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Conscripts Who Complained to Putin Wiped Out in Battle

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Mobilized men attending an Irkutsk conscription office in September 2022. **Alexei Kushnirenko / TASS**

Nearly all the Irkutsk region conscripts whose video appeals to President Vladimir Putin decrying their lack of training made headlines last February are believed to have died in Ukraine's Donetsk region on March 1, the Sibir.Realii website reported on Friday.

The unit's members came to prominence in February 2022, when its recently mobilized reservists made three video appeals to the Russian president complaining of being made subordinate to officers from the Donetsk People's Republic, a self-proclaimed separatist entity whose territory was annexed by Russia in February 2022.

The men also complained of being sent to storm Ukrainian positions with insufficient training and a total lack of military intelligence. They claimed they had been warned they would be shot if they refused to follow orders.

Sibir.Realii reported on Friday that only a few unit members are still alive, with much of the regiment being wiped out after being ordered to storm a fortified area in the Donetsk region of

eastern Ukraine on Wednesday.

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While a few fighters apparently survived the mission with injuries, the unit's other servicemen, who are currently listed as missing are believed to have been killed, according to their relatives, Sibir.Realii said.

"My [husband] called back — [he] has a shrapnel [wound], in the hospital. He says there is nothing left of the regiment. Only two wounded are known [to have survived] so far, the rest are either dead or were left there in a difficult situation," the wife of one of the conscripts told Sibir.Realii.

She claimed her wounded husband had already been told he would be sent back to the front line again in a week.

After the conscripts' three public appeals last year, the Irkutsk regional governor, Igor Kobzev, himself a general and a former deputy head of the Ministry of Emergency Situations, promised they would be reassigned to other duties.

At a meeting with mothers of dead soldiers in Irkutsk in November, Kobzev made headlines once again when he said that the women's sons belonged to the state rather than to their families.

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