

Memorial in honor of soldiers, who died during the liberation of the Southern Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands in 1945



At the corner of Kommunistichesky Avenue and Gorkogo Street, in a green frame of verdant hills, there is a majestic memorial in honor of soldiers, who died during the liberation of the Southern Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands in 1945. There is a five-meter statue of a soldier in a helmet, wearing a greatcoat and holding a machine gun against an extended stele with a writing “Let us forever cherish a memory of heroes”. This is a soldier-liberator, who has finally set a foot on the mother lands, which always belonged to him and his people by rights of discovering, settlement and development. He has returned to these grounds to settle for ages, and his feat was paid by a very high price.

The right side of the composition shows us one of heroic acts of August 1945. Heavy fighting broke out from 19 to 23 August 1945 on Shumshu Island. Japanese troops tenacious held on the 165th highest point. The USSR descent groups leading by Pyotr Shutov, the Hero of the Soviet Union, launched the assaults of the point several times, but Japanese gunners, camped out in bunkers, deterred the assaulters. Thereat sailors Nikolay Vilkov and Pyotr Ilichyov have covered the embrasures with their chests, repeating the feat of Alexander Matrosov.

This very emotional part of a composition can be called “Feat”. There are only few meters before the enemy's bunker, and just in a moment it will be covered with

the bodies of the sailors Pyotr Ilichyov and Nikolay Vilkov, who were awarded the title of the Hero of Soviet Union posthumously.



“It is important for us to not only realize the idea of the memorial in full, but also transfer a portrait resemblance of the heroes. Necessary photos and documents have been sent to us from the Gorkovsk Professional College of Inland Navigation, where Nikolay Vilkov studied. We have got the photo of Pyotr Ilichyov here, in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk”, – a sculptor, the author of the monument and the laureate of the Lenin Prize, Alexander Tyurenkov says.

The team of authors comprised its leader A. Tyurenkov, an Honored Architect of RSFSR I. Loveiko, an architect A. Bronzov. Bronze sculptures have been founded in Belashova art casting factory in Mytishchi. The Leningrad factory “Monumentsculptura” and the Construction Establishment №2 of the “Sakhalinpromstroy” Trust of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk have also participated in the construction of the memorial.



On 3 September 1980 to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the liberation of The Southern Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands a grand opening was held, accompanied by the USSR National Anthem and artillery fireworks. Thousands of inhabitants of the regional center and guests observed a minute of silence in memory of heroes and placed flowers to the memorial.

Every year, for more than 20 years, in the beginning of September people of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk go to the Eastern part of the city, to the Slavy Square to visit the memorial. Here, thinking back and dreaming about the future, people recall the memory of those, who died protecting the Eternal Flame of Life. They bring here their tribute for a happy destiny.