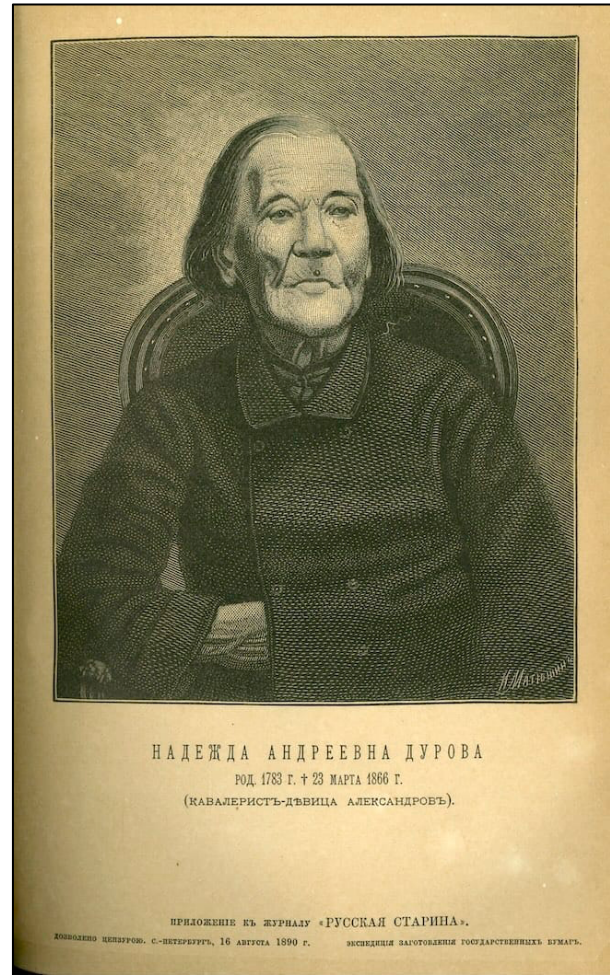


Aleksandr Aleksandrov (Nadezhda Durova): Two Biographical Accounts

Aleksandr Aleksandrov (1783-1866) was a Russian-Ukrainian hero of the Napoleonic wars and a celebrated trans author. His autobiography, *Notes of a Cavalry Maiden* (1836), popular with nineteenth-century Russian readers, offered a first-person account of its protagonist's gender transition. In 1806, Aleksandrov, who was assigned female at birth, joined the Russian army and served in several military campaigns. Two years later, by the Tsar Alexander I's special decree, he was awarded the Cross of St. George and was officially allowed to use the name "Aleksandrov." In 1817 Aleksandrov retired with the rank of Captain-Lieutenant and lived the rest of his life wearing civilian male clothes.

Despite—or because of—Aleksandrov's obvious gender nonconformity, *Notes* (signed by what nowadays would be called his deadname "Nadezhda Durova") has maintained an important place in Russian culture and popular military history for nearly two centuries. Two separate English translations of the work appeared in 1988 and, as a result, *Notes* are now often included in British and North American university curricula. However, Aleksandrov's transmasculine self-presentation, evident in the gendered grammar of the original Russian, was mostly lost in translation. Moreover, few secondary sources that could provide clues about how the public perceived Aleksandrov's gender identity have been translated into English.

The two articles translated below first appeared in Russian popular history periodicals after Aleksandrov's death in 1866. As overlooked examples of nineteenth-century trans life-writing, they demonstrate the surprisingly respectful attitudes to Aleksandrov's gender nonconformity in the Russian Empire of that period, evident in the use of pronouns and grammatical endings.



Nadezhda Andreevna Durova (Cavalry Maiden Aleksandrov) *Russkaia starina*, 1891, vol. 79, p. 209. (Courtesy of the Bodleian Library)

These translations were completed as a part of a collaborative project funded by the University of St Andrews, Scotland. The English translations were produced by two undergraduate students, Charlotte Farrar and Charlotte Thomas, and then reviewed by the project's two sensitivity readers, Cheryl Morgan and Lev Nikulin. The translations were edited by Margarita Vaysman and Connor Doak, scholars of Russian queer cultures, and Esther Jones Russel, copyeditor with specialization in Russian.

