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8.5K Russian Airborne Troops Wounded in Ukraine, Commander Says

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Commander Mikhail Teplinsky. **Russian Defense Ministry**

At least 8,500 members of the Russian Airborne Forces have been wounded in the year and a half since Russia invaded Ukraine, the elite troops' commander said Wednesday.

Airborne Forces commander Mikhail Teplinsky disclosed the figures in a video message congratulating comrades on Paratroopers' Day, which marked 93 years since the founding of the corps.

"More than 5,000 wounded paratroopers returned to the front after treatment, and more than 3,500 of our wounded refused to leave the frontline," Teplinsky said.

His video address was published early Wednesday by the Defense Ministry-run broadcaster Zvezda.

Hours later, the footage was taken down from both Zvezda's website and its channel on the Telegram messaging app for unexplained reasons.

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The independent investigative news outlet Agentstvo, which spotted the video’s removal on Thursday, speculated that the footage was removed because it “disclosed information the Defense Ministry did not want made public.”

Teplinsky did not say how many Airborne Forces troops have been killed in the war.

The Defense Ministry last disclosed its overall casualty numbers in Ukraine in September 2022, saying 5,937 soldiers had been killed in combat, a figure believed to be much higher.

Open-source intelligence analyst Kirill Mikhailov told Agentstvo that Teplinsky’s figures suggest that “several thousand” Russian paratroopers may have been killed in Ukraine.

An independent tally based on open-source data by the BBC’s Russian service and the news website Mediazona estimates that at least 1,832 paratroopers died in Ukraine as of July 30.

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