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# THE EXPLOITS OF UZBEK WOMEN AT THE FRONT AND IN THE REAR DURING THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

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**Abstract.** The topic of the Great Patriotic War will always be relevant, because every citizen of Uzbekistan should know the history of his country. Familiarization with the history of their small homeland is an urgent and inexhaustible topic for every person of any age, especially for young people. Unfortunately, the problem of war is still acute for humanity today. The article will be devoted to the feat of Uzbek women at the front and in the rear. Returning to the relevance of the topic, it should be noted that, unfortunately, the contribution of women to the victory over fascist Germany and the labor feat in the rear is the least studied. During the Soviet period, in studies on this topic, multi-volume books, articles, regardless of the aspect under consideration, the authors had to emphasize a special role and praise the contribution to the victory of the Communist Party. This trend was also traced in the historiography of Uzbekistan. It was only in the post-Soviet period that many fundamental works and articles appeared with an objective and critical analysis of the material. The study will be conducted based on the materials of the periodical press of Uzbekistan.

**Keywords:** Great Patriotic War, feat, women of Uzbekistan, rear, fascism, defense Fund.

During the Great Patriotic War, nearly 800,000 women served in the ranks of the Red Army, fighting alongside men against the fascist invaders. They served in various branches of the military. Many defenders of the Motherland were in military medical facilities, working as nannies, orderlies, sanitary instructors, nurses, and doctors. In communications units, women comprised approximately 80% of the personnel, and in road construction units, they constituted almost half of the total. The female aviation regiment ("Night Witches") gained widespread recognition. It included women from Uzbekistan – Yu. A. Sanfirova and M. G. Syrtlanova. Both were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. Women served as snipers, reconnaissance officers, and anti-aircraft gunners on the fronts. Ninety-one women received the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. Women replaced men in the rear who had gone to the front. If the number of women in Uzbekistan's industry was 34% in 1940, by 1943, the proportion of women in production had already reached 63.5%. Women replaced men not only in factories and plants, in the construction of canals and power stations, but were also forced to work under the most difficult conditions in mines and quarries, mastering traditionally male professions.

Many Soviet women, including those from Uzbekistan, donated their personal savings and gold jewelry to the Defense Fund, knitted warm clothing for frontline soldiers, served in military hospitals, cared for the families of those fighting and the evacuated population, took in orphaned children, and were blood donors. For example, 3728 women from Uzbekistan donated 38,725 kilograms of blood during the war. Uzbek women made an invaluable contribution to the adoption

of children; over 200,000 children were evacuated to the republic, and approximately 4,500 children were taken in by Uzbek families. Women primarily worked in orphanages. In the Uzbek SSR in 1945, there were 236 orphanages housing 28,659 children. I would like to focus more specifically on the women who voluntarily went to the front. A total of approximately 6,000 girls and women from Uzbekistan served in the ranks of the Soviet Army during the Second World War. These are the glorious daughters of the Uzbek people – Munira Giyasova, Roza Ibragimova, Zebohon Ganieva, Sara Shukurova, Aziza Kalandarova, Elena Stempkovskaya, Sonya Pikalova, and others.

I will recount only some of them: In Uzbek, her name was Munira, but at the front, they began calling her Mila in Russian. This refers to Munira Giyasova. When the war began, she immediately began requesting to go to the front, but she was refused and instead began working as a nurse in a hospital, regularly donating blood. In 1942, she learned that courses for communications specialists were opening, and this time she was fortunate, being enrolled. After completing the courses, she was assigned to a unit of the 4th Ukrainian Front. With fighting, Munira Giyasova traversed Ukraine, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Germany. She met Victory Day in the Polish city of Belsk. She was among those who liberated Auschwitz. In her memoirs and interviews, M. Giyasova spoke of many episodes of the war, but she was most struck by the prisoners of Auschwitz. She said: “I cannot recall without shuddering what we saw in that camp. We, girls and women, spoon-fed utterly exhausted people, donated blood to save the lives of many prisoners of the death camp.”.

