

Recent military fatalities in Afghanistan by cause and nationality:
(PERIOD 19 SHORT REPORT ~ 18 March 2013 to 4 August 2013; posted on 14 August 2013)
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***Memo:** A surge of 30,000 US troops was deployed to Afghanistan to facilitate Operation Moshtarak, which began in 2010. By PERIOD 11b through to PERIOD 16, US deployment was at least 90,000. In June 2011, towards the end of PERIOD 14a, US President Obama announced the start of draw-down of US troops – an initial 5,000 to 10,000 in 2011. By the end of September 2012, US deployment to Afghanistan had reverted to around 68,000. Canadian troops had no combat role after 2011. Withdrawal of French troops was to begin in July 2012 and be completed by the end of 2012. UK troops had reduced to 9,500 by early 2012, and to 9,000 by the end of 2012. At 1 August 2013, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) troops numbered 87,200 and Afghan National Army troops 187,000. The UK contingent had reduced to 7,700 and US troop-deployment was 60,000.*

In September 2012, six US Harrier strike aircraft, whose replacement cost is \$30 millions each, were destroyed and two others seriously damaged in a Taliban attack on Camp Bastion which claimed the lives of two US personnel. The attackers wore US uniforms, and so these ISAF-fatalities were counted as Green-on-Blue on icasualties.org but not by us. In September 2012, ISAF reduced its participation – at least temporarily - in joint operations with Afghan security forces unless they were specifically authorized.

Please see PERIOD 18 report for detailed 20-weekly analyses to 17 March 2013. A recent report in Military Medicine 2013; 178: 389-393 by Schoenfeld et al. gives a similar account to ours of UK deployments to Afghanistan but considerably higher reported deployments for Canadian and US troops – as high as 3,571 and 326,047 respectively in 2010, figures which came, apparently, from Defense Manpower Data Centre Statistics for 2006-2010 but are at variance with ours and with press understanding of the numbers in-theatre at a given time (versus ever-deployed in the course of a calendar year).

Only SHORT REPORTS will be made hereafter, primarily because ISAF troops have ceded leadership of most patrols to the ANA. ANA troops are therefore likely to suffer the major part of IED and other operational fatalities. However, ANA fatalities are not reported on icasualties.org and, seemingly, are accounted for publicly by the Afghan Government on an annual basis only. Repeated attempts to encourage UK Ministers to engage with the Afghan government to make more regular disclosures - so that the tempo of military operations in Afghanistan can be gauged by UK's parliamentarians, press and public - have been rebuffed, see OVERVIEW.

The SHORT REPORT series is continued to honour the commitment of UK's deployed military personnel but, unlike our monitoring hitherto, cannot be read as adequately reflecting the nature or severity of the conflict in Afghanistan when fatalities for the majority, and now lead, force – the ANA – are missing.

The SHORT REPORT series continues because Green-on-Blue and suicide-bomber attacks, as highlighted in preceding reports for PERIODS 13 to 18, have become a prominent means of Taliban attacks on ISAF personnel.

An OVERVIEW on 2016-2012 & Summary of recent Findings (by PERIOD up to PERIOD 18 when ended on 17 March 2013) can be found at the end of this SHORT REPORT for PERIOD 19

Readers familiar with the Background to and Methods in our reports may wish to skip to 3. Results.

1. Background

Since 1 May 2006 Bird & Fairweather have reported 20 weekly, and sometimes 10 weekly, on military fatalities in Afghanistan (and Iraq) by cause and nationality. Our analyses^{5,3 22 23} rely on icasualties.org, to which we make acknowledgement. Date and cause of fatalities on icasualties.org are subject to change as well as to updating.

With two mid-point exceptions – determined by UK’s withdrawal from Basra City and the initial phase of Panther’s Claw having ended - our analyses, until 2010, have related to 140-day PERIODS: see below. As of PERIOD 11a (22 February to 2 May 2010), we initiated 10-weekly reporting. Reasons included that, even in the 10 weeks of PERIOD 11a which overlapped the end of the Afghan winter, UK military fatalities in Afghanistan had averaged two per week so that, in 2010 and while in military control of Sangin, UK could expect at least as many military fatalities in 10 weeks in Afghanistan as in 20 weeks in 2006. Throughout 2010/11, we therefore made interim 10-weekly reports so that our intensity of monitoring kept pace with the intensity of combat which UK forces encountered in Afghanistan. From PERIOD 15, we reverted to 20-weekly reporting.

