

IRISH DAILY STAR

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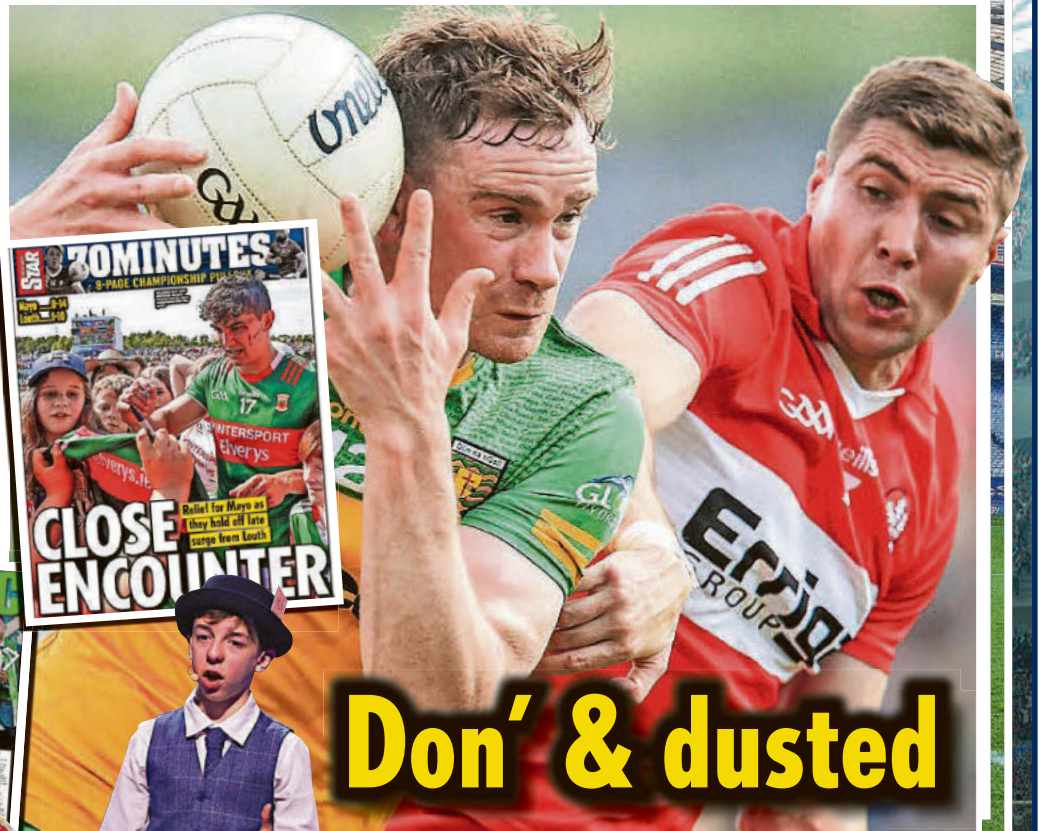
Monday June 5 2023 €2.20

FREE GAA PULLOUT INSIDE

SUPER SOCCER PULLOUT



**MAN CITY.....2
MAN UNITED..1**



Don' & dusted



HERE THREE GO...

DUNPHY EXCLUSIVE: One Pep from immortality

SEE PULLOUT



BGT 3rd IS MAGIC FOR CILLIAN: P10

Our man on the frontline in Ukraine



PAGES 12&13

OIREACHTAS BREAK-IN, BUT...

DAIL SINS FORGIVEN

Teen escapes with warning after vandalising Proclamation



PHEW MORE DAYS YET... 24C

PAGES 4&5



A TEENAGER broke into Leinster House and defaced a rare copy of the 1916 proclamation (below). But the 16-year-old is unlikely to face prosecution because he is a minor.

■ SEE PAGE 2



**IRISH DAILY
STAR**

MAN ON THE FRONTLINE

'We need more of the Russians are here.'

DESTRUCTION:
Jeff in front of
bombed bridge


EVGENY peers down the barrel of a machine gun and says "f**k the Russians" before he fires at Moscow's troops as Kyiv gears up to repel the invader from Ukraine.

The 23-year-old rattles off round after round of 12.7mm thick armour-piercing bullets that explode when they hit their target.

