

# Alexander Peresvet. Heroes of the Battle of Kulikovo.

Alexander Peresvet - one of the most famous Russian warriors. The Orthodox Church is listed as a saint. His personality is covered with legends and myths.



The name of the Russian warrior monk is still worn by streets and cities, and his fame has not faded and in almost 700 years.

## Biography of Peresvet

Date of birth of Alexander is for certain unknown. A number of sources testify to the boyar origin. That is, belonging to the higher class. Boyars occupied leading posts and owned lands. In the 14th century, every boyar from childhood was trained in military craft. Place of birth - Bryansk. Presumably, Alexander Peresvet participated in campaigns and wars. At some point he took monastic vows. The ceremony was held in Rostov. As authoritative sources that could reliably inform about various events almost no historians are discussions about biographies Peresvet today. The problem lies more in the fact that the ancient writers have often resorted to allegory and elevations. That is well-known personalities and deeds attributed to the qualities that they do not actually possess. And modern scientists are difficult to distinguish fiction from reality.

Anyway, we can safely say that by 1380 Alexander Peresvet was a monastic Schemonch. It was in this rank that he approached the Battle of Kulikovo, which brought him eternal glory.

## Prerequisites

In the 14th century, Russia was exhausted under the Mongol-Tatar the yoke of the Golden Horde. At the same time, the influence of the Moscow kingdom increased. Several Russian princes were able to win several victories over the Tatars, which gave strength to the resistance to occupation. In 1376 the Russian troops began to liberate their land, narrowing the Horde to the south. In the process of retreat, the khans of Mamai ravaged several principalities, but never entered into an open battle. In mid-August in Kolomna comes the Russian the army. Different ways from all over Russia are being drawn together by the warriors in order to repulse the Tatars once and for all. Leader of the Horde Mamai believes that Dmitry is afraid to cross the Oka River and hopes for an ambulance help

Lithuanians. But by early September, the Russians had crossed the river and moved across the Ryazan lands to Mamaia. Among the soldiers was Alexander Peresvet.



Such a maneuver by Dmitry was regarded as a rash step. Throughout Russia spread panic rumors about the imminent defeat of the coalition of princes.

## **The Battle of Kulikovo**

On September 8, the famous Kulikovskaya battle and the duel of Peresvet with Chelubey. The day before, the Russian troops crossed the Don River. Grand Duke Dmitry gathered under his banner from 40 to 60 thousand people. The Moscow regiment was the core. On the flanks were the arriving Lithuanians and Ryazanians. On the night of September 7, a review of troops took place. Dmitry understood the enormous responsibility that was assigned to him. Since in case of defeat before the Tatars all the lands to Moscow would have been discovered. Therefore, the review was conducted very carefully.



Alexander Peresvet was most likely in the central regiment with the court of the Moscow prince. At

night, scouts of both sides inspect enemy positions. Only in the morning there are first skirmishes. Tatars brought about 100 thousand people to the Kulikovo field. Since medieval sources tend to significantly increase the number of troops, it is quite difficult to determine the true number. Some sources indicate up to 40,000 Russian soldiers and up to 60,000 Tatars.

In the morning of September 8, the Rusichi were built into combat orders. The legendary heroes of the subsequent battle uttered speeches. A thick fog spread over the field, and the Russians waited for several hours in a daze to begin the battle. A few hours later the Tatars came out of the forest with a thick wall.

## Fights

In the Middle Ages, general battles often preceded by a fight of the best fighters from each army. This unwritten rule was observed inviolably. The fight continued to death and no one had the right to interfere. The origins of this custom go back to BC. Ancient legends indicate that instead of fighting two troops, a battle of two people could occur. The loser side retreated. Of course, in reality, most likely the battle began regardless of the fight. But he had a very important psychological significance for the fighters. For many, he was a kind of superstition.

## Duel of Peresvet with Chelubey

From the side of the Tatars came the famous Chelyabinsk. According to ancient legends, he was famous for his enormous physical strength and military cunning. He was the best in duels. It was for this purpose that the Tatars hired him. Before the battle of Kulikovo, he knew no defeats. In the mount battles, he used a spear, a meter longer than usual, which allowed him to kill the enemy before the collision. From the Tatar army he departed on a white horse, clothed with gray clothes. Alexander Peresvet was in purple robes and stood under the "black" (red) Russian Orthodox banner. The troops froze in anticipation of the fight.



Peresvet and Chelubens dispersed and rushed to each other with straightened spears. They collided with the whole force. Spears pierced at the same time. Peresvet and Chelubens died simultaneously. But Alexander managed to stay on the horse longer, which meant his victory. Encouraged by the victory of their fighter Rusichi, a foggy morning broke the howl of the pipes, and the Russian army rushed into the attack.

## Peresvet with Chelubey on Kulikovo field: another version

According to another version, Peresvet went to the trick and self-sacrifice intentionally. The hero, who fought with Chelubey before the Battle of Kulikovo, knew about the long spear of the enemy. Therefore, he deliberately took off all the armor, so that the spear of the Tatar favorite passed through Alexander's body quickly and this would allow him to hit the enemy. A warrior monk donned a church attire with an Orthodox cross. Self-confident Chelubey pierced Peresvet, but he, with a spear in the body reached out to the enemy and struck him. In the agony of death the Russian soldier managed to reach his troops and only fell there.

## Battle

Inspired by victory and heroic self-sacrifice, the Russian troops with a cry went to the enemy. The parties faced a fierce battle. Tatars were superior to numbers. But the Russians left in ambush the regiment of the governor Serpukhovsky. At a decisive moment, he struck a blow to the rear of the Tatar troops. The horsemen cut down from behind, the Tatars trembled. They turned into a stampede and almost all were killed.

The defeat of the Horde in the Battle of Kulikovo Field was the starting point for the liberation of Rus from the Tatar-Mongols. Inspired by victory, the Russian princes decided to rally around Moscow.

## Burial of the hero

The body of Alexander Peresvet was taken to Moscow. There he was buried with military honors near the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin in his private crypt. Legendary heroes of the battle, such as Rodion Oslabya, were buried with him.



In the 18th century builders found the bell tower. An ancient tomb in which Alexander Peresvet was supposedly buried. Some historians consider this information implausible. After the restoration, the temple was completed with a burial vault and a tombstone was placed. It lasted until the 1920s.



Now in the refectory of the church a new tombstone was erected, which repeats the cast-iron sarcophagus of Peresvet. The grave is open to visitors.

## Memory

The hero of the Battle of Kulikovo was listed as a Russian Orthodox Church to the saints. Day of memory of Alexander Peresvet is September 7. The Moscow State Academy holds a cross, which presumably belongs to Peresvet. During the times of the Russian Empire, several warships were named after Alexander. Today there are several streets, as well as a city in the Moscow region, named after Peresvet.



In 2006, a special unit of VV "Peresvet" was formed.

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