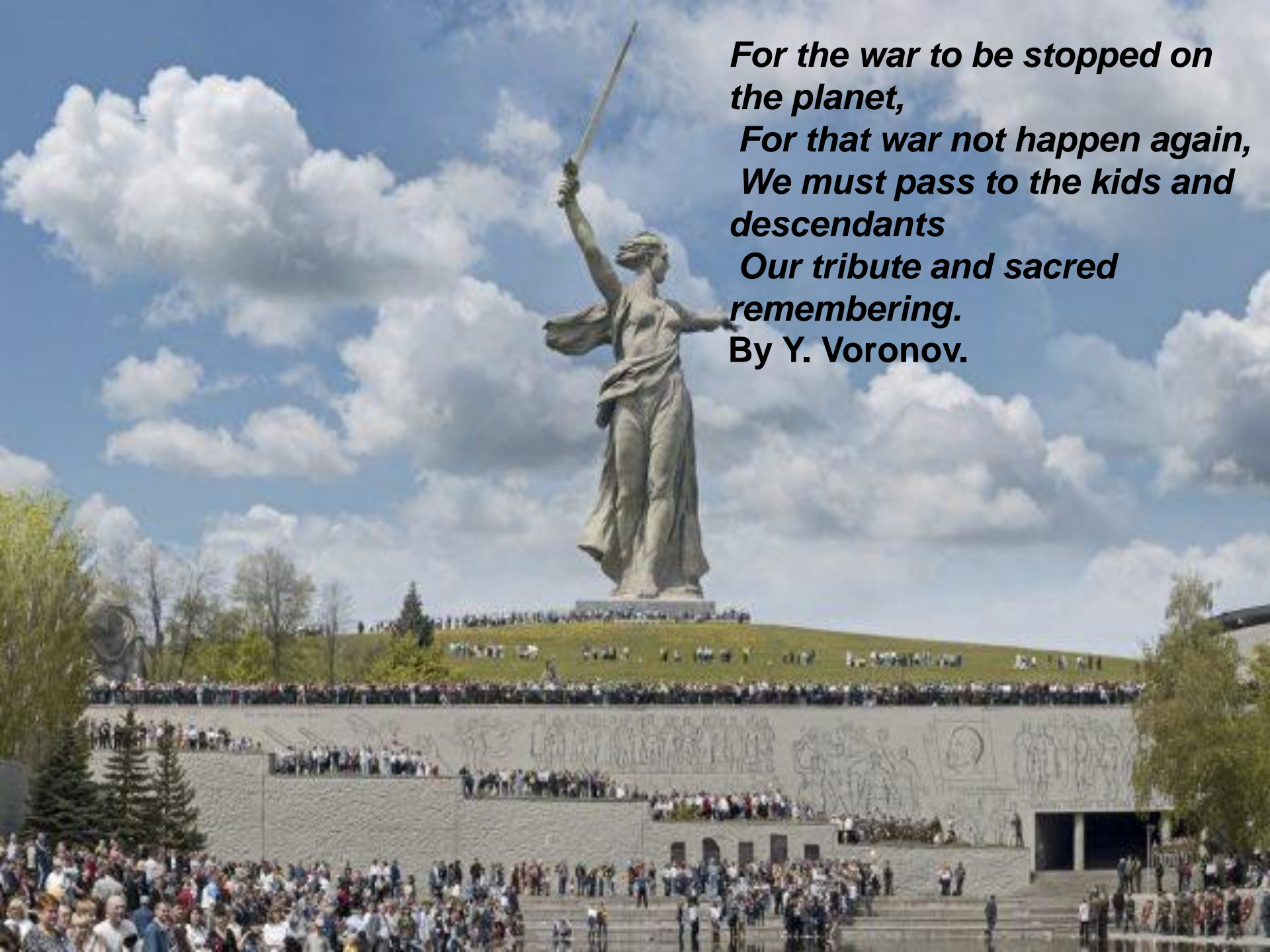




Tribute to the victory of Stalingrad...

