

### About war

On April, 1978, pro-communist people's democratic party Afghanistan (PDPA) and sympathizing Afghan army officers came to power in a military coup. PDPA declared noncapitalist way of development of the country. However, when PDPA began reforms similar to those made in the Soviet union they were met with discontent by the majority of population. In June, 1978, revolts broke out which the government was unable to suppress. These events provided the Soviet union with a pretext to begin a war which is usually called the Afghan or the Afghan-Soviet War.

Gradually, steadily growing resistance became a threat to the pro-communist government led by PDPA. On December 25, 1979, in order to save it, the Soviet union sent its troops in Afghanistan. Thus began a new stage of the Afghan War which by some authors is sometimes even held to be the beginning of this war. By early 1980, the Soviet Army occupied major Afghan cities and assumed control of the main parts of the country. At first there were 40,000, in spring 1980 – 80,000 and in 1985 – more than 100,000 Soviet troops in Afghanistan. The Soviet Army was backed by Afghan governmental forces. Afghan opposition was supported by the majority of Western countries. especially strong support was received from Arab countries. Muslim partisans (mujahideen) used guerilla tactics. All the attempts of the Soviet Army to defeat them using tactics of the classical combat failed. In 1988, the major part of the country was already under control of the opposition forces which were taking the initiative. On April 4, 1988, in Geneva Afghanistan, Pakistan, the USSR, and the USA signed an agreement according to which the USSR had to move his troops out of Afghanistan until February 5, 1989. So ended for the USSR the Afghan War during which it lost 4,000 soldiers. Nevertheless supported by the Soviet union pro-soviet Afghan government survived until early 1992, i.e. it was overthrown only after dissolution of the USSR in December, 1991. So ended the war that lasted for 14 years.

The war demoralized the USSR and accelerated its demise. It aggravated national and religious tensions in Afghanistan and inflicted great physical and mental suffering on those who took part in it. After this war a civil war broke out that lasts with short periods of peacetime until now.

As it is well known, until March, 1990, Lithuania was a part of the USSR. Therefore, nearly 5,000 men from Lithuania also took part in this war (96 of them were killed, 98 – handicapped). All of them fell victim to the global politics of the USSR that caused this war in order to make Afghanistan its province.

During the first several years following immediately after restoration of Lithuanian independence public attitude towards afganai (that's how veterans of this war are usually called in the media) was ambiguous. At first, when the war was "denied" by the Soviet government the public was not able to realize the nature and full extent of this tragedy. Later when it was acknowledged that the war was a political mistake negative attitude towards the war was vented on the veterans. Russian afganai returned to their motherland which had sent them to the war. Lithuanian afganai returned to Lithuania which after restoring independence had many social problems to solve and veterans of the Afghan War were left to their own devices.