STUDENT HANDOUT

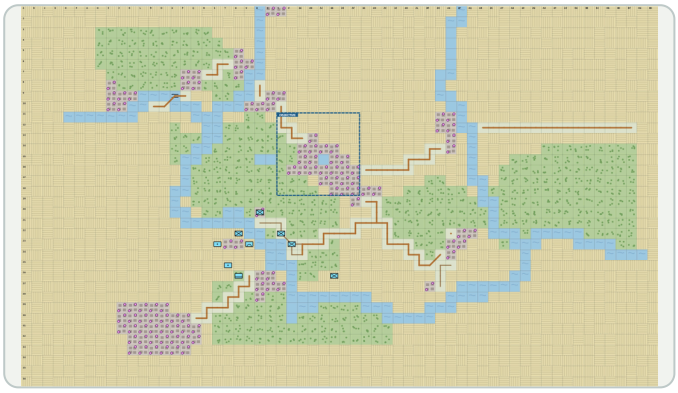
Lyman: The Closing Advance

Lyman and its approaches, Donetsk Oblast, Ukraine · 17 September to 1 October 2022

Information as of October 2026



Scenario illustration · AI generated



Student map · own side only · Simulation situation map · reconstructed terrain and estimated deployments; not verified historical positions.

Learning objectives

- Locate the city between its river and northern approaches.
- Compare the historical capture with the Russian limited delay objective.
- Distinguish documented drone use from assumed aircraft types.

Run time and a good result

Default run clock: 5 minutes 30 seconds at 1×, excluding pauses, briefing and discussion. Time controls change elapsed play time.

Objective: Capture the Lyman military defence sector before time expires.

Lyman: The Closing Advance: Capture the Lyman military defence sector before time expires. Occupy the marked zone with at least one combat unit and no opposing combat unit for 8 continuous simulation seconds. The authored limit is 330 simulation seconds across 3 stages. Compare objective progress, time, losses, drone expenditure and recorded civilian harm with a second run. A strong classroom result also explains the source evidence and reconstruction estimates; it does not verify a historical casualty count.

Atrocity notice

The UN Commission found war crimes by Russian authorities, including killings, torture and sexual violence, and a small number of violations by Ukrainian forces. Its March 2023 findings are context, including for later scenarios.

These reports describe the wider conflict. They do not establish that every crime occurred in this modeled battle.

Studying or commanding a side does not endorse its conduct. Drone Front never lets players target civilians, hospitals, schools or places of worship. Civilian harm from simulated strikes is counted and shown in the debrief, including nonzero harm. Civilian massacres are never playable operations. Designated terrorist forces and Wagner remain computer controlled; Gaza war events remain excluded from play.

▼ Dated reports and findings

- 2023-03-16 · UN Commission of Inquiry: war crimes in Ukraine

Learn more: the laws of war

- ICRC: Geneva Conventions and commentaries
- ICRC: Customary IHL database
- UN: Genocide Convention (9 December 1948)
- UN: Rome Statute (17 July 1998), articles 6–8

Historical source notes

Ukrainian artillery spotters described drone observation during the Lyman recapture. The record supports that role without identifying every aircraft.

Lyman fell after pressure on several approaches. A single city objective compresses the wider advance and withdrawal.

Postbattle burials span an occupation and earlier fighting. Their numbers cannot all be assigned to this short battle.

Civilian harm

CNN reporters saw heavily damaged buildings and railway infrastructure after the recapture. Residents described sheltering and the loss of water and electricity.

The Kyiv Independent reported that Donetsk police identified 111 civilians and 35 soldiers at a Lyman burial site. The report does not establish that all died during this September advance.

Evidence for learning objectives

RFE/RL interviewed a Lyman artillery spotter who described drones correcting fire; the aircraft model remains unidentified.

The model gives Russia a time-limited delay objective; this setting does not claim that Russia retained Lyman historically.

The model leaves the selected-period civilian toll unknown because the burial report does not date every death to this advance.

Timings

For 60 minutes, brief for 15, run with pauses for 25 and review for 20. For 90 minutes, repeat from the other side. For 180 minutes, compare the reports with the physical map.