***For the war to be stopped on
the planet,
For that war not happen again,
We must pass to the kids and
descendants
Our tribute and sacred
remembering.
By Y. Voronov.***





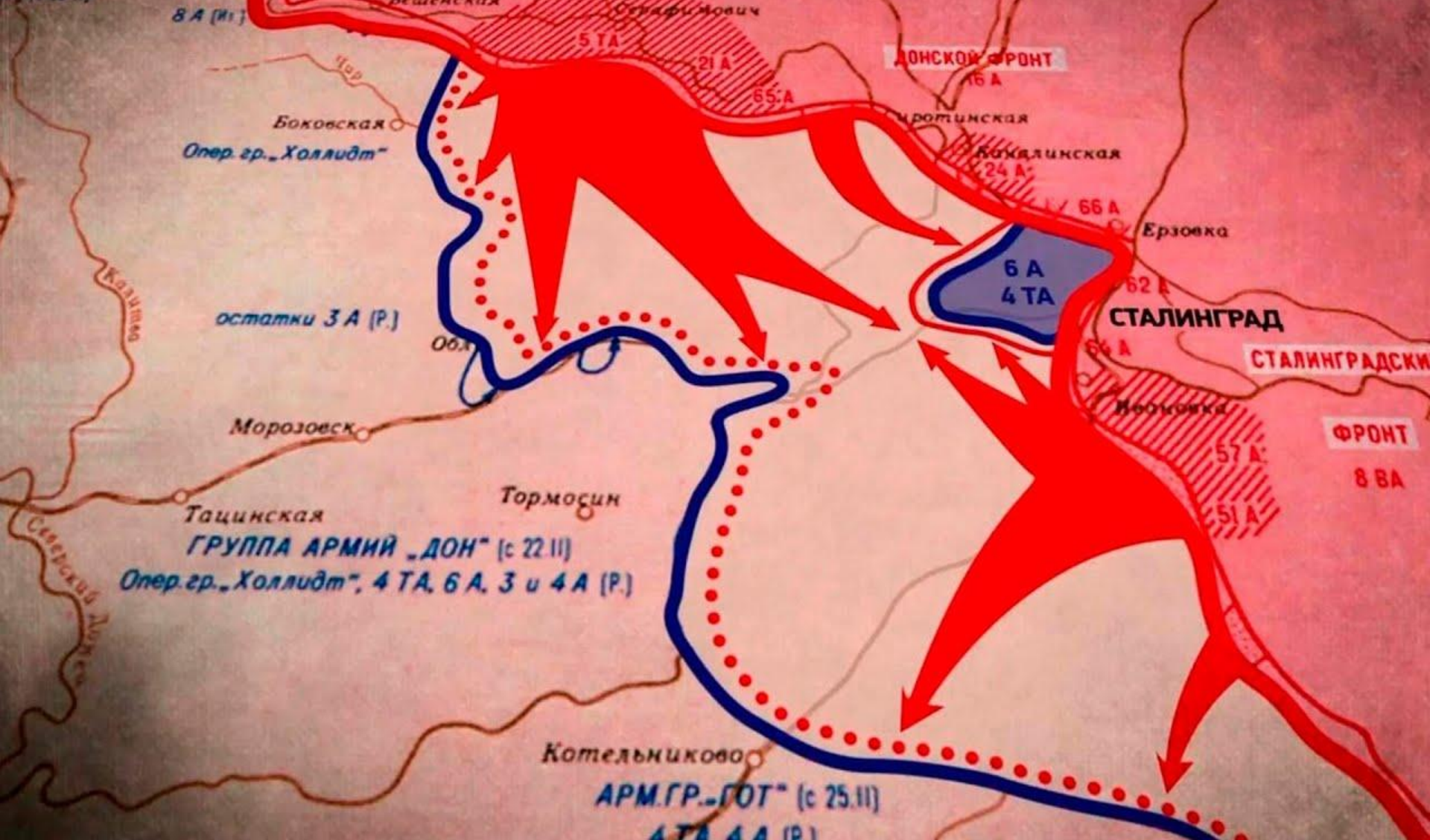
History of Russia has plenty of heroic pages. These pages contain sacred memories which are precious not only for Russians but for the people of other countries as well. On the 2nd of February 2023 we celebrate the 80th anniversary of the battle of Stalingrad. And today we would like to tell you more about it.



