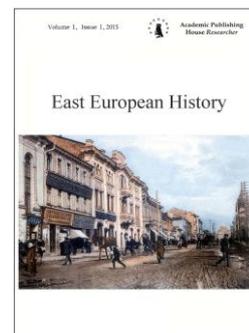


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## Leisure Activities of a Guard Officer in St. Petersburg at the beginning of the XX century

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### Abstract

Due to a newly discovered diary of an officer of the Life Guards 1st Artillery Brigade V.S. Savonko, we have a unique opportunity to get an idea of leisure of Guard officer in 1899–1909. Forms of leisure were diverse: joint feasts in the officers' of the brigade with an almost indispensable card game, lunches and dinners in prestigious restaurants, theaters, cinemas, exhibitions, listening the lectures of a wide range: from military history to the latest advances in all areas of scientific knowledge. Judging by diaries during the military reforms of 1905–1909 an increasingly prominent place in the leisure of the officer was engaged by training and self-education. Their main forms were listening lectures and reading literature.

**Keywords:** V. S. Savonko, Life Guards 1st Artillery Brigade, history of everyday life of the Russian Imperial Guard, cultural life and everyday life of St. Petersburg in 1899–1909.

### 1. Introduction

During the last years of the Russian Empire, the Guard officers were offered a great diversity of the forms of entertainment in St. Petersburg. The possibilities of entertainment provided by the capital of the Empire were more varied than those available to the officers of the provincial garrisons. In addition to the entertaining forms of leisure, which included card games, restaurants, theaters, cinema and various exhibitions, we should highlight attending public lectures, doing courses in the educational institutions, participating in the activities of educational societies and reading.

In a modern researcher's opinion: "The spiritual and intellectual life of the officers differed sharply from the life of the society, composed of people of different upbringing, education, moral and political views" (Andriets, 2008). If one accepts the validity of this statement, the more "separated from the society" seemed to be the Institute of the Imperial Guard officers corps. "The officer corps regiments of the "old guard", said G. S. Chuvardin, were a micro-cultural (subcultural) world, isolated in many ways, living in accordance with the system that developed and constantly cultivated attribute mythology" (Chuvardin, 2002).

### 2. Materials and methods

If the service activities of the Guard officers can be described on the basis of the historical documents, their inner world and forms of leisure activities can be perceived through the memoirs.

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With all its fascination this literature has unavoidable disadvantages, the most important ones are the lack of details, specificity and accuracy. The diaries have a great advantage over the memoirs.

Due to a recent discovery of the diary of the 1st Artillery Leibgarde Brigade officer V. S. Savonko, we have a unique opportunity to get an idea of leisure activities of a Guard officer during the period of 1899–1909 (RNB. F. 1000. Op. 11. D. 86, 87, 88, 89).

Vladimir Stepanovitch Savonko was born on September 18, 1877 in Gatchina to a family of an artillery officer. V. S. Savonko received an excellent home education and after graduated with honors from the 1st Cadet Corps. In 1895–1898 he studied at the Mikhailovskoye Artillery School, which he finished as a 3rd student. In 1898 he joined the 1st Artillery Leibgarde Brigade, where he was in service from 1898–1915. He was promoted to the rank of a second lieutenant of the 1st Artillery Leibgarde Brigade on August 6, 1898, on 8 December 1902 – to the rank of a lieutenant (with the seniority on 8 August, 1902), on 6 December, 1906 – to the captain rank. The author of the diaries was well received at the court as well as in the military circles, often visited royal events and was personally acquainted with Grand Dukes Mikhail Alexandrovich and Andrey Vladimirovich.

Being highly disciplined, observant and literary gifted, V. S. Savonko kept a diary almost every day, recording all the events and incidents that occurred in the brigade. The author considered his diaries "to be his autobiography": "I will write what I see, hear and what is actually happening, without any embellishment, as I have only one witness and listener – my conscience ...". The diaries described the leisure activities, available to the young officer.

