



U.S. ADD TIME NEWS

MOBILE APPS

NEWSLETTERS

Main • Swampland • Battleland • The Page • Intelligent Cities • Videos



Battleland

Where military intelligence is not a contradiction in terms

Battleland Feed

Daily E-mail Updates

« PREVIOUS
Turning Off Doomsday

IRAQ: "Was That Lack of Immunity for U.S. Troops
Simply an Excuse to Pull Out?"

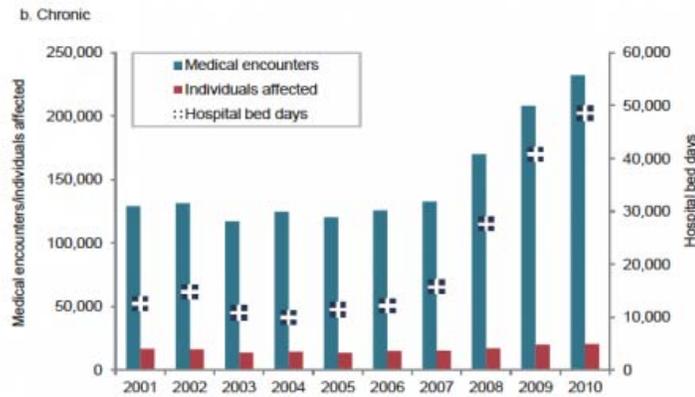
NEXT »

What's In Your Canteen, Soldier?

Posted by MARK THOMPSON Monday, November 7, 2011 at 5:02 am

4 Comments • Related Topics: [military](#), [military health](#), [military mental health](#), [national security](#), [pentagon](#), [troops](#), [veterans](#), [alcohol](#)

Tweet



Since the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq began, the days spent by U.S. troops in hospitals for alcohol-related problems have skyrocketed, according to a new Pentagon study:

Time hospitalized for chronic U.S. military alcohol problems up nearly four times / MSMR

The results of this analysis demonstrate

the increasing medical burden that excessive alcohol use is placing on the military health system; this is especially noteworthy for service members with chronic alcohol diagnoses. The number of bed days attributable to chronic alcohol abuse diagnoses has almost quadrupled over the surveillance period.

Wow. A four-fold jump in the number of days spent in hospitals because of alcoholism between 2001 and 2010. There are apparently a lot of deeply unhappy drunken troops in the U.S. military these days.

The study, contained in the Pentagon's *Medical Surveillance Monthly Report*, doesn't blame anything for the rise, except to suggest that increased attention to the problem might contribute to its apparent growth. It doesn't blame the wars, the fears of going off to war, or celebrating one's return from war, for the Bacchanalia. Instead, it notes that "the proportions of acute incident alcohol diagnoses that were recurrent were relatively higher among Air Force members, senior-enlisted personnel, and those serving in combat occupations." (Excuse me: Air Force?)

All this should come as little surprise: the Pentagon itself reported back in 2008 that "one

Battleland Daily E-mail

Get e-mail updates from TIME's Battleland in your inbox and never miss a day.

SIGN UP

Subscribe to TIME and get ALL ACCESS

On Twitter: Mark Thompson

[markthompson_dc](#) The defense budget is going to be cut, if not slashed. Here are 10 things you need to know about it. On Battleland, at <http://t.co/gMsK5hTr> - 2 hours ago

in five active-duty personnel meet criteria for heavy alcohol use – the consumption level most likely to result in alcohol-related problems." One in five among the 1.4 million troops on active duty? That's 280,000 service personnel getting wasted (an amazing 47% of the 1.4 million said they were "binge drinkers").

The Pentagon report (starting [here](#) on page 9) warns such "sharp increases" in "alcohol-related medical encounters" can:

result in serious consequences that impede the operational effectiveness of the force and may negatively impact family life and career advancement. Abuse and dependence are associated with poor health outcomes (e.g., poisonings, long-term sequelae of chronic abuse), social disruption (e.g., domestic strife), career stunting (e.g., low performance ratings, loss of promotion, attrition from service), misconduct (e.g., fighting, drunk driving), and accidental and intentional injuries.

While the U.S. military bans alcohol in war zones, its prohibition – contained in the infamous **General Order No. 1** – in many cases only delays problems until the troops get back **home**. The Army is **boosting** the ranks of its substance-abuse counselors by 30% to deal with the increasing boozing in its ranks.

Print E-mail digg it Twitter LinkedIn Facebook + MORE 4 Comments

Sponsored Links

LifeLock® Official Site Identity Theft Can Happen to Anyone So Get Protection with LifeLock. LifeLock.com

Mom is 50, Looks 30 Mom Reveals \$5 Wrinkle Therapy That Makes Botox Doctors Furious! http://lifestyleforwomen.net

Official Obama Website Join Barack's campaign and fight for a better future for America. BarackObama.com

Buy a link here



Type your comment here.

Real-time updating is paused. (Resume)

Showing 4 comments

Sort by popular now

JimPut

Maybe I am interpreting the chart wrong, but it seems to show that the number of individuals affected has remained relatively steady. It seems to show that the same number of people are producing much higher bed days. I agree that the bed day rise is alarming, but isn't that caused by something other than a rise in number of people causing the bed day rise?

