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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Soldiers Join Ballerinas for Puzzling Women's Day Photo-'Shoot'

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Ivan Iskorenko, Varya Ivanova / slujbapokontraktu / Vkontakte

In a high-stakes game of who can get more creative on International Women's Day on March 8, this Russian city brought out the big guns.

Photographs from Yekaterinburg showed an unlikely pairing of ballerinas and servicemen armed with assault rifles posing in an empty metro station. Several of the photographs feature the troops pointing squarely at the camera as they're flanked by the dancing ballerinas.

The project dubbed: "The strength of a man is in the tenderness and love of a woman" appeared on Yekaterinburg's volunteer military service social media page Thursday morning.

Vladimir Boychenko, who heads one of its recruitment centers, told the local e1.ru website that the photoshoot took place earlier this week and was greenlighted by Yekaterinburg's administration.

Russia's edition of Maxim magazine was baffled at both the pairing of armed men in fatigues

with ballerinas and the choice of a metro station for the setting of the photoshoot.

“Without knowing the backstory, you’d think the ballerinas are either a decoy or especially well-camouflaged special forces,” it wrote.

The Central Military District troops certainly can’t be blamed for trying.

But Yekaterinburg had competitors.

In Moscow, Putin congratulated mounted women police officers by riding with them.

Embed:

> Владимир Путин приехал в 1-й оперативный полк полиции и сел на коня pic.twitter.com/JNGPKMayV5
>
> — Дмитрий Смирнов (@dimsmirnov175) March 7, 2019

In Crimea, masked men handed out flowers to women on the street while dressed in fatigues in the city of Simferopol, mimicking the "Little Green Men" seen on the peninsula before it was annexed by Russian in 2014.

Embed:

Lastly, the Komsomolskaya Pravda tabloid promised women free pancakes on women's day, which corresponds this year with Maslenitsa, a traditional week-long holiday feast celebrated before Lent.

Embed:

> When festivals collide: “Dear women, congratulations!” Free pancakes to celebrate International Women’s Day #IWD2019 #Shrovetide pic.twitter.com/JTkvbEE9qQ
>
> — Theo Merz (@theo_merz) March 7, 2019

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