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Russian Man Urinates on Eternal Flame, Faces 5 Years in Jail

By Peter Spinella

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A Russian man who extinguished a World War II memorial's eternal flame by urinating on it faces five years in jail for desecration, local media reported.

The 26-year-old, who was hanging out by the monument with his friends in the southwest Russian city of Belgorod, decided to relieve himself on the flame while drunk on Thursday evening, the Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper reported.

An eyewitness called police, who quickly detained the man nearby, the report said, adding that surveillance camera footage confirmed the incident and a medical test proved the man was drunk.

The perpetrator, a resident of the Siberian city of Novosibirsk who had reportedly been in town for about a month visiting his girlfriend, faces a half-decade behind bars for "desecrating the bodies of the dead" buried at the memorial, the newspaper said, citing

police.

Many World War II memorials around Russia feature an eternal flame, meant to burn constantly to honor those who died defending their homeland from Nazi occupation during World War II.

But this is not the first time that a man has put out the flame in such a manner.

Last year an Egyptian citizen, Mohammed Montaser, was sentenced to a year and a half in prison for relieving himself on an eternal flame in Volgograd on New Year's Eve.

And there have been other similar incidents.

In July a young man who put out an eternal flame in the southern city of Astrakhan was sentenced to 18 months in prison, state news service RIA Novosti reported, though it did not reveal how exactly the flame was extinguished.

In 2011 a group of rowdy paratroopers celebrating National Paratroopers Day in Petrozavodsk put out an eternal flame with beer, and in 2010 a drunk man in the northern town of Ukhta extinguished such a flame by dousing it with port wine.

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