Nadezhda Andreevna Durova. Materials for Her Biography.

Source: F.F. Lashmanov, "Nadezhda Andreevna Durova. Materialy k ee biografii. Report," *Russkaia starina*, 1890 (67/9), 657-665.

Translated and edited by Charlotte Farrar, with Lev Nikulin, Cheryl Morgan, Esther Jones Russel, and Margarita Vaysman.

Born 1790, Died 1863

Much has been said, both in print and in society, about the cavalry maiden Durova. Many have commented on her military life. All of this is now beginning to fade from memory, and only the first period of Durova's life—her upbringing and time in the military, which were documented in print—remain for posterity. As for the later period of Durova's life, her last days, nothing remains but rumors distorting the truth. Published documents note neither the time nor the place of death of this remarkable person, let alone the circumstances preceding that event. The goal of this short essay is to lift the veil, even if just a little, on Nadezhda Andreevna Durova's final act. Having at my direct disposal some of Durova's letters, her photograph, which was taken a few days before her death, as well as other information, I hope—a least partially—to succeed in this task.

F.L.

1.

At the beginning of the 1840s, retired Captain-Lieutenant Aleksandr Andreevich Aleksandrov left the city of Sarapul to settle in the town of Elabuga in the Viatka province.

To the day she died, N.A. Durova could not bear to be called by her existing female name, and so hereafter I shall refer to her by the name given to her, or rather authorized, by Emperor Aleksandr I in 1807.

No one knew why Captain-Lieutenant Aleksandrov moved away, but everyone knew that this “Captain-Lieutenant” was only a pseudonym for that “girl hussar.” Almost every day, people were drawn to Sarapul from surrounding villages to gawk at him, and that is not to mention the ordinary people in Sarapul itself, who would not give the lady Knight of St. George even a moment’s peace. Many believed that Aleksandrov had decided to leave his birthplace after his father’s death (his mother had died earlier) to erase forever from his heart the very memory of his female origin. Whatever the reasoning, here in Elabuga he was not disturbed as much, although during his first few days, of course, there was a crowd of curious onlookers.

At that time, the post of the police master in Elabuga was held by one Eduard Osipovich Erlich, a pleasant and sociable German. He was the first person in the city with whom Captain-Lieutenant Aleksandrov had to become acquainted. Happily for Aleksandrov, the police master turned out to be more than pleasant and offered rooms in his own apartment to the newcomer. Yet Aleksandrov, not wishing to burden anyone, rejected this invitation and instead rented himself a house on the very same street as the police master.

Captain-Lieutenant Aleksandrov’s only servant—a valet—was the retired serviceman Stepan (whose last name no one can remember). Stepan served his master the way a nanny serves a young child. He was a jack of all trades: he was a yard-keeper and a chef, could act as an experienced valet when required, and was an excellent messenger. In short, depending on the circumstances, he was able to take on any kind of job in his undemanding master’s household. This might well explain why Aleksandrov loved his Stepan so much!

In the winter and in cold weather, the captain-lieutenant wore a *burka* [a sheepskin overcoat worn by the cavalry]; in the summer, a *razletaika* [a grey, sleeveless officer’s overcoat], and he was always dressed in an officer’s coat with no epaulets, with the cross of St. George in the buttonhole.

Owing to his easy disposition and gentle character, Aleksandrov soon acclimated to his new place of residence. His once-distant relationship with police master Erlich quickly evolved into one of closeness and friendship, so that after only a week the captain-lieutenant already was almost a daily visitor to Erlich’s hospitable home.

The residents of Elabuga were soon convinced that the valiant captain-lieutenant possessed a kind and sympathetic heart. They therefore concluded that it would be foolish not to take advantage of the captain-lieutenant’s emerging friendship with Erlich for their own benefit. So the residents of Elabuga suddenly brought all their squabbles and slanders, arguments, petitions, and petty problems to Aleksandrov, who had not anticipated receiving such a swarm of requests.

