Department of Defense (DoD) Quarterly Suicide Report (QSR) 1st Quarter, CY 2020

Karin A. Orvis, Ph.D., Director Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO)

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.
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).\(^1\) 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 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 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 1\(^{st}\) – March 31\(^{st}\)
- **Quarter 2 (Q2):** April 1\(^{st}\) – June 30\(^{th}\)
- **Quarter 3 (Q3):** July 1\(^{st}\) – September 30\(^{th}\)
- **Quarter 4 (Q4):** October 1\(^{st}\) – December 31\(^{st}\)

The current report presents data from Q1 of CY 2020. Data include all known or suspected suicides (both confirmed and pending) as of March 31, 2020, 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.\(^4\)

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 2018 DoD Annual Suicide Report (available at: https://www.dspo.mil). The official annual suicide counts and unadjusted rates for CY 2019 will be published in the DoD Annual Suicide Report – Calendar Year 2019.

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\(^1\) 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 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).

\(^4\) 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.dspo.mil.

\(^5\) Rates are defined as the total number of suicides divided by the population for a given time period.
QSR Data

Attachment A details the number of suicide deaths by Service and Component. For Q1 of CY 2020, the Military Services reported the following:

- 85 in the Active Component
- 16 in the Reserve
- 23 in the National Guard

Comparisons of suicide counts between Q1 CY 2019 and Q1 CY 2020 are provided below.\(^6\)

- For Q1 CY 2020, the number of Active Component suicide deaths decreased by 6 compared to Q1 CY 2019 (85 versus 91 suicide deaths)
  - Army Active Component suicide deaths increased by 8
  - Marine Corps Active Component suicide deaths stayed the same
  - Navy Active Component suicide deaths decreased by 8
  - Air Force Active Component suicide deaths decreased by 6

- For Q1 CY 2020, the number of Reserve suicide deaths decreased by 5 compared to Q1 CY 2019 (16 versus 21 suicide deaths)
  - Army Reserve suicide deaths decreased by 2
  - Marine Corps Reserve suicide deaths decreased by 3
  - Navy Reserve suicide deaths increased by 2
  - Air Force Reserve suicide deaths decreased by 2

- For Q1 CY 2020, the number of National Guard suicide deaths decreased by 1 compared to Q1 CY 2019 (23 versus 24 suicide deaths)
  - Army National Guard suicide deaths stayed the same
  - Air National Guard suicide deaths decreased by 1

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\(^6\) 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.
### DoD Component and Service

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<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>Q3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marine Corps</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**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 2020.

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