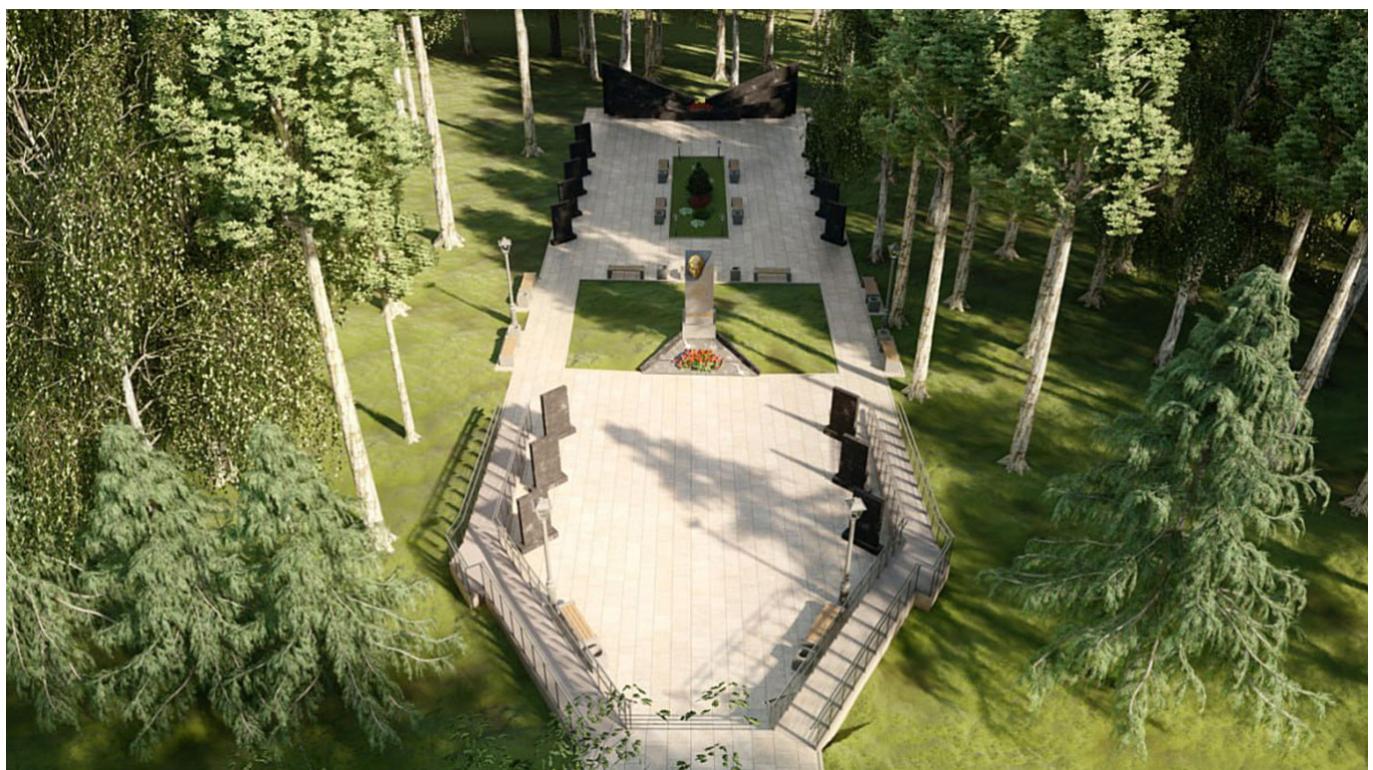


Russian Region to Build 'Heroes of Donbas' Memorial Atop WWII-Era Mass Grave – Reports

December 28, 2023



The "Alley of the Heroes of Donbas" in Oryol. t.me/orlec

Authorities in the Oryol region in western Russia are planning to build a memorial to the "heroes of Donbas" atop a mass grave of Soviet soldiers killed in World War II, the local Telegram channel Orlets [reported](#) Wednesday.

The mass grave in the village of Biofabrika near the region's capital Oryol holds the remains of 52 Soviet soldiers and officers killed in local battles in the summer and fall of 1943. The names of 19 servicemen buried in the grave remain unknown.

The burial site is currently marked by a small gravestone monument and is ascribed the status of a memorial of regional significance.

Local officials plan to spend over 4.5 million rubles (\$50,000) on the "alley of the heroes of Donbas" that would replace the current monument, according to publicly available

procurement documents studied by Orlets.

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Orlets noted that available documents “don’t contain a single word indicating the existence of the burial site.”

The documents also fail to explain why a memorial to “heroes of Donbas” — a likely reference to pro-Russian separatist fighters in eastern Ukraine — is being erected in the Oryol region, whose regional capital is some 550 kilometers away from the eastern Ukrainian city of Donetsk.

Several thousands of memorials immortalizing Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and its participants have been erected across Russia in the 22 months since the war started, [according](#) to independent counts.

Related article: [Amid Ukraine War, a Quiet Battle of Memorials Unfolds in Russia](#)

Meanwhile, memorials dedicated to Soviet-era repressions have been disappearing en masse in what experts say signals a worrying trend.

Earlier this month, authorities in the republic of Karelia [erected](#) a monument to “victims of Finnish occupation” at the Sandarmokh memorial site, where at least 6,000 victims of Josef Stalin’s purges were buried in mass graves.

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