We should admit that the artillery officers were, as a rule, more intellectually advanced than the cavalry and infantry officers. As the proverb, popular among the military in the early XX century goes: "The handsome serves in the cavalry, the smart – in the artillery, the drunk – in the navy, and the fool – in the infantry". Also it is necessary to consider that only the best graduates of military schools with the highest total score became the Guard officers. It can be concluded that the author of the diary in his intellectual development and interests was above the average level of a typical Guards officer.

### 3. Discussion and results

The first years of service gave a few entertainment opportunities outside the military unit for a young lieutenant. When it comes to the theatre, the first to be mentioned on the pages of the diary is the visit to the Imperial Theatre in Krasnoe Selo (Pyatidesyatiletie, 1914). This, of course, is not a coincidence. During the summer camp training, the majority of officers were required to stay with their units. Those officers made most of the audience of the Krasnoe Selo theater. In December 1902 there is a diary entry about the visit to the People's House \*, where the play by Krylov, "1812", was staged. Entries on the theater visits started to appear more regularly since 1903, when the author was already in the captain rank. V. S. Savonko became a theater-goer in 1905, due to his service in the position of a Brigade Quartermaster. On his duty, during the summer months, when the whole brigade was on training in the Krasnoe Selo camp, he stayed in St. Petersburg and headed a non-combatant unit. He often visited the theaters during his stay in the capital. It should be said that attending theaters was burdensome for the budget of an officer who lived on a salary. The junior officer of the Guard received 70 roubles a month (60 in the army), the company commander – about 100 and the battalion commander – about 150 (Gerua, 1969: 64). There was a strictly observed custom according to which the officers of the Guards were not to take a seat closer than the fifth row in the theater (the front row was considered immodest) and not further than the tenth row (a further row was considered indecent) (Zaionchkovskii, 1998: 64).

Nevertheless, V. S. Savonko became a theater-goer. In his diary, he did not just list the plays he saw, but also listed the lead actors. Sometimes he made remarks on the plays' quality or on the actors' performance. Most often he attended the "New Summer Theatre" in Basseinaya street †,

\* The People's House of the Emperor Nicholas II was constructed in 1900–1912 by architect G. I. Lyutsedarsky. At the present time the building houses the "Baltic House" theater and the "Music Hall".

† At 58, Nekrasov street, there was a wooden "New Summer Theater" (or "Olympia" theater until 1908, which staged the operas "Eugene Onegin," La Traviata ", " Rigoletto "and operettas with L.Sobinov , A.Vyaltsevoa and other famous singers. The building burned, in the early 1900s a reconstruction started, but it was

mostly due to its opera repertoire. As V. S. Savonko writes (the diary entry dated 12 May 1905), - "The Kabanov and Yakovlev's management founded such a serious opera, which has on tour powerful artists as Figner, Shaliapin, Sobinov and others" (RNB. F. 1000. Op. 11. D. 87. L. 71 ob.). In this theater V. S. Savonko listened to the operas: "Faust", "Rigoletto", "Demon", "Eugene Onegin", "Queen of Spades", "Samson and Delilah", "Pearl Fishers", "Fra-Diavolo", "Carmen", "Cavalleria Rusticana", "Pagliacci", "La Traviata", "Il Barbiere di Siviglia" as well as a considerable number of operettas. His "addiction" to the New Summer Theater had a quite rational explanation: his brigade's orchestra often played there, and F. A. Kaukal, the conductor\* (and concurrently the conductor of the Mariinsky Theatre) provided the officers with free tickets.

Here is an example of a diary entry dated July 9, 1905: "I attended "Rigoletto" opera at the "New Summer Theater". The Duke was played by Mr. Italo Cristalli, Gilda - Ms. Budkevich, Rigoletto - Mr. Sokolsky" (RNB. F. 1000. Op. 11. D. 87. L. 82). An entry dated July 26, 1907 states: "In the evening, I listened to "Mermaid" opera (first 3 acts) at the "New Summer Theater". Then - a little ballet divertissement by the local corps de ballet (the "Russian" was performed by Ms. Bravura) and in the end - "some favorite ballads of Ms. Vyaltseva". This "ballads" were performed until 12.30 AM. I think not many artists in the world can get such an applause and standing ovation, which Vyaltseva has received today†. In the theatre literally: "barking, laughter, singing, whistle and clap" merged into one continuous rapturous moan that subsided only when Vyaltseva was singing and then resumed again with the new thundering force!" (RNB. F. 1000. Op. 11. D. 88. L. 37 ob.). In the entry dated 20 September 1905: "Watched a Trakhtenberg's comedy "How they quit smoking" in the "New Summer Theatre" performed by 3-rd rate actors... Densely foolish" (RNB. F. 1000. Op. 11. D. 87. L. 94).

