

How to remember a dead soldier

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The wars in Chechnya have meant a traumatic experience both for the inhabitants of that republic and for the Russians. From the Russian perspective, one of the most discussed cases in connection with these wars has been the death of a soldier, Evgeny Rodionov. He was killed in Chechnya in 1996 after having been taken prisoner at a border check point, allegedly because he refused to become a Muslim.

This event has been related in the Russian public sphere using three different discourses: a war-hero discourse; a soldier's mother's discourse, i.e. a narrative about a mother's difficulties in finding information on the fate of her son and her subsequent search for his remains; and, finally, a hagiographic discourse. There have been several attempts to promote canonization of Evgeny as a saint. These discourses use very different fragments of memories, and the same death of a young man is thus remembered in three different ways. I intend to study these discourses and the interrelation between them.