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THE ROLE OF AZERBAIJAN IN THE VICTORY OVER FASCISM



THIS YEAR HUMANITY IS CELEBRATING THAT IT IS 65 YEARS SINCE THE END OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR, KNOWN IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION AS THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR. THE FURTHER FROM OUR TIME THE UNFORGETTABLE DATE 9 MAY 1945 IS REMOVED THE GRANDER THE GIGANTIC FEAT OF THE VICTORS OVER FASCISM APPEARS TO MANKIND.



1. Hazi Aslanov – Guard commander, major general, twice Hero of the Soviet Union; 2. Israfil Mammadov – lieutenant, the first Azerbaijani Hero of the Soviet Union; 3. Mehti Huseynzade – intelligence agent, partisan, Hero of the Soviet Union; 4. Ziya Buniyadov – historian, academician, participant of the Great Patriotic War, Hero of the Soviet Union.

Showing model valour in battle and also persistent selfless labour on the home front, the Azerbaijani people contributed substantially towards the general victory. Together with tens of millions of sons and daughters of the other people of the USSR they forged this victory. A fifth of all the inhabitants of Azerbaijan fought on the fronts of the Great Patriotic War. Sons and Daughters of almost every family left to defend the Homeland.

Out of the country's population of 3,4 million people (1941) 681 thousand people went to the front and among them were more than 10 thousand women. The 77th, 223rd, 369th, 402nd and 416th national rifle divisions were formed in Azerbaijan, whose war journey took them from the foothills of the Caucasus to the Baltic, Eastern Europe and Berlin, as well as 87 battalions and 1123 brigades of self-defence.

Azerbaijanis heroically defended the fortress of Brest, defended the blockade of Leningrad, proved themselves in Moscow, Stalingrad

and the Kursk Bulge, defended the Caucasus and liberated the Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, the Baltic, Moldova and the countries of Eastern Europe.

Among the participants in the battles for Berlin were daughters of Azerbaijan - R. Ahmadova, S. Bayramova and S. Khalilova. During the war years Azerbaijan was the principal producer of oil and oil products. **Azerbaijani oil workers produced about 80% of the essential fuel for tanks and aviation for the front. Already in the first year of the war they supplied 23.5 million tonnes of oil. In total - 75 million tonnes of oil from Baku were directed towards war needs.** More than 10 thousand Azerbaijani oil workers in total were transferred to the construction of a 'second Baku' in the Bashkiria and Perm oblasts. A marshal of Victory Georgy Zhukov said: **'The oil workers of Baku supplied the front and the country with as much fuel as was needed for the defence of our Fatherland and for a quick victory against the enemies'** about the role and contribution of Azerbaijan

in the war against fascism.

More than 130 types of arms and ammunitions were made then in Azerbaijan, including missiles for the famous Katyusha. Our compatriots donated 15kg of gold, 952kg of silver, 320 million roubles and also jewellery from their own savings to the defence fund. More than 1.6 million units of different goods and 125 loads of warm clothes were sent to the front. Just to Leningrad in the summer of 1942, businesses of Baku sent 2 loads of pressed caviar, 40 tonnes of dried fruit, 12 loads of tomato pure and juices and other foodstuffs, as well as medicines and dressings. Considerable help, in the form of foodstuffs, equipment and money, was given to the territories of Stalingrad, Stavropol and Krasnodar.

Businesses of Baku took part in the restoration of the Dnepr State Hydroelectric Power Station, the Black Sea port of Azov and other important objectives.

In the years of the Great Patriotic War dozens of war hospitals were in operation in Baku and other cit-



Shells for Katyusha manufactured in Baku

ies of the Republic. According to official figures, **Azerbaijani doctors returned 1.5 million servicemen to service.** A part of whom after the war forever linked their fate with the Azerbaijanis.

More than 170 thousand Azerbaijani fighters were awarded orders and medals and 123 received the highest rank Hero of the Soviet Union for their heroism and fortitude during the years of the Great Patriotic War.

