



## President of Russia Vladimir Putin meets with Archbishop Alexei of Sitka and Alaska



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On 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> August 2025, the top-level Russian-US delegations, which included President of Russia Vladimir Putin and President of the United States Donald Trump, held a summit at the US Joint Base Elmendorf–Richardson in Anchorage, Alaska.

After the summit meeting, the Russian President laid flowers at the graves of Soviet soldiers in Fort Richardson National Cemetery, which is located in the territory of Elmendorf–Richardson military base, **reports** Kremlin.ru.

The Allied Plot at the National Cemetery consists of 14 graves of Soviet servicemen. The names and ranks of 11 of them have been identified: buried there are nine pilots who took part in aircraft transfers along the Alaska-Siberia route, and two sailors who were in charge of accepting Lend-Lease ships in Alaska. One grave remains unidentified, and two more burials are believed to be those of civilians.

The President of Russia also talked with a hierarch of the Orthodox Church in America, Archbishop Alexei of Sitka and Alaska, and presented him with an icon of St Herman of Alaska, holy patron of America, and an icon of the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God.

“I would like to convey to you the best wishes from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus’,” Mr Putin said, addressing Archbishop Alexei, “We met prior to my trip. He told me how the Orthodox Church had come into being here. He also said that he had been to Alaska and served here. He spoke very warmly of you.”

Archbishop Alexei thanked the President of Russia and also presented to him an icon of St Herman of Alaska which was painted on Mount Athos. “It is the icon I was given when I was made a bishop, and it was given to me by monks from the Holy Mountain. It has been in my prayer corner for four years. I would like to give it back to you to express the gratitude that the native peoples of Alaska have for the leaders that came before, to those in Russia who sent the missionaries. Russia has given us what’s most precious of all, which is the Orthodox faith, and we are forever grateful,” the hierarch said.

As Archbishop Alexei also mentioned, he tries to visit Russia yearly. “It’s a great benefit to my priests and my seminarians,” he added, “Because when they come to Russia, they say, ‘I’ve been home, I’ve come home’.”

Mr Putin called the hierarch a welcome guest, adding that he can feel at home in Russia whenever he comes.

The Russian President also had a brief conversation with Director of Fort Richardson National Cemetery Duane Mendenhall and thanked him for preserving and caring about the memory of Soviet servicemen.

Photo: Kremlin.ru