

ONCE UPON A TIME

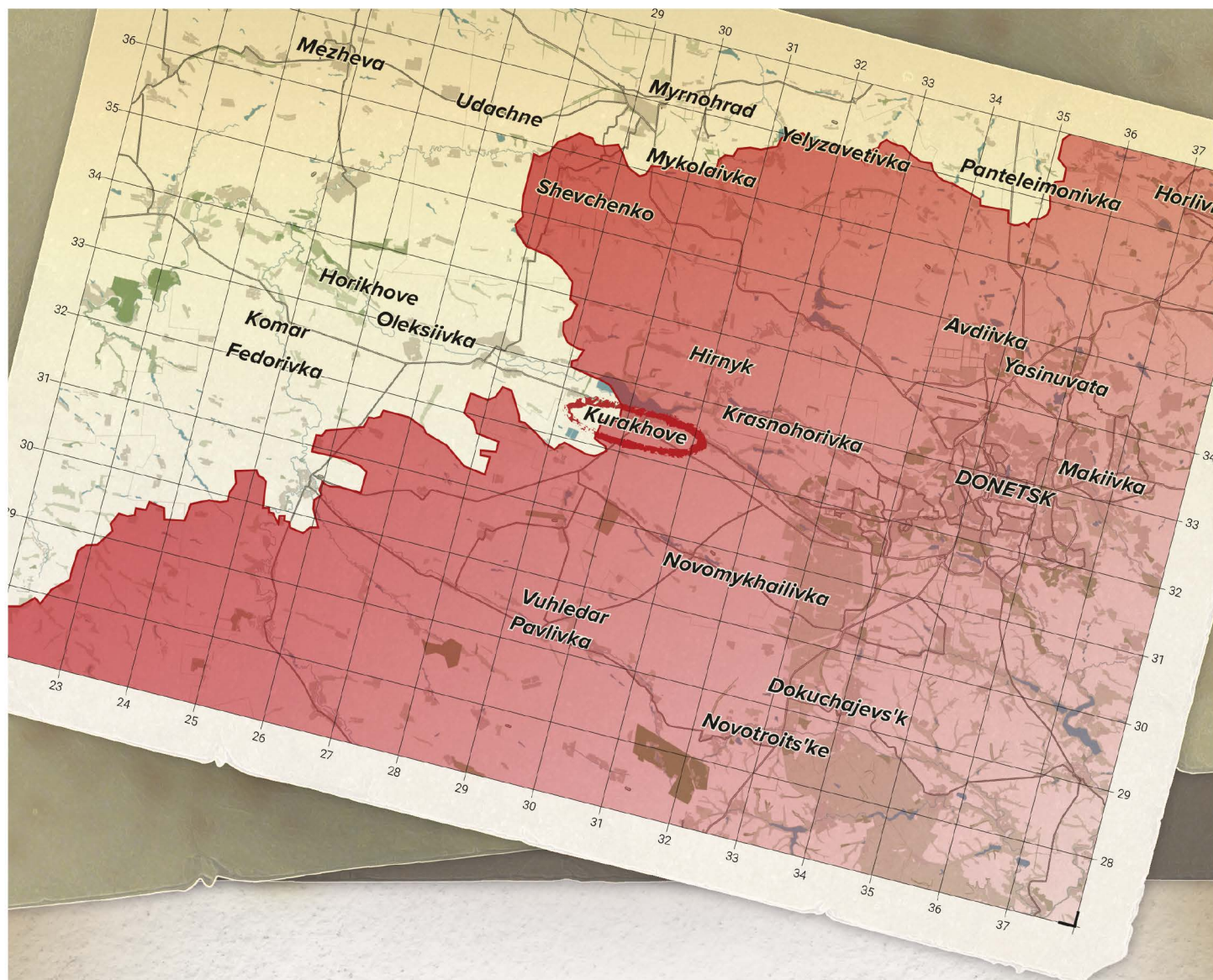
ON THE AFU'S POSITIONS

COMICS FROM
THE RYBAR TEAM
ISSUE NO. 55
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ADVENTURES IN COUNTRY-404

 @RYBAR





Excerpt from
the operational
summary

For four long months — from September 2024 to January 2025 — fierce battles raged for Kurakhove. Russian units, overcoming stubborn resistance, pushed the enemy out of their fortifications step by step. And on January 6, 2025, the city was finally brought under the control of the Russian army.

