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Strelets troops first appeared in Russia in 1550 by decree of Tsar Ivan IV. Initially strelets army numbered 3000 people, the archers were the personal guard of the monarch. Gradually, their numbers increased in the second half of the XVII century has been 26 regiments in Moscow, in the service of which consisted of more than 22,000 soldiers. In peacetime, the archers were supposed to carry the guard duty, and the declaration of war go hiking.

Apart from Moscow, another 48 infantry regiments were formed on the territory of Russia. Weapons and uniforms streltsi prepared from the treasury. At the same time, Moscow's archers were in a privileged position. According to documents on the cloth coats they receive each year, while the archers of the province not more than once every three years. Ceremonial caftans worn only on special occasions, for everyday use underclothes dress.

Thanks to the cinema, we stereotype all the archers wore red coats. But it is not so, the color of uniforms regiments were very different from each other. For example, as of 1674, Yuri Lutokhina Regiment, indeed, wore red coats, but the archers Stepan Yanov were dressed in blue coats. Boots in most of the archers were yellow, but not all. Polk fedora Lopuchin, for example, wore green shoes.

To control the shelf was first created Musketeers hut, then renamed in Streletsky order. On the tributary population had an obligation under the maintenance musketeer troops. For example, pischalnye strelets money and bread. Salaries themselves archers in the XVI century was 4 rubles a year. Centurions received 10-12 rubles, as well as land.

The famous comedy directed by Leonid Gaidai Ivan Vasilievich archers, leaving the hike, sing a song Maroussia. All this is nothing more than an invention of the filmmakers. This song in the XVI century, of course, was not. It was written by composer Alexander Zatsepin the words of Leonid Derbeneva. And sang it in the film actors Mosconcert Boris Kuznetsov, Lev Polosin and the choir of the Moscow Military District.

Armed with archers were squeaking hand gun that was used to destroy the enemy's manpower. At the same time, effective musket was at a distance of up to 50 steps. In addition, the rate was not high. Even experienced archers could not produce more than three rounds per minute.

A melee archers used Swords and famous poleaxes heavy ax with a huge blade impaled on a pole. In our country poleaxes have proliferated in the XV century. Hammers can be applied both chopping and thrusting sharp end. By a staff usually fastened the strap that allows you to carry a weapon behind. Bec de Corbin total weight often exceed 3 kilograms.

Surname Sagittarius indicates that the ancestor of the man carrying of military service. The name is common enough in Russia. Six people with the last name Streltsov received the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. You can also recall Eduard Streltsov legendary Soviet player of the fifties and sixties.

Elimination of Strelets troops began under Peter the Great. In 1698, archers have rebelled, complaining about the meager salaries, the difficulty of service and the appointment of foreigners to command positions. The king was at that time in Europe. Back in Moscow, Peter dealt ruthlessly with the rebels. The total number of executed difficult even called historians. There is evidence that some of the musketeers King beheaded personally.

After the suppression of the uprising a significant part of the musketeers was transferred to the remote county-level city for garrison service. The liquidation process was a little suspended during the Northern War, as the Russian army was in need of an experienced warrior. Since 1705 conscription was introduced in Russia.

However, even in 1689 strelets regiment under the command of Lawrence Sukharev helped the young Peter dethroned older sister Sophia. As a reward for faithful service in Moscow in 1692-1695 years. It was built Sukharev Tower. It lasted until the early thirties of the twentieth century and was demolished in the general reconstruction of the capital. And adjacent to the tower Sukharevskaya Square was renamed in Cooperative.

In 1881, the Russian painter Vasily Surikov has completed work on the painting Morning of the Strelets execution. On the canvas depicts a tragic moment in our history: the execution of the musketeers after the suppression of the rebellion in 1698. The painting was purchased by Pavel Tretyakov for 8000 rubles. And so far this masterpiece of Russian painting can be seen in the Tretyakov Gallery. During World War II the painting was evacuated to Novosibirsk, where he returned in November 1944.