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Russian Official Condemns Estonia's Honored Burial for Nazi SS Veteran

By The Moscow Times

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Harald Nugiseks (center) is one of four Estonian soldiers to have been awarded the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross.

Russia sharply criticized Estonian authorities for granting a burial with full military honors to a decorated Nazi SS veteran who distinguished himself in combat against Soviet troops during World War II.

Harald Nugiseks, the last surviving Estonian recipient of Nazi Germany's Knight's Cross, was buried on Jan. 10 at the Estonian Soldiers Memorial Church in the city of Tori. The ceremony was attended by Brigadier General Meelis Kiili, commander of the Estonian Defense League, retired high-ranking military officers and local officials.

"We regard the ceremonial burial of a Nazi criminal by the Estonian authorities as another example of a twisted interpretation by official Tallinn of historic realities of the Second World War and the tragic impact of the Nazi ideology on the fate of entire nations," said Konstantin

Dolgov, Russia's ombudsman for human rights.

"It is a deeply amoral mockery of the memory of millions of people of many nationalities who were brutally murdered during the war by the Nazis and their henchmen like Nugiseks," Dolgov said in a statement posted on the Foreign Ministry's website on Tuesday.

The history of Estonian collaboration with the Nazis is the subject of widespread revulsion in neighboring Russia, but is viewed by many in the Baltic nation as having been a necessity for achieving national independence.

Russia has repeatedly condemned glorification of Nazism in Estonia, where reunions of Nazi veterans and parades in honor of former Waffen-SS soldiers are held annually.

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