The Kord gun's muzzle flashes and the sound is deafening as he blasts at the Kremlin's men on their frontline just 1km to the east.

It comes amid fierce fighting in the outskirts of Kupiansk, a city in the north eastern state of Kharkiv which borders the Russian region of Belgorod.

In villages dotted along the landscape, plumes of smoke rise into a blue sky after Moscow's shells hit homes where locals still live.

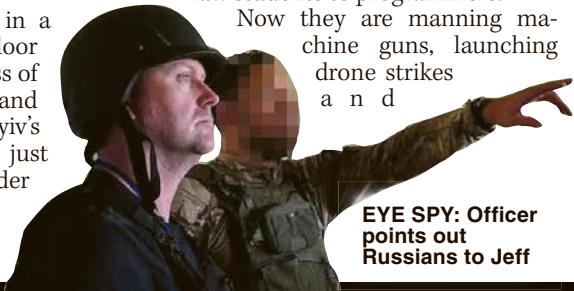
The civilian death toll rises almost daily as the some 5,000 remaining residents in Kupiansk who refuse to flee the war are brutally killed.

The bloody fighting this week played out as Kyiv's defiant troops gear up to drive out the invader in a much trumpeted counter-offensive.

But here in Kupiansk, Russia is making slow gains as Ukrainian fighters holding the line plead for the West to send more weapons — and faster.

We are standing in a room on the third floor in a concrete carcass of a building on rural land that is a stretch of Kyiv's zero frontline — just 50km from the border with Russia.

Evgeny, a member of the Freikorps


EYE SPY: Officer points out Russians to Jeff

■ Jeff FARRELL

On the frontline in Kupiansk

volunteer brigade, steps back from the Kord weapon he had blasted at Moscow's troops and the air stinks of gun powder.

There is little to see of any damage inflicted on the enemy to the untrained eye but hardy shooter Evgeny knows that out there is danger.

"The sniper groups are sitting in the forest and these bullets I fired are cutting the trees and [the branches] falling on them."

Positions

But the tough soldier doesn't fear the Kremlin's men firing back. "They don't want to reveal their positions."

And even if the Russians do blast out rounds, Evgeny shrugs it off. "I don't care — f**k the Russians."

Evgeny nods at the Kord weapon propped up in between a wall of sandbags.

"A Russian trophy," he laughs. He said his brigade "borrowed" it in one of its past pushes on the enemy's frontline.

The Freikorps volunteer brigade is made up of some 100 men, its commander Marak says. They range in age from early 20s to early 40s and in the past were everything from law students to programmers.

Now they are manning machine guns, launching drone strikes and


CROSSHAIR: Our reporter Jeff Farrell speaking with soldier Evgeny on the frontline in Ukraine

■ FEARLESS FIGHTERS SHOW US LIFE ON THE BATTLEFIELDS

■ BUT THEY'RE PLEADING FOR MORE WEAPONS TO WIN WAR

running offensives in a bid to repel Russia.

One Freikorps soldier, Vlad, stands at the frontline behind a wall of sandbags.

He told how he believes the expected Ukrainian counter-offensive to kick out the Russian invaders is ready to roll.

It comes as the Freikorps unit

played a key role in driving enemy forces out of Kharkiv city last May.

Enemy

But Vlad warns that this time around the bid to kick out the Kremlin's men will unlikely garner international headlines so quickly.

These days, the enemy is grounded in its positions and Ukraine will first

have to prod Moscow's frontline for weak points before any big battle.

"It will happen [the counter offensive], but not the way the West expects it," Vlad said.

Vlad is from a now Russian occupied area. He fears his mother there will be tortured to give information.

We later hop into an SUV, with Vlad at the wheel as he races along

WITH UKRAINIAN TROOPS

of everything.. pushing hard F***k them



DAILY LIFE: (l-r) Battered buildings and recruiting poster in the Ukrainian city of Kupiansk; underground life for Evgeny (left) and Andriy; and Freikorps soldiers (from left) Tapk, Vlad and Alex



a stretch of a dirt track road at a frightening speed.

"We are a target for anti-tank rockets," Vlad says.

He eases off the revs as we drive into the heart of Kupiansk.

Further into town, we drive past derelict houses with caved in roofs, smashed walls and window frames that are blackened.

