

Vladimir Putin's secret army

A shadowy mercenary group called "ChVK Wagner" has come to play a crucial role in Russian operations in Syria. The actions of Wagner coincided with the Kremlin's intervention in Syria in September 2015



ChVK WAGNER

Founded by former special forces officer **Dmitry Utkin**

1 Oct 2015: Wagner personnel fly from GRU* training facility in southern Russia, to Khmeimim Air Base

2 Mar 2016: Wagnerians, supported by Russian airstrikes, serve as "shock troops" – attacking so-called **Islamic State** fighters – paving way for Syrian Army to liberate Palmyra

Dec 2016: Utkin and deputy **Andrei Troshev** are guests of President **Vladimir Putin** at Kremlin for Heroes Day ceremony

2017: Wagner's role is expanded to include seizing IS-held gas and oil facilities for Russian company **Evro Polis**, linked to friend of Putin

3 Jul: Wagner personnel fight alongside Syrian army to recapture Shaer gas field from IS

4 Sep-Nov: Wagner takes part in liberation of Deir al-Zour from IS control

*GRU: Russia's main intelligence directorate



Euphrates River de-confliction line:
Russia's area of operations to west,
U.S.-led coalition to east