1 week ago 5 Likes

Like Reply

markthompson_dc Hold it! Brand new \$5 billion aircraft carrier lacks enough working toilets for 5,000-member crew. On Battleland, at http://t.co/oi3CdJXq - 1 day ago

markthompson_dc SecDef Panetta warns nuclear triad might shrink down to a dyad if budget cuts go too deep. On Battleland, at http://t.co/avkeum73 - 1 day ago

Follow Mark Thompson on Twitter

Most Popular

Full List

TIME.COM BATTLELAND

- 1. Kotex Tampons Recalled Over Bacterial Contamination
2. Mind Reading: What We Can Learn From the Dutch About Teen Sex
3. The Straw Man Comes To Zuccotti Park
4. As Glaciers Melt, Bhutan Faces Increased Risk of 'Mountain Tsunamis'
5. Who Should Be TIME's Person of the Year 2011?
6. Google Earth Uncovers Mysterious White Lines in Chinese Desert
7. Gas Prices Sit at All-Time Highs for This Time of Year
8. Obama Insists U.S. Does Not Fear China
9. Why Kids With High IQs Are More Likely to Take Drugs
10. Humphrey the Pet Hippo Mauls His Owner to Death

Battleland Favorite Links

- Air Force Magazine
Aviation Week's "Ares"
Center for a New American Security's "Abu Muqawama"
CNN's Security Clearance blog
Commander Salamander
Defense Tech
DoDBuzz
Foreign Policy's "The Best Defense"
Foreign Policy's "The Cable"
I Like The Cut Of His Jib !!
MilitaryCorruption.com
Ms Sparky
Small Wars Journal
The Long War Journal
The Project on Government Oversight
The Will and the Wallet
Thomas PM Barnett's "Globlogization"
U.S. Department of Defense
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs "Vantage Point"
U.S. Naval Institute



LowellB

Jim, I believe you viewed the chart correctly. Interestingly the bed day/ medical encounter ratio also changes. It looks as though a service member with alcohol related medical issues is much more likely to get treated now than in 2001. Stateside Docs in both Military and Civilian settings are better trained to identify risky drinking behavior. Medical professionals are much less likely to ignore a patient's alcohol related health risks and are more likely to encourage their patient to seek treatment. Early treatment is by far the better investment.

1 week ago in reply to JimPut

Like Reply

• Milblogging.com

blog
• Wired's "Danger Room"



Fawaz Tahir

Another reason to severely restrict use of alcohol worldwide. But why would you do that? You're too busy trying to find something to blame this rise, this other incident on, and this other phenomenon on, all the while ignoring the wisdom behind some religions that say 'no' to alcohol.

You're too caught up with the 'Hey, I only drink a little. No harm done.' If you think that way, you're perhaps amongst the most ignorant. Explore the societal, sociological, and psychological impacts of your drinking with an honest mind and you'll understand why.

1 week ago 2 Likes

Like Reply



TheWanderer, Just a spiritual wanderer across the the wilds of the internet looking fo...

hmmmm maybe if this country reinstated the draft so that all Americans served in wars rather than just those who volunteered. no?

Then lets get the troops out and bring them home. We are asking them to protect our asses while we remain home here fat and happy!!

1 week ago

Like Reply

Get TIME ALL ACCESS
Delivered the way you want it.
SUBSCRIBE

Archive

◀ NOVEMBER 2011

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | | | |

◀ BACK TO BATTLELAND HOME PAGE

More News from Our Partners



- Citadel attorney: Kids claims 'believable'
- Occupy: A deserted park and impending evictions
- Penn State coach went to police, stopped assault, email says

- Jakafi, Pill That Treats Bone Marrow Disorder, Approved By FDA
- Andrea Jones, Tennessee Transgender Woman, Goes Topless In DMV Protest (VIDEO)
- Job Discrimination Complaints Hit All-Time High

- How Was The Joker Potty Trained? Mental Health Experts Psychoanalyze Batman Villains
- Alaska's Alleged Sea Monster Caught On Film
- WATCH: Exploding manhole Tosses Car In The Air

- Five Favorite Films (Plus Four More!) with Joshua Leonard
- RT on DVD & Blu-Ray: Larry Crowne and Beginners
- Box Office Guru Wrapup: Immortals Debuts at the Top

- Holiday Photo Tips: Get Creative!
- Unseen Photos From Classic Shoots
- The 75 Best LIFE Covers of All Time

More on TIME.com »



Why Is Newt Gingrich Looking So Glum?



Penn State: McQueary Says He Stopped Rape, Went to Police



Attention, Astronauts: NASA May Have a Job for You

Quotes of the Day »



"I think the notion that we fear China is mistaken."

President BARACK OBAMA, on a visit to Australia, sends a clear message as he announced a new bi-lateral security agreement with Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard

More Quotes »

Stay Connected with TIME.com [Learn More »](#)



Subscribe to RSS Feeds



Sign Up for Newsletters



Add TIME Widgets



Read TIME Mobile on Your Phone



Become a Fan of TIME



Get TIME Twitter Updates



TIME

© 2011 Time Inc. All rights reserved | [Privacy Policy](#) | [RSS](#) | [Newsletter](#) | [TIME For Kids](#) | [LIFE.com](#)

[Subscribe](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Media Kit](#) | [Reprints & Permissions](#) | [Opinion Leaders Panel](#) | [Help](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Ad Choices](#) ▶

Powered by [WordPress.com](#) VIP