The onslaught was immediate... Everybody—whether offended or not, whether in the right or the wrong—made their way to the captain-lieutenant, hoping he would provide them with some defense and support for their demands. Before he knew it, Aleksandrov was flooded with such requests. Not having the strength to refuse anyone,

he unwittingly became an advocate for nearly every resident, not only of Elabuga, but also of the surrounding villages.

At first, the police master laughed heartily at the captain-lieutenant's mediation, but once he realized that the number of 'petitioners' was multiplying, that they were increasingly impudent, and recognizing, finally, that Aleksandrov was the victim of their unscrupulous exploitation, the kindly old Erlich began to evade these petitions, thinking this would cool the petitioners' zeal somewhat. This did little to rectify the situation, however, and Captain-Lieutenant Aleksandrov continued to listen steadfastly to the numerous requests of his clients and report them "to most kind Eduard Osipovich."

The old police master often sat at his desk to work. At such times, it must be noted, Erlich could not tolerate any sort of distraction from or interruption of his work ... but suddenly Stepan would appear with a note from his master.

The old man would grimace. "Well, here we go—yet another request!" he would grumble, reading the note he had just received.

"Fine. Tell him the request will be granted!" he would say, turning to the captain-lieutenant's valet.

Stepan always answered the police master's usual remarks in the same manner: "Yes, your honor!" and then would quickly disappear from the room in a way that was nearly incomprehensible, given his huge height.

The notes sent by Captain-Lieutenant Aleksandrov nearly always had the same content and included request after request on behalf of his "clients." I offer a few of these notes as examples.

1.

"Eduard Osipovich! Do my *protégé* a kindness, permit him and his brother to build a house, or, at the very least, give them some small jobs for pay. They would like to take advantage of the autumn season to do whatever they can to prepare for the coming spring. Your sincerely devoted servant Aleksandrov."

2.

"This little lady here is crying and pleading that someone has planted a stolen harness on her husband. Be kind to her, Eduard Osipovich. Your servant Aleksandrov."

3.

"Eduard Osipovich! Would you do this soldier's wife a favor and give her some sort of lodging? She's asking for a 'profitable' one, and I really don't understand what she means. I only request that, if possible, you give her this lodging. *Devoué Alexandroff.*"

Later, the residents of Elabuga learned of another of the captain-lieutenant's weaknesses: his love for... animals—particularly cats and dogs.

This discovery, which was particularly important for street boys and old maids, caused a real stir. At first, many people refused to believe it, but when eyewitnesses confirmed that the captain-lieutenant did indeed have an entire menagerie of animals, these skeptics finally were silenced and forced to admit that nature is too strong to fight; at the age of 40-50, all single women inevitably become old maids...

These circumstances resulted in the rapid transformation of Captain-Lieutenant Aleksandrov's apartment into a veritable shelter for dogs and cats. Despite the unpleasant smell this produced throughout the house and despite Stepan's antipathy toward these poor, defenseless animals, the captain-lieutenant did not reconsider his attitude to them... Full credit for this must be given to the zealous young residents of Elabuga. Thanks to the "activities" of the street boys, the number of residents in captain-lieutenant's harem kept increasing. Yet this situation did not in the least trouble Aleksandrov, who only smiled at his acquaintances' ambiguous comments. Stepan was dreadfully unhappy with his master's strange "inclinations" and tried with all his might to counteract them. In response to his master's remarks that "blessed is he who has mercy on cattle," Stepan remained silent, and only on his way out would grumble (but in such a way that the master could not help but overhear), "blessed...unless these 'cattle' give them no peace...." Having reached such an opinion, Stepan would report to his master quite frequently that such-and-such dog was not there anymore, or that such-and-such cat had gone missing. "Wherever could have they gone?" the captain-lieutenant would ask him in bewilderment. Unperturbed, the loyal servant would reply without blinking an eye, "I don't know, your honor."

