

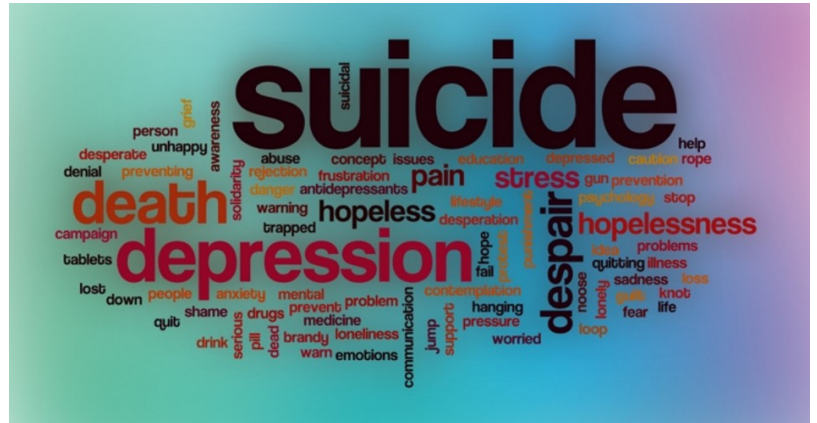


Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on June 10, 2016

## Suicide Among Soldiers Spikes to Record Highs

Suicide rates among members of the U.S. military are increasing, with Army soldiers suffering from the highest rate of increase among all service members.

On June 6, HealthDay reported the findings of a survey of suicide among members of the U.S. military: "An analysis of all U.S. military suicides between 2005 and 2011 revealed that the suicide rate among Army members was roughly double that seen among the second highest risk group, the Marines."



The investigation further revealed that guns are the principal cause of most military suicides. Firearms were implicated in more than 62 percent of all suicide cases that have a definitive cause of death, the study found.

Whereas the study seems to implicate the availability of firearms as a contributing factor to the tragedy, the more immediate and quantifiable element is the seemingly perpetual war in which the United States has been engaged since 2001.

“Suicide was the 10th leading cause of death in the United States as of 2010. And the current investigation comes amid a rising suicide rate among military personnel throughout the last 15 years of continual war. In fact, the U.S. military has seen its overall suicide rate nearly double between 2001 and 2011,” HealthDay reports.

If the American people — including those responsible for sending these servicemen into combat in the name of “making the world safe for democracy” — were still taught the lessons learned and repeated by our Founding Generation, then we would know that no country can remain free and strong in the midst of never-ending warfare.

As James Madison warned: “Of all the enemies to public liberty war is, perhaps, the most to be dreaded, because it comprises and develops the germ of every other. War is the parent of armies; from these proceed debts and taxes; and armies, and debts, and taxes are the known instruments for bringing the many under the domination of the few. No nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare.”

Apparently, it isn't just political freedom that is a casualty of continual warfare; personal liberty — and life — are often found lifeless on the field of imperial conquest.

While psychologists, therapists, and other mental-health professionals will continue to try treating the harm done by the experiences of soldiers sacrificed on the imperial altar, the Founders have a solution that would be prevent so much of the post-traumatic stress.

“Every true friend to this country must see and feel that the policy of it is not to embroil ourselves with any nation whatever, but to avoid their disputes and their politics, and if they harass one another, to avail ourselves of the neutral conduct we have adopted,” George Washington counseled.

By placing the power of waging war exclusively in the hands of the legislative branch, the decision to



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deploy American troops would be taken more seriously and any such proposal would be more soberly deliberated as those making such life and death decisions would be closer to the families who stood to lose fathers, sons, brothers, and husbands.

Today, though, Congress continues ceding that authority to the president, resting in the hands of one man the power to send soldiers to the far-flung killing fields, with so many coming home irreparably harmed by the experience.

Contemporary statesmen have raised the warning voice time and again, reminding Americans and their elected leaders of the devastation that follows so many soldiers home from the battlefield.

"The sharp rise in military suicides, drug and alcohol abuse, and domestic and other violence, is the unintended consequence of a violent foreign policy — of an endless and indefinable "global war on terrorism," wrote former congressman Ron Paul.

Then, the former congressman and presidential candidate put a finer point on the problem, writing in 2013:

Particularly in the past decade or so, we have lived in a society increasingly marked by belief in the use of force as a first and only option. We have seen wars of preemption and aggression, everywhere from Iraq to Pakistan to Libya, Yemen, and elsewhere. We have seen an unprecedented increase in the use of drones to kill overseas, often resulting in civilian deaths, which we call "collateral damage." We have seen torture and assassination (even of American citizens) become official US policy. When asked by Senator Ron Wyden last week if the president has the right to assassinate American citizens on US soil, President Obama's nominee to head the CIA, John Brennan, could not even give a straight answer.

The warning that "he who lives by the sword shall die by the sword" goes not only for individuals but for entire societies. It is a warning to all of us. A country or a society that lives with the violence of pre-emptive war in fact self-destructs.

Healthcare experts quoted in the HealthDay study seem to confirm Paul's predictions.

"Psychologist Alan Peterson contended that the suicide differences between the branches of the military 'reflect the tremendous burden accepted and sacrifices made by the U.S. Army over the past 14 years,'" HealthDay reports

"More U.S. Army personnel have been deployed, injured and killed in action than for all other U.S. military branches combined," Peterson says, as quoted in the story.

A report published by *Time* magazine in 2015 provides the numbers behind the deployments and the mental destruction they bring.

According to *Time*, there are over 1.3 million U.S. military members stationed around the globe, and of those over 150,000 are deployed overseas in more than 150 countries.

Conservatives rightly hold veterans in high esteem, thanking them sincerely for the service that has been selflessly offered in the name of country.

But in light of the undeniable attacks on the mental health of our military men, true conservatives — true friends of the armed services — should call on Congress to reclaim its authority over war, and insist that the Constitution be followed faithfully and that the thousands of U.S. armed forces personnel currently serving in civil wars that have nothing to do with preserving our own liberty be brought home.



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Then, and only then, we might begin to see a steady decline in the number of servicemen who see suicide as their only way to escape the pain of prosecuting imperial wars.

Perhaps, though, there is method to the madness. The policy of the Obama administration is to prevent veterans who have sought treatment for PTSD or other [combat-associated mental illness from owning weapons](#).

In order to disarm the disturbed veterans, these men must first be two things: disturbed and veterans. By sending soldiers into every global skirmish with even the most remote influence on American foreign policy, the current president (and his predecessors) are assuring that military men will suffer mentally in the present and be unable to arm themselves in the future. The president is killing two birds with one sadistic stone.



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