

Russian Orthodox Church consecrates huge cathedral dedicated to military



A new cathedral outside Moscow dedicated to the Russian armed forces has been consecrated.

The ceremony was attended by the country's top military brass and soldiers wearing World War Two-era uniforms.

The opening was originally planned for May 9, the 75th anniversary of Victory Day, but was postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The consecration was led by Russia's Orthodox Patriarch, Kirill.

"Today, as a unified people, in this military cathedral, we remember the feats of our soldiers, and we pray for our fatherland, so that the Lord protects our country from external and internal enemies," Patriarch Kirill announced to the congregation.

Earlier, the patriarch praised the military for defending the country “from external and internal enemies” and thanked Russia’s President Vladimir Putin and Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu for their support in building the church.

The invited dignitaries included Defence Minister Shoigu and Vasily Gerasimov, the Chief of the General Staff, as well as many decorated war veterans.

There had been plans to install mosaics of President Vladimir Putin and former Soviet leader Joseph Stalin in the cathedral, but the idea was dropped after a public outcry.

The cathedral’s six golden domes are dedicated to the patron saints of each branch of the Armed Forces of Russia.

A museum at the church complex features exhibitions about the history of Russia’s armed forces and the Great Patriotic War.

The Soviet Union lost an estimated 26 million people including 8.5 million soldiers in World War Two, and remembrance of victory has become fundamental to Russian identity.

[Source](#)