In 1939 began the bloodiest war in the history of mankind. That war came to the USSR two years later, in 1941 . Hitler's plan of Barbarossa assuming a lightning seizure of the USSR's western territories encountered a massive and powerful resistance of the Red Army. Nevertheless, the enemy, facing a resolute rebuff, managed to approach Moscow, to encircle Leningrad, and reached the banks of Volga river by 1942.



Barbarossa operation.



Taking over Stalingrad as a major industrial center and important communication hub was crucial for the Nazis. For them, it was not just a military, political and economic center. By winning there, they could gain an advantage much needed for successful outcome of the war.



The 6th German field army of the 1940's and until September 1942 was a dream come true of the German Wehrmacht. At that time, it was the best army in the world which, according to Hitler, "could storm the skies." By 1941, it conquered numerous European capitals including Brussels (Belgium) and Paris (France). On the eastern front, that army achieved a significant victory near Kharkov, having carried out a "cauldron" operation for Russian troops in the summer of 1942 (resulting in 240 thousand prisoners). Only 22 thousand Russian soldiers could escape that "cauldron". After that brilliant victory at Kharkov, a famous commander of the 6th German army and Lieutenant General of tank troops, Friedrich Wilhelm Paulus, became a national hero of Germany. As a matter of fact, he was one of German military masterminds at that time and the author of *Barbarossa* operation.



July 17, 1942 marked the beginning of the battle of Stalingrad. On the German side, 14 divisions were put forward including 270 thousand soldiers and officers, 3 thousand guns, 500 tanks, 1200 aircrafts. On the Soviet side there were 12 divisions including 160 thousand people, 2200 guns, 400 tanks, and a total of 454 aircrafts.

Приказ Ставки ВГК № 227

«...Немецкие оккупанты рвутся к Сталинграду, к Волге и хотят любой ценой захватить Кубань, Северный Кавказ с их нефтяными и хлебными богатствами. Враг уже захватил Ворошиловград, Старобельск, Россошь, Купянск, Валуйки, Новочеркасск, Ростов-на-Дону, половину Воронежа...

Мы потеряли более 70 миллионов населения, более 800 миллионов пудов хлеба в год и более 10 миллионов тонн металла в год. У нас уже нет теперь преобладания над немцами ни в людских резервах, ни в запасах хлеба. Отступать дальше – значит загубить себя и загубить вместе с тем нашу Родину. Каждый новый клочок оставленной нами территории будет всемерно усиливать врага и всемерно ослаблять нашу оборону, нашу Родину... Из этого следует, что пора кончить отступление. НИ ШАГУ НАЗАД!

Таким теперь должен быть наш главный призыв. Отныне железным законом дисциплины для каждого командира, красноармейца, политработника должно являться требование беспрекословного повиновения без ПРИКАЗА высшего командования... Этот призыв – значит

On July 28, 1942, the order of the People's Commissar of Defense No. 227 was issued under a title of "Not a step back!". It was perhaps the most severe order in the entire war. It spoke about general mobilization of forces to repel the enemy.



August 23, 1942 became the most tragic day for Russian soldiers and population of Stalingrad: in a period of few hours, the city was wiped off the map. Bombing lasted several days without any break.

There was an eyewitness who shared the following: "It was scary to look around. They dropped small fragmentation bombs, bombs of half and a ton in weight. The soil soared and shook as if it was an earthquake. In addition to those bombs Germans used for intimidation, they also dropped rails, tractor wheels, harrows, iron boiler sheets, barrels with holes, and all that, with a wild howl, screeching and clanging, fell from the sky on the city. German planes making a pitch-down produced powerful sirens, and these hellish sound made your soul ready to jump out of the body."

