

# Museum of the Russian Union of Angola Veterans

(history of the creation, location, main topical display stands, exhibits, benefactors)



*A visit to the museum by Angolan Minister of Defense General João Lourenço, 2015*

Efforts in creating a museum of the Russian Union of Angola Veterans have been launched practically from the time of establishing the Union itself and are an on-going activity today. Our devotee historians faced substantial difficulties like, for example, lack of storage space, intricacy of dissemination of information on collection of exhibits, scarcity of professional assistants and material support. However, we have overcome those hurdles and lived through a number of stages connected with the collection of exhibits, their accumulation,

storage and inventory, preparation for exposition. The critical factors facilitating the creation of the museum were two public exhibitions organized and accomplished in Moscow in 2006 and 2009 held at the State Central Museum of Modern Russian History in Tverskaya Street. Despite unavailable storage facilities or money for the lease thereof, the showpieces of the exhibitions were carefully preserved. They became the cornerstone to the creation of a future museum functioning on a pro-bono basis.

## HISTORY OF THE CREATION OF THE MUSEUM



A visit to the museum by Commander of Luanda military district Simão Carlitos “Wala”, 2016

One of the key charter objectives of the Russian social organization of the participants of international assistance to the Republic of Angola — Union of Angola Veterans (established in Moscow in 2004) — was the preservation of material memories of the international mission of several thousands of Soviet and Russian citizens who visited and worked in Angola in the 70–90ies of the XX century. For those purposes a group of enthusiasts started collection of material evidence of the mission: documents, printed matter and manuscripts, samples of the attire and outfit, badges, decorations, commemorative tokens, photographs,

audio recordings and films, as well as other historic relics and memoirs of Angola veterans. However at that time there was no storage space, so the we kept the exhibits at all sorts of places: at home, at our friends’ homes, even in the offices, while some of the veterans adapted their country house attics as storage space. At that time the devotees of our Union couldn’t even anticipate that at a later moment they will have their own quarters to accommodate the museum, but at the moment it was a long way off.

By 2006 the volume of collected Angola museum pieces reached the number allowing their public exposition at a professional museum site.

In May 2006 the Union of Angola Veterans organized and accomplished an unparalleled exhibition at the State Central Museum of Modern Russian History in Tverskaya Street under the title “**Didn’t the Angolan soil grow crimson with Russian blood?**” The exhibition lasted for a fortnight; for the first time in Soviet and Russian history general public was acquainted with unique combat maps and reports, memos, diaries and orders of Soviet military advisers, samples of military uniform, outfit and arms (replicas), decorations and personal possessions, photos of participants of the local conflict in Angola. It was a difficult task, and the exhibition succeeded due to enthusiastic efforts of the Union members only and money donated by the veterans. However, despite no support from the government agencies and inaccessibility of the state archives, the exposition was extensive and full-bodied. It enjoyed vast popularity: over the two weeks it was visited by several hundred viewers, students of Moscow universities and schools in that number. The exhibition was highly praised by Moscow veterans associations as well as the Embassy of Angola. The military delegation headed by the Chief of the General Staff of Angolan Armed Forces General of the Army A.F. Nelumba “Sanjar” viewed the exhibition with great interest.

The efforts in collecting museum rarities continued, and in May 2008 the







*Opening of the display in the Central Museum of the Russian Armed Forces devoted to participation of Soviet and Russian citizens in the local wars in Angola, Mozambique and Ethiopia, 2008*

Union of Angola Veterans took part in creating **an exhibition stand** (at the Central Museum of the Russian Armed Forces) **devoted to the international and service duty performed by Soviet and Russian citizens in Angola, Mozambique and Ethiopia in the 70–90ies of the XX century.** The Union of Angola Veterans also donated its best exhibits to the permanent exposition stationed in the Hall # 21 — “USSR Armed Forces in local wars and conflicts of 1946–1991”. The donation included tropical uniform (gravel color) worn by the Chief Military Adviser in Angola Colonel-General K. Kurochkin in 1982–1985, his service bars and a statuette presented to K. Kurochkin by the Angolan Minister of Defense. The exposition also presented unique photos,

samples of documents, decorations, Angolan commemorative medals, merit certificates awarded to Soviet advisers for exemplary performance of the international duty, etc.

In particular, Chairman of the Union of Angola Veterans V. Sagachko donated to the Central Museum of the Russian Armed Forces his registration badge together with the Union card awarded at the time of his joining the Union. Military adviser O. Krasilnikov enriched the exposition with his field beret with a FAPLA emblem. A. Kolomnin, military interpreter, donated artillery binoculars with the FAPLA logo presented to him in 1982 by the Chief of Staff of Angolan Air Defense Air Force Alberto Neto. A. Tokarev, an Angola veteran, donated

his Portuguese military uniform worn by the first FAPLA fighters and Russian military specialists in Angola later in the 1970ies. Those exhibits can be viewed today in the **Central Museum of the Russian Armed Forces** located at # 2, Soviet Army Street, Moscow (Hall # 21, second floor).

