

High-Profile French-Trained Ukrainian Brigade Loses Commander Days Before Going to Combat Line

A Ukrainian lawmaker has claimed Ukraine's first major fighting formation trained exclusively outside the country is "in chaos." A high-profile journalist said the unit lost 1,000 men to desertion.

By Stefan Korshak

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Butusov claimed that "almost 1,000" soldiers deserted from the brigade, but did not provide evidence. A Kyiv Post request for comment to Ukraine's Defense Ministry had not been responded to by the time this article was published.

Maryana Bezuhla, a Ukrainian MP often critical of military inefficiency, in Dec. 11 comments said the 155th was critically short of automobiles, electronic warfare equipment, observation and FPV drones, and that soldiers and officers were forced to fill those gaps at their own personal expense, or with the help of grass roots-funded volunteer groups. The Defense Ministry was failing to deliver to the unit even a minimum of basic military material, she claimed.

Paris-issued Mistral air defense systems and Milan anti-tank missile systems issued to the 155th in France, and trained on by dedicated missile teams at French firing ranges, were no longer combat-capable because army command had yanked those weapons systems operators out of the brigade, and made them operators of Soviet-era Igla or American Stinger hand-held anti-aircraft missiles in other units, Bezuhla said.

“The commander has been dismissed,” Bezuhla wrote. “Chaos is reigning within the brigade.”

French media over the weekend noted Ukrainian media and opposition

politician claims of serious disorganization in the 155th Brigade, but did not confirm them. The platform Ouest France repeated reports that Ryumshin had left command of the brigade and reported that portions of the unit had been deployed to the eastern Pokrovsk sector, an area of heavy Russian attacks since mid-summer.

During the brigade's train-up French media gave heavy play to the unit's name, "Anna of Kyiv," a reference to a Kyivan Rus princess of that name marrying French King Henry I in 1051. The 155th's unit motto, "*Ils ne passeront pas*" (They shall not pass) dates back to the 1914 Battle of the Marne, a bloody and epic defense of Paris by French forces against German invasion in World War I.

Official social media operated by 155th Brigade said Ryumshin's replacement was Colonel Taras Maksymov. In May 2022 he was awarded a medal by President Volodymyr Zelensky for bravery in combat.

The commander of a high-profile combat brigade that was Ukraine's first major

fighting formation to have been trained outside the country was replaced shortly after the unit returned home after months of training in [France](#), and days before it went into combat, news reports said.

Col. Dmytro Ryumshin left command of the 155th Mechanized Brigade on Dec. 12. The formation had been created in mid-2024 and was formed, armed and trained exclusively in French training bases from August to November.

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The 155th had been profiled by both French and Ukrainian government media as powerful combat element of 2,000 men armed with French-donated AMX 10 light tanks, 128 armored fighting vehicles and 18 CAESAR self-propelled howitzers, one of the most effective artillery systems operational in the Russo-Ukrainian War.

Ryumshin in a short statement posted on the brigade Facebook page said he was thankful to soldiers, NCOs and officers

for their “loyalty and professionalism,” and said it had been an honor to train with them. The unit would go to the fighting line “soon,” he said.

Ryumshin was one of the [Armed Forces of Ukraine](#) (AFU’s) more seasoned combat leaders with more than a year served in command slots in two combat brigades. Prior to taking command of the 155th, Ryumshin had been the senior officer in 47th Mechanized Brigade. He was relieved of command during ultimately unsuccessful defense operations in the eastern Avdiivka sector.



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Russian media reported on Wednesday that it had lost another Ka-52 “Alligator” attack helicopter which, according to

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Ukrainian military journalist Yuriy Butusov in a Sunday report called Ryumshin “one of our best commanders” and claimed the 155th leadership saw hundreds of soldiers desert during training in France, because men assigned to the unit weren’t volunteers but forcibly recruited.

“The commander of Ukrainian army ground forces decided to create a dog-and-pony unit and jammed into the unit several thousand people, a lot of them literally from the street. They put those guys in a uniform, told them they were a brigade, they put a competent commander in charge, but they didn’t give him time to create a unified unit. As a result, a lot of the soldiers weren’t motivated and they deserted.”