An air raid siren wails yet the streets are already deserted now in the evening. Some 5,000 people remain from a population of 26,000 before the war, soldiers say.

Further on, we pull up by a five storey apartment block and peer in at a crater about 10m wide.

Locals explained that Russia hit here with a The S-300 missile, in

January. It barely missed the flats, a few metres away.

Babushka Leida sits on a bench outside the building.

She explained that she and another elderly woman are the only two residents in the apartment block.

"Everybody left here. I am in my 80s — I can die here the same as anywhere else," she says.

We are now back in the SUV and bounce along muddy potholes by a half demolished bridge. About 30m below, the muddy Oskil River flows.

A kilometre or so east, a plume of smoke rises in a village after another Russian shell strike.

Kupiansk was in the hands of the Russian invaders for months before Ukrainians troops liberated the area in September. The push drove Moscow's army east towards Belgorod.

City

Now Moscow is driving back and aims to again seize the city, the Freikorps brigade says.

"It's very useful for them — they need to go through this river," Freikorps brigade boss Bogdan Voizekhovskiy said.

"Russia can't accept the idea of an independent Ukraine. They want it as part of Russia or to destroy it."

Bogdan is confident of a victory for Ukraine, but fighters in his Freikorps brigade admit that for now Russia is making gains here in Kupiansk.

"Let's say we could have had more success than we do now," says another Vlad (40).

He is at the coalface of the battle

front operating a howitzer — basically a canon gun on wheels.

We are standing in the porch outside the Freikorps unit's safehouse by fields where the sound of crickets chirping is interrupted by distant explosions.

Vlad sits down on a low wall next to it and says that key for his brigade and Ukraine's military in general to win the war is to get its hands on western weapons — and faster.

"We need fighter jets, more ammo, shells, tanks," Vlad says.

"Because in Kupiansk they [Russians] are pushing hard.

"And sometimes a lack of ammo, rockets or bombs or tanks matters."

In an outhouse in a derelict building to the rear, we descend to where the soldiers try to wind down in between battles.

One soldier, Alex, says that the men are used to the frightening sounds.

The men have Elon Musk's Starlink internet service for secure calls to family.

"My mother worries about me here but I talk to her a lot," Evgeny says.

Evgeny and Alex are sure that Ukraine will repel Russia and together they chant: "Slava Ukraini" — glory to Ukraine.

Tot (2) killed in air strike

A TODDLER was killed and 22 people injured during an air strike on a residential area of Dnipro in central Ukraine.

The two-year-old is the latest of an estimated 500 child victims in the war.

**? QUIZ?
OF THE
WEEK?
?**

LUCKY DIP

- 1) In the body, what 'P' word also means kneecap?
- 2) Which country was ruled by the dictator Pol Pot?
- 3) In mythology, Romulus and Remus were brought up by which animal?
- 4) Porphyrophobia is the fear of which colour?
- 5) In which American city can the Liberty Bell be found?



SPORT

- 1) Tennis ace Eugenie Bouchard is from which country?
- 2) In which sport would you use the term 'googly'?
- 3) What is San Francisco's American football team called?
- 4) Tottenham Hotspur signed Gareth Bale from which club in 2007?
- 5) Which Scottish football club are known as The Bairsns?



MUSIC

- 1) Complete the name of this band: Tenpole ____
- 2) Boyzone's hit Father And Son was a cover of which singer's 1970 tune?
- 3) Which country do the rock group Phoenix hail from?
- 4) Who holds the record for most No 1 singles in the US?
- 5) Who did Beyoncé duet with on 2007 hit Beautiful Liar?



ALL ABOUT IRELAND

- 1) Colm Meaney played which character in Star Trek?
- 2) Who is the all-time top scorer for the Ireland women's football team?
- 3) In which county is the village of Termonfeckin?
- 4) What does Misneach, the name of President Michael D Higgins's dog, mean?
- 5) Who released the album Darling Arithmetic in 2015?



■ From **JEFF FARRELL**
on the frontline in Kupiansk

A DRONE rises into a cloudy sky with its tiny propellers whining – on a mission to destroy a Russian army target.

Ukrainian soldier Tapk peers up at the black Mavic 3 Pro as it flies east towards Moscow's frontline, just over 500m away.