V. S. Savonko's comments on the directors and actors' attempts to provide verbal cues on the current issues are of a particular interest. For example, a diary entry dated 7 May 1907 says: "Attended "Geisha" in the "New Summer Theatre". The silly audience enthusiastically applauded the senselessly silly couplets of "Wun-Chi", in which Gringmut‡, the Black Hundred, Article № 129 etc. were criticized" (RNB. F. 1000. Op. 11. D. 88. L. 28 ob.). The entry dated 10 June 1907 reads: "Attended the "Belle Helene" operetta in the "New Summer Theatre" which was staged in a new, extraordinary way. Helene was played by Ms. Eyhenwald-Donskaya§, Paris - Mr. Andreev. Lots of gags on topics of the day. For example: 1) Agamemnon: "We have many exiles ... sorry, I meant to say strong people". (Competitions scene); 2) A charade was given: the cadets (2 letters and a pronoun, the whole - a party) (the author means the constitutional democrats); 3) People are asking for bread and circuses! Agamemnon: "We can give them circuses, but for the bread they should consult the food company!" (RNB. F. 1000. Op. 11. D. 88. L. 32).

In his diary, V. S. Savonko has an impressive list of plays, seen during the season of summer 1905. Before 1905 he listened to 13 operas and during "one summer season I attended 49 opera performances, listened to 20 different operas (Table 1).

Two years later V. S. Savonko's list had 27 opera performances, which he attended 90 times. Among his favorites were: "Eugene Onegin", "The Queen of Spades", "Mignon", "Aida", "Pagliacci" (5 times), "Carmen" (6 times), "Demon" (7 times), "Faust" and "La Traviata" (8 times). In addition to opera, V. S. Savonko attended dramatic theaters: the Little Theatre, the Alexandrinsky Theatre, the "Passage" named after Komissarzhevskaya. He was among the audience of the plays of Gorky and A. P. Chekhov, of Ibsen and Leo Tolstoy.

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dismantled and in its place the largest complex of buildings in St. Petersburg, "the Baseinovy cooperative partnership" was constructed.

\* Kaukal Franz Antonovich (04.02.1872 Prague - 08.10.1927, Leningrad) - a Czech musician, teacher and conductor. In 1888 he graduated from the Prague Conservatory, the oboe class. From 1897 he lived in St. Petersburg. In 1897-1917 was the conductor of the orchestra of the Leibgarde of the 1st Artillery Brigade. During 1897-1921 he was a soloist of the Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra. In 1895-1901 and in 1908-1921 taught at Conservatory (a professor since 1912).

† Vyaltseva Anastasia Dmitrievna (01.03.1871 - 02.05.1913), an outstanding Russian singer, a performer of popular ballads.

‡ Gringmut Vladimir Andreyevich (03.15.1851 - 11.10.1907), a Russian politician and right-wing publicist, one of the founders and chief ideologues of the Black-Hundred movement.

§ Eykhenwald-Donskaya Nadezhda Alexandrovna (?), the opera and chamber music singer.

**Table 1.** The number of views of operas during the summer of 1905 (RNB. F. 1000. Op. 11. D. 87. L. 93 ob.)

No	The opera's title	The number of views
1	Demon	4
2	Rigoletto	2
3	Faust	5
4	Carmen	4
5	Aida	2
6	Samson and Delilah	1
7	Pearl Fishers	1
8	The Queen of Spades	3
9	Eugene Onegin	2
10	La Traviata	4
11	Pebbles	1
12	The African	1
13	The Barber of Seville	2
14	Cavalleria Rusticana	3
15	Pagliacci	4
16	Dubrovsky	2
17	Fra-Diavolo	2
18	Mignon	3
19	Cherevichky	3
20	Camorra	1

