

# **JAMES BRUCE**

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**James David Bruce (1669-1735) – in Russian Iakov Vilimovich Bruce - served as one of Russian tsar Peter the Great's closest advisors. A man of many métiers, he served Russia over the course of his lifetime as a general, statesmen, diplomat, and scholar. Bruce participated in both the Crimean and Azov expeditions. In 1698 he traveled to Great Britain, where he studied several subjects, including Isaac Newton's then avant-garde philosophy of optics (i.e. that light itself is a heterogeneous mixture of differently refrangible rays) and gravity (i.e. that celestial bodies follow the laws of dynamics and universal gravitation). Upon return to Russia, Bruce enthusiastically established the first observatory in his native country. In 1700, at the age of 31, Bruce achieved the rank of major-general and commanded forces in the Great Northern War against Sweden. After a humiliating defeat by the Swedes near Narva on November 19, 1700 after which he reputedly wept, Peter vowed to improve his army and defeat Sweden in the future. He concluded that a modern army needed a disciplined infantry equipped with the latest artillery (rifles), which was supposed to advance while firing and then charge with fixed bayonets. The Russian army had consisted mostly of cavalry, and its officer corps composed of foreign mercenaries. James Bruce was one of the new trainers Peter employed to whip the Russian army into shape. On July 8, 1709 Russian artillery defeated**

Charles' army and sent it into retreat. That year Bruce was awarded the Order of St. Andrew for his decisive role in reforming artillery as Master of Ordnance in the Great Northern War. In 1712-13 Bruce headed the allied artillery of Russia, Denmark and Poland-Saxony in Pomerania and Holstein. In 1717 he became a senator and President of Colleges of Mines and Manufacture. He was also placed in charge of Moscow print and St. Petersburg mint. As First Minister plenipotentiary at the Aland and Nystad congresses, Bruce negotiated and signed the Russian peace treaty with Sweden in 1721, the same year he became Count of the Russian Empire. He retired in 1726 with the rank of field marshal. Bruce corresponded with Jacobite kinsmen and took pride in his Scottish ancestry. He owned a library of books in fourteen languages and was known by many as the most enlightened man in Russia.

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