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## US Army Suicides in 2009 a New Record

By Jason Ditz

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Calling 2009 a “painful year,” the US Army announced today that it faced a record number of suicides among Army personnel, [with 160 active-duty soldiers taking their own lives](#).



Deployment away from family is just one issue facing soldiers

This surpassed the previous record of 140 in 2008, and [the previous record before that was 115 in 2007](#). The Army has been keeping track of suicides since 1980, with the level suddenly rising to epidemic levels in recent years.

But despite the expectation that endless combat deployments would be playing a role in the deaths, officials say that about 1/3 of the soldiers who took their lives this year hadn't yet been sent on any combat missions.

Experts say that the [military has developed a culture which discourages soldiers from seeking psychological help](#), and the stigma associated with things like PTSD treatment will take a long time to repair. In the meantime suicides are a growing problem for the military, and one that they will continue to try to tackle.