

IN THE WAR ZONE: Urgent evacuation of civilians from Pokrovsk earlier this year



British aid worker Eddy Scott on losing two limbs in a devastating Russian drone strike and why he's staying put in his adopted country despite those life-changing injuries

EXCLUSIVE

By Lord Ashcroft in Kyiv



DESPITE having no family links to Ukraine, Eddy Scott speaks with pride about his Ukrainian blood – all 14 litres of it to be precise. That is how much he required from anonymous donors when the van that he was driving was targeted by a Russian drone at the frontline of Ukraine's war with Russia.

When he came around from life-saving surgery, his best friend was at his hospital bedside, informing him he had lost his left leg and left arm at the age of just 28. He had not, however, lost his dry British sense of humour.

Still sleepy from the anaesthetic, he replied, "I guess I am all right then," and even forced a smile. That willingness to see the bright side of everything has resulted in Eddy, 29, transforming a near-death experience eight months ago into a resounding positive.

To describe him as "selfless" does not begin to do justice to his aid work in Ukraine for the past three years and, if his plans come to fruition, for long into the future.

Eddy, from Shaftesbury, Dorset, began to follow the events in Ukraine in the months before and after the all-out invasion of Ukraine by Russia on February 24 2022. "I was shocked but not surprised by the invasion and my first thought was, 'I want to help in some way'," he recalls today. Although he briefly considered trying to join the Ukrainian Armed Forces, he had no military experience so switched his thoughts to becoming a humanitarian aid worker.

"So I made the decision to go," says Eddy, who up to that point, as a keen sailor, had been working on superyachts after leaving Sherborne School aged 18.

He used his savings to buy a second-hand Toyota 4x4 pick-up truck for £4,500 and headed off in a five-vehicle aid convoy for Ukraine in October 2022. The drive to Lviv in western Ukraine took three days and Eddy and others then drove on to Kyiv, the Ukrainian capital, and, eventually, on to Mykolaiv, a city in south-eastern Ukraine.

For most of the next three years, he was an aid worker, delivering medical supplies, food, winter uniforms and other goods to civilians and the military. In 2022, there were relatively few Russian drones in the skies on the

frontline but by early this year the skies were full of enemy drones, on top of the dangers posed by missiles, artillery and mortar fire.

"I never really felt scared because I was mainly working with soldiers, people who knew what they were doing," he says.

Much of his time was spent sharing a five-bedroom building in Kramatorsk with other aid workers. It was known affectionately as the "crack house": this had nothing to do with drug-taking but everything to do with the huge cracks in the walls caused by enemy missiles.

On January 30 this year, Eddy was driving a vehicle, a former security van, in and around Pokrovsk, then and now the scene of some of the fiercest fighting of the war. He was helping to evacuate civilians from the city.

It was around 1.30pm when Eddy, wearing a helmet and full body-armour, heard a FPV (First Person View) drone overhead and so he drove quickly on.

At the time, he had his colleague, who was a team leader for the aid charity BASE UA, with him in the front passenger seat and two evacuees, a married couple, in the back seat. Their white van was clearly marked "volunteers" and "evacuations" in Ukrainian. "Suddenly, the vehicle was rocked by this huge explosion," recalls Eddy, who is tall, slim, fair-haired and bearded. "It felt like someone had punched me on the back of my left shoulder. Straight away I knew I had been hit."

"For a second, I was moving my shoulder to try to steer the van but I could see my arm on the steering wheel was not moving. The charge had basically taken my arm clean off and it was only being held in place by my hoodie."

"I thought to myself, 'Don't look at the arm', so I looked at my leg and it resembled a punched lasagna. The blast had destroyed my leg. I started screaming and got a tourniquet out but I was not in a state to do anything."

"My team leader came around my side of the vehicle, opened the door and got two tourniquets on me, one on my arm and one on my leg. This stopped the bleeding and saved my life." In fact, the team leader and the couple had also been injured by shrapnel but fortunately not seriously. Eddy was transferred to a military pick-up vehicle and then,



FORMER LIFE: Eddy crewed superyachts before move to Ukraine

some eight minutes later, he was transferred to an ambulance that took him to the nearest hospital in Dobropillia. "I was in absolute agony in the ambulance – pain of 11 out of ten – as it was bouncing all over the place on the bumpy road. Every second seemed like an hour. I was thinking, 'Why are we taking so long?' In the ambulance, I started to drift to sleep and I thought that if I died then I would be content. I had not wasted my life and I had done something rewarding with it [in Ukraine]. The medic was slapping me to keep me awake. The last thing I remember was

being wheeled into the hospital on a stretcher. In fact, I went into surgery 56 minutes after arriving at the hospital and, again, this stopped me from bleeding out."

