

ADVENTURES
IN THE LAND

404

ISSUE №78
MAY 2026



NEVER ABANDONING OUR GUYS

BATTLE FOR ZMINYI ISLAND

@RYBAR



CERTIFICATE № 78

February 2022. A group of Russian special forces and commanders Grom and Sever take control of Zmiinyi Island without a single shot. The AFU garrison surrenders, and the prisoners are immediately given water and field rations.

Two months pass, and the picture changes drastically. The sky over the island is filled with Turkish Bayraktars, and the boats carrying reinforcements one after another turn into burning wrecks. Comrades are dying, ammunition is running out. Grom and Sever, both wounded, courageously repulse attacks, but with each passing day they more and more clearly realize: the island is turning into a trap. Soon a new order arrives that changes everything — leave the island.

At dawn on May 8, dissolving in the fog, a boat carries Grom, Sever, and Russian marines away from Zmiinyi Island. The AFU, convinced of an easy victory, are hastily preparing a landing operation, helicopters and boats are already on their way. The command reports a forthcoming “grand victory” — Zmiinyi will be taken! They have no idea what awaits them. High in the sky, like an invisible guardian, a Russian Orlan-10 reconnaissance drone is hovering. At the command post, Grom, peering at the monitor, says with a barely noticeable but meaningful intonation: “They took the bait.”

What is hidden behind this unexpected order to “leave the island” — a bitter defeat or a carefully thought-out plan that is about to be revealed?

APPROACHING SNAKE ISLAND,
MORNING OF 24 FEBRUARY 2022

VROOOM

Grom, how many
of those Ukrainian border
guards are there?

Garrison.
82 soldiers.

I wonder how they'll
greet us?

Don't worry, they'll
greet us just fine.

What makes you
think that?



**Two of our birds!
Great!**

VZHHHH



VZHHHH

**They'll deliver a couple
of strikes on the island
before we arrive.**



VROOOM

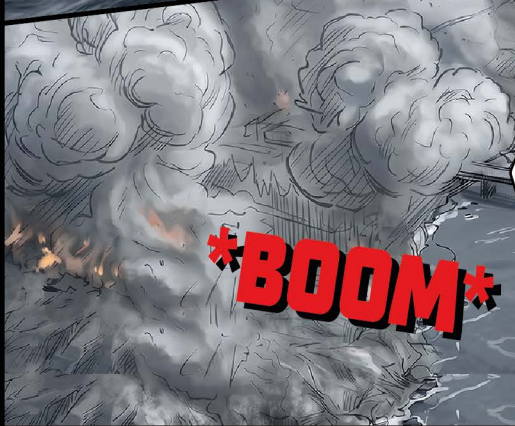
**Exactly, won't hurt
for persuasion.**

BOOM

**Get ready
to disembark.**



BOOM



SNAKE ISLAND,
26 FEBRUARY 2022

THE AFU GARRISON ON SNAKE ISLAND SURRENDERED ON 24 FEBRUARY 2022 DURING THE INITIAL STAGE OF THE SPECIAL MILITARY OPERATION. THE RUSSIAN TROOPS ESTABLISHED FULL CONTROL OVER SEA AND AIR ROUTES, SURROUNDING THE ISLAND. HEAVY FIRE SUPPORT FROM SHIPS, INCLUDING THE CRUISER MOSKVA, MADE ANY ORGANISED RESISTANCE PRACTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE. THE CONTINGENT OF BORDER GUARDS AND MARINES HAD NO HEAVY WEAPONS CAPABLE OF OPPOSING THE CRUISER AND AVIATION.

AFTER DEMANDS TO SURRENDER AND THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF RECEIVING REINFORCEMENTS OR AIR SUPPORT, RESISTANCE WAS RECOGNISED AS INADVISABLE. UNDER CONDITIONS OF COMPLETE BLOCKADE, REFUSAL TO SURRENDER MEANT INEVITABLE DEATH FOR THE ENTIRE PERSONNEL.





Can you give us some water? Really thirsty.



What, you were sitting here without water?