A band of street boys countered Stepan's efforts, generously supplying Aleksandrov with small animals. These rascals tormented the captain-lieutenant's loyal servant until he would turn to drink from sheer despair. The fact is that these boys created a profitable business of sorts from the captain-lieutenant's weakness for small animals. Just as soon as they learned of the appearance of a new family of cats or dogs, the little "businessmen" would quickly appear to take these defenseless creatures (the owners, of course, were always glad to decrease their number of household animals) and then would drag them past the captain-lieutenant's windows when Aleksandrov's faithful squire was not at home. In front of the windows the little animal would begin to squeal mercilessly, for the boys pinched it so that it would sing those heart-breaking melodies!

The captain-lieutenant would shout from the window, "What are you good-for-nothings doing here?" "Well, your honor," even these street urchins dared not call Durova otherwise, "we'd like to drown this little kitten in the river." "Ah, you vile boys," fumed the captain-lieutenant, "give it here." Then the small four-legged creature would go straight into Aleksandrov's keeping, while a small silver coin would appear in the hands of the young "executioners."

And so, the life of Captain-Lieutenant Aleksandrov continued modestly and quietly in the town of Elabuga.

In his spare time during the evenings, the police master received a group of his close friends; among their number was, of course, Captain-Lieutenant Aleksandrov. The police

master always heartily welcomed the captain-lieutenant and was glad to spend his free time with him. Yet, despite such a cordial relationship, the captain-lieutenant often quarreled with the police master, and did so quite earnestly. What exactly was the cause of such disagreements between them? The cause was very simple.

The police master, regardless of his innate goodness and desire to show kindness to Captain-Lieutenant Aleksandrov, often lost his temper. Since he was receiving notes from Aleksandrov nearly every single day with requests on behalf of his petitioners, the good-hearted old man got no peace. At such moments, the police master resorted to a cruel method. This method always gave him around three weeks of freedom from the pleasure of looking into various slanders and squabbles... In essence, the method was not so cruel. The police master usually met the captain-lieutenant with the words, "Hello, dear Aleksandr Andreevich!... Please, come on in..."; but sometimes, in the same circumstances he would say, "Ah, my esteemed Nadezhda Andreevna, how do you do?" Then, as if recollecting himself, he would add, "Oh, please excuse me. I mistook you for a woman of my acquaintance..."

Following such a greeting, the captain-lieutenant's face would first turn bright red, then deathly pale. A minute later the "captain-lieutenant" would stand up and leave the room.

Two or three weeks later, the police master and the captain-lieutenant would make peace and resume their friendship until the phrase "Hello, Nadezhda Andreevna!..." would be used again.

That's how Captain-Lieutenant Aleksandrov passed his time in the town of Elabuga. He maintained this mode of life until his death. The "captain-lieutenant" experienced so much, saw so much in his lifetime: 1807, 1812, then the war for the liberation of the nations ... it all passed like a dream before the eyes of the hero who was already dying. He lived through the great day of 19 February 1861 [abolition of serfdom in the Russian Empire]; he met with new kinds of people, saw the foundation of new regimes, new institutions... But he did not have long to observe the dawn of this new life; in 1863, the poor "captain-lieutenant" was no more... With his death the "animal shelter" shut down and his devoted servant, Stepan, disappeared without a trace... This remarkable person left only a memory of himself behind.

Before the end of her life, Nadezhda Andreevna Durova requested that she be buried under the name Aleksandr, but the priest did not find it possible to fulfil this dying wish. And so, the name of Captain-Lieutenant Aleksandr Andreevich Aleksandrov disappeared with him who bore it honestly and scrupulously until the last moments of his life!



Istoricheskii vestnik, 55 (1894), p. 701

Durova died, as I said, in the year 1863 at the age of 74, and was buried in the town cemetery (see photographs) under a modest monument, carved from a single stone and in the form of a four-pointed cross.

In 1888, during his stay in his father's hometown, Lieutenant I. E., the son of police master Erlich, visited Durova's grave, but the monument was nowhere to be found; the very site of the grave had been washed away by rain and was overgrown by dense thistles and grass. The gravestone had sunk into the ground but was later lifted out

and replaced in its original position, following the orders of one Mr. Ushkov.