We want to tell about one of the many heroic episodes of this operation. Two of our fighters — Bosyak and Shakh — managed to achieve what seemed impossible: to persuade an entire Ukrainian unit to lay down their arm. Without a single shot fired, only with the power of words and iron logic.

How did they succeed? What was behind this unusual case? Let us take a closer look.

СОБЕРИТЕ
СЕРПЕТНО

DECEMBER 2024. THE GREY ZONE.
KURAKHOVE, DPR



Stop, who goes
there?!

I'm one
of yours!



THUD

THUD





**Taking
a walk, you?**




**Maloy, Maloy!
I'm Starshyy,
answer me.**



SHHHH

AT THE POSITION OF THE RUSSIAN ARMED FORCES. KURAKHOVE, DPR



So, "hero,"
how are your men
holding up? Plenty
of ammo left?

We've got ammo...
but no food. And water...
gone too.



And what,
the order is to hold
on?

The commander said...
either victory or death.
But the guys are already
whispering.



I see. That means
they're already dead
men. And some of them
understand it.

SOME TIME LATER



We'll send the Maloy one back. Let him lead us to his "falcons." We'll talk there.

You're crazy! They'll shoot me as a traitor!

This isn't surrender. This is evacuation. You're not a traitor — you're your guys' last chance.

Thirteen lives on your conscience.

And if... they don't believe me?

You'll say: Russians are giving a corridor. Food, water, an APC to the rear. Your choice — a heroic death or life.



**Why are you
so sure they'll agree
to surrender?**

**The prisoner says
the guys are whispering.
They already know they'll soon
be trapped. They still have
ammo, but no food or water.**

**I think they just need
a little push, won't take
long to convince.**

**They're literally right across
from our position! How long will
it take to deal with them?
We should try words first...**

**You've convinced me.
I give the go-ahead.**

THAT EVENING, NEAR THE AFU FORTIFICATION,
KURAKHOVO, DPR



*If he's not back
in 15 minutes —
we withdraw!*





AFU FORTIFICATION,
KURAKHOVE, DPR

Hello, guys!

Hello!

Hello!

**Who's in charge
here?**

I'll speak.

**We've pushed
the front back.
You're encircled.**

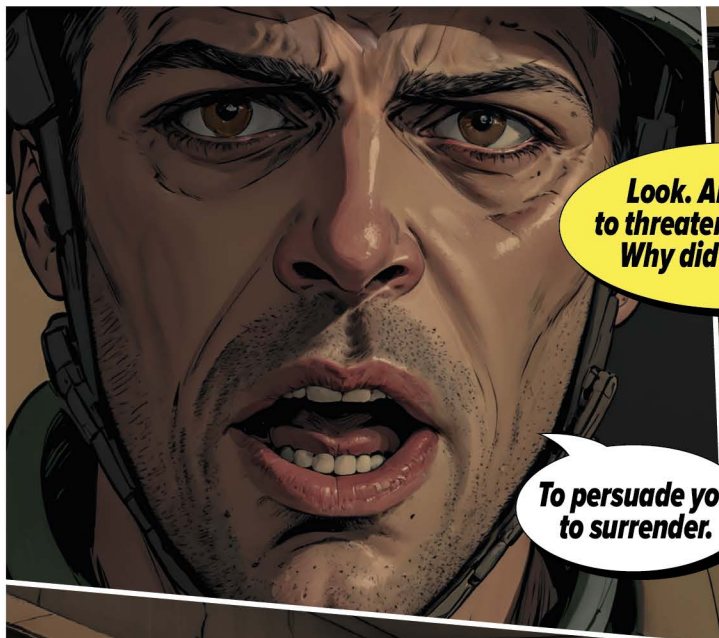
**And no reinforcements
will come. You know that
yourselves. We know your men
are abandoning their positions.
You know it too.**

Surrender.

