

Afghanistan War:

October 7, 2001, to August 30, 2021

US Military/Department of Defense Casualties
and Financial Costs

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The A-Mark Foundation
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I. Executive Summary

- **2,456 US Military Deaths**

Pages 3, 4

The Afghanistan War started with Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) on October 7, 2001,¹ and ended with Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS)² when the last troops pulled out on August 30, 2021.

- **3,923 DOD Contractor / Civilian Deaths**

Pages 3, 5

Those war operations led to the deaths of 2,456 US military members,³ and the deaths of 3,923 US Department of Defense (DOD) contractors and civilians.⁴ Also, 20,763 US military members were wounded.⁵

- **20,763 US Military Wounded**

Pages 3, 6

The Costs of War Project by the Watson Institute at Boston University estimated the total US costs from 2001 to 2021 at \$2.261 trillion,⁶ consisting of an estimated \$530 billion in interest payments on borrowed money, \$933 billion for Defense Department Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) war budget, \$59 billion for State Department OCO war budget, \$443 billion for Defense Department base budget war-related increases, and \$296 billion for veterans' care.

- **The war cost an estimated \$2.261 trillion, excluding post-2021 veteran care and interest on the money borrowed**

Pages 3, 7

The Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), an oversight authority created by Congress, estimated the United States spent \$969.3 billion on the Afghanistan War from 2001 to 2021.⁷ That estimate does not include cost categories for increases over the DOD base budget, veteran care, and interest on money borrowed to pay for the war, all of which account for \$1.259 trillion of the Cost of War Project's

estimate. Adding that \$1.259 trillion to the SIGAR estimate of \$969.3 billion would lead to a total of \$2.228 trillion, which is in line with the Cost of War Project's \$2.261 trillion estimate.

The numbers in this report are as we found them and are presented without subjective analysis or theories.⁸

¹ Hannah Fischer, "A Guide to U.S. Military Casualty Statistics: Operation Freedom's Sentinel, Operation Inherent Resolve, Operation New Dawn, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom," fas.org, August 7, 2015

² Office of Inspector General, United States Department of Defense, "Lead Inspector General for Operation Freedom's Sentinel I Quarterly Report to the United States Congress I January 1, 2021 - March 31, 2021," dodig.mil, May 18, 2021

³ These numbers were obtained from data on the Defense Casualty Analysis System website.

⁴ Neta C. Crawford and Catherine Lutz, "Human Cost of Post-9/11 Wars," watson.brown.edu, September 1, 2021. This combines the 3,917 US Contractor and 6 US Department of Defense Civilian deaths. There is no breakdown by year. Based on the definition of "defense contractor," the US Contractor death total many contain both US citizens and foreign nationals.





⁵ Defense Casualty Analysis System – Casualty Summaries by Month for "[U.S. Military Casualties - Operation Enduring Freedom \(OEF\) Casualty Summary by Month and Service](https://dcas.dmdc.osd.mil)" and "[U.S. Military Casualties - Operation Freedom's Sentinel \(OFS\) Casualty Summary by Month and Service](https://dcas.dmdc.osd.mil)" dcas.dmdc.osd.mil, as of October 20, 2021.

⁶ Costs of War Project, "U.S. Costs To Date For The War In Afghanistan, 2001-2021," watson.brown.edu, accessed August 23, 2021

⁷ DoD: Special Inspector General For Afghanistan Reconstruction, Report to the United States Congress, "2: Reconstruction Update," FIGURE 2.4, sigar.mil, April 30, 2021 – "Reconstruction": Security, Governance/Development, Humanitarian, Agency Operations, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, "What We Need to Learn: Lessons from Twenty Years of Afghanistan Reconstruction," FIGURE 1, sigar.mil, August 2021.

⁸ Much can exist beneath the surface of the numbers, and good people can and probably will debate what the numbers and data indicate. The situation of a new administration inheriting a previous administration's plan already in motion is an example of one factor that might confuse and contextualize the costs and deaths attributed to a specific president.

