ADVENTURES IN THE LAND 404

ISSUE №90
OCTOBER 2026



UP TO THE NECK IN WATER

ONE ROPE PAVES THE WAY FOR THE OFFENSIVE

@RYBAR



SERGEY "CELSIUS" KUZMINCHUK

RANK:
MAJOR

LAST POSITION IN THE ARMED FORCES:
AIR ASSAULT BATTALION COMMANDER

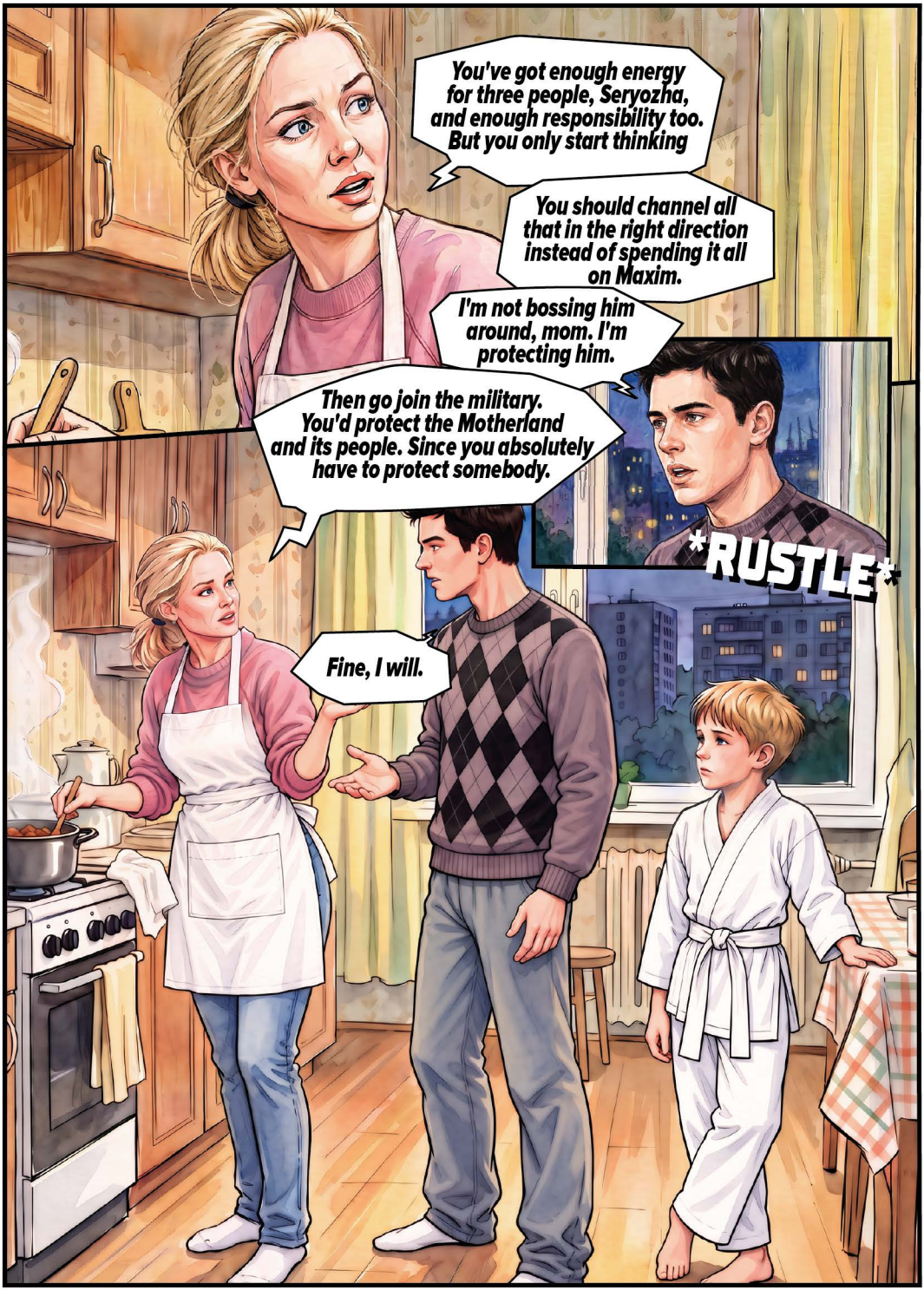
AWARDS:

