

Military Suicides in South Carolina

South Carolina Violent Death Reporting System



The South Carolina Violent Death Reporting System (SCVDRS) combines data from law enforcement reports, death certificates, and coroner/medical examiner reports (including toxicology) to pool data on violent deaths and their circumstances into one anonymous database. SCVDRS data includes decedents who were fatally injured and died within South Carolina (SC) whether or not they were SC residents. SC residents who were fatally injured or died outside of SC are not included in this report.

Therefore, SCVDRS death counts and rates may differ from DPH Vital Statistics and other death sources.

SCVDRS measures military history as "Ever having served in the U.S. armed forces," which allows SCVDRS to capture the impact of suicide for South Carolina's military population, including veterans and active duty members.

From 2017-2021...

758

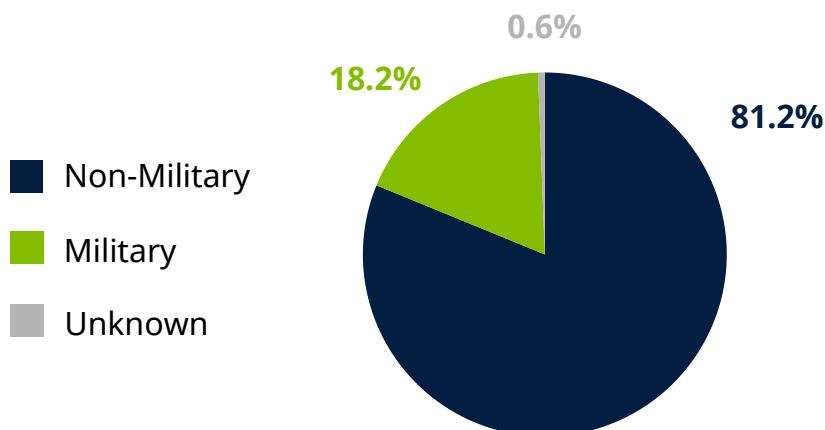
people with military history died by suicide in SC from 2017-2021. This represents **18.2%** of all suicides in SC.

In 2021, there were **151** suicide deaths among people with military history.

The number of military history suicides has remained relatively constant over the past 5 years.