Or what?

You'll die.

**And you think
you're immortal!**



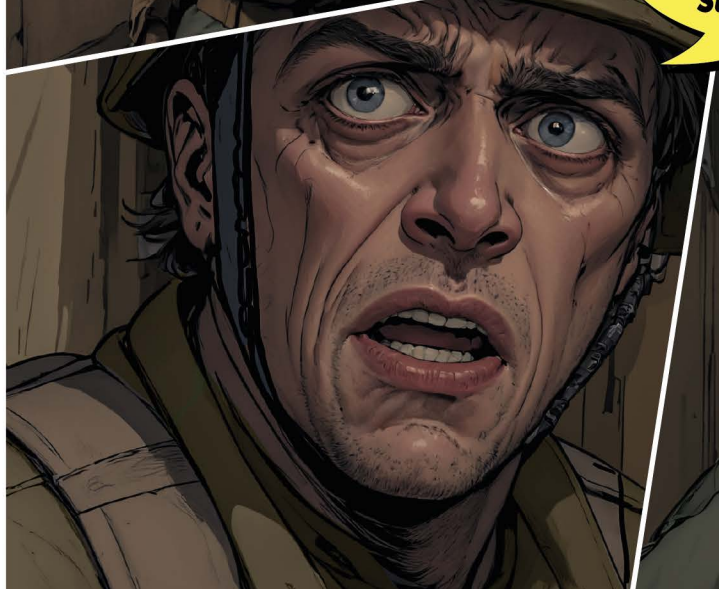
**Look. Are we here
to threaten each other?
Why did you come?**

