

Serdyukov's Relative Gives Luxury Holiday Resort to State

By [The Moscow Times](#)

September 02, 2013



Former Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov, who ordered the construction of the estate located in the Astrakhan region.

A relative of former Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov has donated his elite resort on the Volga river to the state, paving the way for investigators to close a criminal case in which Serdyukov was questioned as a witness, a news report said Monday.

Serdyukov's brother-in-law, businessman Valery Puzikov, and his business partner Artur Pozov, handed over their shares in the Zhitnoye resort, worth \$4.5 million, to two state organizations affiliated with the Defense Ministry — the Grekov Studio of Military Painters in Moscow and the Kubinka Tank Museum in the Moscow region, Kommersant reported.

Zhitnoye was developed mainly by the ministry's troops on the orders of Serdyukov, who personally controlled the funding for the resort's construction, the report said, citing military investigators.

Troops laid an 8-kilometer-long road to the resort from the nearest village and planted trees and grass on the resort's premises.

Investigators opened a criminal case against unidentified Defense Ministry officials on charges of abuse of authority, which carry a maximum sentence of years in prison.

By giving up his share at the resort, Puzikov in fact paid back the money spent on the resort's development to the state, taking away the need to pursue the criminal case any further, unnamed experts told Kommersant.

The probe into the resort's construction is yet another episode in the high-profile criminal case into the embezzlement of state funds and property at Oboronservis, a company affiliated with the Defense Ministry.

Serdyukov who served as Defense Minister between 2007 and 2012 often vacationed at Zhitnoye with friends, including President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, before Putin fired him in November over an investigation into large-scale embezzlement at the ministry, Kommersant reported.

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