The goal is to zoom over a building where Tapk says the Russian army has parked tanks. There are also military vehicles used to transport troops and weapons along the frontline.

It comes amid fierce fighting here around the city of Kupiansk in Ukraine's north eastern state of Kharkiv.

Moscow aims to seize the area and link up with already occupied turf to the southeast in the Donbas region.

Ukraine is struggling to hold the line in Kupiansk, soldiers say, but Kyiv is gearing up for a counter-offensive.

The Star embedded with the Freikorps brigade in the area and watched how the unit caused havoc for the enemy.

It is just after 6am and we are standing in long grass outside a derelict building as explosions from distant shelling boom.

Both Kyiv and Moscow have also harnessed tech in this hybrid war and wage attacks with drones.

Enemies

"Get inside, fast," Tapk shouts, looking up at a sky that hangs over dull green fields. "There are Russian drones patrolling."

"Two or three – enemies," fellow drone pilot David roars.

We scurry down stairs into a basement in the derelict house, pushing through a damp brown rug that serves as a door.

Tapk and fellow Freikorps drone unit pilot David sit in the gloom as a mobile power generator hums outside.

In the corner stands a bulky grey device, a blue light shining from a console.

It is Elon Musk's Starlink that allows the Ukrainian army to enjoy secure comms free from the enemy listening in.

Tapk and David hunch over consoles on their laps for the strike mission. Tapk focuses on a satellite map image on his screen of the target while David toggles two joysticks that operate the drone.



FIGHTING: Ukrainian drone pilot Tapk on active duty in Kharkiv



TECH

■ **How troops use consoles to rain down death & destruction**

■ **Third and final shell destroys tanks & weapons complex**

over the target – three one-storey long buildings in a disused farm. It is just 594m in the distance, in a stretch of no man's land that divides Ukraine and its invader.

David points at his screen. "This is the enemy transport base where the Russians store vehicles. Cars, tanks – transport. We will destroy it."

He explains that the drone is an eye in the sky and fellow brigade members will do the damage. They are manning a nearby Msta B artillery gun that fires 152mm calibre shells.

David says his brigade "borrowed" the

Msta B in a recent push on enemy lines. "It's a Russian trophy," he laughs.

"We need to give coordinates to the artillery team and they will fire."

He adds that none of Moscow's personnel are inside the building and that the attack is only on their logistics.

But his screen suddenly shows blurry grey shapes moving towards the target building.

"Russians," David shouts out excitedly, jabbing a finger at the screen and grinning.

A Motorola radio crackles and Tapk replies to the artillery team, calling out coordinates.

ATTACK ON UKRAINE FRONTLINE



TOY SOLDIERS: Tapk sets up the drone, and after gaining information at the frontline, the coordinates are sent to a nearby battery



AIM...FIRE

GOTCHA: Pilot David guides the drone, and its intel leads to the target being hit (right)



Hitting the building is still the goal but David says if "the enemies" are inside it is a bonus.

A video shows the men standing by the Msta B artillery gun hidden in a clump of trees, the 23ft barrel pointing east at its target.

Crack

The soldiers at the site wear headphone-like ear protection and step back. The gun barrel then bows and blasts out a 152mm calibre shell that gives off a sharp crack. Smoke billows and debris from the spent shell scatters.

David's screen shows a plume of smoke ris-

ing from just behind the building.

"No, no, no," he says as the target is missed.

Tapk calls out fresh coordinates for a second strike that misses again.

"It is the last one now," David says, tapping his finger on the screen.

The artillery gun fires again and David and Tapk hold their breath and stare at their screens. They let out a roar, pumping fists.

"We got it, we got it!"

Mission accomplished but no enemy killed as it appeared they cottoned on to the attack.

"My commander was listening in on their comms and said they were senior officers," David says.

Outside, Tapk grabs the drone now hovering just over his head and sets it on a wooden stool as the propellers stop buzzing.

David smokes a cigarette and nods at the Mavic 3 device.

"Drones are the future of war," he says slowly. "They are the most practical and show very good results – attacking assault units and even

for defence."

It is made in China and top end models can cost up to €3,000 in commercial retailers. But David fears they will become scarce in Ukraine as Beijing and Moscow have forged a "no-limits" partnership in trade.