You could say that.



Form up. Before boarding everyone gets an IRP, we're not some kind of savages.



**SNAKE ISLAND,
THAT SAME EVENING**



**They surrendered
the island pretty fast.**



VROOOM

**Arnold did say
the day isn't over
yet.**



**You'll see,
they'll still fight
for this place.**



**That's right.
From the island it's convenient
for them to control supplies
of weapons and special
equipment from the West.**



**It's convenient
for us to control a lot
of things from here
too.**



**They've had
enough.**





Before the start of the SMO the Americans and British had a reconnaissance centre here.

They passed data to American planes.

Where did the Americans go then?

Shortly before the SMO they evacuated all the intelligence officers with equipment by helicopters.

Alright, now we're here and we need to build shelters.

*SNAKE ISLAND,
6 MAY 2022*

SNAKE ISLAND IS ONE OF THE KEY POINTS IN THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL OVER THE NORTHWESTERN PART OF THE BLACK SEA. IMPORTANT SEA ROUTES PASS THROUGH THIS AREA, INCLUDING THOSE BY WHICH WEAPONS AND MILITARY EQUIPMENT CAN BE DELIVERED TO UKRAINE. SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE CONFLICT THE ISLAND HAS REPEATEDLY BECOME THE OBJECT OF FIERCE ATTACKS.

ON 2 MAY 2022 A GROUP OF RUSSIAN MARINES ON THE ISLAND WAS WAITING FOR PERSONNEL TO ARRIVE FOR ROTATION. IN THE MORNING, AROUND 5:30, TWO BK-16 BOATS OF THE RUSSIAN NAVY APPROACHED ZMIINYI. AT THE SAME TIME A TURKISH BAYRAKTAR UAV APPEARED IN THE SKY AND DELIVERED A MISSILE STRIKE ON THE TWO NAVY BOATS. FROM THE ISLAND THEY TRIED TO SHOOT DOWN THE BAYRAKTAR WITH A MANPADS, BUT THE DRONE WAS ABOVE THE CEILING OF THE MISSILE'S FLIGHT ALTITUDE, AND THE MISSILE EXPLODED BEFORE REACHING THE TARGET. FROM THAT DAY ENEMY UAVS HAVE BEEN CONSTANTLY PRESENT IN THE SKY OVER THE ISLAND. THE ONLY WAY TO PROTECT THE GROUPING WAS TO DELIVER AIR DEFENCE SYSTEMS. THUS, A TOR AIR DEFENCE SYSTEM APPEARED ON ZMIINYI.





Good thing they brought the system.

The enemy won't leave us alone. Drones are circling constantly.

One air defence system isn't enough here. We need a second one.

But one is still better than none.

There's a high probability that the AFU are preparing a landing on the island in the near future.

We're getting ready for that.

SNAKE ISLAND,
THE NEXT DAY



VZHHHH



BOOM



BOOM



So the Tor came
in handy.



There are more
and more of them,
a second system definitely
wouldn't hurt us.

I don't like any of this.
Sever, you hear it too?

Yeah, but those aren't
drones anymore.



Sir, enemy aircraft!



