

Remembering Cooper Andrews

Rikki Shulte

2023

Please visit and share the fundraiser page for the Cooper Andrews Memorial Fund

On April 19th, 2023, Cooper (Harris) Andrews, 26, passed alongside three other anarchist internationalist volunteers in Ukraine. Comrades Dimitri Petrov of the Russian Anarchist Resistance, Finbar Kafferkey, a volunteer from Co. Cork, Ireland, and Cooper Andrews, a former Marine and an anarchist volunteer from Cleveland Ohio, were members of a unit of the international Resistance Committee (unit name withheld for security, and 4th member KIA'd unknown yet). They had chosen to take on the most dangerous assignment in Bakhmut, protecting "The Road of Life" humanitarian corridor, and were ambushed whilst defending evacuees. Cooper had been serving in Ukraine for almost a year, fighting in Kherson, outside Kyiv, and spending the last several months in Bakhmut. As soon as his application to volunteer was accepted, he flew to Ukraine and began with the Foreign Legion before joining up with the Resistance Committee later.

From a very young age he became involved in many struggles as a black autonomist – mobilizing amidst the police murders of Tamir Rice & Tanisha Anderson, on to helping to form a co-operative publisher, print shop and zine store, supporting antifascist struggles, mutual aid, and providing self defense training. Cooper spent many hours working with Suncere Ali Shakur of the Common Ground Collective to run programming and support programs in Cleveland housing projects, and prepare a manuscript memorializing Suncere's time in the mutual aid struggles of post-Katrina New Orleans.

Cooper later enlisted in the Marines in order to gain training in self defense and to prepare to become an internationalist volunteer. He braved bunking with Neo-Nazis at barracks in North Carolina (as a black man!) to build these skills and knowledge; and got a couple Nazis kicked out in the process. In only two years, he rapidly rose to the rank of Sergeant. After leaving the service, he was fighting wildfires in Texas, Colorado, and Idaho. When the war in Ukraine broke out, he felt this was the best opportunity to put his skills into action in the struggle against fascism.

Cooper was one of the most principled, bravest people we have ever known, and his story needs to be remembered.

His family and comrades miss him dearly, but his courage in resistance to fascism will burn in our hearts forever.

A poem written by Cooper a month before he died:

We find ourselves now at a crucial moment in the war where the precarious balance that was struck following the victorious Ukrainian People's counter-offensive may be turned in the aggressors favor through weight of attrition. Internationalists stand at the front of this conflict alongside our fellow countrymen (by blood and focus of efforts if not by passport) and we have resolved to have our fate intertwined with that of this land's people. As the war enters an extremely crucial phase it's now more than ever that I hope my friends back home remember what is occurring here, after the initial excitement and media frenzy it is so easy to be jaded and look upon this conflict as merely another passing instance on the news, for talking head "experts" to debate, or worse still to complacently look at the albeit, plainly apparent incompetence of the Russian armed forces as

a premature end to the war. This war is very much still in question though there have been many glorious victories won, the Russian state has at her means the accumulated resources of a vast empire and it will not leave this conflict without attempting to assemble them all against the people of Ukraine.

Victory in this war is vital to the freedom not just of the Ukrainian people but to that of the entire region and beyond. Putin's nepotistic dictatorship reaches far beyond its own borders to maintain his revanchist regime. His dreams of empire are at the expense of Ukraine's people as well as his own and within his nation and neighboring puppets there is a burgeoning insurgency which threatens to boil over should his great gamble in Ukraine fail. Putin's imperialism represents a great purveyor of fascism (regardless of what certain weak-willed Turncoats may say while they stain the name of antifascism). A victory here for Putin will not only plunge this region into a dark period of authoritarianism from which there will be no escape, but it will also represent a victory for those who seek to recast the world in the image of the old, that is for those who seek to recreate the savagery of authoritarianism produced by those autocrats of, fascists under a variety of names.

In our hands there is a world to win and a fight which requires great sacrifice however the alternative is not an option. For us and everybody else who faces the shadow of putinist aggression there is only victory or death. Love and struggle

As to what we do here we are nothing special, just another group of fighters with various roles. Our time is occupied with training and boredom interspersed between the thrill and stress of combat. I am privileged to be a part of the great struggle as I am and I hope that our efforts will give rise to a free Ukraine and beyond.

find each other.



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