered him Hausmann to abort the campaign. I am in a fervor. This was the kind of campaign I have wanted to be a part of all of my life,
and now my hopes are dashed. With the expedition scrapped, Colonel Ivanovsky and I have been ordered to our unit's normal position on the frontier, a small fort on the Amu Darya opposite Afghanistan, called Fermez.
November 28th—Termez

Winter is beginning to set in here, though it is a mockery of winter back at Novgorod. It has certainly been better than the summer which has been oppressively hot. Termez has not been the worst posting, overlooking a great bend in the river but I have been dying of boredom. There has been little to do but sit and watch the river in the garrison or patrol the countryside. I have spent dozens of hours alone sitting in Ivanovskij’s office and looking at the grand imperial map on the wall, harboring hopes of some chance—any chance really—of expanding Russia’s
great white border. There is only so much
starting across the river at Afghanistan you
can do before you seek to desperately cross
it yourself.

I have spent the last few months
hanging on every scrap of news from Kabul.
The embassy has gone remarkably well for us,
it is said. I consider Russian ascendency
in Afghanistan at hand, as the Emir-
Sher Ali Khan—pledged to make his state
a vassal to Russia in exchange for Russia's
protection against British intrigues.
The British, however, seem to have
other plans. Wood has arrived here that
the British, outraged at our embassy and
funding their own demand for an embass
rejected, invaded Afghanistan last 18 week with 40,000 men. The Emir could do little but be routed by their forces. As I hear that the Emir is begging for help from Russia, I find it hard to suppress the urge of riding to the nearest ford and intervene against the British myself. I desperately hope Kaufmann and Gorchakov can live up to their agreements with the Emir and send our forces to defeat the invaders. I cannot stand the thought of looking across the Amu Darya and seeing British soldiers on the far shore, unless such a sight is followed by a shot from my rifle.
The news from Afghanistan has grown blander by the day. First the British crush the Emir's armies, then they inflict several defeats on them again before besieging Kandahar. Then two-and-a-half weeks ago they took the city, what remained of the Emir's forces dispersed in the middle of the night. Sher Ali Khan departs the city, I might add - awaiting Russian relief forces, I might add - awaiting Russian relief forces for the British forces' arrival. In desperation and with his forces dispersed to put on the throne his puppet, the British forced themselves upon the capital. Kandahar is when he fled, the Emir's puppet place. Kandahar was running for Mazar-I-Sharif, a city...
only thirty miles north of my station. 20

Last night, our battalion was dispatched across the Amu Darya and a secret mission to shield the retreating delegation's retreat across the river. We rode out for the nearest ford, crossed under the dim light of the full moon. Ivanovsky and I rode up to the company when we spotted it approaching, spoke with the leaders of the delegation, and beckoned them towards the ford.

Next came a group we did not expect following behind them: the fleeing Emir and his allies. Getting over my shock, I rode up to greet them and direct them across the ford. Grunts of thanks emanated from the
group, but that couldn’t make up for 21
the sheer look of humiliation and fear upon
each one of their faces. The Emir looked
desperating, haggard even. Never when
Ivanovsky and I saw this delegation
leave would I have expected this horrific
result. Perhaps I was wrong to have been
swept by the same war fever and bellicose
optimism that seized these men. Perhaps
this expedition was not boldness at all,
but mere ill-advised hubris. That night,
I pulled out the map I drew of the dele-
gation’s route to Kasul and added arrows
in the opposite direction for their ignom-
ious retreat.
January 14th—Termez

The recent snow has melted off, and it's time to go on patrol again. My company was sent to patrol the Surkhand Valley to the north of Termez, towards the Russians. The past few days have been uneventful, but it's been refreshing to get out of the small fortress. If I had to spend one more day on the ramparts watching the frontier and hoping for some semblance of action, I would go mad. Today, however, was a momentous day. As we went further down the valley, towards Tashik country, one of our scouts spotted a strange party of Afghan travellers on a hill above
above the road. Curious, but also suspicious, I sent my men to cut them off and surround them. Upon further inspection, this party of “Afghans” was made up of an impertinent British officer, a look-alike Indian cartographer, two poorly-disguised sepoys, and several assorted Indian servants. I ordered them seized and brought to Termoz for interrogation. I cannot risk British spies in our midst.
January 12th - Termez

