

Pentagon Cover Up: 15,000 or More US Deaths in Iraq War?

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The Pentagon has been concealing the true number of American casualties in the Iraq War. The real number exceeds 15,000 and CBS News can prove it.

CBS's Investigative Unit wanted to do a report on the number of suicides in the military and "submitted a Freedom of Information Act request to the Department of Defense". After 4 months they received a document which showed-that between 1995 and 2007- there were 2,200 suicides among "active duty" soldiers.

Baloney.

The Pentagon was covering up the real magnitude of the "suicide epidemic". Following an exhaustive investigation of veterans' suicide data collected from 45 states; CBS discovered that in 2005 alone "there were at least 6,256 among those who served in the armed forces. That's 120 each and every week in just one year."

That is not a typo. Active and retired military personnel, mostly young veterans between the ages of 20 to 24, are returning from combat and killing themselves in record numbers. We can assume that "multiple-tours of duty" in a war-zone have precipitated a mental health crisis of which the public is entirely unaware and which the Pentagon is in total denial.

If we add the 6,256 suicide victims from 2005 to the "official" 3,865 reported combat casualties; we get a sum of 10,121. Even a low-ball estimate of similar 2004 and 2006 suicide figures, would mean that the total number of US casualties from the Iraq war now exceed 15,000.

That's right; 15,000 dead US servicemen and women in a war that-as yet-has no legal or moral justification.

CBS interviewed Dr. Ira Katz, the head of mental health at the Department of Veteran Affairs. Katz attempted to minimize the surge in veteran suicides saying, "There is no epidemic of suicide in the VA, but suicide is a major problem."

Maybe Katz is right. Maybe there is no epidemic. Maybe it's perfectly normal for young men and women to return from combat, sink into inconsolable depression, and kill themselves at greater rates than they were dying on the battlefield. Maybe it's normal for the Pentagon to abandon them as soon as soon they return from their mission so they can blow their brains out or hang themselves with a garden hose in their basement. Maybe it's normal for politicians to keep funding wholesale slaughter while they brush aside the casualties they

have produced by their callousness and lack of courage. Maybe it is normal for the president to persist with the same, bland lies that perpetuate the occupation and continue to kill scores of young soldiers who put themselves in harm's-way for their country.

It's not normal; it's is a pandemic—an outbreak of despair which is the natural corollary of living in constant fear; of seeing one's friends being dismembered by roadside bombs or children being blasted to bits at military checkpoints or finding battered bodies dumped on the side of a riverbed like a bag of garbage.

The rash of suicides is the logical upshot of the U.S. war on Iraq. Returning soldiers are traumatized by their experience and now they are killing themselves in droves. Maybe we should have thought about that before we invaded.

Check it out the video at: CBS News "Suicide Epidemic among Veterans"

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