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Remembering the liberation of Leningrad 70 years on

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Residents of St. Petersburg have been remembering the end of the siege of Leningrad 70 years ago.

The blockade by Nazi troops lasted for two and a half years causing huge destruction, loss of life and the worst famine ever known in a developed society.

President Putin laid flowers and wreaths at the Piskarevskoye memorial cemetery in the city. For him, the memories are extremely personal. Although he was born after the siege, his older brother died of diptheria, and his parents both suffered. His mother was once taken for dead when she collapsed of hunger and his father was badly wounded by a grenade.

The siege started on September 8, 1941, and on January 27, 1944 the city was finally liberated by Russian troops.

Tanks were used to re-enact the moment the city was freed, giving residents a chance to remember the happiness of liberation.

"I remember when soldiers were marching and everybody kissed them.. soldiers were completely dirty and disheveled.. we were just kids and we stay near my mother just watching," said one woman.

Another woman described: "after the siege my mother and I, we danced everyday, I promise, we danced in the Palace Square. My mum even lost one of her heels."

A new museum has opened to tell the story of the siege and the city's brave inhabitants.

Renamed St. Petersburg when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the city will never forget the dark days of the Second World War.

The number of dead from hunger and bombings is disputed by historians but put at between 400,000 to several million.