On 20 September 2010 (which marks the start of PERIOD 12b), UK forces in Helmand handed over responsibility for counter-insurgency operations in Sangin to US troops.

PERIOD	From	To
1	01 May 2006	17 September 2006
2	18 September 2006	04 February 2007
3	05 February 2007	24 June 2007
4 (mid-point)	25 June 2007	2 September 2007 11 November 2007
5	12 November 2007	30 March 2008
6	31 March 2008	17 August 2008
7	18 August 2008	04 January 2009
8	05 January 2009	17 May 2009
9 (mid-point)	18 May 2009 <i>(Afghan election: mid)</i>	26 July 2009 04 October 2009
10	05 October 2009	21 February 2010
11 (mid-point)	22 February 2010 <i>(UK election: 6 May)</i>	2 May 2010 11 July 2010
12 (mid-point)	12 July 2010 <i>(UK to US in Sangin: 20 Sept)</i>	19 September 2010 28 November 2010
13	29 November 2010	6 February 2011 17 April 2011
14	18 April 2011	26 June 2011 4 September 2011
15	5 September 2011	22 January 2012
16	23 January 2012	10 June 2012
17	11 June 2012	28 October 2012
18	29 October 2012	17 March 2013
19	18 March 2013	4 August 2013
20	5 August 2013	22 December 2013
21	23 December 2013	11 May 2014
22	12 May 2014	28 September 2014
23	29 September 2014	16 February 2015
24	17 February 2015	6 July 2015

2. Methods briefly

We report fatality rates per 1,000 personnel-years. Four thousand troops in a theatre of operation for 3 months contribute 1,000 personnel-years (pys). So too do 1,000 personnel in theatre for one year. Analytically, we characterise “major combat” by a military fatality rate of 6 or more per 1,000 pys.

We analyse the lethality of IED (only) incidents. As in Bird and Fairweather^{5 22 23}, we exclude from this analysis multiply-ascribed deaths, such as IED and small arms fire or IED and rocket propelled grenade/grenades. In PERIOD 16, four French fatalities were shown as IED on icasualties.org but in the press as having been caused by a suicide bomber. *We assign these military deaths as caused by a suicide bomber (see <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/06/09/world/asia/afghanistan-troops-killed/index.html>).*

We need to track changes in deployment. In PERIOD 11a, there was some debate about the totality of UK’s deployment to Afghanistan. We continued to show UK’s deployment as 10,000 troops, although BBC’s Today programme on 14 May 2010 cited 10,500. In 2011, UK reporting has cited UK’s deployment as 9,500. We continued to use 10,000 as our reference count until PERIOD 16 when we reckoned UK troop-deployment as 9,500. From PERIOD 18, we shall count UK troops-deployment as at most 9,000 and US troop-deployment as at most 68,000, the latter coming down to US’s pre-surge level.

3. Results

UK troop levels in Afghanistan, 7,700 according to ISAF on 1 August 2013, are due to fall to 6,000 by the autumn of 2013 and to 5,200 by the end of 2013 according to parliamentary statement by UK Defence Minister on 10 July 2013. ISAF on 1 August 2013 put US deployment at 60,000, see **Table 1c** (Afghanistan).

In PERIOD 19 (18 March 2013 to 4 August 2013), there were 88 ISAF fatalities, 20 of them non-hostile and all US personnel. The non-hostile fatalities included 10 deaths in helicopter or aircraft crashes/accidents. There were only four UK fatalities in PERIOD 19, three in a single fatal IED incident on 30 April 2013 and one killed by a suicide bomber.

Fatality rates in PERIOD 19 were low at **2.8** per 1,000 personnel-years (pys) (95% CI: 2.1 to 3.5, based on 69 fatalities in 24,548 pys) for US troops and **1.2** per 1,000 pys for UK troops (95% CI: 0.3 to 3.2, based on 4 fatalities in 3,203 pys).

