

Commander of Elite Russian Airborne Unit Killed in Ukraine

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Colonel Andrei Kondrashkin. **56th Guards Air Assault Regiment**

The commander of an elite Russian airborne unit has been killed in Ukraine, a Kremlin-backed military official in eastern Ukraine's Donetsk region [said](#) Sunday.

Alexander Khodakovsky, who serves as deputy national guard commander of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, announced the death of Russian Colonel Andrei Kondrashkin on the messaging app Telegram, adding that the killed colonel headed the 31st Guards Air Assault Brigade.

Khodakovsky did not disclose the circumstances of the airborne commander's death.

However, Yurii Butusov, founder of Ukraine's censor.net news website, [said](#) Kondrashkin died while trying to repel a Ukrainian attack near the captured town of Bakhmut.

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Without disclosing his sources, Butusov said Ukrainian assault forces had breached the defenses of Kondrashkin's unit in the village of Andriivka, located near the key frontline town of Bakhmut.

"The elimination of one of Russia's strike formations' commanders is a serious achievement," Butusov wrote on Telegram.

Ukraine's military [said](#) it had retaken Andriivka last week, while Russia's Defense Ministry maintained that Kyiv was "trying in vain to dislodge Russian troops" from the village.

Kondrashkin is at least the second commander of the 31st Guards Air Assault Brigade to be killed in Ukraine since the February 2022 invasion.

His predecessor, Colonel Sergei Karasev, was among the dozens of the unit's paratroopers [who died](#) in the first few days of the war when it tried and failed to capture the town of Hostomel outside Kyiv.

Nearly 2,000 Russian paratroopers, including 340 officers, have died in the nearly 19-month invasion of Ukraine, [according](#) to a tally by the independent outlets Mediazona and BBC's Russian-language service.

Moscow has been reluctant to release official casualty figures, leaving independent media to collect data from the disparate local media reports, obituaries, and cemeteries.

Russia's independent news outlet Sota, citing anonymous sources, [said](#) Kondrashkin commanded the 31st brigade for "just a few days."

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