Summary of US Military/DOD Deaths, US Military Wounded, and Costs Related to the Afghanistan War from 2001 to 2021

	A. President / Years	B. US Military Deaths ⁹	C. Dept. of Defense Deaths ¹⁰	D. Total Deaths (B & C)	E. US Military Wounded ¹¹	F. 2001 to 2021 (w/o post-2021 Veterans' Care and Interest) ¹² In billions
1.	 George W. Bush – 8 years (2001-2008)	626	Contractor & Civilian cumulative death total		2,656	\$933 - Defense Department Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) (War) Budget \$59 - State Dept. OCO (War) Budget \$443 - Defense Department Base Budget War-Related Increases \$296 - Veterans Care for Afghan War Vets \$530 - Estimated Interest on War Borrowing
2.	 Barack Obama – 8 years (2009-2016)	1,752				
3.	 Donald Trump – 4 years (2017-2020)	65				
4.	 Joe Biden – <1 year (as of 9/2021)	13				
5.	Totals	2,456	3,923	6,379	20,763	\$2.261 trillion

⁹ Defense Casualty Analysis System – Casualty Summaries by Month for "[U.S. Military Casualties - Operation Enduring Freedom \(OEF\) Casualty Summary by Month and Service](#)" and "[U.S. Military Casualties - Operation Freedom's Sentinel \(OFS\) Casualty Summary by Month and Service](#)" dcas.dmdc.osd.mil, as of September 7, 2021. Total 2,456.

¹⁰ Costs of War Project and Department of Defense, "Casualty Status."

¹¹ Defense Casualty Analysis System – Casualty Summaries by Month for "U.S. Military Casualties - Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) Casualty Summary by Month and Service" and "U.S. Military Casualties - Operation Freedom's Sentinel (OFS) Casualty Summary by Month and Service" dcas.dmdc.osd.mil, as of October 20, 2021

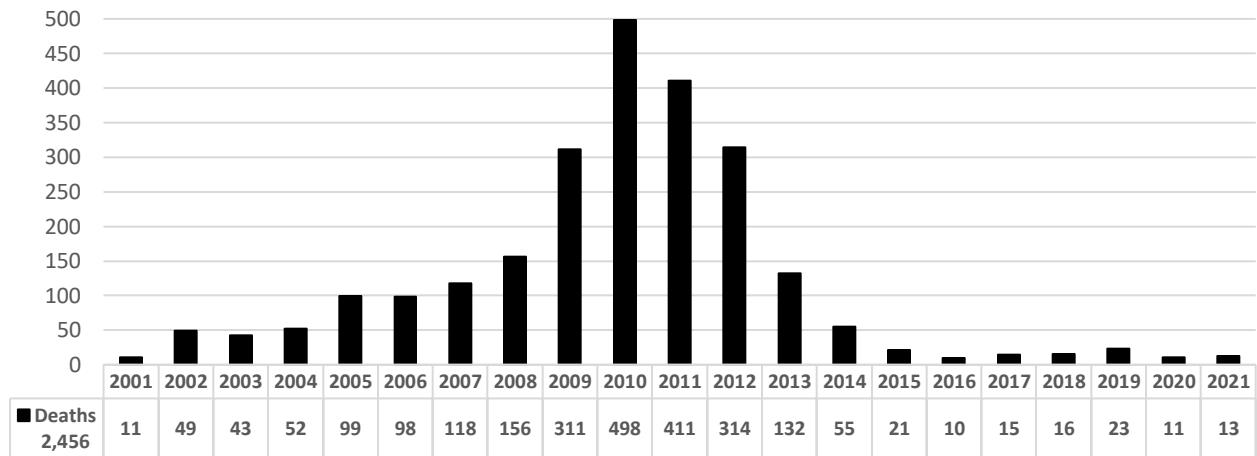
¹² Costs of War Project, "U.S. Costs To Date For The War In Afghanistan, 2001-2021," watson.brown.edu, accessed August 23, 2021

II. US Military Deaths by Year & by President¹³

The death totals for the chart and table below show 2,456 US military deaths over the 20 years of the Afghanistan War.¹⁴

