

# Russian Region Deploys Cats to Ward Off Rats on the Frontlines in Ukraine

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A cat sits under a BMPT Terminator armoured fighting vehicle in Donetsk. **Dmitry Yagodkin/TASS**

Russian volunteers are sending cats to fight off rodent infestations in the battlefield trenches during the country's invasion of Ukraine, local media [reported](#) Monday.

“The soldiers complained to me that they’re plagued by mice,” volunteer Vladimir Malygin [told](#) the state-affiliated media outlet Tatar Inform.

“Cats [saved](#) the Hermitage during the Great Patriotic War [World War II], so I thought why not send them cats,” said Malygin, who heads a military-patriotic club in Russia’s republic of Tatarstan.

Speaking during a regional 12-hour military recruitment [telethon](#), Malygin showed off an orange domestic cat named Ryzhik that he said was ready for deployment.

Russian media drew attention to his distinction between “warm, dear cats from Tatarstan for our lads” and apparently “[man-eating](#)” cats living in Russian-occupied eastern Ukraine.

“Cats from Donetsk are also cats, but sadly they roam the fields where, as you know, there are many dead soldiers,” Malygin said, explaining the motivation behind his initiative.

Tatarstan, home to around 2 million Tatars, an ethnic minority of Turkic origin, offers some of the country’s highest one-time payments for new military recruits at 1.5 million rubles (\$17,000).

Tatarstan’s military recruitment campaign made headlines last week for promising 100,000-ruble (\$1,100) [bonuses](#) for those who sign up a friend or family member.

Besides the so-called “frontline cats,” Tatarstan’s telethon featured popular Tatar artists, soldiers, officials and volunteers.

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