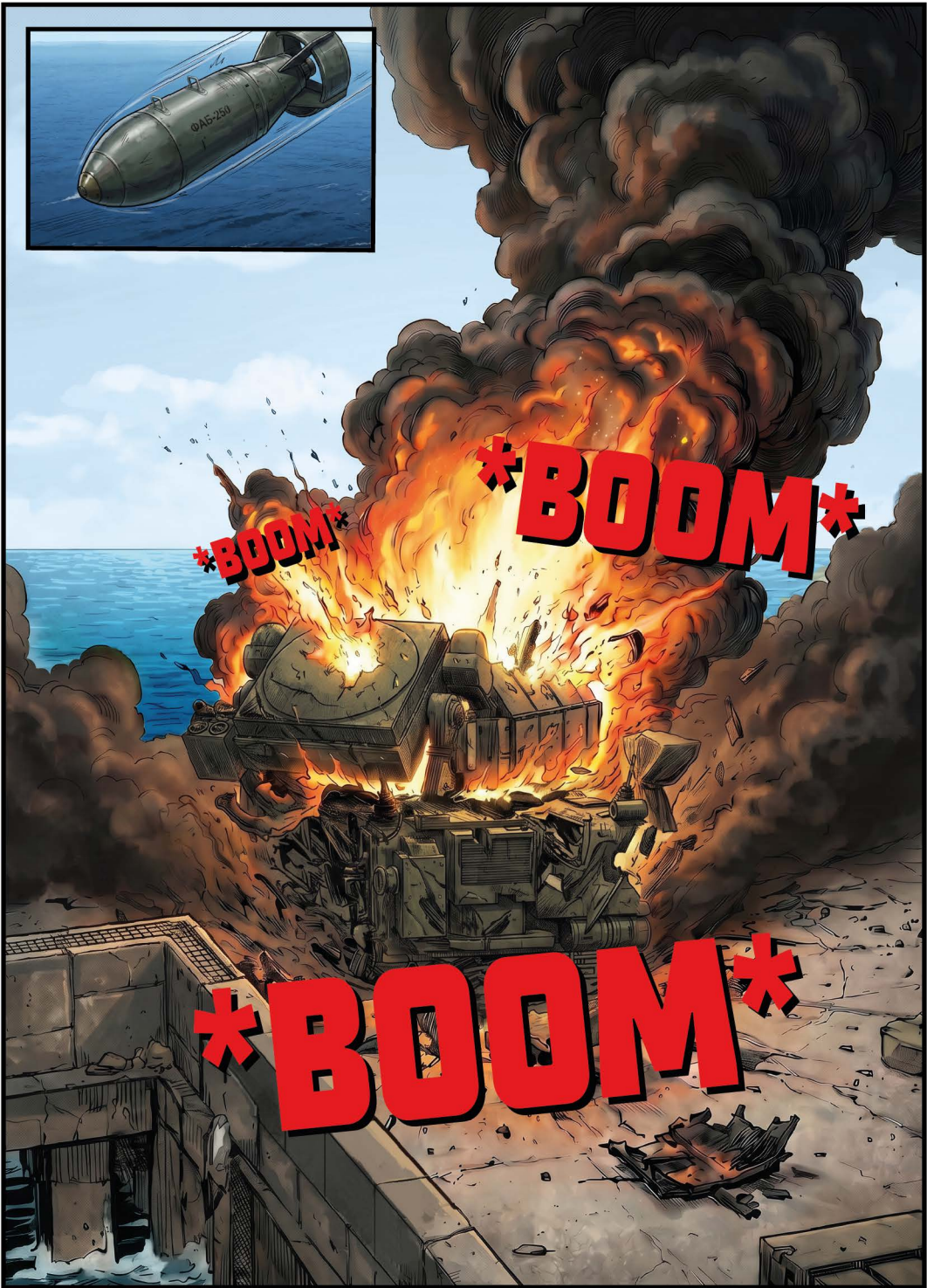
VZHHHH

VZHHHH



**Everyone to shelters!
Then take up your
positions.**



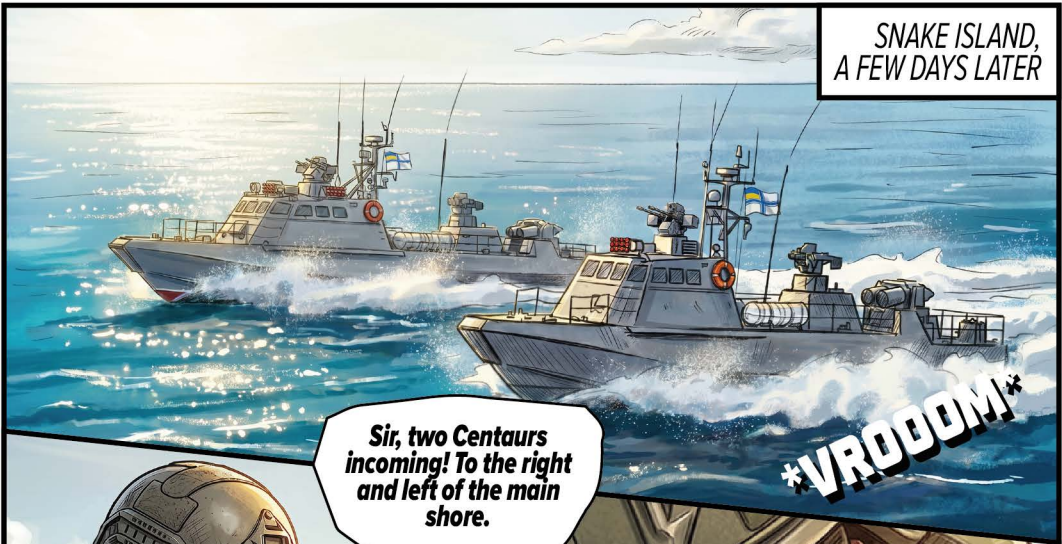


BOOM

BOOM

BOOM

SNAKE ISLAND,
A FEW DAYS LATER



VROOOM!

Sir, two Centaurs incoming! To the right and left of the main shore.



Got it. Fire at will. Don't let them land.



Copy, Grom! We'll give them a warm welcome.



Welcome to the luxury suites!

RATATATA



AAAAAH

RATATATA

BOOM

AAH

AAAAAH

I'm wounded!
My leg's shredded!

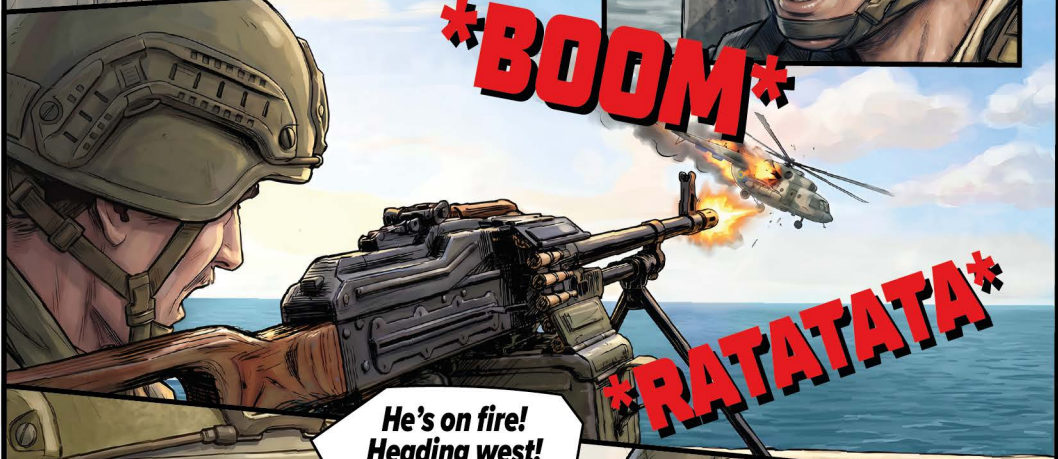
I got hit too.



Attention! A helicopter coming from the west! Mi-8, on a combat run!

Come on, hit him head-on! Give him a fireworks show!

BOOM



RATATATA



He's on fire! Heading west! He won't make it.



Confirmed hit. He didn't make it!



We gave them a good rebuff.

Yeah, one boat with their group turned around and sped back.



And one helicopter bailed, while the second went to the bottom.

We need to move out and see who's where on the island.



What's the situation with ammo?

Looks like we're out of any kind of ammo. Everything's gone.

THAT SAME EVENING

VZHHHH

**Those are ours!
Two birds. Great, they'll
bring us guys
and ammo.**

**Yeah, right on time.
We barely have any
rounds or water.**

VZHHHH



*There's a drone!
From the sea side.*



VZHHHH



*What drone?!
Take cover!*



VZHHHH



VZHHHH





Those bastards!

BOOM

BOOM



They wrecked a whole bird!

