

Monuments and museums remind of tragic past

Belarus celebrates 200th anniversary of 1812 War and prepares for 100th anniversary of WWI

By Viktor Andrejeu

In 1812, the French Emperor attacked the Russian Empire via Belarusian lands; they suffered from the war most of all. A century later, WWI again brought innumerable human victims and the destruction of our historical-cultural heritage. The scale

of our loss is still being comprehended. Its four halls house original artefacts from the history of Belarus and Europe.

documents, maps, medals and historical reconstructions, displaying items from the National History Museum, the Vitebsk and Mogilev regional local history museums, Kobrin Military-Historical Museum (named after Suvorov), the National Historical Archives and the National Library. Afterwards, the items will be on permanent show at Volkovysk's Military-Historical Museum (named after General Piotr Bagration). It was there that, in June 1812, the headquarters of the 2nd Russian army was situated, commanded by Ba-

gration. Its four halls house original artefacts from the history of Belarus and Europe.

er and the creation of the French Empire, alongside the attack on Russia. 18th-19th century guns and hand held weapons (including sabres) are on show, in addition to musical instruments such as horns and drums. A special section is devoted to exhibits discovered on former battlefields: bullets, fragments of shells, buckshot and a German stiletto dagger. The uniform of Napoleon's multi-national army can be viewed, as can Russian and French dresses.

Debates are being held on how best to mark the 100th anniversary of WWI. The Fraternal Cemetery of WWI Victims has been restored in Minsk's Storozevskaya Street and regularly hosts prayer services by various confessions, with official delegations of foreign states laying wreaths. In Belarus, 147 sites of military burial are state registered, all dating from WWI, and others are still being sought. In 1995, the Defence Ministry formed a specialised battalion to seek out graves from the first and second world wars.

The Culture Ministry believes that, as the anniversary of WWI is fast approaching, it would be



1812 military uniform

useful to inform foreigners about the fate of Belarus and detail its losses during WWI and WWII. In 2014, a monument complex is to



Preparations for 1812 War in Minsk's History exhibition, at History Museum

The National History Museum recently launched

It showcases hand held weapons and guns, uniforms, military articles,

ropes, dating from the late 18th century until 1812. Ancient pictures show Napoleon's coming to pow-

Yuri Kuklachev's lessons of kindness help people live in harmony with themselves

Yuri Kuklachev's Theatre — established in 1990 — is probably the most unusual in the world, featuring six dogs and 120 cats. Recently, the leader of this unique troupe arrived in Minsk, as part of the Moscow State Institute of Culture's delegation. People's Artiste of Russia Yuri Kuklachev visited the Belarusian University of Culture and Arts, giving a master class to its students.

By Tatiana Gazhinovich

He tells us, "I come regularly to Belarus, doing so with great pleasure, bringing my performances and books. I lead the Ecology of the Soul laboratory and have written over ten textbooks on the topic of moral health, with a

circulation of over a million copies. I know that Belarusians treat my monographs graciously."

Why did you decide to deal with the ecology of the soul?

I travel so much worldwide, observing spiritual crisis and problems. When I began

working at the theatre, I used to record the behaviour of my cat; I have 15 boxes of diaries. Observation of the lives of people and cats inspired me to write 'Lessons of Kindness'. I hope that my readers learn to live in harmony with nature, people and — primarily — with their own souls. I've



Yuri Kuklachev during master class

even suggested teaching kindness at school.

How did you bring up your children?

I did this with encouragement. I discovered their talents and encouraged them. It's the

same simple system as we use with cats. You can't tame cats. My task is to help children find their vocation, rather than the job with the best salary. Today's children focus on extremes, so we really need to change this,

nurturing an atmosphere of kindness. Our main task should be saving children.

Who is your most famous actor?

Boris the cat is a true star, participating in advertising and earning money for our theatre. He is an honourable resident of the theatre. 'The Olympiad of Cat Boris' show features 70 cats but Boris is the best, as he can jump from a 6m tall pole.

Who are your biggest fans?

In summer, only ten percent of those coming are from Moscow, others arrive from the former Soviet republics.