Once, when I dropped in to the home of my friend, the Lieutenant Erlich whom I mentioned above, we discussed the remarkable people who had lived at the end of the past century and the beginning of the new one. It was here, incidentally, that Erlich told me about his father's acquaintance with N.A. Durova and about the last part of her life in the town of Elabuga, sharing, essentially, the information that I have presented above. Rummaging in his desk drawer, Erlich found a few of Durova's authentic notes, her photograph, a photograph of the town cemetery, and a copy of her service record. All of this he left completely at my disposal. Lieutenant Erlich's story was complemented by the notes of his father's widow, who was also personally acquainted with Durova. As for the second picture—the one of the cemetery—I have to say that this photograph belonged to Captain G.A.E., who suggested that it be printed in this essay, if found to be necessary. The outcome of our conversation was the appearance in print of our brief essay.

F. F. Lashmanov

Appendix

Service record, Captain-Lieutenant Aleksandrov (Nadezhda Andreevna Durova)

By the order of his Majesty, Emperor Aleksandr Pavlovich, the Ruler of All of Russia, etc., etc., etc.

Issued by the Inspectorate Department of the General Staff of his Imperial Majesty to *shtabs-rotmistr* [Captain-Lieutenant] Aleksander Aleksandrov, retired from army service at the age of 24, coming from a noble Russian family, with his father in possession of five male peasant souls, registered for service in the Mariupol' Hussar regiment at the rank of

cornet [junior officer] on 31 December 1807, transferred to the Lithuanian Uhlan regiment on 1 April 1811. Awarded the rank of *poruchik* [lieutenant] 29 August 1812. Took part in campaigns: 1807 in Prussia against the French forces; in battles: near the village of Guttstadt, pursuing the enemy towards the river Passarge and in the battle of Gelsberg, for which remarkable service he was awarded a military order; in 1812 against the same army in Russia, in various battles: 27 June in the village of Mir, 2 July in the village of Romanov, 16 and 17 July by the village of Dashkova, 4 and 5 August in the city of Smolensk, 15 August in the village of Lushki, 20 August by the city of Ezhatsk Pristan', 20 August by the monastery of Kolotsk, 24 August in the village of Borodino, where he received a contusion of the leg from a cannon ball and was sent away to recuperate; in 1813 he returned to service in a reserve detachment, with which he served in the Duchy of Warsaw during the blockade of the Modlin Fortress, from 10 August to 20 October, and during the blockade of the cities of Hamburg and Harburg. He was on leave from 9 to 15 March 1812 and returned to service at the required date. He incurred no fines, and a year ago, in 1816, retired from service with the rank of *shatbs-rotmistr* on the grounds of ill health. As proof, this order of his Imperial Majesty was issued in St Petersburg. 24 April 1817. True copy signed deputy-director general-major (surname illegible). Head of Department, civil servant of the fifth rank Kiselev. Seal of the authentic document of the Imperial Department of General Staff of his Imperial Majesty's Fifth Department.

February 1889, Nizhnii Novgorod. Report. by F.F. Lashmanov.

Durov-Aleksandrov

(Biographical note)

Source: N.A. Kutshe, "Durov-Aleksandrov (Biograficheskaiia zametka)," *Istoricheskii vestnik*, 55 (1894), 788–93.

Translated and edited by Charlotte Thomas, with Lev Nikulin, Cheryl Morgan, Esther Jones Russel, and Margarita Vaysman (eds.)

In 1890, the biography of the famous heroine and author Nadezhda Andreevna Durova-Aleksandrova (Chernova by marriage), written by S. Nekrasova, was published in the September issue of the journal *Historical Messenger*. In it, the author of the biography expressed her regrets that almost no information was available about the period of Durova-Aleksandrova's life in Elabuga, the town where she lived for the final twenty-five years of her life.

I would like to fill this gap with the help of testimonials by those contemporaries of hers who live in Elabuga to this day and who knew Durova well. However, the information and facts of Durova's life that I have collected are not interesting enough to

be discussed in great detail. Durova's everyday life was too repetitive and monotonous; each day was the same as the others for over a quarter of a century.