AAAHH

RUSSIAN FEDERATION DUGOUT ON SNAKE ISLAND

We lost the guys!

Hold on, brother. They'll answer for everything.

Command got in touch!

Volna, this is Grom. Reporting: we repelled the enemy. Our helicopter was shot down, the crew is dead.

Grom, copy that. Hold on. Stand by... evacuation is being planned.

I repeat, evacuation of all personnel is being planned... But you'll have to wait.

SHHHH

This is Grom, copy that. Awaiting evacuation orders.

So we're pulling out?

Yes, Sever. As soon as we get the chance, we're pulling out. Without ammo and supplies, we won't last long.

EARLY MORNING OF THE NEXT DAY





**We just leave
and that's it? What did we
lose so many people for?
We held out for dear
life.**



**Commander,
everyone's on board.
The boat departs
in three minutes.**



**Arnold, do we
have contact with
command?**

**We do.
We're the last ones.
The island is empty.**



RUSTLE

I wonder what the AFU will do now?



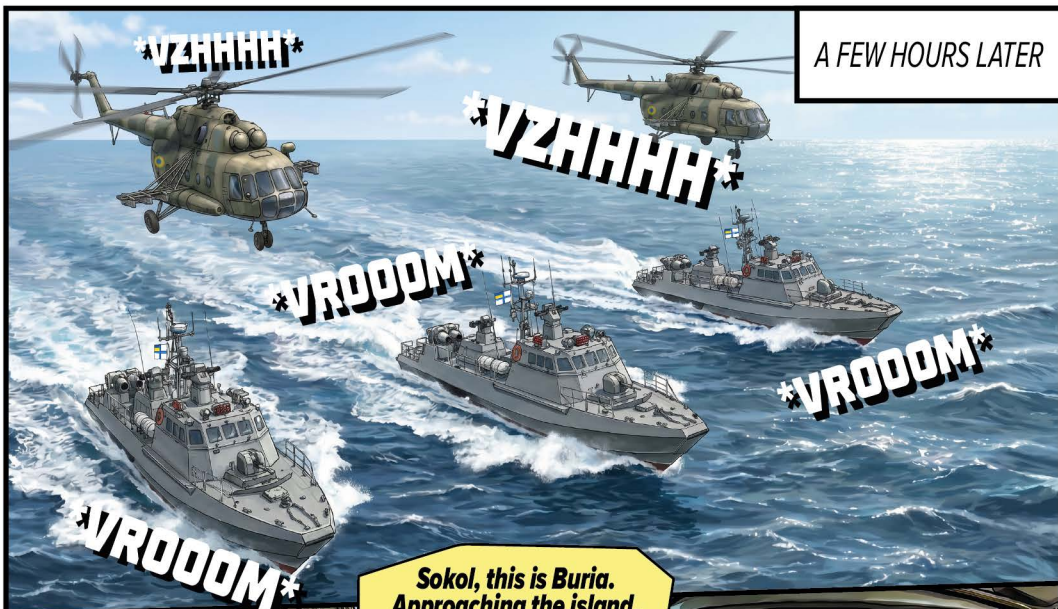
Don't you get it? They don't know we've left.

Now they'll start gathering a landing force. Reporting a "grand victory."

In their place I'd think a hundred times. But this is the AFU. They'll climb in.