The efforts in collecting the museum exhibits continued. Within several years the Union’s archives accumulated more than a thousand rare and unpublished photos made in Angola in 1975–1992 by the Union members, military specialists and advisers. The majority of images were made practically illegally as the Soviet military and civilians, especially in the early period of cooperation in Angola, were strongly “discouraged to leave behind any photographic traces of their work abroad”. Since early 1980ies the limitations became softer, but all the same, the majority of photographs were purely amateur jobs made in black-and-white format. Nevertheless, they were of great interest both from the viewpoint of historic documents and as evidence of the work done in Angola by our military and civil specialists in 1970–1990ies, totally unknown to the public at large.

We came up with the idea to make a selection of most valuable images and to display them at a public photo show. Such a show was arranged due to the efforts of the Union of Angola



*Angolan Minister of Defense General João Lourenço donates a new exhibit to the museum, 2015*

Veterans in June 2009 at the State Central Museum of Modern Russian History in Moscow. The photo show under the title “**Could we have been there?**” became big-selling news both cultural and historic, and informational. Thousands of Muscovites visited the museum: local wars veterans, military, students and other viewers.

They visually perceived how and in what environment the Soviet people performed their professional and international duty in Angola in 1970–1990ies. The exhibition opening was attended by a number of film crews of several federal TV channels and reporters of a number of Moscow print media, therefore, the photo show broke the information blockade of

By the year 2010 the Union of Angola Veterans accumulated a significant volume of material evidence of our mission in Angola: various documents, printed matter and manuscripts, samples of the attire and outfit, badges, decorations, commemorative tokens, photographs, audio recordings and films, as well as

memoirs of Angola veterans collected by the Union devotees. Therefore, the Board of the Union decided to establish a museum of the Union of Angola Veterans operating on a non-profit basis. The decisive factor was that by that time the Union was bestowed accommodation in Moscow by the RF Government Executive Order.



*Angolan Minister of Defense General João Lourenço's address after his visit to the museum and quarters of the Union of Angola Veterans, 2015*



*A visit to the museum by the Angolan military delegation headed by General Adriano Makevela Mackenzie, 2015*

sorts on the participation of our fellow countrymen in the war in Angola of 1975–1992. The Union was flooded with letters, appeals and partnership proposals from Angola veterans living not only in the Moscow region but also other regions and republics of the Russian Federation. The exhibition was also visited by the officers of the Defense Attache office at the Embassy of Angola in Moscow, Angolan cadets of military

academies and schools studying in the capital. On June 12, 2009 the exhibition was viewed by Vice-Premier of the Russian Government I.I. Sechin and Deputy Director of the Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation A.V. Fomin. Upon completion of the show which lasted for two weeks the exposition was carefully disassembled and safely preserved by devoted Union members.

It was decided to house the museum at the quarters of the Union of Angola Veterans located in Office # 161, 13/21 Smolenskaya Square.

By now the Union museum operating on a pro-bono basis has displayed a permanent and regularly complemented exposition telling about the war in Angola in 1970–1990ies and performance of international duty by Soviet and Russian military

and civilian specialists in 1975–1992. It also shows their interaction with the Angolan and Cuban military, SWAPO and ANC combatants. The museum retain genuinely unique exhibits related to modern Angolan history, evidence of the recent wars of Angolans for their independence, against South African aggressions to safeguard sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state.



## MUSEUM EXHIBITS

### CONTRIBUTED BY FOREIGN DONATORS



*The Angolan military visit the museum: Admiral Silva Dala, Colonel Nunes, General Francisco Lopes Gonçalves Afonso “Hanga”*

The core of the exposition comprises exhibits collected by the devotees, both Union members and Angola veterans from Russia and other countries. Those are not only memorabilia and photos, which were the cornerstone for two public exhibitions in Moscow in 2006 and 2009 at the State Central Museum of Modern Russian History but also **gifts of foreign delegations and individuals visiting the museum and quarters of the Union, rarities from personal archives of Angolan and Cuban officers and generals.**

Among the rare items and gifts contributed by officers and generals of

the Angolan Army one artifact stands out — a figurine of an Angolan woman made of ivory with unprecedented craftsmanship and bestowed by Minister of Defense of Angola **General João Lourenço** during his visit to the quarters of the Union and its museum in 2015. The figurine was a natural addition to the statuette “Kioka” (Pesandor) also presented by **General João Lourenço** during the official visit of the delegation of the Union of Angola Veterans to Luanda in 2014. In 2016 during a visit to the museum the **military delegation of Namibia** made a special present to the

Union — unparalleled representation of the Namibian coat of arms made on buffalo skin of special currying.

In 2015 **Commander-in-Chief of the Angolan Air Force General Francisco Lopes Gonçalves Afonso “Hanga”** handed over his shoulder straps of Colonel-General which he received at the time he was promoted to the above rank. General “Hanga” is a character famous in story and song in the Angolan Armed Forces. In early 1980ies upon graduation from the Soviet flying school in the rank of lieutenant he became commander of the first Angolan combat squadron, mastered a number of aircraft (Mig-17, Mig-19, Mig-21, Su-22M in that number), and he has been at the helm of Angolan Air Force for more than 20 years. In 2002 he personally took part in air support of Angolan troops engaged in the “Kissonde” operation, the result of which was elimination of the intractable leader of the opposition J. Savimbi.