V. S. Savonko was a thoughtful mentor-officer and could not ignore the role that the theaters and other cultural institutions could play in the soldiers' education. In the diary entry on 26 December 1908 he writes: "St. Petersburg gives an opportunity for the soldiers to visit the People's House, where they can see such exemplary highly patriotic plays as "Peter the Great", "Kashchei" or "80,000 Leagues Under the Sea", "In 80 days around the world"... Also there are exemplary cinema-theaters with a big choice of films of a diverse content. There are "Panorama of Sevastopol", "Circus", etc. Instead of fulfilling the task of developing the taste and good instincts in a soldier the authorities lower it to the level of a tavern and village fair, offering the soldier greasy clowns and rollicking harmonica" (RNB. F. 1000. Op. 11. D. 88. L. 233–233 ob.).

The cinema was a constantly growing cultural and entertainment segment. Our author was interested in cinematographic sessions that demonstrated the first experiments in aeronautics, the technological progress advances, parades, drills exercises and, of course, feature films. He mentions the cinema sessions for the brigade lower ranks organized with devices that belonged to the officers.

Officers' leisure activities mostly took place in the brigade officers' assembly. Officers' assemblies were the clubs existing in each unit; with the goals of establishing and maintaining friendly relations among the officers, improvement of military knowledge, common entertainment arrangement and reducing officers' expenses (Shadskaya, 2015). The officers' assembly of the 1-st Artillery Leibgarde Brigade housed an excellent museum (Sokolovskii, 1909; Sokolovskii, 1910) a library, a dining room and a billiards room. Most of the single officers had breakfast, lunch and dinner in the dining room every day.

The brigade officers' meals, such as common breakfast, lunch or dinner mostly took place in the officers' assembly building. V. S. Savonko described very vividly the atmosphere of these feasts, which often lasted far into the night. Common lunch of the brigade officers took place, as a rule, once a month. It was often attended by the former brigade officers. The annual dinner, held in November was even more festive. This dinner was attended by the General Feldzeugmeister himself as well as many other generals who previously served as the 1-st Artillery Leibgarde Brigade officers. For example, the diary entry on 23 November 1899 reads: "The usual "annual dinner" of the brigade was held at 7 PM. It was attended by 100 people, including: the Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolayevich, the Grand Duke Pavel Alexandrovich, Generals Rebinder, Altfater,

Egershtrom, Svinyin, Onopriyenko, Kanishchev, Meshetich, Zuev, Evreinov, Afanasovich, Colonel Yepanchin and many others. The dinner was served by Kuba<sup>\*</sup> (RNB. F. 1000. Op. 11. D. 86. L. 12 ob.). The usual after-dinner entertainment was “the trench” (the long common table with the obligatory proclamation of toasts to health of the present), listening to music and playing cards. A wine cellar in the officers' assembly building was carefully stocked with drinks. Champagne was most often served drink.

According to Gerua: “However, there were many temptations in addition to the officers' assembly and at the same time many obligations in St. Petersburg and in particular in the Guard, reaching out to the officer's wallet. If the wallet turned out to be thin, it could not withstand the pressure of all these expenses” (Gerua, 1969: 65). The diary of V. S. Savonko tells several stories of some of the officers, unable to resist the temptations of the city life, “reached out into the state budget” and had to part with the Guards uniform.

Visiting restaurants was considered to be an extraordinary event. “The officer should only attend the societies where the good manners prevail; it should never be forgotten, particularly in public places, that he is not only an educated man, but it is his duty to keep the dignity of his rank. Therefore, he should refrain from any lifestyle and in general from all the actions that compromise not even him personally, but the officers corps...” (Kamenev, 1999: 212). The list of restaurants recommended for the gentlemen-officers was approved by the Order of the military commandant of St. Petersburg.

