



Soldiers killed themselves at the rate of one per day in June, making it the worst month on record for Army suicides, the service said Thursday.

There were 32 confirmed or suspected suicides among soldiers in June, including 21 among active-duty troops and 11 among National Guard or Reserve forces, according to Army statistics.

Seven soldiers killed themselves while in combat in Iraq or Afghanistan in June, according to the statistics. Of the total suicides, 22 soldiers had been in combat, including 10 who had deployed two to four times.

"The hypothesis is the same that many have heard me say before: continued stress on the force, said Army Col. Christopher Philbrick, director of the Army Suicide Prevention Task Force. He pointed out that the Army has been fighting for nine years in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Last year was the Army's worst for suicides, with 244 confirmed or suspected cases.

The increase was a setback for the service, which has been pushing troops to seek counseling. Through May of this year, the Army had seen a decline in suicides among active-duty soldiers this year compared with the same period in 2009.

Philbrick expressed frustration over the June deaths. "Because we believe that the programs, policies, procedures are having a positive impact across the entire force. The help is there."

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