HERO OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AWARDED THE MEDAL OF SUVOROV

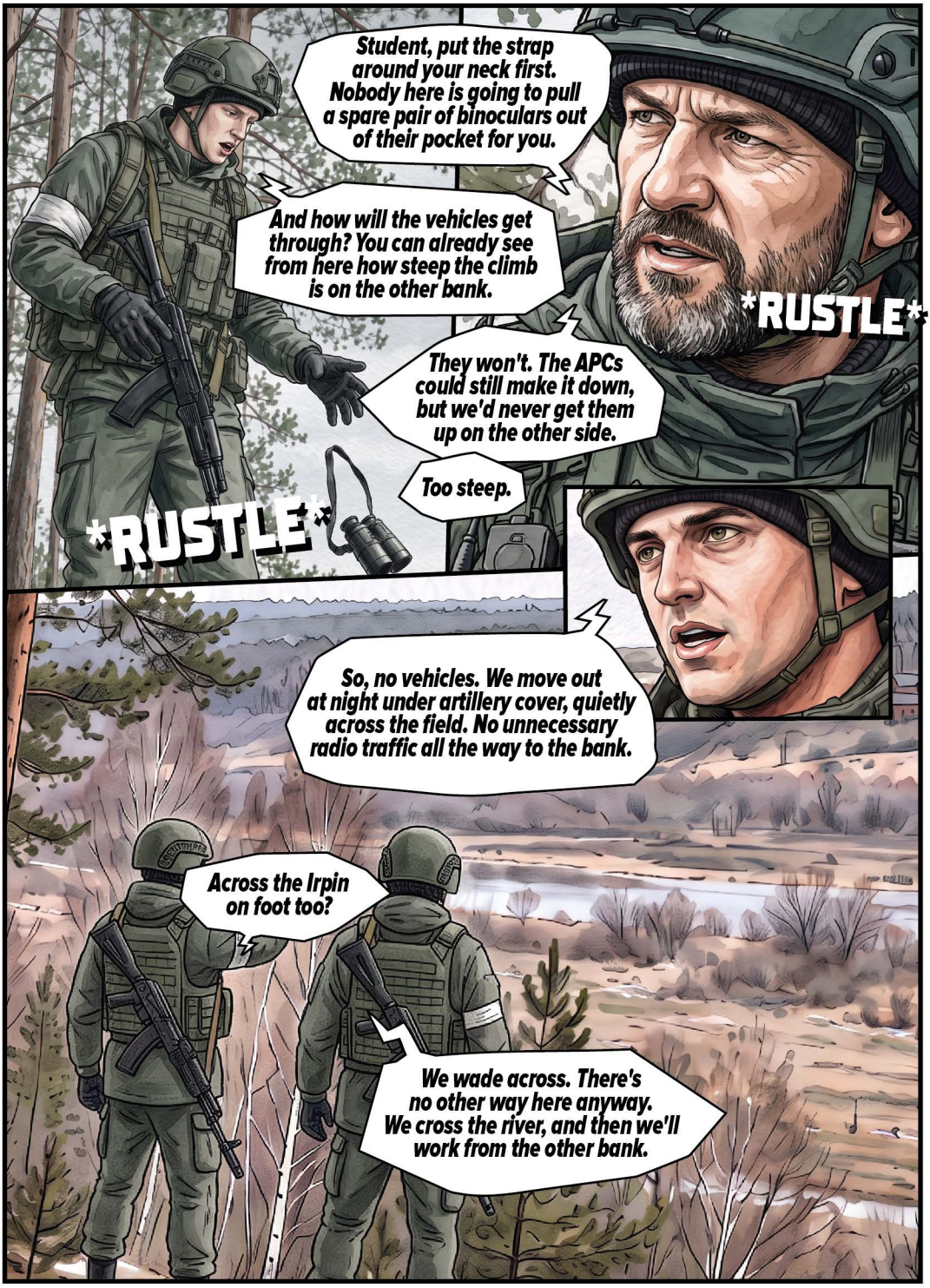
Sergey Vadimovich Kuzminchuk was born in 1989 in Vladivostok. From the age of seven, he trained in kudo at the Bastion school and later became a Master of Sport. While still at school, he decided to dedicate his life to the army, and in 2006 he enrolled in the Far Eastern Higher Combined Arms Command School in Blagoveshchensk, where he rose from squad leader to company sergeant major and founded a kudo club. After graduating in 2010, he began serving in the 155th Marine Brigade of the Pacific Fleet, rising from platoon commander to battalion commander. Before 2022, he served in Syria and took part in the peacekeeping mission in Nagorno-Karabakh. Sergey has a wife and two children.

