

Evgeny Rodionov was murdered by Ruslan Khaikhoroyev. This bandit confessed that himself. "Your son had a choice to stay alive. He could convert to Islam, but he did not agree to take his cross off. He also tried to escape once," said Khaikhoroyev. The guerrilla was killed together with his bodyguards on August 23, 1999 in a fight between armed Chechen groups. When Lubov Rodionova came back home, Evgeny's father died five days after the funeral. He could not stand the loss of his son.

Archpriest Dmitry Smirnov, acting chairman of the Moscow Patriarchy department for cooperation with the Armed Forces, says that Evgeny Rodionov will definitely be canonized. The adequate inquiry has already been made, although more information about Evgeny's fate is needed. Father Dmitry said that Evgeny would be canonized as soon as the information was collected.

A sign in memory of the brave Russian border guard was put at the entrance to the school, where he studied. There was also a documentary released about him. The writings on Evgeny's grave cross run: "Russian soldier Evgeny Rodionov is buried here. He defended his Fatherland and did not disavow Christ. He was executed on May 23, 1996, on the outskirts of Bamut."

"We know that he had to go through horrible, long-lasting sufferings that could be compared to the ones of great martyrs in ancient times. They were beheaded, dismembered, but they remained devoted to Jesus Christ anyway," priest Alexander Shargunov said during the requiem in Evgeny Rodionov's memory.



The first icon of Saint Evgeny. A church is being constructed in Chechnya, which will be named after the newly martyred saint.

# Saint Evgeny Rodionov

*Modern martyr and Warrior for Christ*

Evgeny Rodionov, 19 years old, did not lose his faith despite horrible tortures

"The Chechen captivity is the most horrid, the most inhuman and barbaric thing that can ever happen," says Evgeny's mother. She had to survive hell to find her son, the body of her son, to be more precise. Evgeny's death coincided with his 19th birthday. Evgeny's mother, Lubov, was a little late: she was just seven kilometers far from the place of her son's execution.

"Evgeny was born 30 minutes after midnight on May 23, 1977. His delivery was not hard. He was a good and healthy child, his weight was 3900 grams. I was so relieved, when I heard his first cry. As if he was trying to say: "I came into this world, love me!" I incidentally looked at the window. It was dark outside, and I suddenly saw a falling star. I went pale, my heart turned to a cold small piece. Doctors tried to convince me that it was a good sign. They told me that a falling star was a sign of good life for my baby.



## DESERT WISDOM BOOK ROOM

All Saints of North America  
Orthodox Church

[www.asna.ca](http://www.asna.ca)

(905) 318-6436



However, I had to live with a sense of something dangerous coming over us. Time made me forget about it, but I had to remember the sign in 19 years.”

The Russian patriotic press has already reported about the deed of a 19-year-old Russian soldier, Evgeny Rodionov. This young man found himself in the Chechen captivity in 1996. He did not betray either his fatherland or his faith. He did not take off his cross even at the hardest moment of beastly tortures. The state decorated Evgeny with the Order of Courage. People’s donations made it possible to put a two-meter high Orthodox cross on his grave. People come to visit his grave from most distant parts of Russia. His mother, Lubov Rodionova, says that people’s attitude changed her entire awareness of life. A WWII veteran once came to visit Evgeny’s grave. He took off his military decoration – the Bravery Medal – and put it on the tombstone.

Evgeny Rodionov’s biography was published in a book that came out in 2002. The book was called “The New Martyr of Christ, Warrior Evgeny.” This is not really a book, but a booklet, which was written by priest Alexander Shargunov. However, we know little about Evgeny’s inmost thoughts, feelings, emotions, or what he had to go through during three months of the Chechen hell. A lot of things remain a mystery. Lubov Rodionova shared her thoughts with the priest about her son’s childhood, his interests at school, his attitude to the military service. She also shared her most horrible thoughts – about the news of his alleged desertion from the army, and what followed that news afterwards.

Eighteen-year-old Evgeny Rodionov was taken captive with three other soldiers at night of February 14th, not far from the Chechen settlement of Galashki. The guys arrived from the Kaliningrad region. They patrolled the border between the republics of Chechnya and Ingushetia. Their control and registration post was located some 200 meters far from the security detachment. The post was just a small cabin, without any light or wire communication. The cabin did not even have a military support, in spite of the fact that it was a single cabin on the mountainous road, which was used for carrying weapons, ammunition, captives, drugs and so on. The border guards stopped an ambulance vehicle to check it. More than ten armed Chechens got out of the vehicle. Needless to mention that it was very easy for them to cope with young inexperienced soldiers. The guys showed as much resistance as they could, but the outcome of the fight was evident before it even started. Lubov Rodionova believes that this incident happened over officers’ negligence, basically. “The captivity has always been considered to be the most horrible thing that can ever

happen to a person. It implies no freedom, but only tortures and humiliation. Experience showed that the Chechen captivity is the most horrid, the most inhuman and barbaric thing that can ever happen,” Lubov Rodionova believes.

As soon as she learned that her son was a captive of Chechen guerrillas, she started looking for him all over Chechnya for nine months. She had to go through every horror imaginable. “I think that God was watching over me. I was walking along mined roads, but I did not step on a bomb. He protected me from bombings, he did not let me die, because my duty was to find my son, to bury him on his native land, according to Christian traditions. I have realized that recently. When I was walking along those military roads, I just kept silence, praying to God in my heart.”

Chechen bandits murdered Evgeny Rodionov on May 23, 1996 in the Chechen settlement of Bamut. Russian troops occupied the village the next day. Lubov Rodionova learned about her son’s death only in September. She had to put a mortgage on her own apartment in order to find Evgeny’s body and to take it away along with the bodies of his murdered friends. A Chechen man agreed to show her the place, where Evgeny was buried. She had to pay him a lot of money for that. “When I came to Chechnya in the middle of February, a living private cost ten million rubles. This price was 50 million in August. A friend of mine was told to pay 250 million rubles for her son, since he was an officer. It was nighttime, when I and some sappers were digging the pit, in which the bodies of four Russian soldiers were thrown. I was praying all the time, hoping that my Evgeny was not going to be there. I could not and did not want to believe that he was murdered. When we were taking out the remnants, I recognized his boots. However, I still refused to accept the fact of his death, until someone found his cross. Then I fainted.”