

# Department of Defense (DoD) Quarterly Suicide Report (QSR) 3rd Quarter, CY 2019

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The estimated cost of this report or study for the Department of Defense is approximately \$6,770 for the 2020 Fiscal Year. This includes \$3,940 in expenses and \$2,830 in DoD labor.



**DEFENSE SUICIDE  
PREVENTION OFFICE**

# Introduction

The Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO) routinely collects and reports surveillance data on suicide mortality in the Department of Defense (DoD). The most up-to-date counts of suicide deaths are reported in the Quarterly Suicide Report (QSR).<sup>1</sup> The QSR complies with Objective 11.1 of the 2015 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 a 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 applicable, the Reserve Component, to DSPO.<sup>2,3</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> – March 31<sup>st</sup>
- Quarter 2 (Q2): April 1<sup>st</sup> – June 30<sup>th</sup>
- Quarter 3 (Q3): July 1<sup>st</sup> – September 30<sup>th</sup>
- Quarter 4 (Q4): October 1<sup>st</sup> – December 31<sup>st</sup>

The current report presents data from Q3 of CY 2019. Data include all known or suspected suicides (both confirmed and pending) as of September 30, 2019, for both the Active and Reserve 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.<sup>4</sup>

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.<sup>5</sup> For the most recent DoD annual

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

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

<sup>3</sup> Reserve Component: Limited to members of the Selected Reserves (SELRES). SELRES are drilling and training members of the National Guard and Reserves, 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).

<sup>4</sup> Official annual suicide counts and unadjusted rates are published in the DoD Annual Suicide Report. The most recent report is for CY 2018. Available at: <https://www.dsppo.mil>.

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

suicide rates and trends/changes over time, please see the CY 2018 DoD Annual Suicide Report (available at: <https://www.dspo.mil>).

## QSR Data

Attachment A details the number of suicide deaths by Service and Component. For Q3 of CY 2019, the Military Services reported the following:

- 83 in the **Active Component**
- 17 in the **Reserve**
- 22 in the **National Guard**

Comparisons of suicide counts between Q3 CY 2018 and Q3 CY 2019 are provided below.<sup>6</sup>

- For Q3 CY 2019, the number of **Active Component** suicide deaths increased by 7 compared to Q3 CY 2018 (83 versus 76 suicide deaths)
  - Army Active Component suicide deaths decreased by 4
  - Marine Corps Active Component suicide deaths decreased by 3
  - Navy Active Component suicide deaths increased by 6
  - Air Force Active Component suicide deaths increased by 8
- For Q3 CY 2019, the number of **Reserve** suicide deaths decreased by 2 compared to Q3 CY 2018 (17 versus 19 suicide deaths)
  - Army Reserve suicide deaths decreased by 2
  - Marine Corps Reserve suicide deaths decreased by 3
  - Navy Reserve suicide deaths increased by 1
  - Air Force Reserve suicide deaths increased by 2
- For Q3 CY 2019, the number of **National Guard** suicide deaths decreased by 21 compared to Q3 CY 2018 (22 versus 43 suicide deaths)
  - Army National Guard suicide deaths decreased by 16
  - Air National Guard suicide deaths decreased by 5

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<sup>6</sup> Research on the seasonal effects of suicide death has shown mixed results (e.g., Gutzwiller, 2011; McCleary, 1994; Postalache, 2012; Rossler, 2010). Comparisons made above are solely for descriptive purposes and may not reflect true statistical increases or decreases in suicide.

# Attachment A

DoD Service and Component	CY 2012		CY 2013				CY 2014					CY 2015				
	Total	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total 2013	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total 2014	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total 2015
<b>Active Component</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>266</b>
Army	165	33	28	33	27	121	26	33	32	35	126	33	28	32	27	120
Marine Corps	48	11	12	14	9	46	11	9	6	8	34	3	12	13	11	39
Navy	58	16	7	8	10	41	16	19	8	11	54	10	14	11	8	43
Air Force	50	7	14	15	12	48	19	11	13	19	62	14	17	16	17	64
<b>Reserve Component</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>214</b>
Reserve	72	27	16	23	20	86	24	14	20	21	79	13	21	37	18	89
Army Reserve	50	21	11	15	12	59	13	4	15	10	42	9	17	21	8	55
Marine Corps Reserve	11	4	1	2	4	11	4	5	1	2	12	1	1	8	1	11
Navy Reserve	8	1	2	1	1	5	5	4	1	5	15	2	2	5	5	14
Air Force Reserve	3	1	2	5	3	11	2	1	3	4	10	1	1	3	4	9
<b>National Guard</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>125</b>
Army National Guard	110	26	38	24	32	120	16	18	24	19	77	21	28	30	25	104
Air National Guard	22	2	2	6	4	14	6	2	4	2	14	8	5	5	3	21

DoD Service and Component	CY 2016					CY 2017					CY 2018					CY 2019			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total 2016	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total 2017	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total 2018	Q1	Q2	Q3	Total 2019
<b>Active Component</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>243</b>
Army	31	20	42	37	130	32	23	27	32	114	36	31	38	34	139	30	35	34	99
Marine Corps	12	11	8	6	37	7	9	15	12	43	13	13	15	16	57	14	4	12	30
Navy	9	10	19	14	52	16	13	15	21	65	23	15	11	19	68	22	14	17	53
Air Force	10	15	14	22	61	19	12	14	18	63	9	19	12	20	60	26	15	20	61
<b>Reserve Component</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>126</b>
Reserve	18	24	18	20	80	21	29	27	16	93	22	16	19	24	81	21	16	17	54
Army Reserve	6	13	11	11	41	12	20	17	14	63	15	11	13	9	48	10	8	11	29
Marine Corps Reserve	4	6	5	4	19	5	3	2	0	10	4	1	4	10	19	5	1	1	7
Navy Reserve	3	3	1	3	10	2	2	3	2	9	3	3	2	3	11	2	2	3	7
Air Force Reserve	5	2	1	2	10	2	4	5	0	11	0	1	0	2	3	4	5	2	11
<b>National Guard</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>72</b>
Army National Guard	33	22	26	27	108	30	35	35	21	121	24	26	36	33	119	19	23	20	62
Air National Guard	5	5	1	3	14	2	4	3	3	12	3	2	7	5	17	5	3	2	10

**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 30 September 2019.

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