The whole city was on fire: buildings and oil storage facilities were burning, asphalt was melting. Flaming oil spilled over the water. It seemed that everything was in flames and burning, even Volga river itself.

Colonel General Alexander Rodimtsev who became Hero of the Soviet Union twice during the war described those days as follows: "*The city resembled a pitch-black hell. Flames rose several hundred meters height. Clouds of smoke and dust hurt my eyes. Buildings were collapsing, walls were falling down, iron warped.*"

For the first time, the enemy used its carpet bombing tactics. In the period of August 28 to September 14, 1942, 50000 bombs of 50 to 1000 kilograms were dropped over Stalingrad. Each square kilometer of Stalingrad's territory received up to 5 thousand bombs and large-caliber fragments. No city in the world could withstand such a firestorm.



Fierce fights lasted for more than two months. History of wars never knew such a powerful resistance before Stalingrad. Russian soldiers fought desperately for every house, every single floor or basement, for every city wall.



Since August 25, 1942 a state of siege had been imposed over Stalingrad. Despite the siege, remaining Stalingrad residents were able to accelerate production of weapons to be sent to the front. They began construction of barricades and anti-tank barriers on the streets of the city.




Germans bombed the city and important crossings over and over again. As a result of that bombing, oil flowed into Volga river and burned on its surface. In such conditions, rivermen, sailors and home front workers managed to ferry up to 300 thousand people and a large amount of factory equipment across Volga river in just 20 days, from August 24 to September 14, 1942 (food and weaponry were transferred from the opposite bank of the river).



Such persistent urban battles were barely known in the history of wars. It was decided to hold the city at any cost. Stalin's order of October 5, 1942 read: "*Stalingrad must not be surrendered to the enemy.*"



«The factories have entered the front line, they are under fire», narrates Evgeny Krieger in his story titled *The Fire of Stalingrad*. «No one leaves, no one puts out the furnaces where they can still stand. People worked non stop for 24 hours under bombing without any break, and many were wounded; the plant itself suffered losses and «fought» like a soldier of great endurance. A day later, workers provided 200 assembled, serviceable guns for the line of defense. Then they dragged weaponry to the battle. There were not enough gun crews, and the former master gunsmiths went to firing positions and fired their own guns.»



On September 13, 1942, Nazis rushed to storm Stalingrad with all their might. They struck the main blow in the area of Mamayev Kurgan and Central Market. The whole of Stalingrad was under threat of capture.

On September 14, 1942, Berlin radio announced to the whole world that the conquest of Stalingrad was over and Russia was divided into two halves.

However, in the very last moment appeared the rifle battalions of the 13th Guards Division guided by Major General Rodimtsev. They urgently crossed Volga river.

Out of 10 thousand fighters, around 6 thousand remained alive but the rest of them were drowned or killed. Immediately entering into the battle, they managed to knock out the enemy from the city center and Mamayev Kurgan.

Fierce fightings took up the streets and squares of the city. They did not calm down until the end of the battle. Central station of the city passed from Russian troops to Germans and back 13 times within a week time.





Mamayev Kurgan (the height of 102.0 on military maps) became the site of the bloodiest fights in Stalingrad: there were from 500 to 1250 splinters found for every square meter of its land. Mamayev Kurgan was of great strategic importance: the crossing of Volga river was clearly visible and could be easily shot through from its top. In mid-September 1942, Mamayev Kurgan changed hands several times. Nazis assaulted it 10-12 times a day, they were constantly losing people and equipment. Eventually, they were not able take it over entirely.



In mid-September 1942, there was a threat of the enemy's breakthrough to the Volga in the area of *January 9 Square*. It was decided to turn 2 four-storey houses located in parallel on the square into strongholds. Two groups of fighters were sent there. One group was commanded by Sergeant Yakov Pavlov, the other one was guided by Lieutenant Nikolay Zabolotniy. Both groups chased the Germans out of the houses and secured their position there. Those two strongholds were included in the history of Stalingrad as *Pavlov's house* and *Zabolotniy's house*.