According to the diaries of V. S. Savonko, he and his companions most often visited the “Donon”<sup>†</sup> restaurant that served the traditional common dinners. These dinners were organized on the annual celebration of the Leibgarde of the 1st Artillery Brigade on 6 December as well as on the life events of the brigade officers (leaving the brigade, obtaining a new rank, a new medal award). The first diary entry on visiting a restaurant appears on December 6, 1901 (after two years service as an officer of the brigade). “After the circus performance we all went to Donon, where in the two luxury cabinets we had dinner offered by Colonel Pototsky. Colonel Bernikov, Captain Grodsky, Captain Bazarov, the senior adviser Shulman, Mr. Semyonov, Captain Kavtaradze, Captain Makeev, Captain Gartung, the Sabler brothers, second lieutenant Fride, lieutenant Shanyavskiy (2 bat.), General Lyapunov, Captain Leman, lieutenant von Enden had appeared at Donon by this time... By 2 AM everyone left” (RNB. F. 1000. Op. 11. D. 86. L. 40). It is noteworthy that the old gray-haired generals and very young lieutenants were gathered at the same table. This symbolized the corporate solidarity of the brigade officers and demonstrated the strength of their traditions. “Kuba”, “Contant” and “Palkin” restaurants are among the others mentioned in the diary. The most popular place to attend was the famous café-concert “Aquarium”<sup>‡</sup>. A dinner with the actresses was of a special chic.

A card game was one of the forms of leisure allowed to the officers. In the nineteenth century, card games were divided into banned (gambling): Twenty-one, or the “Ace”, Baccarat, Macau, Thirteen etc; and permitted (commercial) ones: Preference, Whist, Bridge, King, Rams, and others (Morikhin, 2004: 52). The card games (Aunt, Bolt, Bridge, Frappe, Macau) were very popular among the Guard officers in general and the Leibgarde of the 1st Artillery Brigade in particular. Until the ban of 1903 Macau was the most popular one. Since 1905, a triumphant march of Poker started (the officers called the game “jack-bot”). In the entry dated April 10, 1906 V. S. Savonko states: “The “Poker table” was arranged daily. The game was played with a small “limit” of 50 kopecks, but, nevertheless, the loss and win reached 15-20 roubles on average for each player. Sometimes the loss could be 40 roubles. The game therefore resembled gambling more than a commercial game” (RNB. F. 1000. Op. 11. D. 87. L. 131 ob.). A chance to win the amount comparable to a monthly salary became a serious temptation because of the relatively small officers' salaries. The author of the diary describes the accusation of the captain S. N. Krestyanov of a “sloppy game”. The Captain, suspected in cheating, was forced to submit a report on the

\* The “Kuba” restaurant was located in the building at Bolshaya Morskaya street, 16/8, and was among the most famous and expensive establishments of St. Petersburg of the late XIX – early XX centuries.

† The “Donon” restaurant was located in the building on the Moika river embankment, number 24 and was considered the most fashionable restaurant of St. Petersburg.

‡ The “Aquarium” restaurant was located at 10-12, Kamennostrovsky Prospekt, and enjoyed popularity due to its organized entertainment.

dismissal, resign and then leave the brigade. Only the personal interference of Grand Duke Sergei Mikhailovich allowed S. N. Krestyanov to continue his service in the Main Artillery Directorate. It should be noted that gambling was prohibited in the officers' assembly. According to the diary these prohibitions were sometimes violated. The entry dated December 17, 1908 describes an episode with a night officers' game of Macau, spotted by the brigade commander, Major-General Golovachev (RNB. F. 1000. Op. 11. D. 88. L. 132–132 ob.).

V. S. Savonko expressed his attitude towards the card games quite clearly. The diary entry dated April 11, 1906 states: "The advantage lies not in playing cards, but spending time on self-education or other serious work" (RNB. F. 1000. Op. 11. D. 87. L. 133).

Vladimir Stepanovich paid much attention to his education. In 1904 – 1906 he attended lectures at the Petersburg Imperial Archaeological Institute and was proud of his Associate Membership of the Imperial Archaeological Institute. Among the teachers of the institute were the glorious Russian historians: S. F. Platonov, N. V. Pokrovsky, N. I. Veselovsky, N. P. Likhachyov, S. M. Seredonin, N. F. Korinfsky (Alekseev, 2015).

According to B. V. Gerua: "In St. Petersburg the officer had an opportunity "to give work to his brains" if he needed; "the Society of Zealots of the military knowledge" was formed in these years" (Gerua, 1969: 119). In 1898, the War Minister Kuropatkin approved the Charter of the "Society of Zealots of the military knowledge," that aimed to "spread military and common knowledge among the officers" (Zaionchkovskii, 1973: 174).

