

ADVENTURES
IN THE LAND
404

ISSUE №73
MARCH 2026

An illustration of two soldiers in full combat gear, including helmets and tactical vests, walking away from the viewer through a desolate, war-torn landscape. The ground is covered in rubble and debris. In the background, a body of water is visible under a dramatic, sunset sky with vibrant orange, red, and blue clouds. A small drone is flying in the upper right portion of the sky. The overall style is a detailed, comic-book-like illustration.

PRICE OF LIFE

THE ONLY CHANCE OF SALVATION

@RYBAR



CERTIFICATE № 73

January 2026. Sumy region. In a frozen, snow-covered abandoned school, three wounded Ukrainian soldiers end up trapped. One of them, having lost a leg, is rapidly bleeding out. Over the radio comes a short and cold order: there will be no evacuation. Any attempt to surrender means death. A blocking detachment controls the perimeter, drones are on station in the sky.

The chance to survive appears unexpectedly. Russian UAV operators spot the wounded through a window and drop leaflets with a radio frequency for contact and the conditions for surrender. This is not an ultimatum – it is a real chance. Inside there is fear and doubt, and right next to them a comrade's life is fading fast. When the severely wounded man dies, there are no doubts left. The two survivors realize that, for their own side, they are expendable, and they decide to surrender. In exchange for a safe corridor, they pass to the Russian military the coordinates of the enemy UAV command post. With the help of an FPV drone, Russian soldiers destroy the blocking unit's control. The sky is cleared and a safe corridor is opened for the prisoners.

Covering six kilometers over open snow along a tree line, using the corridor provided by the Russian military, the wounded head toward new positions, saving their lives from mortal danger. But having preserved their lives, will they be able to preserve their faith in justice, in the lawfulness of orders, their faith in the so-called "own side", or will they have to change their beliefs and step over the moral line beyond which "ours" and "theirs" swap places.

SUMY REGION, POSITIONS OF THE RUSSIAN ARMED FORCES,
MID-JANUARY 2026

**I'm all clear
here. No locals
around.**

**There's some movement
in the school building.**

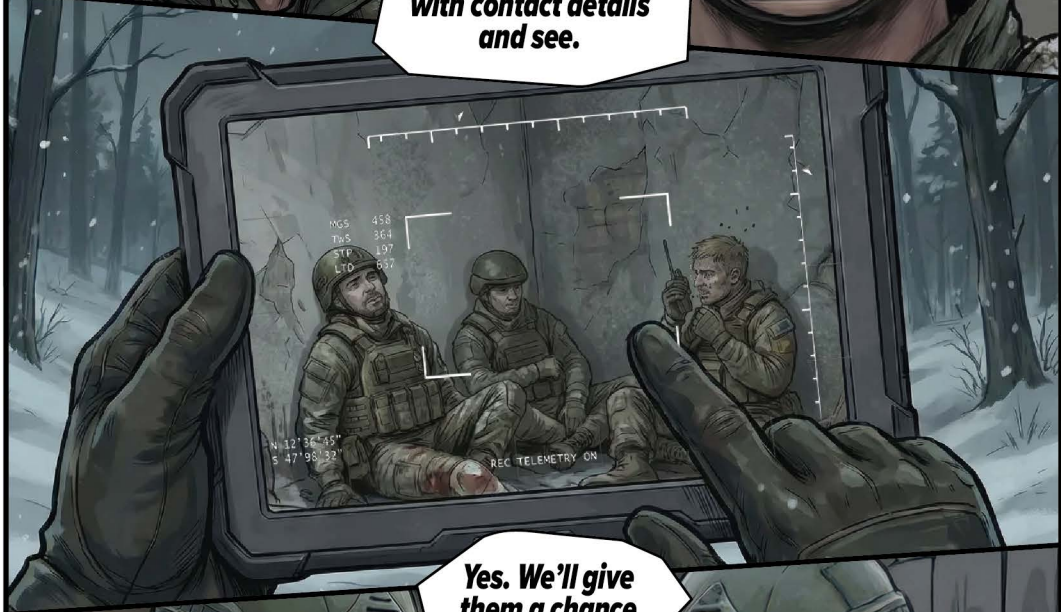
**The building
itself is abandoned.
Partly destroyed.**

**I see three AFU guys.
Looks like all three are wounded,
one without a leg.**





We'll drop leaflets with contact details and see.



