

On Gunsmith Day, Vladimir Putin visited the Patriot military-patriotic park of culture and recreation of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.

The President took part in a ceremony for consecrating the stepping stone of the Armed Forces' main cathedral, a religious complex that is expected to be completed in the year of the 75th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War. Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia held a service to signify the start of the construction.

The project will include a centre for the training of chaplain service personnel, conference halls, classes and an exhibition area for multimedia expositions. The cathedral's central altar will be consecrated in honour of the Resurrection of Christ, and each of its four aisles in honour of the patrons of the fighting arms and branches of the Armed Forces.

Then Vladimir Putin visited the shooting centre of the Kalashnikov Concern in Patriot Park and saw an exposition of Kalashnikov's latest products.

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Speech at stepping stone consecration ceremony for the main cathedral of the Armed Forces

President of Russia Vladimir Putin: Your Holiness!

Everyone gathered for this solemn ceremony! We are attending a very important, truly historic event in Russia's spiritual life: today the first stone will be laid for the Resurrection of Christ Cathedral. Devoted to Victory of our people in the Great Patriotic War, it will become the main cathedral of the Armed Forces, yet another symbol of our unflinching national traditions and our loyalty to the memory of our ancestors and their accomplishments for the benefit of the Fatherland.

We have a long standing tradition of building cathedrals in honour of the accomplishments of the Armed Forces of Russia and Russia's warriors. They are designed to glorify martial prowess, relieve the grief over the dead, cherish examples of dedication, heroism and love for the Motherland and convey these from one generation to another.

The land on which the cathedral will be built remembers these examples. The last lines of defence of the capital, Moscow, ran not far from here during the Great Patriotic War. The enemies were stopped and forced to retreat at the expense of enormous losses in these forests in the winter of 1941.

It is our sacred duty to remember and cherish the memory of those who gave their lives for the Fatherland, to cultivate grateful memory in our descendants.

I believe that people will come to the cathedral when it is built. They will come to pay homage to the defenders of the Fatherland.

I would like to thank the leadership of the Armed Forces for this initiative.

Thank you for your attention.