Серезжа Алёшков



That war became a common ordeal for both the adults and the children. The latter had to grow up early. Like their fathers, they defended their homeland.

One of the youngest defenders of the city was Serezha Alyoshkov. This six-year-old orphan boy did the best he could to assist soldiers of the 142nd regiment of the 47th Guards Rifle Division. On top of that, he saved its commander, having called for help in due time.

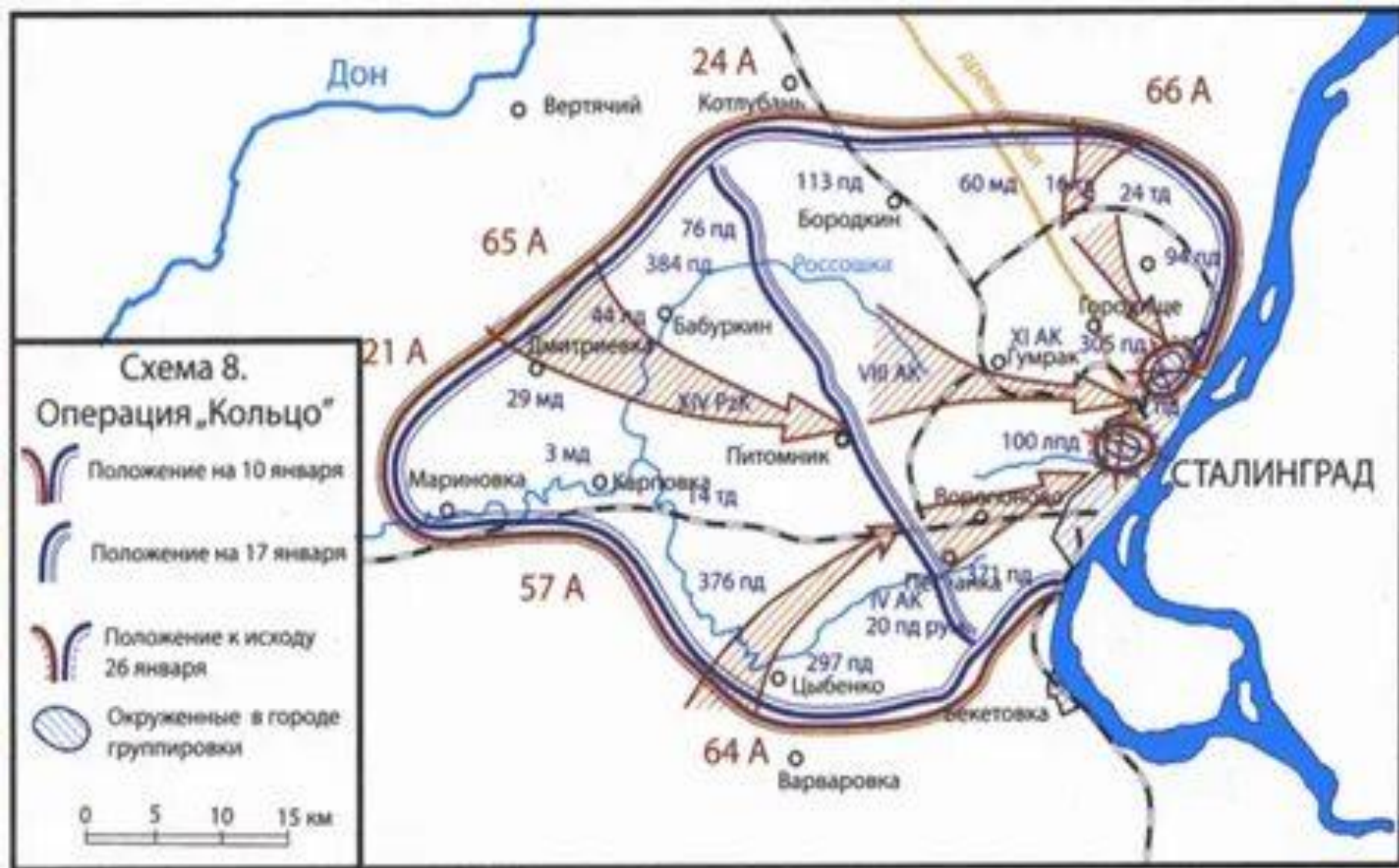
There was also a *barefoot garrison* that operated in the Verbovka farm taken over by Nazis. That squad consisted of 10-14 years old teens. There were only 20 of them. They fearlessly resisted the enemy spreading panic among the invaders. Those boys were captured, brutally tortured, and shot dead in front of the villagers.



