Descendants of Soviet war heroes awarded Chinese medals

By Hu Jie

On May 18, in Moscow, Russia, 18 representatives of Russian veterans who fought courageously in China during World War II were awarded Chinese medals. Two of the representatives, Abbasov Evgenii Konstantinovich and Nicolay Vladimirovich Chuikov, have close ties to Wuhan. The father of the former was killed in action during the Battle of Wuhan.

Between 1937 and 1945, over 3,000 members of a Soviet volunteer air force unit came to China to defend it against the Japanese invaders. Of these brave soldiers, 236 gave their lives for this cause. To celebrate the sacrifices made by their parents and grandparents, a delegation consisting of descendants of Russian war veterans came to China in May 2013 to learn more about their service here. Among the members of this delegation were Abbasov Evgenii Konstantinovich, the son of Abbasov Constantine Timofeyevich, who fell during the Battle of Wuhan and was buried in Nanchang, and Nicolay Vladimirovich Chuikov, the grandson of Vasily Ivanovi Chuiikov, a famous Soviet Red Army field marshal.

The delegation retraced the path taken by Soviet forces in China. They started their journey in Urumqi, Xinjiang, made their way to Lanzhou, Nanchang, Wuhan, Chongqing, and Nanjing, and concluded their journey in Beijing. The two representatives said that it was a great honor to be awarded medals and they were pleased by the strong and healthy Sino-Russian relationship. They also revealed that they had received invitations from the Chinese government to take part in the events commemorating the end of the Chinese People’s War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression scheduled to be held this September.

Abbasov’s father fell defending Wuhan

Abbasov Evgenii Konstantinovich has long been committed to promoting communication and exchange between Russia and China. He is the current vice chairman of the Russia-China Friendship Association and the chairman of the Chinese branch of the All-Russian Veterans Committee.

His father, Abbasov Constantine Timofeyevich, was, although his name is not listed on the monument to fallen Soviet war heroes in Jiefang Park, among the Soviet soldiers who gave their lives during the Battle of Wuhan.

Abbasov’s father began training as a pilot after graduating from a Soviet Red Army military academy. In April 1938, when Abbasov was only six years old, his father left for China. He took part in the air defense of Wuhan on April 29 and May 31. He also fought in battles in Guangzhou and Macau.

On July 7, while chasing an enemy plane along the Ganjiang River, which runs into Poyang Lake, his fighter was damaged, forcing him to eject. During the drop, he was shot and killed by enemy fire. His body was recovered three days later by a local fisherman.

Abbasov visited China for the sixth time in 2013. While he was here, he visited Nanchang, where his father lost his life.

“At last, I came to the place where my father lived and fought. I visited the rooms where the soldiers stayed.” He said that his last remaining wish was to find the descendants of the fisherman who found his father’s body; he wants to express his gratitude.

Chuikov named after maternal grandfather

Nicolay Vladimirovich Chuikov’s maternal grandfather, Field Marshal Vasily Ivanovich Chuikov, was a household name in the former Soviet Union. He achieved many victories during World War II. The field marshal led his men all the way to Berlin. He was twice awarded the Soviet Union’s highest honor; furthermore, Stalin issued 17 orders of commendation for him.

The field marshal was a friend to the Chinese people. In 1940, he became the head of the Soviet Military Advisory Group to Chiang Kai-shek; he served for three years.

The field marshal learned to speak fluent Chinese. He also became friends with Zhou Enlai and other members of the Chinese Communist Party.

Nicolay told our reporter that his mother named him after his grandfather to honor his memory.

Nicolay grew up listening to the stories of his grandfather; he found himself impressed by his grandfather’s interest in and appreciation for China. Not only could his grandfather speak Chinese fluently, but he also enjoyed mahjong; he considered it a game that required both intelligence and wisdom, a game for those with an eye for strategy. After the start of the Chinese Civil War, he worked tirelessly as a mediator between the two parties. After the deterioration of bilateral ties between the Soviet Union and China, he put forth a great deal of effort to restore the friendship between these two countries.