



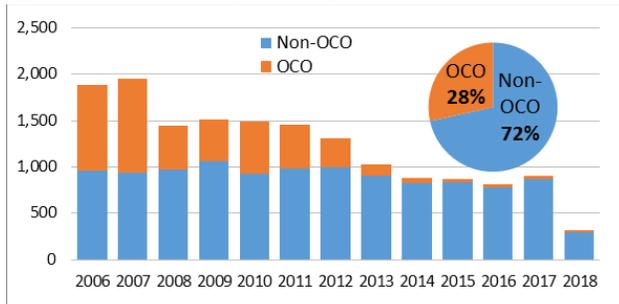
# Recent Trends in Active-Duty Military Deaths

## Summary of Deaths

Since 2006—five years after the start of major combat operations in Afghanistan and three years after the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq—a total of 15,851 active-duty personnel and mobilized reservists have died while serving in the U.S. armed forces. Seventy-two percent of these casualties occurred under circumstances unrelated to war, a category classified in this report as *Non-Overseas Contingency Operations*, or *Non-OCO*. Twenty-eight percent have died while serving in OCO operations—primarily within the territory of Iraq and Afghanistan—during periods of active combat operations. OCO operations related to Afghanistan primarily include Enduring Freedom and Freedom’s Sentinel. For Iraq, OCO operations include Iraqi Freedom, New Dawn, and Inherent Resolve. **Figure 1** summarizes all service deaths since 2006.

Due to quality issues with pre-2006 data, earlier years have been excluded from this analysis.

**Figure 1. Active Duty Military Deaths Since 2006**



**Source:** U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC), Defense Casualty Analysis System report provided to CRS, May 7, 2018.

## Non-OCO Deaths

Approximately 11,341 servicemembers have died in circumstances unrelated to OCO operations since 2006. On average, there have been 920 deaths each year, with the total number varying by as much as 12% on an annual basis. Personnel perished in more than 70 countries (and at sea), with the majority (93%) of deaths occurring in the United States. Other locations have included Germany, Japan, Korea, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

Most servicemembers who died outside of OCO operations during this period died as the result of accident, self-inflicted wounds, or illness. The data indicates a substantial percentage (14%) of non-OCO accidental deaths were related to substance abuse. Overall, alcohol or substance abuse played a role in 8% of all deaths. Approximately 16% of all non-OCO deaths, or 1,807, involved vehicles. For these records, the data does not indicate whether alcohol was also involved.

**Table 1. Substance Abuse in Non-OCO Deaths**

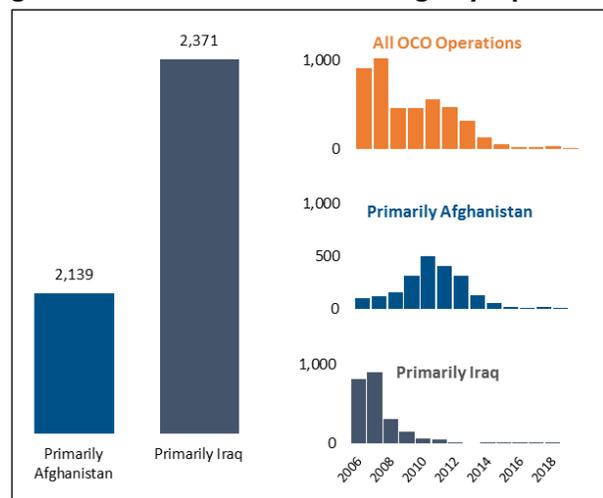
Category	Personnel	Substance Abuse	Substance Abuse (as Percentage)
Accident	4,599	652	14% of Accidents
Self-Inflicted	3,258	135	4% of Self-Inflicted
Illness / Injury	2,650	14	1% of Illness/Injury
Undetermined	248	53	21% of Undetermined

**Source:** DMDC Defense Casualty Analysis System report provided to CRS, May 7, 2018. Omits categories with less than 1% incidence of substance abuse.

## OCO Deaths

Section 101 of Title 10, United States Code, defines a *contingency operation* as any Secretary of Defense-designated military operation "in which members of the armed forces are or may become involved in military actions, operations, or hostilities against an enemy of the United States or against an opposing military force." Approximately 4,510 military personnel have died in such operations since 2006 in more than 25 countries (and locations at sea). Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) caused approximately half of all U.S. deaths in operational war zones. Their lethality closely tracked surges of troop deployments to OCO operations, primarily in Iraq and Afghanistan.

