

Department of Defense (DoD) Quarterly Suicide Report (QSR) 1st Quarter, CY 2021

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The estimated cost of this report or study for the Department of Defense is approximately \$6,770 for the 2021 Fiscal Year. This includes \$3,940 in expenses and \$2,830 in DoD labor.



**DEFENSE SUICIDE
PREVENTION OFFICE**

Introduction

The Department of Defense (DoD) is fully committed to preventing suicides in our military community – every death by suicide is a tragedy. The DoD recognizes the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the well-being of our Service members and families. We are closely monitoring potential impacts and taking proactive steps to mitigate those potential impacts. During this time, we remain dedicated in our efforts to educate the force, support the force, and emphasize social connectedness.

The number of suicide deaths in the current report are preliminary and subject to change, as previously unknown cases are reported and some known cases are further investigated. The DoD needs to allow appropriate latitude to investigate individual cases to make such a determination, and to then conduct the necessary statistical analyses to understand trends over time.

To help determine the impact of suicide on the Total Force, the Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO) routinely collects and reports surveillance data on suicide mortality across the Department. The most up-to-date counts of suicide deaths are reported in the Quarterly Suicide Report (QSR).¹ The QSR complies with Objective 11.1 of the DoD Defense Strategy for Suicide Prevention (DSSP) by providing timely and accurate suicide data to guide suicide prevention efforts across the Department.

DSPO collects suicide data via collaborative effort with the Office of the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System (AFMES) and the Suicide Prevention Program Offices of the Military Services (i.e., Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force). AFMES is the official DoD entity responsible for verifying and reporting deaths by suicide for the Active Component and, to the extent available, the Reserve Component, to DSPO.^{2,3} These numbers are reconciled with the Military Services to ensure the most accurate information is reported.

Quarters are based upon the Calendar Year (CY) and defined as:

- Quarter 1 (Q1): January 1st – March 31st
- Quarter 2 (Q2): April 1st – June 30th
- Quarter 3 (Q3): July 1st – September 30th
- Quarter 4 (Q4): October 1st – December 31st

The current report presents data from Q1 of CY 2021. Data includes all known or suspected suicides (both confirmed and pending) as of March 31, 2021, for both the Active and Reserve

¹ Absolute counts do not account for changes in population size. Consequently, caution should be used when making comparisons across groups and/or interpreting changes in suicide counts across time.

² Active Component: Full-time members of the U.S. Armed Forces and Cadets/Midshipmen at the designated military academies.

³ Reserve Component: Limited to members of the Selected Reserves (SELRES). SELRES are drilling and training members of the National Guard and Reserve, Individual Mobilization Augmentees, and full-time support Active Guard and Reservists. This excludes members of the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) and Inactive National Guard (ING).

Components. Hence, the numbers presented in this report are preliminary and subject to change in future quarterly reports as previously unknown suicide cases are reported.⁴

Caution should be used when making comparisons across groups and/or interpreting changes in suicide counts across time because counts do not account for changes in population size. Rates account for differences in population sizes; and, as such, provide a more standardized way to make comparisons over time or across groups.⁵ For the most recent DoD annual suicide rates and trends/changes over time, please see the CY 2019 DoD Annual Suicide Report (available at: <https://www.dspo.mil/ASR/>). The official annual suicide counts and rates for CY 2020 will be published in the DoD Annual Suicide Report – Calendar Year 2020.

QSR Data

Attachment A details the number of suicide deaths by Service⁶ and Component. For Q1 of CY 2021, the Military Services reported the following:

- 76 in the **Active Component**
- 13 in the **Reserve**
- 26 in the **National Guard**

Comparisons of suicide counts between Q1 CY 2020 and Q1 CY 2021 are provided below.⁷ These comparisons are for descriptive purposes and do not reflect statistical increases or decreases nor account for population size.

- For Q1 CY 2021, the number of **Active Component** suicide deaths decreased by 14 compared to Q1 CY 2020 (76 versus 90 suicide deaths)
 - Army Active Component suicide deaths increased by 8
 - Marine Corps Active Component suicide deaths decreased by 1
 - Navy Active Component suicide deaths decreased by 9
 - Air Force Active Component suicide deaths decreased by 12
- For Q1 CY 2021, the number of **Reserve** suicide deaths decreased by 7 compared to Q1 CY 2020 (13 versus 20 suicide deaths)
 - Army Reserve suicide deaths decreased by 1
 - Marine Corps Reserve suicide deaths stayed the same
 - Navy Reserve suicide deaths decreased by 2
 - Air Force Reserve suicide deaths decreased by 4
- For Q1 CY 2021, the number of **National Guard** suicide deaths stayed the same compared to Q1 CY 2020 (26 versus 26 suicide deaths)
 - Army National Guard suicide deaths increased by 2
 - Air National Guard suicide deaths decreased by 2

⁴ Official annual suicide counts and unadjusted rates are published in the DoD Annual Suicide Report. The most recent report is for CY 2019. Available at: <https://www.dspo.mil/ASR/>.

⁵ Rates are defined as the total number of suicides divided by the population for a given time period.

⁶ Currently, Air Force data includes U.S. Space Force data.

