



The memorial in honor of Sakhalin men, who died in Afghanistan and Chechnya

On 15 February 1989 the last Soviet Soldiers have left Afghanistan. Although they were happy about the peace that has been finally claimed, not everyone could make it till the very end. The list of battle regions is big: Afghanistan, Abkhazia, Chechnya – these are only some of the titles. There are also some questions remained unsolved to these days: was Russia's participation good or bad, were the consequences enough to exonerate the victims?

War never changes. It is definitely an unnatural act, but unless we get rid of feelings like hatred and anger in our minds, war will be taking our husbands, sons and fathers. And no matter of politics, Russian soldiers always take responsibilities for their duties. No matter how many tears have been spilt, wars would still remain in our memories as a horrific experience.

The memorial in honor of Sakhalin men, who died in Afghanistan and Chechnya, was installed in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk in 2004. This is a bass relief of 14

memorial plates with 42 soldiers' names and a sculpture of a crying mother. Veterans of local wars claim it as their duty to leave the names of the heroes to the descendants. According to I. Savelyev, who is a vice-chairman of Sakhalin branch of All-Russian social movement of local wars and military conflicts veterans, the foundation of the memorial was stored in 1999. But due to lack of financial support, the project was ceased for a couple of times. That was also a reason why movement's participants made a great part of work by themselves. Over and above, they had to protect the memorial from vandals. It took five years to finally finish the project. On the vertically installed onyx-black granite plates you can find names of the soldiers, their dates of birth, dates of death and also conscription places. On the both sides of the memorial you can see black tulips – a mournful symbols, which were the metaphorical name for the planes having taken bodies of the soldiers from war lands.



The center of the memorial is a sculpture of a mourning mother, which was carved by a Sakhalin sculptor V. Chebotaryov.

The epitaph says: “For you, those, who died from the bullets, exploded on mines, our everlasting memory and the third pledge”. The Grand Opening was held on 18 April 2004.

Memorials keep horrifying silence, showing us the names and the dates, which cover tragedies, sufferings and a terrible truth. Take a closer look into the dates – many of them have never ever reached their 20s.