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AK-47 Designer Kalashnikov Gets Statue in Moscow

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Vedyashkin Sergey / Moskva News Agency

A 7-meter monument to renowned AK-47 automatic rifle designer Mikhail Kalashnikov will be unveiled in central Moscow on Sept. 19, its sculptor, Salavat Shcherbakov, said.

The date coincides with Gunsmith's Day in Russia and the day of St. Michael in the Orthodox church, Shcherbakov said in an interview with the opposition-leaning Dozhd television channel Tuesday.

"In general, everyone from the Soviet era turns out to have been a believer," he added, noting that Kalashnikov himself "valued and celebrated" his namesake's day.

A founding stone has been installed on Oruzheiny Pereulok near the Garden Ring where Shcherbakov said "weapons were made for centuries."

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The Russian Military-Historical Society has backed the installation of the Kalashnikov monument, which is estimated to cost 35 million rubles ($538,000).

“The weapons that Kalashnikov made were weapons designed to fight evil,” he said. “That was his goal.”

Shcherbakov has a habit of winning state contracts. His monuments, which include Patriarch Hermogenes, Emperor Alexander III, Prince Vladimir, stand near the Kremlin walls and President Vladimir Putin attended the unveiling ceremony of each statue.

In a letter to the head of the Russian Orthodox Church before his death in 2013, Kalashnikov wrote that he was haunted by the thousands of deaths his invention was responsible for.

"My spiritual pain is unbearable,” he wrote. “I keep asking the same insoluble question. If my rifle deprived people of life then can it be that I ... a Christian and an Orthodox believer, was to blame for their deaths?"

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