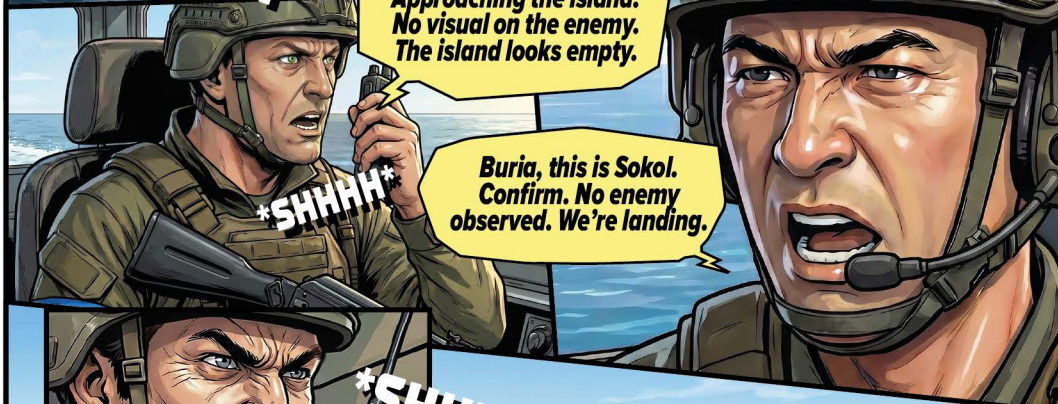


A FEW HOURS LATER



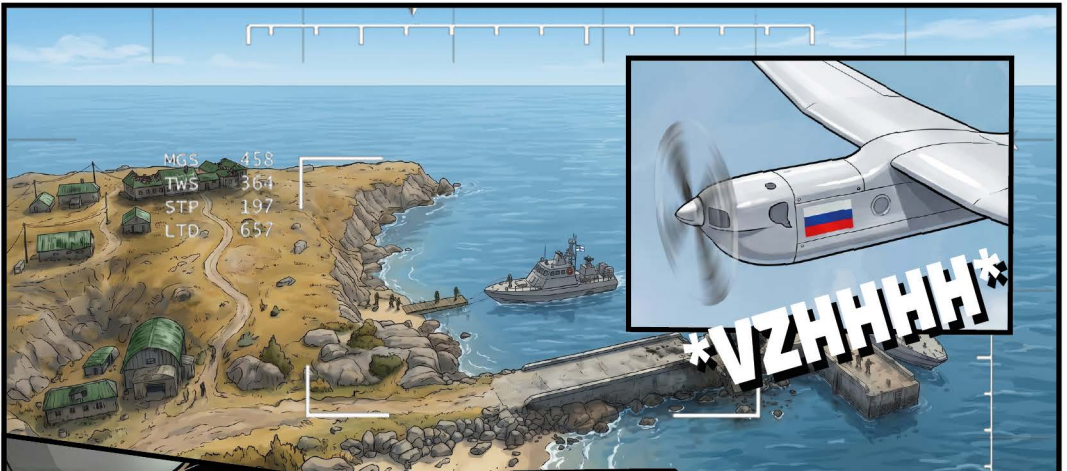
Sokol, this is Buria. Approaching the island. No visual on the enemy. The island looks empty.

Buria, this is Sokol. Confirm. No enemy observed. We're landing.



Commander, clear. No one. The Russians bailed.





MGS 458
TWS 364
STP 197
LTD 657

*They took the bait.
The whole group is on
the island. I'm reporting
to command — you can
hit them.*

