

# Russia's Olympic Stars Visit Syrian Airbase

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**Defense Ministry**

A group of Russia's Olympic stars have visited troops at Russia's Hmeymim airbase in Syria, the Interfax news agency [reported](#) Monday.

Former Olympic pole-vaulter Yelena Isinbayeva visited the base alongside Sergei Kamensky, who took home the silver medal in the 50-meter rifle shooting. Fencers Sofia Velikaya, Arthur Ahmathuzinym, Timur Safin and Alexei Cheremisinova, and wrestler Soslan Ramonov — all of whom won gold at the Olympics this summer in Brazil — also took part in the trip.

The athletes planted trees in honor of their visit, while Isinbayeva held morning exercises for the troops.

"Our visit to Syria made a big impression on us," Isinbayeva said. "We met with our soldiers,

officers and generals, and they were all very easy to get on with: very pleasant, but strong and confident at the same time. They are real men.”

The [Hmeymim airbase](#) acts as Russia's strategic center for military operations in Syria. The airbase can accommodate up to 50 military aircraft, but is soon to be transformed into a military base with a permanent air force contingent.

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