She settled in Elabuga at the start of 1841, having permanently ended her literary career with the publications *Iarchuk*, *the Ghost-Seeing Dog* and *Corner*. Critics had given Durova's final works a rather cool reception. In his notes on *Iarchuk*, the renowned critic Vissarion Belinskii (1811–1848) stated that readers "struggled to understand anything in this mass of incoherent fables." Such is our modern literature! You see in a pile of books one with the name of an author (Durova, that is) whose first works demonstrated remarkable talent. You grab it eagerly, but what then? You read two or three pages and give up... Nothing is worse than betrayed expectations, nothing is harder than leafing through a chest of books "only to say that, after all, they don't need to be read."ⁱ

It is difficult to say for certain what compelled her to fall completely silent and throw down her pen. I do not think, however, that it was linked to an insulted author's ego, a lack of material, or a decline in physical and mental fortitude. Rather, her turbulent and ebullient military life and her intensive literary work (in her late career, she wrote a new novella nearly every day) gave way to a reaction in which indifference and apathy toward everything replaced energy and liveliness. She devoted herself to an utterly calm life devoid of any anxieties, a life that dragged on day in and day out.

She always rose very early—a habit she had picked up during her prior military life, bolstered, no doubt, by the barks, yelps, and growls of a whole pack of seven or eight dogs. Durova loved dogs with a passion. Taking care of the dogs took up the best part of her day, served as the main source of her thoughts and cares, and gave her the greatest pleasure, joy, and comfort. How long it must have taken to bathe, feed, and nurse this pack. At seven or eight o'clock in the morning she would walk the dogs, and woe to anyone who got it into his head to hurt them. Some paid for this seriously and were taken to court by her.

She always wore male attire: a long black frock coat and narrow trousers, a tall black hat on her head, and in her hands a cane, on which she leaned. She endeavored to walk as upright as her years and strength allowed and had a firm step. She always conducted herself as a man and was offended if anyone addressed her as a woman; if this happened, she would get angry and respond harshly. In one of her apartments, instead of displaying a calling card in the window, she had the name *Durov* engraved on the windowpane.

After her walk, she would return home and drink tea, which she loved a great deal. The dogs would sit at and under the table and also would have their tea. At six or seven in the evening she would go for a walk again and would occasionally call on one of her neighbors on business related to her modest household. She was a cheerful conversationalist and very witty; she behaved simply and with no pretensions, which, according to one of her acquaintances, was a rarity at the time, "especially from a person who held the rank of colonel."

ⁱ Writings of V. Belinskii, Moscow, 1859, part IV, p.128.

There were not many people in her immediate circle with whom she had a close friendly relationship other than K. Spasskii, the priest at the St. Nicholas Church, and the wife of the warden of the regional college, S—skaia. She was acquainted with Father Petr Kuliginskii, the priest of the Pokrov Church and author of several texts on local regional history.ⁱⁱ Unfortunately, the notes and memoirs of this well-educated person, from which much information on Durova could have been gleaned, were passed on to a relative and lost. She visited her brother, former police master in Elabuga, very rarely and only out of necessity, mostly on feast days and birthdays. She did not maintain a correspondence with anyone and only wrote to her son on rare occasions. However, none of her acquaintances remembers her son coming to visit her in recent years. In general, it is said that the relationship between mother and son was cold, as if they were strangers to each other.

Durova did not like to remember the days of her former glory, her brave exploits and turbulent life; she could hardly be persuaded to talk about them, and her answers would be short and monosyllabic. How can one explain that? It was as if she was afraid to recall that distant past—which felt like a happy dream to her—so as to avoid troubling her spirit and disturbing her heart. No one saw her don her military uniform even on very important occasions and she avoided all public gatherings and celebrations.

She was more than indifferent to her literary fame and did not even keep her manuscripts. Some of them were gifted by her footman to his acquaintances. Until recently a manuscript describing her military campaigns was kept in the household of F—n. One can suppose this was an excerpt from her *Notes of a Cavalry Maiden*.

