Russian Mercenary Prigozhin's Statue Unveiled at His Grave

By [AFP](#)

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Visitors pose in front of the newly unveiled monument to Yevgeny Prigozhin in Saint Petersburg's Porokhovskoye cemetery. **SOTAvision**

Mourners and soldiers on Saturday laid flowers at a new statue of Yevgeny Prigozhin, a pro-Kremlin mercenary who staged a mutiny and died in a plane crash, at his grave in Saint Petersburg.

Prigozhin was head of the Wagner private militia, which fought alongside Russian troops in Ukraine, capturing the city of Bakhmut in a grinding months-long assault.

He staged a 24-hour mutiny last June, seizing Russian military command buildings in the southern city of Rostov and marching on Moscow in a bid to oust the country's military leaders.

In voice messages published to social media, he had raged daily against what he said was

corruption and mismanagement of the offensive by bureaucrats in Russia's Defense Ministry and General Staff.

Two months later, after backing down and being scolded as a traitor by President Vladimir Putin, he died in a plane crash.

On Saturday, when he would have turned 63, a bronze statue of Prigozhin was unveiled at his grave in Saint Petersburg's Porokhovskoye cemetery.

Embed:

Mourners, including soldiers wearing Wagner insignia, some with their faces covered, laid flowers at the feet of the statue, an AFP reporter saw.

A makeshift memorial to Prigozhin, who was popular among his troops and supported by many of Russia's pro-offensive military bloggers, has stood for months in Moscow close to the Kremlin.

He was initially buried in a secret funeral following the plane crash.

Putin, who said grenade fragments were found in the plane's wreckage, called Prigozhin after his death a "talented" man who had made "serious mistakes."

The Kremlin has denied involvement in the crash.

Putin last month removed long-time defense chief Sergei Shoigu, who had been the target of Prigozhin's criticism, and several senior military figures have been arrested on corruption charges.