

## Russia Adds Incentives for Fighters in Ukraine



VDV (airborne) troopers on parade repetition.

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By Ray Finch

OE Watch Commentary

Despite Russian propaganda efforts to promote military service, the Kremlin and the Defense Ministry have struggled to enlist adequate manpower to fight Ukraine. Even after mobilizing 300,000 new soldiers in the fall of 2022, the Defense Ministry continues to seek new and capable fighters, including immigrants and convicted felons. As the accompanying excerpts illustrate, additional incentives have been introduced to attract new recruits and to further motivate those already in uniform.

The first article from the pro-Kremlin news outlet *Izvestiya* describes how Russian veterans of the Ukraine invasion can expect extensive benefits. The list includes incentives such as vouchers for sanatoriums, free prostheses, and

various housing, tax, and health benefits. While the list is long, obtaining promised benefits is often another story. Recall that Russia has no equivalent to the U.S. Veterans Administration. As such, depending on the type of uniformed service and current place of residence, there is often a wide disparity of benefits and care provided to Russian military veterans.<sup>1</sup> The second excerpted article from the government site *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* describes additional payments Russian soldiers can receive “for destroyed or captured equipment of Ukrainian militants.” For example, soldiers can earn 300,000 rubles (\$4,300) for a downed aircraft or 100,000 rubles (\$1,450) for having “destroyed a large number of enemy manpower.” The article, however, does not spell out the procedures for receiving these payments. Finally, the third article, from the pro-Kremlin site *RT*, briefly describes a recent meeting between Putin and Russian judges, where they discussed “grounds for suspending legal proceedings, including if a citizen who is a party to the case participates in hostilities as part of the Russian Armed Forces or other military formations.” Behind this bureaucratic language, Putin is telling the judges that Russian military personnel should have criminal charges dismissed if they fight in Ukraine.<sup>2</sup> The variety of additional benefits and incentives being introduced by Moscow suggest that Russian recruiting efforts have not proven sufficient, and that the Kremlin may soon have to rely more upon coercion to replenish its military ranks.

**Russian President Vladimir Putin said that the rights of the Russian military and their families must be protected.**

**Source:** “Какие выплаты положены ветеранам боевых действий в России (What payments are due to war veterans in Russia),” *Izvestiya* (pro-Kremlin source), 16 January 2023. <https://iz.ru/1455408/2023-01-16/kakie-vyplaty-polozheny-veteranam-boevykh-deistvii-v-rossii-grafika>

*Veterans of military operations in Russia can count on financial and other support from the state. They are entitled to monthly payments and a number of benefits....*

*Combat veterans can apply for: cash supplement to the pension; partial compensation of expenses for housing and communal services; free vouchers for sanatoriums; free prostheses and rehabilitation aids; extraordinary service; a one-time payment for the construction of a house or the purchase of housing; tax and land benefits; other social preferences....*

## Continued: Russia Adds Incentives for Fighters in Ukraine

**Source:** Ilya Maksimov, “Представлен список поощрений за уничтожение и захват техники ВСУ (A list of rewards for the destruction and capture of Ukrainian military equipment),” *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* (Government newspaper), 15 November 2023. <https://rg.ru/2022/11/15/predstavlen-spisok-pooshchrenij-za-unichtozhennuiu-tehniku-vsuh.html>

*A list of rewards for destroyed or captured equipment of Ukrainian militants is presented... The biggest bonus is for those who were able to destroy an enemy aircraft - 300,000 rubles will be paid for this. The helicopter was valued at 200 thousand rubles, the drone - at 50 thousand.*

*The award is also given for the destruction of ground equipment. The fighter who eliminated the tank can claim a bonus of 100 thousand rubles. For the destruction of infantry fighting vehicles, BMDs, armored personnel carriers, MTLBs, self-propelled guns, **S-300** systems, **Buk**, Tor, Osa complexes or MLRS launchers, they will pay 50 thousand rubles.*

*Bonus payments are also possible to military personnel who have destroyed a large number of enemy manpower or who have completed other tasks assigned to them. This premium is up to 100 thousand rubles.*

**Source:** “Путин: права российских военных и их семей должны быть защищены (Putin: the rights of the Russian military and their families must be protected),” RT (pro-Kremlin news outlet), 14 February 2023. <https://russian.rt.com/russia/news/1111177-putin-voennye-semi>

*Russian President Vladimir Putin said that the rights of the Russian military and their families must be protected. The President stated this during a meeting with the judges. He recalled the recent adoption of a number of legislative decisions on social support for the military, mobilized citizens and their families.*

*The new measures provide additional grounds for suspending legal proceedings, including if a citizen who is a party to the case participates in hostilities as part of the Russian Armed Forces or other military formations. According to him, the courts should carefully consider issues involving the military, taking into account not only legal aspects, but also specific life circumstances and situations....*

### Notes:

[1] For additional background on benefits for Russian veterans, see: Ray Finch, “Proposal to Restore Veterans’ Benefits,” *OE Watch*, July 2018. <https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/oe-watch-articles-singular-format/277121>; Ray Finch, “Russian Military Experiencing Pay Problems,” *OE Watch*, 1-2023. <https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/oe-watch-articles-2-singular-format/433072>; Ray Finch, “Lack of PTSD Treatment for Russian Soldiers,” *OE Watch*, 11-2022. <https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/oe-watch-articles-2-singular-format/429190>

[2] Notably, a similar strategy has also been used by the Russian private military company Wagner, wherein convicts can have their records expunged and earn their freedom in exchange for a six-month tour in Ukraine.