Suicides in South Carolina, by Military History

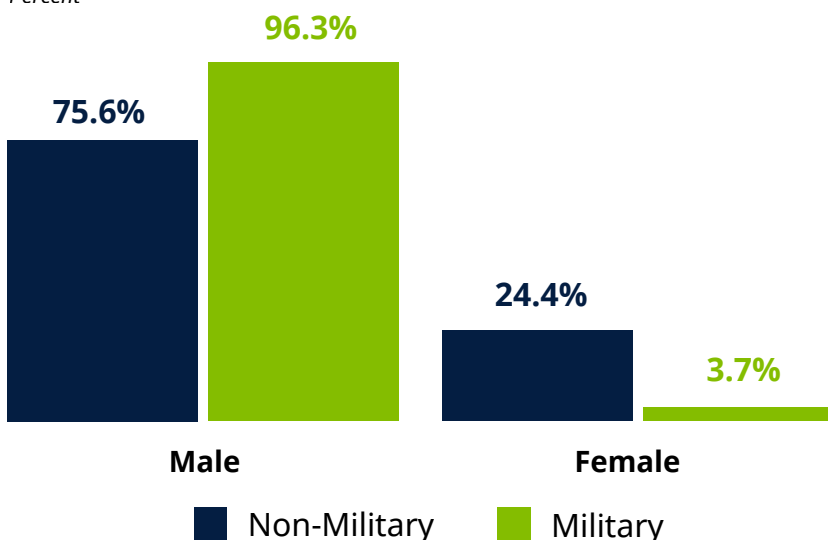
Percent



Military Suicide by Demographics

Suicide, by Military History and Sex

Percent

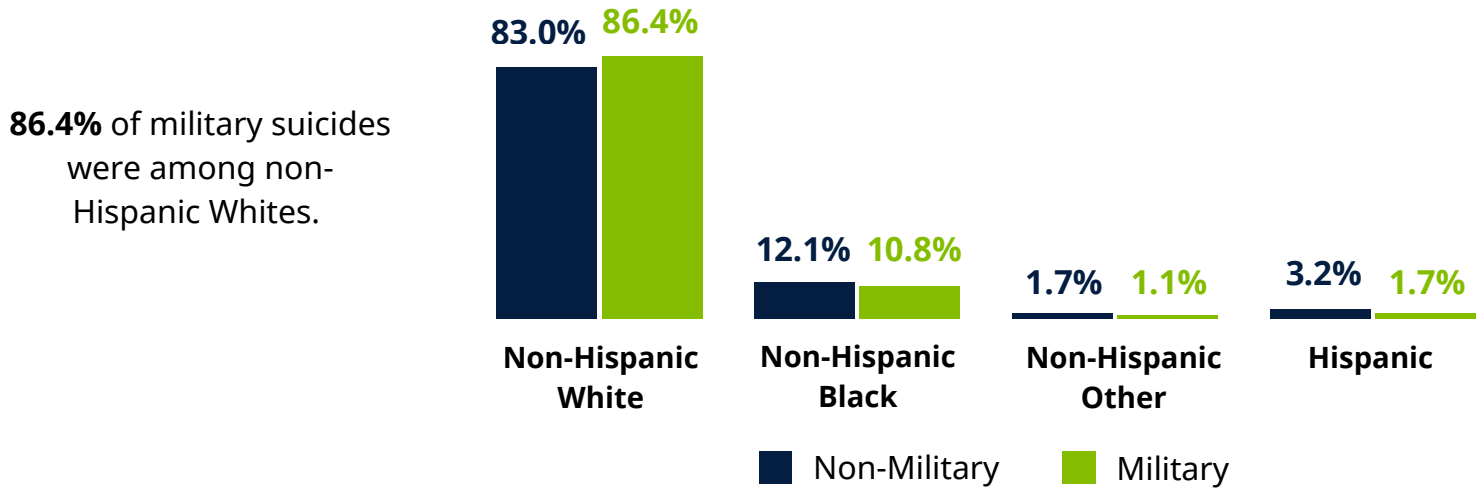


96.3% of military history suicides were males, while only 3.7% of military history suicides were females.

22.1% of male suicide decedents had military history.

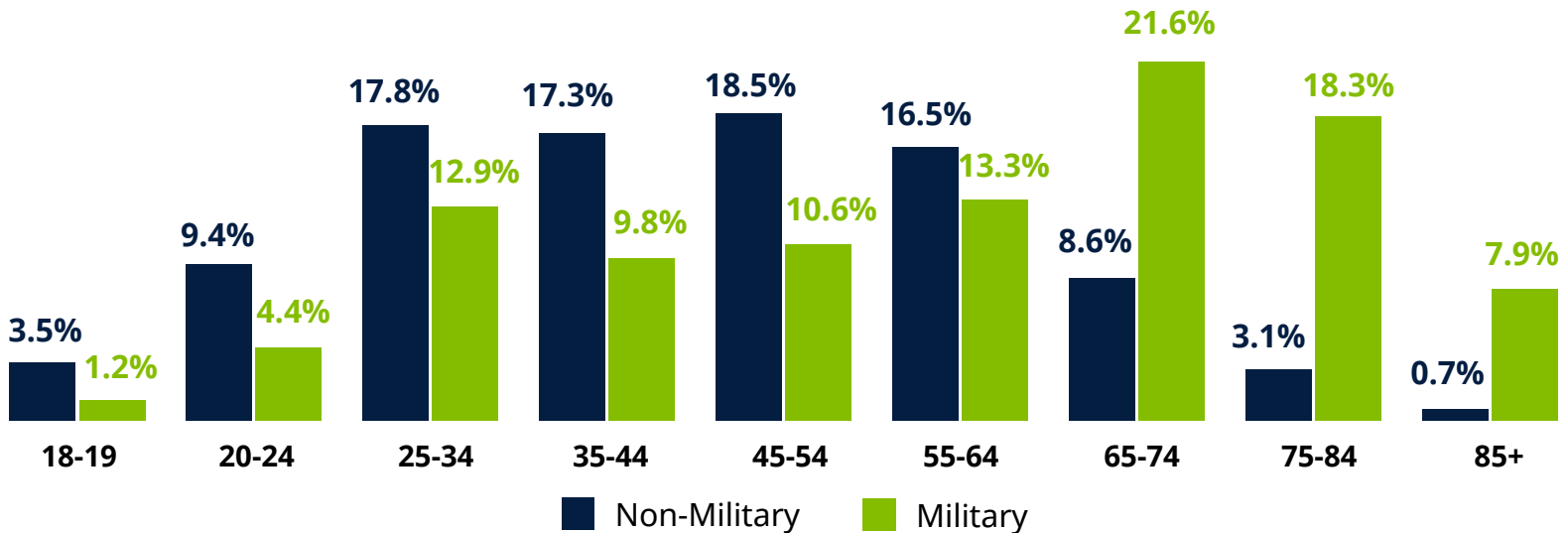
Suicide, by Military History and Race/Ethnicity

