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# RUNNELS County

## VETERANS COUNTY SERVICE OFFICE

*SERVING THE VETERANS AND DEPENDANTS OF RUNNELS COUNTY*

**Date:** November 14, 2019

**TO: Runnels County Register**

The Department of Defense (DoD) recently released its Annual Suicide Report that indicates that the number of active-duty military who have died by suicide has climbed an average of six percent each year over the past five years. The report, mandated by Congress, indicated that there were 676 active duty/reserves/National Guard suicides in 2018. There were 325 active duty suicides and 406 Reserve Component suicides (11 Navy Reserve and 19 Marine Corps Reserves) and 90 percent of the suicide deaths were enlisted, 90 percent of victims used their own personal gun, and most were males under age 30. The report also found that deployment does not increase the rate of suicide. The report indicates that the Army National Guard had the highest rate (35.3 per 100,000 or 118 in 2018) and the Marine Corps had the second highest rate 31.4 per 100,000 with 58 suicides in 2018. The Navy in 2018 had 68 suicides (20.7 per 100,000). The Air Force had the lowest rate of suicide. While the Pentagon has implemented a number of suicide prevention and awareness programs, suicide remains a troubling challenge for the military services. But it's not just the active-duty military community; veterans and the general public also are affected. Data released by the Department of Veterans Affairs found that the suicide rate for veterans was 1.5 times greater than for the general population in the U.S., amounting to about 20 veterans a day. The rate for veterans aged 18 to 34 increased by more than 10 percent from 2015 to 2016, the most recent VA data available. According to the Pentagon report, 186 spouses and dependents of military service members died by suicide in 2017. This is the first time the Pentagon reported the statistics of military spouses and dependents. Data on U.S. Coast Guard was not included in the report since it is not part of the Defense Department. For more information, contact Sandra at the Veterans Service Office at 602 Strong Ave on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am to 3pm, or call 365-3612.

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