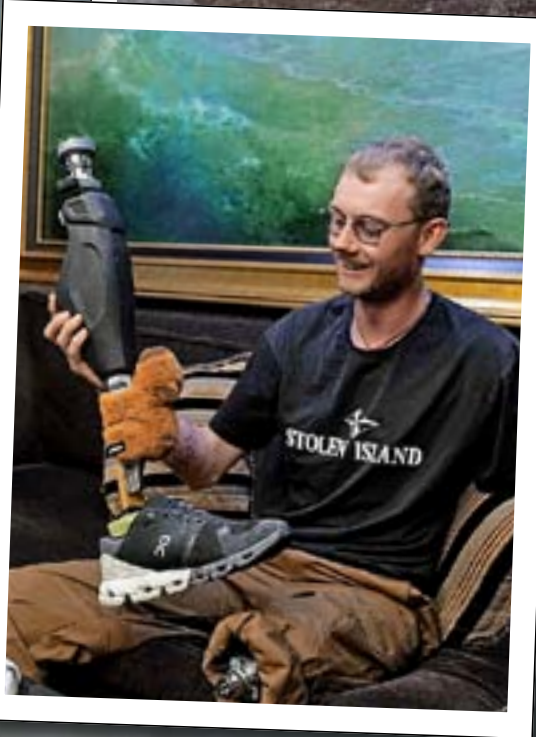
"Because I was given 14 litres of Ukrainian blood, I consider myself partly Ukrainian now. Unfortunately, it has not given me a love of buckwheat [a staple local diet] or language skills," he smiles wryly.

Shortly after his surgery, he was transferred to a hospital in Dnipro, where he stayed for four days. Next, he went to a hospital in Kyiv, where he received specialist care thanks to the

I've got Ukrainian blood... 14 litres of it in fact!



IN HARM'S WAY: Eddy near frontline with his dog, Icy, before Russian drone attack



HERO: Eddy Scott, main, with dog Icy, is rebuilding his life after losing two limbs. Above, with bionic leg

weeks of care, his rehabilitation was taken over by another charity, Superhumans, which specialises in war trauma. He has a new prosthetic left leg and will receive a prosthetic left arm at some point. "I consider myself to be incredibly lucky," he insists. "I am right-handed and I have no other injuries other than losing two limbs. I haven't had a bad day yet, a few bad hours, yes, but I have been surrounded by positive people."

LAST month, Eddy officially began a new role as senior media manager with Superhumans. He will not carry out more frontline work because he does not want others to feel responsible for him. "One of the reasons I am okay with my injuries is that I knew I could get badly hurt in my frontline aid role. To be honest, I thought I would end up dead rather than a double amputee. I was well aware of the dangers."

Before he lost two limbs, Eddy dreamed of running a sailing school in Crimea, the region of Ukraine that was illegally annexed by Russia 11 years ago. For now, that seems unrealistic given Russia's hold on Crimea and his own injuries. Instead, he hopes one day to get to coach a Ukrainian para-sailing team capable of competing at the Paralympic Games.

Eddy is certain that his future lies in his adopted homeland. He says: "Ukraine is now my home and I love the people here. Most of my friends are here. If I go back to the UK, I will be surrounded by a lot of people who don't understand the war."

"As a double amputee, people will understand in Ukraine what has happened to me." An estimated 100,000 people in Ukraine, military and civilians, have lost between one and four limbs during the war.

"What I have got out of Ukraine is so much more than I have lost. I have a Ukrainian god-daughter who is nearly one and a half, a rescued dog called Icy and I am settled here," he adds. "In the long term, I would love to find a Ukrainian wife, buy a plot of land and build an accessible house with a garden. I have so much to look forward to."

● Lord Ashcroft KCMG PC is an international businessman, philanthropist, author and pollster. Visit lordashcroft.com. Follow him on X/Facebook @LordAshcroft Eddy's recovery and rehab have been supported by three charities. Donate to baseua.org, weathermanfoundation.org and superhumans.com

R.T. Weatherman Foundation, headed by Meaghan Mobbs, the daughter of General Keith Kellogg, a key adviser to President Trump on Ukraine.

Eddy preferred to stay in Ukraine rather than return to Britain and was touched that his father, Martin, a semi-retired business consultant, came to be at his bedside and understood for the first time why the second of his four children had risked his life for a country he had never visited before. Eddy says his entire family has been hugely supportive. After leaving hospital after more than six