We arrived back at Termez this morning without any captives in tow. Immediately upon arrival, I brought the British officer—a Major, I soon learned—to Ivanovsky’s office to be interrogated. It was in vain, however, as the major was stubborn and inordinately rude, refusing to divulge his mission or give us any of the information we sought. Frustrated and attended at his demeanor, I wished to pay the answers from him more forcefully before Ivanovsky demurred at the notion. Instead, Ivanovsky told me to bring in the Indian cartographer from his jail cell.
As the cartographer entered, I couldn't help but he seemed to be by appearance the most professional non-white man I had ever seen, dressed as I remember my professors at university appearing. One of my men poured out the contents of his bag. Among them were a few compasses, some ink, and maps—dozens of them. Except in this case, it was the cartographer who had been drawing the maps, rather than myself admiring them incessantly. Within the maps were toads of various rivers and routes in the Pamirs and the Hindu Kush. But considering the tumult ongoing on the other side of the river, a simple mapping expedition...
was not plausible. He must have been a spy, I thought. I pressed the cartographer for answers. Then I pressed him again. I wanted answers. But he just continued to look down at Dvornovsky’s chess set on the desk and was unresponsive. Eventually, I lost my temper with the man, yelling, “Damn it, you Hindu rat! What are you?”

The cartographer looked up at last, with a fire in his eyes the likes of which I had never seen. He stood up and spat on the ground, and in flawless Russian like any educated man. He yelled, “Curse you, you Russian scum! I never wanted to be here in the first place! I was forced into doing...”
this by the Viceroy's Office! You want to know what I am?" He reached down to the
desk and picked up one of the pawns from the chess set, "THIS is what I am!" He
pointed at the Mason in the corner, "This is what he is! This is what YOU ALL are!"

In his anger, he threw the glass piece at the great imperial map on Ivanovsky's wall,
shattering it. I was so angry at this impu-
dent little brown man that I struck him.
He was surprised, but looked at me and
continued in a slower and more deliberate tone.

"We do not matter in the slightest to
those who make these decisions, thousands of
miles away in offices and palaces, looking at
maps on a wall very much like this one here. They toy with the attacks of thousands of soldiers as if they were nothing but the small arrows used to represent them. Those men matter little, and the peoples of those lands, even less. All that matters to these generals and politicians is which flag flies over those lands and which color those lands appear on their maps! And to them, if it takes a glorious and blood-streaked war to achieve it, so much the better!"

His voice grew quiet, almost sad. "This is not a game, and yet we are all still playing it."

Ivanovsky's bushy eyebrows rose, but instead of anger at the outburst, a touch
of understanding could be seen on his face. Ivanovsky dismissed the cartographer, telling the guard to find the man a proper room. I sat quietly in anger for a while, and then departed for one of my favorite places to think, a rock along the great riverbank. I sat there until sunset, thinking about the cartographer had said, clutching my old beloved journal, with all its wooded routes and maps. No matter what, I could not shake the feeling that every word of what he said, as much as I loathed it all, was true.

I got angry, but in a different way than before. I took my old journal and threw it into the river, watching as it and my
Foolish ambitions sank beneath the waves. Part of me felt like I had just thrown away the Sunarov legacy, but the other part of me did not care. What good comes of glory if it only ends in needless death? And what can a man derive from power if it only ends in the desolation of the innocent? I looked up and down the river, remarking upon the utter calm and peace of it all. This place needed no glory. I pray to God that it may stay this way, and that this game can finally stop being played.

- Сергей Федорович Купченко
Nabatov