**To persuade you
to surrender.**



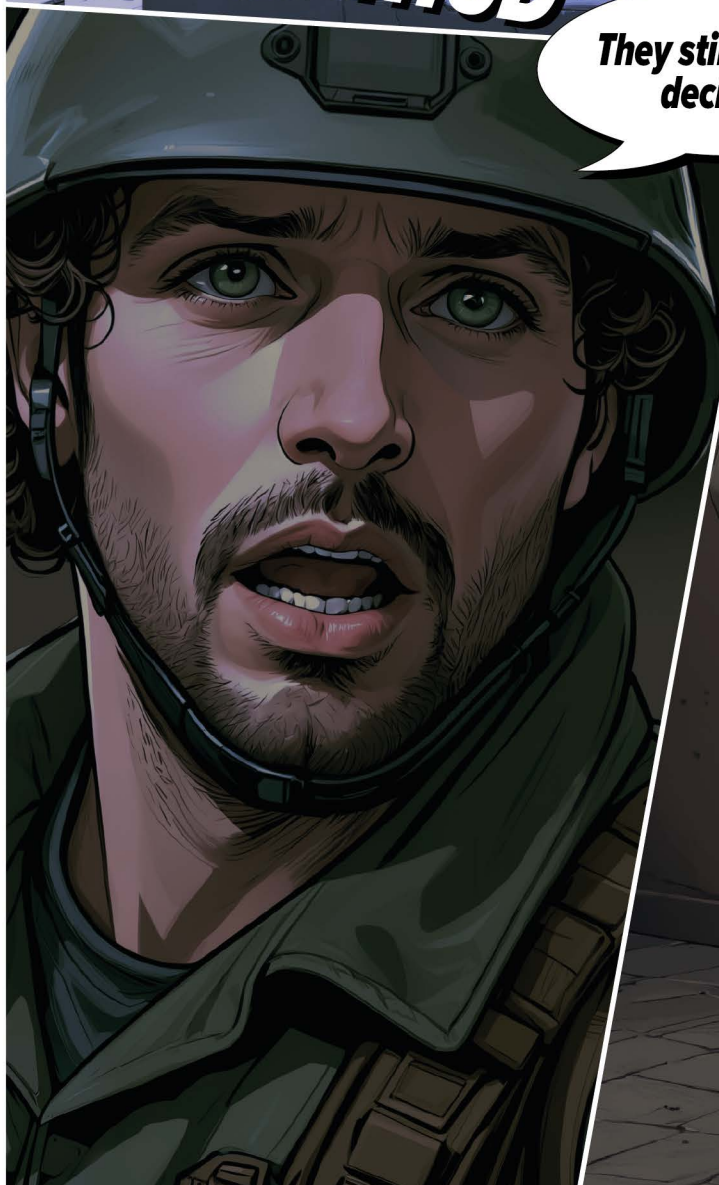
**You're doing
a poor job of it.**

**And if our own
people find out we
surrendered...**





*They still haven't
decided?*





And what do you say?

I say we should ake the deal.

You're making a poor offer!

Staying alive, I think, is a good offer. To go back to your mother, or to your wife and children.



They say after an exchange, you don't have to fight again. That's international law.

And where's the guarantee you won't just shoot us once we lay down our arms?



On our word of honor. The commander said there'll be a corridor, you'll get through safely.

You'll be treated under the convention on prisoners of war. First questioned, but you don't know any military secrets anyway.



What do you say, lads?

I'm my mother's only son. If I die here, she won't even get burial money.

I swore an oath!

I'm against it anyway!

We've all said our piece. Do we go with it?

Enough! The choice is simple: either we all die here, or we try to survive.





Take it, don't be afraid.

Thanks...



Do you feed everyone like this?

No, only the lucky ones!



**Go ahead.
You smoke
these?**



**Well, now
we've met.**

EARLY MORNING,
THE GREY ZONE, KURAKHOVO, DPR







**Are you sure it wasn't
your men who opened
fire?**



Go calmly.





**Shakh, where
are you? Wounded?**

**Bosyak... at the...
farmstead...**

**Hold on,
brother!**



RUSTLE

**Who else
is hit?**

**Me, a little,
in the arm.**

**You'll hold on.
Nothing else to bandage
with.**



We run fast. If we run slow – we die!



