

Russian Fighter Jets Adorned With Religious Icons to Boost Morale

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The faces of Orthodox saints now adorn the side of three MiG-29 jet fighters.

Pilots at a Russian airbase in Armenia have looked no further than the highest heavens for inspiration, painting the images of Orthodox saints on their planes in a bid to strengthen company morale.

The faces of Prince Alexander Nevsky, Prince Dmitry Donskoi and martyr Mercury Smolensky now adorn the side of three MiG-29 jet fighters, the Southern Military District said Monday, according to the Interfax news agency.

"The pilots are certain that having the saints' images on the fuselages of their military aircraft will not only protect them but will also boost the battle morale of personnel," the Southern Military District was quoted as saying.

The military press service also noted that the religious images had been painted on the right side of the aircraft to make them less susceptible to wear-and-tear, as pilots ascend the planes from the left, the report said.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia has continued to maintain military facilities in a number of foreign countries, including Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in addition to Armenia.

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