

# [***Six Russian Soldiers Strolled Into Avdiivka. Out Of Artillery, the Ukrainians Had To Fling Drones At Them.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B9C-3GB1-JBCM-F006-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** A drone spotted six Russian soldiers walking toward Avdiivka. Drones bombed the Russians, but not before they strolled 700 yards from the main supply route into Avdiivka.

**Body**

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Six Russian soldiers stroll toward Avdiivka.

110th Mechanized Brigade capture

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A team of Russian infantry, marching into Avdiivka on foot in a recent daylight assault, demonstrated the perils of the brutal, four-month battle for the ruined city, just northwest of Russian-occupied Donetsk in eastern Ukraine.

A Ukrainian dronespottedthe six Russian soldiers walking toward the city from the north. Another drone or several harried the Russians with grenades, wounding or killing most if not all of them.

But not before the Russians strolled to within 700 yards of Hrushevsky Street, the main supply route into Avdiivka s city center, where the Ukrainian army s weary 110th Mechanized Brigadehas held outever since Russia widened its war on Ukraine two years ago.

The 110th Brigade and adjacent units are running out of infantry, running out of ammunition and running out of time as a pair of Russian field armies hurls more and more troops into the Avdiivka meatgrinder.

Since first assaulting Avdiivka in early October, the Russian 2nd and 41st Combined Arms Armieshave suffered devastating casualtiesto Ukrainian mines, artillery, drones and entrenched infantry and mechanized counterattacks.

In just the first two months, the Russians lost 13,000 troops killed or maimed along with hundreds of vehicles destroyed or abandoned. Russian losses may have doubled since then.

But the Kremlin has made the conquest or demolition of Avdiivka its main objective as its third annual winter offensive in Ukraine culminates. The Russians have advanced a few hundred yards along several other sectors of the front. But north and south of Avdiivka, they ve pushed forward**miles**.

Russian leaders seems to have resigned themselves to trading much of their offensive combat power capturing the ruins of one small city, which before the wider war had a population of 30,000, but today shelters just few desperate civilians and at most a couple thousand Ukrainian troops.

The adversary is focusing efforts on capturing Avdiivka, the Ukrainian Center for Defense Strategiesnoted. Due to a lack of resources, the Russian military command is forced to reduce the pace of advance on all other fronts.

The 400,000-strong Russian force in Ukraine the forward-deployed arm of a two-million-person military is running out of modern armored vehicles and has had to accept huge numbers of under-trained draftees, including paroled ex-convicts, in order to maintain its front-line strength.

But Ukraine s own million-person armed forces also are struggling to acquire modern vehicles and adequately train new recruits. Most vexing for the Ukrainians, they have a fifth as much artillery ammunition as the Russians have the unavoidable consequence of the ongoing blockade of U.S. military aid by Russia-aligned Republicans in the U.S. Congress.

It s that ammunition starvation that may have allowed those six Russian soldiers to walk into Avdiivka.

Yes, Ukrainian troops have access to tens of thousands of small drones per month. But a first-person-view drone packs just a pound of explosives and ranges no farther than two miles. A 155-millimeter artillery shell, by contrast, packs 25 pounds of explosive and ranges at least 15 miles.

It apparently took hours for those drones to hunt down and wound or kill those six infiltrators. It might ve taken an adequately-supplied artillery battery a few minutes.

Increasingly unafraid of Ukraine s starved artillery, the Russians seem to be getting bolder and steadily are advancing into Avdiivka from the north and the south. Russian troops are concentrated on blocking Hrushevsky Street, Center for Defense Strategies explained.

Once the Russians block the street, the Ukrainian 110th Mechanized Brigade if it still is in Avdiivka at that point could struggle to get supplies into the city. As long as the Ukrainian army s 53rd Mechanized Brigade hangs on in the village of Sjeverne, three miles west of Avdiivka, it s possible for trucks to move along the treelines between the village and the city.

But the trucks could be under fire their entire trip. The terrain is flat east of Sjeverne and, in winter, the leafless surviving trees don t offer much cover. Russian forces are less than a mile away.

In light of the risk, Ukrainian commanders could make the call any day now, and pull the 110th Brigade out of Avdiivka along with any remaining civilians who are willing to leave.

It s a political decision as much as it is a military one. And the ***politics*** are in flux in Kyiv. Yesterday, Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyremovedhis popular top general, the charismatic Valery Zaluzhny, and replaced him with the unpopular former head of the ground forces, Gen. Oleksandr Syrsky.

Zaluzhny has a reputation deserved or not for embracing a mobile defense in order to minimize Ukrainian casualties. Syrsky by contrast has a reputation again, deserved or not for accepting high casualties in stubborn, static fights.

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