⁷ Research on the seasonal effects of suicide death has shown mixed results (e.g., Gutzwiller, 2011; McCleary, 1994; Postalache, 2012; Rossler, 2010).

Attachment A

| DoD Component and Service | CY 2014 | CY 2015 | | | | | CY 2016 | | | | | CY 2017 | | | | |
|---------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| | Total | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Total | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Total | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Total |
| Active Component | 273 | 60 | 71 | 72 | 63 | 267 | 62 | 56 | 83 | 79 | 280 | 74 | 58 | 71 | 84 | 287 |
| Army | 125 | 33 | 28 | 32 | 28 | 121 | 31 | 20 | 42 | 37 | 130 | 32 | 24 | 27 | 33 | 116 |
| Marine Corps | 34 | 3 | 12 | 13 | 11 | 39 | 12 | 11 | 8 | 6 | 37 | 7 | 9 | 15 | 12 | 43 |
| Navy | 54 | 10 | 14 | 11 | 8 | 43 | 9 | 10 | 19 | 14 | 52 | 16 | 13 | 15 | 21 | 65 |
| Air Force | 60 | 14 | 17 | 17 | 16 | 64 | 10 | 15 | 14 | 22 | 61 | 19 | 12 | 14 | 18 | 63 |
| Reserve Component | 169 | 42 | 54 | 72 | 46 | 214 | 56 | 51 | 45 | 50 | 202 | 53 | 68 | 65 | 40 | 226 |
| Reserve | 79 | 13 | 23 | 36 | 18 | 90 | 18 | 24 | 18 | 20 | 80 | 21 | 29 | 27 | 16 | 93 |
| Army Reserve | 42 | 9 | 18 | 20 | 7 | 54 | 6 | 13 | 11 | 11 | 41 | 12 | 20 | 17 | 14 | 63 |
| Marine Corps Reserve | 12 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 11 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 19 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 10 |
| Navy Reserve | 15 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 14 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 10 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 9 |
| Air Force Reserve | 10 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 11 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 10 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 11 |
| National Guard | 90 | 29 | 29 | 35 | 27 | 120 | 38 | 27 | 27 | 30 | 122 | 32 | 39 | 38 | 24 | 133 |
| Army National Guard | 76 | 21 | 25 | 30 | 24 | 100 | 33 | 22 | 26 | 27 | 108 | 30 | 35 | 35 | 21 | 121 |
| Air National Guard | 14 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 20 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 14 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 12 |

| DoD Component and Service | CY 2018 | | | | | CY 2019 | | | | | CY 2020 | | | | | CY 2021 | |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Total | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Total | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Total | Q1 | Total 2021 |
| Active Component | 81 | 78 | 78 | 89 | 326 | 92 | 72 | 84 | 102 | 350 | 90 | 81 | 112 | 102 | 385 | 76 | 76 |
| Army | 36 | 31 | 40 | 34 | 141 | 31 | 37 | 34 | 44 | 146 | 37 | 41 | 52 | 45 | 175 | 45 | 45 |
| Marine Corps | 13 | 13 | 15 | 16 | 57 | 14 | 6 | 11 | 16 | 47 | 14 | 10 | 20 | 18 | 62 | 13 | 13 |
| Navy | 23 | 15 | 11 | 19 | 68 | 22 | 14 | 19 | 19 | 74 | 20 | 12 | 19 | 15 | 66 | 11 | 11 |
| Air Force | 9 | 19 | 12 | 20 | 60 | 25 | 15 | 20 | 23 | 83 | 19 | 18 | 21 | 24 | 82 | 7 | 7 |
| Reserve Component | 49 | 44 | 62 | 62 | 217 | 45 | 43 | 41 | 24 | 153 | 46 | 48 | 44 | 59 | 197 | 39 | 39 |
| Reserve | 22 | 16 | 19 | 24 | 81 | 21 | 16 | 17 | 11 | 65 | 20 | 25 | 13 | 19 | 77 | 13 | 13 |
| Army Reserve | 15 | 11 | 13 | 9 | 48 | 10 | 8 | 11 | 7 | 36 | 9 | 16 | 7 | 10 | 42 | 8 | 8 |
| Marine Corps Reserve | 4 | 1 | 4 | 10 | 19 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 10 | 2 | 2 |
| Navy Reserve | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 11 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 13 | 3 | 3 |
| Air Force Reserve | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 13 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| National Guard | 27 | 28 | 43 | 38 | 136 | 24 | 27 | 24 | 13 | 88 | 26 | 23 | 31 | 40 | 120 | 26 | 26 |
| Army National Guard | 24 | 26 | 36 | 33 | 119 | 19 | 24 | 21 | 10 | 74 | 22 | 18 | 29 | 35 | 104 | 24 | 24 |
| Air National Guard | 3 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 17 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 14 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 16 | 2 | 2 |

Note: All figures above may be subject to change in future publications as updated information becomes available. Suicide counts (both confirmed and pending) are current as of 31 March 2021. Currently, Air Force data includes U.S. Space Force data.

- Indicates a change from the previous QSR based on updated information.
- Highlighted for comparison