

New research facility – a note on the Russian Military Studies Archive

The Russian Military Studies Archive (RMSA) was formally launched in November 2015. Managed by Cranfield University's Barrington Library on behalf of the Defence Academy, the RMSA is a new research facility based at the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom in Shrivenham, Wiltshire.

Background:

The Russian Military Studies Archive is a unique collection of newspapers, periodicals, books and other documentation that has been compiled within the MOD over a long time. Some of the books were published in the 18th-19th centuries, although the vast majority of works were published in the 20th-21st centuries.

The Archive once served the Conflict Studies Research Centre at Sandhurst. The primary function of the collection was to provide a means to better understand Soviet intentions towards the rest of the world over a whole range of defence and security-related issues.

The bulk of the holdings was acquired over almost four decades, when the former Conflict Studies Research Centre, (RMA Sandhurst) was in operation, (1972-2009). Following CSRC's move to Shrivenham in 2005, CSRC eventually fused with the incumbent Advanced Research and Assessment Group and became the Research and Assessment Branch of the Defence Academy in 2009. The Research and Assessment Branch was wound up in 2010, and all material placed in warehouse storage.

The collections were rediscovered by Barrington Library (Cranfield University) several years later and since then library staff have been working with Dr Steven Main to save, move, maintain, catalogue and promote this valuable resource on behalf of the Defence Academy.

Range:

The material is in a range of formats and languages. The majority of the material is in English or Russian, but there is also a considerable amount of material in other languages including Czech, Polish, German, Romanian and Albanian, as well as original language source material from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

The Archive has over 16,000 individual books, some of which are rare and, probably in the case of much of the Russian-language material, especially works published pre-1980, very difficult (or at least very expensive) to obtain now.

The collection contains material such as BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, Foreign Broadcast Information Service Reports, RAND papers, Soviet Army Studies Papers and many journals including:

- 30 years' worth of the USSR's/Russia's main military medical journal, Voenno-meditsinskiy zhurnal
- 40 years of the Soviet/Russian Navy's journal Morskoi Sbornik
- Over 30 years of the Soviet/ Russian Ground Forces journal, Voenniy Vestnik and the Soviet Air Force main monthly, Aviatsiya I Kosmonavtika

Also included in the Archive:

- various Russian and other CIS and East European newspapers (late 1960s-2009)
- a very rare collection of former Soviet General Staff maps of the USSR, produced on the eve of the invasion of the USSR in June 1941
- a complete set of the USSR's most prominent military journal, *Voennaya Mysl'*, from its inception in 1918 onwards, as well as early issues of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union's main paper, *Pravda*, the MoD's main paper, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, etc.
- an interesting range of Russian posters.

Other collections within the Archive:

We have received a substantial donation of items from the **Defence Centre for Language and Culture** (also based at the Defence Academy). This donation comprises Russian language and cultural material and includes specialist dictionaries.

We will also be housing the collection of **Dr Shirin Akiner**, a world-renowned academic. Her collection comprises material directly relating to Central Asia, past and present (history, current politics, economy, languages, art and architecture, literature etc.), but there are also sections on topics such as Islam and women's rights.

Research areas:

Here are just a few of the research topics that the Archive can support –

- The pre-WW2 history of the Red Army, Air Force and Navy particularly the history of the USSR's Armed Forces in the 1920s-1930s, still a rich area for genuine, ground-breaking historical research
- World War II - Combat operations carried out by the USSR's Armed Forces during 1941-1945, the diplomacy undertaken in the lead up to the outbreak of War in June 1941, the economic policies pursued by the Soviet government in their bid to achieve total victory, the social conditions endured by the civilian populace, as a whole
- Post-World War II development of the Soviet Armed Forces, particularly in relation to the period 1970s-early 1990s
- Analysis of battlefield deployment and tactics of all branches of the Soviet Armed Forces throughout the length of their historical existence
- Re-creation of the Russian Armed Forces from 1991 onwards
- Soviet and Russian foreign policy, from the creation of the USSR through to the first decade of the 21st century. The English-language material on Soviet/Russian foreign policy is also not inconsequential, especially in analysing USSR/Russia's relationship with the USA, Western and Eastern Europe, China, the Middle East, and Africa
- Domestic and international terrorism
- Cold War history of countries such as East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Romania
- Security apparatus – FSB and its predecessor, the KGB; Soviet and Russian military intelligence, and counter-espionage operations
- Aspects of Soviet/Russian military technology – Ground Forces' kit, nuclear submarines, missile-defence complexes, tanks, and artillery.

Interested? Find out more:

We welcome all researchers working in this area. Visit our website and search the Archive's catalogue (this is very much a work in progress, only a modest part of the Archive has been listed so far).

<http://barrington.cranfield.ac.uk/rmsa>

For enquiries, please contact rmsa@cranfield.ac.uk

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