Another famous Angolan general — **Simão Carlitos “Wala”** — widely known as the commander of the 20<sup>th</sup> Brigade of Angolan Army, which made a key contribution to the “Kissonde” operation and elimination of UNITA leader J. Savimbi, donated a number of rare photos showing soldiers of his brigade literally hours after elimination of the intractable opposition leader.



*General João Fonseca – one of the donators to the museum*





*A visit to the museum by Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary in Russia Joaquim Augusto de Lemos*

*Commander of the Angolan Air Force General Francisco Afonso "Hanga" hands over new exhibits for the veterans' museum to Union representative in Angola A.Cherkassky, 2016*

**Head of the Department of Special Forces of the Angolan General Staff General João Fonseca** presented the Union management with a number of rare badges of Angolan special forces used at the time of civil war and insignia of contemporary special forces soldiers.

Among the rare items and gifts donated to the museum by Cuban officers and generals who fought in Angola in 1975–1989 one can find: parade uniform of a Cuban

serviceman, service cap of a Cuban officer, insignia, copies of operational documents of the commanders of the Cuban military contingent in Angola and other showpieces.

Apart from rare objects contributed both by officers and generals of the Angolan Army and Cuban internationalists fighting in Angola the museum displays exhibits donated by our former enemy — SADF servicemen. For one, **former South**

**African serviceman Gert Hugo** decorated with many SA awards before 1992 donated his collection of war medals to the veterans' museum. Among them one can find a "Southern Africa Medal" with a highly interesting background: symbolically, it was cast from the armor of T-34 tank captured by SA troops in 1981 in Angola in the "Protea" operation. T-34 tank has a symbolic significance to the SA military, and the one internationally renowned.

It personified the Soviet military might, victory in the Second World War, and Soviet advancement in Africa. Therefore, South Africans have chosen the "thirty-four" piece. The initiative to cast decorations to his subordinates belonged to the then Commander-in-Chief of the SA Army General D. Geldenius. He was not a novice in the field and was well-read in history. At the time of the Crimean (Eastern) War (1853–1856),





so unfortunate to the Russian Army, the Brits used bronze of the Russian canons captured in the Crimea to cast decorations for their soldiers and officers. Naturally, the decoration was not directly cast from the T-34 tank steel. Purely symbolically, the combat machine was stripped off some minor elements which were then in molten form added to the silver-nickel alloy used to coin the South African decoration. The medal was

regarded as an exceptionally prestigious and honorable decoration among the SA military until the ANC came to power. Suffice it to say, that the medal is the second in seniority only to the high-status medal "For the Motherland" (the latter is also available in the museum collection) taking the respective place on the medal-ribbon brooch.

The museum also treasures items donated by the delegation of the

veterans of South African Defense Forces (SADF) and South West African Territorial Forces (SWATF) headed by **Major-General (Ret.) Roland de Vries** who visited the Union quarters in 2014. Those are the decorations of SADF, regalia, tokens and badges of SA Special Forces of the "apartheid" times: "Buffalo" Battalion and "Recess" regiments. Among them are printed materials and a memorial tablet of the

61<sup>st</sup> Mechanized Battalion (battalion group) and 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion of South African Defense Forces ("Bushmen") which were actively involved in the war in Angola. The collection features authentic elements of military uniform elements and outfit of SA officers and men worn in Angola: steel and Kevlar helmets, a dixie with the name of the owner scratched thereon, service belts, buckles, ribbons and chevrons.



Generals and officers of the Angolan Armed Forces visited the museum with their Russian advisers in 2016



Generals of the Angolan Armed Forces at the museum of the Union of Angola Veterans

## MUSEUM EXHIBITS

### DONATED BY RUSSIAN VETERANS



*Vice Prime Minister of the Russian Government I.I. Sechin views the exhibition of the Union of Angola Veterans "Could We Have Been There?", 2009*

Among the rare objects displayed in the museum one can single out a vast collection of photos taken in 1975–1992, as well as combat maps, printed materials, propaganda leaflets (circulated both by FAPLA-MPLA and their opponents from UNITA and FNLA). The collection includes personal papers of war participants, certificates of merit of FAPLA and Cuban command awarded to Soviet advisers, samples of Soviet military specialists' uniforms, officers and men of FAPLA, UNITA, South Africa, ANC and SWAPO contingents, as well as insignia of servicemen who

participated in the regional war conflict in Angola later in the XX century. The majority of those exhibits were donated by the Russian participants of the international mission in Angola.

Rare objects contributed to the museum by Russian Angola veterans **Aleksandr Polivin**, **Vadim Sagachko**, **Konstantin Kurochkin**, **Leonid Kvasov**, **Mikhail Korol**, **Boris Murashov**, **Sergei Antonov**, **Dmitri Babushkin** are presented in the exhibition as separate features. For one, **Aleksandr Polivin**, author and cameraman of the documentary "We Couldn't Have Been There" filmed in

Angola in 1989–1990 and the like-named song which was later to become the anthem of the Union of Angola Veterans, carried out his international duty in Angola in two separate missions. For bravery and dedication displayed in performing the call of duty he was decorated with the USSR Order of "Badge of Honor", USSR Medal of "Honoris Causa" and the Cuban medal for distinguished military service. A. Polivin handed over all those decorations to museum custody.

