

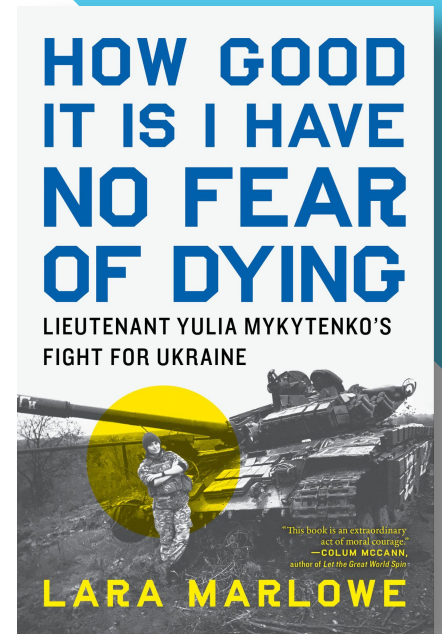
HOW GOOD IT IS I HAVE NO FEAR OF DYING

Lieutenant Yulia Mykytenko's Fight for Ukraine

Lara Marlowe

Hardcover 9781685891879

eBook 9781685891886



“A tour de force of hope and service amid the destruction of a horrific, ongoing war.”
— **Booklist, STARRED review**

“Unsparring but tender, filled with love and pain, this extraordinary book gives voice to a new generation of Ukrainians whose lives have been interrupted by the Russian war machine that has sought to destroy and subjugate their homeland since 2014.”
— **Yaroslav Trofimov, Chief Foreign Affairs Correspondent, *The Wall Street Journal***

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

When I met Lieutenant Yulia Mykytenko in 2023, I was impressed by the Ukrainian frontline army officer's calm, courage and determination. Yulia's young life has unfolded in tandem with that of independent Ukraine. She has known great tragedy but aspires to a better future for her country. I interviewed Yulia dozens of times through the winter of 2023/24. At first, I merely wanted to tell her compelling personal story, but by the time we completed the book, I realized it was a heartfelt plea for western democracies, chief among them the United States of America, to support Ukraine in its war against Russian occupation and to welcome Ukraine into the community of western nations.

— Lara Marlowe

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **The full-scale invasion of February 24, 2022.** What reasons did Vladimir Putin give for his unprovoked aggression against Ukraine, and how do they contrast with explanations provided by Ukrainians and western observers?
2. **How have Russian forces behaved in the Ukrainian areas they have occupied, in particular Bucha and Mariupol?** What atrocities have they committed and how likely are Russian soldiers and their officers to be prosecuted for war crimes?
3. **How have drones revolutionized warfare?** The author describes war on the eastern front in Ukraine's Donbas region as a combination of World War I trench warfare and Space Age technology. In what ways does it resemble both?
4. **What are living conditions like for Ukrainian soldiers in frontline positions?** Aside from constant danger, what are the hardships and discomforts of life on the front line? How do soldiers keep their morale up?



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5. **Death on the front line.** How have Lt. Mykytenko's comrades been killed? What is the procedure when this happens? How are the soldiers' families informed? What compensation do they receive? What happens when the army cannot recover a soldier's remains?
6. **Wagner militia.** Who was Yevgeny Prigozhin and why was the strategy he pursued in Donbas described as "the meat grinder"?
7. **The Maidan Revolution.** What happened in Kyiv between November 2013 and February 2014 and how did it change Ukraine forever? Is Ukraine doomed to be pulled back and forth between Russia and the West? What historical elements does Vladimir Putin use to justify his claim to Ukraine? And why do Ukrainians insist their history is with Europe, not Russia?
8. **Love on the front line.** How did Lt. Mykytenko meet her husband, Illia Serbin? Why did they join the army together and how did he help her? How did his death affect her?
9. **Women in the Ukrainian armed forces.** Why are women more at risk than male soldiers? What are examples of sexism encountered by Lt. Mykytenko in her career, and in what ways has the situation improved?
10. **Medal for Courage.** Why did Lt. Mykytenko receive a medal for courage from President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in October 2022? Can you describe the medal ceremony and her feelings about it? Why does the author describe courage as a miracle?
11. **Ukraine's allies.** What has been the attitude of the US, Europe, and NATO regarding Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine? Have they done everything they could and should have?
12. **Endgame.** How does Lt. Mykytenko think Ukraine's war will end? In your opinion, what would be a just peace, and how likely is that to happen? Will the West betray Ukraine?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lara Marlowe is an American journalist who started her career as an associate producer at *60 Minutes*, before switching to print media. She has since reported internationally for the *Financial Times*, *Time Magazine*, and, most recently *The Irish Times*, where she has worked for nearly 30 years as a foreign correspondent. She has covered more than a dozen wars, and is especially recognized as a Middle East and Eastern European expert.

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