

Mamayev Kurgan

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The Mamayev Kurgan memorial complex dominated by the statue of Mother Russia is a dominant height overseeing the city of Volgograd (formerly Stalingrad) in southern Russia. The name literally means Hill of Mamai, named after a medieval commander of the Tatar Golden Horde. Today it is the site of a memorial complex commemorating the Battle of Stalingrad which raged between 1942 and 1943. The battle was a decisive Soviet victory on the Axis at the Eastern front of World War II.





When forces of the German 6th Army launched their attack against the city centre of Stalingrad on 13 September 1942, Mamayev Kurgan (appearing in military maps as "Height 102.0") saw particularly fierce fighting between the German attackers and the defending soldiers of the Soviet 62nd Army. Control of the hill was vital as it offered control over the city. To defend it, the Soviets had built strong defensive lines on the slopes of the hill, including trenches, barbed wire and minefields. The Germans pushed forward against the hill, taking heavy casualties. When they finally captured the hill, they started taking the city centre under fire, as well as the railway station Stalingrad-1 beneath the hill. They captured the railway station on 14 September.





On the same day, the Soviet 13th Guards Division commanded by Alexander Rodimtsev arrived in the city across the river Volga under heavy German artillery fire. The Division's 10,000 men were immediately thrown into the bloody battle. On 16 September they recaptured Mamayev Kurgan and kept fighting for the railway station, taking heavy losses. By the following day, almost all of them were dead. The Soviets kept reinforcing their units in the city as fast as they could. The Germans assaulted up to twelve times a day, and the Soviets would respond with fierce counter-attacks.

Скульптурное изображение Женщины-матери,
склоняющейся над погибшим воином



The hill changed hands several times. By 27 September 1942, the Germans had again captured half of Mamayev Kurgan. The Soviets held their own positions on the slopes of the hill, as the 284th Rifle Division desperately defended the key stronghold. The defenders held out until 26 January 1943, when the Soviet winter offensive relieved them, trapping and destroying the German forces inside Stalingrad.



When the battle ended, the blood-soaked soil on the hill was ploughed and mixed with shrapnel: between 500 and 1,250 splinters of metal were found per square meter. The earth on the hill had remained black in the winter, as the snow kept melting in the many fires and explosions. In the following spring the hill would still remain black, as no grass grew on its scorched soil. The hill's formerly steep slopes had been flattened in months of intense shelling and bombardment.



After the war, the Mamayev Kurgan memorial complex was built. On top of the hill, a huge allegorical statue of Mother Russia was erected, a concrete sculpture 52 meters tall, dominating the skyline of the city of Stalingrad, later renamed Volgograd. At the time this statue was created, it was the largest free-standing sculpture in the world. It is made of concrete, except for the blade of the sword, which is made of stainless steel. The statue is held on its plinth solely by its own weight.



<http://www.volfoto.ru>

Vasily Chuikov is buried at Mamayev Kurgan, the first
Marshal of the Soviet Union to be buried outside of
Moscow.



Цветы героям. Озеро слёз. Площадь Героев памятника-ансамбля на Мамаевом Ю.
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Волгоград







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Thank you!