



  
**ARMY**  
BE DEPRESSED

# JOIN THE ARMY BE DEPRESSED

The armed forces has always been a high stress occupation, leaving a high percentage of ex-servicemen and women with clinical depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, bi-polar disorder, and a greater likelihood to engage in substance abuse<sup>1</sup>. Since 2001, and the invasion of Afghanistan, life has become ever more dangerous for those joining the military.

In Afghanistan there have been **40 deaths** since 2001<sup>2</sup> (23 of which have happened in 2006). The situation is even worse in Iraq, where **118<sup>3</sup> British troops have been killed**, whilst the number of **injured UK military personnel is 2,703<sup>4</sup>**.

The number of British casualties though is tiny when compared to the number of Iraqis who have died since the start of the invasion. **Estimates range from 46,000<sup>5</sup> to 220,000<sup>6</sup>**, with the UN saying that at least 14,000 died in the first six months of 2006 alone.

Even those that are lucky enough to come back from a combat zone alive still have a difficult life ahead of them. **25% of rough sleepers in the UK**

**were once part of the Armed Forces<sup>7</sup>**. Combat Stress, the main mental health organisation for ex-armed services personnel, has long been helping those who have seen military service deal with mental health problems including: Clinical depression, phobic disorders, PTSD (aka Shell-shock or battle fatigue), psychotic conditions, substance abuse (drugs and alcohol), bi-polar disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder, and raised anxiety states<sup>8</sup>.

There is also a large body of evidence suggesting that **those who return from active service are a greater danger to themselves** (either through self-harm or attempting suicide) **and a greater risk to their family<sup>9</sup>**, with a greater propensity to commit domestic abuse<sup>10</sup> or murder<sup>11</sup> than the civilian population.

For more information on these topics we would encourage you to use the resources to the right. There are thousands of opportunities outside of the military where you don't have to suffer these traumatic, stressful events. Perhaps you can explore those.

## RESOURCES

### Combat Stress

[www.combatstress.org.uk](http://www.combatstress.org.uk)

Support for ex-armed services personnel.

### Samaritans

[www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)

0845 790 90 90

Offers a listening ear for those struggling with personal issues, anxiety, depression and any other problems people need to talk through.

### Military Families Against the War

[www.mfaw.org.uk](http://www.mfaw.org.uk)

A group of people who have either lost relatives, or whose relatives are serving in Afghanistan and Iraq. They campaign for the troops to come home.

### Crisis

[www.crisis.org.uk](http://www.crisis.org.uk)

0870 011 3335

Help and advice for those who find themselves homeless, or sleeping rough.

### Refuge

[www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk)

0808 2000 247

A support service for people trapped in a violent relationship, or suffering domestic abuse.

### Sack Parliament

[www.sackparliament.org.uk](http://www.sackparliament.org.uk)

Working to end the war on 'terror'.

1. [www.combatstress.org.uk](http://www.combatstress.org.uk) 2. Ministry of Defence 3. *ibid* 4. Hansard (<http://tinyurl.com/l7zva>) 5. Iraqi body count 6. The Lancet Report ([www.thelancet.com](http://www.thelancet.com)) 7. Crisis homeless charity - [www.crisis.org.uk](http://www.crisis.org.uk) 8. [combatstress.org.uk](http://combatstress.org.uk) 9. "Ex-soldier kills family", BBC 9th July - [www.tinyurl.com/mu9ga](http://www.tinyurl.com/mu9ga) 10. [www.endabuse.org](http://www.endabuse.org) or [www.womensaid.org](http://www.womensaid.org). uk 11. "50% of women murdered suffered domestic abuse", House of Commons debate, [www.tinyurl.com/nhbf1](http://www.tinyurl.com/nhbf1)