

Ambushed Soldiers Heroes VFW Chief Says; National Commander Visits Wounded at Landstuhl

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LANDSTUHL, Germany — The national commander of the nation's largest organization of combat veterans on Tuesday met with wounded soldiers at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, who were recovering from last week's battle on a remote outpost in Afghanistan's Kunar Province, near the border with Pakistan, discounting some media speculation that the soldiers allegedly were ill-prepared when insurgents stormed the American and Afghan outpost in the mountainous northeastern province.

"That's simply not true," George Lisicki, a Vietnam War veteran from Carteret, N. J., said during an interview with Veterans of Foreign Wars "The National Defense" [\[listen to interview\]](#) talk-radio show," adding that, although the men had endured a tremendously fierce battle, they were all lucid in providing details of the early morning Sunday battle.

Note: To read the TRUE account of what happened, read Stars and Stripes interview with Col. Charles "Chip" Preysler, commander of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team: [Commander: Media reports on Afghanistan outpost battle were exaggerated.](#)

"Although it was emotionally difficult for them to talk, their spirit and morale was amazing. In their words, even though they were outnumbered four-to-one, they 'took it to the enemy, and kicked butt,' the VFW national commander said.

The soldiers, who are with the Vicenza, Italy-based 173rd Airborne Brigade, had just been deployed to the outpost when the heavily-armed insurgents attacked. Nine of their comrades died during the battle. According to published sources, the attack was "one of the deadliest engagements for the international forces that arrived in Afghanistan in late 2001 to fight the hard-line Taliban movement now waging an insurgency."

"They really smoked them," Lisicki relayed after listening to the soldiers recant the battle in their hospital beds. "They are our heroes, and we are so proud of the individuals who fought in the battle. They gave the insurgents quite a beating."

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When asked about their morale, Lisicki said their spirits are high.

“They’re really gung ho in everything they are doing. The only thing they regret is that they are in the hospital, and their buddies are back there fighting the war,” he said. “Just about all of them want to get back there to fight the battle because they believe in what they are doing and in their mission,” adding that he knows they will win the war.

“We have great Americans fighting the battle,” he said, “and just listening to their spirit and seeing the dedication they have for their country is remarkable. They believe in what they are doing.”

Lisicki, who was on a fact-finding mission in Europe meeting military and government officials, said this unfortunate incident verifies the need for more resources and more allied help in Afghanistan, especially in the eastern area near the Pakistan border.

“We need help,” he said, sharing the governmental agencies concerns that the situation in Afghanistan is worsening. “They are telling me our allies are under resourced and are undermanned. They need more help, especially helicopter support.”

The VFW national commander of the 1.6 million-member combat veterans group will travel next to Kuwait and Bagdad, where he will spend five days with troops.