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Missing Soviet soldier found after 33-years in Afghanistan

March 5, 2013

^[1]A SOVIET soldier, who was thought to have died 33-years ago in Afghanistan, has been discovered alive and well by former comrades, Russia's RIA news agency reported.

An ethnic Uzbek, Bakhtretidin Khakimov who arrived in Afghanistan in 1980 was found living a nomadic life under a new identity of Sheikh Abdullah.

Shortly after the Soviets invaded Afghanistan Bakhtretidin had fought in one of the Soviet armies motorized rifles units and was wounded in battle shortly after deployment in 1980.

He started living with the Afghans after he survived by them and started practicing herbal medicine after adopting a new life with the Afghans in western Herat province.

Like many of his Afghan neighbours he still bears the everlasting scars of war. A shaking hand and shoulder along with a nervous tic are permanent wounds he is burdened with.

The head of the official veterans' committee, Ruslan Aushev, said Sheikh Abdullah – real name Bakhtretidin Khakimov – was tracked down in Shindand district after a yearlong search.

The Soviet war in Afghanistan lasted nine years from December 1979 to February 1989. Part of the Cold War, it was fought between Soviet-led Afghan forces against multi-national insurgent groups called the mujahideen.

Between December 1979, and February 1989, a total of 620,000 soldiers served with the forces in Afghanistan.

Of the troops deployed, 53,753 were wounded, injured, or sustained concussion and 415,932 fell sick. A high proportion of casualties were those who fell ill.