The museum also keeps "To Soldier-Internationalist" Certificate of Merit of the USSR Supreme Soviet signed by the first and the last USSR President M. Gorbachev and the badge "Soldier-Internationalist" awarded to the military adviser in Angola **Vadim Sagachko** (now President of the Union of Angola Veterans) upon his return from the mission abroad. Former **Chief Military Adviser in Angola Colonel-General Konstantin Kurochkin** who held the tenure in

1982–1985 presented the museum with his certificate of "Parachute Jump Instructor" and a Cuban medal of "Soldier-Internationalist" with appropriate documents conferred by the Cuban military mission command in Angola. His other showpieces donated to the museum (tropical uniform of a general he wore in Angola in 1982–1985 and a statuette presented to him by the Angolan Minister of Defense) are currently displayed in the Central Museum of the Russian Armed Forces.

**Military interpreter Mikhail Korol** who performed the international mission in Angola in 1984–1986 complemented the museum collection with rare historic exhibits: genuine shoulder straps of a UNITA officer and UNITA leaflets collected in combat environment. Companion of the Soviet Medal for Gallantry received for an act of bravery in Angola **Leonid Krasov** enriched the museum with rare objects from his personal archive: insignia of the Angolan Special Forces and





shoulder straps of a FAPLA captain, genuine military service registration certificate of a FAPLA conscript, as well as a corporate shirt of a member of the Angolan youth organization of the 1980ies — Jota MPLA.

**Angola veteran Boris Murashov**, who was stationed in

Angolan ethnic groups and the first President of independent Angola, Doctor and poet Agostinho Neto. Another Angola veteran, Igor Vassiliev, who now permanently resides in Britain, for a number of years has been buying rare objects related to Angola at different Internet auctions, and

FAPLA anniversary awarded to **Angola veteran Andrei Tokarev**, several medals with the side view of the first Angolan President Aghostinho Neto, initially conceived as decorations but which failed to become as such. The collection is also proud of the Angolan medal to a participant of the First MPLA

Luanda in 1975. However, in the battle of Kifangondo the FNLA forces were routed by the united force of FAPLA and Cuban internationalists and, quite naturally, the medal remained unclaimed.

A special place in the exposition is reserved for everyday objects



Angola as an Air Force specialist in 1980–1982, presented the museum with an impressive collection of Angolan postage stamps, which he meticulously collected for many years. It features philatelic curiosities of the colonial times and period after 1975 when Angola became an independent sovereign state: stamps portraying Portuguese navigators and discoverers, representatives of

gratuitously hands them over to our museum. Veterans **Igor Ignatovich and Stanislav Sidorin** donated exhibits related to their work in the 1980–90ies with SWAPO fighters in Angola: posters, badges, field service manual in English, several copies of The Combatant monthly bulletin published for PLAN personnel.

The museum collection features a rare medal in commemoration of the 2<sup>nd</sup>

Congress coined in 1977, the South African medal issued in 1994 in honor of amalgamation of different military formations (MK, APLA, AZANLA, SADF) into united armed forces of the country (SANDF), as well as a rare medal cast from silver alloy with the side view of FNLA leader Holden Roberto — all from the archives of **Sergei Kolomnin**. The latter was conceived as a decoration for FNLA fighters upon expected seizure of

reminding of the Angolan period of life of the Soviet military: a Sharp-777 dual-cassette recorder (donation of **Vladimir Ovsyannikov**), cameras of those times, wristwatches, a 200-gram tin of popular Angolan coffee “GINGA” produced in 1979–1980ies in Luanda (donation of **Oleg Drachev**), labels of Angolan CUCA beer (donation of **Maxim Gladkov**) and other exhibits.

## TOPICAL DISPLAYS

### ON THE HISTORY OF ANGOLA



A unique map of the battles of Kifangondo and of the north of the country in 1975, from "A batalha de Kifangondo"

The museum of the Union of Angola Veterans paid special attention to such an outstanding event as the **Battle of Kifangondo (1975)**. The battle played a paramount role in the modern history of Angola. Dramatic events in October-November of 1975 at Luanda suburb, Kifangondo, determined the destiny of independent Angola. Due to the victory achieved in the battle against the forces of the FNLA opposition of Holden Roberto and Zairean invaders by the MPLA-FAPLA "armed wing" and Cuban internationalists, MAPLA managed to retain control over the state capital. In full conformity with

the arrangements reached with the Portuguese administration in the night of November 11, 1975 the MPLA Chairman Agostinho Neto declared independence of Angola. The decisive role in crushing defeat of armed opposition and foreign invaders was played by the Soviet armament, in particular, the most sophisticated at that time BM-21 multiple rocket launcher delivered to Luanda by Soviet and Cuban internationalists. The victory promoted consolidation of MPLA power, and further Cuban assistance and Soviet military supplies assisted in coping with external aggression of the



Posters of the exhibitions held by the Union at the Central Museum of Modern Russian History in 2006 and 2009



RSA and preserving sovereignty and independence of the country.