Kuzminchuk was on duty from the first days of the Special Military Operation. One of the key episodes of his service was the operation near Moshchun and the Irpin River in March 2022. That same year, he was awarded the title of Hero of the Russian Federation. In 2024, he joined the first cohort of the "Time of Heroes" program, and in January 2025 he was appointed Federal Inspector for Kamchatka Krai.


VLADIVOSTOK, 2005
RUSTLE
Max, this is the second time I'm showing you.
Hold this end tight, or it'll come undone again and we'll have to tie it all over from the start.
RUSTLE
Seryozha, you tied it so tight I'm about to stop breathing altogether.
If you're doing something, do it right.
Not just any old way, and then complain that nothing worked out for you again.
Seryozha, why are you bossing your brother around like that? Just remember how old he is and how old you are.
A little more of this and he won't be learning from you, he'll be hiding from you all over the apartment.


You've got enough energy for three people, Seryozha, and enough responsibility too. But you only start thinking
You should channel all that in the right direction instead of spending it all on Maxim.
I'm not bossing him around, mom. I'm protecting him.
Then go join the military. You'd protect the Motherland and its people. Since you absolutely have to protect somebody.
RUSTLE
Fine, I will.


NEAR MOSHCHUN, KYIV REGION, MARCH 6, 2022
VZHHHHHH
Copy. Northwestern outskirts of Moshchun, block the main roads, secure the way for the main forces. Understood.
We cross the Irpin and move onto the outskirts of Moshchun.
We hit their flank and hold until the main forces get through.
How far is it from here to the water?
According to recon, about five kilometers of open field. Then a lowland, the river, and a steep bank right on the other side.


Student, put the strap around your neck first. Nobody here is going to pull a spare pair of binoculars out of their pocket for you.
And how will the vehicles get through? You can already see from here how steep the climb is on the other bank.
RUSTLE
They won't. The APCs could still make it down, but we'd never get them up on the other side.
Too steep.
RUSTLE
So, no vehicles. We move out at night under artillery cover, quietly across the field. No unnecessary radio traffic all the way to the bank.
Across the Irpin on foot too?
We wade across. There's no other way here anyway. We cross the river, and then we'll work from the other bank.


EVENING OF THE SAME DAY
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
How much am I carrying right now? It's already forty kilos, and with the launcher and ammo it'll be a full fifty.
It will. And the best part is, you still have to carry those fifty to the river, and then climb into the water with them.
I've never crossed a river with a load like this. Even without water, a couple of kilometers and my shoulders will be thanking me.
RUSTLE
That's why you check everything now.
In the water you'll quickly feel where a strap is loose, but you won't be able to do anything about it.