Yes. We'll give them a chance to survive.



They definitely won't last long.

RURAL SCHOOL BUILDING,
SAME DAY



VZHHHH



VZHHHH

RUSTLE

RUSTLE





Krupa, ask if there will be help?

Yeah, find out when. Tell them Granddad is bleeding out.

RUSTLE



Base, what's going on, we have a critical, where's the evacuation?

SHSHSH

SHSHSH

There will be no evacuation. Do not surrender. Do you copy?!



**We copy,
we copy that they've
left us here to die.**

**Yeah, we can't
expect any help.**

**We have
to think what
to do next.**



**Krupa, look out
the window.**

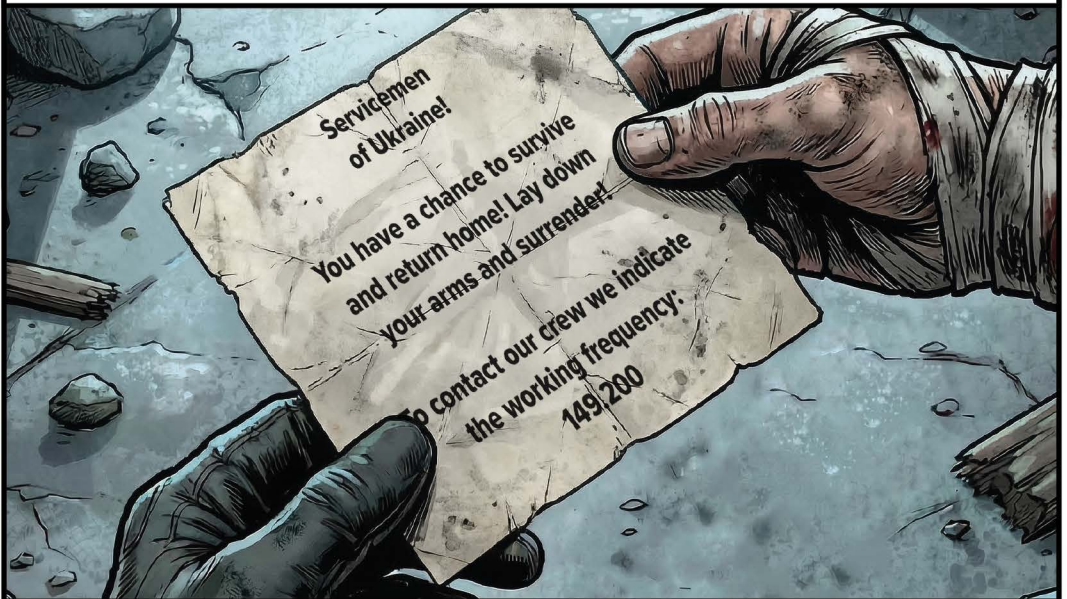
**What's that paper flying
around?**





IN THE WALLS OF THE ABANDONED SCHOOL, THREE WOUNDED UKRAINIAN SOLDIERS FOUND SHELTER. ONE OF THEM WAS IN PARTICULARLY GRAVE CONDITION. HAVING LOST A LIMB, HE WAS FADING LITERALLY BEFORE THEIR EYES. DESPITE THE PAIN AND DESPAIR, THEY HOPED SOMEONE WOULD COME FOR THEM, THAT RESCUE WAS POSSIBLE. BUT THE ANSWER TURNED OUT TO BE MERCILESS: THERE WOULD BE NO EVACUATION, AND ANY ATTEMPT TO SURRENDER WOULD BE SUPPRESSED.

