



Russian Clandestine Operations in Ukraine and the role of the GRU

Published on April 13, 2015 [Edit article](#) | [View stats](#)



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Narratology- Narrative Warfare and Military History

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The Russian intelligence community are masters when it comes to propaganda, disinformation, subversion, bribery, using agent provocateurs, and other clandestine methods. Lessons learned during the Bolshevik revolution were refined and became more sophisticated during the Cold War.

With the advancement of electronic communications, including the internet, the Federal Security Service (FSB), formed in 1994 to replace the notorious KGB, and their foreign intelligence agency, the GRU, recognised that modern communications not only allow for the dissemination of information on a global scale, written words supported by photographs and graphics greatly enhance the psychological impact of the intended message.

The use of paper trails- the total amount of written evidence of someone's activities, is still relevant when it comes to modern electronic communications: Internet, videos, electronic news services etc., and a lot of information can be obtained about an individual from their Internet activities and the amount, and type of traffic to their sites.

Through the use of glamour or soft porn photographs, which were designed to depict 'Slavic beauty', 26 year old, Yulia Kharlamova, became an overnight internet success with a large number of male followers living in Russia and Ukraine. Often dressed as a Russian Airborne soldier, it now becomes clear this was not innocent flirtation: her intention was to attract and manipulate members of the Russian and Ukraine military as well as neo-Nazis.

Analysis of her Internet activities and the traffic to her various sites sheds little doubt that Yulia Kharlamova was a GRU officer, a driving force behind the current war in Ukraine, and her activities set the conditions essential for 'planned' clandestine military activities.

What do we know from her internet activities?

Yulia Kharlamova was born in 1989, in Odesa Ukraine and studied at the Lobachevsky University in Nizhni Novorod Russia. Although her area of study is still to be confirmed, she is thought to have studied Archaeology and Ethnology of Ukraine. If this is correct, this may account for her popularity among Russia's neo-Nazis, where she was known by the nick name 'Nordika', and was respected for her vocal support of their nationalist and racist views.



It is also known she served with Russian Airborne forces where she underwent full combat training and there are several references of her serving with Unit 54164 Moscow Region and 38 Separate Parachute Brigade. Sometime in 2013, reference was made of her being a communications specialist with the Parachute Brigade. However, as we look further into her activities with the GRU there is a possibility that the use of the world 'communications specialist' was used to mask the fact that Kharlamova was trained in psyhological warfare.

We also discover that sometime during 2013 she used social media to announce her resignation from the army. She wrote,

"Gone in reserve. I am thankful to the army for many things, it was the best lessons of my life. I learned a lot. I have found a very good civilian job which opens my creative potential"

Shortly after announcing her resignation, Kharlamova increased her internet activities and started to engage members of the Ukraine Army, their families, and anyone with grievances against the Ukrainian government. During the same period she also increased her influence over Russia's neo-Nazi movements and renewed her relationship with the notorious neo-Nazi, Alexi Milchakov, who she had known since 2000.

Alexi Milchakov would later be accused of a number of war crimes, including the decapitation of Ukrainian POW's. From the age of 14, most of his recreation activities involved cutting the heads of dogs and skinning dogs alive before uploading photographs of his 'hobby' to social media. One may argue that his 'hobby' fits the profile of a sadistic psychopath who would willingly be involved in war crimes. However, there remains insufficient evidence as to his involvement.

It was shortly after Kharlamova renewed her relationship with Milchakov that she publicly showed her true political beliefs by announcing on social media she was a "Novorossiya Freedom Fighter"- an historic term of the Russian Empire denoting a region north of the Black Sea, which Russia annexed as a result of the Russo-Turkish War, and which is now used by Russian propagandists to describe parts of eastern Ukraine they now wish to annex.

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Through various social media networks she used her 'communications' skills and 'creative potential' to mount a coherent psychological campaign to win support for Russian nationalism based on Novorossiya, and also created the necessary conditions for Russian clandestine military operations in Ukraine. Through a large number of posts, mixed with a blend of Russian folk lore imagery, she appealed to Ukrainian soldiers to rise-up against their government.