Even so, there were 28 deaths in 15 fatal IED-only incidents, see **Table 2c** (Afghanistan) and five Green-on-Blue (G-on-B) fatalities in three separate G-on-B incidents (1Slovak+2US+2US). Of the seven small-arms-fire (saf) deaths in PERIOD 19, five were the aforementioned G-on-B fatalities. In addition, there were 16 deaths of military personnel in five suicide bomber incidents (3US+7Georgia+2US+3Georgia+1UK).

In summary, suicide bomber or G-on-B incidents accounted for 21 of the 68 hostile-deaths, and fatal IED-only incidents for a further 28 (41%; 95% CI: 29% to 53%).

There was one large cluster of fatalities in PERIOD 19 when seven Georgian personnel died in a suicide bomber incident on 6th June 2013.

In terms of senior ranks, fatalities in PERIOD 19 included an Italian major who was killed by a grenade and a single G-on-B incident claimed the lives of two senior US military personnel: a major and lieutenant-colonel.

TABLE 1c (Afghanistan): Coalition military deaths in Afghanistan and estimated fatality rates per 1,000 personnel-years in consecutive 140-day periods.

Theatre	Afghanistan – PERIODS are 140 days' duration								
Period	15 SURGE	16 SURGE	17 DRAW- DOWN	18 DRAW- DOWN	19 DRAW- DOWN				
Dates	5 Sept 2011 to 22 Jan 2012	23 Jan 2012 to 10 June 2012	11 June 2012 to 28 Oct 2012	29 Oct 2012 to 17 March 2013	18 March 2013 to 4 August 2013				
Total fatalities (non-hostile)	173 ^{2FF} (23 ^{6H})	166 (41 ^{12H+2H+1A})	170 (23 ^{2H})	55 (16 ^{5H+1H})	88 (20 ^{3A+4H+2H+1A})				
US deaths* (troops) personnel- years	125 ^{6H+1H} (90,000) 34,616	120 ^{2H+1A} (90,000) 34,616	136 ^{7H+2H} (88,000 to 68,000**) 30,066	46 ^{5H+1H} (68,000) 26,154	69 ^{3Aetc as above} (68,000 to 60,000) 24,548				
UK deaths (troops) personnel- years	15 (10,000) 3,846	22 (9,500) 3,654	18 (9,500) 3,654	5* (9,000) 3,462	5* (9,000 to 7,700) 3,203				
Canadian deaths (troops) personnel- years	1 (2,800) 1,077	0	0	0	0				
Other deaths	32 ^{6=NATO}	24 ^{3=NATO}	16 ^{2=NATO}	4 ^{1=NATO}	15				
US	3.6 (3.0 to 4.2)	3.5 (2.8 to 4.1)	4.5 (3.7 to 5.3)	1.8 (1.2 to 2.3)	2.8 (2.1 to 3.5)				
UK	3.9 (2.2 to 6.4)	6.0 (3.5 to 8.8)	4.9 (2.9 to 7.8)	1.4 (0.5 to 3.4)	1.2 (0.3 to 3.2)				

Total of 23 non-hostile deaths in PERIOD 15 includes 6 US fatalities in a single helicopter crash; 2 Australian fatalities in single non-hostile helicopter crash in PERIOD 17; five and one US fatalities in non-hostile helicopter crash in PERIOD 18.

** counted as 88K, 86K, 84K, then 68K, 68K

*four of the five were G-on-B

TABLE 2c (Afghanistan): IED (only) fatalities in Afghanistan; and Green-on-Blue (G-on-B) fatalities since 1 January 2008.