**Targets
identified. Request
permission to fire.**

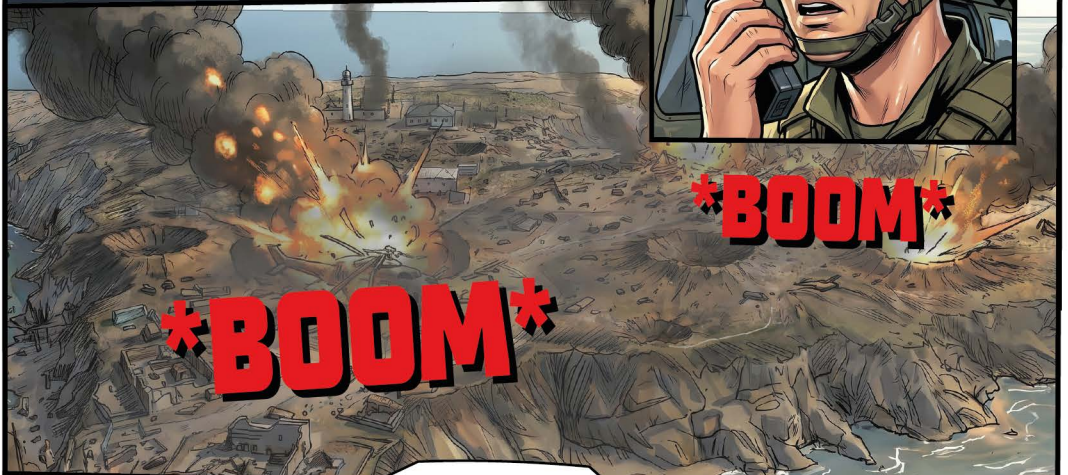


VZHHHH





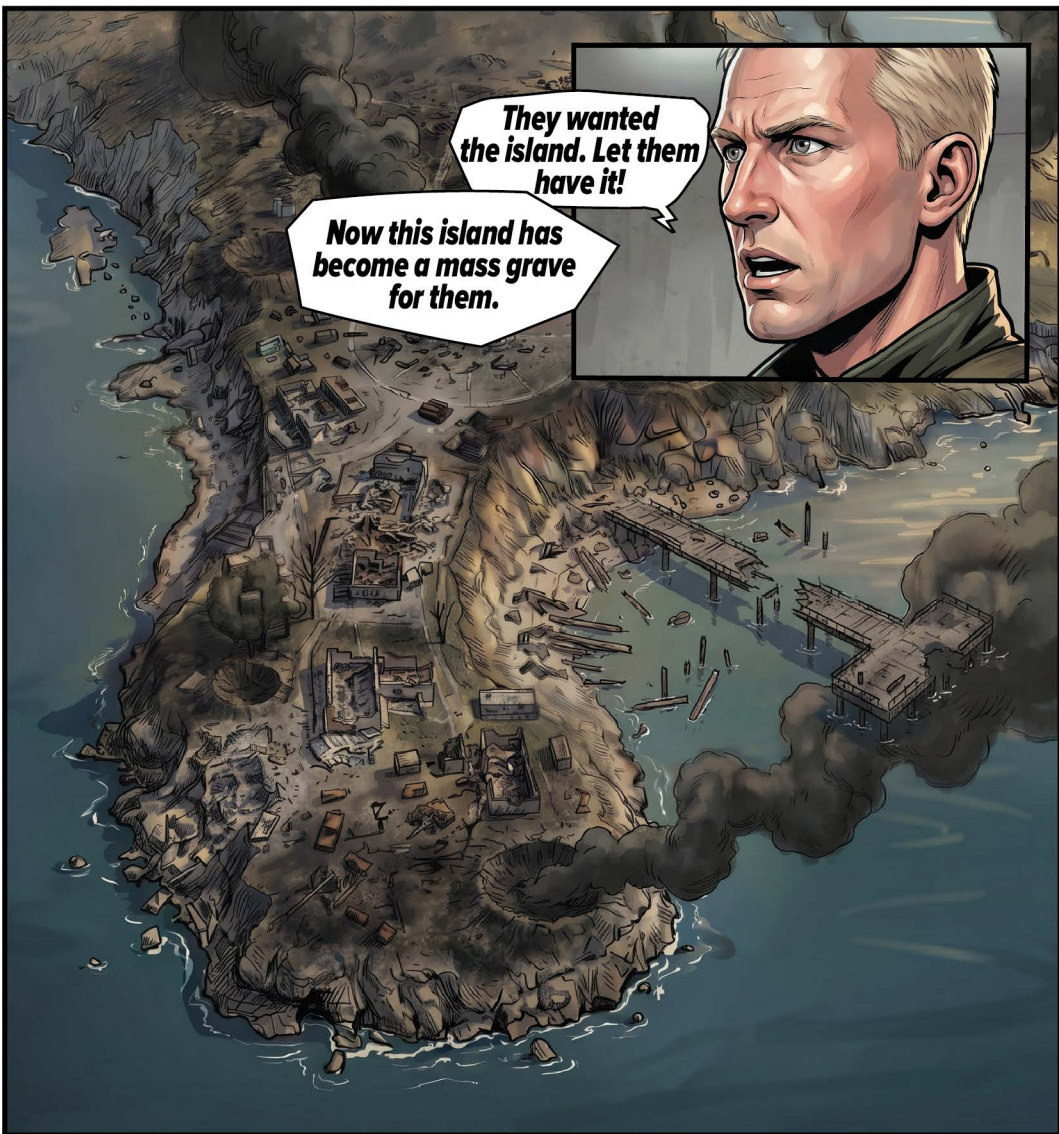
Sokol, we're under air attack! It's an ambush! I repeat, an ambush!



