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Guards at Volgograd War Memorial Complain Of Hazing and Abuse

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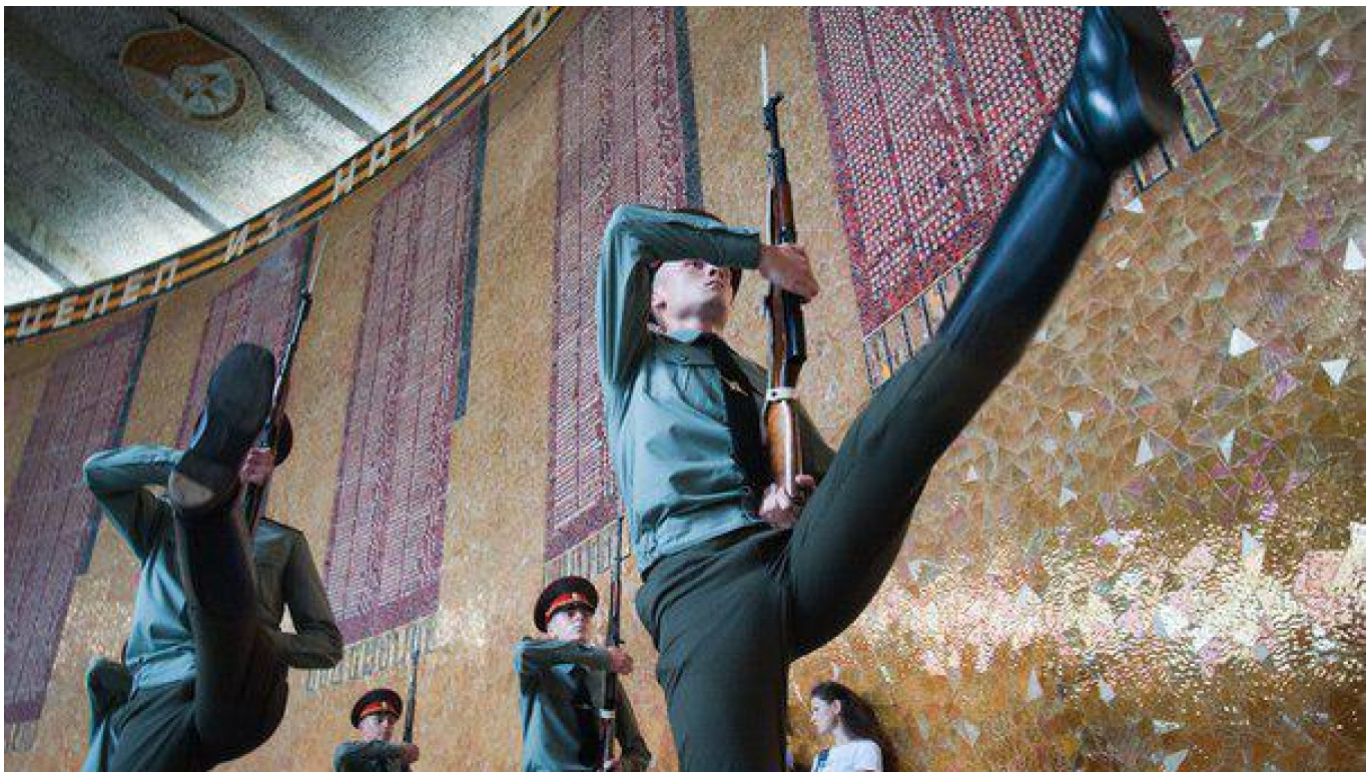

Alexander Yarantsev / VK

Soldiers in an elite military unit in Volgograd guarding a World War II memorial have complained of beatings, extortion and other forms of hazing.

After reports about the abuses came to the attention of Mother's Right Foundation, a human rights organization, officers confiscated soldiers' cell phones to prevent further leaks, the local news outlet V1.ru reported on Thursday.

"Soldiers serving in unit 22220 and their parents complained that commanders extort money from subordinates and torment those who refuse to obey," head of the human rights group, Nina Ponomaryova, told V1.ru.

The soldiers' relatives filed a complaint with the Volgograd military prosecutor's office saying that each serviceman must pay up to 2,000 rubles to their commander to make a phone call or receive permission to go on leave.

“This is hell,” one woman told V1.ru on condition of anonymity, mentioning a ruptured spleen that her son suffered due to beatings.

The unit’s commander, Igor Danilov, denied any wrongdoing among his officers, as did the Southern Military District’s press service.

Reports of hazing are common in Russia's Armed Forces. As a result, draft dodging is rife.

Related article: Silent Deaths: The Price of a Russian Soldier's Life

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