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British Volunteer Father Killed by Russian Drone in Ukraine on First Mission

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A British father, Alan Robert Williams, 35, was killed by a Russian drone strike during his first military mission volunteering with Ukrainian forces in the Kharkiv Oblast region. Despite having no prior military experience, Williams chose to join the fight against Russian forces after witnessing the conflict unfold, defying the pleas of his wife and 12-year-old daughter.

Williams, a former school site manager, officially joined the Ukrainian military unit on June 10. His family lost contact with him on July 2, when he was deployed on his initial mission. Two weeks later, Williams' unit colleagues informed his wife, Stephanie Boyce-Williams, 40, that he had been struck by a Russian drone while attempting to retrieve foreign officers during an assault. According to his comrades, Williams was rendered

immediately unresponsive and had to be left behind as they retreated from the attack. Due to his body not being recovered, he has been classified as Missing in Action (MIA).

Stephanie Boyce-Williams shared how the family tried to dissuade him from going. “We spent time trying to convince him not to go, telling him how it would affect us and how it would impact our daughter,” she said. “But he was such a strong-willed man that once he got something in his mind there was no way you were changing it. He wanted to help civilians, especially the children.” Earlier this year, Williams had been hospitalized for mental health reasons after becoming unemployed. Upon his discharge, he felt compelled to act, stating he “couldn’t sit back and watch” as Russian forces advanced through Eastern Europe.

Under Ukrainian law, Williams cannot be officially declared deceased until his body is recovered or until six months have passed and his wife applies to a Ukrainian court. This process requires in-person submission and all paperwork must be in Ukrainian, complicating the legal recognition of his death. As a result, Stephanie has been unable to claim financial support. She explained, “We have lost Alan’s wage completely, which was half of our bills. I can’t claim anything with regards to being a widow until he is officially declared. I am not entitled to anything. I earn too much to claim any single person benefit and I have two adult children who count towards people in my house, so I can’t claim anything at all.”

A spokesperson for the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office confirmed that the department is “supporting the family of a British man who is missing in Ukraine, and is in contact with the local authorities.” The tragic case highlights the personal costs endured by volunteers drawn into the conflict in Ukraine and the challenges families face when loved ones go missing in active war zones.