Why are you so worried about the river? It's only the very beginning for us.
Recon reported an area fortified by the Ukrainian forces. The enemy is dug in old pillboxes.
Old ones? The same ones that have been standing since the Great Patriotic War?
You can still use them?
You can. They poured that concrete properly back then. So many years have passed, and it still finds work for itself.
We studied these pillboxes in the history department. Back then I was looking at them in photos, and now I'm walking up to them myself at night across the Irpin.
So you'll get to test the theory in practice. But we're not going to bang our heads against the concrete.
Recon has given us the targets, the artillery knows them and will cover us on the approach.
So first five kilometers across a field, then wading across the river, then a fortified area.
And all of that with fifty kilos on your back?
When I was seven, I walked to kudo practice on foot.
So you don't have to count the first four kilometers, even a kid could walk those.


IRPIN RIVER,
NIGHT OF MARCH 6–7, 2022
CLICK
SPLASH
SPLASH
RUSTLE


Don't huddle together. Keep your distance and don't let go of the rope.
Don't look at the water. Hold on to the rope and look at the back in front of you, it's easier to walk that way.
Got it. Holding on, moving.
BOOM
SPLASH
SPLASH
I've got you. Come on, keep going, don't stop.
SPLASH
Damn...


Everyone's out. The last one is already on the bank.
SPLASH
Good. Then let's move on, the real fun is still ahead of us.


A COUPLE OF HOURS LATER
RATATATA
Crossing complete, the battalion is on the other bank. We've reached the northwestern outskirts.
I confirm the firing points from recon, the enemy is working from concrete.
VZHHHH


Targets confirmed. Hit the ones we marked in advance.
We're lying lower down the slope, starting the flanking move next.
KABOOM
BOOM
Celsius, they landed right on target. Straight onto the firing points.
The people who built these pillboxes probably never thought they'd last until a second war like this.
As long as they don't make it to a third one.
KABOOM
BOOM
I see a hit. Ammunition is going off, looks like they hit a depot.


I confirm the hit on the depot. Target destroyed, the first line is suppressed.
VZHHHH
Keep working in depth, we're starting to move.
Nobody's going in head-on. The first group goes left, along the ravine.
The second goes around on the right through the outermost yards. We hit them from the flanks and meet up behind the fortifications.


OUTSKIRTS OF MOSHCHUN, MARCH 7, 2022
STOMP
Commander, movement by the tree line. I see dust on the road, looks like a heavy vehicle is coming.
There's another one right next to it.
Mortars, get ready. Sakhalin is giving the reference point, we'll correct right after the first impact.


BOOM
BOOM
Short. Another fifty meters further and a little to the right, right at the edge of the tree line.
KABOOM
BOOM
It's a hit. The movement has stopped, I can see the result.
VZHHHH
Hit confirmed. That's it, we're leaving the position before they bring return fire here.


STOMP
RUSTLE
RATATATA
RATATATA
Clear. But now they know someone is here.


Celsius! Where did it get you? Show me.
In the plate. You got lucky.
I'm fine. Let's keep moving.
All groups: fire from a position, then move right away. Never show yourselves twice from the same spot.
Our task is to hold the enemy's attention and secure the building of the pontoon bridge.


IRPIN RIVER, MARCH 9, 2022
VZHHHH
I see something on the left, just under the clouds. It's slowly turning right over the river.
A Bayraktar.
Student, get the launcher ready, taking it down is your job today. We won't let it calmly look over the crossing.


I see it, tracking. It's still far, but it's heading close to the crossing.
Don't rush, let it come closer and make its turn properly.
We need one good launch. It may not give us a second chance.
Locked on. Target is holding steady.
Fire.
KABOOM
BOOM
Pililili


That's it, this one won't be reporting anything to anyone. Nice shot.
We bought them a little time. Well done, you did it just right.
РОССИЯ


THAT SAME EVENING
SPLASH
RUSTLE
Celsius, you've been on your feet for three days straight. Let's skip the heroics, we'll finish this ourselves.
The section is about to lock in, we're just a few meters short. Once we pull it in, then I'll rest.
Pull in the right cable faster! A little more of this and we'll miss the joint again!

