

# Department of Defense (DoD) Quarterly Suicide Report (QSR) 2nd 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).<sup>1</sup> 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.<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 Q2 of CY 2021. Data includes all known or suspected suicides (both confirmed and pending) as of June 30, 2021, for both the Active and Reserve

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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 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.<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 suicide rates and trends/changes over time, please see the CY 2020 DoD Annual Suicide Report (available at: <https://www.dspo.mil/ASR/>). The official annual suicide counts and rates for CY 2021 will be published in the DoD Annual Suicide Report – Calendar Year 2021.

## QSR Data

Attachment A details the number of suicide deaths by Service<sup>6</sup> and Component. For Q2 of CY 2021, the Military Services reported the following:

- 99 in the **Active Component**
- 14 in the **Reserve**
- 26 in the **National Guard**

Comparisons of suicide counts between Q2 CY 2020 and Q2 CY 2021 are provided below.<sup>7</sup> These comparisons are for descriptive purposes and do not reflect statistical increases or decreases nor account for population size.

- For Q2 CY 2021, the number of **Active Component** suicide deaths increased by 18 compared to Q2 CY 2020 (99 versus 81 suicide deaths)
  - Army Active Component suicide deaths increased by 19
  - Marine Corps Active Component suicide deaths decreased by 2
  - Navy Active Component suicide deaths increased by 5
  - Air Force Active Component suicide deaths decreased by 4
- For Q2 CY 2021, the number of **Reserve** suicide deaths decreased by 11 compared to Q2 CY 2020 (14 versus 25 suicide deaths)
  - Army Reserve suicide deaths decreased by 8
  - Marine Corps Reserve suicide deaths increased by 2
  - Navy Reserve suicide deaths decreased by 2
  - Air Force Reserve suicide deaths decreased by 3
- For Q2 CY 2021, the number of **National Guard** suicide deaths increased by 2 compared to Q2 CY 2020 (26 versus 24 suicide deaths)
  - Army National Guard suicide deaths increased by 3
  - Air National Guard suicide deaths decreased by 1

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<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 2020. Available at: <https://www.dspo.mil/ASR/>.

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

<sup>6</sup> Currently, Air Force data includes U.S. Space Force data.

<sup>7</sup> 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
<b>Active Component</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>287</b>
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
<b>Reserve Component</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>210</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>
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
<b>National Guard</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>120</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>
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	Q2	Total 2021
<b>Active Component</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>174</b>
Army	36	31	40	34	141	31	37	34	44	146	37	41	52	44	174	44	60	104
Marine Corps	13	13	15	16	57	14	6	11	16	47	14	10	20	18	62	13	8	21
Navy	23	15	11	19	68	22	14	19	19	74	20	12	19	15	66	11	17	28
Air Force	9	19	12	20	60	25	15	20	23	83	19	18	21	24	82	7	14	21
<b>Reserve Component</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>83</b>
Reserve	22	16	19	24	81	21	16	17	11	65	20	25	13	19	77	15	14	29
Army Reserve	15	11	13	9	48	10	8	11	7	36	9	16	7	10	42	10	8	18
Marine Corps Reserve	4	1	4	10	19	5	1	1	2	9	2	2	2	4	10	2	4	6
Navy Reserve	3	3	2	3	11	2	2	3	0	7	5	3	2	3	13	3	1	4
Air Force Reserve	0	1	0	2	3	4	5	2	2	13	4	4	2	2	12	0	1	1
<b>National Guard</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>54</b>
Army National Guard	24	26	36	33	119	19	24	22	11	76	22	18	29	35	104	26	21	47
Air National Guard	3	2	7	5	17	5	3	3	3	14	3	6	2	5	16	2	5	7

**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 June 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