



The Siege of Pokrovsk: Advances at Colossal Cost and Decisive Electronic Warfare

Published on 18/11/2025

The recent Russian offensives in the Donbas area, particularly the attempt to capture the city of **Pokrovsk**, have captured international military attention, not only for the strategic importance of the city but especially for the war dynamics that are defining its outcome. At the same time, Russian attacks targeting **Ukrainian energy and transport infrastructure**, especially in the Donetsk region, are severely testing Kyiv's resilience.

The Energy War and Russian Tactical Advantages

As highlighted, in recent weeks Russian forces have intensified raids against major Ukrainian energy resources and the railway network. Intelligence data and reports from the territories indicate a deliberate strategy to degrade Ukraine's logistical capacity and civilian resilience.

- **Critical Impact:** These attacks, often conducted with drones and missiles, have caused extensive power outages, even in occupied regions (as reported for the city of Donetsk) and have damaged port infrastructure, essential for the economy and supplies (for example, in the Odesa area).
- **EW/UAV Superiority:** Ukrainian sources, including recent appeals from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, confirm the challenge posed by the massive use of Russian **UAVs and UAS (Unmanned Aerial Systems)**, often supported by **Electronic Warfare (E.W.)** to target Ukrainian Block Posts (BP) and Tactical Control Centers (KTs). The head of the Main Directorate of Radio-Electronic and Cyber Warfare of the Ukrainian Armed Forces Headquarters estimated the daily use of drones by Ukrainian soldiers at \$7,000-9,000\$, highlighting the enormous demand and centrality of these tools in the conflict.
- **The Drone Race:** Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiha has requested funding to increase drone production to \$20\$ million next year, defining the race for modern armaments as a competition over "**millions of cheap drones**".

The Siege of Pokrovsk: Advances at Colossal Cost and Decisive Electronic Warfare
The Siege of Pokrovsk: Advances at Colossal Cost and Decisive Electronic Warfare

Pokrovsk: The Russian "Strategic Stubbornness"

The offensive on Pokrovsk, a crucial logistical hub in western Donetsk, is the clearest example of the Russian strategy of **war of attrition**, as highlighted in today's military analysis by Roberto Casalone.

"Has Pokrovsk fallen today? Not yet?"

The operational picture, despite some Russian territorial advances, shows a bloody stalemate, where the gains are "**minimal, laughable, at the cost of a colossal human toll**".

- **Advances at a Snail's Pace:** The Russian advance is measurable "**by pixels**" (a few hundred meters) west of Novoekonomichne and towards Moskovske, achieved through the so-called "**light infantry offensive, poorly mobile and extremely slow**".
- **"Killing Boxes" and Attrition:** Ukrainian forces firmly maintain control of the road junctions around Myrnohrad, forcing the Russians to attack through narrow and predictable

"corridors," transformed into real **"killing boxes"** (annihilation zones). *Each single attack thus becomes a sort of meat grinder, akin to the Somme of 1916 or Verdun...*

- **Frightening Human Cost:** The analysis suggests that every 50-meter advance costs about **1200 Russian deaths**, and each alleged "success" costs about **one battalion every two days**. This figure, although difficult to verify with certainty, illustrates the staggering rate of losses in a frontal offensive lacking modern inter-arm coordination and mechanized momentum.
- **Insufficient Force Ratio:** The current ratio of 3:1 in favor of Russia in the area is considered insufficient for a decisive assault. According to the analysis, a ratio of at least 8:1 or even 10:1 would be necessary to ensure rapid success and secure the territory. President Zelensky has indeed reported that Russian forces outnumber Ukrainians eight to one in the Pokrovsk sector, highlighting the severity of the pressure.
- **Encirclement Objective:** The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) notes that Russian forces are attempting to complete the encirclement of Ukrainian forces in Pokrovsk and Myrnohrad, focusing on disrupting the lines of communication (GLOCs) to the north. However, the use of small group infiltration tactics has proven insufficient to "generate enough mass to eliminate Ukrainian forces" within the city.

The Siege of Pokrovsk: Advances at Colossal Cost and Decisive Electronic Warfare

The Siege of Pokrovsk: Advances at Colossal Cost and Decisive Electronic Warfare

Conclusions: Dynamic Resistance and Military Debt

The battle of Pokrovsk stands as a case study on Moscow's **"Strategic Stubbornness"**. Russia, under political pressure to achieve results, continues to fuel the offensive with waves of mobilized troops, yet without applying the critical mass necessary for a decisive maneuver.

Ukraine, on the other hand, is implementing a **"dynamic resistance"**, making Russia pay **"for every meter with usurious interest"**. These "interests" do not allow Moscow to liquidate the capital of its military debt in human lives and resources.

Pokrovsk has not yet fallen. Its tenacious defense, despite Ukrainian difficulties in countering Russian EW/UAV attacks, is effectively slowing down the entire Donbas front, turning Russian territorial gains into an unsustainable logistical and human hemorrhage in the long term.

News link: <https://www.google.com/search?q=https://understandingwar.org/research/russia-ukraine/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-november-17-2025>