The display presents rare pictures, maps and outlays related to the **Kifangondo Battle**. One of the maps on the display is an original exceptional edition of the Angolan Institute for Geodesy and Mapmaking of 1986 — "XI Aniversario da Independencia. Batalha de Quifangondo", the second is the battle pattern mapped by an eyewitness, a Brazilian participant of the battle on the FNLA side **Pedro Marangoni**. The display also features print publications on the battle: "Russian Trail at Kifangondo. Unknown Pages of Black Africa's

History" by Sergei Kolomnin (in Russian and Portuguese), Angolan edition "Battle of Kifangondo. Facts and Documents" published in Luanda in 2011 (Miguel Júnior. A batalha de Kifangondo. 1975. Factos e documentos. Mayamba Editora, Luanda, 2011), as well as a rare poster "Triumphant March-In" to Luanda of H. Roberto and J. Savimbi published by the MPLA Department of Propaganda after the defeat of FNLA troops at Kifangondo.

A separate display is devoted to another outstanding event in Angolan history — **the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale (1987–1988)**. This small





*Diplomats of the Angolan Embassy in Russia view the exhibition of the Union of Angola Veterans at the Central Museum of Modern Russian History*

settlement in the south of the country some three hundred kilometers from the Namibian border was later called “African Stalingrad”. In August 1987 in the province of Cuando-Cubango the rebel groups of UNITA found themselves in a razor-edge plight due to a wide-scale FAPLA military operation prepared with the help of Russian military advisers. The UNITA forces faced a real threat of losing the so-called “advance base” in Mavinga. In an attempt to avoid complete destruction of its faithful ally

in the region, UNITA, the South African army once again made an in-road into the country. It was the 14<sup>th</sup> large-scale invasion of South Africa into Angola since the declaration of Angola’s independence. By November 16, 1987 the progress of South African troops and UNITA formations was checked at the approach to Cuito Cuanavale in the so-called Tumpo triangle, and the siege started.

SA operational air force periodically bombed, and G-5 long-range howitzers

regularly shelled positions of the defenders and the settlement itself. South African troops with the use of Elephant heavy tanks, Ratel infantry combat vehicle and other equipment persistently assaulted the Angolan defense positions in Cuito Cuanavale. The siege of the small settlement lasted for five months. On March 23, 1988 the final decisive assault was launched. However, having lost a number of heavy tanks, South Africans retreated in a failure to crush the defense and heroic spirit of Cuito Cuanavale defenders. Three Soviet servicemen were lost in the battle. On September 26, 1987 the military interpreter of the FAPLA 21<sup>st</sup> Mechanized Infantry Brigade Oleg Snitko was gravely wounded near Cuito Cuanavale. On November 27, 1987 the adviser of the 6<sup>th</sup> military district Colonel Andrei Gorb was killed by the SA long-range artillery fire at Cuito Cuanavale. On December 20, 1987, having tripped a mine, died the driver-signalman of the group of soviet advisers of the Southern Front Private Aleksandr Nikitenko.

The display devoted to the **Battle of Cuito Cuanavale** features combat maps, outlays, photos (including pictures of our fellow countrymen who lost their lives near Cuito Cuanavale), splinters of artillery shells of SA G-5 howitzer and Valkyrie rocket launcher (contributed by **Sergei Antonov**) fired at the FAPLA positions near Cuito Cuanavale in 1987–1988.





## HISTORY OF USSR (RUSSIAN) — ANGOLAN COOPERATION



*Angolan Minister of Defense General João Lourenço views exposition of the museum, 2015*

The museum widely displays documents, rare photos and other exhibits reflecting political, technical and military cooperation of the USSR (Russia) with Angola over 1975–1992. Ever since the 1960ies the Soviet Union and Cuba were rendering assistance and support to the national liberation movement of Angola in its just struggle against Portuguese colonialism. They made a great contribution to the Angolan independence reached in November 1975. Upon declaration of Angola's independence the Soviet Union seconded advisers and specialists who assisted in building up a nation and its economy. Our military advisers, specialists and interpreters

performed their call of duty and fought shoulder to shoulder with Angolan and Cuban fighters to stand up for Angola's freedom and independence against foreign aggression and terrorism. Together with the Angolans our civil specialists built houses, bridges, roads, power stations, assisted in prospecting new deposits of mineral resources, carried passengers and hauled cargo by air and sea.

A large part of the exhibits is devoted to the military cooperation with Angola. The showcases feature photographs of the majority of Soviet Chief Military Advisers who worked in Angola in 1975–1992, photos of Soviet weaponry supplied to the Angolan

army. They also represent efforts of Soviet specialists, in particular, in the course of heroic defense of the Angolan cities of Ondjiva, Kaama and Shangongo by FAPLA troops in 1981 when four Soviet citizens fell in the battle with the intruding RSA units, and warrant officer **Nikolai Pestretsov** was taken prisoner by SA troops.