MEANWHILE, RUSSIAN SOLDIERS DROPPED LEAFLETS ON THE SCHOOL BUILDING WITH AN OFFER TO LAY DOWN ARMS. THE WOUNDED UNDERSTOOD THAT CAPTIVITY MIGHT BE THEIR ONLY CHANCE TO SURVIVE. BUT IT ALL SEEMED ALMOST UNATTAINABLE — DRONES WERE CIRCLING OVERHEAD, AND EVERY MOVE WAS UNDER THE CONTROL OF A BLOCKING DETACHMENT.





So what is it? Read it.


Granddad, they're offering to lay down arms.

I don't even know what to think.

The Russians write that there is a chance to survive if we surrender. They gave a frequency for contact.

RUSTLE

SHSHSH



Abandoned building, come in... Do not pick up the leaflets. If you decide to surrender, we'll shoot you.



VZHHHH



VZHHHH



458
364
197
657

There, look, they're watching us.

Watching us they've got "birds" for, but when we assaulted, there were no birds to cover us!



Guys, we have to surrender anyway.

Granddad, what are you talking about? We'll climb out and our own will gun us down on the spot.

AAAAH





Granddad could still have been saved.

He could have, but it turned out no one needed that.

RUSTLE



**Servicemen
of Ukraine!**
You have a chance to survive
and return home! Lay down
your arms and surrender!
To contact our crew we indicate
the working frequency
149.200

RUSTLE



**We have no choice.
Switch to the indicated
frequency.**

**No choice, but
there is a chance!**

**There's two of us, we're
ready to surrender. We can't
get out, the blocking unit
will take us out, we know
their location...**

SHSHSH

SUMY REGION, POSITIONS OF THE RUSSIAN ARMED FORCES,
MID-JANUARY 2026

**The leaflets
worked!**

**Got it, dictate
the coordinates
of the blocking detachment
UAV control point.**

**All right. Let's see
what they've got
there.**

SHSHSH

**I don't know
the coordinates. Main street,
second yard from our side...
There's a concrete entrance
to a cellar, the door was
wooden...**

**Got it. The prisoners
can't come out, they're
being watched by
drones.**

SHSHSH

**Get the "birds"
ready! We'll work
the target based on
their directions.**



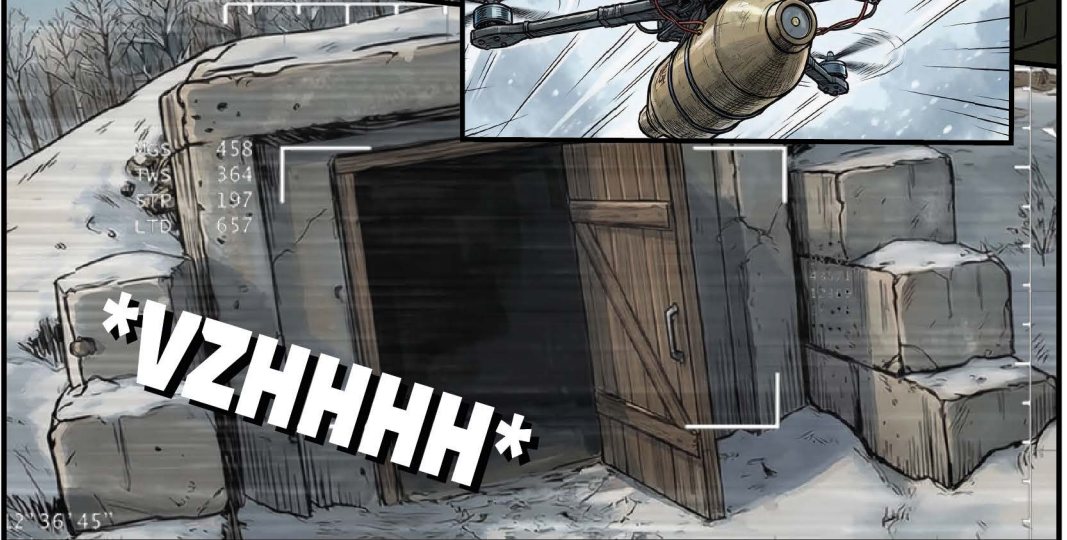
Now we'll take the blocking detachment off duty.