**Figure 2. Deaths in Overseas Contingency Operations**



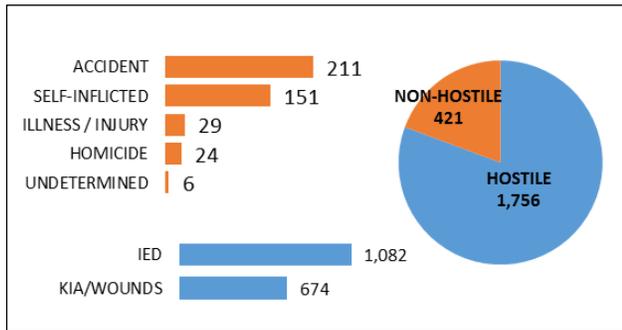
**Source:** DMDC Defense Casualty Analysis System report provided to CRS, May 7, 2018.

**Note:** *Primarily Iraq* comprises Iraqi Freedom, New Dawn, and Inherent Resolve; *Primarily Afghanistan* comprises Enduring Freedom and Freedom’s Sentinel. Includes casualties at all associated locations.

### Overall Deaths in Iraq

Since 2006, approximately 2,177 U.S. troops have died in Iraq during OCO operations. Half of all these military deaths are attributable to IEDs (and their variants), which killed most U.S. personnel between 2006 and 2009. Of those that were not killed by IED related incidents, approximately 38% died under nonhostile conditions, primarily from accidents (including loss of aircraft or ground vehicle) or as the result of self-inflicted injury.

**Figure 3. Overall Deaths in Iraq**



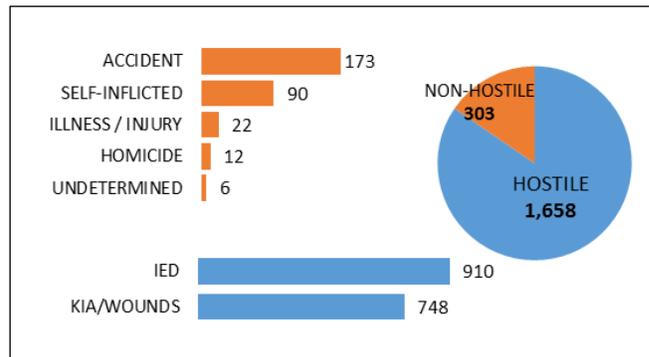
**Source:** DMDC Defense Casualty Analysis System report provided to CRS, May 7, 2018.

### Overall Deaths in Afghanistan

Since 2006, approximately 1,961 U.S. troops have died in Afghanistan. Nearly half (47%) of all these military deaths are attributable to IEDs and their variants, which in 2009 and 2010 exceeded non-IED deaths. Most U.S. personnel not killed by IEDs during this period died as the result of gunshot wounds, or after suffering other multiple physical

trauma in action. A substantial number (162), died in connection with the loss of an aircraft or ground vehicle. Most such incidents were classified as accidental (69%), and occurred under nonhostile conditions.

**Figure 4. Overall Deaths in Afghanistan**



**Source:** DMDC Defense Casualty Analysis System report provided to CRS, May 7, 2018.

### Source of Casualty Data

Data in this report was provided by the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC). When a U.S. casualty occurs, each service is required to complete a form (DD 1300 Report of Casualty) that includes circumstances related to death. This information is subsequently entered into the service’s Casualty and Mortuary Affairs database (Defense Casualty Information Processing System, or DCIPS) which, in turn, is made accessible to DMDC. Casualty data is refreshed daily, and past records are subject to change. For details on casualty matters, policies, and procedures, see Department of Defense Instruction 1300.18.

**Table 2. U.S. Active-Duty Military Deaths, 2006-2018**

	NON-OCO	OCO	Total	Percentage
Accident	4,599	471	5,070	32.0%
Self-Inflicted	3,258	282	3,540	22.3%
Illness / Injury	2,650	119	2,769	17.5%
Killed In Action	6	2,698	2,704	17.1%
Died Of Wounds	0	874	874	5.5%
Homicide	458	41	499	3.1%
Undetermined	248	17	265	1.7%
Pending	104	2	106	Less than 1%
Terrorist	18	2	20	Less than 1%
While Captured	0	4	4	Less than 1%

**Source:** DMDC Defense Casualty Analysis System report provided to CRS, May 7, 2018.

**Notes:** The self-Inflicted subcategory includes an apparent-suicide designation, however, for comprehensive statistics on this subject, please consult the Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO). Of the 6 personnel that were killed in action during Non-OCO operations, four were killed in Niger, one in Iraq, and one at an unknown location. Includes 35 alcohol or substance abuse related casualties during OCO operations.

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