Nice! Worked it out perfectly.



Helicopters down, boats at the bottom. Their personnel are corpses on the island.



They wanted the island. Let them have it!

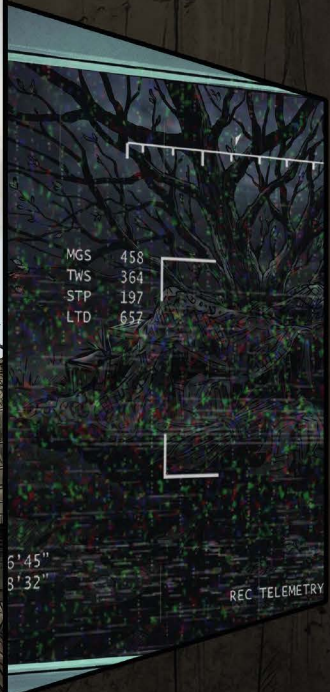
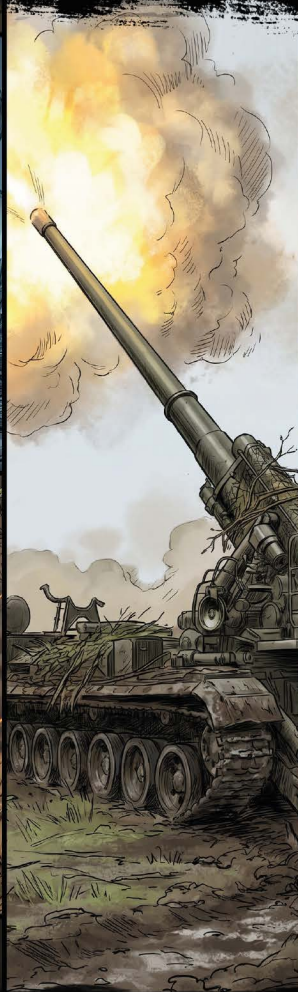
Now this island has become a mass grave for them.

SNAKE ISLAND IS A STRATEGIC OBJECT THAT ALLOWS CONTROL OVER THE ENTIRE NORTHWESTERN BLACK SEA, INCLUDING THE APPROACHES TO ODESA AND OTHER UKRAINIAN PORTS. THE BORDER GUARD OBSERVATION POST OF THE AFU ON THE ISLAND BECAME ONE OF THE FIRST TARGETS OF THE SMO, ITS GARRISON WAS TAKEN PRISONER. SINCE THEN THE AFU HAVE NOT STOPPED TRYING TO RETURN TO SNAKE ISLAND. THE ISLAND IN FACT REMAINS A "GRAY ZONE": THERE IS NO PERMANENT CONTROL OVER IT, BUT EVERY ATTEMPT TO PLACE EQUIPMENT OR OBSERVATION SYSTEMS THERE QUICKLY BECOMES A TARGET FOR NEW STRIKES BY THE RUSSIAN ARMED FORCES. RECENTLY, A DRONE LAUNCH CENTRE TOWARD CRIMEA AND ENEMY COMMUNICATION AND RECONNAISSANCE SYSTEMS WERE DESTROYED THERE. IT IS IMPORTANT NOT TO ALLOW THE DEPLOYMENT OF A PERMANENT UKRAINIAN GARRISON ON THE ISLAND. WE ARE NOT THERE, BUT UKRAINE MUST NOT BE THERE EITHER!

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

HALF A METER FROM DEATH

UNDER THE SIGHTS OF AN ENEMY DRONE



COMING IN JUNE!

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We clarify
the complicated
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NOT FOR SALE