No one needs their services anymore.

And for good!

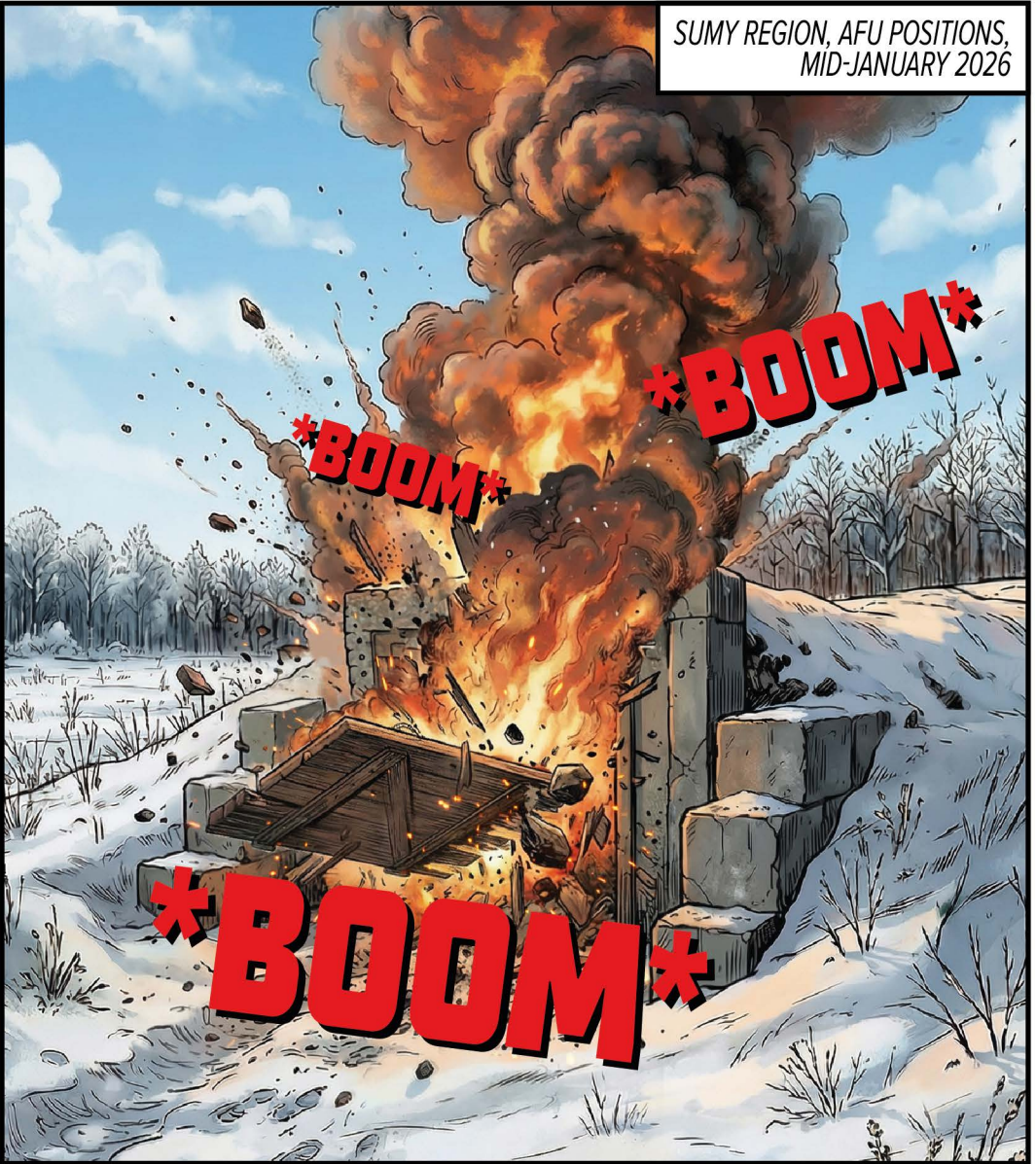
Time to clear the place!