Theatre	Afghanistan							
Period	9+10+11+12	13+14+15+16	17	18	19	20	21	G-on-B
Dates	18 May 2009 to 28 Nov 2010	29 Nov 2010 to 10 June 2012	11 June 2012 to 28 Nov 2012	29 Oct 2012 to 17 Mar 2013	18 Mar 2013 to 4 Aug 2013	5 Aug 2013 to 22 Dec 2013	23 Dec 2013 to 11 May 2014	1 Jan 2008 to 4 August 2013
Duration	560 days	560 days	140 days	140 days	140 days	140 days	140 days	2043 days
Deaths in fatal IED incidents	545 in 396 fatal IEDs	333 in 241 fatal IEDs	46 in 32 fatal IEDs	18 in 15 fatal IEDs				108 G-on-Bs in 52 fatal G-on-B incidents, {20}/52 in PERIODS 17+18+19
Number of fatalities in a fatal IED incident								
<i>Fatalities, x, in IED/ G-on-B incident</i>	<i>By period: frequency of fatal IED/Green-on-Blue incidents with x fatalities</i>							
1	299	185	23	13	9			18 {7}
2	68	36	7	1	2			18 {8}
3	13	12	1	1	2			7 {4}
4	12	4	0		1			2 {1}
5	2	2	0		1			1
6+	2*	2	1		0			2 [6, 8]
TOTAL fatal IED/ G-on-B incidents	396	241	32	15	15			52
Fatal IED/ or G-on-B incidents per day	0.71	0.43	0.2	0.1	0.1			0.025
Mean deaths per fatal IED incident or per fatal G-on-B incident	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.9			2.1

**OVERVIEW on 2006-2012 &
SUMMARY of RECENT FINDINGS by PERIOD (to PERIOD 18: ended 17 March 2013).**

OVERVIEW on 2006-2012

*Our calendar-year resume on UK fatality-rates in Afghanistan relies only on total number of UK military fatalities in each calendar year and a **mid-year estimate** for the number of UK troops deployed to Afghanistan. The resume lacks detail on when troop numbers escalated and does not differentiate, as our more detailed analyses do, between the ‘fighting season’ and Afghan winter. Even so, the resume summarizes key features: i) 2011 is the first of the past six completed calendar-years in Afghanistan when UK troops had faced less than major combat (which we define operationally as: 6 fatalities per 1,000 personnel-years) and ii) 2009 and 2010 exacted a very heavy UK toll indeed.*

<i>Calendar year</i>	<i>UK military fatalities in Afghanistan, F</i>	<i>Mid-year UK troop deployment, P</i>	<i>Estimated UK fatality-rates per 1,000 personnel-years, based on F and P only</i>
2006	39 ^{Nimrod=14}	4,500	8.7 (95% CI: 6.2 to 11.8)
2007	42	6,900	6.1 (95% CI: 4.4 to 8.2)
2008	51	8,000	6.4 (95% CI: 4.7 to 8.4)
2009	108	9,000	12.0 (95% CI: 9.7 to 14.3)
2010	103	10,000	10.3 (95% CI: 8.3 to 12.3)
2011	46	10,000	4.6 (95% CI: 3.4 to 6.1)
2012	44	9,500	4.6 (95% CI: 3.3 to 6.0)

*For the Afghan National Army (ANA), the corresponding fatality rate in 2012 was notably higher at 5.4 per 1,000 personnel-years (95% CI: 5.1 to 5.7, based on **1,056** fatalities from an indicative deployment of 195,000 troops). This reported ANA fatality-rate is only 1.4 times that of US/UK military personnel - not 2.5 times as many, see below - and at least 80% had reportedly died in IED attacks. We are sceptical that all ANA fatalities have been accounted for: as deaths in IED incidents may be more readily counted.*

In follow-up to the journalistic vignette below and the year-end account of ANA fatalities in 2012, parliamentary questions by Patrick Mercer OBE MP asked for information about ANA-fatalities to be reported quarterly to UK Parliament, but was rebuffed.

“The Government of Afghanistan owns the information concerning the number of ANA fatalities. Through operational reporting, ISAF is aware of the casualty rates throughout Afghanistan, however the official figures are only releasable by the Afghan Government. As Afghans’ reporting procedures improve, the Afghans are increasingly releasing their own statements on ANA fatalities.”

*In correspondence with the Ministerial team at Defence, the UK government acknowledged to Patrick Mercer that it does indeed accumulate the weekly counts of ANA-fatalities (see **journalistic vignette**) but declined to release them.*

“This service honours all operational deaths, whether killed in action or resulting from other causes, and while we cannot be sure it provides a complete picture, it does give a broad indication of ANSF fatalities. For the same reasons I have explained above, it is inappropriate fro the UK to release information on Afghan fatalities to the public.”