Session	Plan
45 minutes	Brief: 10 min; Run: 15 min; Collect: 5 min; Review: 15 min
60 minutes	Before questions: 5 min; Brief: 10 min; Run: 20 min; Collect: 5 min; Debrief and after questions: 15 min; Discussion: 5 min

Session	Plan
90 minutes	Before questions: 5 min; Brief: 10 min; Run 1: with drones: 20 min; Run 2: without drones: 15 min; Collect: 5 min; Compare and discuss: 25 min; After questions: 10 min
180 minutes	Before questions: 10 min; Brief and staff roles: 15 min; Run 1: with drones: 25 min; Run 2: without drones: 20 min; Break: 10 min; Run 3: syndicates: 30 min; Collect: 10 min; Seminar replay and debrief: 40 min; After questions: 10 min; Close: 10 min

Staff roles

commander
Track the objective and the historical phase.

intelligence
Separate findings, attributed claims and assumptions.

fires
Record simulated effects and civilian exposure.

droneOps
Record observation flights and their evidence limits.

Opposing staff objective

Delay the loss of the Lyman defence sector until time expires. This limited mission does not represent retaining the city after Russia's historical withdrawal.

Decision points

- Opening phase: where does this period fit in the wider September advance?
- Northern phase: how does pressure on several approaches change the historical account?
- Final phase: what does control of the city establish, and what remains unknown about losses?

Before and after questions

1. **What does RFE/RL's Lyman spotter interview support?**
   A. It identifies the exact quad model flown there.
   B. It establishes the complete local drone inventory.
   C. It verifies each sortie in the model allocation.
   D. It documents drones used to correct artillery fire.

2. **What would a Russian-side success in this Lyman scenario mean?**

   A. The simulated defence delayed loss until the deadline.
   B. The historical garrison retained Lyman after October.
   C. The simulated outcome proves every convoy escaped.
   D. The historical withdrawal had been prevented entirely.

3. **How should CNN's differing accounts of the Lyman withdrawal be recorded?**

   A. Treat the spokesman's account as independent confirmation.
   B. Attribute both accounts and keep the timing unresolved.
   C. Treat the residents' account as the model's fixed timeline.
   D. Combine both accounts into a verified single departure.

4. **How should the reported 111 civilian bodies at a Lyman burial site be used?**

   A. As the verified civilian death total for the advance.
   B. As the final civilian toll for the whole occupation.
   C. As an attributed burial finding with uncertain dates.
   D. As the combined military and civilian battle losses.

5. **What does the model's dated containment sequence establish about Lyman?**

   A. It verifies the actual orders of every displayed unit.
   B. It establishes the actual strength of the historical garrison.
   C. It reproduces the actual paths of withdrawing vehicles.
   D. It groups estimated functions into authored battle stages.

Discussion

- Why can the Lyman map and Kharkiv map link to the same campaign article?
- What does an interview with a drone spotter establish about the aircraft?
- Why are burial findings not assigned wholesale to this battle?

Debrief rubric

Strong
Meets the objective or explains why it was not met; uses the published sources and run evidence, separates known facts from assumptions, compares both sides' losses and cost exchange, and evaluates precautions against civilian harm.

Adequate
Describes the objective and main decisions, identifies at least one source and model limitation, reports losses and harm, and gives a reasoned change for a second run.

Weak
Reports only victory or points, treats teaching settings as real performance, gives unsupported historical claims, or omits uncertainty and civilian harm.

Published readings

1. Reuters: Ukraine says troops closing in on Lyman, 30 September 2022
2. Reuters: Ukraine troops say they take Lyman, 1 October 2022
3. CNN Newsource via KYMA, Nick Paton Walsh and Victoria Butenko: Visit to Lyman (2 October 2022)

Complete source list

Wikipedia: Lyman front of the 2022 Kharkiv counteroffensive, accessed 6 October 2026
Reuters: Ukraine says troops closing in on Lyman, 30 September 2022
Reuters: Ukraine troops say they take Lyman, 1 October 2022
CNN Newsource via KYMA, Nick Paton Walsh and Victoria Butenko: Visit to Lyman (2 October 2022)
RFE/RL, Sam Skove: Soldiers recall the Lyman retreat, 14 October 2022
RFE/RL, Sam Skove: Drone operator training in Ukraine, 27 September 2022
The Kyiv Independent: Donetsk police report Lyman burial findings, 20 October 2022
Wikipedia: STC Orlan-10, accessed 6 October 2026