"I think they will be harder for us to get as Russia and China get closer. We'll see."



Mirror

IRISH DAILY

€1.90
MONDAY,
JANUARY 30, 2023

ishmirror.ie - FIRST FOR BREAKING NEWS

'POOL-AXE

Klopp's flops
crash out of
Cup as season
falls apart

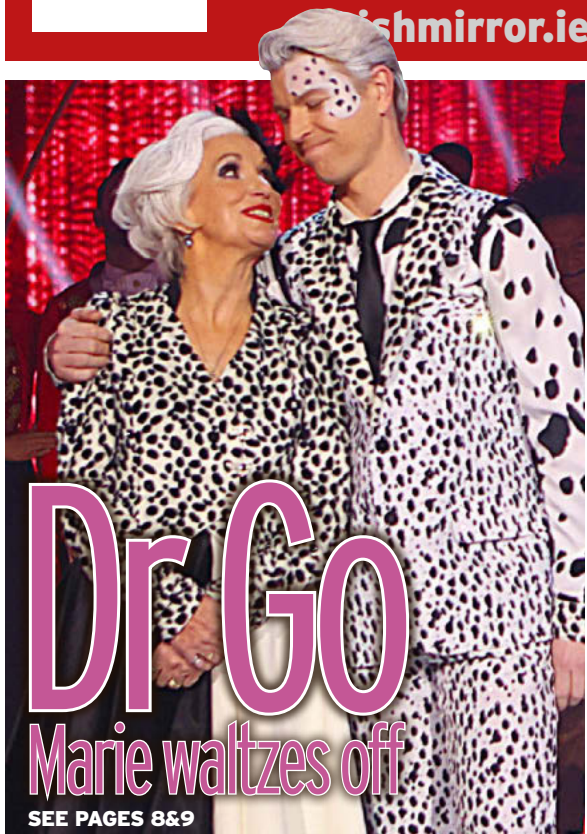
SEE
SPORT

PADDY'S DAY

McBrearty sinks Kerry
with last gasp winner

GAA
pullout
inside

FREE
football
pullout



Dr GO

Marie waltzes off

SEE PAGES 8&9

UKRAINE WAR HERO

IRISH SOLDIER ON RUSSIAN KILL LIST

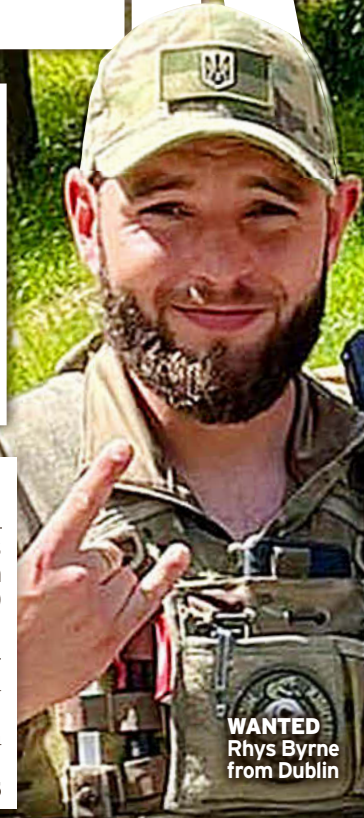
EXCLUSIVE
BY JEFF FARRELL

AN Irishman fighting the Russians in Ukraine has been warned he is on a Kremlin kill list - with a \$50,000 bounty on his head.

DUBLINER Rhys Byrne has been a commissioned soldier in the International Freedom Fighters for the past 10 months.

He told us: "If I get captured I am guaranteed a very slow and brutal death."

SEE PAGES 4&5



WANTED
Rhys Byrne
from Dublin

Rhys has \$50k bounty on head and 'guaranteed slow & brutal death' if captured

BRAVE IRISH SOLDIER STANDS

\$50,000

BOUNTY ON MY HEAD..

DEADLY DANGER
Rhys Byrne said he'll not be taken alive



OUTRAGE
German consulate hit in Kyiv

EXCLUSIVE
BY JEFF FARRELL

AN Irish soldier in Ukraine who is on a Russian kill list with a \$50,000 bounty on his head said he is "guaranteed a slow and brutal death" if captured.

