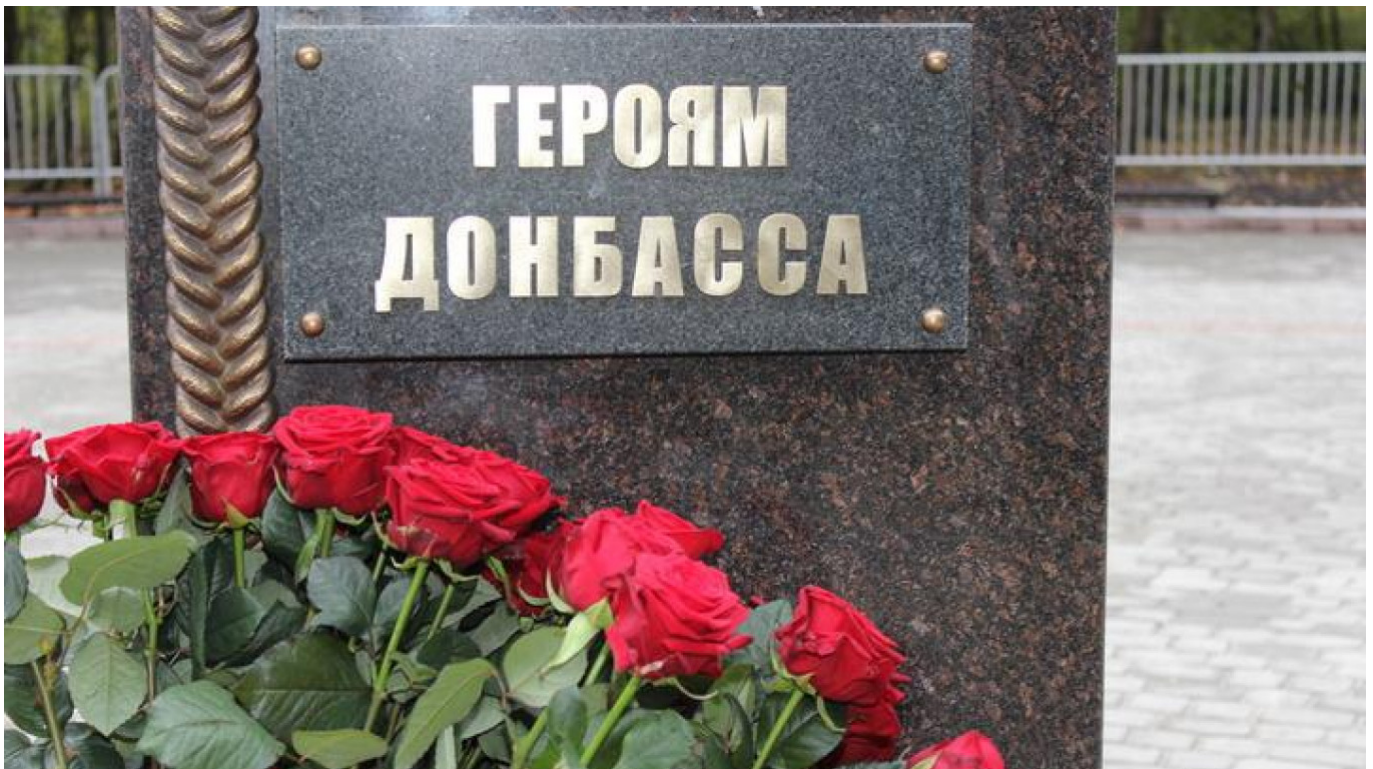


Statue Unveiled Commemorating Russian 'Volunteer' Fighters in Ukraine

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Alexander Volkov Facebook

A statue dedicated to Russian “volunteer” fighters in eastern Ukraine has been unveiled less than 100 kilometers from the Ukrainian border, the local news website 1rnd.ru [reported](#) Monday.

Eastern Ukraine has been a flashpoint between Ukrainian forces and pro-Russian separatists since 2014. Moscow has denied its active-duty military are in the region, insisting Russian fighters there are ideologically-motivated “volunteers.”

A seven-meter granite statue dedicated to the Russian fighters titled “To the Heroes of Donbass” was unveiled in the southern Russian city of Rostov-on-Don on Monday, 1rnd.ru reported.

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The outlet reports that the monument was [erected](#) late last month, while the Rostov-on-Don mayor backdated a permit for its installation on Oct. 5.

Mayor Vitaly Kushnaryov [thanked](#) a delegation of retired and active “volunteers” at the ceremony for “doing everything to save the Russian world.”

“This is the first monument of its kind erected in Russia,” the state-run TASS news agency [cited](#) a senior member of the so-called Union of Donbass Volunteers as saying.

The union’s Rostov chapter was reportedly behind the idea to erect the monument. Around 1 million rubles (\$17,400) was collected from unnamed sponsors, according to the Kommersant business daily.

Several activists had written to the municipal authorities protesting the statue’s installation as illegal, the newspaper writes.

The unveiling on Oct. 16 coincided with the one-year anniversary of the [killing](#) of a military commander for the self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic known by his call-sign “Motorola.”

It was attended by DNR leader Alexander Zakharchenko and Russian presidential aide Vladislav Surkov.

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