MGS 458
TWS 364
STP 197
LTD 657

VZHHHH

SUMY REGION, AFU POSITIONS,
MID-JANUARY 2026



WHEN THE SEVERELY WOUNDED MAN DIES, ALL DOUBTS DISAPPEAR. FOR THE TWO SURVIVORS IT BECOMES OBVIOUS THAT THEY HAVE NO VALUE FOR THEIR OWN SIDE. ANY HOPE OF RESCUE VANISHES. THEY MAKE A DIFFICULT BUT FINAL DECISION — TO SURRENDER.

IN EXCHANGE FOR A GUARANTEED SAFE PASSAGE, THEY GIVE THE RUSSIAN MILITARY THE COORDINATES OF THE ENEMY UAV CONTROL POINT. WITH THE HELP OF AN FPV DRONE, RUSSIAN FIGHTERS CARRY OUT A PRECISE STRIKE, DESTROYING THE CONTROL POINT AND THE ENEMY'S BLOCKING CONTROL WITH MAXIMUM EFFECTIVENESS.

SUMY REGION, POSITIONS OF THE RUSSIAN ARMED FORCES,
MID-JANUARY 2026

**Done. The enemy
control point has been
destroyed.**

**The prisoners
can move out to our
position.**

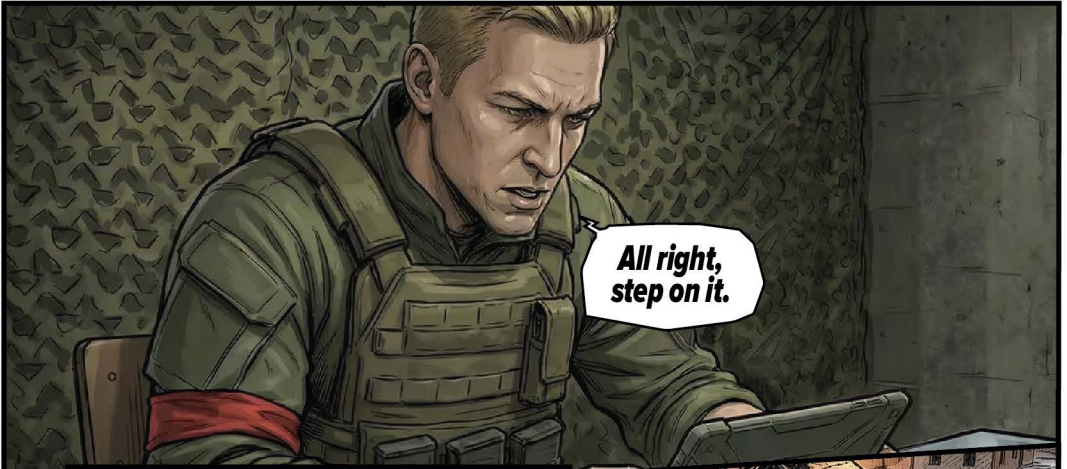
**Time to give them
the good news.**

**Go along your street
north all the way, you need
to get to the tree line across
the field. You'll be met
there.**

SHSHSH

**Roger. We're
moving out.**

SHSHSH



All right, step on it.



VZHHHH



They always scared us that we'd regret it badly if we were captured.

But I heard the Russians treat prisoners well.

We can't promise a red carpet, but we will organize a corridor.



EVENING OF THE SAME DAY

Now the main thing is to make it there.