	A. Year	B. Number of US Military Deaths		A. Year	B. Number of US Military Deaths	
George W. Bush 626 US Military Deaths	1.	2001	11	12.	2012	314
	2.	2002	49	13.	2013	132
	3.	2003	43	14.	2014	55
	4.	2004	52	15.	2015	21
	5.	2005	99	16.	2016	10
	6.	2006	98	17.	2017	15
	7.	2007	118	18.	2018	16
	8.	2008	156	19.	2019	23
	9.	2009	311	20.	2020	11
	10.	2010	498	21.	2021	13
	11.	2011	411		Total	2,456
						Barack Obama 1,752 US Military Deaths
						Donald Trump 65 US Military Deaths
						Joe Biden 13 US Military Deaths (as of 9/15/2021)

Chart 1: US Military Deaths - 2,456 - 2001 to 2021



¹³ Sources – Chart 1 & Table: Defense Casualty Analysis System – Casualty Summaries by Month for "[U.S. Military Casualties - Operation Enduring Freedom \(OEF\) Casualty Summary by Month and Service](#)" and "[U.S. Military Casualties - Operation Freedom's Sentinel \(OFS\) Casualty Summary by Month and Service](#)" dcas.dmdc.osd.mil, as of September 7, 2021. Total 2,456.

¹⁴ The Costs of War project estimates total deaths in the Afghanistan war at 176,206, according to the [Figures](#) page chart dated September 2021.

III. US Department of Defense Contractor and Civilian Deaths

The Afghanistan War operations led to the deaths of 3,917 Department of Defense contractors¹⁵ and six DOD civilian employees¹⁶ from 2001 to 2021, for a total of 3,923 deaths.¹⁷ We have found no breakdown of these numbers by year.

However, the US contractor death total is probably not exact. According to the US Department of Labor website page “Defense Base Act Case Summary by Nation,” which keeps count of these numbers, “These reports do not constitute the complete or official casualty statistics of civilian contractor injuries and deaths. They are offered as general information to the public who may be interested in the scope of civilian government contracting overseas.”¹⁸

The Costs of War Project stated that “the majority of U.S. contractors are the citizens of other countries, many of whose deaths appear not to have been reported.”¹⁹

¹⁵ According to the CRS Report, “Defense Primer: Department of Defense Contractors,” updated February 3, 2021: “A defense contractor, as defined by the Code of Federal Regulations, is ‘any individual, firm, corporation, partnership, association, or other legal non-Federal entity that enters into a contract directly with the DOD to furnish services, supplies, or construction’ (see 32 C.F.R. 158.3, ‘Definitions’)....The term ‘contractor’ does not refer to military servicemembers, civilian DOD career employees, or civilian political appointees.”

¹⁶ Department of Defense, “Casualty Status,” [defense.gov](https://www.defense.gov), October 13, 2021

¹⁷ Neta C. Crawford and Catherine Lutz, “Human Cost of Post-9/11 Wars,” watson.brown.edu, September 1, 2021. This combines the 3,917 US Contractor and 6 US Department of Defense Civilian deaths.

¹⁸ US Department of Labor, “Defense Base Act Case Summary by Nation,” [dol.gov](https://www.dol.gov), accessed October 15, 2021