In vain, we have pressed for transparency - on the part of UK government - about the level of combat that ISAF-trained ANA forces encounter, and how their fatality-rate compares with that of ISAF-nations. By the end of 2012, 80% of patrols were reportedly ANA-led, which is consistent with ISAF-fatalities in IED-only incidents having decreased from:

1.0 per day in PERIODS 9+10+11+12 [18 May 2009 to 28 November 2010]: based on 545 IED-only fatalities in 560 days; US/UK/Canadian deployment of 144,770 pys **to 0.6 per day in PERIODS 13+14+15+16 [29 November 2010 to 10 June 2012]:** based on 333 IED-only fatalities in 560 days; US/UK/Canadian deployment of 156,887 pys **to 0.23 per day in PERIODS 17+18 [11 June 2012 to 17 March 2013]:** based on 64 IED-only fatalities in 280 days; US/UK/Canadian deployment of 63,336 pys.

Journalistic vignette: On 7 October 2012, Quentin Sommerville (QS) reported for BBC News, Kabul as follows (see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-19834021>):

“In a circle of trees at the heart of the international mission’s headquarters in Kabul, there are 50 flags. One for each of the coalition countries that make up the force that is fighting the Taliban.

Under the trees, in the early morning shade, a few hundred soldiers stand still, listening, as the names of that week’s dead are read aloud. The first was that of a Jordanian soldier, then a British sergeant and two British captains. Next an American gunner’s mate, and two more sergeants. An Afghan officer stepped forward. He read just a number: 31. The service is short, it barely lasts five minutes. There is not enough time to read the names of all the Afghan dead.”

Statistical inference based on QS’s journalistic vignette: That week’s ISAF toll was seven. The Afghan dead numbered 31. We shall assume that all 31 were ISAF-trained ANAs. If ISAF troops numbered around 113,000 at the end of September 2012 and ISAF-trained, deployed ANA troops were about 195,000 (as had been projected), then the relative fatality-rate for ANA: ISAF troops would be around 2.5:1 if Quentin Sommerville’s reported ratio of fatalities (31:7) was typical (ie representative).

QS’s update: looks like ANSF fatalities will top 200 in this month, March 2013 – whether due to Nowruz “spike” or not.

ISAF-HQ’s weekly accounts of the ANA deceased are accumulated by MOD, but UK parliamentary, let alone public, access is denied in deference to Afghan government. While UK military personnel continue to put their lives on the line in Afghanistan, accountability is surely owed to UK military families, UK Parliament and the public.

The need for transparent accounting is the greater because, in the 80 weeks of PERIODS 13+14+15+16 (29 November 2010 to 10 June 2012) when there were 804 ISAF-fatalities in Afghanistan, treachery by Afghan personnel or trainees claimed at least 41 ISAF-lives (all by small arms fire, saf), that is: caused 5% of all deaths and 41/152 (27%) of saf-deaths. The Green-on-Blue (G-on-B) toll was, proportionately, even greater in PERIODS 17+18, see below.

SUMMARY of RECENT FINDINGS by PERIOD (to PERIOD 18: ended 17 March 2013)

Green-on-Blue fatalities

a) In PERIOD 17, there were 170 ISAF-fatalities in Afghanistan, of whom 29 (17%) were identified on icasualties.org as Green-on-Blue (G-on-B). We, however, have chosen **not** apply this G-on-B designation to two US fatalities in the Taliban’s attack on Camp Bastion but we do include one extra G-on-B fatality, a US sergeant 1st class, who died by small arms fire on 18 August 2012 at Kandahar, as likely by the account given in *The Long War Journal* (LWJ), see http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2012/08/green-on-blue_attack.php. We make grateful acknowledgement to LWJ’s authors: Bill Roggio & Lisa Lundquist.

In winter-season PERIOD 18, there were 55 ISAF-fatalities in Afghanistan, of whom six (11%) were identified on icasualties.org as G-on-B. {We checked that G-on-B was not implicated in five other deaths by small arms fire (saf).}

Although icasualties.org now gives a generally-reliable account of G-on-B fatalities in 2012, its reliability does not hold up for preceding years.

