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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian WWII Museum Puts Ukrainian 'Trophies' on Display

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People visit an exhibition of Ukrainian military vehicles destroyed during Russia-Ukraine conflict at the "Breakthrough of the Leningrad Siege" museum. **Olga Maltseva / AFP**

Soviet-era Ukrainian tanks captured during Russia's invasion of its western neighbor have appeared at a World War II museum outside St. Petersburg ahead of the exhibit's expected opening, according to photos and reports published over the weekend.

Russian-speaking social media users criticized as inappropriate the placement of armored vehicles seized during the nearly year-long invasion of Ukraine at the Breakthrough of the Siege of Leningrad museum in the town of Kirovsk.

According to the independent Sota news outlet, local residents noted the glaring absence of NATO equipment and U.S.-supplied HIMARS rocket launchers that Russia's military has regularly boasted of seizing or destroying.

It added that the Soviet-era T-72 tanks were missing their slat armor, which is designed to

protect the vehicles from attacks, leading the outlet to speculate that it had been appropriated for the Russian military's needs.

The museum declined to comment on the Ukrainian T-72s and 2014 BTR-4 amphibious infantry fighting vehicles placed on its grounds, and would not specify the date of the exhibit's expected opening, according to the U.S.-funded Radio Svoboda news website.

The regional news website 47news.ru reported Sunday that the exhibit is curated by a federal senator and is slated to open on Jan. 27, the day the Soviet Army lifted the Nazi siege of Leningrad, which has been renamed St. Petersburg after the collapse of the U.S.S.R.

Dubbed "Unlearned Lessons of Fascism," the exhibit is expected to feature modern Russian armor with its gun turrets pointed at the Ukrainian trophies and other Ukrainian weapons.

Ukrainian trophies were displayed in exhibitions nationwide in the early months of Russia's invasion, which was launched last February.

In Moscow, those displays included "trophies" that Russian soldiers had brought back from Ukraine — including a bulletproof vest, a Ukrainian military uniform and a Ukrainian insignia badge — which were described as "unique exhibits" provided by the Russian Defense Ministry.

Ukraine has also regularly displayed Russian tanks and other captured military hardware in central Kyiv.

Analysts estimate that more than 1,600 Russian and 2,800 Ukrainian tanks have been destroyed, captured, damaged or abandoned during the nearly 11-month war.

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