V. S. Savonko and some of his young fellow officers attended the meetings of the Society. The entry dated January 29, 1904 reads: "Attended the meeting of the "Zealots of the military knowledge". Captain of the second rank Klado\* read on the Japanese-Russian war. The urgent topic attracted about 1 thousand people to the hall of the Sea Cadet Corps (where the report took place). The report was extremely interesting. Afterwards the Corporate Secretary, Colonel Novitsky† read out the text of the telegram, which the "society" intended to send to the Sovereign. In response all those present shouted "Hurrah!" (RNB. F. 1000. Op. 11. D. 87. L. 8).

In addition to lectures and reports of the brigade officers or visiting lecturers, it was also common to attend public lectures at other institutions. The lecture topics were often not related to artillery matter. The entry dated 21 March 1903 reads: "In the chemistry lab of Mikh. Art. Academy and College Professor Colonel Korolkov‡ conducted a lecture on "radium" - a newly-discovered substance. The lecture was of a purely scientific nature. The audience was almost entirely artillerymen. I attended" (RNB. F. 1000. Op. 11. D. 86. L. 87 ob.). The entry on March 28, 1905: "I attended the lecture by Professor Colonel Korolkov on the "wireless telegraphy" at Mikh. Art. Academy" (RNB. F. 1000. Op. 11. D. 87. L. 64).

The public lectures were often attended by a group of the brigade officers. This episode, for example, took place on November 16, 1905..: "At 8 PM in the "Society of Zealots of military knowledge" one could see a considerable number of our brigade officers. This was a lecture by Colonel L. F. Gartung on the non-commissioned officers §. An interesting topic and interesting lecturer, who spoke in the public for the first time and was gleaming with the beautifully constructed, reasonable and well thought-out phrases and thoughts. He received a lot of applause. Our guests – the Leib Dragoons attended the lecture in full assembly. The debates that took place after the lecture were rather colorless" (RNB. F. 1000. Op. 11. D. 87. L. 105).

On February 24, 1907, V. S. Savonko participated in the first meeting, where the "military antiques Society" (RNB. F. 1000. Op. 11. D. 88. L. 10) was established. In the future, this initiative led to the establishment of the "Military Historical Society." V. S. Savonko was an active member of the society, often attended its meetings, worked closely with its secretary D. P. Strukov. In 1907

\*Klado Nikolai Lavrentyevich (01.11.1862 – 07.10.1919), a historian and theorist of the Russian Navy, Marine Corps., Nykolayev Maritime and Engineering Academy instructor.

† Novitsky Evgeniy Fedorovich (29.11.1867 – 11.06.1931), a historian and theorist of the warfare, one of the founders of the "Zealots of the military knowledge Society".

‡ Korolkov Aleksey Lvovich (1859 -?), the Professor of physics and electrical engineering at the Mikhailovskaya Artillery Academy.

§ Gartung Lev Fedorovich (6.01.1868 -?), the Artillery officer of the Guards, during the described time: Colonel, Commander of the 1st Artillery Brigade 6th Battery of the Leibgarde

V. S. Savonko started a large-scale work to complete the lists of the brigade officers' ranks since 1796. For this purpose, he regularly visited the Artillery museum archive.

The defeat in the Russian-Japanese war officer affected the training requirements to be strengthened with lecturing methods dedicated to the analysis of various episodes of the campaign. The brigade officers reported on a regular basis on the tactics, artillery and machine guns combat employment, based on the Russian-Japanese war actions.