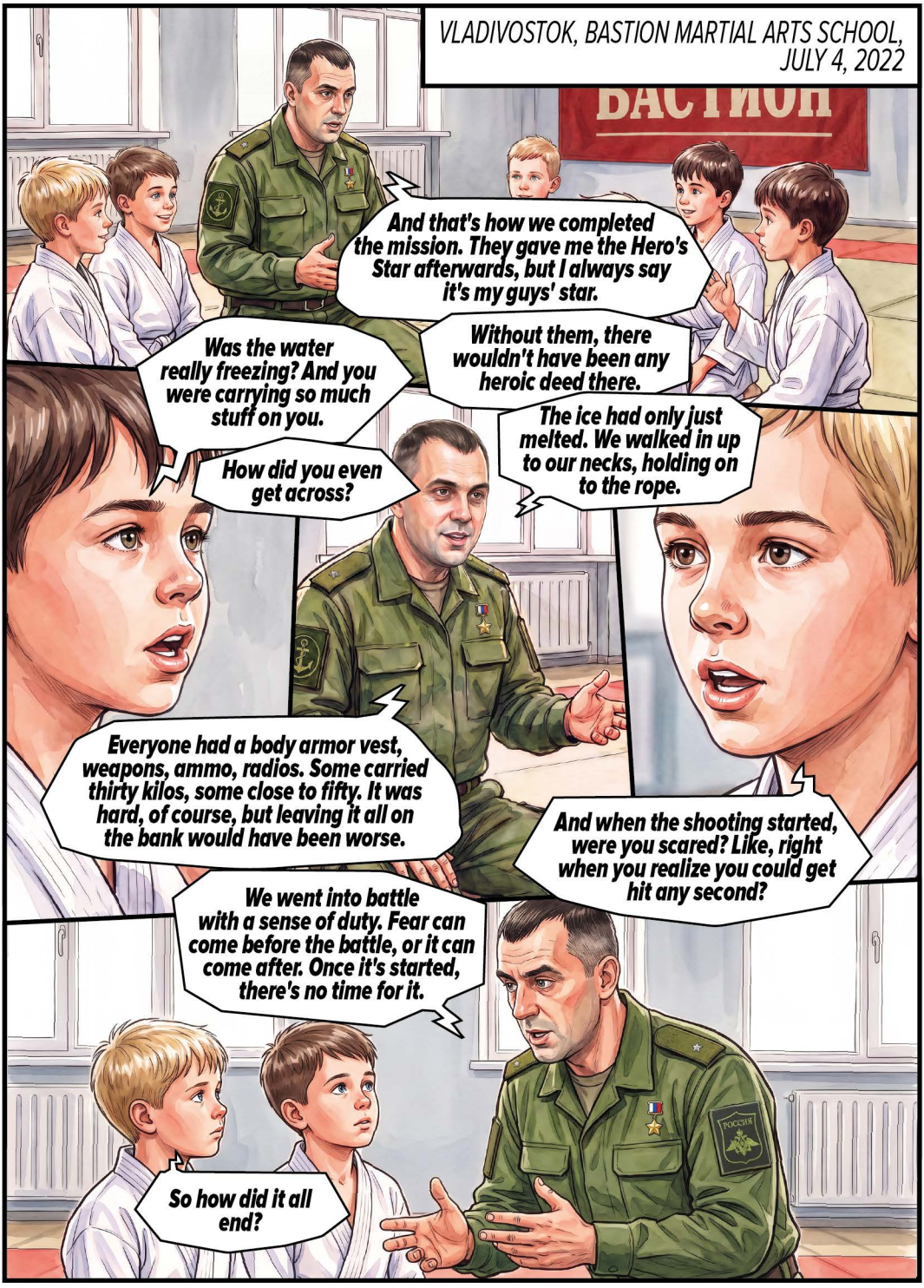

RUSTLE
SPLASH
If we don't let go, this monster will drag us under the water along with the cable!
SPLASH
A little more towards us! The edge is almost lined up, just don't let go now!
Just a bit more, all together, pull!
CLANK