Munira Giyasova was fortunate to return alive from the front lines; she dedicated 28 years to the Tashkent Canning Factory, working as a chemical technologist. She recently passed away. Aziza Kalandarova was 18 years old when the war began. She grew up with her sisters in an orphanage and studied at a medical school. In 1941, she worked at the Tashkent military hospital; in September 1941, she entered an anti-aircraft artillery school. She served on the front lines from 1942, as part of the 430th Artillery Division within the 2nd Ukrainian Front, fighting from the Volga to the Oder. During the battles near Orel, she shot down three German bomber aircraft. For her bravery in that engagement, she was awarded the Order of the Red Star. She sustained two wounds and suffered a concussion. Anti-aircraft gunner, battery operator, artillery reconnaissance specialist – these comprise her service record. When the war ended, she was in a military hospital and returned to Tashkent on crutches after another injury, but her chest bore the "For Courage" medal, the Order of the Red Star, and the Order of the Red Banner. In peacetime, Aziza Kalandarova led the republican organizational committee of the council of women veterans of the Great Patriotic War for many years. Roza Ibragimova was born in the Khorezm Region. In 1941, she enrolled in the Tashkent Medical Technical School. From the beginning of the war, she dreamed of serving on the front lines. In 1943, she graduated from the radio operators' school together with other young women from Uzbekistan. Her dream came true, and in 1944, she was assigned to a tank unit. During the very first battle, an enemy shell struck the tank. The commander ordered everyone to evacuate the vehicle. Holding the radio close, Roza jumped to the ground. The gunner and tank driver followed. After retreating several meters, they looked back and saw the tank engulfed in flames. But where was the commander? The tank driver and gunner rushed to assist the commander, but were cut down by a machine-gun burst from a fascist aircraft. Then Roza swiftly ran towards the burning vehicle and helped the wounded commander escape. They had barely reached a thicket when a deafening explosion occurred. Roza regained consciousness only in a field

hospital. For her courage in saving the commander's life, Ibragimova was awarded the Medal for Courage. Subsequently, Roza was assigned to a partisan detachment, where she maintained regular communication with the mainland.

Another page in the military biography of R. Ibragimova. A reconnaissance group, including Roza, received orders to remain in one of Poland's settlements after completing a mission deep behind enemy lines, to subsequently link up with advancing Red Army units. They established their base in a ruined church. Roza quickly deployed the radio and reported her coordinates. The night passed quietly. In the morning, they heard the voices of fascists who had arrived in the village, and from their conversations, they learned that the front was approaching. The group's commander decided to call down fire from our artillery to prevent the enemy from retreating. Roza transmitted the message. The first shells struck a cluster of retreating Hitlerites. Arriving Soviet soldiers helped the reconnaissance team escape from under the rubble. Roza saw the faces of the people but heard nothing. She realized she had suffered a concussion. She had to be sent to a hospital. And in March 1945, Roza Ibragimova returned to her unit, which participated in the battles for Berlin.

Sonya Pikalova – a student at the Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Mechanization of Agriculture, graduated in 1941 from radio telegraphy courses and reconnaissance school. In November 1941, along with sixteen other young women, she was sent to the front lines. She was dispatched to an underground network, initially to Rostov, where she maintained radio communications. Subsequently, she was transferred to the German-occupied Taganrog, where for a year and a month she knew only one person and could communicate only with him. When Sonya returned to her own, her friends scarcely recognized her. The young woman had developed gray hair. In 1944 – again behind enemy lines, this time in Odesa. As Sonya recalled, she often hid the radio on attics, descended by ropes, and frequently had to hide in garbage bins. Only when the radio, with the assistance of a female underground operative working as a secretary for Vlasovites, was successfully installed directly on the roof of their headquarters, did things become calmer. She worked in close connection with an underground organization and helped it track down and capture the head of Romanian intelligence. Just before our troops entered the city, Sonya's radio malfunctioned, forcing the scout to navigate the front line with vital intelligence. She was then assigned as a radio operator on a ship. Initially, the sailors were unwelcoming: "A girl on a ship brings trouble – that's the saying." Then the ship's commander said: "Anyone with a medal, step forward." Several people stepped forward. "Anyone with two – two steps forward." Everyone remained in place. "But your radio operator has three medals. Silence." And so, Sonya Pikalova, radio operator and scout, concluded her combat service on the ship as a radio operator. Zebo Ganieva – was born in 1923 in the Azerbaijani city of Shemakha. Her father was Azerbaijani, her mother Uzbek. But with her parents alive, Zebo effectively became an orphan. Her mother was repressed and exiled to Uzbekistan, and her father was forced to renounce her to save her life and freedom. In 1940, Zebo enrolled in the acting faculty of GITIS. And on November 7, 1941, immediately after the parade on Red Square, she left to defend the Motherland.

