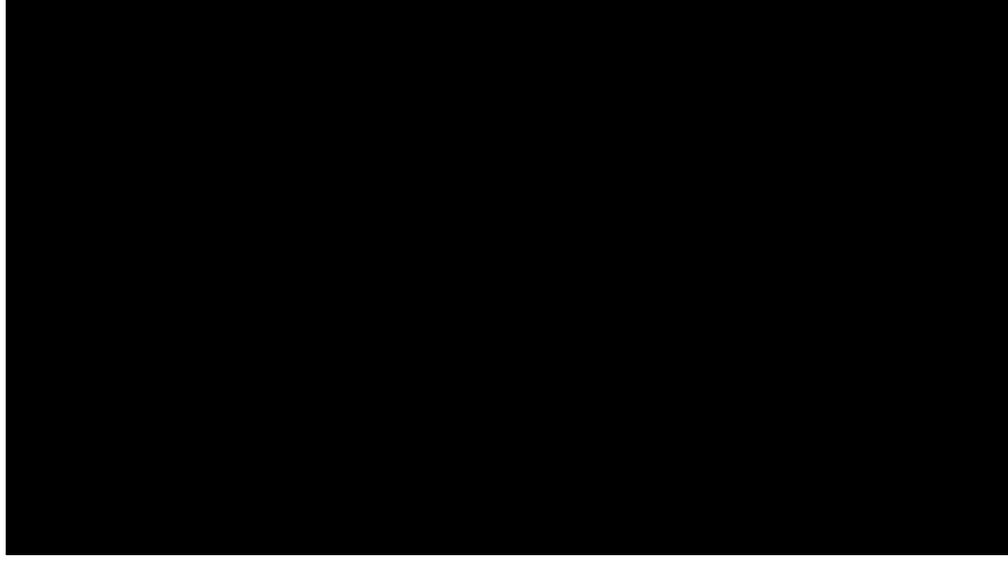


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WORLD

Ukraine Deploys Gun-Toting Mannequins to Drive Russians From Kharkiv

BY SCOTT MCDONALD ON 5/15/22 AT 6:30 PM EDT



WORLD UKRAINE RUSSIA

Ukraine has a new line of defense in the war against Russia. Standing posts dressed up in everything from tactical gear to dresses, Ukraine has deployed mannequins in certain areas north of Kharkiv as Russian troops continue retreating from the city back to the nearby border.

The mannequins are well-armed with fake rifles and other makeshift weapons aimed at whomever decides to attack them.

The mannequins are positioned north of Kharkiv, which is in northeast Ukraine and only a few miles from the Russian border. The mannequins appear to aim weapons as Ukraine moves homemade improvised explosive devices (IEDs) to the frontline of the battle.



A mannequin aims towards a former frontline position on May 15, 2022 on the outskirts of Kharkiv, Ukraine. Ukrainian and Western officials say Russia is withdrawing forces around Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, suggesting it may redirect troops to Ukraine's southeast. PHOTO BY JOHN MOORE/GETTY IMAGES

This comes as there are multiple reports of Ukrainian fighters defending the city and driving the Russian troops back.

Mannequins might be easy to find in Kharkiv, which has endured a heavy shelling by Russian forces since the war began in February. Many malls and department stores have been destroyed in the process, leaving much behind in the rubble.

It's unclear who dressed and placed the mannequins to their positions.



A mannequin aims towards a former frontline position on May 15, 2022 on the outskirts of Kharkiv, Ukraine. Ukrainian and Western officials say Russia is withdrawing forces around Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, suggesting it may redirect troops to Ukraine's southeast. PHOTO BY JOHN MOORE/GETTY IMAGES

Using mannequins as decoy troops during war is nothing new. Serbia used them in 1999 during the Kosovo War. Decoy troops are generally more effective "against helicopters and aircraft," according to military strategist Justin Crump.

"Targeting fakes wastes effort and ammunition, which is how Serbia made effective use of decoys in 1999. It can also fool reconnaissance efforts," Crump said in the *London Times*.

Russia has also used mannequins in this war for trickery against Ukraine, and the Russians also claimed Ukraine used mannequins to present as dead bodies to fool the international community.

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Rossiya24, which is Russia state-owned TV network seen both in and out of Russia, last month [showed a video](#) of what they said were Ukrainian soldiers prepping a mannequin to sensationalize the "theatre of war."

"Here you can see the preparations for the 'theatre'—literally—of war activities in Ukraine," the reporter said. "As you can see for yourself, it's not complicated. Two men in military outfits are wrapping this dummy in scotch tape, with a clear purpose of presenting it as a dead body."

This video by the Russian TV network came after emerging photos of bodies in the streets of Bucha, which the Russian government said was also staged by the Ukrainian government to gain sympathy.

"The other day another fake attack was carried out in the city of Bucha in the Kiev region after the Russian servicemen left the area in accordance with the plans and agreements reached," said Russia Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in early April. "A fake attack was staged there a few days later, and it's being fomented on all channels and social media by Ukrainian representatives and their Western patrons."

The claims of Ukraine staging dead bodies were [debunked by Newsweek](#).

The war will enter its 13th week on Wednesday, which means it will have been going for a quarter of a year so far with no clear end in sight.

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