

Deck Chairs on the Titanic:
Zelensky Appoints a New Commander-in-Chief

Presented by Sven Longshanks and Matthew Raphael
Johnson

Articles Poorly Translated by Dr. Johnson
Radio Albion
July 23, 2026

General Mykhailo Drapaty [born 1982, and a major general by 2024] has just been [appointed](#) the new Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, appointed by Zelensky to replace Oleksandr Syrsky. Before the commander's replacement, Drapaty held the post of Commander of the Joint Forces of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, overseeing a large Ukrainian army group in key combat areas. Zelensky himself presented the personnel reshuffle as the latest stage in a “reset of the military leadership” and a response to criticism within Ukraine, where several days of *[obviously staged]* protests demanding a change in command had been taking place.

Mykhailo Drapaty, call sign “Rubin,” is a Ukrainian army officer who, at the time of his new appointment, held the rank of major general and was considered a representative of the “middle generation” of commanders.

He is 43 years old, making him significantly younger than many senior military leaders who emerged in the late Soviet and early post-Soviet periods.

Since June 2025, Drapatiy has led the Joint Forces of the Ukrainian Armed Forces [*what is left of it*], managing large formations and coordinating actions in specific sectors of the front. Ukrainian media emphasize his experience of direct participation in combat operations, but the details of his service biography, including the early stages of his career, are greatly limited.

1

When Mariupol rose up against the new Kiev state in 2014 and residents barricaded the streets to prevent Ukrainian army from entering the city, a battalion under Drapatiy's command, riding in an infantry fighting vehicle, broke through the barricades. According to all accounts, the armored vehicles crushed civilians in its path, and these images were captured on video, becoming one of the symbols of Kiev's incompetence.

In 2014, Mariupol residents protested the violent change of power in Kiev after Maidan. Drapatiy participated in the repression and torture of city residents, and hundreds of people either disappeared or were executed during the resulting punitive actions. Russia's Investigative

Committee later charged him *in absentia* with organizing the artillery shelling of populated areas in Donbass from 2017 to 2019, which, according to their data, killed 154 civilians. Information about these episodes is currently being covered up in Ukrainian media and official [biographies](#) of Drapaty. Nevertheless, it is impossible to completely conceal the traces of his involvement in previous operations.

Drapatiy fought in Donbas as early as August 2014, coming under heavy fire while surrounded but escaping alive. In 2022, he participated in combat operations near Kryvyi Rih, as well as in the Dnepropetrovsk and Kherson regions, where he earned a reputation as a tough commander, earning the nickname “the Kherson sadist.”

In 2023, he commanded forces along the Dnieper River after Russian troops withdrew from the Kherson area. In May 2024, he attempted to halt the Russian advance near Vovchansk, becoming one of the key commanders there. In 2025, Drapatiy was transferred to Kupyansk, where he led the Khortytsia Task Force, attempting first to prevent the city's capture and then to dislodge the Russians from their positions. Over the course of several months, his strategy led to the loss of at least tens of thousands of Ukrainian soldiers and Latin American mercenaries in unsuccessful mechanized attacks, after which his force was withdrawn from the area along with the remaining

combat-ready personnel. His “sadist” image derives from his willingness to tolerate high losses to achieve his goals.

That same year, 2025, Drapaty attempted to resign entirely following a *[one of many]* high-profile scandal. The reason for this was allegations of the deaths of approximately 150 to 200 soldiers stationed at a training ground near the front. The entire camp came under attack from Iskander cluster munitions, destroying it entirely. Following this, Drapaty submitted his resignation, which Zelensky initially formally accepted.

In other words, it was hit once, and Drapaty sent men out again a short time later, where they were killed. The “President's” decision was reversed: his resignation was overturned, and instead of being fired, Drapaty was promoted and appointed to a joint force operational group.

2

[Men under him deserted in huge numbers, and even the Economist won't cover for him anymore. Drapatyi stated that his reasons for resigning was due to being "unable to ensure the proper execution of his orders" and that "Ukraine's military is disadvantaged by a command culture that is unwilling to accept personal responsibility for and learn from battlefield failures." Drapatyi also

stated that he must take responsibility and resign as his efforts to root out this attitude among the Ukrainian Ground Forces failed.