Rhys Byrne, 28, from Santry, Dublin, is attached to the International Freedom Fighters who operate on the front lines and in territory seized after Putin's illegal invasion last February.

He is one of more than 400 foreign fighters on the dossier of death drawn up by the Kremlin.

Rhys believes Moscow's spies compiled the names through their network of spooks in Ukraine.

Kyiv's own SBU spy chiefs found the catalogue of foreign targets through its network.

Rhys' name is among 14 Irish names, including one female under the heading Ireland.

He said: "It's for the capture of anyone on that list who is a foreign fighter. I think they [Russians] just got names and said, 'Right let's just scare the foreigners'."

"If I get captured by the Russians, I am guaranteed a slow and brutal death, because I'm covered in anti-Russian tattoos.

"If I get captured they consider us war criminals. We would be charged in a Russian court and then executed.

"They wouldn't get that far with me. They'll just f***ing kill me.

"If they capture me, I don't know how that scenario would occur, because when I'm on the frontline I always keep a round [of bullets] for my pistol and rifle for me.

"I also keep a grenade for myself as I don't plan on getting captured.

"We have an unwritten rule within our units and that is if we saw one of us being captured, if we have a shot to take out our lad, we will."

The Irish Mirror secured the "hit list" in Ukraine from a Danish foreign fighter who was also on the dossier.

Rhys revealed the Ukrainian military contacted him last September to confirm he was a target for Moscow.

He added gardai also called to also warn him he was in the Kremlin's sights.

He said: "They [gardai] advised me on this and that but I spoke to one of them, I turned on my camera [and showed his assault weapon], I said, 'I've got my own hardware. I'm not worried about it'."

Rhys added the danger is if Moscow's forces corner him on the battlefield but he has no fears they can target him in Ukrainian-held territory. He said:

» Rhys named on Kremlin kill list of fighters
» Hero faces brutal death if ever captured

"If the death squads come for me, I'm in a military unit, [so] you've got to infiltrate it.

"If anyone comes in to take me out, he's not getting out, so you have to send someone suicidal and someone suicidal doesn't really think through plans. So I'm not

too worried about it at all, and when I'm in country [in Ukraine], I always have my weapon with me 24/7.

"I am 100% ready to die if necessary. I don't want to die and it's not because I'm not afraid to die. I'm afraid of what dying will do to the people left to mourn, who care about me, because they're the ones who suffer.

"I have to get back [home] for their sake. If I didn't have any family members and people I know who care for me, I probably would have died already, because what would I have to live and fight for?"

Rhys, who served in the French Foreign Legion and the private sector, added images of women and children killed in Russian shelling attacks motivated him to take up arms. He said: "I was there from

the start of the war. When I heard Russians were killing kids and just eradicating everything in front of them, I said, 'That's not right'.

"I have benefits and skill sets that can help. So basically I wanted to go over and stand up to the world's biggest bully."

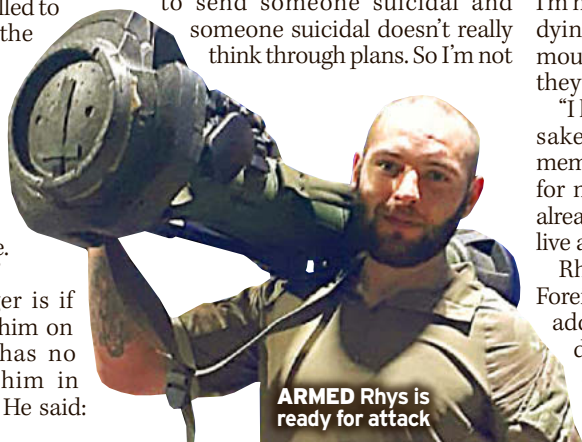
The Dubliner is involved in work including evacuations of Kyiv's

prisoners as well as in reconnaissance missions behind enemy lines.

He revealed: "There are parts [around the front] where you will get small arms fire and you will come into engagements with occupiers.

"When you come into it you just deal with the situation as it is and how it arises."

And that can mean close combat



ARMED Rhys is ready for attack

Fighter pilots sent to

IRISH fighter pilots are being trained by the US Air Force, we can reveal.

The Defence Minister, Tanaiste Micheal Martin, has confirmed six young Air Corps trainee pilots were sent to America, even though the

country is military neutral and doesn't have a modern fighter jet.