By November 1942, Nazis levelled Stalingrad completely. Nevertheless, they were not able to break resistance of its dwellers. In a period of three months, having seized a part of Stalingrad's land they established a *new order* there. As a result, 108 people were hung, 1744 people were shot dead and 1593 people were exposed to violence and torture. Tens of thousands were captured and sent to Germany for a forced labor. The occupiers did not spare anyone, neither elderly nor women or children. They were killing everyone. By the end of the battle there were only 7 thousand people left out of 900 thousand who lived in Stalingrad initially.



November 19, 1942 marked the beginning of *Uranus* operation that meant a launch of counterattack at Southwestern, Don and Stalingrad fronts. By November 23, Soviet troops surrounded the enemy. It was a great success! The headquarters of the 6th German Field Army and 5 German corps consisting of 20 divisions, 2 Romanian divisions, numerous rear units and institutions of around 300 thousand people were doomed.



On January 10, after powerful artillery and aviation training, the troops of the Don's front went over to attack the enemy. *Ring* operation began. Soviet troops had to dissect the encircled enemy group into parts, and then destroy them.



At the end of January 1943, suffering from hunger, frost and lack of ammunition, under constant shelling and bombing of Soviet troops, Germans began to surrender by thousands. On January 31, the headquarter staff of the Sixth German Army led by Field-Marshal Paulus, was captured. *Ring* operation and the entire counterattack in the Stalingrad direction both ended up in a brilliant victory.



Since the beginning of the WWII Nazis had not experienced such a defeat. They lost the fourth part of all their forces operating at the Soviet-German front in Stalingrad.

