

Dmitry Yazov, 95, Dies in Moscow

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General Dmitry Yazov and Vladimir Putin [Kremlin.ru](https://kremlin.ru)

Dmitry Yazov, the last appointed Marshal of the Soviet Union, died on Tuesday in Moscow after a long illness. With a career extending from the Siege of Leningrad to the 1991 August Coup, Yazov was one of the most decorated and controversial Russian military figures of the twentieth century.

Born in 1924 in the Omsk oblast, Yazov enlisted in the Red Army in 1941 at age 17. During World War II he would be honored for his service on the Volkhov and Leningrad fronts, thus laying the groundwork for his ascension through the ranks of the Soviet military. Over the next 50 years, Yazov would make a brilliant military career, holding a number of high positions and serving as Minister of Defense. In 1990 he was appointed Marshal of the Soviet Union, the nation's highest military rank. He would be the last person to receive this appointment before the collapse of the Soviet Union.

A dedicated communist and staunch conservative, Yazov disapproved of perestroika and was part of the "Gang of Eight," a committee of high-ranking Soviet officials who fomented the

1991 coup against general secretary Mikhail Gorbachev. He did, however, pull back the troops after the first bloodshed in the capital. He was nevertheless imprisoned following the coup's failure and remained in detention for 18 months before being granted amnesty by newly-appointed Russian president Boris Yeltsin.

Following his release from prison, Yazov's military career came to an end and he went on to work in various advisory and administrative positions in military academies, ministries, and organizations, including a 2008 appointment as general inspector of the Russian Defense Ministry.

In 2019, Yazov was [sentenced](#) in absentia to 10 years imprisonment for war crimes relating to his involvement in the violent Soviet military offense against members of the 1991 Lithuanian pro-independence movement. Russia denied extradition requests and Yazov remained free.

Yazov has remained a symbol of the Soviet military both within Russia and abroad. He appears as himself in Tom Clancy's spy-thriller "The Cardinal of the Kremlin," and has been praised in his homeland. His death marks the end of the line of surviving Marshals of the Soviet Union.

Funeral proceedings will be held on February 28 at Moscow's Federal Military Memorial Cemetery.

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