



**A Voluntary Charity working
in
Ukraine and Moldova**
with roots going back to 1990



**Voices from Ukraine – A man who built a home
A man who built a home, only to disappear into a war
that still refuses to end.**

Natalia's husband, Misha, has been missing since November 2022.

The last she heard, he was fighting in the village of Orlivka in the Donetsk region. It was two days of brutal street combat—relentless shelling, the crack and scatter of grenades, buildings torn to pieces. Misha was the commander of his platoon. Four of his men were wounded and trapped. He went back for them. They were the last group to be evacuated. Then, silence. The radio went dead. No one knows what happened next.

Thirteen soldiers from that battalion remain unaccounted for. No bodies. No final word. Just absence.

Natalia has clung to every fragile thread of hope. She searched for answers but kept hitting walls—rumours, bureaucracy, uncertainty. In time, she gathered others like herself—wives, sisters, mothers of the missing—and formed a support group. Together, they sought the truth, hoping that as a collective, they might uncover something no one could alone.

She built a working relationship with senior commanders, not because they had answers, but because they could help her with the mountain of paperwork that now defined her days. In Ukraine, it falls on the family to prove that their loved one fought, went missing in action—not that they ran. If the state believes a soldier fled, there is no pension, no compensation. Just silence and shame. Proof is difficult—documents, statements, delays—and with every new rule, it becomes harder still.

It's estimated that up to 71,000 Ukrainian service members are reported missing. Natalia's fight now is not only for truth, but for recognition. If she completes the process, if she can navigate the layers of loss and red tape, she will be entitled to fifty percent of Misha's salary. It is something—but always paid late, and never enough to replace what was lost.

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Natalia is a psychologist by training. Since Misha's disappearance, she has been volunteering at the military hospital in Vinnytsia. She tries to be of use, to anchor herself in service. One day, she spoke with a soldier, wounded and fifty years old. "We must fight on," he told her, "we must take the land back." And she nodded. She agrees with him. But the cost, she knows, is almost unbearable.

She lives under constant stress. "You don't get used to it," she says softly. "You just live with it." Their eldest daughter, Darea, is 23. She fled to Norway when the war began, after finishing her studies in Kyiv to become a social worker. Her son, Vlad, still in Ukraine, wants to join the fight—wants to follow his father's path. Their middle daughter works long hours at a veterinary clinic, losing herself in work to avoid the weight of it all.

And then there is Snejana, the youngest. She was just 15 when Misha disappeared. She grew up in a moment. She doesn't speak much now. Doesn't go out. She avoids friends. Her world has shrunk to the size of her mother's sorrow. Her one mission is caring for Natalia. "She should go," Natalia says. "She should apply to university, have her own life." But Snejana won't leave. Perhaps, Natalia wonders, it's her way of coping—by staying close, by not letting go.

Natalia's burden extends beyond her home. Misha's parents live 40 minutes away and need her help. Not all the time, but enough. They, too, are lost in the limbo of their son's disappearance. His father, once strong, is fading now. It's faith alone that keeps him upright. Natalia buys their groceries, their medicine, brings what comfort she can.

Her life now sways between grief and desperate hope. She does not speak in anger, does not blame anyone. But she confesses, "My life has stopped. Only the seasons change now. Not me." Before the war, Misha had worked tirelessly—first as a plumber in Ukraine, then traveling to the United States to earn more. Every hour was spent saving for a home. That was his dream: to build something lasting, safe. A home for his family. They finally bought the house. He slept there only twice before being called back to the front.

And now—he is gone. Not confirmed dead. Not officially alive. **Just missing.**

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