

## Coverup of the Number of US Soldiers Killed in Iraq

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Official US. government reports on soldiers under US command killed in Iraq are so fragmented that they account for less than half of the total number, according to information uncovered as part of an inquiry by the Government of Puerto Rico regarding the total number of Puerto Rican war casualties.

This analysis was confirmed by El Diario/La Prensa's review of multiple documents, including official reports issued by the US Department of Defense, the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior and more than 230 battlefield reports, which reveal that more than 4,076 troops under US command have been killed in 799 days of battle.

This information contrasts markedly with the limited information on casualties generally issued by US military authorities, which focus only on US uniformed troops. These total 1,649.

Military affairs expert Jose Rodriguez Beruff from the University of Puerto Rico said that the figures showing more than 4,000 dead indicate that, far from winning the war in Iraq, "what is happening is that the troops are being worn down." He said that traditional theorists calculate that for an armed invading force to win a guerrilla war, its casualties should be one to ten of its enemy's. In this case, that would require 40,000 casualties among the insurgents.

In addition, Rodriguez Reduff warned that the reports should be reviewed on an ongoing basis, as he suspects that the number of casualties is even higher.

Calculations are even more difficult when it comes to the wounded, which US authorities number at more than 12,600, and medical discharges — those maimed or suffering from physical and mental injuries — about whom only partial reports can be obtained. In this category, large discrepancies in counts have been publicized by news outlets such as the national German Press Agency (DPA), which ran a story reporting on US Army documents putting the number of US soldiers with war-related mental ailments at 100,000.

That issue is more controversial. The Argentine press agency Argenpress reported about 17,000 unreported cases of war-related mental illness. But no matter the scenario, the numbers of wounded and medical discharges are larger than those officially announced, as is the case with casualties.

The figures came to light in the course of an ongoing investigation that El Diario/La Prensa is making on the number of Puerto Rican and Hispanic casualties in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. That inquiry prompted Congressman Jose Serrano (D-NY) and An'bal Acevedo

Vila, then Resident Commissioner of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, to request a full casualty report, which yielded a partial list with 200 Puerto Rican losses, including casualties, wounded and medical discharges.

After his election as Governor, Acevedo Vila renewed his request to the Department of Defense for a total and specific accounting, but as of press time he had yet to receive an answer.

According to documents reviewed by this paper, in addition to the 1,649 fatalities among US uniformed troops, there were 88 from Great Britain, 92 from other coalition member countries, 238 reported by private contractors, and at least 2,000 from members of the Iraqi Army. The biggest defect in published counts is the missing casualties among Iraqi troops under command of the occupying forces.

Translated from Spanish by Carolina Gonzalez

See [official figures of US casualties at http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iraq\\_casualties.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iraq_casualties.htm)

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