Percent



Suicide, by Military History and Age Group

Percent



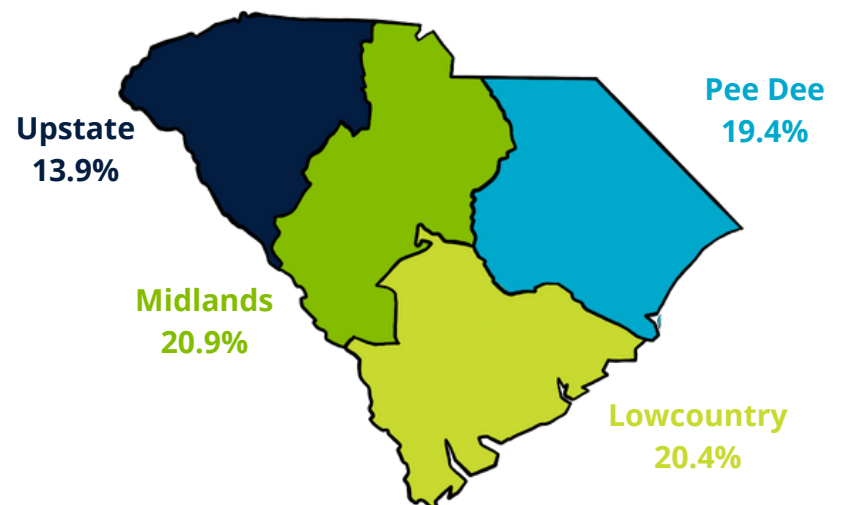
Note: Youths <18 not shown due to military ineligibility. 4.6% of non-military suicides were youths <18.

Almost half (**46.0%**) of suicides among adults aged 65+ were among people with military history. Almost half (**47.9%**) of all military suicides were among individuals aged 65+ (data not shown on graph).

Military Suicides, by Region

Percent of Regional Suicides

Greenville County had the highest number of military suicides (**n=76, p=16.5%**) and the highest number of non-military suicides (**n=355, p=82.6%**) among all SC counties. Saluda, Sumter, Allendale, Beaufort, and McCormick had the highest percent of military suicides compared to non-military suicides.