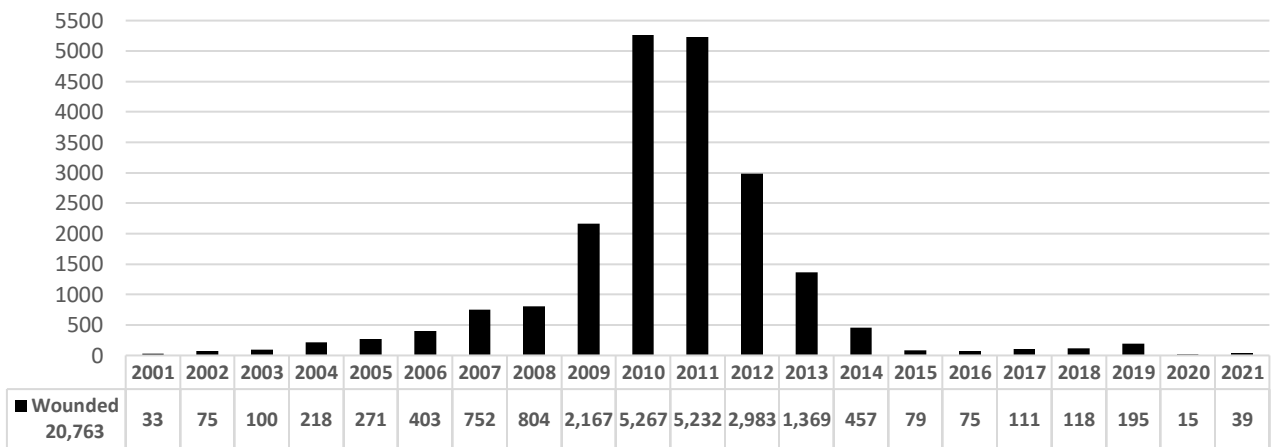
¹⁹ Costs of War Project, “U.S. & ALLIED KILLED,” watson.brown.edu, updated as of July 2021

IV. US Military Wounded by Year & by President

Accurate counts of US military members who were wounded in the Afghanistan War are problematic, in part because there were forces for and against an accurate count for various reasons. Regardless, the numbers below come from the Defense Department, Defense Casualty Analysis System.²⁰

	A. Year	B. Number of US Military Wounded		A. Year	B. Number of US Military Wounded	
George W. Bush 2,656 US Military Wounded	1.	2001	33	12.	2012	2,983
	2.	2002	75	13.	2013	1,369
	3.	2003	100	14.	2014	457
	4.	2004	218	15.	2015	79
	5.	2005	271	16.	2016	75
	6.	2006	403	17.	2017	111
	7.	2007	752	18.	2018	118
	8.	2008	804	19.	2019	195
Barack Obama 17,629 US Military Wounded	9.	2009	2,167	20.	2020	15
	10.	2010	5,267	21.	2021	39
	11.	2011	5,232		Total	20,763
						Donald Trump 439 US Military Wounded
						Joe Biden 39 US Military Wounded (as of 10/20/2021)

Chart 2: US Military Wounded - 20,763 - 2001 to 2021



²⁰ Source – Chart 2 & Table: Defense Casualty Analysis System – Casualty Summaries by Month for "[U.S. Military Casualties - Operation Enduring Freedom \(OEF\) Casualty Summary by Month and Service](#)" and "[U.S. Military Casualties - Operation Freedom's Sentinel \(OFS\) Casualty Summary by Month and Service](#)" dcas.dmdc.osd.mil, as of October 20, 2021. "The central objective of DCAS is to collect and maintain U.S. casualty information on warfighters who have fallen in global or regional conflicts involving the United States. This site is maintained by the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC)." Also, "A Casualty in DCAS is defined as a Service member that is/has been classified as deceased, wounded, ill or injured....The data is provided to us directly from the Services." [FAQ page](#), accessed October 22, 2021

V. Costs of the War in Afghanistan Through 2021, Excluding Post-2021 Veterans Care & Interest on Borrowing

The Costs of War Project by the Watson Institute at Boston University estimated total congressional appropriations and spending for the Afghanistan War at **\$2.261 trillion**. The estimate consists of:

- Defense Department Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) (War) Budget (\$933B);
- State Department OCO (War) Budget (\$59B);
- Defense Department Base Budget War-Related Increases (\$443B);
- Veterans Care for Afghan War Vets (\$296B); and
- Estimated Interest on War Borrowing (\$530B).²¹

The Costs of War Project does not show an annual breakdown for its estimate, and does not include projected future costs of veteran care or future interest costs on the money borrowed to pay for the war.

SIGAR (Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction), an oversight authority created by Congress, reported a cost of \$969.3 billion from 2001²² to 2021, which includes Department of Defense spending of \$826 billion and “Reconstruction” spending of \$143.3 billion for Security, Governance/Development, Humanitarian, and Agency Operations.²³

SIGAR noted that its estimate was lower because the Costs of War Project “adds what it considers to be Afghanistan-related costs of \$433 billion above DOD baseline costs, \$296 billion in medical and disability costs for veterans, and \$530 billion in interest costs on related Treasury borrowing.”²⁴

Those three additional costs included by the Costs of War Project but not by SIGAR total \$1.259 trillion. Adding that to the SIGAR estimate of \$969.3 billion results in a total of **\$2.228 trillion**, which is in line with the Cost of War Project’s \$2.261 trillion estimate.

