

Folks - a brief update.

First of all, I'm gratified to tell you that since "In The Trenches Ukraine" kicked off late one cold night in October 2023, we've raised over \$50,000. And that's not even including my personal costs - travel, lodging, internal transport, communications etc. If I look back on my international development career, with its beefy "cost recovery rates", large back office staff, weighty donor compliance requirements etc., I believe that same fifty thousand dollars of direct assistance would have cost at least three times as much - \$150,000. And it would have taken infinitely longer to procure and deliver the aid.

The reason for this success is simple. "Trenches" is a one-man show, and is based entirely on your personal trust in me. Your confidence and monetary donations have allowed me to provide Ukrainian front-line defenders with a variety of useful things, including:

- * Truck and car tires
- * Tools
- * Combat trauma kits
- * Medical transfusion heaters
- * Drone components
- * Drone duffel bags
- * Electrical charging stations
- * Binoculars
- * Walkie-talkies
- * Headlamps
- * StarLink terminal
- * Laptops and tablets
- * Night Vision monocular
- * Forward observer tents
- * Trench stove
- * Tactical gloves
- * Body armor
- * Packaged food



These things have gone to some ten different fighting units facing off against the Russians in the east of the country: special forces, regular army, national guard, territorial forces, and police. Much of it has been handed over directly by me, or by a handful of Ukrainian kindred spirits in whom I have total faith. And not to put too fine a point on it, but not one cent of your donations went to pay for any overhead or “management” costs, only for the actual items above.

I did bend the rules in one instance though, by taking a few hundred dollars to add to money given by my family and I in order to buy Christmas presents for Ukrainian kids, orphans, displaced, or patients at the psychiatric hospital where I volunteer on Saturdays. I’m guessing I’ll be forgiven for this lapse of protocol.

In case you’re wondering who the guy is in the photo above, it’s Nikolai, who was a drone commander in Kherson, just a mile or two from the enemy lines. Of course the Russians have drones too and nine months ago one of them exploded near Nikolai. Here’s what his leg looks like nine months later. He’s a little guy, shy, and not very forthcoming, but he has a practical nature and the grit that you find in a lot of



Ukrainians. They're not easily given to flights of fancy, at least not during this war. So even with steel rods holding his shin bones together, he still does his part, raising funds for more drones and repairing one of his team's pickups which was recently blown up. People like him are why Ukrainians say "Heroyam Slava!" (Glory to the Heroes!).

If you want more details, please drop me a line anytime.

Chris (aboard a Lufthansa flight between Frankfurt and Washington, Dec. 19, 2024)

www.inthetrenchesukraine.org