One of her early posts:

"Due to grandiose abuse of the authorities, violation of your legal rights, re-writing laws which led you to turning into slaves, outrageous activities and no one thinking of letting you go home. For all these reasons, among all who spent a year and a half service (military) we declare action of protest! Friends, this is our only chance to go home without waiting for years under the mercy of illegal authorities that came to power by armed overturns"

"Press the share button and share with your friends"

On 13 December 2014, Kharlamova widely published the following post:

"All of Ukraine, parents, come to the military bases, start the uproar, take children that serve at our military units. Those parents who won't make it, leave by yourself, this is our last chance!!! Remaining silent leaves us slaves WITHOUT RIGHTS AND SILENCED WITHOUT PERSONAL LIFE AND FUTURE don't be a herd - you are human, you are people, you are power. Share in local media and tell your fellow soldiers. Support our honour of the whole country"

The above are just two of a plethora of messages encouraging an uprising against the Ukraine government.

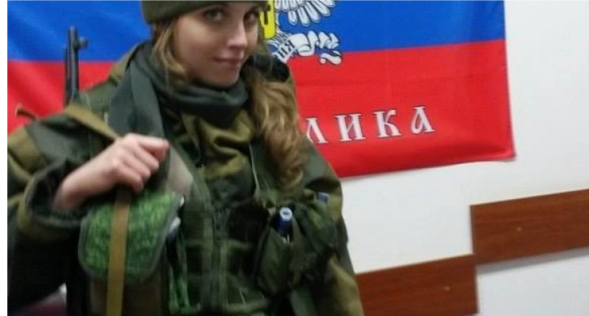
Her role as agent provocateur was not confined to promoting revolution through the use of social media, she also traveled to Ukraine and actively encouraged violence against the government and directed this violence to further the nationalist cause.

On 12 April 2015 the Independent Newspaper described the riots in Kiev as, *"Plumes of black smoke billow over the city, fires rage in the scorched skeletons of cars, and hundreds have been wounded, with two confirmed dead. Hordes of riot police are on the streets and the EU's justice chief has said the country is sliding towards civil war."*

Unless you've been following the events from the beginning it's difficult to glean why tensions are now strained to breaking point"

This report raised an interesting question - "Why tensions are now strained to breaking point"

There is mounting evidence to support claims that the violence in Kiev was as a direct result of subversive activities which were directed by Yulia Kharlamova. For instance, there are several eye witness accounts of seeing her increasing tensions among army conscripts outside the Presidential Administration Building in Kiev, which led to the so-called National Guards Protest, an event which was fully exploited for propaganda purposes by various Russian state owned media organisations. There have also been several accounts of Kharlamova, along with other women she claimed to be members of her family, provoking and encouraging crowds in Kiev to commit acts of violence against police, government



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Military operations with Alexey Milchakov

From his social media profile and various posts we find that Milchakov was a dedicated Nazi who openly discussed his enjoyment for torturing stray dogs. He also said he was born St Petersburg and is known by the nickname 'Fritz' by his neo-Nazi friends.

Through his Internet activities it was established that Alexey Milchakov commanded the so-called 'Batman' Spetsnaz Rapid Response Unit, operating out of Luhansk, and this unit reported directly to the GRU. Although details remain incomplete, Kharlamova fought alongside Milchakov on several occasions. On 5 September 2014, both were involved in an attack on Ukrainian government forces in the village of Shchastya, in the Lugansk region, in which eleven Ukrainian soldiers were killed.

Although on several occasions Yulia Kharlamova publicly denied being in Kiev during the time of the riots, due to increasing allegations of her being a GRU officer and playing a major contribution to the war in Ukraine, the GRU planned a damage limitation exercise. This resulted in Kharlamova making a number of television appearances designed to clear her name.

On Ren TV, a Russian channel, she denied being an intelligence officer and said she had no connection with the violent events in Kiev. On the same day, she was interviewed by TV Zed, also a Russian channel and allegedly controlled by the Ministry of Defence, this time she was described as an activist who was born in Odessa, who was simply visiting relatives in Ukraine. Again, she denied being a GRU officer.

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