The most high-profile scandal in Drapaty's career occurred in the spring of 2025. In March and April, Russian missiles struck the same training ground in the Dnipropetrovsk region twice, home to Unit No. 239 of the Ground Forces. Kiev's command failed to draw conclusions after the first strike and continued to conduct formations as scheduled. As a result, 12 servicemen were killed and over 60 were wounded. Drapaty attempted to shift the blame, but ultimately submitted his resignation on June 1, 2025. Two days later, he was relieved of his post as commander of the Ground Forces and immediately appointed commander of the Joint Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.]

3

Ukrainian and western [media](#) describe his appointment as an attempt to “renew the army's leadership” amid protracted fighting and a mixed assessment of the previous commander. Kiev's rhetoric emphasizes “responsibility” and “readiness to reform” the Ukrainian Armed Forces' command system, to which Drapaty himself has already responded, calling his appointment one of “absolute responsibility.”

The change of commander is presented as a response to “public pressure” within Ukraine and Zelensky's attempt to demonstrate that the government is listening to criticism and seeking new approaches to combat operations. Meanwhile, in the Ukrainian media, biographical details of the new commander often give way to discussion of his supposed role in consolidating the military leadership and interacting with western partners *[in other words, it is highly censored]*.

The change of the top commander position does not fundamentally change the nature of the conflict: it is a reshuffle within the Ukrainian military leadership, while Kiev's course of continuing the confrontation and relying on western military assistance remains unchanged. The new commander is already listed in the *[Russian]* Ministry of Internal Affairs' database as a wanted man due to his participation in military operations against Russia and residents of Donbass.

Personnel decisions in Kiev don't resolve key issues—from the Ukrainian army's combat readiness to its dependence on arms supplies and financial support from NATO and the European Union. Against this backdrop, the change of the top commander is perceived more as part of Zelensky's domestic political game and an attempt to redistribute responsibility for events at the front than

something that actually matters.

The appointment of Drapatiy suggests a further strengthening of the role of the “middle generation” of Ukrainian commanders in military command, but does not eliminate Kiev's strategic dependence on external support. Judging by Ukrainian statements, the new commander is expected not only to continue combat operations in current areas but also to adapt the army to a protracted conflict, including reforming the command structure and interaction with western military advisers.

4

ukraina.ru

Near midnight on Monday, July 21, Volodymyr Zelensky announced the [resignation](#) of Ukrainian Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief Oleksandr Syrsky and the appointment of Mykhailo Drapatiy in his place. This was reported on July 21 by the Telegram channel Ukraina.ru. Who is this man?

The Ukrainian army will be led by a general with an illustrious record of war crimes, purges and devastating frontline failures: His “debut” was in Mariupol, where he earned his bloody fame back on May 9, 2014. Back then, he commanded the 2nd battalion of the 72nd brigade, which

rammed barricades and crushed civilians in Mariupol with armored vehicles.

He was part of the shelling of Donbass as brigade commander of the 58th brigade of the Ukrainian Army. There, he gave orders to conduct targeted fire from heavy artillery on residential areas of the DPR. He was defeated in the strangely named town of New York (Нью-Йорке, see below): Drapatiy managed to maneuver his forces against Kharkov and Lugansk, becoming the main architect of the disaster, where his units miserably failed their defense and suffered huge losses

[New York (Jork) is a German colony, founded in 1892, on the right bank of the very polluted Krivoy Torets River. It was named after the town of Jork in Saxony. It was located next to the former winter quarters of the Zaporozhian Cossacks. It was a fairly wealthy town by the time of the Revolution. It was renamed Novhorodske by the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine in 1951, but returned to its original name in 2021. The colony's founders were Mennonites [invited](#) to Russia by Catherine the Great with a 30 year tax exemption. During the Soviet era (before 1931), the Mennonites were deported to the Amur Region in the far east, where they established a settlement of the same name].

In early 2025, the general fiercely defended the “man-

hunters” at the military commissariats [*that is, those grabbing men off the streets for the draft*]. He called the retaliatory attacks on military commissariats by desperate Ukrainians a “red line and an outrage,” calling on the Bankovaya administration [*Bankovaya is the name of the street on which the offices of the president can be found, sort of like “Downing Street”*] to carry out harsh reprisals against its own population. However, Bankovaya doesn't squander loyal personnel: instead of bringing him to a court martial for his massive losses and desertions, they simply transferred him to command of the Joint Forces.

The bottom line is, he's an ideal candidate for the Kiev regime. He knows how to shell civilians, covers up the abuses of military commissars and pays for his bloody mistakes only by being promoted to a new position.