Interaction of the Soviet military mission in Angola was not limited by collaboration with Angolan and Cuban forces only, it also involved cooperation with patriots fighting for the liberation of Namibia, South Rhodesia and against the apartheid regime in South Africa. Upon acquiring independence in 1975 Angola became a stronghold of national liberation movements of Southern Africa: ANC (RSA), SWAPO (Namibia) and ZAPU (South Rhodesia,

then Zimbabwe). For one, Angola occupies a special place in SWAPO's attainment of its paramount goal — Namibia's independence. Training of SWAPO combatants (who then became the backbone of the national army) with the help of Soviet military specialists was held in Angola ever since the later 1970ies. In the 1980ies it sheltered two PLAN military training centers: one, named after Tobias Haineke, was located close to the capital of the Ouila Province, the city of Lubango, another one — in Jambé. Tangible assistance was rendered to South African patriots: since 1980 four training camps for ANC combatants were functioning in Angola by assent of Angolan authorities and assistance of the Soviet military — two in the vicinity of Luanda (Viano and Cachito), one —







Veterans at the opening of the exhibition “Could we have been there?” 2009

in the north near the Zairean border and one — in the Melanga Province.

In the long run the victory secured in the fight for Cuito Cuanavale resulted in Namibia’s liberation: on March 21, 1990 Sam Nujoma, the SWAPO leader, was elected the first President of a free country. This victory in Angola substantially accelerated the process of dismantling the apartheid regime in South Africa, and accession to power of the black majority — the African National Congress (ANC). Therefore, Angola can be metaphorically called a springboard of Namibia’s independence, and the base

for destruction of a shameful system of race discrimination in South Africa. However, it would be impossible without Soviet and Cuban assistance to Angola. Special displays are devoted to those pages of common struggle.

To make the exhibition more illustrative we also created arrangements based on statuaries (mannequins) dressed in regular uniforms, outfit and armament (small arms are exact replicas of combat versions) of Soviet military advisers and interpreters, FAPLA fighters, personnel of the SA army and UNITA. The mannequins also wear uniforms of



Exhibits of the museum



marine infantry and navy sailors who carried out their call of duty on Soviet ships cruising at Angolan shores. All displayed samples of the outfit (uniforms, footwear, accoutrements, insignia of grade) are genuine items brought from Angola by different routes and collected by the devotees of the Union for many years.

For instance, the mannequin of a Soviet military adviser (interpreter) wears genuine camouflage FAPLA trousers and a blue beret, an Air Force officer’s shirt and combat boots brought from Angola in the early 1980ies by **Sergei Kolomnin**. The mannequin

portraying a South African serviceman wears a fully authentic uniform which formerly belonged to the **RSA Army Medical Service Captain Barry Fowler** who took part in the so-called border war in Angola. B. Fowler gratuitously donated the outfit to the museum in 2008. The beret of the mannequin posing as a combatant of the UNITA armed opposition bears a UNITA emblem taken as a war trophy in combat. The rare exhibit was donated to the museum by the **veteran of the Soviet KGB “Vympel” Tactical Assault Group Petr Suslov** who worked in Angola in mid-80ies as an



*Story of the Russian pilot Kamil Mollayev (right) who was shot down in Angola and spent two years in UNITA's captivity is described in the book of S.Kolomnin "Russian Special Forces in Angola"*

adviser of the Department of Special Operations.

The museum showcases feature not only samples of all medals and badges established by the Union: medal "For International Assistance to Angola", honorary badge "For Assistance to the Union of Angola Veterans", medal "For Cooperation: Russia-Angola", anniversary medal "40 Years Together", but also rare FAPLA and MPLA medals abolished in Angola because of the national reconciliation of 2002.

Special space in the museum showcases is allocated to the material evidence of aggressive actions of the

RSA apartheid regime and SADF units against independent Angola in 1975–1989 — brought to Russia by Soviet and Russian citizens from Angola. Those are the flying helmet of a South African pilot shot down in the mid-80ies over Angola and press-to-talk switch intercommunication equipment of the pilot the SA Air Force Impala aircraft shot down by the Angolan Air Defense in Cunene Province (donated by **Angola veteran Nikolai Rybchuk**).

The museum also displays vivid proof of bravery and dedication of our countrymen who found themselves in an emergency situation in Angola but



*The museum can lend pamphlets and books on the war in Angola and Union of Angola Veterans*

performed their call of duty with honor. Those are memoirs, photographs, documents and decorations. For instance, the Soviet civil aviation pilot, **Kamil Mollayev**, who worked in Angola on a contract and performed regular flights on military transport planes of the national Air Force was shot down in November 1980 and was taken captive by UNITA opposition forces. His flight engineer **Ivan Chernetsky** was also taken prisoner. They spent two years in captivity but displayed courage and persistence. Upon return for heroism and bravery aircraft commander Kamil Mollayev was decorated with the Order of the People's Friendship. He handed

over his photos and documents about those dramatic events to the museum. **Tatyana Khudoerko**, wife of the Soviet military specialist **Aleksei Khudoerko**, in August 1981 found herself encircled by RSA troops together with her husband in the vicinity of Ondjiva. It so happened that they were destined to part, and for several weeks she was walking back to friendly troops across the open woodland all alone. In Angola Tatyana kept a diary, which she later passed on to the Union of Angola Veterans. This document is a vivid evidence that not only military men took part in the war in Angola.