They were located in Alabama and Florida with the US Air Force from November 2021 until June last year.

The Irish Air Corps currently has 96

WITH UKRAINE AGAINST PUTIN



PATROL
Foreign fighters



LOYAL FRIEND
With ex-military dog Chazar

“
I keep a hand grenade for myself as I don't plan on being taken prisoner
”
RHYS BYRNE FOREIGN FIGHTER IN UKRAINE



IN HARM'S WAY
Fighters operate behind enemy lines



BATTLE HARDENED
International Freedom Fighters



SUPREMO General Gerasimov

Russian top brass terror over latest attack plan

BY **ANDY LINES** Chief Reporter

RUSSIA'S senior generals are "horrified" at Vladimir Putin's demand for an urgent new military offensive in Ukraine, it was claimed last night.

They fear yet more "slaughter" as a new analysis suggests the Kremlin has now lost a staggering 175,000 troops in the war.

Political analyst Valery Solovey said Putin's demand for his war supremo General Valery Gerasimov to unleash "an assault in several directions at once" has created deep divisions.

SLAUGHTER

The former professor at Moscow's Institute of International Relations, a spy training school, said: "The Army General Staff is terrified. I am not exaggerating.

"They are afraid to lose the remaining armed forces in the slaughter that they are being dragged into by Putin's order."

Mr Solovey said they will still obey Putin even though the commanders have given up on their "goal of winning" the war.

The Kremlin still insists Putin's military adventure is going according to plan.

A Russian strike killed three people and wounded 14 in a residential district of the eastern Ukrainian city of Kostiantynivka on Saturday.

fire fights including one mission he recalled in the south east of Ukraine.

Declining to give the exact location for security reasons, Rhys added: "I've shot at them. They went down.

"I took a picture of the dead body after and so we could take it back [to camp] for intelligence purposes, to identify human patches and equipment so we can try to identify what

[Russian] equipment and that." A video show Rhys in action including patrolling the site of the abandoned German consulate in Kyiv following a Kremlin missile strike on October 10.

He is seen walking through rubble and debris and shouting "F**king Russians" as he walks past a dead body on a road covered in a yellow sheet. Many foreign fighters work

independently in ad hoc groups in Ukraine but Rhys said his unit the International Freedom Fighters was recently approved by Kyiv's forces.

That seal of approval means it is an official battalion and Rhys and his comrades have commissioned ranks which come with salaries.

But the Dubliner added he and his fellow fighters have yet to be paid and have been operating in Ukraine on their own savings for nearly a year.

He said: "When you mention money to the Ukrainian army everything goes stale very quickly.

"They just say there's a delay in payments and all that. As long as I've bullets I'll keep fighting"

It's believed there were initially around 20 Irish foreign fighters in Ukraine. Rory Mason, who was 23

and from Co Meath, was killed last October.

But unless you have extensive military experience, Rhys urged anyone thinking of going to Ukraine to think again.

He said: "There are men who could help us and we need as much help as we can get at the same time we've got so many gobs***s coming over.

"They really don't understand, this ain't no [video] game."

Rhys is currently on a rest for several weeks from the fighting.

He added: "It's a very mentally straining environment - it's unnatural for the human mind.

"I took a break but now when I'm back I'll be back for the duration or [unless] if I'm medically injured or dead." A spokesperson for the

Department of Foreign Affairs said: "We strongly advise against all travel to Ukraine, for any purpose.

"Irish citizens in Ukraine should leave if safe to do so. The capacity of the Department to provide consular assistance remains limited.

"As with all consular cases, the Department does not comment on the details of individual cases."

A Garda spokesman said: "We do not comment on security issues that may or may not relate to individuals."

Donations can be made to the International Freedom Fighters through their Facebook page.

Jeff Farrell's reports and social media coverage of Russia's invasion of Ukraine can be found through his website at www.jefffarrellonline.com.

news@irishmirror.ie

America for training

qualified pilots with eight officers in pilot training.

However, the overall number of staff employed in the Air Corps at the moment is 175 short of where it should be. The Air Corps has 711 staff

with a budget for 886. The number of people joining the Army and the Navy is also in decline.

There are now just 8,049 in the Irish military when it should be a total of 9,500.