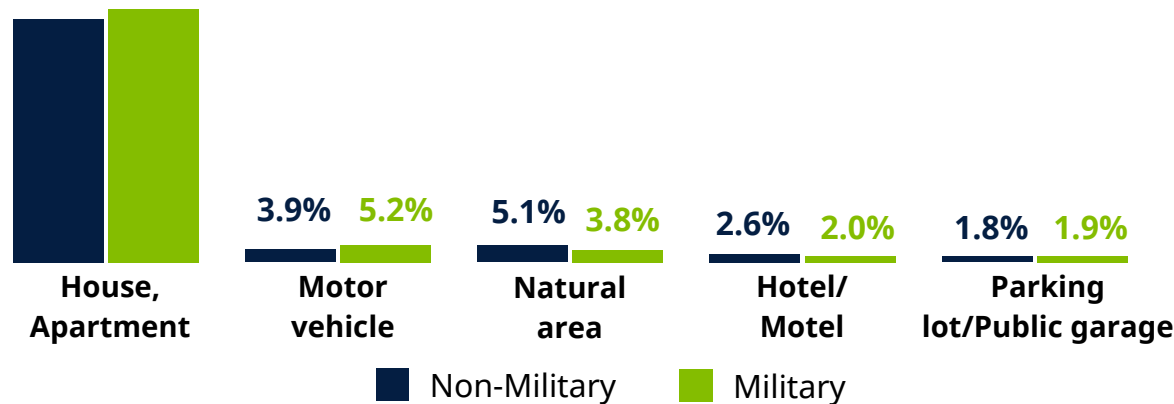


Incident Characteristics of Military Suicides

Top Injury Locations of Suicides, by Military History

Percent

73.1% 76.1%



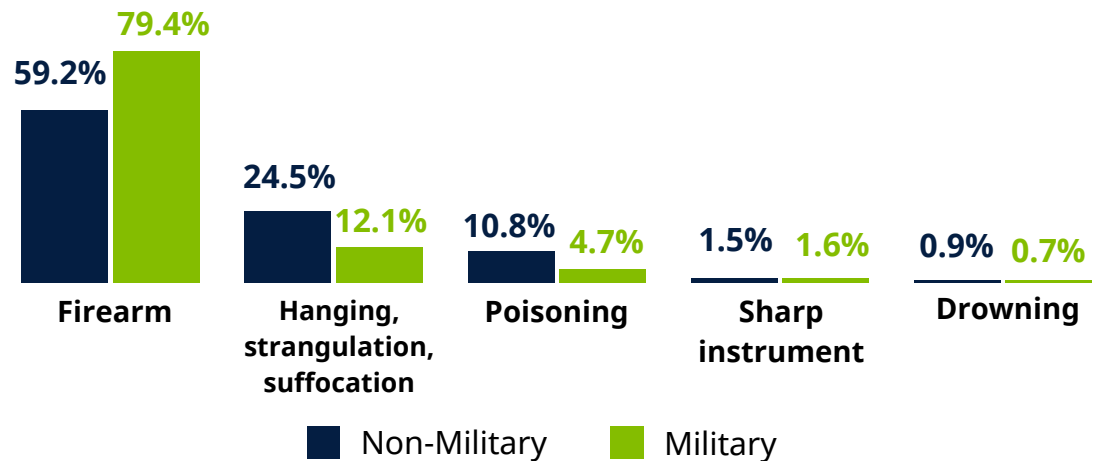
The top three locations for all decedents were in a house or apartment, in a motor vehicle, and in a natural area. **Over three quarters of military suicide** victims were injured in a **house or apartment**.

Top 5 Mechanisms of Injury for Suicides, by Military History

Percent

Firearms were the most common weapon used in military suicides, accounting for almost **80%** of military suicides.

Over 1 in 10 military suicides were by hanging or strangulation.

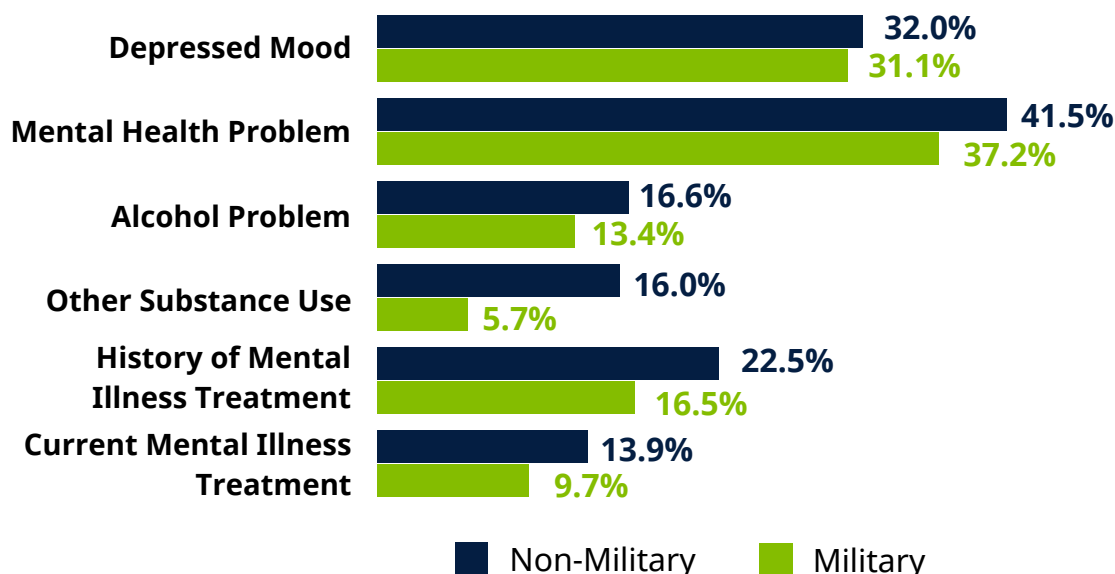


Circumstance Characteristics of Military Suicide Decedents

Circumstance characteristics are among suicide decedents with at least 1 known circumstance. Suicide circumstances were known for 76.1% of suicide decedents. Decedents may have more than one known circumstance.