Museum of the Union of Angola Veterans is viewed not only by Russian citizens, veterans of Angola and other local wars, students of Moscow universities and schools, but also by foreign diplomats and delegations visiting Moscow. For one, having viewed the historic exposition Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Angola in Russia Joaquim Augusto de Lemos has, in particular, pointed out that only few of Angolans, including Government members, are aware of and remember the details of this troublesome and tragic period of history of our country, and assistance rendered by your country and people to Angola. The endeavor undertaken by the Union

of Angola Veterans promotes restoration of memory of the deceased servicemen both Angolan and Russian. Angolan leaders of different ranks arriving to Russia on official visits could come and see this museum of Russian veterans for better acquaintance with the relics connected with the history of our country.

Exhibits of the museum are widely used in different field exhibitions. In November 2015 our exhibits were the foundation of the "Angolan Baseline" exhibition at the Photocenter in Gogolevsky Boulevard in Moscow organized by the Union together with the management of the Center. It was devoted to the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the declaration of independence of Angola

and the Day of Angola Veterans celebrated annually on November 16. The exhibition lasted for two weeks and displayed about one hundred rare photos from the museum collection related both to the local conflict in Angola and contemporary activities of the Union. Opening of the "Angolan Baseline" exhibition was attended by the Military Attache of Angola in Moscow Vice Admiral Lourença da

Silva. The exhibition was also visited by the delegation of Angolan cadets studying in Moscow military schools and academies.

The museum is regularly complemented with new showpieces. It is located in the quarters of the Union of Angola Veterans in Moscow. Mail address: Office 161, 13/21 Smolenskaya Square, 121099 Moscow. E-mail: veteranangola@mail.ru



The museum archive holds a large volume of literature and manuscripts devoted to the war in Angola in Russian, Portuguese, Spanish and English, among them are:

- ◆ Stockwell J. CIA CONTRA ANGOLA. União Dos Escritores Angolanos, Luanda, 1979
- ◆ Adamishin A. THE WHITE SUN OF ANGOLA. Moscow, 2001
- ◆ FAPLA BALUARTE DA PAZ EM ANGOLA. Berger-Levrault International, Paris, 1989; La Guerra de Angola. Editora Politica, La Habana, 1989
- ◆ Shubin V. THE HOT COLD WAR. YaSK, Moscow, 2013
- ◆ Jose M. Ortiz. ABGOLA: UN ABRIL COMO GIRON. Editora Politica, La Habana, 1979
- ◆ Kolomnin S. RUSSIAN SPECIAL FORCES IN AFRICA. Eksmo, Yauza, Moscow, 2002
- ◆ XI Aniversario da Independencia. Batalha de Quifangondo. Instituto da Geodesia e Cartografia de Angola, 1986
- ◆ Tokarev A. FNLA IN ANTI-COLONIAL STRUGGLE AND CIVIL WAR IN ANGOLA. Institute of Africa of RAS, Moscow, 2006
- ◆ Chief Directorate of International Military Cooperation of the Russian Federation: 1961–2001. Military historic study. Moscow, 2001.