We found it necessary and useful to make cross-reference between icasualties.org and the detailed accounts given in LWJ. We summarize our findings as follows: **there were 103 Green-on-Blue ISAF-fatalities from 1 January 2008 to 17 March 2013, three of them in 2013.** The increase between 2010 and 2012 is clearly disproportionate to the indicative numbers of Afghan Security Forces, and of ANAs – at least before co-deployment is taken into account, on which we lack publicly-available data. **Moreover, the high proportion – at least half - of 49 fatal Green-on-Blue attacks that resulted in more than one fatality (30/49, 95% CI: 48% to 76%) argues strongly against a mere clash of cultures or sporadic outburst between assailant and provocateur.**

Calendar year	Best estimate of Green-on-Blue fatalities (%)	Afghan Security Forces: October indicative #	ANA: October indicative # Deployed	Number of ANAs who are ISAF co-deployed ??
2008	2 (1% of 295)	148,000	68,000	
2009	10 (2% of 521)	190,000	95,000	
2010	11 (2% of 711)	261,000	145,000	
2011	25 (4% of 566)	312,000	171,000	
2012	52 (13% of 400)	350,000	195,000	
2013 to 17 March	3			

b) IED-only fatalities versus Green-on-Blue fatalities

In the 80 weeks of PERIODS 9 to 12, there were 396 fatal IED-only incidents in Afghanistan, which caused 545 military deaths (that is: mean of 1.4 deaths per fatal IED-only incident) and the proportion of hostile deaths due to IEDs was 57% (545/962; 95% CI: 53% to 60%).

In the 80 weeks of PERIODS 13 to 16, there were 241 fatal IED-only incidents which caused 333 military deaths (that is: mean of 1.4 deaths per fatal IED-only incident) and accounted for a significantly lower percentage, 49%, of all hostile deaths (333/684; 95% CI: 45% to 53%).

In PERIODS 17+18, there were 47 fatal IED-only incidents which caused 64 military deaths but accounted for 34% of all hostile deaths (64/186, 95% CI: 27% to 41%).

In PERIODS 17+18, however, 17 fatal G-on-B incidents caused 34 Green-on-Blue fatalities (that is: mean of 2.0 deaths per fatal G-on-B incident) and accounted for 18% of all hostile deaths (34/186; 95% CI: 13% to 24%).

c) Small arms fire; and Green-on-Blue fatalities therein

In PERIODS 13+14+15+16, 152/689 hostile deaths (22%) were from small arms fire (only), 41 of them apparently Green-on-Blue fatalities so that Green-on-Blue accounted for 41/689 hostile deaths (6%), and for 41/152 deaths by small arms fire (27%, 95% CI: 20% to 34%).

*In PERIODS 17+18, 65/186 hostile death (35%) were from small arms fire (only), 34 of them Green-on-Blue fatalities, that is: 34/186 hostile deaths (18%), and **34/65 deaths by small arms fire (52%, 95% CI: 40% to 64%) were Green-on-Blue, a significantly higher proportions than in PERIODS 13+14+15+16.***

d) Large clusters of fatalities

Large clusters of fatalities continue to occur: seven large death-clusters in the past 100 weeks have claimed 77 military lives, as follows.

In PERIOD 14, there were three large death-clusters: one, of eight US fatalities, occurred when two IEDs exploded in a single incident and a second when, in small arms fire & apparently after an argument, a senior-ranking Afghan National Army (ANA) pilot opened fire on, and killed, 8 US personnel at Kabul International Airport, six of them senior officers {Lt. Colonel, 5 majors, 2 captains and Master Sergeant}; the third was the largest cluster of ISAF fatalities in Afghanistan in 2006-2011 when 30 US military personnel (including special forces and a Lieutenant Commander) and others died, the Taliban having brought down a Chinook helicopter in Wardak.*

In PERIOD 15, there were six US fatalities in a non-hostile helicopter crash.

In PERIOD 16, 12 Turkish fatalities (who included four majors) occurred in a non-hostile helicopter crash.

In PERIOD 17, there were seven US fatalities in a hostile helicopter crash in Kandahar and six US fatalities in an IED attack in Wardak.

In PERIOD 18, there was no large cluster of 6+ fatalities.

e) Afghan National Army (ANA)*

*Monitoring is needed of **number deployed** of ISAF-trained ANA personnel; and **their** fatalities.*

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