The author of the diary fully used the opportunities to improve the cultural level, provided by the capital of the Empire. The diary is full of entries on visiting all sorts of exhibitions. Those were the art expositions, artistic and industrial exhibitions, technical and agricultural exhibitions, animal exhibitions, flower shows, etc. The author was interested in popular shows as well as in the very exotic ones. For example, on March 3, 1907 V. S. Savonko visited the paintings exhibition on the Russian-Japanese War that took place in the building of the Academy of Sciences, and later attended the 35th exhibition of the Wanderers in the building of the Imperial Society for the Encouragement of Arts. In the record dated May 20, 1907 he states: "From 2 to 4 PM I attended the 1st Automobile exhibition in Mikhailovsky Manege. Such an elegant exhibition with the most elegant public!" (RNB. F. 1000. Op. 11. D. 88. L. 30). The impression was so strong that on May 25 he attended it the second time. And on June 17 of the same year, he writes: "At 3.30 PM I attended the "Traditional Patterns" exhibition organized by K. D. Dalmatov \* (83, Fontanka). In addition to the "Patterns" all kinds of the Russian antiquity: dishes, utensils, a carved cupboard of the unknown carpenter (in my opinion, the end of the XVII century), paintings, etc were exhibited there. The exhibition has almost no visitors... What a pity!" (RNB. F. 1000. Op. 11. D. 88. L. 32 ob.). October 22 the same year, the officer visits the Poultry exhibition in Mikhailovsky Manege, and on January 24th 1908 in the same Manege he visits the exhibition of Seeds and Agricultural machines. On March 4, 1908 V. S. Savonko along with his colleagues was present at the 1st Theatrical exhibition, which he later criticized for the lack of systematization and instructiveness. The same year, the author of the diary visits the International Construction and Furniture exhibitions. These are only some exhibitions that attracted the interest of the author!

The journeys also contributed to the broadening of the officer's outlook, though he did not travel much. In ten years he visited Gapsal † resort for treatment, Abastuman‡ resorts of the Caucasus (twice) and the resort of Myneralnie Vody. In 1906 (from May 25 to July 23) he visited Austria-Hungary, the north of Italy, France and Germany. The diary entries reflected the spontaneous impressions and thoughts. He took service trips within the St. Petersburg Military District. Being a curious man he turned an ordinary trip to Pskov to the fascinating and instructive tour in 1903.

Reading played a decisive role in the self-education and personal development. We have to admit that most of the officers were indifferent to reading (Lyutov, 2002; Samyi podrobnii, 2007). Many officers read only official documents, and in their spare time did not read books and magazines. The brigade library regularly received all the military periodicals, the officers covered the subscription fee of the most popular magazines, which were available in the building of the officers' assembly. The observations of the reading problem among his colleagues induced V. S. Savonko to appear in press under the pseudonym "V. Chernigovsky" with an article devoted to the promotion of reading (Chernigovskii, 1907: 702). In the entry dated December 21, 1907, the author says: "Our brigade has the best disciples of the Artillery school and Corps of Pages and our brigade library has "all" the periodic military magazines (thus provides a source for reading), and yet I still assert that only 5 % of the officers will read the "Scout", 45 % will "review" and 50 % – will neither read nor review it" (RNB. F. 1000. Op. 11. D. 88. L. 63). Our author read a lot for the self-education and unsystematically, according to the diary entries.

\* Dalmatov Konstantin Dmitrievich (1850 -?), a Russian collector, gathered an enormous collection of ancient and modern lace, embroideries, labels, fabrics, patterns of a Russian origin, as well as other peoples' with the national ornament.

† Gapsal (Haapsalu), the city and the castle in Western Estonia, before 1917 had the status of an Imperial Resort.

‡ Abastuman (Abastumani) – the mountain-climatic resort in Georgia Adigeni municipality. Since 1898 the hospital was under the control of the military department.

#### 4. Conclusion

Our acquaintance with the diary of V. S. Savonko suggests that he was one of the best representatives of the military intelligentsia during the last years of the Russian Empire. The officer dedicated most of his leisure time to self-education and cultural level improvement. However, he was in good relations with his fellow colleagues and officers and was a dignified man. The people like V. S. Savonko were rarely met among the Guard officers. Most of his colleagues preferred to spend their leisure hours in entertainment and idleness. But among the officers of the Leibgarde of the 1st Artillery Brigade he was not alone. His elder staff officers V. A. Lekhovich, N. A. Ilkevich, L.F. Gartung set the examples of a military intellectual person for him. According to the diaries, in-service training and self-education played an increasingly important role in the leisure activities of an officer during the military reforms of 1905 – 1909. Their main forms were lectures and reading.

#### 5. Acknowledgements

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