The first Azerbaijani to be awarded the rank of Hero, on 11 December 1941, was the assistant of the commander of a platoon of the 42nd infantry regiment, senior sergeant **Israfil Mammadov**. He was at the head of a group of fighters which accepted battle near the village of Pustink by Novgorod on 3rd December 1941, repelling four attacks by opponents of superior strength, joined in hand-to-hand combat and retained the position.

On 31 March 1943 the rank of Hero was posthumously conferred on **Gafur Mammadov**, communication commander of a company of the 323rd section of the battalion of marines, who in a battle to the northwest of the city of Tuaps, personally annihilated 13 enemies with sub-machine guns and 1 mortar and its crew and died, shielding the commander of the company.

Mammad Maharramov, com-

mander of a section of the 933rd infantry regiment (52nd Army, 2nd front of the Ukraine), was the first to cross the Dnepr at the village of Kreshatik, in the Cherkass Region, on the night of 3 October 1943, carrying out reconnaissance and extracting valuable information. On 17 October he exploded an ammunitions dump at the rear of the enemy, destroyed a tank and motor vehicle and wiped out a few dozen of Hitler's men together with fighters from his section.

Garay Asadov, senior sergeant and gunner of the 281st Guards' regiment (27th Army, 2nd front of the Ukraine) repeated the famous feat of Aleksandr Matrosov at the battles of the Rumanian town of Margita.

The pilot **Huseynbala Aliyev** brought down two enemy planes in one air fight in the battle of Leningrad.

Among those who distinguished themselves as commanders was the twofold Hero of the Soviet Union and commander of the 35th tank brigade, general-major **Hazi Aslanov**. He received the first rank of Hero in the battle for Stalingrad. This is why there is also a memorial to Hazi Aslanov among the five memorial plaques at the Mamayev Kurgan, in Volgograd (formerly Stalingrad).

A special place in the list of Azerbaijanis who have received rank of Hero of the Soviet Union for

heroic deeds in the Great Patriotic War is held by the Azerbaijani scientist, Orientalist and Academician **Ziya Musa oghlu Bunyadov**. He received the rank of Hero when commanding the 123rd penal regiment which took part in the famous Vislo-Oder Operation. Later Z. M. Bunyadov recollected: 'I was charged with an extremely dangerous thing: to cross a triple line of enemy defences and go deep behind enemy lines. We had to take a mined 80m bridge over the river Pilitsa, and after that protect the bridge intact so that the war machinery could go across it. And we carried out this task. But at what cost?! Out of 670 fighters of the regiment only 47 remained alive after that battle. So many I buried then and so many letters I wrote to their relatives! All those who remained alive were decorated with war orders. And I was awarded the rank of Hero of the Soviet Union on 27 February 1945'. After the Victory Z. M. Bunyadov was appointed commandant of the Pank Region in Berlin. Z. M. Bunyadov



died on 21 February 1997. Not long before his death he came forward with an initiative to confer the rank of Hero City on Baku.

None of these 123 are still alive today. The last to die was Malik Maharramov, commander of a company of the 218th Guards' battalion (61st Army, central front).

14 fighters from Azerbaijan became full holders of the Order of Glory. They are equal in status to the Heroes of the Soviet Union. Among them are **Aghasan Nahmatov, Ali Huseynov, Suleyman Eldarov, Sultan Mehtizade and Vasiliy Gavrilov.**

Many Azerbaijanis actively participated in the partisan movement, including in different European countries. The most prominent among them was **Mehti Huseynzade**, who received the rank of Hero of the Soviet Union posthumously.

More than 250 thousand Azerbaijanis died on the battlefield. We bow our heads before the blessed memory of these heroic sons and daughters of Azerbaijan.

The Azerbaijani people gave an enormous contribution to the attainment of Victory over fascism.

Literature

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*Marines from Baku headed for the war front in 1942.
Photo: National Archives*



Unit 416th of the Taganrog Division in the parade in Berlin at the moment of removal of the Victory Banner from the Reichstag in order to give it to the museum, June 1945