

Profile in Courage? The last words of a Russian Commando

As the Intellectual Takeout piece, "[A Primer on Courage](#)," noted:

"Courage, also known as 'fortitude' or 'bravery,' is one of the four cardinal virtues along with prudence, justice, and temperance. Along with temperance, courage helps one to conquer the obstacles to doing the good with prudence and justice.

According to Aristotle, one possesses the virtue of courage if he/she 'faces and ... fears the right things ... from the right motive, in the right way and from the right time, and who feels confidence under the corresponding conditions.' In other words, a brave person is one who prudently decides in certain situations that it is right to endure suffering for the sake of a good, even though he is afraid. The brave person endures suffering in cases where he knows that avoiding it would be a greater evil."

Courageous is how the recent actions of a Russian officer named Alexander Prokhorenko are being described. Is it a fair description based on the true meaning of the word? Arguably, yes. Prokhorenko was a Russian Special Forces Commando who, after retreating to a defensive position, was overrun by ISIS soldiers and called in an airstrike on his position to destroy his attackers. In the process, though, he knew it would take his own life.

(Edit: Some question whether or not the event happened as told by the Russians and revealed in the transcript. At this point it is undetermined, though stories such as the one below have happened throughout history, with many American soldiers receiving posthumous decorations for similar acts.)

Here's the [transcript](#) released by the Russians that captured Prokhorenko's call for an airstrike and his final words to his family:

Officer: command I am compromised, repeat I am compromised.

Command: please repeat and confirm

Officer: They have spotted me, there are shooting everywhere, i am pinned, request evacuation immediately

Command: evacuation request acknowledged

Officer: please hurry I am low on ammo, they seem to everywhere, I can't hold them for too long please hurry

Command: Confirmed, hold them off, continue return of fire, go to safe position, air support is monitoring, state coordinates

Officer: gives coordinates which are blurred in the translation

Command: command repeats coordinates which are blurred. Confirm

Officer: confirmed, please hurry I am low on ammo, they are surrounding me, bastards

Command: 12 minutes until evacuation, return to safe line, I repeat return to safe line

Officer: They are close, I am surrounded, this may be the end, tell my family I love them dearly

Command: return to green line, continue return of fire, help is on the way, followed by air support

Officer: negative, I am surrounded, they are so many of these bastards

Command: 10 minutes, return to green line

Officer: I can't they have surrounded me and are closing in, please hurry

Command: move to green line, repeat move to green line

Officer: They are outside, conduct the airstrike now please hurry, this is the end, tell my family I love them and i died fighting for my motherland.

Command: Negative return to green line

Officer: I can't command, I am surrounded, they are outside, I don't want them to take me and parade me, conduct the airstrike, they will make a mockery of me and this uniform. I want to die with dignity and take all these bastards with me. please my last wish, conduct the airstrike, they will kill me either way.

Command: please confirm your request

Officer: They out outside, this is the end commander, thank you, tell my family and my country I love them. Tell them I was brave and I fought until I could no longer. Please take care of my family, avenge my death, good bye commander, tell my family I love them

Command: No response, orders the airstrike

Was it courageous? If true, undoubtedly.