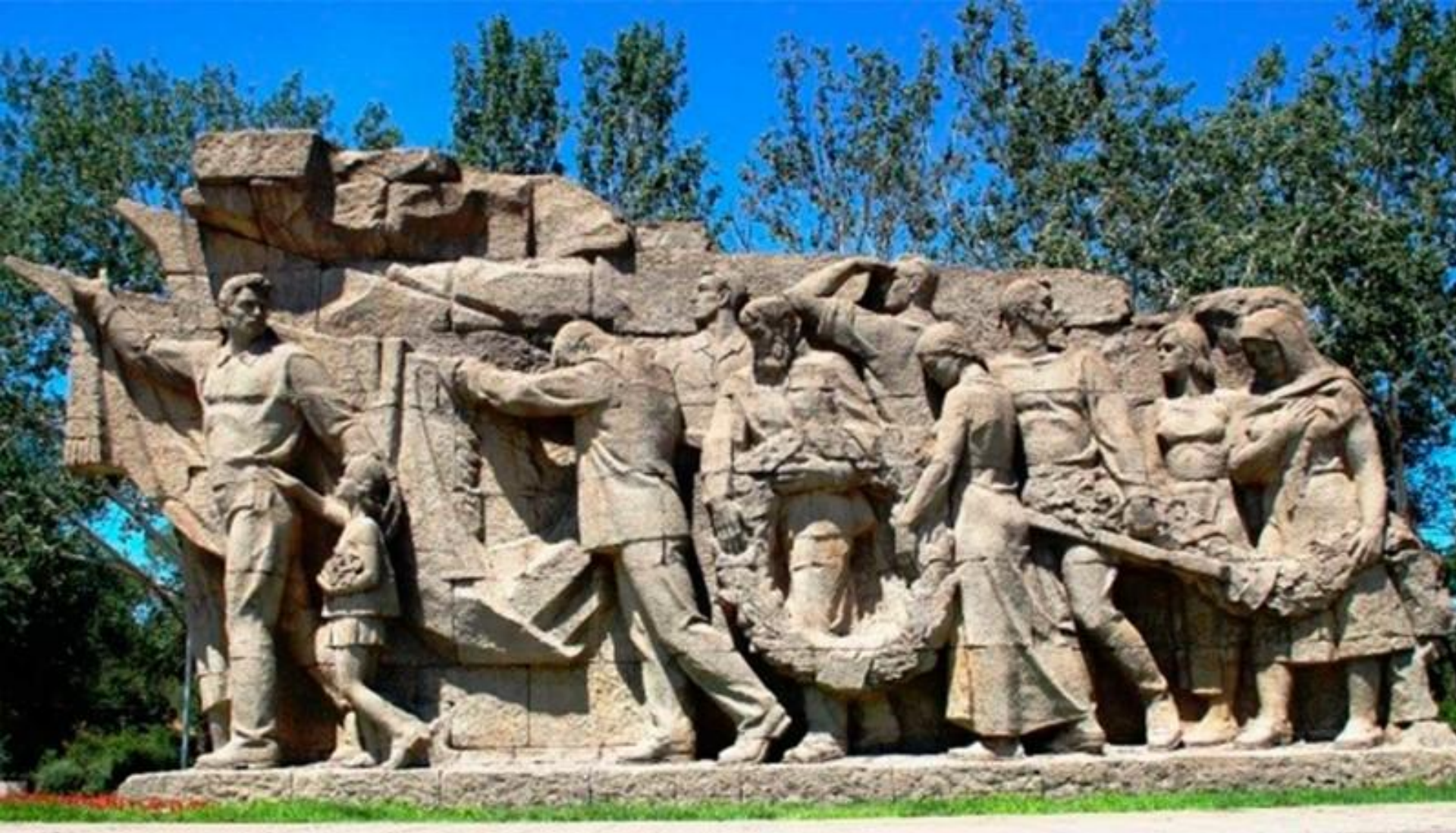
Eventually, the Nazis were not able to recover from that defeat. Their total loss amounted to 1.5 million people killed, wounded and captured. For the first time during the war national mourning was declared in Germany.



The battle of Stalingrad was a unique one in the whole world history: Nazi troops lost 1.5 million soldiers and officers, around 3,500 tanks and guns, over 3,000 aircrafts, 12 thousand weapons and mortars. The myth of Germany's invincibility had come to an end. But Stalingrad won that battle at a high price too. The city was in horrible state. Ruins stretched for 40 kilometers. The tornado of war destroyed 90% of the housing stock. None of 126 enterprises survived. Human losses were irreparable.



After Stalingrad's liberation, Soviet soldiers defeated 2 German, 1 Italian and 2 Romanian armies. 113 thousand soldiers and officers, 24 Nazi generals were captured.



Home country highly valued the deed of its heroes. Tens of thousands of soldiers and officers were honoured with state awards. 112 of the most distinguished ones among them were awarded Gold Star of the Hero of Soviet Union. More than 750 thousand participants of the battle were awarded medals *For Defense of Stalingrad*.

**Monument "Tribute From the Home to the Front" (Magnitogorsk).
A worker passes a sword to a soldier.**



Monument "Motherland Calls You" (Volgograd) is a symbol of the sword that was raised in Stalingrad.



Monument "Warrior Liberator" in Berlin where Soviet warrior-liberator lowered his sword.



Victory on Volga river reversed the course of the war. After that Soviet army started to advance victoriously and eventually in May 1945 WWII was over in Berlin.

02.02.1943 – 02.02.2023
We remember! We are proud!



***The presentation is designed by
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of Africa and the Middle East:***

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