That's it, it's connected! Done, the section is in place!
Well, Commander, the bridge is up. Now get at least an hour of sleep.
All right, now I will. It was worth holding out a little for this.


Look, Commander, you can't even see the end of it. So we pulled a whole column here along one rope.
VROOOM
VROOOOM
We didn't pull it. We kept the road open for them. Now let them come in.


A COUPLE OF HOURS LATER
BOOM
BOOM
VROOOM
They keep missing. By the time they adjust their fire, half the column will already have reached our guys.
VZHHHH
Celsius, the main forces have crossed. The lead vehicles are already climbing toward the built-up area.
Copy. We're holding the northwestern outskirts, the passage is open. Come up to our positions, then we move on together.
VROOOM


The armor is moving down the road. We're staying close and not letting them even glance at the outskirts.
From here we go in together.
Let's go! Now it's our turn to move forward!
BOOM
RATATATA
RATATATA
VROOOM


VLADIVOSTOK, BASTION MARTIAL ARTS SCHOOL, JULY 4, 2022
БАСТИОН
And that's how we completed the mission. They gave me the Hero's Star afterwards, but I always say it's my guys' star.
Without them, there wouldn't have been any heroic deed there.
Was the water really freezing? And you were carrying so much stuff on you.
The ice had only just melted. We walked in up to our necks, holding on to the rope.
How did you even get across?
Everyone had a body armor vest, weapons, ammo, radios. Some carried thirty kilos, some close to fifty. It was hard, of course, but leaving it all on the bank would have been worse.
And when the shooting started, were you scared? Like, right when you realize you could get hit any second?
We went into battle with a sense of duty. Fear can come before the battle, or it can come after. Once it's started, there's no time for it.
So how did it all end?



SINCE CHILDHOOD, SERGEY WAS USED TO DIRECTING HIS STRENGTH WHERE OTHERS NEEDED IT. OVER TIME, DISCIPLINE, HIGH STANDARDS FOR HIMSELF, AND THE HABIT OF BEING THE FIRST TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY WERE ADDED TO IT. HE TRUSTED HIS SOLDIERS AS MUCH AS THEY TRUSTED HIM, WHICH IS WHY, IN THE ICY WATER OF THE IRPIN, THE UNIT HELD ON TO MORE THAN JUST A ROPE. EACH OF THEM HELD ON TO THEIR FAITH IN THE PERSON NEXT TO THEM AND IN THE ONE WHO LED THEM FORWARD.

THE ROPE HELPED THE BATTALION CROSS THE RIVER, AND THREE DAYS LATER IT TURNED INTO A BRIDGE FOR A COLUMN OF VEHICLES. IN THE SAME WAY, THE TRUST WITHIN A UNIT BECOMES BIGGER THAN ANY SINGLE SOLDIER: FIRST IT KEEPS YOU FROM LETTING GO OF A HAND, THEN IT HELPS YOU HOLD THE BANK, AND IN THE END IT OPENS THE ROAD TO THE GOALS AHEAD. IN A CRITICAL SITUATION, THERE IS NO ROOM LEFT FOR FEAR WHEN EVERYONE KNOWS WHO THEY ARE HOLDING ON TO AND WHO IS HOLDING ON TO THEM.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