She was a radio operator and made sixteen trips behind enemy lines with a group, then defended Moscow as a machine gunner on a tank, and later became a sniper. The entire country knew of her exploits – her photographs and a report stating that she had eliminated 20 fascists with a sniper rifle were published in all central and local newspapers. In her memoirs, she recounted that she had eliminated far more enemies. In 1942, Zebo was severely wounded. Risking their lives, comrades carried her from the battlefield. Zebo miraculously managed to be flown to Moscow. She

was admitted to a hospital where Maria Fedorovna Shvernik, wife of the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Nikolai Mikhailovich Shvernik, was tending to the wounded at the time. She literally saved Zebo's life, because the young woman was dying from sepsis. Maria Fedorovna did not leave her bedside for a full eleven months, and when she was able to stand, she said with tears in her eyes: "Normal women carry a child for nine months, I carried you for eleven." After the severe wounding, Zebo returned to Andijan to her mother.

Following a severe wound and prolonged treatment in a military hospital, the distinguished sniper, junior lieutenant Zebikhan Ganieva, returns to her permanent residence in the mountainous region of Andijan. I request that you create the necessary conditions for her, issuing instructions for the provision of an apartment, medical care, and placement on special rations. In 1945, Zebikhan Ganieva enrolled in the philology faculty of the Azerbaijan State University. Subsequently, she was accepted into the graduate program of the A.M. Gorky Institute of World Literature of the USSR Academy of Sciences and was sent to Aligarh Muslim University (India) to improve her Urdu language skills and study Indian literature. She married the renowned diplomat Tofik Qadirov, who served as chargé d'affaires of the Soviet embassy in Turkey. She devoted herself to historical studies, becoming a Doctor of Oriental Studies, a professor, while remaining an exceptionally modest person. She was awarded the Orders of the Red Banner, the Red Star, and the Patriotic War 1st Class (in 1985, in commemoration of the 40th anniversary of Victory); and the "For the Defence of Moscow" medal. Elena Stempkovskaya was born in 1921. Her father, Konstantin Maksimovich, served in a partisan detachment during the Civil War and subsequently worked in the militia.

In 1932, the family relocated to Central Asia, to the Bayaut-1 state farm. Her father managed the spare parts depot, and her mother, Anna Vikentievna, worked in a nursery. This is where Elena Stempkovskaya spent her childhood. In 1940, she enrolled in the history faculty of the Tashkent Pedagogical Institute named after Nizami, studying with excellent grades and actively participating in public work. On the recommendation of the Tashkent City Committee of the Komsomol, Elena was drafted into the ranks of the Red Army and sent to radio operator training courses, and after their completion – to a rifle regiment. In August 1942, during the heavy fighting on the Don, the unit where Stempkovskaya served was encircled. For several days, a handful of Soviet soldiers repelled countless attacks by the Nazis. Communication with the unit's headquarters was not interrupted for a single minute, despite the difficult situation, and radio operator Stempkovskaya worked tirelessly.

In October 1942, Elena's unit held the defense at the Don village of Zimovenki, on the outer approaches to Stalingrad. The fighting lasted five days. For five days, the battalion withstood the furious German assault. Elena worked tirelessly at the command post with her radio. But then the Germans managed to break through to the battalion's command post. They spotted the girl and rushed towards her. Elena did not panic: she grabbed her rifle and began firing at close range at the fascists. She killed three, but the rest surged forward and seized her. The girl was subjected to agonizing torture, attempting to extract military secrets. They repeatedly beat her, tore out her hair, paraded her through the village, and subjected her to vile mockery. But nothing forced Stempkovskaya to reveal the secret. The enraged Nazis severed her hands. The Komsomol member died a terrible death, but remained faithful to her military oath until the end. For her noble deed, she was posthumously awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. This high title was conferred upon E. K. Stempkovskaya in 1946. The war engendered mass heroism among the Soviet people.

This was a great feat of all the peoples of the Soviet Union, defending the freedom and independence of their country from fascist slavery. Uzbek women also contributed their share to this victory, the deeds of which we must not forget and by which we should educate the youth of Uzbekistan today.

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