- International Cooperation of the Navy. "Arms and Technologies" Publishing House, Moscow, 2003
- ◆ Angola. Ethnic Groups and the Nation. Material of scientific colloquium. Embassy of Angola in the RF. Moscow, 2003
  - ◆ Remizov S. WE DO NOT NEED AFRICA? Moscow, 2012
  - ◆ Zhdarkin I. NONE OF THE KIND HAPPENED IN AFGHANISTAN. Recollections of an Angolan War Participant. Memoris, Moscow, 2008
  - ◆ Kolomnin S. USSR AND CUBA IN THE WAR IN ANGOLA OF 1975–1991. Edition of the Union of Angola Veterans. Moscow, 2009 (in Russian and English)
  - ◆ Kolomnin S. RUSSIAN TRAIL AT KIFANGONDO. Unknown Pages of Black Africa History. Etnica, Moscow, 2014
  - ◆ Shubin V. THE HOT "COLD WAR". USSR IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. (In English). Pluto Press, London, 2008
  - ◆ Kalinin Ye. SEPARATE LONG-RANGE RECONNAISSANCE UNIT. From the history of the 392nd Separate Long-Range Reconnaissance Regiment of the Air Force of the Red Banner Northern Fleet. Cherepovets, 2013
  - ◆ Kononov S. ANGOLAN DIARY (1984–1985). Okraina, Cherepovets, 2008
  - ◆ Kovtun N. ANGOLA IN MY HEART. Itinerary of a Soviet military adviser. Kiev, 2010
  - ◆ MILITARY CHRONICLE OF RUSSIA IN PHOTOGRAPHS 1850–2000ies. Golden Bee Publishers, 2009. Authors-collectors: Koloskova Ye., Litvin A. With participation of the Union of Angola Veterans
  - ◆ Kolomnin S. UNION DE VETERANOS DE ANGOLA, (in Spanish). Union of Angola Veterans edition, 2010, 1000 copies
  - ◆ Kolomnin S. OS HERDEIROS DO KIFANGONDO, (in Portuguese). Union of Angola Veterans edition, 2013, 2000 copies
  - ◆ Kolomnin S. A URSS E CUBA NA GUERRA EM ANGOLA 1975–1991, (in Portuguese). Union of Angola Veterans edition, 2012, 2000 copies
  - ◆ Kolomnin S. A UNIAO DE VETERANOS DE ANGOLA, (in Portuguese). Union of Angola Veterans edition, 2012, 2000 copies
  - ◆ Kolomnin S., Ignatovich I., Sidorin S. USSR AND SWAPO: SECRET MISSION IN ANGOLA (1977–1990). Union of Angola Veterans edition, 2015, 1000 copies
  - ◆ Kolomnin S. UNION OF ANGOLA VETERANS. TEN YEARS ON THE ROAD OF PEOPLE'S DIPLOMACY AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE TO VETERANS, Union of Angola Veterans edition, 2015, 2000 copies
  - ◆ Kalinin Ye., Kolomnin S., Ignatovich I., Sidorin S. SOVIET LONG-RANGE AVIATION IN ANGOLA (1975–1990). Union of Angola Veterans edition, 2014, 1000 copies
  - ◆ FORTY YEARS TOGETHER. 1961–2001. Materials of the research and application conference (in Russian and Portuguese). Under the editorship of V. G. Shubin, PhD (Hist.). LEAN Publishers, 1000 copies. ISBN5–85929073-X
  - ◆ Tokarev A. A., Khazanov A. M., Shubin V. G. et al. AGOSTINHO NETO — POET AND PRESIDENT. PRAD JSC, Moscow, 2005., 3000 copies. ISBN5–201–04784-X
  - ◆ ANGOLA. THE WAR WHICH NEVER HAPPENED. NTV television company, 2014. The film of Aleksei Pobortsev
  - ◆ Kolomnin S. UNION OF ANGOLA VETERANS (in English), Edition of the Union, 2010, 1000 copies
  - ◆ Kolomnin S. NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION OF PARTICIPANTS OF INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO THE REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA. Union of Angola Veterans edition 2010, 1000 copies.
  - ◆ VETERANS OF LOCAL WARS AND UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS REVOKE. Moscow, 2010. Authors-collectors: Tokarev A. A., Shubin G. V., 100 copies. ISBN978–5–904935–04–7
  - ◆ ORAL HISTORY OF FORGOTTEN WARS. Recollections of Angola war veterans. Memoris, Moscow, 2007. Editor-collector: Shubin G. V., 100 copies. ISBN978–5–903116–36–2
  - ◆ ARMED AND VERY DANGEROUS. FROM UNDERGROUND STRUGGLE TO FREEDOM. ITRK Publishers, Moscow, 2005.
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- ◆ RECOLLECTIONS OF ANGOLA WAR AND OTHER LOCAL WARS VETERANS. Memoris, Moscow, 2011. Editors-collectors: Kuznetsova-Timanova A.V. (Belarus), Tokarev A. A., Zhdarkin I. A., Shubin G. V., 100 copies, ISBN978–5–904935–13–9
  - ◆ RECOLLECTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS AND EYEWITNESSES OF THE WAR IN ANGOLA OF 1975–2002. THE ORAL HISTORY OF FORGOTTEN WARS. Memoris, Moscow, 2008. Editors-collectors: Tokarev A. A., Shubin G. V., 100 copies, ISBN978–5–903116–48–5
  - ◆ FORGOTTEN CIVIL WAR IN ANGOLA (recollections of eyewitnesses). Moscow, 2008. Editors-collectors: Kuznetsova-Timanova A.V. (Belarus), Zhdarkin I. A., Barabulya V. A., Shubin G. V., 100 copies. ISBN978–5–904935–13–7
  - ◆ Tokarev A. A. PORTUGUESE STUDIES IN THE USSR AND RUSSIA. Ves Mir Publishers, Moscow, 1000 copies. ISBN978–5–91298–131–9
  - ◆ Kolomnin S., Sagachko V. UNION OF ANGOLA VETERANS. Edition of the Union, 2006, 1000 copies
  - ◆ Shubin G., Tokarev A. BUSH WAR. THE ROAD TO CUITO



- CUANAVALA, (in English), Jacana Media (Pty) Ltd, 2011, 1000 copies. ISBN978-1-4314-0185-7
- ◆ Shubin G., Zhdarkin I., Barabulya V., Kuznetsova-Timanova A. CUITO CUANAVALA, (in English). Jacana Media (Pty) Ltd, 2014, 1000 copies. ISBN978-1-4314-0963-1
  - ◆ Kolomnin S., Kalinin Ye. WINGS OVER THE ATLANTIC. Union of Angola Veterans edition, 1000 copies
  - ◆ Shubin G. THE ORAL HISTORY OF FORGOTTEN WARS. The Memories of Veterans of the War in Angola, (in English). Memoris, Moscow, 2007, 100 copies. ISBN978-5-903116-40-9
  - ◆ FNLA IN ANTI-COLONIAL STRUGGLE AND CIVIL WAR IN ANGOLA. synopsis of Ph.D. thesis, Moscow, 2006, Institute of Africa of the RAS, author: Tokarev A., 1000 copies
  - ◆ Roberto LEAL Ramos Monteiro “Ngongo”, Shubin V. et al. ANGOLA: THIRTY YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE AND THREE YEARS OF PEACE. Collection of reports at the research and application conference (in Portuguese and Russian. Moscow, PRAD JSC, 2005., 3000 copies.

**As well as films of Aleksei Pobortsev “Angola: the War Which Never Happened” and “Two Wars”. Other publications and materials.**