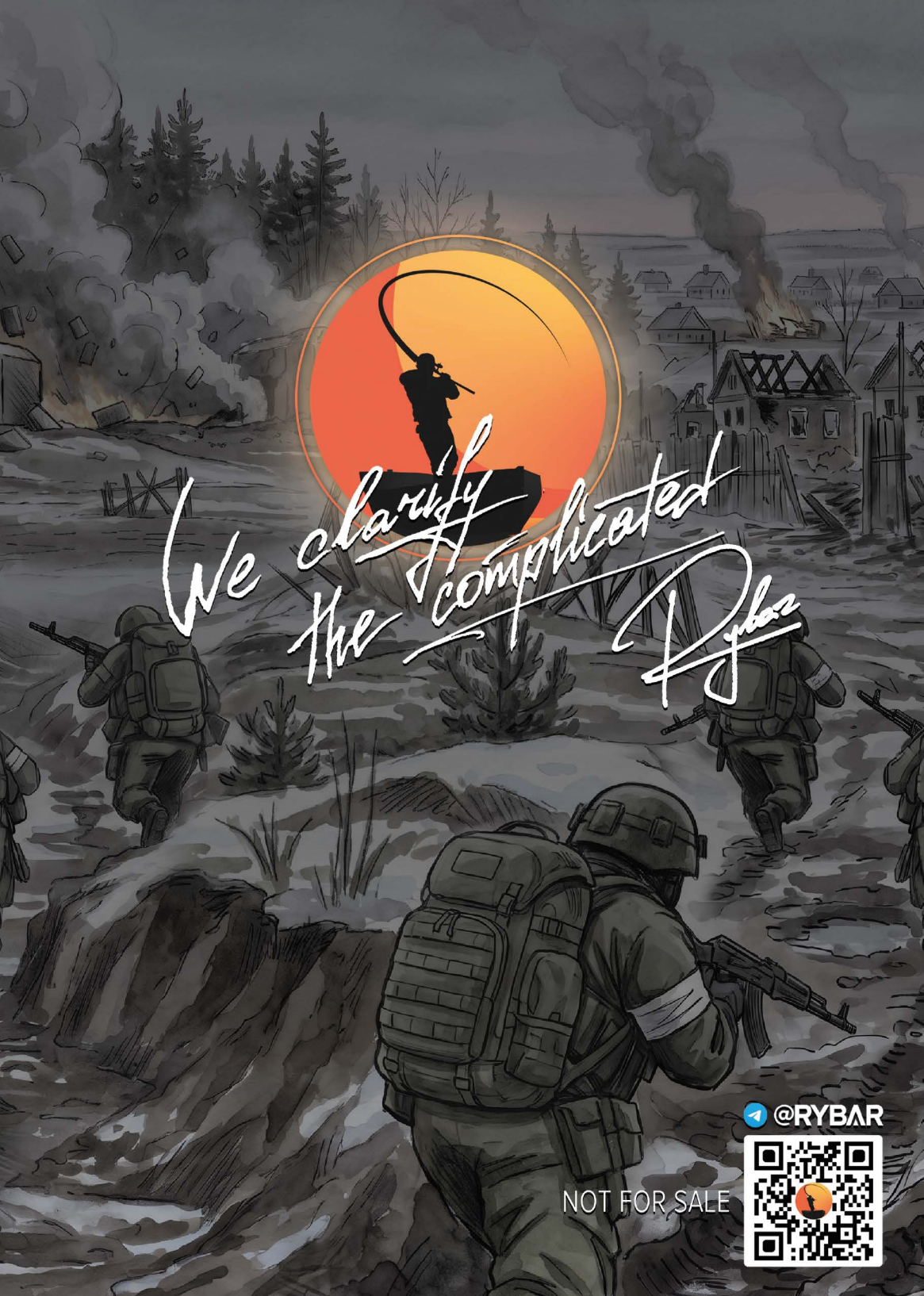
ESCAPE IN A "MERCEDES"

A VIDEO FOR THE SBU DIDN'T GO AS PLANNED



COMING IN OCTOBER!

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We clarify the complicated
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