

The Wild Brigade

Дикая бригада

a film by Vladimir Koptsev

Press kit

Year	2022
Runtime	70 min
Country	Russia

Logline

Veterans of a Chechen-war unit return to their abandoned base to build, with their own hands, a memorial to the comrades they buried.

Synopsis

Twenty-five years after demobilisation, veterans of the OBrON-94 brigade who fought in the First Chechen War gather again. Many of them come from Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, and some are Muslims. They take the train to their abandoned base in Tomsk to build a memorial to their dead with their own hands and their own money. Nobody asked them to.

On the train they joke, drink and tell old stories. At the graves they cry. Then they stand at the memorial and say that this is their last answer to their fallen comrades.

Technical details

Year	2022
Country	Russia
Type	Feature documentary
Runtime	70 min
Colour	Colour
Language	Russian
Subtitles	English

I made THE WILD BRIGADE because I had no choice.

The two Chechen wars were the most painful wound on Russia's body throughout the 1990s and early 2000s - which happens to be exactly the time I was growing up and becoming who I am. Together they lasted twelve years - longer than the decade-long Afghan war that had already strained the Soviet machine to breaking point. The Chechen wars are bound up with mistakes, grief, tears, fear. No one I know remembers them with anything resembling military pride - no heroism, no gratitude to commanders or the state.

I had always wanted to get closer to this subject. People who carried the First Chechen War inside them were guarded, unwilling to put much into the public space. But I was lucky enough to meet the veterans of ОБрОН-94. When the opportunity came, I dived in.

I tried to do my job as honestly as I could. In the process, I came to love my subjects - in spite of everything I saw and learned. Perhaps they sensed that I genuinely cared, and so they let me closer than they had let anyone before. They showed me things they had never shown anyone.

I believe I made something that matters. A film about that war, about today, and about what is coming. An honest conversation with an honest viewer.

Credits

Writer, director	Vladimir Koptsev
Director of photography	Daniil Bolotnikov
Sound supervisor	Ekaterina Maslova
Editor	Denis Nazarov
Line producer	Aksinya Dmitrieva

Festivals

2023	Artdocfest/Online Online

Stills



Still 1



Still 2

Stills



Still 3



Still 4

Stills

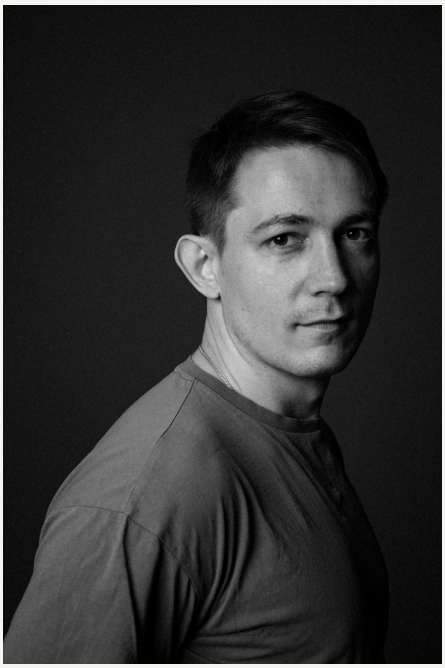


Still 5



Still 6

Director



Vladimir Koptsev

Alexander Sokurov's workshop graduate. Vladimir Koptsev directs fiction and documentary films. Selected at Torino Film Festival, Moscow IFF, Artdocfest, El Gouna Film Festival. Three TV series in development with Lookfilm and Mesto Sily. Former news correspondent and stuntman - used to working under pressure and making fast decisions.

He is drawn to cinema that grabs reality by the throat - through observation, conflict, and precise detail. He makes films about people at a breaking point, where a decision must be made: about power and responsibility, war and memory, family and choice. Documentary and fiction are not a fork in the road for him, but two ways to reach the same thing. The truth.

His teacher is Alexander Sokurov, and the lesson he took from him is this: the author must be honest, even when the whole world is against you.

Contact

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Screener	Screener on request