The chart below shows the breakdown for US spending from 2001 through 2021 based on the Cost of War Project’s estimate.

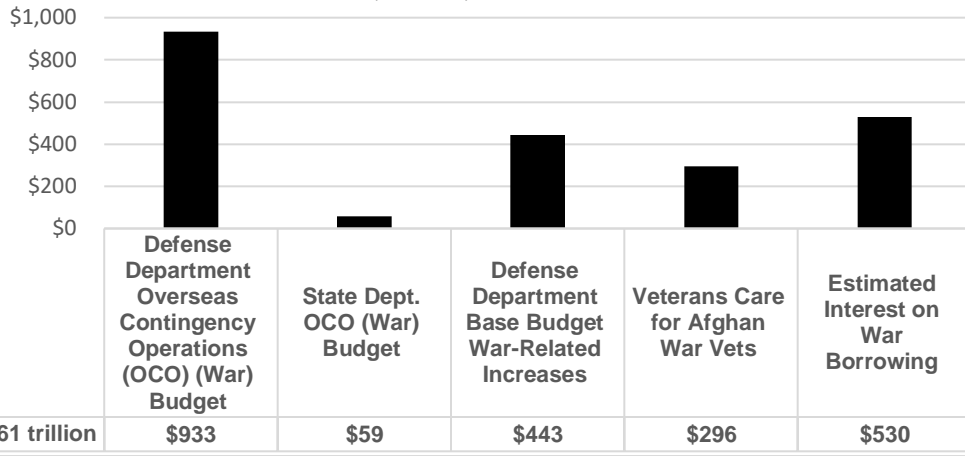
²¹ Costs of War Project, “U.S. Costs To Date For The War In Afghanistan, 2001-2021,” watson.brown.edu, accessed August 23, 2021

²² According to the USGS, U.S. Department of the Interior website, “The fiscal year for the federal government begins on October 1 and ends on September 30. It is designated by the calendar year in which it ends.” The FY 2002 numbers would include 2001 since operations in Afghanistan began in October 2001. USGS Glossary, “Office of Budget, Planning, and Integration (BPI),” usgs.org, accessed September 15, 2021

²³ DoD: Special Inspector General For Afghanistan Reconstruction, Report to the United States Congress, “2: Reconstruction Update,” FIGURE 2.4, sigar.mil, April 30, 2021 – “Reconstruction”: Security, Governance/Development, Humanitarian, Agency Operations, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, “What We Need to Learn: Lessons from Twenty Years of Afghanistan Reconstruction,” FIGURE 1, sigar.mil, August 2021. “Congress created SIGAR as an independent agency focused solely on the Afghanistan mission and its reconstruction issues,” according to its August 2021 report.

²⁴ Special Inspector General For Afghanistan Reconstruction, “Special Inspector General For Afghanistan Reconstruction | Reconstruction Update,” sigar.mil, August 2021

Chart 3: Estimated Congressional Appropriations and Spending for the Afghanistan War 2001-2021
(in billions)



VI. Conclusion

While the numbers in this report are the most authoritative we have found, it should be noted that exact numbers are difficult, if not impossible, to obtain during war. Regardless, we hope the above information gives you a snapshot of US military and related casualties, and dollars spent in America's war in Afghanistan, from 2001 to 2021.

In addition to estimates presented above, the Costs of War project estimated that 66,000-69,000 Afghan military and police, 1,144 allied troops from other nations, 47,245 Afghan civilians, 51,191 opposition fighters, 72 journalists, and 444 humanitarian aid workers were killed due to the war in Afghanistan.²⁵

²⁵ Neta C. Crawford and Catherine Lut, "Human and Budgetary Costs to Date of the U.S. War in Afghanistan," watson.brown.edu, April 15, 2021