We'll make it. Look, a drone is escorting us, that's already something.

VZHHHH



VZHHHH

Krupa, why is it that when we were assaulting, they didn't cover us with "birds"?

And why didn't they let us fall back? And why didn't they send help?



They even put up a blocking detachment and left us to die.

“Our own” wrote us off. That’s why.



MAS 458
VMS 364
STP 197
LTD 657

1564
92769
4357
1236
15782
9497

167 45
98 32

REC TELEMETRY ON

TRYING TO ESCAPE MORTAL DANGER AND PRESERVE THEIR LIVES, THE PRISONERS MOVE ACROSS THE SNOWY EXPANSE ALONG THE CORRIDOR MARKED OUT BY THE RUSSIAN MILITARY.

BUT EVEN AFTER ESCAPING THIS DANGER, THEY CANNOT SHAKE THOUGHTS OF JUSTICE AND BETRAYAL, OF THE LEGALITY OF ORDERS, OF THOSE WHOM THEY SO RECENTLY CONSIDERED “THEIR OWN”. WHAT THEY HAVE LIVED THROUGH WILL FORCE THEM TO RECONSIDER THEIR BELIEFS.



**Krupa, tell me,
is it far to go?**

VZHHHH

**It's hard, I've got
no strength, when
will we get there.**

**Far or not,
I don't know.**

**What difference does
it make. The main thing
is to get as far away from
"our own" as possible.**





Svat, do you agree with me or not?

I agree. Only "our own" don't abandon "our own".



Right. Which means they're "theirs".



They abandon their own, and we take out theirs.

SUMY REGION, POSITIONS OF THE RUSSIAN
ARMED FORCES, NEXT DAY

**Will you
talk?**

**We'll tell you
everything, we'll
show you everything.**

**We have a lot
of questions. Name,
surname, date and
place of birth?**

**I am Pavel Sergeevich
Stetsenko...**





**Place of birth –
city of Kharkov.**



**Which
brigade?**



**158th separate
mechanized...**



**Who is the
commander?**

**If only we knew.
We have never seen him once.
They threw us straight into
the slaughter.**

**But we do know
some of the positions and
where the headquarters
is hidden.**

RUSTLE



THIS STORY MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO SEE THE MORAL PRINCIPLES OF THE PARTICIPANTS, TO REVEAL THE DIFFERENCES IN VALUES BETWEEN THE SIDES. THE CRUELTY OF AFU COMMANDERS, READY TO SACRIFICE THEIR OWN PEOPLE FOR THE SAKE OF A FORMAL ORDER, LAYS BARE THEIR BETRAYAL OF THEIR OWN SOLDIERS. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, THE CONTRAST BECOMES DECISIVE: THE SOLDIERS OF THE 30TH MOTOR RIFLE REGIMENT OF THE 44TH ARMY CORPS DO NOT PASS BY ENEMY WOUNDED. THEY OFFER A CHANCE, ESTABLISH COMMUNICATION, RISK EQUIPMENT, DESTROY THE BLOCKING CONTROL AND OPEN A CORRIDOR FOR WITHDRAWAL. THEIR ACTIONS DEMONSTRATE A DIFFERENT PRINCIPLE: EVEN AN ENEMY REMAINS A HUMAN BEING IF HE IS UNARMED AND WOUNDED. SAVING THE ENEMY WOUNDED UNDERLINES THAT THE STRENGTH OF AN ARMY IS DETERMINED NOT ONLY BY ITS WEAPONS, BUT ALSO BY ITS ATTITUDE TO LIFE — EVEN TO THE LIFE OF AN ENEMY.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

LIFE ON THE FRONT LINES

A MOMENT THAT DIVIDES INTO "BEFORE"
AND "AFTER"



COMING IN APRIL!

READ ON THE CHANNEL  @RYBAR



We clarify
the complicated
Rules

 @RYBAR



NOT FOR SALE