

[New Pentagon Study on Suicide Underscores Scope and Depth of National Problem](#)

New York, NY (April 25, 2014) – According to a new report by the Department of Defense (DoD), 319 active duty servicemembers and 203 members of the Reserve Component (73 Reserve and 130 National Guard) died by suicide in 2012. Initial data for 2013 suggest the numbers for active duty went down (261 suicides), while suicide among the Reserve Component increased (213). The DoD's 2012 Suicide Event Report (DODSER) carefully analyzes the events surrounding each suicide and suicide attempts across the Department. Findings from the DODSER are important because they help understand the risk factors associated with military suicide and determine where the nation can do a better job of providing a network of care. The report, however, does not include veterans. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, an estimated 22 veterans die by suicide every day.

Suicide is a complex issue and the report continues to highlight the importance of understanding the risk factors. The report reflects the complexity of the issue and emphasizes the need for a comprehensive solution. The full report can be read at www.suicideoutreach.org.

Last month, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) launched a [Campaign to Combat Veteran Suicide](#), calling on Congress and the Obama Administration take new action on the issue. Today's report underscores the need for such action.

"Suicide is the top issue for the military and veterans community. Today's report underscores why that is. Everyone should be outraged about these numbers and all the recent news regarding military and veteran suicide – and moved to action," said IAVA CEO and Founder Paul Rieckhoff. "The Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the White House and the entire nation need to strengthen our efforts to support our military community in this effort. Our servicemembers and veterans fought for our nation, and now it's time for us to fight for them."

Last month, 32 veterans from across the country were in Washington for IAVA's 10th annual Storm the Hill advocacy events – specifically launching a Campaign to Combat Suicide. In meetings with the White House, Congress, the VA and the Pentagon, they had the chance to share IAVA's recently released 2014 Policy Agenda for veterans. The agenda lists important issues and proposed solutions for some of the main challenges facing veterans who have returned from war over the last decade, including the number one issue of veteran suicide.

As part of the "We've Got Your Back: IAVA's Campaign to Combat Suicide" IAVA is calling on Congress to pass comprehensive legislation expanding mental

health care for veterans and ensuring that they have extended access to that care. After Storm the Hill, IAVA is pushing for bipartisan support for S.2182, The Suicide Prevention for America's Veterans Act (SAV Act) – historic legislation introduced by U.S. Senator John Walsh of Montana, the first Iraq vet ever to serve in the Senate. IAVA is urging all Americans to call their Senators to sign on as a co-sponsor to the SAV Act.

IAVA is also demanding President Obama to issue an Executive Order addressing the often problem plagued coordination of records and care between the Department of Defense and the VA and to appoint a National Director of Suicide Prevention.

IAVA connects veterans to mental health services, including partnering with the VA's Veterans Crisis Line to ensure that every servicemember, veteran, family member and provider knows that there is free and confidential help available 24 hours a day through phone, text and online. Veterans, or those concerned about veterans, can call 800-273-8255 and press 1 to be directly connected to qualified responders.