She lived modestly, but did not deny herself anything; she spent the entirety of her 1000-ruble pension and when she died her savings amounted to just one ruble. She had one footman for a servant; he served her until her death, bought himself a house, and amassed a small capital. According to S—v, he still lives in Kazan, now a decrepit old man.

Prior to her death, she led an even more withdrawn and solitary life. Without exaggerating, one could say that her sole preoccupation was her dogs—she cared for them, bitterly mourned their deaths, and even, as was the case in S—v's house, dug a grave for them in the garden herself.

Durova died quietly and calmly on 21 March 1866 at the age of 82. On 24 March, her friend K. Spasskii, archpriest of the St. Nicholas Church, escorted her mortal remains to the cemetery of Trinity Church, where she was buried. "The funeral of the Cavalry Maiden was honored by the local cadre battalion with an appropriate military convoy that escorted her body to the grave. An officer carried the Cross of St. George. Very few mourners attended the sad ceremony, as the procession was held very early."ⁱⁱⁱ

In the register of the St. Nicholas Church for 1866, No. 2632, Part 3, the deceased is described as follows: "Deceased March 21st, 1866, buried March 24th, Staff Cavalry

ⁱⁱ I published a biographical note about him in the *Calendar of the Viatka Province*, 1893, under the title 'Priest P.N. Kuliginskii.'

ⁱⁱⁱ No. 40 *Vyatka Provincial Gazette* of 1866.

Master according to identification #2362 issued for retirement on April 24th, 1817, a noblewoman by birth and baptism, Nadezhda Andreevna Durova.” In the column on age, she was marked as having been 73 years old, and the cause of death was stated as “old age.” Meanwhile, her gravestone lists her age as 78, and the date of death as 29 March 1866, whereas in her biography, published in the 1866 *Viatka Province Gazette*, her age was given as 73 and the date of death as 22 March. Without a doubt, she died on 21 March 1866, as recorded in the register by Archpriest Spasskii, but owing to a lack of information, he could not have known for certain her age at the time of death and approximated it as 73. Had Durova been 73 at the time of her death, then she would have been born in 1793, and not 1783, as is generally accepted. Yet it is known that Durova married Chernov on 25 October 1801, which refutes the above claims about her age. Finally, in the *Historical Messenger*, Mrs. Nekrasova indicates 1783 as the year Durova was born, in accordance with an excerpt from the register.

Soon after Durova’s death, a modest tombstone was erected by her admirer and friend, Str—skaia. It consisted of a stone slab six quarters long [1.08m], four quarters high [72cm], three quarters wide [54cm] at the top, and two [36cm] at the bottom. 25 years passed. Some of Durova’s friends died, others had left Elabuga, among them St-skaia. The tombstone was covered with sand, overgrown with moss and grass, receded into the ground, and the inscription on it could only be made out with the greatest difficulty, so it is not surprising that it was later somewhat restored. In 1890, Fadikhin, a tradesman who knew Durova in his youth, raised the slab from the ground, coated it in paint and redid its inscription in the same form it had been before, and according to him, adding only the final words. From the attached image, we can see that the epitaph reads as follows:

Here lie the ashes of the servant of God
Nadezhda Andreevna Durova-
Aleksandrov.
Deceased 29th March 1866,
at 78 years of age.
As restored by F. P. Fadikhin

As often tends to happen, the monument was not restored by some rich person (of whom there are many in Elabuga who personally knew Durova), but by a tradesman who did not do it for any selfish or aggrandizing reasons, but out of the kindness of his heart, “in fond memory,” as he puts it, “of the once-famous female warrior.”

In conclusion, I must say that the title of my biographical note, Durov-Aleksandrov, was chosen for a reason. Durova always considered herself to be a man, wore male clothing, aspired to imitate a male manner, voice, and gait, and did not permit herself to be addressed otherwise, particularly after Tsar Aleksandr I ordered her to call herself Aleksandrov. Let her be remembered in posterity as Durov-Aleksandrov, according to her own desire.

P.S. We learned recently that a citizen of Elabuga, P.K.U., intends to place a marble bust on Durova's grave. All that remains is to wish that this wonderful idea be put into practice as soon as possible.