



Written by [Dennis Behrendt](#) on February 26, 2022

Kiev Withstands Attack for Now; Ukrainian Resistance Stiffens; Heroes Emerge

As night fell on Friday in Kiev, it was widely anticipated that the capitol city would come under attack and that brutal fighting in the city might lead to the fall of the Ukrainian capitol. As of dawn the next day, Kiev remained under Ukrainian control.

Fighting, however, did come to the city, with civilian infrastructure beginning to take damage. The most shocking scene was caught on a nearby security camera when what has been reported to have been a Russian missile slammed into a large apartment building on Kiev's Lobanovsky Avenue. The missile hit the building with terrifying force and exploded leaving behind a gaping wound in the structure.



Kiev apartment building struck by missile (AP Images)

"The State Emergency Service of Ukraine is evacuating the victims. According to preliminary data, there were no deaths," [Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta reported](#).

A resident of the building described the attack. "We managed to escape, we were in the hall. Direct hit — into the kitchen. The wife and older [son] have broken legs, an open fracture, the younger one was taken away by rescuers," said the unnamed resident according the Russian paper.

Russia, however, disputed the account of the [missile strike, saying that it did not fire the missile in question](#). According to a report from the Russian Interfax news agency, a source in the Russian Ministry of Defense said, "The information disseminated on social networks about the Russian missile strike on a residential building on Lobanovsky Avenue in Kiev is not true. The nature of the damage to the house indicates that an anti-aircraft missile hits it."

The unidentified Russian Defense Ministry source continued: "This is clearly visible in the video. It is obvious that during the reflection of night rocket fire of military infrastructure facilities of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, there was a refusal in the system of aiming the missile of the Ukrainian medium-range air defense system 'Buk-M1' and the missile touched the corner of the residential building."

Although disoriented by the blitzkrieg at first, perhaps from believing such an invasion to be an impossibility, the Ukrainian defenses appeared to stiffen as the Russians advanced.

Having blockaded Kiev from the West on February 25, Russian forces began to approach the city from that direction, but met strong resistance. "A Russian column that attempted to advance from the west, on the highway linking Kyiv to Lviv, was destroyed in nighttime fighting inside Kyiv," the *Wall Street Journal* [reported](#). "Bodies lay on the ground, amid the smoldering remains of armored vehicles and trucks."



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Emerging from the fighting, heroic deeds of a few brave soldiers have been reported and if they prove true will live as legends of heroism for the ages, equal to even the Spartan stand at Thermopylae.

The specific modern comparison to Thermopylae may have been provided by the heroes of Snake Island. The tiny outpost was defended, reportedly, by a mere 13 soldiers. Faced with obliteration by a Russian warship, they dared that ship — in fierce language — to do its worst. The heroic defenders of the island refused to surrender and paid the ultimate price. At this point, it is difficult to know if the story is true. But if it is true, then the 13 defenders of Snake Island are heroes of the ages.

Of course, there could be more to the story of Snake Island. Russia claims, for its part, that 82 soldiers on the island surrendered and were evacuated by a Russian ship. On February 26, the [Russian Ministry of Defense released a video of the Russian ship *Shakhter*](#), part of the Black Sea Fleet, arriving in port and disembarking the Ukrainian soldiers. The video shows rations on a pallet dockside waiting for the soldiers. As they leave the ship, the video continues showing a Russian woman distributing the rations to the soldiers.

In an official release on the incident, a Russian Ministry of Defense statement said: “Today, a rescue tug of the Black Sea Fleet ‘Shakhter’ brought to Sevastopol a group of 82 Ukrainian servicemen who refused resistance and voluntarily laid down their weapons on the island of Snake.”

Stirring, too, for its heroism is the story of the “Ghost of Kiev,” a lone fighter pilot patrolling the skies above his city in his Mig-29 Fulcrum. According to rumors widely circulated on social media on February 25, the Ghost has engaged and defeated six Russian warplanes, making him the first fighter ace of the 21st century and a hero to Ukrainians.

Again, it is too early to know if this story is true. But some, perhaps many, want to believe.

Will the reported heroism and apparent resistance be enough? Ominously, Russian sources have indicated that the invasion was stalled not by Ukrainian resistance, but by Putin himself.

[In a statement](#), Russian Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov said Putin had called a halt on the advance of troops on Friday ahead of potential negotiations with Ukraine.

“Yesterday afternoon, in connection with the expected negotiations with the Ukrainian leadership, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief President of Russia ordered the suspension of the advance of the main forces of Russian troops,” Peskov said.

Now, in the absence of those talks, the Russian advance is set to continue again.

“Since, in fact, the Ukrainian side refused to negotiate, this afternoon the promotion of the main Russian forces resumed in accordance with the plan of the operation,” [Peskov told reporters according to Interfax](#).



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