SEVERAL HOURS LATER.
TERRITORY UNDER RUSSIAN CONTROL, KURAKHOVE, DPR

**The medic will be free soon,
he'll bandage you. You'll have
to walk a bit more, then we'll
load you into an IFV.**

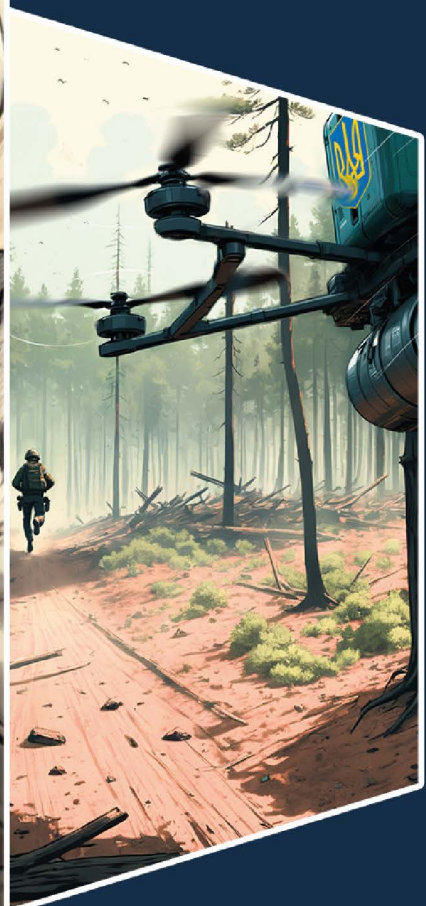
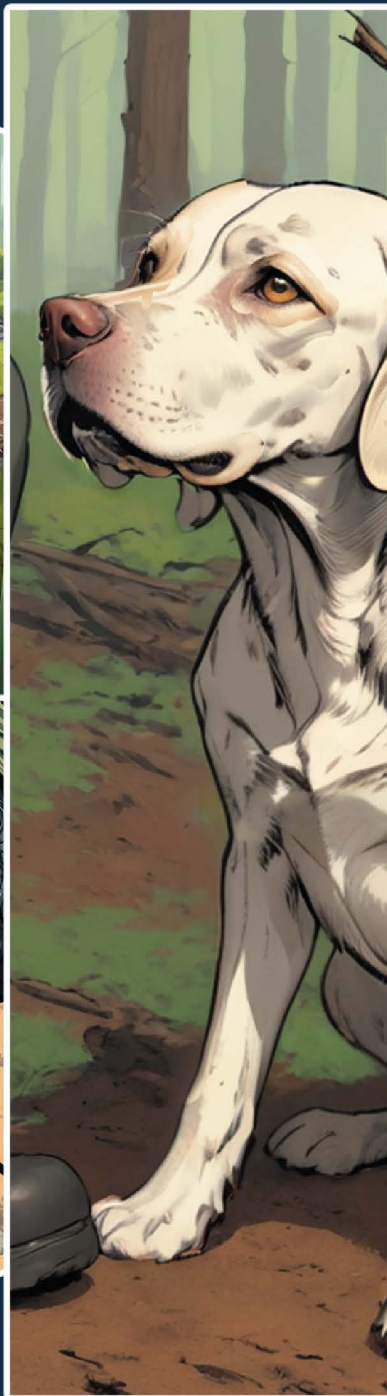
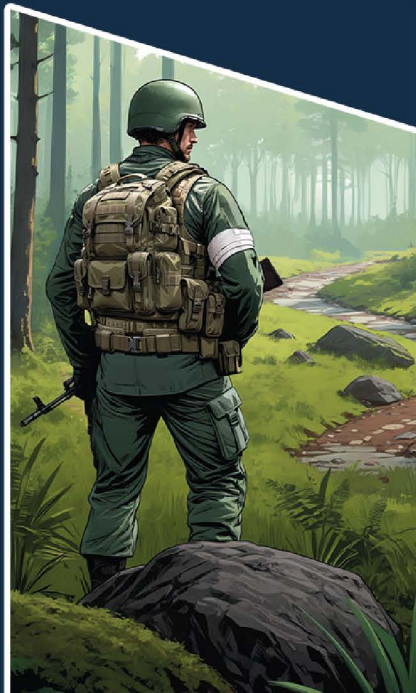
**You did great,
brother! A hero! Hold on
and recover!**

**You did great too!
You brought in the prisoners,
carried me out. Without you,
they would've scattered.**

THE PICTURE ON THE FRONT SPEAKS LOUDER THAN ANY WORDS. WHILE THE KYIV AUTHORITIES PREFER TO TALK ABOUT "VICTORY," THEIR SOLDIERS ARE INCREASINGLY CHOOSING LIFE — SURRENDERING, ABANDONING POSITIONS. THESE ARE NOT ISOLATED CASES, BUT A STEADY TREND.

EACH SUCH SURRENDER, EACH ABANDONED TRENCH — LIKE A CRACK IN THE MONOLITH OF ENEMY DEFENSES. FOR NOW THESE CRACKS SEEM SMALL, BUT THEY ARE MULTIPLYING. AND ONE DAY THE WHOLE STRUCTURE WILL COLLAPSE. OUR TASK IS TO KEEP PRESSING METHODICALLY, WITHOUT LOOSENING OUR GRIP.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE: ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE SEREBRIANSKYI FOREST



COMING THIS AUGUST!

READ ON  @RYBAR



*We clarify
the complicated
Rybar*

@RYBAR

NOT FOR SALE