Mental Health Circumstances of Suicide, by Military History

Percent

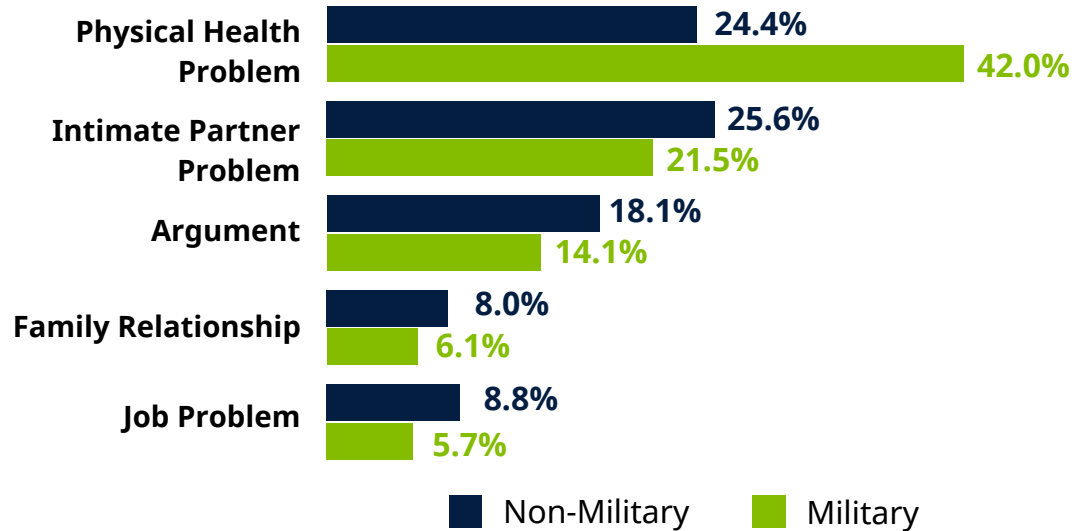


A current mental health problem, found in **37.2%** of military suicides, was the leading circumstance for both military and non-military suicides.

Life Stressor Circumstances of Suicide, by Military History

Percent

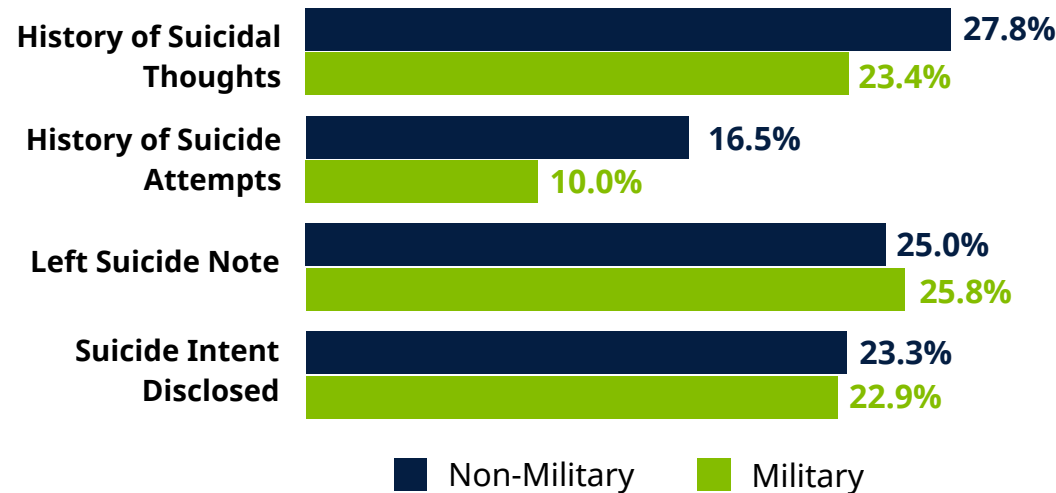
Physical health problem was the leading circumstance for **military** suicides, found in **42.0%** of military suicides.



Military suicides were **more** likely than non-military suicides to be related to physical health problems, but **less** likely than non-military suicides to be related to job problems or substance abuse problems.

Suicide Specific Circumstances, by Military History

Percent



Non-Military suicides were **more** likely to be preceded by a history of suicidal thoughts or attempts, while **military** suicides were **more** likely to have left a suicide note.

SCVDRS Data Limitations

- Known circumstances leading to the suicide event are subject to the knowledge of family members, friends, and others who report to coroners and law enforcement during investigations.
- Availability of law enforcement and coroner reports for 2020 and 2021 were impacted by the pandemic. Therefore, known circumstances may be underreported.

Support:

SCVDRS is supported by funds from the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) under Cooperative Agreement 5 NU17CE010146-02-00. This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by the NCIPC, CDC, DHHS, or the U.S. Government.

Sources:

South Carolina Violent Death Reporting System (SCVDRS), 2017-2021