

Army Supports Honoring Russia's 'Polite Men' Who Annexed Crimea

By [The Moscow Times](#)

October 03, 2014



A shop assistant sells T-shirts with images of Russian President Vladimir Putin. The text reads: "The politest person."

Russia may soon have a day dedicated to the "polite men" who shot to the spotlight during Russia's annexation of Crimea in March.

The "polite men" — a widely used euphemism for Russian troops who wore no identifying insignia on their military uniforms and quietly stood guard as Crimea's strategic sites were seized — will be honored on Oct. 7, President Vladimir Putin's birthday, if the Defense Ministry gets its way.

Deputy Defense Minister Nikolai Pankov was cited by Izvestia newspaper Friday as saying the ministry supported a State Duma deputy's initiative to dedicate the date to them.

"We are following this legal initiative of State Duma Deputy Igor Zotov with great interest

and attention," Pankov was cited as saying. "It was greeted very positively by all departments of the military," he said.

The identity of the "polite men" who seized control of several key sites on the peninsula was at first a mystery. At the time, residents described the men as wearing military uniforms with no insignia and refusing to disclose where they came from. But they did "behave politely," locals were cited as saying at the time.

Having first denied that Russian soldiers were present in Crimea, President Vladimir Putin later admitted during his annual call-in show that the men were Russian troops sent to maintain order and control during the peninsula's referendum on seceding from Ukraine and joining Russia.

Zotov's proposal to officially honor the "polite men" each year was submitted to the State Duma on Sept. 17, and is currently under consideration.

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